

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #752,

Held in the President's Study at Hyde Park, N. Y.,

July 1, 1941 -- 11.15 A.M., E.D.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's a grand day. (as the newspapermen file in)

Why the hell did you want to come up today? (jokingly) This is the day to wear asbestos. (laughter)

Q They tell us the first one at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library was a Republican. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got a blessed thing. I won't say a word. You can ask all the questions, and I will say "No" or "Don't know".

Q Have you decided yet, Mr. President, whether you will be in Washington on the Fourth of July?

Q I would like to go back to cool Washington.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. (he laughs) I am going to stay here as long as I can. I haven't ordered the train.

Q Well, off the record, what would be your hunch on that? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't even got an off-the-record hunch. I would like to stay here, but I don't know.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It is safe to assume that the Friday broadcast will be either from here or Washington.

Q Thank you. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You don't mind staying up here, do you?

Q I would like to go back to cool Washington. It's cool down there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. As long as we do have it here -- just thinking about the movie people. Er -- somebody suggested that we have it in my room over at the Library. It has never been done.

Q Nice place.

THE PRESIDENT: What do you think?

Q We can do it all right.

THE PRESIDENT: All right for the movie people?

Q Sure.

THE PRESIDENT: They might think it was a little small. I think it is big enough. You can tell them -- if they are here -- that we will do it four o'clock Friday afternoon. Of course, they want pictures of it, apparently.

Q Mr. President, I see in the papers that Secretary Knox is urging the use of the Navy immediately, to clear the Atlantic for deliveries of supplies to Britain. Does that meet with your approval?

THE PRESIDENT: Mm -- mm -- I don't think there is any comment.

Q Mr. President, have you been kept informed of the arrest of these spies in New York City?

THE PRESIDENT: Only what I read in the papers.

Q I wonder if that has been linked with the Van Norden sight. Can you say if that is similar?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know any more than you do. Probably less. Too hot. (he laughs)

MR. DURNO: Do you care to comment, sir, on the report of the House Military Affairs Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't read it. Anything specific?

MR. DURNO: Well, it criticised the Administration's handling of the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Where?

MR. DURNO: On the defense program.

THE PRESIDENT: Where? In what particular? (George Durno hesitates)

(laughter)

MR. DURNO: It suggested the appointment of a single head ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) For what?

MR. DURNO: For the running of the defense program.

THE PRESIDENT: In what particular? I mean in what running of the defense program?

Q The Knudsen-Hillman production, I think the story said.

THE PRESIDENT: Why?

Q Production for defense.

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, George just had a bad time. As a matter of fact I will talk to you off the record. It has got to be off the record, but it is worth-while to assemble a few thoughts when you get back a little.

I didn't read all the story, that is perfectly true, but I got an idea about what it is about, and all the clamor in it, in order to see whether they had taken up any one specific thing, and based any recommendation on any one specific thing, and I couldn't find it. Not one single article or item. Now, what-- what worth is a report of that kind? There wasn't one single item that I could find in that report. Now, of course, probably the whole report was not printed -- I will probably get somebody to look it up and check -- but I don't think you will find one item.

Q I believe they suggested that the automobile industry had been permitted to take steel and other materials over too long a period.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, after all -- this is still off the record -- hindsight is awfully valuable, and it is true that a year ago there were two things that happened that have been changed by subsequent events. The first one -- the program -- that is to say, appropriations by

the Congress to call for the making of such and such material; and the second was that we got the best available men we could find to give us a checkup. They said there was plenty of steel to go around, and therefore there was no curtailment of the civilian use of steel. That's a year ago.

Well, there were two things that happened, and after all, if you had -- oh, what? -- Eli the Prophet in charge -- or Julius Caesar, or somebody else -- the sole person in charge of things -- what would he do? He would get the best advice he could, based on those two factors, what Congress had appropriated for -- what the military people thought was necessary at that time. And this is the same thing, of course -- Congress and the military people went along pretty well.

Then came the report from the best brains that could be bought. (he laughs) And at that time it looked as if it was in pretty good shape. Then two things happened: a number of people got worried; they asked for a checkup in the course of this past spring, and there was a checkup. And the checkup showed that the original estimate was too low, in view of the fact that the Congress and the Military had asked for more stuff, so they said, "You are perfectly all right, but it may mean the curtailment of some civilian use".

Well, that was begun. There may be more of it. I don't know -- I don't know today what the program is going to be three months from now. It will depend on the international situation. Maybe some individual's guess was wrong. You remember the first guess of Stettinius was wrong, for example. He got the best brains that he could find, and this last guess may be all right and it may not --

it depends on the future and not on the past.

