

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Remarks on the Quad Cancer Moonshot With Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan, and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia in Claymont, Delaware

September 21, 2024

President Biden. Hello, hello, hello.

[At this point, a helicopter could be heard flying overhead.]

By the way, that little thing up in the air there, don't worry about it. *[Laughter]* It's not armed.

Good evening, everyone: Prime Minister Albanese, Prime Minister Modi, and Prime Minister Kishida; and Governor John Carney, Senator Chris Coons, and Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester; all the scientists and doctors and advocates here tonight. What a fitting way to end the Quad Summit, by launching another historic endeavor.

When I was Vice President, Jill and I launched here in the States what we call the Cancer Moonshot. We committed to end cancer as we know it and make—reach 50-percent cure for cancers in a timeframe that we've announced.

We had lost our son to glioblastoma in 2015, Beau, a graduate of this great institution. And like many mothers and fathers, quite frankly, we were ready to give up. But—I wasn't going to run again. My son Beau, knowing he was going to die shortly, pulled me aside—not a joke; I wrote about it—made me promise that I wouldn't walk away, that I'd stay involved, because he knew the impact if we stayed—and we stayed and made the case.

I remember him saying to me, "Dad"—this is the God's truth—"Dad, I'm not afraid. I'm going to be okay." He knew he was about to die. But he said, "You've got to promise me you'll stay involved." Because he knew, the way he talked about it, that it would give people hope, that those of us and many of you experienced it.

I'll bet if I asked you to raise your hand, including the press, for anybody who's lost a family member or has been diagnosed with cancer, it's the vast majority of you.

And it seems to me there is nothing that families and/or the cancer—person suffering from cancer needs more than hope—hope—hope that science will outrace the disease.

When I—after Beau died, I literally visited every major cancer research facility in the world—seven of them around the world. I wanted to see what was possible, and I did.

And by the way, I didn't do it alone. I want to thank Danielle Carnival, who is here—where are you, Danielle? I want people to see you—who is—an effort—*[inaudible]*—worked on putting this together for me.

During those trips, I got to see the incredible dedication—incredible dedication—that the scientists, doctors, and nurses.

And by the way, having spent a lot of time, like many of you have, in hospitals, you know, doctors let you live; nurses make you want to live. They give you hope—male and female, you think I'm kidding. They had hope.

And they're making a significant progress, all of you—those of you scientists out here. And it's not just because it's personal—this—but it's because it's possible.

When I became President, we reignited our Cancer Moonshot with an ambitious goal: cut the cancer rate by at least 50 percent over the next 25 years or even cure—and cure many cancers.

Throughout this effort, what amazed me was that leaders around the world asked about the Cancer Moonshot. Its mission that brings us—that's the mission that brings us together tonight and one that brings the best of us. That's why we're here today.

I'm proud to announce that the Quad Cancer Moonshot is what we're talking about. Our goal is to team up, end cancer around the world, and start—starting with cervical cancer. I know it may sound unrealistic, but it's not.

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable cancers in the world. In fact, we have prevention and screening tools and treatments to make it the first cancer that can—ever to eliminate—be eliminated. Yet it's still one of the most deadly cancers across the world.

Every year, 150,000 women die from cervical cancer in the Indo-Pacific—every year. That's more than double the population of this city. We can't and will not let that continue.

The four of us are proud democracies. We're coming together to deliver a better hope, more hope for our people. In practice, the Quad Cancer Moonshot means more collaboration between our hospitals, research centers, and cancer foundations; more investment in screenings, treatment, and research; and more exchanges between our countries to improve vaccination rates all across the region.

Right now only 1 in 10 women across the Indo-Pacific, which is the most populated part of the world, have received HPV vaccinations for cervical cancer. So I'm proud to announce that our four countries, the leaders behind me, and many organizations here today are committing over \$150 million for HPV screening and therapeutics.

