

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

**Remarks on United States Assistance to Ukraine and an Exchange With Reporters
in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware**

February 17, 2024

The President. I spoke with Zelenskyy this afternoon to let him know that I was confident we're going to get that money to keep that country from being overrun by Russia.

You know, there's so much at stake. I learned—I watched the television the other night, and one of the other Republican candidates saying I've never explained to the American people why NATO is so important.

NATO is critical to our survival. NATO has held—we have never been able to avoid a European conflict. As long as there's NATO, we're—have allies, allies that are competent and have defended us.

And by the way, the only time article 5 has been invoked is the—when we were attacked on 9/11. So the idea that we're going to walk away from Ukraine, the idea that we're going to let NATO begin to split is totally against the interests of the United States of America, and it is against our word we've given for—since Truman—since all the way back to Eisenhower.

So it's about time we make sure that Congress come home and pass the legislation funding NATO. It's critical. Our security depends on it.

Ukraine/U.S. Assistance

Q. How confident are you that there isn't another city that falls right after this if Congress acts on it?

The President. I'm not. I'm not. No one can be.

Look, the Ukrainian people have fought so bravely and heroically. They've put so much on the line. And the idea that now, when they're running out of ammunition, we walk away? I find it absurd. I find it unethical. I find it just contrary to everything we are as a country. So I'm going to fight until we get it—we get them the ammunition they need and the capacity they need to defend themselves.

Thank you very much.

Death of Russian Opposition Leader Alexei Navalny/North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Q. Have you heard anything else about what led to Navalny's death, sir?

The President. I haven't—I've heard several things. I haven't had them confirmed. But the fact of the matter is: Putin is responsible, whether he ordered it or—he is responsible for the circumstances he put that man in. And he's—it's a reflection of who he is. And it just cannot be tolerated.

I said we'd—there would be a price to pay. He is paying a price already. Since 2000 when I made that statement, Russians have had sanctions imposed on them and a whole range of other impacts.

But it's just—this is—look, the idea that after 70 years we have a NATO alliance that has kept the peace, basically, in Europe, kept us out of the—the idea the transatlantic alliance is not overwhelmingly in our interest is bizarre.

It can only be—I just—I don't understand. I don't understand. There's either a complete lack of knowledge of history or their lack of responsibility.

Thank you very much.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:55 p.m. outside St. Edmond Catholic Church. In his remarks, he referred to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine; Republican Presidential candidate and former U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Nikki R. Haley; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 19.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : U.S. assistance to Ukraine in Rehoboth Beach, DE; Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Locations: Rehoboth Beach, DE.

Names: Haley, Nikki R.; Navalny, Alexei; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: Delaware, President's visit; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, death of opposition leader Alexei Navalny; Russia, President; Russia, U.S. and international sanctions; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400112.