

BRIEFING ROOM

Press Gaggle by Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan En Route Brussels, Belgium

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MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Hi, everybody. Okay. We have National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan here. And he's going to say a few words, take a couple of questions, and then I'll take over after that and take any other questions you might have.

Go ahead, Jake.

MR. SULLIVAN: Hey, guys. So, we're heading into a full day tomorrow in Brussels. The President will start by meeting with the Secretary General to check signals, you know, get on the same page in terms of the agenda for the NATO Summit. And then he'll be at the NATO Summit for three hours with his 29 fellow Allied leaders. So, it'll be NATO with 30.

NATO itself has not, as institution, been involved in the coordination or facilitation of security assistance to Ukraine. It's been individual members, individual Allies who have done that. The United States, obviously, providing a really significant amount of military equipment and weapons to Ukraine and also coordinating the supplies of Allies as well to facilitate their delivery.

So, it will be a subject of discussion at the summit — even though, institutionally, NATO is not engaged in it, how we make sure that we're continuing to support Ukraine in its effort to defend itself, you know, will be a topic of conversation among the leaders while the President is in Brussels.

They will also discuss the question of NATO's force posture on the eastern flank. The leaders will ratify some of the decisions taken by defense ministers last week. We'll have more to say on that tomorrow.

But they'll also task the military and political instruments of NATO to set out a longer-term game plan for what forces and capabilities are going to be required in those eastern flank countries – to be, ultimately, agreed at the Madrid Summit this summer – so that we've got a long-term footprint that is matched to the new security reality that's been created both by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and by what's happening in Belarus, including the fact that we're seeing Russian forces and projecting Russian forces ending up in a posture where there is more of them more frequently on the territory of Belarus, and perhaps other capabilities as well.

So that'll be the NATO Summit piece of it.

The President will then have opportunity to meet with the G7 leaders, and they'll issue a statement. And it will cover a range of issues. The G7 has been a central locus for sanctions coordination. It's where many of the key elements of the sanctions architecture were agreed and have been – have been – the details have been worked through.

And the G7 leaders tomorrow will agree on an initiative to coordinate on sanctions enforcement so that Russian efforts to evade the sanctions or other countries' effort to help Russia evade the sanctions can be dealt with effectively and in a coordinated fashion. And there'll be, you know, a specific example of what that means discussed at the meeting and rolled out tomorrow.

In addition, we, the United States, will announce a package of sanctions designations tomorrow that relate both to political figures, oligarchs – so, individual designations as well as entities – and that'll be released tomorrow.

The G7 will also cover a number of other critical issues, including the global energy picture and the global food security picture, and some of the other knock-on and spillover effects of the conflict in Ukraine on the global

economy and on the livelihoods of the citizens of our countries and people all around the world.

And then the President will have the opportunity to have a signals check with President Michel, the President of the European Council, before he goes into a European Council meeting where he will have the opportunity to discuss the refugee and humanitarian situation that has been fast evolving over the course of the past month since Russia's latest military action got underway.

He'll have the chance to talk about next steps on sanctions with the European Union. He'll have the chance to talk about democratic resilience and supporting civil society and journalists and other instruments of strong democracies in many of the partner countries of the European Union in the east.

And there will be a few other elements to the discussion that he will have with European leaders, including China and how we get coordinated on our approach vis-à-vis China, especially as it relates to China's involvement in the crisis in Ukraine — because the EU has a summit with China coming up on April 1st, so just a few days after the President will be engaging them in Brussels.

The last thing is, throughout the day, the President will obviously consult on potential contingencies: the possibility of cyberattacks by Russia against the United States or other Allied and partner countries, the possibility of the use of chemical or biological weapons in Ukraine, the possibility of escalation in the conflict in other ways. And as I discussed yesterday at the podium, how to deal with the rhetoric and the commentary coming out of Russia on this whole question of the potential use of nuclear weapons.

I said yesterday that we haven't seen anything that's made us adjust our posture — our nuclear posture, but it's, of course, something that we will have to continue to stay in close consultation with Allies and partners on, as well as communicate directly to the Russians on.

So, let me stop there in terms of what tomorrow looks like, and I'm happy to take your questions.