We may have to curtail automobile production some more. We are getting enough steel at the present time. We may not get enough six months hence, which means less for civilian automobiles. Now that is the one example that you find, and if there is anything else, you will find the same general rule applies. But for the program at any one given time, we are getting along all right.

Now, nobody can guess the future. And if you remember a year ago, I said we have all got to guard against two things. That is the tendency to -- the tendency to say six months after an appropriation bill or an Order has gone through, "Why haven't we got it?" "Why didn't they go around -- my old Garfinckel story -- to Garfinckel's and buy it?" Of course you can't. You have got to build a factory first.

And then the other thing is, they fail to realize that the needs of a year ago are very different from the needs of today. I haven't got the faintest idea -- none of us have -- what the needs of next October are going to be. We can't guess. We are making -- it might be called -- the best guess that we can. It may be entirely changed three months from now.

In other words, this report, as I read it, it doesn't amount to a 'hill of beans' because there is no specification. We have known for a year in automobiles we might have to curtail civilian use more and more. We have got plenty of leeway, as you remember, on all steel production. 25% was for defense needs; 75% for civilian needs. It won't hurt terribly if we reduce civilian use from 75% to 60%.

Q As it looks now, sir, everybody who is going to buy a car is buying a car.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Just informally, Mr. President, can you tell us, off the record, anything about the conduct of the Russian-German war? Their military communiques are so patently a tissue of lies.

THE PRESIDENT: Nobody knows.

Q Nobody knows?

Q Are you getting any reports you consider reliable?

THE PRESIDENT: No. In other words, we are getting exactly the same communiques from Moscow and Berlin that you are getting.

Q The Army -- the middle of last week -- said that they had surveyed the forces on the Russian-German front. The Germans had 6,000 planes and the Russians 4,000, and Germany claims to date to have knocked 4167 out of the air. (laughter) It looks confusing.

THE PRESIDENT: Very true; and same thing with tanks. Exactly the same thing with tanks.

Q On the record, Mr. President, anything you care to say about the apparent election of Lyndon Johnson?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

Q Anything you care to say about the apparent election of Lyndon Johnson?

THE PRESIDENT: Is there any more news this morning?

Q Except what appears in the paper.

Q It appears pretty uncertain.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q I would say it was not completely certain, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better go to Washington. This is -- has

to be off the record. I just got an intimation last night that Lyndon Johnson's friends were all 'het up' because the -- there is such a thing, you know, -- this is off the record -- of withholding returns. I don't of course say what the motive is, but Texas law has been withholding the returns.

Q Eighteen to twenty thousand of the votes still out, apparently.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think that steps are being taken to police it.

Is that a polite word? You had better find out from Washington, but the intimation last night is that they were going to police the thing.

Q State police?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q State police, I believe. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You know, one other funny thing happened -- this is all off the record. Up here in this State we have had voting machines for a long, long time, and they were apparently perfectly safe. We didn't think there were any phony returns from voting machines, as far as I know, except that they -- as they spread around the State, there were some awfully queer returns that came in, and of course the voting machines are all made by one company. It is a perfect cinch for them. It is the most complete monopoly there is in the world -- the voting machine.

So they devised a brand new one -- which of course would have put an awful lot of money into their pocket -- a photographic plate on the back of the machine. Well, as you know, on a voting machine, when you want to read the darn thing, you have to take a screwdriver and unscrew the back before you can get to the figures on it. Now

this thing is a photographic plate on the inside of the back, and before they can unscrew it, they have to expose that plate and take a reading of the figures before -- photographic reading -- before they can take the back off. Then they have to have that plate developed and send it in to the County Board, or State Board, or something like that. It looks almost foolproof.

Q It seems to be.

THE PRESIDENT: Charge an extra \$150.00 to get one of those plates on the back of the machine. It's a cinch.

Q Can it be put on the present machines?

THE PRESIDENT: You probably have to get a new machine.

MR. JOHN HENRY: Speaking of polls, Mr. President, your Congressman, Mr. Fish, is conducting a poll now, on whether his constituents agree that the United States should enter the war or not. Have you received ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I didn't get one. I didn't get one. My wife got one, and I think she voted that she also was against sin.

MR. JOHN HENRY: Is that your answer?

THE PRESIDENT: (the President laughs) You remember President Coolidge's story on him. His wife came back from church -- he hadn't gone, he had a cold. No -- his wife didn't go to church. He went to the church. And he came back. She said, "Did you have a good sermon?" "What did he preach about?" "Sin," said Coolidge. "What did he say about it?" "He was against it." (laughter)

That's very much like this poll which Fish is conducting. Why, anybody would vote, of course -- obviously -- one way on that thing. "Are you against war?" Sure -- we are all against war.

[Joseph M. ?]

Q Captain Robert Patterson seems to be happy.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q This estimate of the poll of the New York Daily News is a summary ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The same question.

