

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #727,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
March 18, 1941, 4.10 P.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in!

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing of interest I have is that I have been taking up with the Secretary of Agriculture and with Dr. Parran, who is just back from Britain, the problem of food and related things which will be needed in Britain in the future; and while I am away I am asking the Secretary of Agriculture and Dr. Parran and several others to work up what might be called a program relating to types of food that are needed and things like -- what do you call it? -- vitamins, of which there are various new forms, I am told --

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) I'll say!

THE PRESIDENT: Earl Godwin and I never found it necessary to take vitamins -- we get along quite well without them.

MR. GODWIN: Don't we! (Mr. Godwin weighs about 235 pounds.)

Q (Mr. Brandt) What about that milk -- that "homogenized" milk? (Mr. Godwin's radio sponsor is Thompson's Dairy, which features homogenized "vitamin D" milk.)

THE PRESIDENT: And they are going to let me have a report on it. I think the British are sending over somebody to represent their Food Ministry, so we will get a pretty good picture. We have plenty of food-stuffs -- agricultural commodities -- as we know, in this country; it's more a question of working out a schedule for the whole thing. I think that's about all.

Q That is in relation, sir, to the money that is in the Lend-Lease Appropriation Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Some would come out of that and some wouldn't.

Q Mr. President, before this gets into a world discussion, may I ask a local question?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q There's a story carried in our paper today about the diversion of 50 to 75 million cubic feet of water on the Ontario side of the St. Lawrence; is there anything on that now?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so; I think you will probably get something in a very few days. Have I (turning to Mr. Early) actually sent it to the Congress?

MR. EARLY: No.

THE PRESIDENT: There'll be something very soon.

Q Is there to be additional diversion on this side, too?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

(The question was repeated.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think Niagara enters into this picture at all; this is the St. Lawrence. I think Buffalo is still safe. (Laughter)

Q I am afraid it isn't if that is the case!

THE PRESIDENT: I think this is a thing that has been all ready to shoot as soon as we get a final word on it; if we don't get final word before I leave, it will go up to Congress as soon as we do.

Q Can you tell us anything on your trip, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going off to get a little sunlight -- to be gone a week or ten days.

Q Mr. President, I believe the last time convoys were mentioned in this Conference you made the remark about that being the first step toward shooting. I understand there have been reports you were considering

early convoying of ships.

THE PRESIDENT: That has been going on four or five years, hasn't it?

Q What has been going on?

THE PRESIDENT: Those reports.

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: That's what I thought; I haven't paid any attention to them yet.

Q Mr. President, may I bring you back to that food question, sir? Your idea is for food to go to Britain and to other democracies at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q It is all in there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q At the last Conference you mentioned Spain as being in need.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and unoccupied France; we have just sent some food there, haven't we?

Q Are sending some now.

Q Is this report you requested solely devoted to the British food stuffs?

THE PRESIDENT: No; of course that would be the major part of it; but it includes others, too.

Q There is some concern about the application of State sales taxes and excise taxes on materials that are imported into states for use in Government contracts -- raw materials and parts. There has been some indication that would be taken up with you and that there might be some legislation to clear that up.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you better ask the Treasury Department, because it is a terribly complex thing. I couldn't begin to go into it; I would make a mistake in the second sentence if I did. It is under study. I

think the only thing you can say is that, naturally, under the present system, the state has the right to impose certain excise taxes, but in the long run it doesn't make the state very popular in Government supply work if the state superimposes extraordinary or out-of-line excise taxes at this particular time on new industries. I think that is the best way.

Q The question has come up in the California situation because of a ruling that those taxes could not be added to the contract prices. The Army and Navy have placed contracts for ships and what-not.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends entirely on the individual contract. I don't think there is any rule on it. It's a very technical discussion -- that whole thing -- and I couldn't begin to answer it.

Q I'm anxious to duck it, myself!

Q Do you have any information about submarines and battle cruisers in the Atlantic?

THE PRESIDENT: You know what I know.

Q Mr. President, what is the situation on your defense labor board?

THE PRESIDENT: Coming along very soon.

Q Will it be an eleven-man board?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you yet; there'll probably be action to set up machinery before I go away tomorrow; as to whether the personnel will be announced, I don't know; I haven't the faintest idea.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us whether this St. Lawrence matter will be in the form of a treaty or an agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: An agreement.

Q Will it require congressional action or approval?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; it will cost money.

Q Mr. President, getting back to the labor board, will that be by Executive Order?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, in this matter of food for France; have we released two cargoes of food to be sent to the American Red Cross?

THE PRESIDENT: The Red Cross over here is taking it up at the present time; but whether they can send two cargoes over I don't know. I don't believe they have completed arrangements yet but they are taking it up at the present time. Of course that means taking it up with quite a lot of people.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us when we may start turning over some ships to the British for that "bridge across the Atlantic"?

THE PRESIDENT: That's a secret.

Q Mr. President, I am still not clear as to whether the St. Lawrence document is the whole seaway or only power development -- the document which you will send to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

(Question repeated.)

THE PRESIDENT: It means building a dam, for power.

Q Doesn't involve the seaway?

THE PRESIDENT: Not unless you put a lock in the dam.

Q That's what I want to know.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President, last week I think you discussed the Irish situation; but now Mr. de Valera has, in a speech, requested food and arms and said he is sending someone over here; do you know anything more about it?

THE PRESIDENT: How are they going to get them in?

Q Is that a big problem?

THE PRESIDENT: Wouldn't you think so?

Q Haven't you authority to change the war zone?

THE PRESIDENT: I am just answering that question with another question.

Q Mr. President, what is the present status of the volunteer home defense thing?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably there'll be a final report on it to me from various people by the time I get back, and then pretty quick action after that.

Q Mr. President, did you see the new basic policy of the Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies in the paper this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I think there is still some confusion as to whether this St. Lawrence thing is to be for seaway or power dam.

THE PRESIDENT: No, you will have to wait until you see it. Of course you will have to remember one thing, and that is this, that the cost of a dam is about -- well, it would add only about 10 percent if you put a lock in it. That is No. 1. If you build a power dam and you see it costs you -- what? -- 200 million dollars, it would only cost you about 20 million more to put a lock in it. That's just common sense in this awful polemic -- is that the right word for it? -- discussion.

Q I don't know; it's very vague to me. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Then you have to remember another fact, and that is that I can't build any ocean-going steamers in the Great Lakes today. That's pretty tough, isn't it? And then you have to remember a third fact: I can't take any existing steamers off the Great Lakes for ocean service today unless they are less than 270 feet long, and most of them are more than that.

Q Well, of course it's all right with New England if you don't.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course New England, as well as some other parts of the country, should think about the whole country.

Q Mr. President, are you advised of the German submarine in our waters?

THE PRESIDENT: Only what I read.

Q Have you anything to say about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q (Mr. Wright, of Buffalo Evening News) Mr. President, this is the last gasp on this: but is this, at the same time, the authorization and appropriation you are asking for? In other words, we heard there was going to be a joint resolution to authorize this thing as a national defense measure. Is this that you are going to recommend the authorization and appropriation all wrapped up in one package?