Q Can I ask, on energy sanctions or energy actions, what — you mentioned this yesterday — what is on the table in terms of some sort of deal or anything between the U.S. and the EU to try to reduce reliance on Russian energy?

Of course, European partners have been more hesitant to enact the same measures that the UK, the U.S., Canada, and others have because they rely more heavily on it, in particular on natural gas. Is there anything you're going to discuss or announce on that? Is there deal in place? What can you tell us?

MR. SULLIVAN: So, this is a substantial topic of conversation. A major priority for both the President and his European allies is to reduce the dependence of Europe on Russian gas. Full stop.

And the practical roadmap for how to do that — what steps have to be taken, what the United States can contribute, what Europe has to do itself — this has been the subject of intense back-and-forth over the course of the past few days and weeks. And we will have more to say on this subject specifically on Friday, particularly with the European Commission and the European Commission President, von der Leyen. So he'll discuss it tomorrow.

But in terms of further things to say publicly on the subject, I'm not going to preview it today. But you can zero in on Friday morning for more news on that, so stay tuned.

Q Can you say what the U.S. will tell its European partners what it wants to see from China or what it hopes Europe will seek from China? In other words, what is the latest in terms of what you're — what you perceive to be China's involvement or lack of involvement in Russia's war and the trajectory, I guess?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, as I said yesterday, we have not actually seen or do not have evidence of the actual provision of military equipment for use in Ukraine from China to Russia. But we are monitoring that closely and, of course, our European allies are as well.

And we've sent a clear message to China about the implications and consequences of any such provision of military equipment. And we're on the same page with our European allies on that, and we expect that they will convey similar messages in their dealings at the highest levels with the Chinese government.

The same thing goes for systematic efforts to undermine, weaken, or circumvent the sanctions regime that we have put in place. And we've communicated on that as well to China, and we expect similar communication by the European Union and individual European countries. And we're also on the same page in that regard.

And the G7 sanctions enforcement initiative ensuring that there isn't systematic sanctions busting, that's not specifically about China, but it will apply to every significant economy and the decisions that any of those economies take to try in an intentional and active way to undermine or weaken the sanctions that we put in place.

Q Can I just follow up on the energy issue? The idea of reducing energy dependence sounds like a medium- to long-term question. Is the United States — is the President going to be pressing the — his European allies to do more in the immediate term — a ban on oil, a ban on gas? A ban on coal has been raised. I mean, is — and understanding that their reluctance is because of their greater dependence, is the message from the United States going to be, “You guys need to act now”?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, first, I think it's important to note that the United States itself is acting now to help Europe on the issue of Russ- — dependence on Russian gas, diverting cargoes to help increase the supply of gas — U.S. LNG — to Europe in the immediate term. And I think you can expect that the U.S. will look for ways to increase LNG supplies, surge LNG supplies to Europe not just over the course of years, but over the course of months as well. Of course, that amount will grow over time.

So, our focus now is not on — over the course of the next couple of days — is not on a particular sanctions move we're asking Europe to make on this. It is, rather: How do we put in place a strategy that is not just a long-term strategy

but is a short-term strategy to help reduce dependence and to create more freedom and flexibility then for different policy choices by the Europeans?

Q Can I put a finer point on the China question? You — they have a preexisting economic relationship — China and Russia. Are your concerns about an incremental growth in that relationship as a financial relationship? Is status quo okay? Could you maybe elaborate a little bit more about those concerns?

MR. SULLIVAN: What do you mean? I'm sorry, I'm not sure I fully —

Q China and Russia have a preexisting financial relationship: trade. Is it okay if that trade continues as is? Or are you concerned about incremental change in that — or growth in that kind of trade to avoid sanctions? Can you put a little finer point on that?

MR. SULLIVAN: Sure. I mean, just three sort of examples that I think will give a little bit more flavor to the kinds of things we're looking out for.

One is attempting to backfill in response to the export controls that we have imposed — Chinese companies or companies from other countries choose to backfill. We obviously have tools available to us to ensure that backfilling can't happen. That's one.

Second is, from the point of view of payment settlements and financial sanctions, systematic efforts, industrial-scale efforts to try to reorient the settlement of financial payments and so forth. That's something that, in coordination with our G7 allies, we will look at and respond to.