Q I don't know exactly how it is worded but generally it is the same.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. Well, of course, all of those -- that -- that type of policy -- it is -- it is just like saying, "Are you against sin?" I shouldn't be surprised -- if somebody gave me the Daily News poll -- if I wouldn't vote just the same way as Captain Patterson would vote.

Q Mr. President, back when war first started, it was a popular question to ask you if you thought we could keep out of it.

THE PRESIDENT: There may have been.

Q You always then -- said then you thought we could.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I didn't. I said I hoped so. Yes. (he laughs)

Q Is that still your answer?

THE PRESIDENT: Doing it since what? -- first of September, 1939 -- same old answer. (he laughs)

Q Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe there's a blessed thing. I am just sitting around taking a swim each afternoon.

Q We will take a swim, but we don't have to go in a pool.

THE PRESIDENT: Anybody played golf, or has it been too hot for that?

Q Yes, we have been playing nearly every day. Good water over there.

Good wells. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I hope you have stopped sampling that Poughkeepsie water.

Q Just drinking the water on the golf course. It's all right. It's

well water.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that's good, too. That's the reason for going down there.

MR. CHARLES DALY: What does one drink when one gets thirsty in Poughkeepsie?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: Charlie, what a question!

MR. CHARLES DALY: I just got here this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Tell him about the chlorine. Not the chorine, the chlorine. (laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #753,
Executive Offices of the President,
July 8, 1941 -- 4.10 P.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: (speaking softly) I think we ought to have a name for Earl. (Earl Godwin) The last gentleman there we called him 'Dean'. Do you think we ought to call him 'Deacon'?

MR. GODWIN: They call Hassett 'Deacon' you know.

THE PRESIDENT: Deacon! That's all right -- take the name away from Hassett.

MR. GODWIN: Deacon!

THE PRESIDENT: I wonder if any of this mob wants me to answer those fool questions?

MR. GODWIN: What?

THE PRESIDENT: I wonder if any of this mob wants me to answer those fool questions?

MR. GODWIN: Lots of them. (he laughs)

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) That's a funny one, isn't it? (he laughs again)
(pause here)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: (speaking normally) I haven't got anything of any excitement at all; but as you know, sometimes in my mail I get things that are pretty appealing, from the human interest point of view. And I got the other day a letter I thought that would interest you. I shall read it to you. It is, for example -- it is from a man in the State of Missouri. Of course I can't tell you his name. I thought I would read it to you. Dated 29th of June -- just before

the Fourth of July. (reading)

"Dear President Roosevelt:

"I am a married man, 28 years old -- boy, three -- girl, one. Here is how I feel about being an American. My ancestors were Czechoslovakians. My wife's English, but we are Americans. I look at my refrigerator, my oil heater, and my radio, and glad I am an American. My children get cod liver oil, nourishing food, and a doctor's watchful care. They will be glad they are Americans.

"This morning I went to church among my neighbors, unafraid and unmolested. I thank God for giving us America.

"I went home today to my wife and kiddies. My little boy Douglas came running and said, 'Hi, pop, you're gonna take me to see the ribber?' And I said, 'Sure, Doug, I will take you to see the river.' 'And we will stand on the bridge and see the cars, pop?' 'Sure, Doug.' 'Pop, see the sun -- look, see, pop, the shine on the car windows.' 'Yes, Doug, the sun shines on all America.'

"After our walk, we came home and had dinner -- two veal chops and baked potatoes and fresh green beans, corn-on-the-cob. I said grace with tears in my eyes. I am so happy I am an American. This afternoon we listened to a radio broadcast of British children here in America talking to their parents in England, and I was proud to be an American.

"And tomorrow I will go to work. I work in an electro-type foundry, and I love my job. I made it, in fact, from errand boy to production manager in two years. I just had ideas and I told the boss about them. He is an American.

"Tonight before going to bed I told my wife, 'Honey, I am going to buy a large flag and hang it out of the window on Friday. The President wants everyone to pledge allegiance to a new and united America, and, Honey, I am going to do my part, because I would rather be an American than anything else on earth.'"

I think that's rather a nice letter. (murmur of approval)

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I haven't got anything that I can tell you.

Q Mr. President, before we get into Iceland, I was wondering whether you could tell me ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) We are in Iceland. (loud laughter)

Q (continuing) I wonder if you could tell me whether you have decided on that Puerto Rican Judge yet? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't. (turning) Steve, will you remind me to find out about the Puerto Rican Judge?

Q Now that the Ice(land) has been broken, Mr. President -- (laughter) -- can you tell us anything about the prospect for diplomatic recognition and appointment ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q Diplomatic relations with Iceland?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It will be -- it will be initiated by -- well, you will have to ask the State Department. I don't know whether I send a name up to the Senate first or whether I ask for an appropriation first, you see.

