

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #745,  
Executive Office of the President,  
May 28, 1941 -- 4.10 P.M., E.S.T.

(Press Conference normally held on May 27 was held today instead.)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got one or two matters here. Steve (Mr. Early) will give you a release on this. The -- I have signed a Joint Resolution of Congress authorizing an extension of the control of exports and strategic and critical articles and materials to the Philippine Islands. And then I have also signed the Proclamation putting this into effect. Then, in order to save time and trouble -- er -- licenses will be issued in the Philippine Islands by the High Commissioner acting on behalf of the Secretary of State. And since there is no District Court of the United States in the Philippines, jurisdiction of offenses committed in the Philippines, in violation of the Export Control Act, has been conferred on the Philippine courts.

Then I got this morning the second report -- three months -- of the first report from Mr. Gano Dunn on the steel -- Adequacy of the Steel Industry. Copies of this report and summaries of same will be available to the Press at the office of Mr. Tom Wilson, Room 5525, New Social Security Board Building at Fourth and Maryland Avenue. Then there is a summary here on this report -- the highlights. I will try and summarize the summary.

Prospective deficits in Great Lakes transportation capacity, blast furnace capacity and coke oven capacity that were forecast

in the first report as likely to be developed by the end of the present calendar year, have been voided by action of the industry to bring its production facilities into full balance. That means that there -- I take it they are -- er -- getting more steel out of the Bessemer process than coke oven and technical things of that kind.

Secondly, maximum reliable capacity of the industry that was first estimated in the first report at 91,124,000 tons has been increased to 91,338,000 tons, and further increases are in prospect. The creation of the Government-Industry Committees, now in process of formation, promises to increase greatly the effective cooperation of industry at maximum levels, by bringing about more even loading of the various steel companies through re-allocation of industry and fully utilizing certain less efficient capacity that is not now in full use. The passage of the Lend-lease Act, and further increases in the defense program, have caused sharp upward revisions of the estimated requirements for steel, both for military and civilian uses.

As a result of the increased demands, the second report -- this one -- represents a deficit -- prospective deficit -- of 1,400,000 tons of steel for the calendar year 1941, as compared with a surplus -- estimated surplus -- of 10,000,000 tons in the first report, and a deficit of 6,000,000 tons for the calendar year 1942, as compared with a surplus of 2,000,000 tons in the first report. Such deficits would not affect the ability of the industry to meet all defense needs, since the total Army, Navy and Maritime Commission, and British requirements do not

amount -- these are war requirements of all kinds -- to more than 25% of the total capacity of the industry.

The -- we are therefore studying what should be done, whether to make a further curtailment in civilian consumption -- that means taking it out of 75% of steel that is used in civilian requirements, or to increase the capacity of the industry. Mr. Dunn points out, however, that in increasing the capacity of the industry -- if, for example, we want to increase steel production capacity by 10,000,000 tons, it would take over 4,000,000 tons of steel to increase the capacity. And he used a rather nice simile on that.

He reminded me of the story in Mark Twain -- I think it was Huck Finn (Huckleberry Finn) -- and there was a great rivalry on the Mississippi River, in the old days, about which boat had the loudest whistle. And there was one boat that was built that took all the prizes, up and down the river, for the loudest whistle. The only trouble was that when the ship whistled she had to stop because the whistle took all the steam. (laughter)

And, of course, that is a matter for practical decision, as to whether we do want to use 4,000,000 tons out of present very much needed capacity in order to get 10,000,000 tons increased capacity two years from now. That is just one of those decisions that has to be made from the practical angle. Of course, the other -- the other way out, as I indicated, is that out of the 75% -- over 75% of steel production that is now going to purely civilian uses, -- whether it is not possible to get further allocations for military and naval needs out of that, without any

very serious hardship to civilian use of steel.

Q Mr. President, does that indicate that priorities will be extended, since there is a shortage?

THE PRESIDENT: If we did that, yes.

Q Well, we couldn't expand for two years ---

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q We could not expand for two years, according to that report.

THE PRESIDENT: Practically not. Construction. Production of steel -- takes pretty close to two years to build.

Q Mr. President, did Mr. Gano (Gano Dunn, Office of Production Management) take into account the reductions in civilian production that already have been ordered -- automobiles, for example?

THE PRESIDENT: In automobiles it has, as you know.

Q That is all figured out on those, and still have the deficit? That is, it would have to be a great deal ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think -- I don't know -- I couldn't tell you, because I haven't read that part of the report, whether the automobile reduction has been figured into this report or not.

Q Mr. President, has any decision been made on the Kaiser proposal for the West Coast in this report?

THE PRESIDENT: No. They wouldn't come into it.

Q Mr. President, has the Irish Government accepted your offer of two ships, and five hundred thousand dollars worth of food, for relief of the civilian population there?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. I think you had probably better check Mr. Davis. (Norman H. Davis, Chairman, American Red Cross (?)) Have you heard anything, Steve? (turning to Mr. Early)

MR. EARLY: The Irish Minister is ill, Mr. President, but to date they haven't heard. (Robert Brennan is Irish Minister)

MR. PAUL BRANDT: Mr. President, last night you said that the 1917 convoy method is outmoded. Can you explain how the newer method is more effective?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think probably that was explained last night, Pete. As you know, I mentioned other elements which came into the dangers of ocean shipping at the present time, not just the submarine, but an improved submarine, and the raider, and the aircraft. Understand, of course, the old convoy method didn't have those three things to contend with.

Q You think it would be more than a patrol?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that would be quite comparable in any way, as you know if you read last night's speech. It is to our -- er -- is a part of our policy to be quite certain, so far as we possibly can, for our patrols to know where any German submarine, plane or raider is on the ocean at any given time. Of course, you can't do it one hundred percent, but it is getting more and more effective every day.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us how you expect to act in regard to fifth column activities under your emergency proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose go on the way we are doing. Tighten up all we can.

Q Will you take any new steps?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got the faintest idea.

Q Mr. President, you said that -- that labor and capital's desires should not be allowed to stand in the way of defense production.

In a situation like the coal strike, do you -- prospective coal strike -- would you favor any proposal submitted to offset that?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an awfully "iffy" question. We'll have to treat it as such.

Q Mr. President, following that same line, do you propose any direct steps to implement the labor objectives you set forth in that speech?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think that is pretty clear, what the present labor objectives are. Of course, if they don't work out, then you have to do something else. (he laughs)

Q That would infer, sir ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That's about all you can say.

Q Some positive action if they would not respect them?

THE PRESIDENT: Some action would have to be taken.

Q Do you see the need ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I don't say that by way of threat in any way, but of course it is perfectly obvious what the objective is, and as long as it is the Government objective under an emergency, it is the duty of the Government to continue to work toward the objective, which is production.

Q Mr. President, have your studies indicated whether or not you can implement the present machinery with the authority you have now, or whether you will need any legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't studied it.