THE PRESIDENT: Jim, I don't know what form the thing will take.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your conference with Milo Warner?

THE PRESIDENT: No; he told me about his trip on the other side and gave me a copy of the report he made to the executive committee of the Legion at Indianapolis the other day, which I think has been printed.

Q Yes.

Q In the item of 200 million dollars for repairs -- expenses for repairs to British vessels -- where will those repairs be made?

THE PRESIDENT: Where will it go?

Q Yes, where will the repairs be made?

THE PRESIDENT: Obviously, they could not be made in the Great Lakes; that is the closest answer I can give you on that.

Q Would they be in navy yards or private yards?

THE PRESIDENT: They can't be made in the Great Lakes. They might be made at Newburgh, New York; you know we have been trying to get a shipyard there -- before the campaign, especially (laughter), and we haven't got one yet.

Q I thought you had this all worked out, Mr. President, that you were going to put these submarines on a raft and float them down the Mississippi.

THE PRESIDENT: What's the matter with the barge canal and the Hudson River?

MR. WRIGHT: That's all right, only it doesn't start from Buffalo! (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: This is grand! -- sort of a "You-scratch-my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours" arrangement. (Laughter) We're all getting local -- and so's Maine! (Laughter)

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Mr. President!

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #728,  
Upon Completion of the President's Inspection  
of the Naval Air Station,  
Jacksonville, Florida,  
March 20, 1941.

(Captain Charles P. Mason, Commanding Officer of the Naval Air Station, Jacksonville, Florida, was present at this Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: (To Captain Mason) The Press is here. They will probably want you to do a little explaining to them. When did we break ground here -- about a year and a half ago?

CAPTAIN MASON: Sixteen months ago.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I think the chief thing of interest is that in the first place it is absolutely modern and we broke ground only sixteen months ago. That's a pretty good illustration.

Q Tell us something about the number of people you have.

CAPTAIN MASON: Our allowance will be 3,500 station enlisted men, fourteen to sixteen hundred Aviation Cadets, and three thousand students in the trade school, with 480 officers as instructors for the whole station.

THE PRESIDENT: We are not only training the cadets, but also the trade school is awfully important.

CAPTAIN MASON: The trade school will turn out enlisted mechanics for the Navy. They started the flying field in August and gave it to us in December.

Q How soon do you expect to have the whole place finished?

CAPTAIN MASON: The present set-up is for the first of July.

Q How far ahead of schedule?

CAPTAIN MASON: Seven weeks ahead on the flying field and three months on some buildings. Two to three weeks ahead on the average.

Q How much money is invested in the plant?

CAPTAIN MASON: Twenty-five million, without the latest appropriation. The contract right now is twenty-five million. Sixteen million has been paid out.

Q What is going to be the total cost?

CAPTAIN MASON: Twenty-five million, but there are additions coming along all the time as the Administration expands.

Q Upwards of forty million dollars?

THE PRESIDENT: About forty million dollars.

Q Are you very well satisfied?

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly fine! Very much surprised to know we are as far along as this.

Q How does this place compare with Pensacola in size? How is it on personnel?

CAPTAIN MASON: Total personnel a little bit more than Pensacola. We have fewer Aviation Cadets but they do not have the trade schools. We have 514 cadets at present and 103 of them soloing already.

Q How many students will you turn out a month?

CAPTAIN MASON: Two hundred flying cadets -- six hundred from the trade school.

Q How long a course is it, Captain?

CAPTAIN MASON: Seven months, flying.

Q What's the trade school course?

CAPTAIN MASON: Depending on the rate studied for, four to five months. Maximum five, minimum four.

THE PRESIDENT: We will turn out about seven to eight thousand trade school graduates a year.

Q Do you plan to make any other inspections today?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing between here and the port of embarkation.

Q Is that still secret?

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CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #729,  
Upon Completion of Inspection of  
Fort Jackson, South Carolina,  
March 31, 1941, 9:30 A.M.

(His Excellency Burnet R. Maybank, Governor of South Carolina  
and Major General William E. Shedd of the First Army Corps,  
Columbia, South Carolina, were present at this Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: I have just said to Burny (Governor Maybank) that you are  
now in South Carolina and I thought I would let him take the review of  
the Press instead of me.

GOVERNOR MAYBANK: We are glad to have you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: You get a pretty good idea of what has been done. This camp  
was acreage during the World War and practically abandoned. Later on,  
some of the National Guard troops came down and trained here in the  
summer. Nearly all of the World War buildings were gone completely.  
Most of the National Guard equipment was temporary and they were in  
tents. We did have the acreage, started in September and it is still  
March. It has all been done since September. There are 35,000 men in  
two divisions. One is the old square division, mostly National Guard,  
with a certain percentage of selectees put in it. The other is the new  
triangle division, which is Regular Army, plus a certain number of  
selectees. You will have to find out what the difference is between a  
square division and a triangle division. The square division is about  
22,000 men --

GENERAL SHEDD: (interposing) Eighteen or nineteen thousand men.

THE PRESIDENT: A typical triangle division is about 12 to 14 thousand men.  
Of course eventually the triangle division will supersede the square

division as far as we can tell.

Q This is the biggest camp you have seen?

THE PRESIDENT: It is not the biggest one we have.

Q This is the first one where you have seen them out in the process of training?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

I can't think of anything else.

Q Can you tell us about the seizure of Italian ships?

THE PRESIDENT: I hate to spoil a good story for the boys who are still in Washington.

Q Can you tell us if it was done at your direction?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you can make certain assumptions.

Q Can we make any about what is going to be done?

THE PRESIDENT: Don't cross creeks without a pontoon bridge. You saw them up there.

Q How did you like Columbia and the Governor's house --  
(interposing)

THE PRESIDENT: / I wasn't there this morning, but I have been there before.

It is a very nice house that the Governor of South Carolina lives in there, and I had a very good breakfast there the last time I was in it.

(Referring to Fort Jackson) I think it is a great site and they have done a wonderful piece of work. The fact that they started in September and here it is still March and practically complete except for the trimmings -- flowers and pine trees. Young pine trees will come up and it will look like a million dollars next fall.

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CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #730,  
Upon Completion of Inspection at  
Fort Bragg, North Carolina,  
March 31, 1941.

(Major General Jacob L. Devers, Commanding Officer, Fort Bragg,  
North Carolina, was present at this Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: Come in here, General, and answer some questions

Q Mr. President, we are all being asked what we are going to do, whether  
we are going to keep the ships taken over or give them away.

THE PRESIDENT: Too far from salt water to reply to a question like that.

About the camp, we are on time here and within the cost estimate. This  
is the second camp today. Glad to have found that. (To General Devers)  
Is there any mystery about those guns?

GENERAL DEVERS: Not that I know of. There may be.

THE PRESIDENT: There are a number of 75's, World War 75's, I think, some of  
them are under that shed over there, which are about to leave here for  
Greece.

Q Any other material?

THE PRESIDENT: The new equipment is coming in in sufficient quantities for  
training purposes. That does not mean full equipment of each regiment  
or battalion, but there is sufficient new equipment coming in for train-  
ing purposes. And we have two very interesting battalions -- colored  
engineers.

