

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

**Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel in Tel Aviv, Israel**  
*October 18, 2023*

*Prime Minister Netanyahu.* Mr. President, Joe, I want to thank you for coming here today and for the unequivocal support you have given Israel during these trying times, a support that reflects the overwhelming will of the American people.

I've seen your support every day in the depth and breadth of cooperation that we have had since the beginning of this war, a level of cooperation that is truly unprecedented in the history of the great alliance between our two nations.

We see that support in your steadfast commitment to provide Israel with the tools we need to defend ourselves. We see that support in the clear message you've sent our enemies not to test our resolve and in the two American carrier battle groups that you sent to the region to back up those words with action.

But above all, Mr. President, the world sees that support in the moral clarity that you have demonstrated from the moment Israel was attacked. You've rightly drawn a clear line between the forces of civilization and the forces of barbarism. You described what Hamas did as "sheer evil." It is exactly that.

Hamas murdered children in front of their parents and parents in front of their children. They burned people alive. They raped and murdered women. They beheaded soldiers. They searched for the secret hiding places where parents hid their children. And just imagine, Mr. President, the fear and the panic of those little children in their last moments as the monsters discovered—found out their hiding places.

Hamas kidnapped women, children, elderly, Holocaust survivors [survivors; White House correction]. I know you share our outrage on this, and I know you share our determination to bring these people back.

On October 7, Hamas murdered 1,400 Israelis, maybe more. This is in a country of fewer than 10 million people. This would be equivalent to over 50,000 Americans murdered in a single day. That's twenty 9/11s. That is why October 7 is another day that will live in infamy.

Mr. President, you rightly said that Hamas is worse than ISIS. The German Chancellor, who visited here yesterday, said that Hamas were the new Nazis. You're both right. And just as the civilized world united to defeat the Nazis and united to defeat ISIS, the civilized world must unite to defeat Hamas.

I can assure you, Mr. President, Israel is united to defeat Hamas. And we will defeat Hamas and remove this terrible threat from our lives. The forces of civilization will prevail, for our sake, for your sake, for peace and security in our region and in the world.

Mr. President, for the people of Israel, there's only one thing better than having a true friend like you standing with Israel, and that is having you standing in Israel. Your visit here is the first visit of an American President in Israel at a time of war. It is deeply, deeply moving. It speaks to the depth of your personal commitment to Israel. It speaks to the depth of your personal commitment to the future of the Jewish people and the one and only Jewish state.

So I know I speak for all the people of Israel when I say: Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for standing with Israel today, tomorrow, and always.

*President Biden.* Well, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you very much.

Look, folks, I wanted to be here today for a simple reason. I wanted the people of Israel, the people of the world, to know where the United States stands.

I've had my great Secretary of State here. He's been here for—a lot. But I wanted to personally come and make that clear.

The terrorist group Hamas has slaughtered, as has been pointed out, over 1,300 people—and it is not hyperbole to suggest "slaughtered"—"slaughtered"—and including 31 Americans as part of that.

And they've taken scores of people hostage, including children. You said: Imagine what those children hiding from Hamas were thinking. It's beyond my comprehension to be able to imagine what they were thinking. Beyond my comprehension. They're committed—evils that—atrocities that make ISIS look somewhat more rational.

You know, Americans are grieving with you. They really are. And Americans are worried. Americans are worried because we know there's—this is not an easy field to navigate what you have to do.

But the fact is that Israel, as they respond to these attacks, seems to me that—have to continue to ensure that you have what you need to defend yourselves. And we're going to make sure that occurs, as you know.

And we have to also bear in mind that Hamas does not represent all the Palestinian people and has brought them only suffering.

You know, years ago, I asked the Secretary of State, when he and I were working in the Senate, to write something for me. And he said—he wrote a line that I think is appropriate. He said, "It's not—we lead not just"—well, I won't go into it. I'll wait until later. I'm taking too much time.

But the point is this: That I was deeply saddened and outraged by the explosion at the hospital in Gaza yesterday. And based on what I've seen, it appears as though it was done by the other team, not you. But there's a lot of people out there who are not sure.

So we've got a lot of—we've got to overcome a lot of things.

And it also means encouraging lifesaving capacity to help the Palestinians who are innocent, caught in the middle of this.

And—well, at any rate, that's who we are—not just me, but I mean that's who the United States is. And it's just not the example—our powers of—the power of our example that's almost as important.

The world is looking. We—Israel has a value set like the United States does and other democracies, and they're looking to see what we're going to do.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, I'm very happy to be back in Israel with you. Thank you for having me. And I'm looking forward to having a thorough discussion about where everybody goes from here. But thank you.

And I want to say to the people of Israel: Their courage, their commitment, their bravery is stunning. It's really stunning. I'm proud to be here.

*Prime Minister Netanyahu.* Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:45 a.m. at the David Kempinski Tel Aviv hotel. In his remarks, he referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) terrorist organization. Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to Chancellor Olaf Scholz of Germany.

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