

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Rishi Sunak of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters

June 8, 2023

President Biden. Well, Mr. President—"Mr. President." Just—I've just demoted you.
[*Laughter*]

Mr. Prime Minister, it's great to have you back. And you know, in the past few months, we've met each other in San Diego, and then we met in Belfast, and we met Hiroshima, and now we're here. And we're going to solve all the problems in the world right in this next 20 minutes.

But you know, Prime Minister Churchill and Roosevelt met here a little over 70 years ago, and they asserted that the strength of the partnership between Great Britain and the United States was the strength of the free world. I still think there's truth to that assertion.

And together, we're providing economic and humanitarian aid and security assistance to Ukraine in their fight against a brutal invasion of the Russians. And we've worked out an arrangement with AUKUS, with Australia, to make the Indian Ocean and that whole area safer and more secure. And you know, we're building on the Good Friday Agreement—25 years—and keep that going. We can talk about that a little bit.

As NATO allies, we're working together to help provide the collective defense of all of us. And we're going to further—I hope we can—we're going to discuss today plans to further strengthen our economic relationship.

And the global economy is undergoing, I think, the greatest transformation that's occurred since the Industrial Revolution. And something you know a lot about, AI, is going to play a big part in that, and I want to hear your views on that as well.

And we don't have a closer ally than Great Britain. And I'm delighted that you're here.

Prime Minister Sunak. Well, Mr. President, thank you. Thank you for the warm words. But also thank you for welcoming me to the White House and for allowing me to stay in Blair House, which, I've got to say, the spare room in the flat in Number 10 Downing Street doesn't quite compare. So it's been a real privilege.

And, as you said, it's daunting to think of the conversations that our predecessors had in this room when they had to speak of wars that they fought together, peace won together, and incredible change in the lives of our citizens.

And again, for the first time in over half a century, we face a war on the European Continent. And as we've done before, the U.S. and the U.K. have stood together to support Ukraine and stand up for the values of democracy and freedom and make sure that they prevail, as I know we will.

But also, I completely agree with what you said: Our economies are seeing perhaps the biggest transformation since the Industrial Revolution as new technologies provide incredible opportunities, but also give our adversaries more tools for harm.

But one thing I know won't change—I'm confident won't change—is the strength of our partnership and our friendship. And we will put our values front and center, as we've always done, to deliver for the British and American people.

President Biden. Well, if we had time, I'd take you over to the Residence where I live. And when you were over in Blair House, the—President Truman was there because they were redoing the White House. He put a whole—the Truman Balcony exists now because of Blair House being available. The balcony—that second balcony you see—the first balcony you see going up.

So, at any rate, and there's an awful lot of stories that are told—probably a bunch, apocryphal—about the former Prime Minister liking to take baths up the—anyway.

Prime Minister Sunak. Wandering around at 3 in the morning.

President Biden. That's right. *[Laughter]*

Prime Minister Sunak. Yes, Winston Churchill was bothering—bothering Mrs. Roosevelt. Yes. So you won't—don't worry, you won't see me there at—*[laughter]*—

President Biden. All right.

Prime Minister Sunak. —bothering you and the First Lady.

President Biden. Anyway, welcome, welcome, welcome.

Prime Minister Sunak. Well, it's great to be here. Thanks for having me, Joe.

President Biden. Thank you. Good to be with you.

Thank you, everybody.

Prime Minister Sunak. Thank you.

United Kingdom-U.S. Relations

Q. Is the special relationship in good shape, Mr. President? Is it in good shape?

[At this point, the President gave a thumbs up.]

President Biden. Real good shape.

Q. Real good shape?

Wildfires in Canada/Hazardous Air Quality Conditions in U.S.

Q. Anything we should know about your—the Federal response to the smoke, Mr. President?

President Biden. You're going to get a chance to ask me questions at the press conference.

Q. Wait, what does he say? What did he say? I'm sorry.

Prime Minister Sunak. The President said you'll have a chance to ask us questions later on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, White House; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : United Kingdom, Prime Minister Sunak.

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