MR. GODWIN: You send a name up to Congress for its agreement, in order that a diplomatic representative may be ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, in two ways, the nomination of somebody to be minister, and an appropriation to pay the costs and expenses of a legation. Now, which comes first, I don't know. They might come simultaneously.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, were you aware of any intention on the part of Germany, or any other country, to occupy Iceland? I think you make it pretty clear.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that I can answer that question categorically any more than any similar question. In war, one puts oneself more or less in the place of the other fellow. Sometimes one has information that leads one to do it. Sometimes one hasn't. One

asks what the other side would do. One asks what would you do yourself, if you were in the position of the other fellow. Sometimes I say it is based on information. Sometimes it isn't.

Q Mr. President, do you think the other fellow is liable to make any move toward the Azores or Cape Verde Islands?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't prognosticate.

Q Do you have any comment to make on the prognostication of some of the -- a particular Senator about Iceland?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think the case speaks for itself.

Q Mr. President, would it be proper to ask whether we have any troops in Greenland at the present time?

THE PRESIDENT: That would not be proper at this time, because it -- the answer to it might expose military information.

Q It might disclose what, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q It might disclose what, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Military information.

Q Mr. President, can you say are there plans afoot to establish an airline service between the United States and Iceland?

THE PRESIDENT: What kind of an airline service?

Q I don't know. There is a report from London saying that such has been contemplated. I believe Icelandic circles assert it.

THE PRESIDENT: A civilian commercial service?

Q It didn't say.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President, what is the status of the price-control legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't heard of it since I got back.

Q What about General Marshall's recommendations for detention in the

Service of the National Guard and Selectees?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think I can only talk about that by way of background, by giving you some illustrations.

A year ago, we had a regular Army in this country that was pretty well trained, but of rather small size. It did not, of course, include the troops in the Philippines or Hawaii or Canal Zone. It was very small, and as in the World War, instead of retaining those troops which amounted to, as I remember it -- oh, what? -- roughly 150 to 200,000 trained troops with trained officers -- as in the case of the World War, we used them for the training of the new Army.

In other words, in each unit, whether it was a brigade or a division, we took a certain portion of the regular Army and added to it another portion from the National Guard, and then added a still third portion from the Selectees, and built up, on the nucleus of the regular Army, a very large number of units -- battalions and brigades, and divisions, and corps; with the result that in all of the present divisions you have a complete mixture, which was necessary for training purposes, of three different groups of people -- the regular Army, and National Guard and Selectees. And in any one unit the same thing applies to the officer personnel in a -- going down to the lowest unit, which is the company.

Where's Pa? (Major General Edwin M. Watson) Is he there? (looking around) I don't know if I am talking military correctly. In a company, for instance, the non-commissioned officers -- some of them may be at the present moment -- may be old line regular Army, some may be National Guard. Some of the corporals, and sergeants

may have come from the ranks of the Selectees. In other words, they are all put together into an American force.

Now we are confronted with certain problems at the present time, which of course are inevitable if we created this Army in the way -- the only practicable way to create it. We have certain of these units in different places, where we are up against physical problems.

If, for example, -- in Hawaii -- we have an anti-aircraft detachment, which is a part of the defenses of Hawaii, but which contains a very major proportion of National Guard and Selectees, the time's approaching when we might have to bring the major portion of that battalion, or unit, back home and have left a minor portion of the battalion or unit, which would immediately lose its efficiency, because it would only be a small unit that would have to be replaced with raw material. Now that would mean, of course, the loss not only of privates but also of non-commissioned officers, and commissioned officers belonging to the National Guard, or the Selectees.

The same thing is true in Alaska. The same thing would be true in Panama. The same thing would be true in Bermuda or Trinidad or Newfoundland, and it means, of course, a very distinct difficulty in maintaining, at a rather critical juncture, the efficiency of the army unit. And, of course, the whole theory of modern warfare is based on efficiency of the unit. And that really is the present problem that is before the Congress.

Q Er -- the implication to that is that not all of the Selectees, not all the National Guard men would be retained, only enough to keep up the efficiency?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know. That is a thing you would have to

ask General Marshall, because I never took that part of it up with him.

MR. GODWIN: But there is another -- there is another item in his recommendation which has to do with restrictive legislation that keeps the army down, and particularly with respect to going out of this Hemisphere. I don't know whether that is important or not, but it has been made a basis for discussion.

THE PRESIDENT: It might or might not be.

MR. GODWIN: Have you anything further on that?

THE PRESIDENT: It might or might not be. You take the case of Iceland. It is a perfectly practicable thing. In the first place, you will ask the question, is it or isn't it in the Western Hemisphere?

