

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks on Congressional Passage of National Security Supplemental Appropriations Legislation

April 24, 2024

The President. Good morning.

Q. Good morning, sir.

The President. It's a good day for America, it's a good day for Europe, and it's a good day for world peace, for real. This is consequential. I just signed into law the national security package that was passed by the House of Representatives this weekend and by the Senate yesterday.

It's going to make America safer. And it's going to make the world safer. And it continues America's leadership in the world, and everyone knows it.

It gives vital support to America's partners and they—so they can defend themselves against threats to their sovereignty and to the lives and freedom of their citizens. And it's an investment in our own security, because when our allies are stronger—and I want to make this point again and again—when our allies are stronger, we are stronger.

I'm grateful for all—grateful to all those in Congress—Democrats, Republicans, Independents—who voted for this bill.

It's a path—to my desk, it was a difficult path. It should have been easier, and it should have gotten there sooner. But in the end, we did what America always does: We rose to the moment, we came together, and we got it done.

Now we need to move fast, and we are.

Over 2 years, Russia has been responsible for a brutal campaign against Ukraine. They've killed tens of thousands of Ukrainians, bombed hospitals—deliberately picked them out—bombed hospitals, kindergartens, grain silos; tried to plunge Ukraine into a cold and dark winter by striking their power grid.

Ukrainians have fought—the Ukrainians have fought back, defending their country and their families with extraordinary courage. Many of you have been there with me many times. It's amazing what they do. I mean, it's amazing, against such a larger military.

Ukraine has regained over half the territory that Russia took from them in this invasion. And they won important victories against Russia's navy. But make no mistake about, they're a fighting force with the will and the skill to win—the will and the skill to win. For months, while MAGA Republicans were blocking aid, Ukraine has been running out of artillery shells and ammunition.

Meanwhile, Putin's friends keep giving him—are keeping him well supplied. Iran sent him drones. North Korea has sent him ballistic missiles and artillery shells. China is providing components and know-how to boost Russia's defense production.

With all this support, Russia has ramped up its airstrikes against Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure, rained down munitions on brave Ukrainians defending their homeland. And now Americans are going to send Ukraine the supplies they need to keep them in the fight.

This weekend, there were reports—and this is—I find this amazing. There were reports of cheers breaking out of the trenches in eastern Ukraine—probably came from one of your folks, a reporter or someone. I'm not sure where it came from. But that they're cheering as they watched the House vote in support for Ukraine.

It's not like they don't understand what we've done. Not like they don't understand how critical this is for them.

I'm making sure the shipments start right away. In the next few hours—literally, the few hours—we're going to begin sending equipment to Ukraine for air defense munitions, for artillery, for rocket systems; and armored vehicles.

You know, this package is literally an investment, not only in Ukraine's security but in Europe's security, in our own security.

We're sending Ukraine equipment from our own stockpiles, and then we'll replenish those stockpiles with new products made by American companies here in America: Patriot missiles made in Arizona, Javelins made in Alabama, artillery shells made in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

In other words, we're helping Ukraine while at the same time investing in our own industrial base, strengthening our own national security, and supporting jobs in nearly 40 States all across America.

You know, the United States is not acting alone, to state the obvious. Our allies in Europe and around the world, who for—constantly been asking me: "Are we going to step up? We're not going to walk away, are we? How many"—and some of you have been in these international meetings with me. They're very concerned. Had we failed to step up, Lord only knows what would happen to the cohesion of NATO.

We're also sending—they're also sending significant help to Ukraine. We're all standing together against this brutal dictator.

As I've argued for months, this is directly—directly—in the United States national security interest. If Putin triumphs in Ukraine, the next move of Russian forces could very well be a direct attack on a NATO ally. And you all know full well that invoking article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty would be the first thing that comes to mind, which declares an attack on one is an attack on all.

If Putin attacks a NATO ally, like he's attacking Ukraine today, we'd have no choice but to come to their aid, just like our NATO allies came to our aid after the September 11 attacks here. That's why we're supporting and surging support now to Ukraine: to stop Putin from drawing the United States into a war in Europe and in the future.

