

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

The President's News Conference With President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine in Savalletri di Fasano, Italy

June 13, 2024

[Prior to their remarks, President Biden and President Zelenskyy signed a joint statement titled "Bilateral Security Agreement Between the United States of America and Ukraine."]

President Biden. Good evening, everyone.

Last year, at the NATO summit in Lithuania, the United States brought together every member of the G-7 to sign a joint declaration of support for Ukraine. Twenty-five additional countries joined us quickly. Each agreed to forge a long-term bilateral commitments to—with Ukraine.

President Zelenskyy and I have just now signed that agreement between the United States and Ukraine. Our goal is to strengthen Ukraine's credible defense and deterrence capabilities for the long term. A lasting peace for Ukraine must be underwritten by Ukraine's own ability to defend itself now and to deter future aggression anytime in the future.

The United States is going to help ensure that Ukraine can do both, not by sending American troops to fight in Ukraine, but by providing weapons and ammunition; expanding intelligence-sharing; continuing to train brave Ukrainian troops at bases in Europe and the United States; enhancing interoperability between our militaries in line with NATO standards; investing in Ukraine's defense industrial base so in time—in time—they can supply their own weapons and munitions; working with Ukraine's partners to build a future force that is strong, sustainable, and resilient; and supporting Ukraine's economic recovery as well as its energy recovery after Russia has repeatedly targeted Ukraine's energy grid with massive attacks in the futile attempt to break the will of the Ukrainian people. All these lines of efforts and others are laid out in this agreement.

Additionally, the G-7 achieved a significant outcome this week on the matter of Russia's frozen assets in Europe and other places outside of Russia. Back in 2022, 2 days after Russia's invasion, members of the G-7 and the European Union worked together to freeze \$280 billion in Russian Central Bank funds outside of Russia.

I'm very pleased to share that, this week—this week—the G-7 signed a plan to finalize and unlock \$50 billion from the proceeds of those frozen assets, to put that money to work for Ukraine. Another reminder to Putin: We're not backing down. In fact, we're standing together against this illegal aggression.

The agreement that President Zelenskyy and I just signed also lays out our shared vision for a just peace, a peace rooted in the U.N. Charter and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, a peace with a broad base of support around the world that holds Russia accountable for the damage it has done in this war.

We will see this vision strongly affirmed at the historic peace conference happening in Switzerland this weekend, where Vice President Harris will represent the United States.

Finally, this agreement accelerates Ukraine's integration into the European and Atlantic—trans-Atlantic communities. It includes major commitments from Ukraine to impact—and to—excuse me—to implement democratic, economic, and security reforms in line with the European Union's accession goals and NATO's programs of reforms.

While we take this step, the United States is also intensifying pressure on Russia. Yesterday the U.S. Treasury Department made clear any bank anywhere in the world that deals with sanctioned Russian banks, companies, or individuals risks being sanctioned themselves.

And we announced roughly 300 new sanctions on individuals and companies that are helping Russia's war effort. They include key parts of Russia's financial sector—

[At this point, an aircraft could be heard overhead.]

I'll wait until it goes over—as well as individual and entities that supply Russia with items critical to its defense production, like microelectronics, machine tools, and industrial materials.

We also—we also—sanctioned more Russian future energy projects that—Russia's natural gas and oil projects that are under construction and are not yet fully operating. Putin is counting on revenues from those projects. Our sanctions will disrupt those plans.

Plus, at the G-7, we discussed our shared concern about countries like China who are supplying Russia with materials they need for their war machine. And we agreed to taking collective action to push back against that activity.

Let me close with this. We've taken three major steps at the G-7 that collectively show Putin we cannot—he cannot wait us out, he cannot divide us, and we'll be with Ukraine until they prevail in this war.

First is the bilateral security agreement just signed. Second, a historic agreement to provide \$50 billion in value from Russian sovereign assets to Ukraine. And third, an agreement to ensure our sanctions efforts disrupt third countries that are supplying Russia's war efforts. That will increase pressure on the Russian economy.

Collectively, this is a powerful set of actions, and it will create a stronger foundation for Ukraine's success.