GENERAL DEVERS: We have one regiment of colored engineers and will have  
another June fifteenth.

THE PRESIDENT: That's the first time that has ever been done, and also two  
anti-aircraft regiments.

Q Can you tell us about any additional aid?

THE PRESIDENT: Just happened to think of that. Just happened to mention this.

Q May we say that this is not all that is going?

THE PRESIDENT: It's a fairly general statement -- it's good enough.

Q Are they reconditioned 75's?

GENERAL DEVERS: They are the split-trail.

THE PRESIDENT: They are World War, but they have the modern high-speed carriages.

Q Mr. President, --

(interposing)

THE PRESIDENT: /Frank (Frank Kluckhohn), you can be persistent, but you won't get anywhere.

Q Are you very well satisfied?

THE PRESIDENT: Very well. We are up to 40,000 men here now and it will get up to about 65,000 within about two months. Nearly all of the housing is finished. In that new section we just came through they are finishing the housing. This part around here with these white stucco buildings with red roofs is the permanent part of Fort Bragg that was started about 1928. We used this during the World War, but after the war we let it go to pieces until 1928, then started on these structures.

GENERAL DEVERS: We put one up here every thirty-two minutes, or is it twenty-eight minutes?

THE PRESIDENT: That's pretty good.

(To Press) I think you have received about everything.

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CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #731,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 1, 1941, 4.12 P.M.

(Miss Hedda Hopper was a guest at this Press Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: What is the story about Bruce (Mr. Pinter, of the New York Herald Tribune) getting arrested?

Q They dragged him off to camp. He was three days overdue.

THE PRESIDENT: I just pardoned a fellow for that day before yesterday.

Q He is on his way back to Fort Bragg.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he get back here?

MR. EARLY: He just came in, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we ought to excuse him for being two days late.

MR. DONALDSON: All in!

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have rather bad news this afternoon about a member of the White House Correspondents' Association -- about to be court-martialed. I think we can straighten that out all right. If any of you fellows get into similar trouble, let me know.

Q Can you fix a parking ticket, Mr. President? (Laughter) (No answer.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have any news at all today. I am leaving out speculation entirely, and as far as news goes, there isn't any, except that I checked up this afternoon on what I had done in the last three days, since the signing of the 1776 Bill, in the way of putting it into effect, and I have a summary here -- daily summary -- that brings it up to this afternoon, showing that we have authorized out of the five items in the bill -- the Army, Navy, Treasury Department, and Department of Agriculture -- a total of a little over a billion; I think actually a billion, 80 million dollars out of those five items to be handled by

the four departments. That is something out of each item.

Q That means you have 300 million yet to come?

THE PRESIDENT: No, this is new procurement.

Q New procurement under the 1776 Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, where does the Treasury come in?

THE PRESIDENT: Miscellaneous.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about the billion, three?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't got those figures here.

Q Mr. President, this takes the form of definite allocation of funds for specific departments?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, for specific things; in other words, not a lump sum; it's for specific things.

Q Can you give us a breakdown of --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I can't give you any breakdown of those things.

Q Is this for new construction?

THE PRESIDENT: This is for procurement.

Q Can you define that?

THE PRESIDENT: No; orders -- placing orders.

Q That is for goods later to go under the 7 billion?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q You didn't mention the Maritime Commission, sir; is that because there has been no allotment, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there are five items; there's something in each.

Q To refresh our memory, sir, could you give us the categorical heads of those five items?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I can't; I don't remember the language well enough. But

Item 1 is all kinds of Army material, and Item 2 was -- that's Item 1, I think it was Navy material too -- Army and Navy; Item 2 was aviation material; Item 3, as I remember it, was automotive material; Item 4 was agricultural material; Item 5 was miscellaneous material. I think there were only five items, and I don't remember what ships is under.

Q Was it all to Great Britain, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: To various countries -- more than one country.

Q More than two, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: More than one country. I see where you would lead to with that question.

Q Agricultural material means raw products or food?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, or processed.

Q Mr. President, is consideration being given to insure that these shipments get over on the other side?

THE PRESIDENT: That has been given out for about a year and a half; still being considered.

Q New plant construction in this, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't break down, because that's almost like itemizing.

Q Has determination been made as to which countries it is going to?

THE PRESIDENT: I said more than one.

Q Will China get any of it?

THE PRESIDENT: I said more than one.

Q In these allocations, are you operating on any formula whereby production would be prorated to this country and other democracies?

THE PRESIDENT: No, all you have to do is to read the appropriation bill; it is the regular appropriation bill. New material for the Army and Navy and the 7-billion-dollar appropriation bill is over and above all of that.

Naturally, nothing would be sent out of this country until it is finished.

MR. GODWIN: May I ask you a question about these ships in "protective custody"? I think the general public believes that those ships have been seized for American use; my question is, Is there any law at all that permits that?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer is, Earl, that there isn't any news today. That's all I can tell you.

MR. GODWIN: Anyhow, I asked the question!

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q During the World War those ships were requisitioned and paid for?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Was that before or after we declared war?

THE PRESIDENT: After, I think. (Another newspaperman corroborated the President on this.)

Q Mr. President, referring to the lend-lease matter for a moment, have you any idea, sir, how soon that stuff will be moving over?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say in the next couple of years.

Q Mr. President, all or any part of this can be retained in this country, can't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; and as I said, it can't very well be shipped until it is made.

Q Can you give us any figure as to how much has been moved out of the one billion, three?

THE PRESIDENT: I will try to have those figures by Friday.

Q Those 75's from Fort Bragg are out of the billion, three?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, are you ready to announce a new merchant ship building program?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Without referring to figures, sir, could you tell us whether any of that material shipped abroad out of the one billion 300 million has reached a foreign country unhurt?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I haven't had time to check up.

Q Have you consulted with Mr. Welles (the Under Secretary of State) about the protests on the ship seizures?

THE PRESIDENT: No; and I haven't even got the real story up to date. The last I heard was just what Bob Jackson (the Attorney General) told me over the telephone, which was a report which he got from the Treasury Department and he restated it to me from memory. That is all I have, and that is not very substantially different from what appeared in the papers this morning.

Q Mr. President, is there any news on your conversation with Secretary Wickard and Leon Henderson?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the usual check-up.

Q Is Henderson going to head a new price division?

THE PRESIDENT: No, there is nothing in sight; he is going ahead on present work, which is pretty important.

Q Still in the Advisory Council?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q When we last talked with you, you hadn't heard the final report from Lauchlin Currie; have you anything for us now?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I read two volumes that "Lauch" brought back from China, on the boat, and they're extremely interesting; but I haven't had a chance to talk over the two volumes with "Lauch". I saw him about two minutes ago.

Q. Are they optimistic as to China's future?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you would have to read both volumes before you could say. (Laughter)

Q. Have you taken up the St. Lawrence Waterway question yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't done anything about it.

Q. Mr. President, have you any comment to make on the Army here, as to Fort Jackson and Fort Bragg?

THE PRESIDENT: I was very much pleased. I think all of you who were with me thought it was very good performance. The selectees in a great many cases worked in with the existing National Guard and Regular Army units. It is very, very good for the health; those who were there saw that. A number of them were a little overweight, but most of them had come down to normal within the last month or two, and were better off as the weeks went by. Some who were underweight were getting really built up, because, as a rule, we add about 15 pounds to the average person who comes into the Army or Navy.

