

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom and an Exchange With Reporters

September 13, 2024

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to Vladimir Putin's threat of war?

President Biden. I say to you: Be quiet until I speak. Okay? That's what I say. Good idea?

Q. Well, what do you say to Vladimir Putin's—

Q. Sir—

Q. —threat of war, sir? It's a serious threat.

President Biden. Well, I—well, I—you've got to be quiet, and I'm going to make a statement here. Okay?

All right. Anyway.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. Welcome back to the White House.

Often said there's no issue of global consequence where the United States and Great Britain can't work together and haven't worked together. And we're going to discuss some of these things right now.

You—first, Ukraine. I want to thank you for the U.K.'s leadership on this front. The United States is committed to standing with you to help Ukraine as it defends against Russia's onslaught and aggression and clear that Putin will not—make it clear Putin will not prevail in this war and the people of Ukraine will prevail.

Second, the Middle East.

Prime Minister Starmer. Yes.

President Biden. Today we'll discuss our work to secure a deal in the Middle East to release the remaining hostages that are held—being held by Hamas, bring an immediate cease-fire, increase the flow of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

And thirdly, we're going to be talking about the Indo-Pacific. No region more important to our future. And I'm so proud that under our AUKUS partnership with Australia and—with Australia the last 3 years, we've made the region more free, open, and secure.

So, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you again for being here. And I look forward to our conversation.

Prime Minister Starmer. Mr. President, thank you very much for those words. Thank you for the invitation to be back here just 2 months after our last meeting here.

And it's really important to us—great allies, that special relationship—to have this time to talk about the global issues you have just identified, starting, of course, with Ukraine, where I think the next few weeks and months could be crucial. Very, very important that we support Ukraine in this vital war of freedom. And so I look forward to discussing that with you.

The Middle East, of course, again, vital over the coming weeks and months. And elsewhere in the world.

I think that, historically, we've shown the strength of our relationship, that we are strategically aligned, we have common cause on these global issues. And therefore, it's very important us—for us to have this opportunity to talk them through, not just as a matter of tactics, but also the wider strategy that underpins them.

So thank you for the invitation. It's very good to be here again.

President Biden. Good to have you back.

President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia

Q. What do you say to Vladimir Putin's threat of war, Mr. President?

President Biden. I don't think much about Vladimir Putin.

Q. Mr.—Mr. President—

Q. Do you take that threat seriously?

Ukraine/Russia

Q. —can you tell us, sir: How close are you to agreeing to have missiles go into deeper Russia? How close are you to that decision?

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

President Biden. We're going to discuss that now.

[Several reporters began speaking at once. President Biden gave a thumbs up.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:37 p.m. in the Blue Room at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 16.

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