

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Remarks at an Official Greeting With Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Vilnius, Lithuania**  
*July 11, 2023*

*Secretary General Stoltenberg.* President Biden, dear Joe, welcome to the NATO summit. And many, many thanks for your strong leadership making this alliance united and even stronger. This summit is already historic because the agreement we made yesterday will make Sweden a full member of NATO. And that will make our alliance even more capable of defending all allies.

At this meeting, we will also send a clear message to Ukraine that we stand by them as long as needed and also that we agree on a united and positive message on the path forward for Ukraine and membership for Ukraine.

Another major message from this summit will be that we need to invest more in our defense. And we will agree on a new defense investment pledge where we state clearly that 2 percent of GDP for defense is the minimum.

And the good news is that European allies and Canada are stepping up. This year, we have new numbers showing that they have added 8.3 percent in real terms for their defense budgets. This is a record high, and that demonstrates that allies are delivering on their commitments.

So, once again, Mr. President, it's great to have you here at the NATO summit.

*President Biden.* It's good to be here. And thank you for continuing to deliver.

I—as I've made no—the press is not at all surprised that I've been touting the fact that I think it's really important at this critical moment in Ukraine—in the whole NATO issue that you continue to lead NATO. You're trusted. No one knows the situation that we're facing better than you do.

And this historic moment—the adding of Finland and Sweden to NATO—it's consequential. And your leadership really matters. And the—and we agree on the language that we proposed, that you proposed, relative to the future of Ukraine being able to join NATO.

And we're looking forward to continuing a united NATO. They've heard me say—my American press have heard me say many times I still think that President Putin thinks the way he succeeds is to break NATO. Not going to do that, especially with you as the lead of it.

So thank you for being willing to do it.

*Secretary General Stoltenberg.* Thank you so much.

*President Biden.* Thank you, thank you, thank you.

*Secretary General Stoltenberg.* Thank you.

*President Biden.* Thank you, all.

*Q.* Where do things stand—[inaudible]? Where do things stand—[inaudible]?

*Q.* Mr. President, what is your role in getting Turkey to agree? Mr. President, Mr. President—

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:20 p.m. at the Lithuanian Exhibition and Congress Centre. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

*Categories:* Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General Stoltenberg.

*Locations:* Vilnius, Lithuania.

*Names:* Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Stoltenberg, Jens.

*Subjects:* Finland, North Atlantic Treaty Organization accession bid; Lithuania, President Biden's visit; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Sweden, North Atlantic Treaty Organization accession bid; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202300612.