Q. Suppose you take Reynolds! (Laughter) (Reference was made to Mr. Thomas F. Reynolds, head of the White House Correspondents' Association.)

THE PRESIDENT: I mean averaging it up, it's good; we would only put perhaps 10 pounds on Reynolds! (Laughter) (He probably weighs well over 200 now.)

MR. GODWIN: I lost a pound a day!

Q. As a seafaring man, have you any observation to make on the Battle of the Ionian Sea?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. I am not dead-sure as to whether it was in the Ionian Sea; in other words, practically all that we have got has been just what has appeared in the paper, and we won't probably get any report until the Admiralty gets it in London. Nothing has come through yet.

Q Have you anything to say about the labor situation? -- how about your telegram to the bituminous coal folks?

THE PRESIDENT: The only word was that they were still in session about an hour ago.

Q I believe you talked with the legislative group on the general question of legislation to control controversies in the defense situation; was there anything concrete outlined in that conversation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except, of course, the general idea that if we can -- what shall I say? -- the general labor and employer-employee situation can be worked out with existing machinery, in a mutual spirit of give-and-take, an understanding of the necessity of avoiding slowing down the defense program -- going to give it a fair trial before anything different is done.

Q Mr. President, are you pleased with the record to date of the Mediation Board?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Are you pleased with the record of the Mediation Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe I can answer questions Am I pleased at this or angry at that.

Q Do you think --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think it is going along all right.

Q What do you think of the Democratic leaders of the House taking a recess for ten days, beginning Thursday?

THE PRESIDENT: What have they got?

Q They have a few odds and ends left.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, don't you suppose we could get them back if something other than odds and ends should turn up within the next week or two?

Q In connection with Italy, have you any reason to believe that the Italian people would welcome a separate peace if they could get it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I could talk about that.

Q Were you informed of that telegram sent by Knox and Knudsen?

THE PRESIDENT: I read about it.

Q Do you care to say anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing I heard was that over half of the people went back to work.

Q That's what's in the news, at least.

Q Were you acquainted with their intention to do this before it was done?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think I can answer that, either; in other words, that is almost inquisitional as to what I had heard and what I had not. I can't answer that type of question.

Q Mr. President, are you planning to set up any kind of organization to handle the shipments to Britain -- not the actual shipments, but the channel of supplies?

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing separate; there is lots of Government machinery.

Q Mr. President, there is a report that the United States is going to stabilize the American-Canadian dollar, dollar for dollar.

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it!

Q Mr. President, have you chosen a successor to Dr. Dykstra yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, could you say why no nomination has been sent yet to replace Mr. McReynolds on the Supreme Court?

THE PRESIDENT: Like Topsy -- growing up; hasn't growed up yet. (Laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President!

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #732,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 4, 1941, 10.45 A.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in!

THE PRESIDENT: I think I said on Tuesday that I would try to get something on that billion, 3 -- that is, old material. These figures are necessarily very tentative. We have since -- well, this week -- taken about 500 million dollars' worth of old materials for the aid of democracies, that figure being what might be called an in-between figure; it is not a final determination of the value of any individual product. It represents an in-between figure, between the original cost and what might be called scrap value, and is therefore not a final -- only a tentative -- figure.

Then, since Tuesday, under the 7 billion, we have allocated enough money for 212 new merchant ships and, I think, about 50 to 60 new ways, plus funds -- preliminary funds -- for the repair of damaged merchant ships. I have no -- except a very general -- figure in my head as to that; it is about half a billion more, about 500 million for those new ships and the new ways.

And we are now in the process of studying and putting through Army, Navy and Agriculture allocations to about a billion and a half to 2 billion more.

That is the progress report.

Q Mr. President, repair of damaged ships -- will they be Italian and German ships?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, the first item you spoke of, when speaking of the business as not a final figure; I gather, then, sir, that that charge is not made

on the appropriation bill value of them as new?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us when it is estimated that the first of those 212 new ships would be ready?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say the end of this year.

Q Are they the "ugly duckling" type?

THE PRESIDENT: Both -- two types.

Q You have a billion, 580 up to now; you had --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What's this billion, 580?

Q You had a billion; now you have added 500 million more.

THE PRESIDENT: About 500 million more for shipping and ship repairs.

Q That brings it to a billion, 580; then you --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now in process.

Q That brings it up to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  billion already tentatively allocated.

THE PRESIDENT: No, because the last of it is under study.

Q You have a billion and a half under study?

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Mr. President, when you refer to the repair of damaged merchant ships, do you mean foreign ships as well as our own?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, anything at all.

Q (by Mr. Reynolds) Mr. President, do you anticipate that the transfer of 212 new merchant ships will relieve the need for convoying?

THE PRESIDENT: Tom, I don't believe I can make a categorical statement on that.

MR. REYNOLDS: One more question: There were reports this morning that general staff talks had been conducted between the United States and Great Britain on the question of convoying.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Of course we have observers over there; that's all.

Q Is there any tentative study at present of the repair of warships?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, are all these new ways to be on the ocean -- the seaboard?

THE PRESIDENT: Necessarily, they are -- unfortunately. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, you spoke of 500 million under the 1 billion, 3; is that all to date, or have there been some previous allocations on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think that is all to date.

Q Mr. President, do you plan any further moves to get work going in places where work has stopped in defense production?

THE PRESIDENT: We are moving just as fast as we possibly can.

Q Mr. President, two ships -- the LOCKSLEY and the ROBIN HOOD -- carrying a number of tons of United States mail are supposed to have been tied up in Brooklyn by strikes since March 18. I think that is the first time mail has been tied up by strike. Have you got that under consideration?

THE PRESIDENT: Haven't heard of it.

Q There is a report that you might remove the combat zone on the Gulf of Aden in the Red Sea.

THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps it is a little premature to say whether I have or haven't; but obviously, in the waters of the Red Sea, if there is no fighting going on, we would consider withdrawing that area from the combat zone area. I think it is perhaps a few days premature.

Q Mr. President, could you give us any breakdown of the billion, 3 allocation?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean?

Q Of the material already on hand -- the nature of it.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no, not yet. Of course you have a pretty good slant on one or two things, such as guns for Greece.

Q On the ships again: you said there would be two types?

THE PRESIDENT: Two what?

Q I understood you to say there would be two types of ships.

THE PRESIDENT: One would be an "ugly duckling" and the other would be a ship.

(Laughter)

Q A swan?

THE PRESIDENT: One will be shaped, and the other will be, roughly, straight lines.

Q We didn't get clear the statement whether there has been allocation for repair of foreign warships.

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't broken it down yet. There have been no ships that have come in for repair. It is a very small sum.

Q There is a statutory allocation in the appropriation, isn't there?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q The appropriation contains a statutory allocation for that, doesn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but that, of course, has to be reallocated to me; I have to wait until I get some ships here to repair. It's a relatively small, preliminary sum, and we do not know what the future will bring forth -- how many ships there will be to repair.

Q Are there not some German and Italian ships that could be repaired?