And next year, doctors and nurses from the U.S. Navy will begin a program to train Indo-Pacific counterparts in conducting cervical cancer screening and vaccination so we can reach every woman in the region. And it matters.

Folks, let me close with this. During my first year as President, I received a letter from a mother from Tennessee. She had been recently diagnosed with cervical cancer. She said she experienced every emotion, from denial to anger to fear to grief. Jill and I remember those feelings as well.

But when she asked herself: "What am I going to do? Am I going to give up? Am I going to fight?" She answered, "I choose to fight."

We've got to choose to fight. Choose to fight, as a society. Ladies and gentlemen, today America, Australia, India, and Japan choose to fight for every patient asking for one more day, one more week, one more year; every survivor and caregiver who carries the scars of recovery; and every person we've lost and every person we can save.

Because there is only—there's truly nothing beyond our capacity when we act together—not even beating cancer. And that's what this group is about today.

So I want to thank you all for being here. And now, who am I introducing next? Who's next?

White House aide. Distinguished guests, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

President Biden. By the way, he's from a small country like ours. It's low population. *[Laughter]* But he's become a good and decent man and a good friend.

[Prime Minister Modi spoke briefly in English, as follows.]

Prime Minister Modi. Thank you. *[Laughter]*

[Prime Minister Modi continued in Hindi, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.]

Excellencies, I thank President Biden for organizing this very important event. This demonstrates our shared firm resolve to provide affordable, accessible, and quality health care.

During the COVID–19 pandemic, we took the Quad vaccine initiative for the Indo-Pacific. And I am pleased that in the Quad, we have decided to face the challenge of cervical cancer together.

In cancer care, collaboration is essential for cure. In order to reduce the burden of cancer, it is necessary to have an integrated approach of prevention, screening, diagnosis, and treatment.

In India, an exceedingly cost-effective cervical cancer screening program is being implemented on a mass scale. At the same time, India has also implemented the world's largest health insurance scheme, and special centers to provide generic medicine at affordable costs have also been set up.

India has also developed its own vaccine for cervical cancer. And, with the help of AI, we have also implemented new treatment protocols. Excellencies, India is ready to share its experience and expertise. Several Indian experts working in the field of cancer care have also joined us at this event today.

India's vision is "One Earth, One Health." It is with this sentiment, under the Quad Moonshot Initiative, I announced an assistance of sampling kits, detection kits, and vaccines worth \$7.5 million. India will also provide support in radiotherapy treatment and capacity-building.

I am pleased that for the countries of the Indo-Pacific, under the initiatives of Gavi and Quad, 40 million doses of vaccine will be contributed by India. These 40 million doses of vaccine will be rays of hope in the lives of millions of people.

As you can see, when the Quad acts, it is not just for nations, it is for the people. This is the true essence of our human-centric approach.

Thank you.

White House aide. Distinguished guests, the Prime Minister of Japan.

Prime Minister Kishida. President Biden, Prime Minister Albanese, Prime Minister Modi, dear participants: It is my pleasure to attend the Quad Cancer Moonshot on the sidelines of the summit.

Joe has worked passionately on measures against cancers over many years. I wish to express my heartfelt congratulations to you, Joe, on the fruition of your dedication in the form of the Quad cooperation, and I express my esteem for Joe's leadership.

The Quad demonstrated strong solidarity in the response to the COVID–19 pandemic. In the post-COVID era today, the response to health-related challenges that have receded due to the pandemic is even more important. Efforts to deal with regional health and security, including cooperation on cancers, is indeed a timely initiative.

Regarding our support for measures against cancers in the Indo-Pacific region, Japan has offered support, such as the deployment of equipment and technical cooperation or support through international organizations and initiatives. We are also collaborating with research institutions working on cancers in the United States, Australia, and India.

Regarding the measures against cervical cancers, we have supported the deployment of medical equipment and facilities, offered technical cooperation, or have contributed to

international organizations, including Gavi Vaccine Alliances, UNFPA, and IPPF, among others. And such endeavors will continue going forward.