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

Q Do you see any further need of extending the patrol -- the Atlantic

Patrol?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is like asking me where Destroyer 446 is at the present time. What is her latitude and longitude. I am not going to tell you, even if I do know. I don't happen to know. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, how is the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, that is a matter -- purely a military and naval matter.

Q How is the selectee affected by the terms of the proclamation of national emergency? Is he in for the duration of the ---

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, no. No. You are just letting your imagination run away with you. The proclamation of national emergency requires implementing by Executive Orders, or other forms of orders, and none have been issued.

Q The reason I asked that, sir, is that at Fort Dix this afternoon General Powell, in command, stated to the 44th Division, in which there were six thousand selectees, that under the terms of the emergency proclamation they could consider themselves in there, quote, "to an unlimited tenure of office."

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would like to check up on that statement before -- I am not sure that your quotation is accurate. I am not the least certain that the quotation is accurate.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us what the basis of your powers in declaring the national emergency are? Are they Constitutional or specific statutes?

THE PRESIDENT: Both Constitutional, and Supreme Court, and legislative. I have forgotten how many different acts there are. There are about --

oh, there are about eight pages of titles of acts which are on the statute books. Some of them date back to -- well, I won't say the Civil War, because I don't know, but some of them date back to the time of the Spanish War where there is legislative reference -- not actual laws which were still on the statute books -- to a national emergency proclaimed by the President. In other words, a full recognition of the power to declare a national emergency by many Congresses of the United States.

Q Mr. President, yesterday some of the dispatches said that the ship which found the Bismarck was American made, and also that the ship was American owned. Can you tell us which is correct?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it was a ship which was a modification of one of our Navy long-range patrol bombers, which was sold -- bought by the British from the manufacturer some time ago. How long this ship had actually been in England, I don't know. It was manned, operated and owned by the British.

Q Mr. President, from what you have said about the national emergency, is it true then that the powers you now have, through the proclamation of this emergency are the additional powers -- are merely those powers signed in these various legislative acts through the years?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the only way I can answer you that -- the trouble is you are trying to be too specific. In 1933, we had, as I remember it, an emergency in this country -- a national emergency. We could not get any money out of any banks. We couldn't pay our hotel bills. In a bad way. Well, at that particular time there was a national emergency, and nobody raised any question about it.

It happened to be a domestic matter, a money matter, and we had a national emergency then, and we got out of it. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, do you plan any immediate change in international broadcasting, or communications?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't quite get it. (meaning not hearing)

Q Well, under your emergency powers ---

MR. EARLY: (interposing) (to the President) He means taking over communications.

THE PRESIDENT: Ask Mark Ethridge. (General Manager, Louisville Times)

Q What?

Q (interposing) Mr. President, do you regard any ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Ask Mark Ethridge, and Fly (James L. Fly, Chairman, F.C.C.) and Harry Butcher (Vice President, Columbia Broadcasting System) and some of the other fellows. I haven't heard of any. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, I am sorry, I did not remember that that was included in that analysis that Bob Jackson (Robert Jackson, Attorney General) made some time ago. Was it included in that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. I think that has become law.

Q Those items in the Attorney General's list of powers inherent in the President under all of these acts, they don't -- you don't go to work on them until you issue a proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: That's right, that's right.

Q Do you plan such proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on how many you would include in a given order. I haven't got anything in prospect.

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President, that means that there will be no exercise of authority under the new declaration of unlimited emergency, except as you issue specific orders defining the new application?

THE PRESIDENT: That's right, that's right.

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

Q How can you back up with action a re-assertion of the right of freedom of the seas under the Neutrality Act?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think it will tie in all right.

Q We ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I don't think there is anything ---

Q (continuing) We asserted that right in the Neutrality Act, didn't we? And we decided to let it slip for a while?

THE PRESIDENT: If you remember the Neutrality Act, there was a rather definite intent in the whole thing. The first was the embargo clause, or embargo clauses, which were later repealed. The other was the desire and intent of the Congress at that time to prevent any American flag -- merchant ships with American crews, what they call documented ships -- from going into certain defined war zones, to be defined by Presidential proclamation. That is about all there was.

Q Will the Act itself prevent these ships from calling at neutral ports?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Will the Act itself prevent these ships from calling at neutral -- I mean belligerent ports? I beg your pardon.

THE PRESIDENT: Those are documented ships; yes.

Q Well, now, is it anticipated that those ships will re-enter the trade generally?

THE PRESIDENT: Into the war zone?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that would be a violation of the Act.

Q Then how can we have freedom of the seas, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: You can limit freedom of the seas by saying that they can't go to some particular port, where on the doctrine of chance they will be destroyed.

Q Mr. President, in view ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) A little bit like the old question of 'what is a blockade'. Is it a paper blockade, or a blockade that you can't get through? We always claimed in the Civil War that blockade of the Southern ports was effective, and the British claimed that it was not, because an occasional blockade-runner did get through the blockade. Well, on the figures of the blockade, we were, as I remember it -- taking the Southern ports as a whole -- we were catching about three-quarters of all the attempts to run the blockade, in or out, and only about one-quarter of the blockade-runners were getting in or out; and on that basis we claimed that it was effective.

Q Mr. President, in view of the emergency, can you tell us whether you contemplate any further action to curb the export of oil and other war materials to Japan?

THE PRESIDENT: I could not, at the present time.

Q Mr. President, may we take it then that you do not for the moment intend to ask for a repeal of the remaining part of the Neutrality

Act?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you can assume that.

Q Do you feel that you have all the power you need to see that our war supplies get to Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned last night in your speech that other steps to curb the delay of supplies to Britain were under study by you and your naval aides. Can you indicate ---

THE PRESIDENT: That is just what Hitler wants to know. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, some of us over here (meaning in their part of the room) failed to catch the question on the Neutrality Act as to whether it was intended to have it repealed.

THE PRESIDENT: Whether you can assume -- whether I will ask for the repeal of what is left of the Neutrality Act? I said I thought it was a pretty good assumption.

Q That you are?

THE PRESIDENT: That I am not going to. (laughter)

Q That is the way it came out the first time.

Q Would you care to define those provisions of the Neutrality Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think you are coming down to -- well, to use a polite word -- refinements. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) No, as a matter of fact I am not considering anything at the present time in regard to the Neutrality Act. Now, that is the simplest way of putting it.

Q Is there enough available tonnage to get these vital supplies to Great Britain, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you heard what I said last night. Now, if you ask me how much is left, that is the thing that I am not going to tell you, because that is something that Hitler would like to know too.

Q Mr. President, could we have a direct quote on that statement on the --

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q A direct quote ---

THE PRESIDENT: No; I don't think it is worth it.

Q You said there were some eight pages of statutes that confer upon you various powers in an emergency. Could we possibly obtain access to these eight pages?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because you might misconstrue them. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, could you tell us if naval patrol ships have been ordered to resort to any new measures, as yet, beyond signalling?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the one thing Hitler wants to know.