(Laughter)

Q Mr. President, what reports do you have on coal stoppage and its effect on defense production?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope very much they will be at work on Monday.

Q (by May Craig, representing Portland papers) Mr. President, can we find out where these new ways are?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there are any in Maine! (Laughter) There may

be, at that.

MISS CRAIG: Then can we find out where they are?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so, pretty soon; better ask the Maritime Commission.

Q Any story in the fact there are to be two kinds of ships -- the "ugly duckling" and the real ship?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, was there anything said in your conference with the Yugoslavian Minister about aid to Yugoslavia?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

Q Can you tell us anything more?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing more, except that Yugoslavia has expressed the desire to acquire certain types of things -- materials and what-not; and we are going ahead to see whether we can get them for Yugoslavia or not.

Q Any condition?

THE PRESIDENT: No condition.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment to make on the action of the Department of Agriculture yesterday in lifting the prices on butter, eggs, chickens, and so on?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is primarily a stabilization matter; in the case of hogs, there is a desire to present a reasonable assurance to the hog grower that if he starts the fattening process by feeding more corn to the hog he will get a reasonable price for the hog meat; in other words, we want to encourage the fattening of hogs and the use of corn for that purpose. It takes some time to do it, and we believe that the farmers will now go ahead with that process.

In the case of dairy products, very much the same objective is given; because, obviously, with a heifer it costs something to turn that heifer

into a milk cow. We want to give reasonable assurance that the people who turn heifers into milk cows will be able to get a reasonable price for the butter or dried milk.

Q Mr. President, will your conference with Mr. Currie this afternoon have any bearing on aid to China?

THE PRESIDENT: He is going to make that famous report. He is lunching with me. This is the first chance I have had to talk with him. I have read the two books.

Q Then no determination of aiding China has been made yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I have to talk to him first.

Q Could you tell us whether the Yugoslavian Minister indicated the definite intention of his country to resist oppression?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think the matter was discussed.

Q Mr. President, will Mr. Currie speak to you as a representative of the Chinese Government? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: How about it, "Lauch"? (More laughter) (The reporter could hear no answer.)

Q Any comment on the recall of the Italian Naval Attaché?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you have all the facts. It is pretty well proven that a great deal of this sabotage was on the order of this Italian Naval Attaché; and of course it is an illegal thing; therefore, he ordered an illegal thing to be done by foreigners in the United States. There was only one thing to do in those circumstances.

Q Is similar action contemplated in the case of the Germans?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't heard about it.

Q Representative Vinson was down here yesterday. He has introduced two bills in the House -- one to prevent work stoppage and another to provide a

"cooling-off period". Could you give us any comment?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't read them, so I couldn't comment. As a matter of fact, there is only, at the present time, one really serious stoppage of work, and that is at Allis-Chalmers; and that is really a very bad situation. Something has got to be done about it, quite soon. I have asked for a little time -- not very much.

Q Mr. President, we couldn't hear what you said. Will you repeat that?

THE PRESIDENT: Foote, will you read that to them?

(The reporter then read the paragraph referred to.)

Q What do you mean by "a little time", sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not any eight or ten weeks more.

Q What could be done about it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: You see they are having a meeting before the National Mediation Board tomorrow at 10 o'clock; so I couldn't very well prejudge anyone before that.

Q Mr. President, have you any reports of Communist activities in connection with that strike?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; but of course that same thing applies to a good many other individuals in the United States -- not labor as a whole.

Q Could I infer from your statement, sir, that the Ford situation at present is not serious in regard to defense?

THE PRESIDENT: Not after only one day, or two days.

Q As a matter of fact, I wonder whether many defense orders in that plant are tied up?

THE PRESIDENT: Some on parts would affect other plants.

Q You say you don't regard it as serious?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. It's only the second day. Give them a day or two.

Q Mr. President, have you been in touch with the Governor of Michigan on that strike?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, that Allis-Chalmers thing: If I got the comment correctly, you asked for a little time -- time for whom?

THE PRESIDENT: Both -- everybody.

Q How do you mean when you say you have asked for a little time?

THE PRESIDENT: From the Press. (Laughter) In other words, I am asking the Press not to press today. (Laughter)

Q (by Mr. Godwin) The court really seemed to indicate that the Governor has the same object that the President has -- that they might "talk it over", to use that phrase; is that orthodox?

THE PRESIDENT: No; that's "iffy".

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Mr. President!

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #733,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 8, 1941, 4.10 P.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got two things here. One is a statement -- is it mimeographed Steve?

MR. EARLY: Not yet.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve will have it mimeographed and you can have it -- About the work of this new organization called the United Service Organizations for National Defense. Yesterday they announced their program of service to soldiers, sailors and defense workers. This work, of course, -- by way of explanation -- is essentially around the various camps, navy yards, and new plants, and provides for the recreation, welfare and spiritual needs of the young men and women who have answered, and will answer, the call to the National Defense. The six-member organizations of the United Service Organizations are fulfilling an essential and patriotic duty. This duty -- of maintaining morale on the home front -- is one in which every American shares. The Federal Government is doing its part. It stands squarely behind the United Service Organizations, and Congress has been asked to provide money -- to provide money. The national private organizations which have incorporated the United Service Organizations as an over-all planning body are: The Y. M. C. A.; Y. W. C. A.; Catholic Community Service; Jewish Welfare Board; Salvation Army, and the Travelers Aid Society. They are to be congratulated on their vision and on the practical common sense of their plans for staffing and operating these 300 odd service centers. The local communities, both public and private organizations

are preparing to cooperate with them. It is only the groundwork, but what they need is the support of every individual citizen, and they should have united support. To facilitate their work throughout the country a national conference of community leaders, to be held in Washington, April 17, is in cooperation with the Federal Security Administrator, and the Secretaries of War and Navy.

Well, we have been working up towards that. We have got them all together, and of course, if I was writing a story, I would emphasize the fact that we have got all of these organizations in under the same tent -- which is a perfectly magnificent thing, and didn't even happen in the World War.

Q What is that, after the Jewish Welfare, and before you got to Travelers Aid?

THE PRESIDENT: Travelers Aid?

Q The next to the last one.

THE PRESIDENT: Salvation Army. My Lord, you are not forgetting that! It is a great job. In other words, they are all sitting around the same table and working out a combination of their work.

The other thing I have got is a story which I got out of O.P.M., a new basis to show the progress of the work, and I don't want anybody to suggest that this is being given out with any ideas that we are viewing with pride. We are not -- are not satisfied. There is room for an awful lot more improvement; but it just shows the amount of work that has been done in the past three months, in comparison with the previous six months, in terms of disbursement. Now that is a new approach. It isn't in terms of X number of airplanes, or so many guns; it is in terms of disbursement. In other words, money actually spent

out of the Treasury for work done, and as you know, we don't spend the money out of the Treasury until the work is done. In terms of dollars -- in the first three months on these particular things -- the acquisition of defense material and construction for defense -- we have paid out in the first three months of 1941 one billion, eight hundred million dollars, whereas in the whole of the last six months of 1940 -- calendar year -- we only paid out one billion, four. On table number two -- put it on aircraft, ships and ordinance. Those three items in the last six months of 1940 we paid out an average of \$116,000,000. a month, and the average of the first three months of this year we paid out an average of \$197,000,000. per month. On new plant facilities during the whole of 1940 we only paid out \$45,000,000., and in the first three months of 1941 we paid out \$240,000,000. For bases, stations, and fortifications during the last six months of 1940, we paid out \$330,000,000., and the first three months of 1941 we paid out \$550,000,000.