And then third, of course, is the kinds of non-steady state, new efforts to try to seize opportunities that have been created by the reduction in commerce between Europe, Japan, and other countries because of the sanctions not just with China but across the board. That's something that we will look at as well.

And, you know, I've been clear that we're not going to lay out in specifics the particular countermeasures we would take, the particular steps we'd impose.

We're communicating that privately to countries. You know, I don't want to use the microphone to threaten; I just want to say this is something we're vigilant about and that we have tools at our disposal to deal with in coordination with the G7 and with other countries.

Q A question on chemical and biological. Has the U.S. seen evidence that Russia has moved or deployed any of these weapons in a way to threaten Ukraine?

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't have any intelligence to share with you today on this subject. The main thing that we're looking at right now is the deliberate drumbeat of misinformation, propaganda, and lies on this subject that has all the markers of a precursor to them actually using these weapons.

Q So is the U.S. assessment based entirely on that drumbeat of propaganda, or is it also based on movements of weapons?

MR. SULLIVAN: It's a very fair question. All I can tell you right now is I can't comment further on the intelligence picture on this today. To the extent that I'm in a position to share further information related to our intelligence, I'll be sure to do so. But right now, I don't have anything else to share.

Q Jake, was there anything in your conversations with Chinese officials last week or President — or the President's conversations with President Xi that left you at all reassured that the Chinese would not provide weapons or other assistance to the Russians? Or do you — are you more concerned after those conversations?

MR. SULLIVAN: So, I will beg your forgiveness in advance by being sort of intentionally vague in my answer to your question. And the reason is because this is not the kind of circumstance where you just kind of feel reassurance. It's going to require constant vigilance, constant monitoring. We will have to see what happens.

So, all I can really say to you is that coming out of that conversation, we have not seen the Chinese government move forward on the supply of weapons,

but it's something we're watching every day. And I really can't characterize my level of comfort with that out one way or the other; it's something we just have to maintain vigilance about.

Q I have a question on the EU. Do you want to see the European Union — does the administration want to see the European Union spend more on defense — such as what President Macron has suggested, that they should become — you know, borrowing more money, spending more, bolstering its defense spending to this point?

MR. SULLIVAN: When President Biden and President Macron met in Rome in October, they put out a joint statement. And one of the points in that statement was support across the board for increased European capability and investment in the strength of their defense tools and the modernization of their defense establishments with one very important principle underlying that, and that is complementarity with NATO.

So, all of this work that's being done by individual European countries, by the European Union, this is something that contributes overall to the health and strength of the transatlantic Alliance so long it is — it is done in complementarity with NATO.

Q Should Russia still be part of the G20? Any concern, any talk about that? There are some countries that have voiced some — some opinions on that. I know there's a financial leadership meeting in Washington of the G20 come maybe April. Should Russia be a — should Russia representatives attend that?

MR. SULLIVAN: So what I said yesterday, which I'll repeat today, is that we don't believe it can be business as usual with Russian international institutions. But in terms of specific answers to that kind of question for the G20 or other international organizations, we want to have the opportunity to consult with our Allies and partners around the world, including our G20 partners before I opine on that question publicly.

Q A couple. On — if you're looking at the sanctions and the upcoming planned sanctions that you plan to announce, on — say, on like a scale of 1 to

10, or do it on however measure you would like to — like, what do you have left? Like, where would you be at if 10 were ratcheted up to the highest degree?

Q And what else could you do?

Q Yeah, how much room to grow do you have?

MR. SULLIVAN: So I — I would ask you guys, I guess, two — two questions — two things. The first is: In terms of an analysis of the macroeconomic impact of what we have done and then, you know, what additional tools are in the toolkit, Daleep — who is on the trip, and we'll get you with him in a backgrounder so you have the opportunity to speak with him directly on this — is the expert and then to speak also with the Treasury Department. So that's one thing.

Because I think this is one where really getting down granularly into what hit has the Russian economy taken, in what way, and then, you know, what are other things that we could do over time.

But the second thing I would ask you is to consider this not just like we're firing bullets out of the chamber of a gun and we fired X number and there's Y number left. I think it's the wrong way to think about it.

What we've done on the financial sanctions and the export controls is create a vise that is squeezing harder and harder with each passing day and week. And then, as we see the impact and we see efforts to evade, we think about adjustments we need to make to ensure that vise continues to tighten.