MR. GODWIN: What do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on which geographer I consulted last.

MR. GODWIN: Well, as I understand the statement -- (the President laughs) -- the State Department has it straddling.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on your geographer.

MR. GODWIN: Well, I didn't mean to be facetious about it.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that really is beside the -- it always reminds me -- sometimes when you try to draw an imaginary line it leads one to ----. I remember a great many years ago, I was going up the north cape of Norway, in one of those cruise boats. We were standing at the rail up there and somebody said -- there was an old lady standing by me -- and somebody said, "By Jove, we have just crossed the Arctic Circle!" And she said, "Where? I don't see it." (laughter)

Q Mr. President, the last time you gave us the imaginary line, it ran

between Iceland and Greenland. Has there been a shift in that location?

THE PRESIDENT: That is, as I say, depending on the geographer I had seen the previous night. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Well, in any spot, does that meet ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I tried very hard for a week to see if it was possible to draw a line of demarcation. Well, I gave it up.

MR. GODWIN: I think possibly, sir ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) There are, for example, points -- probably they are in the Western Hemisphere, one was or the other -- which are not the least bit important for the defense of the Hemisphere. Now, what do we do? There may be some other points that from the geographer's point of view lie just outside of the Western Hemisphere which are terribly important to Hemispheric defense. That is why you can't draw an imaginary line and put a buoy on it.

MR. GODWIN: Well, the restrictive legislation that General Marshall mentions I think is more important than the argument over the line.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Now have you anything further to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think -- of course the important thing is -- is the breaking up of existing efficient units of the army. That's the real thing.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

Q Do you plan a message or any recommendation to the Congress on General Marshall's recommendation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think they understand pretty well what the problem is before them.

Q Mr. President ---
(interposing)

Q /Can you tell us something about your conference with Mr. Murray today?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think -- we saw each other as we do every few weeks.

Q He talked particularly to you, did he not, about this pending legislation in Congress -- the Vinson bill, and May bill ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, and because we had about eleven or fifteen or nineteen of them, we found it a little difficult. We didn't have the text of any of it before us. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, the Maritime Commission has ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q The Maritime Commission has submitted a program for further construction of merchant vessels. Could you give us some idea as to how many vessels are contemplated?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen that program. I knew there was one in process. Of course, it is about time for a new program, because a great many of the ships under the old program are beginning to reach the point when we ought to order material for new ships to replace them when they go down the ways.

Q Do you feel that the original -- that the original two-million-ton program has been filled?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know. I haven't got the program yet.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. GODWIN: (after getting up) They say there's good trout fishing in Iceland.

THE PRESIDENT: They say it's grand.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #754,
Executive Office of the President
July 11, 1941 -- 10.50 A.M., E.S.T.

MR. GODWIN: (to the President) How are you?

(the President nods)

MR. GODWIN: Oh, my!

You have got Commissioner Young working. He works all the time. He doesn't have any time off. He has got the police investigation.

THE PRESIDENT: That's not his own field, is it?

MR. GODWIN: Well, he is taking that field because Hazen is a little bit weak ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Of course.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing)--- and somebody has got to be up there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: He is doing a good job. Really you ought to be proud of him. He's all right. He has given a lot of good thought to it.

(pause here)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you have got yesterday the -- er -- supplementary Army estimates, and I have two more today that are going up to Congress this morning. One for the Navy, totaling one billion 625 million, and the other for the Maritime Commission -- I'll come to that later.

The Navy estimates are for a great many things. The larger items are 400 million for the maintenance and repair of defense installations in Government or privately owned merchant ships. Er -- 249 million for ordinance and ordinance stores. About 300

million for pay and subsistence, and clothing -- medical care. Public works about 300 million. That includes housing, and different equipment for Navy Yards, and so forth -- oh, a lot of items. 90 million for aviation. About 90 million for the Marines. 160 million for repairs. Well, that's about all.

Q Sir, does that 90 million for aviation include plane purchases, or is that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, the first item that you mention -- the breakdown of 400 million for maintenance and repair of defense installations in Government or privately owned merchant ships -- sounds interesting. Does that mean arming merchant ships?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, no. Just the ships we are taking over.

Q In that first item of 400 million -- for maintenance and repair of merchant ships -- you mentioned 160 million for repairs. What kind of vessels are those?

THE PRESIDENT: That I couldn't tell you.

Q Is part of that repair for British vessels?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Mr. President, does the 90 million on Marines mean a big increase in Marines, or is that for equipment, and so forth?

THE PRESIDENT: Everything to do with Marines.

Q (interposing) Well, does that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) They are coming in -- the answer is very simple -- they are coming in faster than we had expected them to.