You know, it seems to me we should take a little bit of a step back and realize what a critical moment this was for the United States and for NATO. This is a historical moment.

In the last 2 years, we've helped unify, strengthen, and expand NATO. Imagine if instead we had failed—we had failed—to step up now and to support Ukraine. All those gains would have begun to unravel, the cohesion of NATO would have been weakened, and our national security would have been undermined, without any question.

You know, Putin started this war believing he could easily break the will of the people of Ukraine. When that failed, he changed his strategy a little bit, thinking he could break the will of NATO, break the will of the United States, break our will. Well, he's failed again.

America stands with our friends. We stand up against dictators. We bow to no one—to no one—certainly not Vladimir Putin.

Look, this bill also includes vital support for Israel. Just 10 days ago, we saw Iran launch over 100 missiles and drones at Israel. And because of them and other allies across the country—world, including from the region, none—no serious damage occurred. An unprecedented attack

that followed years of Iran supporting Hizballah, Hamas, and proxies of their own—their own attack on Israel. They fund these guys.

My commitment to Israel, I want to make clear again, is ironclad. The security of Israel is critical. I will always make sure that Israel has what it needs to defend itself against Iran and terrorists it supports. And with this aid, the United States can help replenish Israel's air defense and provide other critical defense so Iran can never carry out the destruction it intended with its attack 10 days ago.

But, at the same time, this bill significantly—significantly—increases humanitarian assistance we're sending to the innocent people of Gaza, who are suffering badly. They're suffering the consequences of this war that Hamas started. And we've been working intently for months to get as much aid to Gaza as possible.

This bill includes \$1 billion for additional humanitarian aid in Gaza. We're going to immediately secure that aid and surge it—surge it—including food, medical supplies, clean water. And Israel must make sure all this aid reaches the Palestinians in Gaza without delay.

And everything we do is guided by the ultimate goal of bringing these hostages home, securing a cease-fire, and setting the conditions for an enduring peace.

You know, there's more that this bill does, and as you all know, the press here, including providing for support to strengthen even further our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region, as well as humanitarian aid to places including Haiti, Sudan, and Somalia.

But there's one thing this bill does not do: border security.

You know, just this year, I proposed and negotiated and agreed to the strongest border security bill this country has ever, ever, ever seen. It was bipartisan. It should have been included in this bill, and I'm determined to get it done for the American people. But I'll come back to that in another moment—another time.

This is a reminder of what America can do when we come together, despite our differences.

I want to thank everyone in Congress who made it possible, especially the bipartisan leadership: Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Leaders Schumer and McConnell. They don't always agree, but when it matters most, they stepped up and did the right thing. And I mean this sincerely, history will remember this time. History will remember this moment.

For all the talk about how dysfunctional things are in Washington, when you look over the past 3 years, we see that time and again on the critical issues we've actually come together. It hasn't always been easy, but when it's come time to decide to rebuild America, we did it with the bipartisan infrastructure law, which is just underway.

When it came time to invest in our semiconductor industry and technical—technologic—technologies of the future, we did it with the CHIPS and Science Act. And when it came time to stand with Ukraine and Israel and help the people of Gaza, we did that as well.

At the end of the day, most of us—whether we're Democrats, Republicans, or Independents—believe that America must stand up for what is right. We don't walk away from our allies, we stand with them. We don't let tyrants win, we oppose them. We don't merely watch global events unfold, we shape them.

That's what it means to be the indispensable nation. That's what it means to be the world's superpower and the world's leading democracy.

Some of our MAGA Republican friends reject that vision, but this vote makes it clear: There is a bipartisan consensus for that kind of American leadership. And that's exactly what we'll continue to deliver.

I thank you all very much. And now I'm going off to make a speech at a hotel that I am late for. And I'll have plenty of time to answer questions on this and other matters.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. H.R. 815, approved April 24, was assigned Public Law No. 118–50.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : National security supplemental appropriations legislation, congressional passage.

Locations: Washington, DC.

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