

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks Prior to Working Session I at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Summit

July 10, 2024

Secretary General, allies, friends: Seventy-five years ago, when our nations created the alliance, President Truman said, quote, "We hope to create a shield against aggression, the fear of aggression," and to "permit us to get on with the real business" of creating a "government and society."

For 75 years, our nations have grown and prospered behind the NATO shield. Today, we're stronger than we've ever been. Since, I took office, we've doubled the number of battle groups at NATO's eastern flank in—the United States has; Finland and Sweden have joined the alliance; and the number of allies spending at least 2 percent on defense has gone from 9 to 23.

That's not happened by chance, but by choice. At our summit 2 years ago, we launched a plan to modernize our deterrence and our defense. And today, we have to ask ourselves: What is next? How can we keep making the shield stronger?

One answer must be to strengthen our industrial base. Right now Russia is on a wartime footing with regard to defense production. They've—they're significantly ramping up their production of weapons, munitions, and vehicles. And they're doing it with the help of China, North Korea, and Iran.

We cannot—in my view, we cannot—allow the alliance to fall behind.

The fact is that so many of my—let me put it this way: I'm very pleased that, today, all NATO members are making the pledge to expand our industrial base and our industrial capacity, like our defense-spending commitment. This is a critical step to maintaining our security.

The first time ever, every NATO nation is pledging to develop plans for defense production at home. That means, as an alliance, we'll become more innovative and competitive. And we're able to produce more critical defense equipment more quickly and—than—and we should—we may need it. You know, we will not be surpassed—we cannot be surpassed by anyone when it comes to our readiness.

Here at home, Americans have seen the power of investments like these. In my administration, we've already invested \$30 billion in defense manufacturing to restart or expand production across 35 of our States. We're investing billions more. The result: stronger supply chains, a stronger economy, a stronger military, and a stronger nation.

Let me close with this. This new pledge sends an unmistakable message to the world that every NATO member is committed to doing their part to keep the alliance strong; we can and will defend every inch of NATO territory, and we'll do it together; and that we're investing in our future strength to ensure NATO will always be ready for whatever threats we will face—should be a clear message we're making to the—sending to the world.

So I want to thank you, every NATO member, for your commitment for our shared security.

And I will—now ask the press to depart so we can get started.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:03 p.m. at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg of the North Atlantic Treaty.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : North Atlantic Treaty Organization summit, Working Session I.

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