Two and a half years ago, Putin unleashed a brutal war on Ukraine. And it's been a horrifying ordeal for the Ukrainian people that are so brave and incredible. It's also been a test for the world: Would we stand with Ukraine? Would we stand for sovereignty, freedom, and against tyranny?

The United States, the G-7, and countries around the world have consistently answered the question by saying, "Yes, we will." And we will say it again. Yes, again and again and again, we're going to stand with Ukraine.

And thank you. And I now yield to my friend from Ukraine, the President.

[President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.]

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much, Mr. President Biden, dear President; dear journalists; dear Ukrainians; dear Americans. And thank you so much. Thanks, Italy and Georgia, to—for an invitation.

Dear friends, today is a truly historic day. And we have signed the strongest agreement between Ukraine and the U.S. since our independence. And this is an agreement on security and thus on the protection of human life. This is an agreement on cooperation and thus on how our nations will become stronger. This is an agreement on steps to guarantee sustainable peace, and therefore, it benefits everyone in the world because the Russian war against Ukraine is a real, real global threat.

I thank you very much, Mr. President, for your leadership, which is reflected, in particular, in this agreement and in your years of support for Ukraine. I thank our teams—both teams. Thanks very much for making sure that the details of the agreement are really good.

And of course, I want to thank every Ukrainian soldier, all our people, whose courage made this level of alliance between Ukraine and the United States possible.

And I am proud of our people and what Ukraine can do. And I am very grateful to all Americans, to everyone in America who strengthens American leadership.

So, under the points of the agreement, first, the agreement contains a very detailed, legally binding part, and this means that credibility of American support for our Ukrainian independence.

Secondly, security commitments from the United States are based, among other things, on the sustainability of security and defense support not only for the duration of this war, but also—also—for the period of peace after the war. And we will definitely ensure peace.

Third, it clearly states that America supports Ukraine's efforts to win this war.

Fourth, the agreement has good provisions on weapons for our defense, very specifically on the Patriot systems, very specifically on the supply of fighter squadrons to Ukraine—that's right, plural "squadrons"—including, but not limited to F-16s. We have worked for a long time for these.

The agreement is also very specific about the supply of the necessary weapons, joint production, and strengthening of the defense industries of our countries through our cooperation. And this is something that will not only provide security, but also new, good jobs for Ukrainians and Americans.

The agreement also outlines what is needed in terms of intelligence information. The agreement contains key aspects of protecting the lives of our people.

Fifth, it is very important that the agreement also addresses the issue of Russia's just responsibility for this war and its attempts to destroy Ukrainians. America supports both fair compensation for the damage caused by Russian strikes and working out ways to ensure that frozen Russian assets are used to protect and rebuild Ukraine.

The agreement also includes sanctions and export controls that will make Russia feel the pain for what it is doing against the freedom of peoples.

And two more things. I am grateful that the philosophy of our security agreement is, in fact, the philosophy of the alliance. And that is why the issue of NATO is covered through the text of the agreement. It states that America supports Ukraine's future—future—membership in NATO and recognizes that our security agreement is a bridge to Ukraine's membership in NATO.

It is very important for all Ukrainians and for all Europeans to know that there will be no security deficit in Europe, which tempts the aggressor to war and makes the future uncertain.

Now we are clearly defining everything. We will cooperate for the sake of victory, make peace guarantees effective, and provide the necessary security for our people.

And thank you, Mr. President, for your leadership in the G-7's decision on \$50 billion loan for Ukraine. It's a vital step forward in providing sustainable support for Ukraine in winning this war.

Russian immobilized assets should be used for defending lives of Ukrainians from Russian terror and for repaying the damage aggressor caused to Ukraine. It's fair and absolutely right.

Mr. President, thank you, your team. I would also like to thank the United States Congress for their support: both parties, both Chambers.

Thank you. And thanks to every American heart that does not betray freedom and supports us.

Slava Ukraini.

President Biden. Now what we'll do is—we're each going to take two questions from American reporters and two—a question each from two American reporters and a question each from two Ukrainian supporters—reporters.