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) But Marines in ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Nearly all of this whole estimate was

caused by the fact that things are ahead of schedule on everything. Practically every item. It means we are ahead of schedule, and we have to ask for the money now, instead of next January.

MR. GODWIN: Well, sir, has it anything to do with the wider policy ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. Nothing at all. Not a blessed thing. Can't get any story out of it. It's just because we are ahead of schedule.

Q Mr. President, does the increase in appropriation mean that there will also be an increase in request for taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: Request for taxes?

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Taxes.

Q (continuing) Increased taxes. They were going to have two-thirds paid by taxes and one-third by borrowing. Now this increase means it is upsetting the balance.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, after all, I suppose the easiest answer to that is that you have a tax bill about every year, and you don't base your tax bill on individual supplementary estimates. You take the one at the end of the year. Now there is one tax bill that is on the way through at the present time, and I assume there will be another tax bill to be sent which is based on the one we have at that time. We don't put any tax bill through every time we send a deficiency estimate up. (he laughs)

Q Well, Mr. Morgenthau said something -- not very definite about it, which is the reason I add this.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is the easiest way. We haven't an annual tax bill.

Then the other one is the Maritime Commission. We are asking

698 million in cash. That is to say in appropriations, which includes -- what's the easiest way of putting it? -- we are also asking a contract -- oh, wait a minute -- (looking at his papers) contract authorization for a billion dollars. Now, actually, we are asking a billion 296 of contract authorization, but we are asking 296 -- er -- immediate cash under that, and that is included in the item of 698. So your -- your total is one billion 698.

You see the point?

MR. GODWIN: For what?

Q (softly) No.

Q (softly) No.

THE PRESIDENT: That is primarily for a construction fund. More ships.

Q How many ships does that apply for, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: A great many. (laughter)

And the real reason for this is that again the schedule -- the program is going ahead of schedule. And obviously, when you are going ahead of schedule, you have got to get the money quicker. If -- take the simple example -- if a ship was to be -- go off the ways next March, we wouldn't need to order the material for a new ship, to take her place on the ways, much before December. But if a ship is going off the ways six months ahead of time, we have got to order the material for a ship to take her place six months ahead of December. And of course our every indication is that they will turn out ships faster than we hoped.

MR. GODWIN: They gave me the idea that they were using all the shipways that we had in the country. I guess that's your impression too?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Does this mean more shipyards by any chance?

THE PRESIDENT: Er -- yes and no. It means -- it means carrying out more quickly than we had expected certain -- a few -- planned shipyards on which very little has been done -- or we are all ready to go ahead with them -- but it is nearly all the old -- the existing ways.

Q Mr. President, can you say anything about the type of ships?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't.

Q Mr. President, is the Maritime Commission about ready to put to work all the Italian and German ships that we have taken over in our ports?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd say that we would begin to get delivery of the repaired ships pretty soon, and of course they -- the schedule depends on the amount of damage in the case of each ship.

Q Mr. President, are these new ships to be used generally?

THE PRESIDENT: To be used what?

Q General use?

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

Q Could you tell us any more about this item for the maintenance and repair of defense installations on merchant ships, and defense facilities?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I haven't got any breakdown on that.

Q What is the ---

MR. GODWIN: The first item of 400 million dollars he is talking about -- in the Navy. The one I asked you about.

THE PRESIDENT: (pausing) Well, I haven't got any breakdown on it at all. It simply says maintenance, Bureau of Ships, including maintenance and repair of various installations in Government or privately owned merchant ships.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It merely includes it -- I suppose the great bulk of it would be Navy ships.

MR. GODWIN: Well, that is bound to be construed, Mr. President, as a --- suggestion let me put it -- the possibility that merchant ships are being armed now.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that includes that, and I think there are -- as a matter of fact, we will take certain measures. You have heard of 'degaussing'.

Q What?

THE PRESIDENT: I imagine they would include 'degaussing' against magnetic mines, but the great bulk of that 400 million undoubtedly is for Navy ships.

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, the entire business of 'degaussing', according to the deficiency report, only costs about \$30,000. a ship. Would this include converting merchant ships and vessels for Navy use then?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I suppose it would. What about the \$30,000.?

Q That's the estimated cost of 'degaussing' a ship.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a new one on me.

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Where did you read that?

Q Deficiency appropriation hearings, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh. (he laughs)

As a matter of fact, when you convert a ship to a certain type of Navy use, you spend more money on the conversion process than you

do on the cost of the ship -- obviously.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, there seems to be some substantiation from abroad this morning in the stories of American work bases, or whatever it is, in Scotland or Ireland, or both. Have you anything to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Whatever's done has been done under one of two things. Either straight purchase by the British government, or lend-lease bill. I shouldn't be surprised -- only you have got to be fair and put it this way -- I shouldn't be the least bit surprised if American steel, for example, had gone into fifty bases -- British bases -- in the British Isles and Canada, and God knows where -- South Africa. I don't know. And I have no doubt that there are a great many American workmen that are working all over the world, being paid for by the British government, which is of course perfectly legal.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, Mr. Willkie, after seeing you the other day, suggested that we ourselves establish bases in Ireland. Is there anything like that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I don't think there is any comment necessary.