So our theory on this was never: Every three days we fire another bullet. It was: Put the major pieces in place, look for ways to continue to tighten the screws, and then consider other means as we go forward. And, of course, we will do that.

So I can't characterize this question of what we've done and what we have left precisely, in part because we don't think of it quite in the terms that your question posed.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. SULLIVAN: But on — on the kind of macro picture, which is a kind of — the way to back into an answer to your question, I'd ask you to speak with Daleep.

Q Can you talk a little bit about Friday? There's obviously a big gaping hole in the President's schedule. Is he going to go close to the border? Is he going to meet with — is he going to tour refugees — with refugees? What — what else can you tell us about Friday?

MR. SULLIVAN: I'll let Karine talk to you about Friday when —

Q When do you think we may see —

MR. SULLIVAN: — when the time is right.

Q — JCPOA updated? And to what extent that will be discussed on this trip during this week?

MR. SULLIVAN: So he'll have the chance to talk to our E3 European partners — UK, France, Germany; four members of the P5+1; as well as the European Union, which plays this important coordinating role in the P5+1.

Where things stand now is we've made progress over the course of the past several weeks. There are still some issues left. We're working on those issues. It's unclear whether this will come to closure or not. But, you know, we're diligently trying to drive the diplomacy to a place where we have put Iran's nuclear program back in a box.

Q Are you sure that a deal could put more money or more freedom to use money in the hands of Iran, and that, in turn, could be a lifeline to Russia's economy? Can you talk about the sort of triangulation of that here?

MR. SULLIVAN: First, Russia posed both publicly and privately this proposition that Iran should somehow be entirely carved out of the sanctions

regime, which was not accepted by any of the parties.

So the only question of sanctions as it relates to Russia in the context of the JCPOA is about sanctions on Iran being able to, for example, cooperate with the Russian Atomic Energy authorities to ship out their enriched uranium.

So we feel confident that if we were to get back into the JCPOA on a compliance-for-compliance basis. It would not create a significant economic opportunity for Russia.

And we would take whatever necessary enforcement steps to ensure that that was the case.

Q Jake, how much visibility do you have into the status of Russian-Ukrainian negotiations right now? And how much faith do you have in the Russians being a trustworthy negotiation partner in the first place?

MR. SULLIVAN: Well, I will point out that Russia has not been trustworthy in its public statements about its intentions with respect to Ukraine for months. So, we take everything that they say at the negotiating table or from their podiums with a very large grain of salt.

We are in very consistent communication with our Ukrainian friends. And President Biden speaks to President Zelenskyy on this issue. President Biden also speaks with the Presidents of France and Germany, the Prime Minister of Israel, the President of Turkey, others who have been actively engaged in discussions with President Putin and President Zelenskyy. So, we're actively engaged in monitoring the ongoing diplomacy, though the United States is not directly at the table or directly playing any kind of mediating or brokering role. And we will see how things unfold.

Our basic principle is: This is about Ukraine's future, Ukraine's destiny, and therefore it is up to Ukraine and the Ukrainian leadership, the Ukrainian people to make their own judgments about any agreement that they would reach with the Russians.

Q Can you comment on the transfer of air defense systems to Ukraine. Is

that moving forward? You know, we've talked about the S-300 system — things like that. There's a large shuffle going on. What's the latest on that? When could Ukraine expect to see those systems in their country?

MR. SULLIVAN: We feel good about the progress that we are making with respect to air defense systems. And I'm not going to get into further details on that because I don't want to compromise the ongoing effort to ensure that Ukraine gets the tools it needs to protect itself from the sky.

Q Can you confirm that NATO — NATO Allied countries want to extend the contract of the Secretary General, Stoltenberg, and what the President's view — possibly through September of 2023 — and what the President's view on that might be?

MR. SULLIVAN: The President thinks very highly of Secretary General Stoltenberg. They've developed a relationship of trust. And Pres- — Secretary General Stoltenberg has played an instrumental role in helping secure the powerful unity you've seen at NATO through this crisis. And I don't have anything for you on the question of his tenure.

Q Can you say whether he wants to see continuity there and not sort of breaking this up in the middle of this conflict?