The first person I'm to call on is Colleen Long of the Associated Press.

Ukraine/Russia/President Biden's Son R. Hunter Biden

Q. Thank you. Thanks, Mr. President.

About 2 weeks ago, you changed course to allow Ukraine to fire U.S. weapons into Russia. Given the reported successes, would you consider further expanding the parameters on U.S. weapons into Russia even despite your concerns about escalation?

And on the news from home: You're going through something that so many American families go through—the intersection of addiction and the criminal justice system—but you're not like most families. Was your son able to get a fair trial? Do you believe the Justice Department operated independently of politics?

And for President——

President Biden. Let me answer your question——

Q. Okay.

President Biden. ——then you ask his question. Okay?

Q. Okay.

President Biden. With regard to the first question, it is clear that the near abroad, meaning just across the line of the border with Russia and Ukraine, that it makes a lot of sense for Ukraine to be able to take out or combat what is coming across that border. In terms of long-range weapons—longer range weapons into the interior of Russia, we have not changed our position on that sort.

With regard to the question regarding the family, I'm extremely proud of my son Hunter. He has overcome an addiction. He is—he's one of the brightest, most decent men I know. And I am satisfied that—I'm not going to do anything. I said I'd abide by the jury decision, and I will do that. And I will not pardon him.

Q. President Zelenskyy, a number of leaders here in Italy, including President Biden, are facing upcoming election challenges. How will the security agreement signed tonight and the other promises of support continue if they are not in office? And what's your contingency plan if they don't?

[*President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.*]

President Zelenskyy. Thank you for this question—[*inaudible*]. First and foremost, I'd like to thank the people of the nations. First and foremost, to the United States, to the countries in Europe and other—on other continents who have supported us since the very beginning of—the beginning of this absolutely unjust war of Russia against the people of Ukraine.

That—and that is—they—they've been killing people that—homes and territory, all that is very important. It is part of life. But, first and foremost, we are speaking about people and lives of people, you understand. And this war was unjust since the very beginning, the war of this evil, whose name is Putin—the war against the people of Ukraine. And he has killed so many people.

To say that it is not him, and it—there was a military man who did it—the last one is just an instrument of his. And he's playing this instrument.

And therefore, it is important for us that, since the very beginning, we were supported by people, by nations, because they understood that we share common values. We simply want to live, and the people understood. They imagined what will happen if such evil attacks them. And therefore, we were supported by people.

And I thank President Biden and other leaders who, since the very beginning of the invasion—Putin's invasion—started to support us. They—based on their values, they were—based on the voice of their people. And it is impossible without people.

And I am sure that this nation chooses leaders and presidents. And it seems to me that no matter whom the nation chooses, first and foremost, it seems to me that everything depends on the unity within this or that state. And if the people are with us, any leader will be with us in this struggle for freedom.

President Biden. Do you want to call on a Ukrainian reporter?

[*President Zelenskyy spoke briefly in English as follows.*]

President Zelenskyy. Yes, yes. Yes. With pleasure. Thank you so much.

[*President Zelenskyy spoke briefly in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Yes, please, Inter. Irina Ivanova, Inter TV channel.

[*The reporter spoke in English as follows.*]

Ukraine/International Military Aid

Q. [*Inaudible*—for both leaders. So today, during the G-7 meeting, the discussion focused on developing Ukraine's air defense system based on the most advanced Western complexes and also on enhancing long-range capabilities. So my question is, can you provide any details on the initiative and about the readiness of our allies to take part in it? Thank you.

President Biden. I'd be happy to respond to that. We have acquired commitment from five countries so far for Patriot batteries and other air defense systems as well as, we've let it be known to those countries that are expecting from us air defense systems in the future that they're going to have to wait. Everything we have is going to go to Ukraine until their needs are met. And then we will make good on the commitments we made to other countries.

[*President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.*]

President Zelenskyy. I think President Biden already answered your question. Really, he knows and all our other partners, they know that urgently we need seven Patriot systems—yes, to save our cities—not all of them; it's a pity—but urgently seven. And we discussed the possibility of having five of them, it's true. But the partners work on it.