Q Mr. President, are we to assume from these answers that all of the steps you may take from now on of a naval and military character are secret?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't say everything, because I would say that I have answered directly, without using that method, about three-quarters of all the questions you have asked today. There are some things that obviously I am not going to tell you about, and you will get accustomed to not asking them after a while.

(laughter)

Q No, we won't.

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #746,  
Executive Office of the President,  
June 3, 1941 -- 4.05 P.M., E.S.T.

Miss May Craig handed a book (CHILE, LAND OF PROGRESS, by Earl P.

Hanson) to the President, who thought Earl Godwin had written it.

MISS CRAIG: I was asked to present it to you.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it interesting? (looking through the book)

MISS CRAIG: I have just read the first chapter. It's -- it's quite interesting to me. Maybe you already know all of it.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so.

MISS CRAIG: Read the inscription, Mr. President. Further, towards the front. (the President continues to look through the book)

MISS CRAIG: Mr. President, Mr. President, turn back to page two, and read the inscription from the author to you.

MR. GODWIN: A little further.

MISS CRAIG: There.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. Very nice.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: (turning to Mr. Hassett behind him) Anybody got any news? No news? Mr. Hassett says we have no news. }

Q Is there something you can tell us, sir, about the report that Mr. Winant has made to you?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it has begun. He is giving me some more tomorrow. 1

Q Mr. President, is he giving you any further information about this Hess affair?

THE PRESIDENT: About what?

Q The Hess affair.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought I just said that I did not have anything because he has not finished talking to me.

Q Mr. President, could you just say whether you asked him to come home, or whether he came on his own initiative?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I couldn't tell you. It's nobody's business.

Q What time do you expect to see him tomorrow, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, is Mr. Cohen going to stay in America, or is he going back?

THE PRESIDENT: Going back, I think.

Q Mr. President, this is just for the record. When can we expect any news on the Chief Justiceship?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Does that answer apply also to the Associate Justice?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Did you hold off on one before the other?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Did you hold off on one before the other?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think it was probably just as much a surprise to me last night as it was to anybody else. I had no idea of it at all.

MR. GODWIN: Well, Mr. President, in the dearth of live important news, I have been trying for a month to find a spot where I could ask you a local question. (laughter) Mr. Young, Commissioner of the District of Columbia, is very much impressed with the red, white and blue automobile tags for District automobilists, and the

Budget Bureau says they can't have them.

THE PRESIDENT: Why?

MR. GODWIN: He says the Federal Government should have a red, white and blue tag, and I wonder, seriously, whether they had come to you about it. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, it hasn't, and by the way, your bringing up that tag question reminds me -- there has been an awful lot of -- not you people -- but columnists lately, who have been writing about how over-burdened I was with details, et cetera. Well, we have got things -- this is just for general information -- it is off the record -- off the record entirely -- but we are -- just for our own family information -- I have got things so -- what shall I say? decentralized -- I have forgotten what the columnists' word is for it -- it is something fancy -- today -- that I am doing actually less paper work than I have done at any time in eight years. I am having fewer things to decide -- such as red, white and blue tags in the District -- at the present time, than I have had in eight years. In other words -- I know -- 'delegation of authority' -- that's what they (the columnists) use. Well, there is more of it being delegated now than at any time in eight years, and the reason is that -- I should say that such decisions as do come necessarily to the President are much smaller in number than before and receive -- well, they have always had fairly prompt action, as you know -- they are receiving even prompter action. So it is just -- just one of those slants that people take when they have to write something every day, that it just happens -- I just thought I would let you know.

Q Can I ask a local question too, if you want to answer, Mr. President, as to the staggering of pay days here?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't heard about it.

Q I understand it had been brought to your attention.

THE PRESIDENT: I think those things are largely a matter of what is best, also the convenience of peoples, or government employees.

Q Mr. -- Mr. President, in a bill that the War Department sent up to Congress, they asked for the power to -- in case of necessity -- to take over the property, the difference seeming to be previously permanently. Could you explain to us, sir, whether the power to take over permanently was put in?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know anything about it. Don't say I know nothing about that though.

MR. JAY FRANKLIN: Mr. President, returning to the remarks about your duties, why should they necessarily be off the record? Why can't they be used?

THE PRESIDENT: Use what?

MR. JAY FRANKLIN: Why would you say that's off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: I tell you what I would do. I would have said it for the personal information of columnists, Jay. (Jay Franklin, Bell Syndicate) Now that is a new way of putting it.

MR. GODWIN: He is a columnist.

THE PRESIDENT: I know he is. That's why I said it. (laughter)

Q Well, Mr. President ---

MR. JAY FRANKLIN: (interposing) The only point is that it seemed to be a very interesting piece of news.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think so. Oh, no, I never -- I never handle

columnists as news. (loud laughter)

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Now you brought that on yourself, Jay.  
(he laughs)

Q Well, Mr. President, I brought you back to discuss local things.  
There has been no ---

THE PRESIDENT: Did you say local things?

Q Oh, no, it's national in character. I said I brought you back to discuss local things. There has been no Marshal in the Southern District of New York for a year. Is there going to be an appointment of any for this year, do you know?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. It has been a headache for a year.

Q I know it has. Now you spoke of decentralization of duties.

THE PRESIDENT: No. I suppose it comes up about once a month, and I send it over to the New York Senators -- Eddie Flynn -- and before that to Jim Farley.

Q Mr. LaGuardia also?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. Anybody that wants to take a whack. (laughter)

Q Well, that version has not been sent yet.

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q When will it be sent from ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You will have to ask all of these people that I have told you. I am trying to get an agreement.

Q Mr. President, I want to ask a local question.

Q Who would be a good source of information on these matters of 'delegated authority'?

THE PRESIDENT: The people to whom they are delegated.

Q Could you enumerate them?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, take the Congressional Record -- I mean the Directory -- everybody in it. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, I would like to ask a local question. It has been a long time since I said anything about Passamaquoddy. (laughter) Now that the drought has caused a dearth of power from rivers, are you considering the revival of the tidal project?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you are too young to remember, but even in prohibition days in Maine we never had a drought up there. (laughter)

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President, did I understand you correctly to say you didn't know about this bill -- the War Department bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I hadn't read it. I haven't read it. I couldn't talk to you about the language.

Q Do you approve in principle? They announced that it had White House approval.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the origin of it was -- like in the language of the old -- and I am merely telling you in general -- general idea -- in last year's -- last fall's bill there was a provision, if you remember, that allowed the Government to take over a plant in case of refusal -- I think it used the word refusal -- to carry out the Government order, and then came that problem of the Allis-Chalmers strike. Well, the strikers said they were willing to go back to work if, and the company said they were willing to deliver if. So in a technical, legal sense that did not amount to, I suppose, a refusal, and they wanted some kind of authority to take over various kinds of situations where the Government was not

getting its goods delivered, or manufactured. Now, whether the enlargement should use the word "failure" or "inability" or something of that kind, I don't know. And as I said, I haven't seen the language of the bill, but the bill was intended to get deliveries where under the present law there is some cloud in the actual language.