MR. SULLIVAN: So, all I will say is: We think that Jens Stoltenberg has been doing a fantastic job and, day in and day out, has played a critical leadership role for NATO.

And you'll forgive me if for today, on this plane flight, I will add nothing to that other than our unreserved view that that Stoltenberg is a real asset to the Alliance. And then, you know, the leaders will have the chance to talk tomorrow.

Q Does the President plan to send additional U.S. troops to Eastern Europe? And if so, how many?

MR. SULLIVAN: So, we don't have any plans for announcements of specific additional units to move to Eastern Europe at this time. But the President is

constantly reviewing plans for near-term adjustments to our force posture in all the eastern flank countries, depending on how things develop. So that's not a today thing or a tomorrow thing, but it's — it's a matter of consistent reassessment.

Q Do you know if any additional troop deployments will be announced on this trip?

MR. SULLIVAN: I don't.

Q And that's — but what about the broader — the long-term of NATO force deployment along the eastern —

MR. SULLIVAN: Yes, we have —

Q — that — that could involve U.S. troops to —

MR. SULLIVAN: Two aspects of this will be discussed tomorrow. One is the immediate need to shore up on a rotational basis those Allies on the southern end of the eastern flank, and that will be discussed tomorrow.

And then the second is, across the entire eastern flank, as we head to the Madrid Summit, what decisions does NATO have to take for longer-term force posture adjustments? And of course, some of those will involve U.S. forces.

Q On this trip, what are you looking to hear from other EU and the UK leaders? You've talked about trying to reduce Europe's energy — energy dependence on Russian oil and gas. What else would you like to hear from the leaders that the President will be meeting?

MR. SULLIVAN: I think what we would like to hear is that the resolve and unity that we've seen for the past month will endure for as long as it takes. That's at a topline.

Then how that translates specifically: that countries follow through on the commitments they've made with respect to the supply of military equipment

and add to those commitments as Ukraine's needs evolve over time; that countries remain fully committed to enforcing the sanctions on the banks and, to the extent we find additional targets that can help impose pressure on Putin, we do — we move in a joint way on that; that we all work together to do our part on the humanitarian element of this crisis, both the suffering inside Ukraine and the refugee crisis outside Ukraine — here, Europe has really stepped up in a huge way, and it's the United States that will be coming with additional commitments on both humanitarian assistance and refugees tomorrow; and that NATO, as an Alliance, puts its money where its mouth is when it comes to actually defending every inch of NATO territory, and that means following through on the necessary capabilities and contributions to defend the eastern flank and to defend the whole Alliance.

That's what tomorrow is all about across an integrated set of three meetings. And we think that we will have a substantial set of outcomes that will emerge by the end of the day when, after many hours, the President will emerge to address all of you.

Q Does President Biden plan to have a short bilat with Turkish President Erdoğan on the sidelines of NATO?

MR. SULLIVAN: We don't have a bilat scheduled with President Erdoğan. But you know how these things go. They'll be hanging out at NATO Headquarters, and I expect he'll have the chance to have brief conversations with a number of leaders.

Q Is the U.S. position on giving planes to Ukraine — remains the same? Or are you looking to discuss that if the Polish, for instance, bring it up? Is it still your belief that it should not be NATO giving planes to Ukraine?

MR. SULLIVAN: There's been no change in our position on the MiG-29s.

Q And have you guys formally shot down the idea of a peacekeeping force that the Poles have raised? Or is that something that is still at least open for discussion from the U.S. perspective?

MR. SULLIVAN: President Biden's been very clear that we're not sending

U.S. soldiers to fight Russian soldiers in Ukraine. I have not, myself, had the opportunity, nor has President Biden had the opportunity to consult with his Polish counterpart, or I with mine, on exactly what they have in mind. So, we'll — we'll have that conversation.

But our position, with respect to deployment of U.S. forces in Ukraine, has been clear from the start, and it remains unchanged.

Q There's a difference between saying U.S. forces shouldn't be deployed and NATO forces should not be deployed into Ukraine. Do you have the same red line about forces under a NATO banner from other NATO countries going into Ukraine?

MR. SULLIVAN: I think before I opine on what is a hypothetical or theoretical question like that, I think it's important for us to get the opportunity to hear more about something we've just seen in the press, and then we can speak to it.