It doesn't mean that tomorrow we will have these five systems, but we see, in the closest future, good result for Ukraine.

President Biden. You'll have some relatively quickly.

American reporter. Josh Winegrove [Wingrove; White House correction], Bloomberg.

Conflict in Gaza, Palestinian Territories/International Diplomatic Efforts

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I have a question for Mr.—or President Zelenskyy shortly on the announcements. But if you don't mind, I'd like to ask you about your discussions on the

situation in Gaza here at the summit. You were asked just a short time ago about it, after the skydiving demonstration. Can you give us your assessment of Hamas's response? And do you believe that they are trying to work towards a deal, or is this response working against a deal? And what is your message to allies, including those here at the G-7, about what more, if anything, the U.S. can do to drive towards a peace agreement? Thank you.

President Biden. I wish you guys would, a little, play by the rules a little bit.

I'm here to talk about a critical situation in Ukraine. You're asking me another subject; I'll be happy to answer it in detail later. But the bottom line is that we've made an agreement—I've laid out an approach that has been endorsed by the U.N. Security Council, by the G-7, by the Israelis, and the biggest hangup so far is Hamas refusing to sign on even though they have submitted something similar.

Whether it has—now to—comes to fruition remains to be seen. We're going to continue to push. I don't have a final answer for you.

Ukraine/Russia

Q. And to President Biden's point, a question about today's discussions.

President Zelenskyy, the \$50 billion today—you've had the supplemental, of course, from the U.S. Congress recently. Can you give us an assessment of the situation on the battlefield right now? And what has been given now, how long will this get you in terms of either stopping the Russian advance or making headway on this? And how long will it last you if, indeed, future leaders or current leaders are unable to reach consensus on further aid packages?

And President Biden, I'd welcome your assessment of the situation currently on the battlefield and what difference the supplemental has made as well, sir.

Thank you.

[President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

President Zelenskyy. Thank you for your question. Indeed, we were expecting the fundamental package of this support was in the Congress of the United States of America. And truly, it was a long pause for our warriors, first and foremost, but it is important, and we are grateful that, in the very end, we have this supplement, and this will for sure strengthen our warriors.

Yes, this has given the opportunity to the enemy within this pause to try to occupy Kharkiv, but that attempt was stopped by our warriors. They were repelled—the enemy was repelled. And we, despite everything, disrupted all their plans. And it seems to me that that is the most important thing.

What this supplement that will arrive gives us: It enables us to fully equip the reserves—those guys, those brigades that are ready—so that they provide for the opportunity to rotate our units on the battlefield so that they can have some rest so that the brigades can regenerate so that other brigades enter the battlefield instead of them with equipment. This is what the supplement gives them.

So the raise of morale, but also the raise of strength of our brigades. And it seems to me that this is the most important.

For how long this will be enough—look, we, without package, have been holding the lines for 8 months, and the Russians had no successes. And therefore, the question on for how long it will be enough—no, I think the question has to be for how long the unity will last: the unity in the

United States together with the European leaders, how these or those elections will influence this unity.

It seems to me that we should look on this exactly this way: to preserve unity, to preserve the integrity of the world—integrity of the democratic world. Because if Ukraine does not withstand, the democracy of many countries will not be able to withstand—and I'm sure of that.

President Biden. By the way, the idea that we had to wait until we passed the legislation overall, being held up by a small majority of our Republican colleagues, was just terrible. And there's a lot more money coming beyond what's already come in the other tranches that are available now that we've passed the legislation. So they'll have what they need and get it there as quickly as we possibly can.

[*President Zelenskyy spoke briefly in English as follows.*]

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much, Mr. President.

[*President Zelenskyy spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

Telegraph, please.

[*The reporter spoke in English as follows.*]

Ukraine/Russia/International Diplomatic Efforts

Q. Good evening. My name is Yaroslav Zharyenov of Telegraf UA. Thank you for this opportunity. I have a long way from Kyiv and have enough time to prepare such long question. [*Laughter*]

Firstly, to Joe Biden. Mr. President, the additional Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act that you signed mandated the submission of strategy war—for the war in Ukraine within 45 days after its enactment.