Q 550 was that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: 550. Those figures, of course, do not include any payments on British orders.

Well, that is just to give a slant on the angle of money paid out -- actual disbursements, and the fact that we are very greatly accelerating it gives a slight comparison of things that have been done in the last three months -- I mean the three months of 1941 in comparison with the six months of 1940.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) But it is not to be taken, as I remarked before, as any satisfaction on my part with the progress of the program.

Still much too slow.

Q Mr. President, did you say there was some construction in that first item?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, in the third item.

Q No, the first.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes, that is over-all money. Your first item includes the other items that I mentioned. In other words, the last items I mentioned were in terms of millions.

Q Does the first item mean the total over-all?

Q Does it mean everything you have spent that money for has been delivered?

THE PRESIDENT: Or constructed.

Q Work done or delivered?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, that includes things not only for our own use but also some that may have been transferred for Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think anything out of this has been transferred.

Q Mr. President, that would include partial payments for partially completed warships and things like that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q How much do you think this should be accelerated in your own mind? You say it is much too slow.

THE PRESIDENT: More.

Q What is being done?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't give you a figure on that.

Q What is being done to do that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we will just keep on using 'chestnut burrs' all the time. You are familiar with the use of 'chestnut burrs' to make a mule go. (Laughter)

Q Can you identify the mule? (Laughter)

Q Who is the mule? (More laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You ought to, you come from Missouri, Frank. (Laughter)

Q (Frank) I came from Minnesota, sir.

Q Mr. President, what are the main reasons why the progress is, as you say, much too slow?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, thousands, thousands of reasons.

Q I say the main.

THE PRESIDENT: Individuals -- mostly human beings.

Q Can you break that down? (Much laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, do you agree with Mr. Biggers that the next hundred days are going to be crucial in our production program?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and the next hundred after that (he laughs) and the next hundred after that probably. I can't see as far ahead as that.

Q Mr. President, Mr. Knudsen has endorsed this 'cooling off' period before strikes came up, and so has Mr. Biggers, and there seems to be general sentiment among the Defense officials. Can you state what your views are on such a program, since the labor situation seems to be a little easier now?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is working in that general direction.

Q Do you think it should be done through legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is working in that general direction at the present time.

Q Toward cooling off?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, in other words, we are looking forward to a result.

Q Mr. President, Secretary of the Navy Knox yesterday commended those newspapers and photographic agencies which made no reference to the arrival of the battleship MALAYA in New York harbor. That might have been

interpreted as a rebuke to those who did? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. The editorials in those papers who did print the stories and did carry the pictures, were the lamest excuses to try to get square with our reading public that I have ever read.

Q Do you believe, sir, that voluntary censorship --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q Do you think that the voluntary censorship as suggested was more effective?

THE PRESIDENT: I noticed some of the papers advocated the immediate clamping down of legal censorship, which is very interesting probably to all the other papers in the United States. I prefer to go along with the great majority of the newspapers in the United States at this time. I think that covers it.

Q Would you like to be quoted in words on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I much prefer to go along with the overwhelming majority of newspapers at this time.

(Reporter was asked to read back above statement, at the request of Mr. Godwin.)

Q Does that mean something more may be necessary later?

THE PRESIDENT: You can leave out 'at this time', because there is nothing else in sight.

Q Would you prefer that we leave that off, 'at this time'?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe the best thing to do is to add to it what I had, 'nothing else is in sight at this time'.

Q Mr. President, have you any late word on the coal and steel situations?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't had anything -- the coal thing has actually been signed -- the agreement is still being edited.

Q Mr. President, is there anything --

(interposing)

THE PRESIDENT: /What?

Q What is the latest word on steel?

THE PRESIDENT: Steel? They have another week -- a week from today the men are to work.

Q Anything on the Ford situation, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: The Ford situation? I haven't heard anything since yesterday, when Steve (Mr. Early) probably told you the Governor suggested that if Mr. Murray could go out there and be there today, instead of coming to Washington, as he had intended, he thought it would be helpful if I could send word to Mr. Murray that I could see him tomorrow or the next day, whenever he did come down to Washington, that he might be able to feel free to go out to the strike, so he said that to Mr. Murray and he went to Detroit instead of coming to Washington.

Q Do you think, on this international situation, that our arms will get to Yugoslavia in time to be of use?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Are the shipments being rushed?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, as fast as we can get them off.

Q Anything new on opening the Red Sea?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q Mr. President, five Governors representing the Southern Governors Conference arrive here tomorrow for furthering defense industries. Do their efforts in that regard have your support?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me tell you -- let me tell you a story. In the first place, this should not be regarded as -- what shall I say -- National -- National Defense. Proceeding on a basis of the benefit by dollars and cents to each and every State of the Union on a square mile basis or a population basis, we are trying to change, trying to

create National Defense on the basis of the greatest speed and efficiency, on a national basis.

Now, I can go on and point out that I had a certain group come in from certain States that have what might be called a rather severe winter climate -- three or four feet of snow -- they understood perfectly well when I explained to them that we could not put a camp of 60,000 men up in their State, except in the summer-time; and because we want these camps to operate all the year round, from the point of view of National Defense, we put them in another section of the country, where they could run all through the winter as well as all through the summer. In other words we weren't doing it on a geographical basis but on a climate basis, not an area basis or a sectional basis but on a climate basis.

In the same way, there are certain industries which from the point of view of efficiency ought to go where they have the best and cheapest access to raw materials, and the most practical and useful access to the labor -- type of labor -- that goes into it. Well, that means that there are certain areas, unfortunately, in the country, that do not have ready access to certain types of materials, or certain forms of labor.

Now in the South of course, they have a great many more of these camps than any other place in the country, that is on account of the climate. The Middle West and the East have probably a great deal more factory production allocated to them than in other parts of the country. That is solely from the point of view of efficiency. We are trying all the time, of course, to decentralize -- and it is working out pretty well -- in accordance with efficiency. I wouldn't want to put,

for instance, a steel plant up at the entrance to the Glacier National Park. I don't think it would work. I don't think that I would want to put an all-the-year-round camp of 60,000 men up at the mouth of the Glacier National Park. I don't think it would work in the winter time. We don't need that many ski troops. (Laughter) And so I think it will be a fairly easy thing to persuade these Governors of Southern States that they are getting a good deal, and we want them to have anything else they can handle for the efficiency of the whole national program.

Q Mr. President, will any of these Danish ships that were taken over be used to transport munitions to Yugoslavia?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't got them yet for operating purposes. I am asking Congress for legislation, day after tomorrow, in regard to the purchase of certain foreign ships in our harbors. I can't tell you anything more about it, and I don't like to write the message today. I have to wait a little while.

Q We may assume, sir, that that will include some of the ships that have been seized?