Q Would you say then the prime objective of this was less disputes ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) To get deliveries -- defense orders.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us whether Britain's present position in the Mediterranean calls for any increase in our present flow of supplies with the necessity of speeding up?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. No.

Q Mr. President, has the Deputy Coordinator of petroleum been selected yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Is there to be one?

Q Yes, sir.

MR. GODWIN: Several.

Q Mr. President, in that property bill it goes much further than the point that you just mentioned. It carries authority to requisition patents, tangible property, intangible property, and a good many other things. Was that included in the endorsement that you gave of it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. It depends entirely on what the definition of property is. Your own brain -- your own brain -- is property. I don't know whether I could requisition it or not. I mean, you are talking intangibles now, as they say. I couldn't tell you.

Q Mr. President, have you made any decision with respect to the status

of Mr. Budd in the transportation setup?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, is there any comment you could make about your conversation with Admiral King today?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Just the usual checkup. I suppose we will have them every few weeks, whenever he happens to be down here.

Q Could you tell us how the Atlantic patrol is coming along?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Could you tell us how the Atlantic patrol is coming along?

THE PRESIDENT: Coming along. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, any Executive Orders in sight under the emergency proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, Senator Tydings (Senator Millard E. Tydings, Democrat, Maryland) made a speech today on the floor, in which he said that until strikes in defense industries are ended and non-military expenditures are cut, we could not consider anything more in the way of active participation in the war. Is there anything you could say to us about this?

THE PRESIDENT: Speaking on the floor is his privilege. That's his privilege. I couldn't comment.

Q Mr. President, do you expect to send up your St. Lawrence message tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether tomorrow. I think Thursday. I don't think the Senate meets until Thursday. I am not sure.

Q Mr. President, if I could phrase a previous question in a different way, do you think that the Government needs -- for defense projects --

the right to take over<sup>~</sup> factories permanently?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I have given it no consideration.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #747,  
Executive Office of the President,  
June 6, 1941 -- 11.05 A.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry to be late.

MR. GODWIN: What?

THE PRESIDENT: Sorry to be late. I have been signing things that  
I had to get out of the way.

MR. GODWIN: Look at the scottie (novelty on the President's desk).

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have just signed the bill authorizing acquisition  
by the United States of title to, or for use of domestic -- for  
the use of domestic or idle foreign merchant vessels for urgent  
needs of commerce and national defense. It is being signed and  
a time put on it. And right afterwards I signed an Executive  
Order in connection with that, which will authorize the United  
States Maritime Commission to purchase, requisition, charter --  
requisition the use of, or take over the title to, or possession  
of, any or all foreign merchant ships lying idle in the waters  
within the jurisdiction of the United States, including the Phil-  
ippines and the Canal Zone.

Secondly, to operate any of them in the service of the  
United States, directly or through an agent. To charter or lease  
any of them in the service of the United States/or in any foreign --  
or in any commerce, foreign or coast-wise, provided that no vessel  
shall be transferred, chartered or leased to a belligerent gov-  
ernment without the approval of the President.

Third, to document them as desired under the laws of the United States, or any neutral country of the western hemisphere. Fourth, to make such other use as the President may direct. And, finally, the Commission is directed to determine and make, to the owner or owners of any vessel taken in accordance with the provisions hereof, just compensation for such vessel. I guess that's about all.

Q Would you tell us how many ships you anticipate getting?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I have no idea.

Q Or what ships are likely to be taken over?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Any idle ships.

Q What do you mean by time -- setting a time limit?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What do you mean when you say a time on it?

MR. GODWIN: You note the time when you signed it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Eleven A.M., Eastern Standard Time.

Q Today?

THE PRESIDENT: Today.

Q Sir, you spoke of any idle ships. Would they include French ships as well?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

MR. FRED ESSARY: Mr. President, are you able to talk with us today about Governor Winant's mission and his report to you?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose that I can tell you practically everything there is. It is a two-fold mission. One was to report on

probably 25 or maybe 50 major topics -- major items -- relating to the conduct of the war in Great Britain, and the other was to obtain here information regarding 25 or perhaps 50 topics relating to the defense of the United States, to take back to the other side.

I can say this, Fred, and I think it is a perfectly fair thing to say -- that there are certain types -- I hate, as you know -- I hate to talk about newspapers and publicity, and I am not talking about all papers by any means -- I am talking about certain types of papers which -- in the columns of which there is a most amazing coincidence. I characterize it only as a coincidence, and I hope that that is a correct term to use.

It so happens that just about the time that Winant got here -- just before he got here -- I've got it in my basket -- I had two memoranda. Both of these memoranda relate directly to orders given out in Berlin, not to people in Germany or in Europe, but to nazis in the United States, including the various grades, you might say almost, those people who are in favor of appeasement in this country. These orders came from Germany. And I just happened last night -- in going through my basket -- to pick out a couple of them. Of course, naturally, I get pretty well -- I get a pretty good slant on what those orders are. They come from Germany to sympathizers with fascism or nazism in this country. I get them right along. Don't ask me how, but you can assume that I have a pretty darn good idea of what German propaganda is in this country in some detail.

These two particular ones related to two things which the

American nazis and fascists were asked to play up by Germany. The first was that Germany, of course, had no thought -- not the slightest thought in the world -- of ever doing anything against any country in the entire western hemisphere.

Well, just as an illustration of that, that is being carried by some papers, and was carried again this morning by the New York Times, for instance. And I suppose some other papers carried John Cudahy's article on his interview with Hitler.

Well, I thought that in regard to that -- probably as good an answer as could be written was the editorial in the same issue of this morning's New York Times (June 6, 1941), and I think that editorial is good enough for the press of this country to repeat, giving due credit, of course, to the New York Times. But it is a darn good statement of the value of German assurances over the past few years, and expresses the hope -- quite properly -- that there are a very large number of dupes in the United States. (See appendix for editorial.)

The other article is -- the other order was extremely interesting -- but it said as soon as Winant gets here, spread the story around -- spread the story around, all through the United States, that he is bringing over a scarehead story that the British are just about all in. And secondly, spread the story around that Britain is talking peace.

Now that originated from Germany. And all you have to do is to read the coincidence of the stories, from a certain type of paper in the United States, to realize that there is the most amazing coincidence, and I think that's all that needs to be said about it --

it's just a fact. Oh, it doesn't make any difference. For instance -- this is off the record -- Ludwell Denny's story last night in the Scripps-Howard paper (holding up a copy of the New York World-Telegram for June 5, 1941) -- it might just as well have been written in Berlin. Only that is off the record.

MR. FRANK KLUCKHOHN: Mr. President, haven't the British helped a little on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. FRANK KLUCKHOHN: I saw a statement by Sir Gerald Campbell, the new publicity chief, that Winant came to the White House to say Britain's position was very serious.