Q I didn't hear that.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any comment.

Q Mr. President, have you any plans to go to Ottawa this month or next?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q None at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I have no plans to go anywhere.

Q Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I just live on a day-to-day basis.

Q Have you decided upon anyone for the vacancy on the FCC?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, no.

MR. GODWIN: Eddie Roddan (Democratic National Committee publicity staff) has that job, according to some columnists. Did you know that?

THE PRESIDENT: Has he? No. (laughter)

Q Is there anything on an appointment for Attorney General?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Nothing at present.

Q In connection with the supplemental estimates, when does the lend-lease supplement -- the new lend-lease program go up?

THE PRESIDENT: They are working on it. I don't know.

Q This week sometime?

THE PRESIDENT: No. ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I don't think so. As far as I know, they are not ready on that.

Q Those letters are going to the Speaker of the House?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, do you think it is necessary, in order to prevent inflation, to impose a freezing of prices at any existing level?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President. (the President laughs)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #755,
Executive Office of the President,
July 15, 1941 -- 4.03 P.M., E.S.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am very sorry to hear this morning of Commissioner Hazen's death. (Melvin C. Hazen, President of the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia) I really feel that it is going to be a very great loss to the District, because that term of affection which a great many people used -- "grand old man of the District" -- was very well bestowed. I don't know of anybody in the District that has been more public-spirited than he has been in a very large number of years. Even long before he held office I knew him quite well back in the old days of the Wilson administration. He is going to be very much missed.

I don't think I have anything at all today. You will probably ask about the meeting this morning with Chairman Doughton and Representative Cooper.

MR. GODWIN: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there isn't anything particular to say, except that we discussed tax legislation in a general way -- certain items. And that's about all there is to be said.

MR. GODWIN: Does that have to do with current legislation, or proposed legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Current?

THE PRESIDENT: I mean the current bill that is before the committee.

Q Mr. President, did you discuss joint returns?

THE PRESIDENT: Mm -- no.

Q Was there any decision reached about the three ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) This is not a matter for decision. Just general.

Q Is there any discussion about going above the figure?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q The 3 billion five hundred million?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Mr. President, when this first Treasury -- when the Congress first began discussing the new tax bill, Mr. Morgenthau had a formula of two-thirds taxes and one-third borrowing.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) That is working out all right in the present bill, but it won't work out ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Of course not. I answered that the other day. This tax bill originated -- what was it? -- three months ago -- two or three months ago -- to make certain expenditure demands -- it might be called the 1941 tax bill -- and the last press conference -- somebody said, "You are going to raise the money to pay these new supplementary estimates that have come in?" And I think I said, "No, certainly not. That would be a matter which would be met by the next tax bill, and in all probability in times like these we will have to have an annual tax bill."

Q Mr. President, have you been kept informed on the Peruvian-Ecuadorean difficulty?

THE PRESIDENT: More or less.

Q Er -- have you any comment on the progress that they have been making?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, better ask the State Department.

MR. GODWIN: Sir, have you anything to say further about the matter of General Marshall -- War Department's various recommendations -- time, and limitations, and so forth?

THE PRESIDENT: Only this -- that I think it is a very simple choice to make, as to whether in times like these you want to disintegrate the Army of the United States or not, and the responsibility, of course, is squarely up to the Congress as to what change is made in the present law. The Army of the United States, which is one of the -- at the present time one of the smallest armies in the world -- (he laughs) -- would be disintegrated. Roughly two-thirds of it would go back to private life, and their places would be taken by a two-thirds fill-in of untrained officers and men, and that is why the matter is so serious.

MR. GODWIN: The two-thirds includes the National Guard?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, is Iceland in the Western Hemisphere?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, don't ask any more silly questions. (he laughs) That has been discussed backwards and forwards.

Q May I revert to this thing that you were explaining. It seems to be the general impression that you will address the Congress, or send some message over on that subject.

THE PRESIDENT: Honestly, I don't know.

Q Mr. President, to make that tax matter a little more definite, Chairman Doughton said after the conference that he is opposed to any higher tax bill this year than the one that they are already working on. Could we say that that represents your feeling too?

THE PRESIDENT: No. All you can say is, just as I have said before this, the question of raising 3 billion 500 million did not come up.

Q What is the status of the lend-lease appropriation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you mean a new one?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: There isn't any yet.

