MICHAEL SHEAR: Admiral, can I get just two timeline clarifications? What is first — what is the John Kirby definition of a bit in terms of how long the U.S. can continue to provide support to Ukraine under the current funding levels? Is three weeks? Four weeks? Is it a few months? Like how — how long is a bit?

JOHN KIRBY: I think, given what we have left and given the pace at which we’ve been providing support. Um, uh, you’re talking perhaps, um, a couple of months or so roughly. Now, it depends — Michael, the reason I’m being squishy on this is because it depends on what’s going on — on the battlefield and how big the packages are and what capabilities Ukraine needs and as the war has evolved, so have the packages and so I need a little bit of breathing room on what a bit means. But — but you know, in coming weeks —

SHEAR: [INAUDIBLE]

KIRBY: — and a couple of months or so, it’s roughly about right.

SHEAR: Okay, and then — then —

KIRBY: The other thing that’s important to — I don’t mean to talk too much here, but it’s not just the authority that — presidential drawdown authority is not a check, it’s not a checking account. It’s — it’s — it’s — it’s — it’s how much authority they have to, to go to the inventory to the shelves and pull stuff off and depending — each package costs different because the capabilities and the tools you’re pulling off the shelf cost the Pentagon a different amount of money. But what also has to be factored into your question about what is a bit is the replenishment authority for the Pentagon to restock those shells. And right now, the authority they have to replenish is less by a significant number of what they have authority to provide. And so, in addition to the needs of the battlefield and the pace at which the drawdown is going, you also have to factor in when we talk about how long is a bit and how much authority the Pentagon has left replenish his shelves.

SHEAR: And then, the other timeline question, you know, the President and you all have repeatedly said, and it sounds like he said again that the meeting today that the U.S. is in this for as long as it takes, right? So, as the President goes back to voters to face reelection as a President who has in the past criticized the length of some of the wars that we’ve been engaged in in Afghanistan and Iraq, does — is there any responsibility for the President to be specific about with the voters about how long he is — he thinks the United States should be willing to be involved in this? Should he be willing to say two years? Five years? 10 years? 20 years? Like, how long, you know, is — doe s — does he commit the United States to — to being in this system in this situation of what is costing tens and tens of billions of dollars on a regular basis?
KIRBY: For as long as it takes means for as long as it takes. And the President has been very, very honest about that. Every other leader on the call also, in their own way, emphasized the — their commitment again for as long as it takes. Now, look, I mean, everybody, we’d all like this war to end tomorrow. It could if Mr Putin would do the right thing. Certainly, the Ukrainians want it to end. Nobody wants to see this go on any longer, but it is their war. I — I understand that we are the leading contributor of support, but the Ukrainians are the ones fighting this war. We don’t have American troops on the ground, so it’s a — not a fair comparison to make with Iraq or Afghanistan where you had American boots on the ground. This is Ukraine’s war. They’re fighting it. We are helping them fight it. We’re giving them the foreign assistance that we ourselves have benefited from in our own history. And again, we’re going to work as hard as we can with might and main to — to make possible for Ukraine to end this war as soon as they can, but it has to be done in terms that President Zelenskyy is comfortable with, the Ukrainian people can accept and that ends up with a whole, free, prosperous Ukraine with international recognized borders.

SHEAR: Is forever war a fair term to apply to this?

KIRBY: I don’t think so.

(.....)

1:49:12 p.m.
1 minute and 29 seconds

PHILIP WEGMANN: First, when you and I spoke earlier this year, you noted that the administration had not seen any military or financial assistance falling prey to any kind of corruption in Ukraine. Is that still the case? And then, second, Semafor is reporting that the chief of staff for the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations, Christopher Mayer, his chief was allegedly part of an Iranian influence campaign and had access to top secret environmental information. Does the NSC have an assessment of that was national security compromised? Has the President been briefed?

KIRBY: No, I think we’ve seen the press reporting, but I’d refer you to DoD on that one completely. And then on your first question, still no indication that there’s been any kind of widespread corruption or inappropriate use of us capabilities. As a matter of fact, I don’t know who asked me before about expenditure rates, but I mean, oftentimes the stuff that’s getting to Ukraine, it’s going hand to mouth. I mean, you know, a matter of days before some stuff gets there and then a matter of days more before it’s being used on the battlefield. Not — not every system, of course, but the Ukrainians are in a very active fight. They’re using the stuff that’s being provided to them.

WEGMANN: Senator Angus King told me earlier this year that he communicated to the Zelenskyy administration that any type of corruption or graft could really this up. Has the administration communicated to the Ukrainians just how important —
KIRBY: Yes.

WEGMANN: — this good government is to keep the —

KIRBY: 100 percent.

WEGMANN: — okay, thank you.

KIRBY: At various levels. Including the leader level.

WEGMANN: Thank you, sir.

(....)

2:15:59 p.m.
3 minutes and 10 seconds

CATHERINE LUCEY: Has the — does the White House any comment on the carjacking of Representative Cuellar? Has the President reached out to him? And more broadly, does it say anything about safety and crime in the District?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, what we saw happen, the reporting that we saw happen to the congressman, obviously, was unacceptable. The President did have an opportunity to speak with the congressman today and we will always continue to speak out against any sort of violence and we’ve been consistent here in this administration. We are certainly grateful and relieved that the congressman was unharmed and we are thankful to the law enforcement to have reacted so quickly. And — and so, look, this is the President, unlike Republicans, has actually put forth billions of dollars — has taken to make sure that there are billions of dollars in his budget every year and through the American Rescue Plan. Let’s not forget there were billions of dollars in his American Rescue Plan so that local communities and — and state and federal police as well, law enforcement were able to make sure that they had the funding, so that they can hire more law enforcement. And that was incredibly important to the President so that they can make sure that their communities were safe. This is something that President has done and Republicans have not helped. [TO DOOCY] And I know you have, I know you’re going to follow up on that. What — what's your question?

PETER DOOCY: Well, the first follow up would be, how are you going to blame Republicans for this? Isn’t D.C. run by a bunch of Democrats?

JEAN-PIERRE: I’m going to speak to what the President has done, right? The President has been very, very straightforward about what he has done to make sure that communities are safe. American Rescue Plan? Not one Republican in Congress will for it. Not one. There were billions of dollars in that plan, in that — in that act to make sure communities across the country got funding so that they can indeed hire more police officers so that they can keep their communities safe. Republicans had nothing to do with that. They were not involved in that they decided not to
vote on the American Rescue Plan. That’s just a fact.

DOOCY: So, if President Biden’s policies are helping bring crime down, would he be comfortable with somebody borrowing his Corvette and parking it on the street overnight in Southeast D.C.?

JEAN-PIERRE: I’m not going to get into hypotheticals. I’m just going to get into the facts about what this President has done in this presidency. One thing that your — somebody was asking me about bipartisanship, he was able as it relates to guns, he was able to come together, right? We saw Democrats and Republicans come together and have the first piece of gun, anti gun violence prevention legislation in 30 years. And that’s something that this President was able to do.

DOOCY: If a member of Congress is not safe on the streets of the nation’s capital, Who is?

JEAN-PIERRE: Look, we’re grateful and relieved that the congressman is unharmed. We understand what communities are going through across the country, not just in D.C. That’s why the President took action very early on in his administration to get the American Rescue Plan done without the help of Republicans. That’s why every time he puts forward his budget, he makes sure there are billions of dollars to deal with crime. That’s just a fact. All you got to look is what the President has been able to do this past two years. There’s always going to be more work to be done, but the fact is the President has taken action.