THE PRESIDENT: Wait a minute -- now wait a minute, Frank. You are only quoting one sentence. It's a little out of context. If you had copied the whole paragraph that that sentence occurred in, you would see that it is not fair to use just one sentence out of a paragraph.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, in order to nail this down, can you say definitely that Winant brought no peace proposal of any kind to your consideration?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, on condition that you don't run it in the form that "the President denies," because that kind of a story is a vehicle for bringing out the falsehood. It's an old game. I would probably use it myself if I wanted to. (laughter) But that's all it is, it's just an old game -- "the President denied." Well, the President doesn't deny, the President accuses. That's a very different thing.

MR. GODWIN: Well, Mr. President, to make sure that we have this very

important thing right, Jim Wright says he asked you if Winant brought a peace offer.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely nothing like it.

MR. GODWIN: That has been ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Not even a -- not even a tenth cousin of a peace offer, or anything like that, or any discussion of peace.

Q May we quote you, sir, on that?

THE PRESIDENT: On condition that you don't use -- in talking about it -- use it as a denial, but I use it as an accusation.

Q An accusation of what, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: An accusation of the duping of certain people in the United States by German propaganda, which was ordered from Germany. That is the easiest way of putting it.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, on the other item that you had there -- you had two items -- the story that Britain is all in ---

THE PRESIDENT: Huh?

MR. GODWIN: Would you care to say anything about that matter?

THE PRESIDENT: That's the same kind of German cloth.

Q Mr. President, would you have the stenographer read the direct quote which you have authorized?

THE PRESIDENT: All right, Romagna.

(The reporter read back, "Not even a tenth cousin of a peace offer, or anything like that, or any discussion of peace." A newsman insisted the President said, "Absolutely nothing like it" which is true, but not in that sentence. See page 6 -- top of this page.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, wait a minute now. The sentence goes on from

there -- "Absolutely nothing like it" comma -- not even a semicolon, because I have seen some people change a semicolon into a full stop (laughter) -- "provided you use this not as a denial by the President, but as an accusation by the President." (he laughs) That's darn hard for anything -- anybody to get away from. (laughter)

Q May we also use the 'tenth cousin'?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q May we also use the rest of the sentence?

MR. GODWIN: 'Not even a tenth cousin'?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Well, Mr. President, right along with that, there is a fairly good understanding -- whether it is erroneous or not -- that Great Britain has said that they were -- couldn't last more than a certain number of months without our help, and that's going around in the news.

THE PRESIDENT: That has never been said. Perhaps by Berlin.

MR. GODWIN: Well, it is --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) That has never come from any responsible source, I can assure you of that.

MR. GODWIN: Would you have the editors kill such stories, such as John Cudahy's?

THE PRESIDENT: No, as long as they're accompanied by excellent editorials pointing out what the significance of it is. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, I think probably a good many people in the United States would be deeply shocked to hear that Germans can send orders to any great number of citizens in this country. Could you tell us, sir, about who sends these orders out, or to what branches or

agencies they go? How does this thing operate?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because if I did that, it might disclose how I get that information. It does come from -- I think they call it -- well, whatever that propaganda bureau is in Berlin -- its government.

VOICE: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: (loudly) Wait a minute -- wait a minute -- I'm not through this time. (Loud laughter)

I have been getting, in the past week or ten days, some very wonderful resolutions, telegrams, letters of support, from labor organizations in the United States, and because of the volume of them, because they go down to small local unions, and from there all the way up to international unions, who haven't been thanked, but I haven't specified any of them because of the volume -- I would say, offhand, that -- oh, I must have had four or five hundred from labor organizations. And yesterday Daniel Tobin brought me in a letter which in effect was a resolution from the General Executive Board of the International Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers, which is so good that -- I won't read it to you -- I asked Steve (Mr. Early) to have it mimeographed for you, in the hope that you will use it as -- what might be called -- a sample of support which we have been getting from a great many labor organizations all through the country. And it isn't very long, but it is so well expressed that I thought it is a good sample to use on the support we are getting.

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

Q The country would like to know what you are going to do with those organizations -- labor organizations -- who are not supporting you.

THE PRESIDENT: There isn't any statement from the White House today.

Q Mr. President, isn't Mr. Tobin's union the one that has tied up Pittsburgh?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and he was leaving after I saw him yesterday morning, because one of his locals, one of warehousemen in New York City and the other was a small group in Pittsburgh, and he was leaving yesterday afternoon to try and go back to these two locals and get them back to work. He didn't hear it -- he didn't hear it himself until yesterday morning.

Q Mr. President, without trying to press you on this matter, there is a very serious situation, such as that in the North American strike, where an agreement was reached that there would be no strike.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right, and the Mediation Board is working on that, and the lumber thing, at this particular moment.

Q Well, are you giving thought to what can be done to bring about more responsibility on the part of the leaders, by these locals?

THE PRESIDENT: I should say probably the answer is Yes. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, did you mean to emphasize the word 'today'?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you heard me. (laughter)

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

MR. GODWIN: Let me ask you one more question ---

Q (interposing) Statements have been made in Congress about the St. Lawrence Waterway, on the ground that the war would be over before it could be built. I wonder if you could tell us how many of the new battleships would have to be junked if we applied the same time limit?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess all of the ones that were authorized last year -- probably -- as a matter of fact on this St. Lawrence thing, according to the best timetable -- the best schedule that I have got, we could practically complete it just short of four years, practically complete it. But the Army engineers and the Canadian engineers have been working on a plan by which they could get lake-built merchant ships out of the St. Lawrence in two years.

Q Is there any particular new improvement at this moment with regard to the French, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, reports were published this morning that the Japanese Ambassador has held discussions with the Secretary of State on the possibility of a non-aggression or neutrality agreement between this country and Japan, and that the conversations were quite informal. Do you understand that to be the case, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about it. I know, of course, that the Japanese Ambassador sees the Secretary of State right along, but then he has been for a long time. I haven't heard anything about that.

Q Mr. President, there is one other matter I would ask you about, if I can. Certain states have laws that limit the working hours of labor. The California Manufacturers Association sent you a wire

about its work week and the State code and the limitations. I am informed that there are numerous states that have similar laws but have no emergency clauses in that. Has that been brought to your attention?

THE PRESIDENT: No. First I have heard of it.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

(loud laughter from the President as the newsmen file out)

ON MISUNDERSTANDING HITLER

(Editorial from the New York Times for June 6, 1941)

At the end of his interview with Mr. Cudahy in this morning's TIMES Adolf Hitler complains that he is always being misunderstood in the United States. "Time after time he has tried to emphasize that the position of Germany and his plans are not inimical to the United States, but his efforts have always proved futile."