THE PRESIDENT: They will be the Danish ships.

Q Will you specify the nationality?

THE PRESIDENT: Ships which should be purchased, or rather acquired under other forms of acquisition.

Q The German and Italian too?

THE PRESIDENT: I should say that would be a different form of acquisition, in view of the fact that they violated American laws.

Q Mr. President, did you discuss this Danish question with Mr. de Kauffmann (the Danish Minister) today?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Did you have his acquiescence to it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, there was a bill introduced in the House recently that has been discussed with certain people at the Maritime Commission, providing for the chartering of these ships?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly; the same general idea. Charter or purchase, it doesn't make much difference.

Q Mr. President, you may have answered this question sometime before. Is there any law under which you can acquire these German and Italian ships other than purchase?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so.

Q And may be condemned?

THE PRESIDENT: After all, things like that -- as I have said several times before, if the Federal Government in times of emergency -- mind you this is not a full emergency -- can take away your ship, Frank, (Frank Kluckhohn of the New York Times), your yacht (laughter), against your will, you see, that is called the old "Right of Eminent Domain". Well, if they can do it to an American citizen -- the yacht in our harbor -- I think probably the Federal Government would have the right in a future emergency to use the old "Right of Eminent Domain" against some foreign ship.

Q But that would be only under a full emergency, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is the way I construe it, although I think probably you can get legal opinion to say that I can do it, even under the present limited emergency.

Q You can condemn a building under "Eminent Domain" without emergency.

THE PRESIDENT: You have to have legislation.

Q Mr. President, when you take by "Eminent Domain" it is for the use of the Government? Could you devote it to the use of another government?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not necessarily. You could if you wanted to -- if you were at war with the other government.

Q Mr. President, yesterday you saw Governor Lehman and some of the New York Power Authority people. Can you tell us whether or not you have deferred the St. Lawrence power?

THE PRESIDENT: We decided to devote the next two weeks to a study stage of cooperation between the two -- State of New York and Federal Government.

Q Did you say 'study stage'?

THE PRESIDENT: Study stage for about two weeks.

Q Mr. President, I am not quite sure on this ship business -- on German and Italian ships, you do think they have some legal way?

THE PRESIDENT: Forfeiture.

Q Forfeiture? That would be under sections 2 and 3 of the Espionage Act?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, you would have to show me the bill.

Q That would be through existing legislation at any rate?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q This is a full or limited emergency?

THE PRESIDENT: What we have got now is limited.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

APRIL 8, 1941

## STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Yesterday, in New York, the United Service Organizations for National Defense announced their program of service to soldiers, sailors and defense workers. In providing for the recreation, welfare and spiritual needs of young men and women who have answered -- and will answer -- the call of national defense, the six-member organizations of the U.S.O. are fulfilling an essential and patriotic duty.

This duty -- of maintaining morale on the home front -- is one in which every American shares. The Federal Government is doing its part. It stands squarely behind the U.S.O. program and Congress has been asked to provide money for building and equipping the necessary club houses and community centers. The national private organizations which have incorporated the U.S.O. as an overall planning body -- the YMCA, the YWCA, the Catholic Community Service, the Jewish Welfare Board, the Salvation Army, and the Travelers Aid Society -- are to be congratulated on their vision and on the practical common sense of their plans for staffing and operating these 300 odd service centers. In local communities, both public and private organizations are preparing to cooperate to the fullest extent in this Nation-wide effort.

But imperative as all this is, it is only the groundwork. What United Service needs, if it is to become a reality, is the active personal support of every individual citizen. That is a duty in which we all share -- in which, I know, we all are glad to share.

The United Service Organizations should and will have our united support -- in financial contributions and in personal effort. To facilitate their work throughout the country a national conference of community leaders, to be held in Washington, April 17, is being sponsored by Federal Security Administrator, Paul V. McNutt, with the cooperation of the Secretaries of War and of the Navy. I understand that invitations to several hundred Community leaders were wired yesterday.

I am certain that the American people will get behind this United Service program with characteristic whole-heartedness. I know of no enterprise more vital to the well-being of the millions of young people who are rallying to the country's call.

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CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #734,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 11, 1941, 10.45 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: You people are becoming very popular. I am going to charge admission pretty soon. I have to pay some income tax -- so must charge admission to the audience so that they can see and hear you all. Think that is a good idea?

MR. GODWIN: I think it is a swell idea. I hope you charge them enough.

Q The question is who is on exhibit? (Laughter)

Q Comedy is it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, melodrama.

Q Each might bring you a souvenir.

Q If it's educational it's tax-free, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q If it's educational and charitable it's tax-free.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q If it's educational and charitable it's tax-free.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q How long do you contemplate being at Warm Springs?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the plans yet.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have enough to keep you busy for three or four hours.

The first is the signing of the order this morning creating the Office of Price Administration and Civilian Supply, under the Office of Emergency Management, to be headed by Mr. Henderson (Mr. Leon Henderson). This has been worked out with the approval of O.P.M. It continues and emphasizes the protection of the consumer, and it provides for programs

to what we call residual supply of materials among the competing civilian demands -- I would say what we call consumer -- after the military requirements are satisfied. Steve (Mr. Early) will have copies of the order for you when Leon will have a press conference tomorrow, to explain any details. It -- among other things -- it merges the existing offices under the <sup>[National Defense Advisory Commission]</sup> National Emergency Committee of Seven -- the old one -- it merges two of those offices and in effect puts them together using the staffs of those two offices. One is Mr. Henderson's office of Price Stabilization, and the other is Miss Elliott's (Miss Harriet Elliott) office of Consumer Protection -- puts those two together. Well, that means essentially that out of -- out of the original organization which of course was a temporary one -- to get things started -- out of those seven original offices, five have now been consolidated and it leaves only two out of the original seven -- the Agriculture Division and the Transportation Division -- which have not yet been consolidated into the larger picture; and those we are now studying exactly where they would fit in in the developed picture. In other words, whether they would come in under the Office of Emergency Management, or whether they would work in through other agencies of the Government.

Er -- In this Order there are a great many Statutes that are referred to. It is a technical matter, but if anything occurs to you on reading the Orders -- to what all these section references are -- Leon will have a -- I have them right here -- a statement or explanation of what the older Statutes are. I think that about covers it. I haven't -- I don't think there is any use in going into detail.

Q Would you give us about a paragraph on what the Office of Emergency Management is, who is on it, and what its function is?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, very simple -- when the Reorganization Act was put through, there were authorized several organizations under the Office of the President, because they did not fit in anywhere else. In other words, they referred to a good many different branches of the Government, such for example as the Office of the Budget. The Office of the Budget refers to all of the offices of the Government, Departments, Agencies and everything else. Beforehand it had been more or less under the Treasury, but of course that was not right because they have to pass on the Treasury estimates. So, they were made an independent Office in the Office of the President. Secondly, there was the National Resources Board, which of course again touches a great many different Departments, and then there was authorized at that time an emergency office in the Office of the President, not to be set up until and unless needed, and that was called the Office of Emergency Management. Now, under the Office of Emergency Management we set up the O.P.M., and now we are setting up this new organization; and there may be others, we can't tell.

