

Remarks Following an Expanded Bilateral Meeting With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters

September 21, 2023

President Biden. Well, Mr. President, 575 days. It's been 575 days since Putin launched his brutal war of conquest against Ukraine.

Putin thought he would break Ukraine. He thought he could break you. He had underestimated the consequence of taking on Ukrainian people. From your children to your grandparents, I've never seen so much courage exhibited by civilians. It really is amazing. It's amazing.

And he also thought he could break the Western alliance and NATO in the support of you. And he also thought that he'd break the will of nations around the world. Many more have stood with Ukraine—who still stand with Ukraine.

Well, he was wrong. He continues to be wrong. Ukraine is unbroken, unbowed, and unconquered, proving that nothing can dim the flame of liberty that burns in the heart of free people.

And, Mr. President, the American people—Democrats and Republicans alike, families all across our Nation—understand what Ukraine is fighting to defend, what generations of Americans have also stepped up to protect and preserve. It's pretty basic: freedom, liberty, and sovereignty.

And as I made clear at the U.N. this week—and you were there—the entire world has a stake in making sure that no nation, no aggressor is allowed to take a neighbor's territory by force.

The American people will never waver in our commitment to those values.

That's why, together with our allies and partners, we will continue to provide security assistance to support Ukraine's progress in reclaiming its territory. And we'll continue to provide humanitarian aid to help millions of innocents suffering from your—Russia's aggression. And what they've done to your children is just—it's criminal.

And we're going to continue to support Ukraine's diplomatic effort to deliver a just and lasting peace, a peace that protects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Russia alone—Russia alone—stands in the way of peace. It could end this today. Instead, Russia is seeking more weapons from Iran and North Korea. That would violate multiple U.N. Security Council resolutions that Moscow itself voted to put in place.

Instead, as the threat of famine still stalks families around the globe, Russia is bombing grain silos in Ukraine and separating families, kidnapping—this is what I can't get over—kidnapping thousands of Ukrainian children.

Instead, with the days beginning to turn colder, Russia hopes once more to use winter as a weapon against the people of Ukraine. But as I discussed with President Zelenskyy, the people of Ukraine are steeled for this struggle ahead. And the United States is going to continue to stand with you.

Today I approved the next tranche of U.S. security assistance to Ukraine, including more artillery, more ammunition, more antitank weapons. And next week, the first U.S. Abrams tanks will be delivered to Ukraine.

We also focused on strengthening Ukraine's air defense capabilities to protect the critical infrastructure that provides heat and light during the coldest and darkest days of the year. That includes providing a second HAWK air defense battery with steady deliveries of additional HAWK and other systems each month through the winter. And a new package of launchers and interceptors that's going to protect Ukraine—Ukraine's grain silos, hospitals, schools, and power plants.

That will help save Ukrainian lives.

Just as we are committed to helping the Ukrainian people defend themselves now, we're also committed to helping them recover and rebuild for the future, including supporting reforms that are going to combat corruption, creating an environment where businesses can thrive and where American and European businesses want to invest.

Ladies and gentlemen, last week, I announced the appointment of Penny Pritzker as our new Special Representative. Penny, thank you for being willing to come back in. Of you—she's the—going to be the Special Representative for Ukraine Economic Recovery to help Ukraine reopen markets, mobilize investments, and make the necessary economic reforms that are needed.

And together with 29 other partners—partners—partners, partners, and they're partners—we're committed to help Ukraine build a force capable of ensuring Ukraine's long-term security—capable of deterring future threats against sovereignty, territorial integrity, and freedom, which are underway now.

Because that's what this is all about: the future. The future of freedom. America can never, will never walk away from that.

That's why, 575 days later, we stand with Ukraine, and we'll continue to stand with you, Mr. President. And that's why we're so proud of being able to be with you.

Mr. President, we're with you, and we're staying with you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much, Mr. President. Thank you for all these 575 days.

Yes, and thanks to American people. They—all these days, they are together with us, with Ukrainians, with ordinary people, all of us. Thank you so much.

Thanks you, your team, Congress. And thanks, journalists, that—for all your messages to your society and to the world that you share the truth about this, you know, tragedy, aggression from Russia.

So thank you very much, dear Mr. President Biden. Thank you for a warm meeting and very productive, strong negotiations. And today we have some important results.

First, we agreed to work on the future force of Ukraine. It's very important. And it is strategic decision that will allow us to prevent any—any—new aggression against us, against Ukraine, our people. And this will be one of the outcomes of Vilnius G-7 Declaration and our bilateral security arrangements.

Second, we reached a new agreement that will strengthen Ukraine's defense capabilities. Thank you so much. More details will be announced shortly.

And thirdly, I thank United States of America and Mr. President for the new defense package for Ukraine, a very powerful package. Thank you so much. And it has exactly what our soldiers need now.

Fourthly, the United States will be helping Ukraine with strengthening our air defense during this winter season.

And fifths, we agreed on specific steps to expand exports of grain from Ukraine. And we will continue to work on the peace formula and preparing inaugural summits. So thank you so much not only for these points—for all these points, for all these 575 days. Thank you.

President Biden. Thank you.

President Zelenskyy. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Biden. Thank you all.

U.S. Assistance to Ukraine

Q. President Zelenskyy, are you confident that Congress is going to support your efforts to get the supplemental aid? Did you get any assurances?

President Biden. I'm counting on the good judgement of the United States Congress. There's no alternative.

Thank you.

All right, are we ready?

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

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