They will always remain futile, unless we become a nation of dupes; for the utter worthlessness of Hitler's explanations and assurances and promises is written in his record. This is the man who solemnly declared that "Germany has neither the wish nor the intention to mix in internal Austrian affairs or to annex or unite with Austria"--and who then annexed it. This is the man who promised that once the Sudeten question was solved "there will be no further territorial problems in Europe for Germany"--and who then marched his army into Prague. This is the man who declared that an agreement of his own making with Poland would "bring about lasting and continuous pacification"--and who then fell upon and butchered and dismembered Poland. This is the man who gave the most explicit possible assurances that his plans were "not inimical" to Norway, to Denmark, to Holland and to Belgium--and who then robbed them of their freedom.

It is no news that his present plans are "not inimical" to the United States. He is always the best friend of the next nation on his list for plunder.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #748,  
Executive Office of the President,  
June 10, 1941 -- 4.05 P.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm yawning, and I had ten hours sleep last night.

MR. GODWIN: That's great.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: That's great.

MR. EARLY: (to Miss May Craig) You'll break your arm holding all that (newspapers, books, etc.) (Miss Craig smiled back.)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I asked Steve (Mr. Early) if he didn't have anything, and he said he was dry. After I lifted my eyebrows, he amended it and he says that the oasis was dry. (laughter) I don't think we have got anything at all.

MR. GODWIN: Heard anything on the Moor -- the Robin Moor?

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing further. The ship that did the rescuing is not yet in.

Q Mr. President, in the oasis of news, is there anything about a judge for Puerto Rico? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (whistles a little) No, and Bob Jackson was in here just five minutes ago and I forgot to ask him. That's bad. Steve, will you remind me to ask him about a judge for Puerto Rico? (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, there are reports that Mr. Sayre (Francis B. Sayre, United States High Commissioner for the Philippines) may come back

from the Philippines and be replaced by another High Commissioner. Is there anything you can say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that's an old report -- year old, or something like that.

Q Mr. President, we understood that your conference this afternoon with Mr. Jackson and the others was on the west coast labor situation. Could you amplify that at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think the -- perhaps I could say this -- of course it is our desire in the case of that particular plant, or any others that may eventuate in the future, that they will be returned to private management as soon as it is possible.

Q Mr. President, have you taken actual legal possession of the plant, or is it simply a policing job?

THE PRESIDENT: I took action as President and not as a lawyer. We did talk about the question of the pay envelopes this week, and we are paying the regular scale, with the understanding, of course, that it had been arrived at out there before this mediation agreement was violated -- was that the -- whatever is decided on will be retroactive to the first of May. In other words, that is carrying out in good faith what had already been agreed on. The Mediation Board, or a panel thereof, will resume mediation to try to work out an agreement, just as soon as they possibly can.

MR. GODWIN: Are the pay envelopes the company's money? You see, we are -- you gave me the impression that the Army or the Government was handling the pay envelopes. Is that ---

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I frankly -- I couldn't tell you.

MR. GODWIN: You don't know about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the same people will get out the checks as they have done them before. Whether regularly charged to Government account and reimbursed afterwards, or whether paid out by the company and arrangements made with the Government afterwards, is beyond me.

MR. GODWIN: Well, your information was simply on the rate of pay?

THE PRESIDENT: That's it.

Q Mr. President, in these further efforts to work out an agreement, are they going to continue to bargain with the C.I.O.?

THE PRESIDENT: With Mr. Frankenstein. (Richard T. Frankenstein, National Director of the Aviation Division of the U.A.W.)

Q I see.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) But not with the people who were ousted from the local union -- but the international union.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, you spoke of the possibility that other situations like this might eventuate. Do you have any in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We hope not.

MR. GODWIN: Well, you have the Aluminum ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, that is in the hands of the Mediation Board. They have made no recommendation or report yet.

Q Mr. President, what is the situation on the Pacific machinists' strike in the ---

THE PRESIDENT: In the Bay district? Mr. Brown (Harvey W. Brown, President, International Machinists, A.F.L.) was in yesterday, and he has called -- the first opportunity he could get them

over to Chicago was Thursday Morning -- the Executive Committee of the International Machinists.

Q (interposing) In Washington, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And he is going to ask them for authority to order the machinists --- those 1500 or 1700 --- back to work.

MR. EARLY: That meeting takes place ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. EARLY: That meeting takes place in Washington.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it will. Steve (Mr. Early) says the meeting will take place here in Washington.

Q Well, there are some C.I.O. people also involved in that strike, are there not?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not.

Q Some C.I.O. machinists?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, reports that troops are being readied at Fort Niagara for movement to Cleveland -- anything to that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, never heard of it. Maybe they are headed for Newfoundland. Lots of places you can send them to.

Q Mr. President, a report has come in from Lisbon that the Government of Portugal has delivered formal protest to the United States, with respect to your broadcast on May 27, concerning the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's just a report.

Q I beg pardon, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's just a report. I don't think any such communication has come in, or will come in, because there is

nothing to protest against. I am sure -- I am sure that is just a wild rumor.

Q It is an Associated Press dispatch, sir. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Who is that? Somebody from United Press that asked that? (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Oh.

Q (softly) Yes, sir.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, if a strike ends before the strikers are reclassified and actually inducted into service -- under the ruling made yesterday by the Selective Service Headquarters -- will those men be reclassified and permitted to go back?

THE PRESIDENT: In the first place, it's very 'iffy', and in the second place, I couldn't answer because I don't know.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Nobody ever thought of that until you, Pete. I'll find out.

Q Mr. President, as a general matter of policy, do the employees jeopardize their requests for higher wages by forcing the Government to take over the plant?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That's another one of those things that is so general you couldn't possibly answer it. It depends on cases. Everything depends on cases. And there are other factors which I don't think you mentioned. (he laughs)

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: Mr. President, has any consideration been given to taking over the American Potash and Chemical Corporation, where there has been a strike since March?

THE PRESIDENT: May be a very good corporation, but I never heard of it.

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: There were some reports that you had told the Cabinet the other day that they would be next.

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of them, so the report isn't exactly based on fact. (he laughs)

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, can you tell us your views on ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What do they make?

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: They make borax and boric acid, very essential to optical glass, I understand. The only main source of supply in the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Where do they live?

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: Trona, California.

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of them.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, can you tell us your views on specific legislation authorizing you to do what you did at the North American? (loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so, Pete. I think that things are going along pretty well.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #749,  
Executive Offices of the President,  
June 17, 1941, 4.05 P.M., E.S.T.

(Press Conference was not held June 13, due to minor illness of  
the President)

THE PRESIDENT: (To Miss May Craig) May -- May -- you come here afterwards and I will -- I will give you an answer to something you asked me about the other day, but I can't tell anybody else.

MISS MAY CRAIG: All right.

MR. GODWIN: Mm mm! (the President laughs)

Q What did she ask about the other day?

Q Advice to girls. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Advice to girls.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right, too. (he laughs)

MR. GODWIN: This is the wrong side of the house. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What is the male of Dorothy Dix?

Q There's a big debate about that. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, there's a big debate about that.

