

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland
June 17, 2023

Q. Good morning, sir.

The President. The only reason we're going to Philadelphia: It's my wedding anniversary. *[Laughter]* And we figured I—with my Philly girl, we'd go to Philly. You can smile; it's okay. It's a lousy joke.

Anyway, I—the reason I'm excited about today is, just like what we did last week in the— with the environmental groups. I think—I'm told this is the first time ever this early that every single union has endorsed me. I've been told that's never happened before. And the good news about that is, I also met yesterday with some businesspeople. Businesspeople and unions are beginning to work together like not before.

And so I'm excited about—this is the beginning of something big, in terms of changing the economic balance.

2024 Presidential Election

Q. What kind of campaign do you think you're going to have? Do you think it's going to be a nasty campaign this whole year, the way your opponent's going after you?

The President. Well, it depends on who the nominee is.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. On China, Mr. President, can Secretary Blinken ease tensions with China on this trip, do you think?

The President. Sure. Well, look, China has some legitimate difficulties unrelating to the— unrelated to the United States. And I think one of the things that that balloon caused was not so much that it got shot down, but I don't think the leadership knew where it was and knew what was in it and knew what was going on. It was—I think it was more embarrassing than it was intentional.

And so I'm hoping that, over the next several months, I'll be meeting with Xi again and talking about legitimate differences we have, but also how there's areas we can get along.

[At this point, several reporters spoke at once.]

Ukraine/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Mr. President, are you going to make it easier for Ukraine to join NATO?

The President. No.

The President. Because they've got to meet the same standards. So I'm not going to make it easier. I think they've done everything relating to demonstrating the ability to coordinate militarily, but there's a whole issue of: Is their system secure? Is it noncorrupt? Does it meet all the standards everyone—every other nation in NATO does?

I think they will. I think they can. But it's not automatic.

Thank you.

Russia/Nuclear Weapons

Q. Do you have a comment on Russia's deployment of tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus?

The President. I've commented on that many times. It's totally irresponsible.

Q. Mr. President——

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. prior to boarding Air Force One en route to Philadelphia, PA. In his remarks, he referred to President Xi Jinping of China.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Locations: Joint Base Andrews, MD.

Names: Biden, Jill T.; Xi Jinping.

Subjects: 2024 Presidential election; Belarus, suspected Russian nuclear weapons transport; China, downing of spy balloon by U.S. military; China, President; China, relations with U.S.; Economic improvement; Maryland, President's visit; News media, Presidential interviews; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, nuclear weapons, reported transport to Belarus; Ukraine, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, membership exploration.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300544.