Q Mr. President, when Mr. Henderson's organization arrives at a conclusion or determination as to a price or priority, will he have authority to enforce it? Is that made clear in the Orders?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as the laws go.

Q Is that included in these --

Q (interposing) Mr. President, how far does --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) In other words, until you have read the Orders, I don't think there is any use talking about it.

Q Will Mr. Henderson continue on the S.E.C.?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as I know.

Q When and where are we going to have that Press Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q When and where are we going to have that Press Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: At his office, tomorrow morning.

MR. LEON HENDERSON: 11 o'clock; we will put it on the notice outside.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, have you seen the sections of the proposed murals for the new War Department Building. They have been delivered here presumably? Have you?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. I would like to see them very much. Is there any scandal about them? (Laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I haven't seen them either.

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q Mr. President, a story has been printed again that Secretary Perkins has turned in her resignation. Is that true?

THE PRESIDENT: Just another story. It has been going on for eight years, so it's all right.

Q Mr. President, is there any question of transferring more destroyers to Britain at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Then, number two. Are you ready for number two? We are going to do a little jumping now.

I have signed the Act, or rather the Joint Resolution -- S. J. Resolution 7, affirming and approving non-recognition of the transfer of any geographic region in this hemisphere from one non-American power to another non-American power, and providing for consultation with other American republics, in the event that such transfers should appear likely. You are all familiar with that. It has been duly signed and is now a law.

You are familiar with the Danish agreement that was entered into. You know the reasons for it. You know the fact that Greenland is considered very definitely part of the Western Hemisphere and has the same status, both under the Monroe Doctrine and the various agreements that have been made by the American republics, as at other places, such as Martinique, Guadalupe, British Guiana, Trinidad, and so forth and so on. This Resolution of the Senate affirms that as the American policy.

Q Mr. President, does that imply that there is any consultation necessary with the American republics with respect to Greenland?

THE PRESIDENT: They all know about it.

Then, two proclamations, along the same general question of war. The first is the proclamation of a state of war between Germany and Italy on the one side and Yugoslavia on the other.

The other is the proclamation which revokes the combat area previously set forth and covering the mouth of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. At that time the original proclamation did not cover the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden in so many words, but it set up a small -- what you might call a "stopper" (he laughs a little) across the -- from the eastern-most tip of Africa to the Arabian coast. / In other words, you could go into the Red Sea without going through that area, and that area has now been revoked as a combat area, in effect making the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea open to commerce like any other non-combat zone.

Q Mr. President, in that connection, may I ask will the ships be permitted to go up to the Suez Canal?

THE PRESIDENT: I just said that you have taken the "stopper" out.

Q Yes, yes, Well, then, they can go out?

THE PRESIDENT: I have just said they have taken the "stopper" out. (He laughs)

Q Is the Suez Canal now in a declared combat zone?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q No?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not the Canal itself.

Q Not the canal itself? Could you tell us whether or not the combat zone begins at the eastern Mediterranean there, at the beginning there?

THE PRESIDENT: It covers the Mediterranean.

Q Do you think, sir, that they could go as far as Port Said, for instance?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't got a large-scale map here. I don't think it is a very practical question. I think they could go --

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) through Ismailia.

Q I am not quite clear on the law. When that combat zone is revoked American ships can carry anything into the --?

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What are the high seas? What are the high seas? The high seas are everything except things in the combat zone.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) In other words, the high seas. What is Buenos Aires?

Q Mr. President, I think there has been some confusion as to whether or not an American ship, with this revocation of the former order, can carry war materials destined for a belligerent through that area.

THE PRESIDENT: No, not for a belligerent, but for a neutral power.

Q They can take it to Egypt, for instance?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, Phil Murray said, when he was here day before yesterday, that he would like to have you speak for both of them about his meeting with you. Can you tell us what it related to?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, a lot of things, that's all. No use going into details on that. The less said on labor disputes on the outside the quicker they are settled.

Q Getting back to the combat zone -- there was a story printed this morning that you may ask for an amendment in repeal of the statutory provisions of Halifax --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I read it with great interest. First time I had ever heard of it.

Q Is the United States taking any military measures to protect Greenland?

THE PRESIDENT: You saw what the War Department said yesterday. The War Department said that there would be no news or any details relating to any bases from now on. You will have to get accustomed to that.  
(He laughs)

Q Any word on the Ford strike, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. I think my previous remarks apply -- the less said the quicker mended.

Q Mr. President, on this combat zone -- does it mean that American ships carrying goods to neutrals may traverse the Suez Canal?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I just said it isn't really a practical question. The Suez Canal, in the first place is in Egypt, and the two ports -- I will have to teach you geography, Paul. (Mr. Paul Leach of Chicago Daily News) I will have to learn some geography myself.

The Port Said is, as I remember it, at the Mediterranean end, and

I think it is called Ismailia that is at the other end, and I think there is a railroad along the Canal between those two places. Now, I haven't the faintest idea as to whether a ship would go through the Canal in order to discharge at Port Said, or would go alongside of Ismailia, and the stuff go across the Isthmus by rail.

Q The Mediterranean would remain out of bounds?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. I am not fully familiar with geography to be able to tell you off-hand whether the individual dock at Port Said is in the Mediterranean, or whether it is in the Canal, (he laughs), you see.

I don't know. Never been there.

Q Ismailia is in Egypt, is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q And that is a neutral country at which we can deliver supplies there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Under the Neutrality Act, sir, no supplies ultimately destined for any belligerent could be delivered to a neutral country for trans-shipment, could they?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That brings up other questions of international law. I would hesitate very much to say yes or no on that. You get things like a continuous voyage -- and if you will read John Bassett Moore's five volumes you will find the House has been on all four sides of that subject.

Q One is a good side then, isn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q One is a good side?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

Q Would that question be explored in connection with this new proclamation

opening up?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so -- we don't buy headaches unless we have to.

Q Mr. President, the Southern Governors report complete agreement, in view of the recommendation on industry. Would you comment, please?

THE PRESIDENT: They did report?

Q Reported complete agreement with you on the recommendation of plants and contracts.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, about all that could be said is this -- that they asked me whether I approved a statement. In other words, a policy that had been outlined by Army, Navy and O.P.M., which had been previously given out, and I said yes. Well, everybody was satisfied.  
(he laughs)

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Army, Navy, O.P.M., the Governors and the President -- all satisfied. (he laughs)

Q Have you seen Arthur Salter yet, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am going to see him day before yesterday -- tomorrow.

Q If he puts up this proposition of Halifax, would you consider it?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say that was purely hypothetical, because I never heard of it until I read the paper this morning.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President. (Mr. Godwin spoke rather softly).

Q Did you discuss the steel pact with Mr. Fairless and Mr. Olds yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Did I what?

Q Did you discuss the steel pact with Fairless or Olds?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Mr. President, the Northwest air base operating an airline from the Pacific coast in Seattle has applied for a certificate east to New

York City, across a part of Canada and I believe that that application has been placed before you for a decision?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. The only thing I have got is an application for somebody to get an airline from Seattle up to Vancouver, that is all.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, sir, Mr. President. (Much louder voice this time)

(They all laugh).

Q (To Mr. Godwin) You were being very polite.