All right. Thank you, guys.

Q Thank you, Jake.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Thanks, Jake. Thank you so much.

Q Now you get to tell us all about the refugees in the Friday schedule.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Okay. Is that what you want me to talk about?

Q Jake —

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Okay. No, Jake did a great job laying out tomorrow — NATO, EU, G7 meetings that the President will be — will be part of.

I mean, look, what I — what I can do is — you guys already have all of this — is say what happens when he leaves Brussels — right? — in a more broad stroke —

Q Right, just because —

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: — and say what happens after Brussels in a more broad — broad stroke.

So, as you guys already know, he's going to meet with President Duda once he leaves Brussels and goes to Poland to thank him for everything the people of Poland are doing and to discuss our coordinated humanitarian response to support the many Ukrainians who have been impacted by Putin's war.

I think Jake also talked about the President — where he will engage with U.S. troops who are now — who are now helping to defend NATO territory yesterday. He talked about that. And he will meet with experts involved in a humanitarian response.

We talked about the speech that the President will be giving, but I won't give any more further —

Q His speech? I'm sorry, which?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: We talked about that. The President is going to be giving a speech in Poland.

Q In Poland?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah, we announced that probably a day or two ago.

And so those are kind of — (laughs) — Michael, you got to keep up. You got to keep up. So, we talked — I'm just going to, like I said, talk about the broader strokes of things that he's going to do tomorrow.

Clearly, we'll give more guidance on what Friday will look like. But for security purposes, we just want to keep it more broad and not go into details.

Q Can you give us an update on whether the President tested before this trip since Monday and what his most recent COVID test result was?

Q And just any general update of other people who tested positive in the White House.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: So, the President ha- — was tested yesterday, as Josh just mentioned, and as part of his regular testing cadence. There's no change to the President's testing cadence during his travel because he was not a close contact.

He will be tested throughout the trip in alignment with the various entry and departure requirements for the countries he will be visiting.

For example, for context here, there'll be no testing entry requirement for Brussel — testing requirement. There'll be testing requirement for a Warsaw exit requirement for return to the U.S.

As far as your question, so, since — when we're talking about staff and all of those things that you just asked — so, since July, because of our commitment to transparency, we provide updates when any White House official tests positive for COVID-19 and with White House Medical Unit deems them as having had close contact with the President, Vice President, First Lady, and — or Second Gentleman. That will be up to the White House Medical Unit based on the criteria of the CDC.

You know, Jen, for example, shared her positive case yesterday, as she did in October, out of an abundance of transparency.

If an individual does not meet this criteria that I just laid out, meaning they are not a close contact of our four principals, it would be up to the individual. This has been our policy since July. It hasn't changed.

Q Can you give us an update on whether you're still considering any further releases of the SPR to deal with the current gas price?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: I don't have anything new to share on that, on any new actions. But as the President has said previously, we're going to continue to assess, and our government will take action as needed as evidenced — as evidenced by recent Strategic Petroleum Reserve releases that we announced

not too long ago, and the — and announced International Energy Agency agreement — those two things that we announced probably, I don't know, about a month ago — a couple weeks ago.

Q And acknowledging that there are other things on the go, has he made any decisions on when you will name a new Fed nominee?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: I don't have anything to preview for you on the new Fed nominee.

Q Forgive me for having to ask.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: (Laughs.) No, it's a fair — it's a — not a surprising ask.

Q Does the President have any further reaction to yesterday here on the Sup- — on Ketanji Brown Jackson?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah. So, as we noted, the President did watch some of — some of the — did watch some of the portions of yesterday's hearing with Judge Jackson.

And again, he couldn't be more proud of her intellect, her grace, character, and the value of her experience. The country is seeing just how qualified Judge Jackson is and how she determines cases fairly based solely on the facts and the law, which is what the American people expect in a Supreme Court justice. That's why she is endorsed by conservative judges, the Fraternal Order of Police, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, dozens of police chiefs, sheriffs, and 83 bipartisan former State Attorney Generals. Just today, 43 former federal prosecutors in Florida endorsed Judge Jackson.

So, like we said yesterday, the President was also impressed with how she dismantled bad-faith conspiracy theories and that have — that have been fact checked by major media outlets and experts, like some of you all here, and moderates in both parties are now dismissing them for the fringe smears that they are.