This deadline passed on June 8. And to now, yet the international community has not seen this strategy. Has it been developed? And if the strategy is classified, what step does your administration plan to take to hasten Ukraine victory in the war?

It's my first question. The second will be to the President Zelenskyy.

President Biden. What was the last part of your question?

Q. Has it been developed, this strategy? And to—what steps does your administration plan to take to victory Ukraine in the war?

President Biden. The steps we're going to take to make sure it has—Ukraine has victory and that Russia does not prevail is continued support—what we just signed. We signed that, and a significant number of nations have signed it.

We have convinced the G-7—convinced—we've got the support of the G-7 and, quite frankly, 48 other countries. We sat with the Prime Minister of Japan, South Korea. We have—50 nations have signed up, beyond NATO and the G-7. And so we're going to stay as long as it takes.

With regard to the plan, that is a—that is a plan in process now. We're discussing with our Ukrainian friends exactly what it would be. We have a lot of movement toward that. We know the outlines of it. We have not done the detail of it all. But we know what Ukraine is capable of doing when given the material to defend themselves, and that's exactly what they're doing now.

China/Russia

Q. And my second question is to President Zelenskyy. It will be in Ukrainian.

[*The reporter spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.*]

Recently, you have made a couple of sharp statements regarding China, and there are rumors in the press regarding the possible supplies of Russia's weapons to China. Apart from that, China is actively promoting its own peace plan among certain countries. What are the motives of Beijing now? And would it be possible to change the vision of China regarding our war and which role the U.S. can play in this?

And the final question. Is China a partner of Russia in these crimes that it commits?

[*President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.*]

President Zelenskyy. [*Inaudible*] Too many questions. Okay. But yes, I understood that your trip was long. [*Laughter*]

So the—so, first of all, I had phone conversation with the leader of China by phone. He said that he will not sell any weapon to Russia. That is the first. We'll see with you. We'll see, but he said to me. If he is respectable person, he will not, because he gave me the word.

The second. Our—you know that—you know very good with details how our peace formula—it's very open for everybody, basing on charter, yes, United Nations. And you know that it's—it bases on next principles: territorial integrity, sovereignty, nuclear security, food security.

If China has alternative view on it, it can prepare alternative peace formula—if we share common views on it, like with—globally, with all the world, I think so. So, if they share the same way to peace, we will find dialogue.

President Biden. By the way, China is not supplying weapons, but the ability to produce those weapons and the technology available to do it. So it is, in fact, helping Russia.

Thank you all so very much. Appreciate it.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. This concludes our press conference. Thank you, everybody.

[*President Zelenskyy spoke in English as follows.*]

President Zelenskyy. Thank you so much.

[*Several reporters began asking questions at once.*]

Q. Mr. President, should the American hostages—[*inaudible*]?

Q. Mr. President, do you plan on commuting your son's sentence?

Q. President Biden—

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:47 p.m. at the Hotel Masseria San Domenico. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia; Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan; and President Yoon Suk Yeol of South Korea. President Zelenskyy referred to Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni of Italy; and President Xi Jinping of China. President Zelenskyy and some reporters spoke in Ukrainian, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Interviews With the News Media : Joint news conferences, President Zelenskyy of Ukraine.

Locations: Savelletri di Fasano, Italy.

Names: Biden, R. Hunter; Harris, Kamala D.; Jean-Pierre, Karine; Kishida, Fumio; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich; Yoon Suk Yeol; Zelenskyy, Volodymyr.

Subjects: China, relations with Russia; Gaza, conflict with Israel; Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Hamas political-paramilitary organization; Israel, military operations in Gaza; Italy, President Biden's visit; Japan, Prime Minister; News media, Presidential interviews; North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Russia, relations with China; Russia, U.S. and international sanctions; South Korea, President; Ukraine, international military aid; Ukraine, President; Ukraine, relations with U.S.; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, security cooperation with U.S.; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Vice President; White House Press Secretary.

DCPD Number: DCPD202400521.