

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Klaus Iohannis of Romania
May 7, 2024

President Biden. Well, Mr. President, welcome to the White House. Welcome back to the Oval Office.

President Iohannis. Thank you.

President Biden. We were reminiscing for a moment before you came in that, back when I was a Senator, 180 years ago, I fought very hard for Romania's admission to NATO. And you've exceeded every expectation.

And 20 years ago, when you joined NATO for real, the—and every year since, our nations have grown only closer, in my view, closer and closer together.

And we see it in Romania and American troops serving side by side across NATO and including in your country. I believe there's about 1,800 American forces there. We thank you for that. And we see our work in strengthening NATO's eastern flank.

And I want to thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership, especially in the Black Sea. You've been incredible. You've stood up, and the help you've provided for Ukraine is real. It's significant.

The unified support for the people of Ukraine—you've allowed a number of refugees to come across, be in your country, about 8,000, they tell me. A whole lot. And that's really something. And also your security assistance to Ukraine, moving Ukrainian grain.

And I want you to know the United States is committed to standing with you.

Today, we lay the foundation for the next 20 years. I look forward to our discussions and just say that we've got a lot to discuss, so I'm looking forward to it.

The floor is yours, sir.

President Iohannis. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you for making this meeting possible on the short notice.

I believe it is timely. And I believe that you're absolutely right: We have a lot of issues to discuss.

Let me just start by saying that we managed not only to be members of NATO, thanks to you and others who really fought for us—20 years since Romania is a proud member of NATO—but we also managed to work on our bilateral relationship, which became stronger and stronger.

We have a strategic partnership. And I think by making this partnership strong, we also managed to make the transatlantic link strong. In my opinion, the transatlantic link is the cornerstone of our democratic way of life, our values.

And so this is obviously linked to the way we see the future of our nations; the way—how we manage to make our nations work better, live better; how we manage to guarantee the security of our peoples; how we manage to make our economies grow.

And so we have, really, a lot of issues we can discuss. But also, sometimes I believe it is important to underline that we managed to move ahead and that we managed to have very positive results. And of course, we will discuss things we still have to achieve.

And so, maybe just an example, we are working together on a visa waiver for Romania. If this goes well, hopefully, not before long, we will have results.

But unfortunately, the most important issue is to find the way to reinstall peace in Europe. And helping Ukraine and the Ukrainians, you set such a huge example how this can be done.

Romania is trying its best, and we have some pretty good results. I think it is decent. But nevertheless, we have to find ways to prevent Russia to win this war in Ukraine. And here we have to stay united. We have to work together. And we will, as far as I can see.

So a lot of issues, Mr. President.

President Biden. Well, there's a lot of issues.

Let me just say one thing. I don't think there's any NATO partner who has a stronger commitment to the Euro-Atlantic alliance than Romania and the United States. And it's a value set. It's what we believe.

President Iohannis. Absolutely.

President Biden. And you've stepped up, and you've been incredible. And what you've done and what we're going to continue to do together, I think, is going to be significant, not only for Europe, but for the whole world.

So thank you.

President Iohannis. Thank you.

President Biden. Thank you all.

[At this point, several reporters began asking questions at once.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Romania, President Iohannis.

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