We will cooperate with you closely in order to bring together the technologies and networks of the Quad to raise the effects of our measures against cancers even further.

Thank you for kind attention.

White House aide. Distinguished guests, the Prime Minister of Australia.

Prime Minister Albanese. Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here today alongside my good friends President Biden, Prime Minister Modi, and Prime Minister Kishida.

The unifying principle of the Quad is that we can achieve more together than on our own. Our work on health is a powerful example of that.

At the very first Quad leaders summit, chaired by President Biden, the Quad agreed to work together to improve access to COVID vaccines. As a direct result, more than 400 million vaccine doses made their way into communities in the Indo-Pacific. That changed lives, and it saved lives.

That's what the Quad Cancer Moonshot Initiative is all about as well. This program builds on one of President Biden's signature policy initiatives, not just in his term as President but throughout his time in public life. It's a reflection of the ambition and empathy, the vision and compassion that has defined President Biden's leadership.

It's about understanding people's pain, but doing something to help. This is personal for the President and for Dr. Biden. It is personal for all of us, because, in our nations, as in every part of the world, cancer casts its shadow on the lives of our citizens and our loved ones.

Australia is proud of the leading role that we've played preventing cervical cancer worldwide. The HPV vaccine was developed at the University of Queensland by Australian of the Year, Professor Ian Frazer. That vaccine, together with improvements in screening and treatment, means Australia is on track to be the first country in the world to eliminate cervical cancer.

Yet, beyond our shores, the story is very different. One in four global cervical cancer cases occur in the Indo-Pacific. And tragically, women in the Pacific die of the disease at up to 13 times the rate of women in Australia.

These people are not numbers. They are our neighbors, members of our Pacific family, and we're stepping forward to help.

Today I can announce that Australia is expanding our funding commitment to the Elimination Partnership in the Indo-Pacific for Cervical Cancer, known as EPICC. Alongside a generous contribution from the Minderoo Foundation, the expansion will use Australian cervical cancer expertise to help more partner governments get HPV vaccine programs up and running across the region.

This will also increase screening and treatment and provide support for health workers. It will build on what we've learned in the Western Highlands of Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu and make it available to Malaysia, Timor-Leste, the Solomons, Tuvalu, Fiji, and Nauru as well.

It's fitting that this Cancer Moonshot takes its name from a famous American achievement that inspired the world: a choice America made to mobilize its collective talent and go to the Moon not because it was easy, but because it was hard. That's the spirit of this endeavor.

All of us know that curing cancer, defeating it once and for all, will be hard, but not as hard as the lonely, exhausting physical and emotional ordeal of diagnosis and treatment and never as hard as losing the people we love, which everyone here, I'm sure, has been impacted by at one stage in their life.

In 1969, 7 years after President Kennedy called on his fellow Americans to organize and measure the best of their abilities to meet an unprecedented challenge, the world watched as two Americans walked on the Moon. The images of that defining moment in human history were carried to Tokyo and Osaka, New Delhi and Chennai, Wilmington and Washington, DC, by the Australian radio telescope in Parkes.

Australians will always be proud of the part we played in sharing that triumph of science and human courage with the world.

We're proud to stand with the United States, with India, and with Japan in this shared effort to change lives for the better.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:42 p.m. on the grounds of Archmere Academy. In his remarks, he referred to Danielle Carnival, Deputy Director for Health Outcomes, Office of Science and Technology Policy, in her capacity as Deputy Assistant to the President for the Cancer Moonshot. Prime Minister Albanese referred to former National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronaut Edwin E. "Buzz" Aldrin, Jr. Prime Minister Kishida spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 23.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Quad Cancer Moonshot in Claymont, DE; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Australia, Prime Minister Albanese; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : India, Prime Minister Modi; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Japan, Prime Minister Kishida.

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