

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024*

## **Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Aisne-Marne American Cemetery in Belleau, France**

*June 9, 2024*

*The President.* Every marine I know knows about the battle in Belleau Woods. There were over 2,029—229 buried here. And, inside that chapel, there's names of 1,000 missing. They never recovered the bodies.

And the idea that we should come to Normandy beach, celebrate and show reverence for those we lost—I'm probably not speaking loudly enough. I apologize.

The—and not come here—you know, the idea—General—Colonel—excuse me, Captain Williams, when they arrived here to stop the Germans, the other team decided they had to retreat. And his comment was: "Hell no. We just got here. We just got here." They stopped the Germans. They stopped the Germans.

And the idea that we were able to avoid being engaged in major battles in Europe is just not realistic. That's why it's so important that we continue to have the alliances we have, continue to beef up those alliances, continue to keep NATO strong, continue to do what we've been able to do for the last—since the end of World War II.

And so I just wanted to—Jill and I wanted to come and pay our respects. And it matters a lot.

### *The President's Visit to the Cemetery*

*Q.* How does it feel to be here, sir?

*The President.* You know, I don't want to—I don't want to make this personal, but every time I show up at a military site where veterans are buried, it brings back memories of hearing my grandfather and my mother talk about the loss of their son and brother in the South Pacific. And I think about my son Beau after a year in Iraq.

And so it—you know, I think it—as a measure of a country's support for democratic values, that they honor those who've risked their lives and lost their lives. And think about it. You had this—they were on their way to Paris—Germans. They stopped them here. They stopped them here, just like the Americans on Normandy—the Normandy beach stopped—turned the war around. And gives you both a sense of pride and, in my case—and my guess is you as well—a sense of reverence for what they did.

And so, any rate.

*Q.* You talked about—

### *Aisne-Marne American Cemetery*

*Q.* Why this particular cemetery, sir?

*The President.* This is the most—more Americans—more marines were lost here than any battle until the middle of World War II. The idea that I'd come to Normandy and not make the short trip here to pay tribute—and it's the same story. Think about it. America showed up. America showed up to stop the Germans. America showed up to make sure that they did not prevail. And America shows up when we need it, just like our allies show up for us.

*Q.* You've criticized President Trump for not coming here on his trip. What message are you hoping to send to voters by being here right now?

*The President.* Any other questions?

*Pointe du Hoc in Cricqueville-en-Bessin, France*

*Q.* Mr. President, what's been the most memorable part of this trip so far?

*The President.* I think the most memorable part of the trip was Pointe du Hoc. I think that was the most memorable because I've been there several times, and the last time I was here was a long while ago—in Normandy. And we came in on a landing craft. We got off a destroyer and got on a landing craft. And you're coming in and look at the—the depth of that beach and those cliffs behind it. You know, these guys just—how many of them drowned just getting off the—off the landing craft because they sank into the water with the heavy packs and got stuck.

But they kept going. They did not quit. There's no quit in America. None. None. There's no quit in America. And that's what it shows me.

*United States Foreign Policy*

*Q.* Mr. President, what do you hope Americans take away from you coming on this trip?

*The President.* The knowledge that the best way to avoid these kinds of battles in the future is to stay strong with our allies. Do not break. Do not break.

*Q.* Do you feel that Americans—

*Q.* Did anything surprise you on this trip, sir?

*United States Leadership in Global Affairs*

*Q.* —are slipping? Do you think that Americans are not holding that view anymore, that there's a—

*The President.* No, I don't.

*Q.* —slippage?

*The President.* I think the Americans hold the view. I think there's a new—a rise in a sense of some within the—in the country wanting to let that slip.

The idea that we become semi-isolationists now, which some are talking about—I mean, the idea we had to wait all those months just to get the money for Iraq [Ukraine; White House correction] that we—because we were waiting. I mean, it just—it just—it's not who we are. It's not who America is.

*Q.* One—one policy—

*Q.* Sir, did anything surprise you on this trip?

*Q.* One policy question, for you, sir. Did—I'm sorry. Go ahead. Go ahead, Michelle [Michelle Jamrisko, Bloomberg].

*Q.* Anything surprise you on this trip that you heard?

*The President's Visit to France*

*The President.* Even though I've been here before, it surprised me how much it awakened my sense of why it's so valuable to have these alliances, why it's so critical. That's the way you stop wars, not start wars.

*The President's Meetings With President Emmanuel Macron of France*

*Q.* One policy question. Did you discuss the Russian asset issue with President Macron yesterday? And did you come up with an agreement on how to use them?

*The President.* Yes, and yes.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:04 p.m.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters, Belleau, France.

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*Names:* Trump, Donald J.

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