

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks Prior to an Expanded Bilateral Meeting With Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel in Tel Aviv, Israel

October 18, 2023

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President, you are meeting with our united war cabinet, united and resolved to lead Israel to victory. This will be a different kind of war because Hamas is a different kind of enemy.

While Israel seeks to minimize civilian casualties, Hamas seeks to maximize civilian casualties. Hamas wants to kill as many Israelis as possible and has no regard whatsoever to Palestinian lives. Every day, they perpetrate a double war crime: targeting our civilians while hiding behind their civilians, embedding themselves in the civilian population, and using them as human shields.

We've seen the cost of this terrible double war crime against humanity that Hamas is perpetrating in the last 11 days. As Israel legitimately targets terrorists, civilians are unfortunately harmed. Hamas is responsible and should be held accountable for all civilian casualties.

We saw the cost of this terrible war crime yesterday, when a rocket fired by a Palestinian terrorist misfired and landed on a Palestinian hospital. The entire world was rightfully outraged. But this outrage should be directed not at Israel, but at the terrorists.

As we proceed in this war, Israel will do everything it can to keep civilians out of harm's way. We have asked them and we'll continue to ask them to move to safer areas. We'll continue to work with you, Mr. President, to assure that the minimal requirements are met, and we'll continue to work together to get our hostages out.

Mr. President, the road to victory will be long and hard, but united in purpose and with a deep sense of justice and the unbreakable spirit of our soldiers and our people, Israel will prevail.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Biden. Well, thank you, Mr. Prime Minister.

In the wake of Hamas's appalling terrorist assault—it was brutal, inhumane, almost beyond belief what they did—this cabinet came together and—standing strong, standing united.

And I want you to know you're not alone. You are not alone.

As I emphasized earlier, we will continue to have Israel's back as you work to defend your people. We'll continue to work with you and partners across the region to prevent more tragedy to innocent civilians.

Seventy-five years ago, your founders declared that this nation would be one based—quote, "based on freedom, justice, and peace." "Based on freedom, justice, and peace." The United States stands with you in defense of that freedom, in pursuit of that justice, and in support of that peace today, tomorrow, and always. We promise you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, what did mean by "the other team" was responsible earlier?

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:55 p.m. at the David Kempinski Tel Aviv hotel.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Israel, Prime Minister Netanyahu.

Locations: Tel Aviv, Israel.

Names: Netanyahu, Benjamin.

Subjects: Israel, attacks by Hamas; Israel, President Biden's visit; Israel, Prime Minister; Israel, relations with U.S.

DCPD Number: DCPD202300913.