She thoughtfully and thoroughly answered questions from senators for nearly 12 hours, as you all know, demonstrating the temperament required for a Supreme Court justice and showing the strength of her intellect and character.

Q I guess — I just wanted to follow up really quickly. Does he have any reaction to the kind of questioning that Senator Cruz, Senator Hawley, Senator Cotton — I mean, you know, a range of them — did? What did he think of their questions?

Q And just to piggyback on that — just the critical race theory as well — you know, theory and all of that.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Let me talk more broadly about your point, Michael, about the overall attacks. Look — so, you know, we’re going to — we’re focused on the full Senate. Right? She’s been working hard to earn support since day one. She has — since the day she was — the President named her, she’s met with 45 senators, and she’s going to meet with more after.

And you’ve heard Republicans react well to her qualifications and her neutral methodology based in the facts of law — law and facts — based in the law and facts. And so, I want to be really clear: Our strategy doesn’t depend on Josh Hawley or any of the other senators who attacked her.

On the critical race theory, you know, she actually spoke to this yesterday as well — Judge Jackson. And to quote her, she said, when it comes to critical race theory, “never been something I’ve studied or relied on.” She applies the facts and the law when making decisions on the bench, not academic theory.

And I also saw PolitiFact already found an attack about base — about — based on this “false” after a senator claims she considered it when judging cases. In comments to students about academic subjects that may — that they may find interesting, she mentioned critical race theory in a list of other academic topics such as administrative law, constitutional law, negotiations, and contracts.

But again, I would refer you back to what she said herself about that.

Q But I guess the questions is: Did he think the questions from the senators that we mentioned about critical race theory and the other issues – the, you know, pornography, and whatever – did he think those questions were inappropriate, racist, whatever – however you want to say?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Look, it's basically what I said, Michael. He's very proud – he's very proud of how she handled herself yesterday.

Q That doesn't answer –

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: I mean, I think – I think it does. We – I just told you he watched – he watched yesterday, and I just told you his reaction. We're not going to go – we're not going to break it down – break it down specific to details. I just laid out how he felt and why she was chosen and her bipartisan support that she's getting.

Q Can you give us more of a preview of the humanitarian assistance that we might expect to see? He's going to go to Poland. Polish leaders have been pretty clear about their breaking point. He's going to presumably see some evidence of that. I know you're not going to get ahead of the President, but can you give us some – should Americans expect a more open-door policy to get these – some of these folks into the U.S.?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: So, look – you know, again, he's going to announce further American contributions to respond to the growing flow of refugees and to the coordinated humanitarian response to ease the suffering of civilians inside Ukraine, but I don't have anything further to preview.

Look, we are surging humanitarian assistance to countries neighboring Ukraine who are providing them with support. We've kind of laid out what we've done in the past – these past couple weeks.

Q And with Poland, to help them – some kind of relief package for Poland to help them deal with –

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Again, I'm not – I mean, you even said it in your

question. I'm not going to get ahead of the President, but this is something that's coming forward.

Q I just — last time on this one, to follow up on Michael's point. You know, he's served on this panel for many years, like many of these confirmation fights. Like just generally — I know you don't want to respond to any specific senator — how does he think that these Republican senators have comported themselves? Not her reaction to that, but the senators themselves.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Look, I'm not going to get into specifics on that at all. I'm just going to lay out what I said already and how he saw her performance, which is what is the most important thing is — how Judge Jackson performed yesterday. He's very proud of her. We feel very confident in her being the next justice on the Supreme Court. I don't have anything further to read out to you.

Q Do you have any lists of bilats or anything you can share on what meetings he might have during this trip?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Say that last part.

Q Do you — can you share anything about what bilateral meetings he might have on this trip?

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: No. Jake just talked about that. We don't have anything — at least when he was asked about Turkey — we don't have anything else to preview on a bilat meeting. And just to reiterate what Jake said —

Q Right.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: — which is, you know, at these type of events — the NATO in particular and the EU and G7 — you never know what might happen. But we — I don't have anything else to preview on a bilat.

Q All right.

MS. JEAN-PIERRE: Okay. All right. Thanks, guys. Appreciate you all.

Q Thank you.

2:24 P.M. EDT