Q (softly) Little Steve. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (To Mr. Godwin) Did you ever know the old girl?

MR. GODWIN: I never knew Dorothy Dix.

THE PRESIDENT: She's grand -- a grand old girl.

MR. GODWIN: Look what your office is doing. Look at this date. It's  
now July -- June 17th.

THE PRESIDENT: What? -- June 21 -- what do you mean?

MR. GODWIN: A little ahead of time. (indicating) No, that's June 21st.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, all right. I never bother about that -- dates. (he laughs)

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't this Bunker Hill Day, or something like that?

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Huh?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Steve (Mr. Early) tried hard to think of something, and he can't find anything. I haven't got a thing.

Q Mr. President, there has been a crime wave in the District of Columbia, of which you are more or less the Mayor. Is there anything that you can say about that, or any recommendations?

THE PRESIDENT: What about it, Earl? (Earl Godwin)

MR. GODWIN: Well, there are 25 policemen watching these picketers out in front of the White House that might have been watching garages.

THE PRESIDENT: No, it's too bad.

MR. GODWIN: Well, we haven't got enough policemen. I don't know whether that would stop crime or not.

Q Mr. President, there is the matter of a Puerto Rico Supreme Court Judge.  
(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What is the connotation between these two questions? (laughter)

Q I think there ought to be more Supreme Court Judges. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: More what?

Q Supreme Court Judges.

THE PRESIDENT: Supreme Court Judges?

Q Mr. President, would it be proper to ask why -- if and why the Marine Corps' leave had been canceled?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't know it had.

Q Mr. President, could you comment on the fact that Secretary Ickes yesterday stopped this shipment of oil from the Philadelphia port? Does that have any --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, I don't think it means anything. Just pending further determination.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) From an east coast port, not a west coast port.

Q Excuse me.

Q Mr. President, there is no plan to hold up west coast shipments?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q Or a complete embargo, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q Some days ago Lieutenant General McNair (Lesley J. McNair) gave us a talk on the forthcoming maneuvers of the Army this summer, and in that there were several notations with reference to National Guard troops, putting them in various localities, in case they are retained in the Federal service beyond the year for which they were called. Is it possible now for you to tell us whether they are considering retaining them or not?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. The Secretary of War told me about -- I think it was yesterday -- the thing is under study, and will have a report for me very shortly.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the Robin Moor incident?

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing further. --

Q (interposing) Have you received --

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) Today.

Q Have you, sir, received the report today from the State Department that

was brought up from Brazil?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, a summary of it. I haven't seen the actual documents yet. I expect to later on.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us how much longer Justice Byrnes is likely to continue serving in the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

Q Mr. President, have you any comment about the letter that Representative Lea (Representative Clarence F. Lea, Democrat, California) sent with regard to moving of the Interstate Commerce Commission?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I wish you people would find out where that originated -- in other words, the story that was taken to the committee. Somebody told the committee that the I.C.C. was to be moved. And where -- where -- why they acted on that without any further checkup on it, I don't know. Of course, we are making a study, as you know, for taking care of a lot more people who are going to come to Washington, probably in the course of the next year, and it becomes a question as to whether some bureaus, or commissions, or agencies will have to be moved out. There has been no determination on any individual unit, or agency, or bureau, or commission -- absolutely not. In other words, we have not even -- we have not seriously begun the study of it yet. Who picked on the poor old I.C.C. I don't know.

MR. GODWIN: Well, the I.C.C. laws, as I understand it, sir, designate Washington, D.C., or the District of Columbia, as their headquarters.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it does.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) And that would have to be done by an Act of Congress. Am I right about that?

Q Charles F. Palmer, Division of Defense Housing Coordination, issued a

statement saying that somebody had to be moved out as there were no facilities here.

THE PRESIDENT: That probably -- we are afraid that that is true.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) But absolutely we have not really undertaken the study as to what should go out.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us about some of the improper activities in which the German consuls in this country have been engaged?

THE PRESIDENT: Not any further than that they were of a subversive character.

Q Relating to sabotage?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Relating to sabotage?

THE PRESIDENT: I should say the word 'subversive' included a great many sins.

Q Sir, would you -- may I ask you if this is news -- new to you -- I mean the knowledge of these subversive characters?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say -- I would use the word 'cumulative'.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Mr. President, would it be warranted speculation on any association between the consular activities and the strike situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think that anybody but a columnist is entitled to speculate. (he laughs) I told you that before. We newspapermen -- we don't speculate. (he laughs again)

Q Mr. President, there have been charges made that certain other consuls -- and countries have been -- also been engaged in doubtful activities.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there isn't any news on that today.

Q Would you emphasize 'today'?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) The same old answer -- You heard me.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us approximately the size of the new lend-lease appropriation that is pending?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think they have made up the totals yet, -- (interposing)

Q/ Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- and probably it will be some time off.

Q Mr. President, as a result of this sinking of the Robin Moor, are you giving any consideration to the possibility of requesting authorization to arm merchant ships to protect themselves?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Of course, that is -- I suppose every -- every chief of naval operations has had a plan of the arming of merchant ships -- if and when called on to do it -- in the safe ever since 1918, at the end of the war.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Well, have they come out of the safe yet?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Have they come out of the safe yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at my request.

Q Do you need any authorization, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I really don't know.

Q Mr. President, there are 24 candidates for the Senate in Texas to succeed Morris Sheppard, and at least 18 claim Administration support. Would you care to say anything further on that subject, more than you have already said?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I thought I did rather a good job when I answered that question the first time. Were you there that day?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, don't you think I did a good job?

Q I think you did at that time, but there were some editorial comments since then --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, that again is a case --

Q (continuing) -- expressing the hope that you would clarify your stand.

THE PRESIDENT: That again is over-speculation. Now if you would just run that story, you could even get Romagna and have it quoted for you. It was pretty clear when I said it. I am not adding to it or detracting from it. I think it is very clear what my intention was.

Q Mr. President, do you concur in the statement of your Secretary of the Navy last night that America is now at its hour of decision in following the course that Canada has followed?

THE PRESIDENT: I believe in the Ten Commandments too. (he laughs)

Q Is this the eleventh?

(pause here)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

(the President laughs)

MISS MAY CRAIG TO MR. GODWIN: Where were you?

MR. GODWIN: I had a question --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) They jumped the gun on you.

(Miss May Craig conferred with the President)

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #750,  
Executive Offices of the President,  
June 24, 1941 -- 4.00 P.M., E.S.T.

(Press Conference for June 20, 1941, was not held, due to minor illness of the President)

MR. GODWIN: I had to show my card to get in.

THE PRESIDENT: You did?

MR. GODWIN: Did you ever see a press card? (handing his to the President)  
You had better get one.

THE PRESIDENT: First one I ever looked at. Oh, what's that? (sprig of balsam placed on the President's desk by Miss May Craig)

Q A forget-me-not.

THE PRESIDENT: Very nice, very nice. I wish they would grow in this climate.  
Campobello balsam. Real balsam.

(To Mr. Godwin, referring to the press card) They didn't ask you to show it?

MR. GODWIN: Yes, an awful lot of visitors come in. They make everybody comply, every now and then.

THE PRESIDENT: Mm mm -- mm mm. It would be a joke if we picked up an anarchist by mistake. (laughter)

Q Mr. Godwin is a subversive influence.

Q We have been checking up on God (Mr. Godwin) for some time.

THE PRESIDENT: May (Miss May Craig) how is that N. Y. A. thing going on?  
Pretty well?

MISS MAY CRAIG: Swell.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it good? Is it really?

MISS MAY CRAIG: A democratic state.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know why everybody's coming in. I haven't got any news today.

Q It's a smaller crowd than usual. They are checking them as they come in.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, have you been fingerprinted -- everybody coming in? I don't think I have got anything.

Q Mr. President, the Governor of Kentucky says you are going to dedicate Mammoth Cave National Park at a date that you select. Have you selected any date?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Some time off.

Q Mr. President, there has been a recent request from Britain for American volunteers to a civilian technical corps -- mechanics to serve as radio detectors. Has that come to your attention?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have got something on it, somewhere. It came in this morning. (picks up and looks through his work-basket) Well, it is not -- apparently is not established for Americans, because it was established over there by the Prime Minister and Lord Beaverbrook, and announcements were made over there and in the British Embassy here some time ago. It is a civilian technical corps. The British authorities hope that American mechanics will enroll. Such mechanics as do enroll will be returned to this country, if the need for their services arises. Full information could be obtained from the British Consulate General at 25 Broadway, New York City. Trained mechanics to perform no combatant functions, but will be engaged in repairing and serving technical equipment, including mechanical devices recently developed by the British for locating approaching planes. A great need for additional trained mechanics over there, I take it, largely in view of new designs and new equipment, new instruments --

Q (interposing) Mr. President, how is that handled under the Neutrality Act?

THE PRESIDENT: How does it come under the Neutrality Act?

Q Doesn't the Neutrality Act have prohibitions against Americans visiting belligerent territory except in special cases?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, anybody can go into a belligerent territory, at their own risk, of course. You can't -- you can't take the oath of allegiance to a foreign government, and you can't be recruited -- solicited for the army or the navy of a foreign government in this country. But you can enlist -- as I have said many times before -- you can enlist, or can be enlisted -- in Canada, for example, and become a part of the armed forces, if you want to, of Canada or Great Britain, so long as you don't take allegiance to the King. I understand that they are not requiring the oath of allegiance to the King, so it's completely legal.

Q The same is true in China, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Are you in favor, sir, of encouraging this sort of enlistment?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much. I think Great Britain needs these people very much -- just the same way that quite a number of doctors and a great many nurses have already gone to the other side.

Q You also include in that, sir -- you also include that you favor enlistment in the armed forces?

THE PRESIDENT: Any boy that wants to go has a perfect right to go, so long as he is not recruited in this country.

Q Mr. President, would these mechanics include ground crews for planes?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know enough about what a ground crew for a plane is.

I suppose they are mechanics. In other words, all mechanics are not members of ground crews, but I suppose most members of ground crews are mechanics.

Q If not, it would cover them if they were mechanics?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so.

Q Mr. President, will these be exempt from the Draft?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, what is the status of price-control legislation proposals?

THE PRESIDENT: Pete, you got me there. I had meant to ask today, and I have done nothing about it.

Q What about this reorganization of O.P.M. we hear about?

THE PRESIDENT: The first I knew about it was in the papers this afternoon.

Q Mr. President, the Treasury apparently is releasing \$40,000,000. in frozen Russian assets.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will they be permitted to get export licenses to buy things with?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, have you any news or any interesting comment to make following Mr. Welles' (Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles) statement yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think that covers it pretty well. Of course we are going to give all the aid that we possibly can to Russia. We have not yet received any specific list of things, and of course people must realize that when we get a list it will be probably a list of such character that you can't just go round to Mr. Garfinckel's and fill the order and take it away with you. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: How about Thompson's Dairy?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What kind of things shall we give them, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, socks and shoes, and things like that. What you can get at Garfinckel's you can probably get at once. That is the easiest way of putting it. When it comes to planes and things that have to be made, we have got orders that will take a long time to fill, of course. Now on the deliveries of those orders, nothing could be changed, of course, except by agreement.

MR. GODWIN: At the time Mr. Welles made his statement, I think he also included the statement that we had not heard anything from the Russian government?

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly true.

MR. GODWIN: Have you got a list now? Have you had any --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

MR. GODWIN: Have you had any official --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. Absolutely nothing. We have had no request.

MR. GODWIN: What about the list?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't got anything at all. Nothing is coming through. Just like the average newspaper office at this minute. They get no news from the other side. Neither am I.

MR. GODWIN: Where did you get this list? Maybe I misunderstood.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. I said we couldn't do anything without a list.

MR. GODWIN: I beg your pardon.

Q Will any priorities on airplanes be assigned Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't the faintest idea.

Q Mr. President, is it general policy that comes under lease -- any aid

we could give comes under lease-lend?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I probably know less about the situation on the fighting front in Moscow than the average desk man does, at this particular moment.

Q Mr. President, is the defense of Russia essential to the defense of the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, ask me a different type of question. You know I never answer those. I would generally say "How old is Ann?" or something like that.

Q Mr. President, one thing the Russians have been pressing for consistently is machine tools. They have been planning to get licenses for those. Could you tell us anything about what the situation is on those requests?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, but my impression is that certain orders which they had here, for certain types of machine tools, were filled and delivered; and that certain very large machine tools -- this is a long time ago -- I mean this is way back last -- early in the fall -- nearly a year ago -- certain very large tools -- one or two of those shipments involved were held up and used by us, because we needed them at the moment. Now what has happened since then, I don't know.

Q Mr. President, General Maxwell (Brigadier General Russell L. Maxwell, Administrator, Export Control (National Defense) said yesterday that there would be no change in our attitude on the issuing of export licenses to Russia, until a statement of policy concerning such licenses was made by you in a formal statement.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you think, instead of answering hypothetical questions

on the part of anybody, it would be best to find out what they want?

I think that is more practical.

Q (interposing) Well, they have --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) What we do before we know what would be asked to send, that is our situation today. We haven't got the foggiest idea. We will not cross that bridge until we come to it.

Q Do you plan, sir, to see Mr. Oumansky at all tomorrow? (Constantine A. Oumansky, Ambassador, U.S.S.R.)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe he knows any better than I do.

Q Mr. President, there have been reports that Colonel Donovan has been given a high position in the military intelligence, or will be given.

THE PRESIDENT: I read that, too, in the paper. I have had nothing come to my desk on it.

Q Mr. President, has anything come to your desk about keeping Selectees in service, more in service?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have got a report coming from the War Department, but it hadn't arrived last night.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.