Q Is it in prospect?

THE PRESIDENT: It's being studied still. I haven't had any recommendations even.

Q Can you tell us about your conference today with Leon Henderson and Wayne Coy on price control?

THE PRESIDENT: Made progress. That's all. They are taking it up on the Hill. In other words, it might be called a three-cornered state of conversations.

Q Here?

THE PRESIDENT: Wayne, Leon, and myself.

MR. GODWIN: Is there any reason for leaving out the State of Maryland from this letter to Congress on the subject of Daylight Saving?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

MR. W. H. MYLANDER: Mr. President, on this matter of Daylight Saving, the people of Toledo, Ohio -- at least my city editor (laughter) -- complains that school children will be going to school in the dark. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't it more important whether they go home in the dark? (he laughs)

MR. W. H. MYLANDER: The sun doesn't rise until after eight o'clock out there. They belong to the Central time belt, and they operate on Standard time.

THE PRESIDENT: Give it up. They are still having an awful time down in Warm Springs as to whether they are on Eastern Standard or Central Standard. I don't know when it will be ended. They have been talking about it for twenty years.

Q Mr. President, in this Daylight Saving extension over the country, communities which already have Daylight Saving -- Chicago for instance -- which has Daylight Saving or Central Standard, and now Eastern -- you wouldn't move them another hour?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope not. (he laughs)

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It's a question of saving very much needed power in certain parts of the country, thereby increasing the defense effort.

Q Mr. President, did you receive the cheese and beer which Governor Heil of Wisconsin sent you? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I received -- I received and have eaten some of the cheese. I believe I have received the beer, but I haven't -- I haven't had any yet.

Q You did not send the cheese to the British then?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q You did not send the cheese to the British? (loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. (he laughs)

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) That is being saved for the White House.

Q Mr. President, in regard to the matter of oil supplies, there are reports that 50 to 75 more tankers may be taken off the Gulf Atlantic coast run. Has that matter been taken up with you?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Haven't heard of it.

Q Mr. President, is there anything further you can say in regard to activities of German representatives or agents in this country? I have in mind particularly Mayor LaGuardia's statement against them.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. Of course, I will have to give you this as background only. There have been in regard to the Eastern war -- and the Western war -- a lot of very well-meaning people in this country who have been told by somebody in the Far East, or somebody in Europe -- not in the Government -- but some person fairly high up -- not in the Government -- that it would be perfectly grand if there could be a peace worked out. Well now, these perfectly well-meaning American citizens rush down to Washington and tell us about it. Well, that's about all there is to it. You get that kind of thing almost every time from somewhere, nearly always from well-meaning sources. I have to admit that in some cases it has looked like a plant. And that is all I can say.

Q Mr. President, one of the largest papers in the country carried a rather circumstantial story that the Hess proposal was that the British Empire and the British Fleet should be retained intact. There hasn't been anything of that kind has there, or something come to you?

THE PRESIDENT: I must say the circumstantial story that you discuss in this great influential paper is unknown even to Mr. Churchill.

Q You mean the paper is?

THE PRESIDENT: What? (laughter)

Q Mr. President, in this three-corner discussion on prices, I wonder if you would give us some background about the various questions involved in the price control situation?

THE PRESIDENT: It's so long that I would probably overlook some of the essential things. There are a number of elements involved, and one of the proposals is whether they should all be put into one bill, or separate bills. Well, I will give you an example. After all, what we are after is an objective, and if it is better to put them into separate bills, in order to get it through, it's perfectly all right. That is a legislative matter.

For example, the question of rents. You and I know an awful lot of -- er-- lobbyists here that don't want rents touched. I don't mean the District -- of course in the District that is true -- but in nearby Maryland, and nearby Virginia, and a lot of other places where there is a shortage and where rents are very greatly mounting. Well, it is -- that is a different -- that is a different problem in a way from the question of a price limit on food-stuffs, and yet it does hit an awful lot of families. We had a certain legal control over that during the World War right here. As I remember it, we did not have that control all over the United States. It was a general law. It's a little bit -- that particular phase of the subject might be put into a separate bill. I have always felt that for something -- that if you can curb excessive prices of food-stuffs or clothing -- things like that -- at the same time you should curb excessive charges for rent. And there are various ways of working it out --

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- to go into the same bill ---

MR. GODWIN: (softly) Excuse me.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- or separate bill, I don't know.

MR. P. BRANDT: What about wages, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. P. BRANDT: What about wages?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, we are trying to keep things pretty well in balance, Pete. That is all I can say.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, that rent situation -- you and I both remember -- the Ball Rent Act, under which rents were administered here. They took each particular instance and went into each one, which was not freezing in ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Of course, that's right.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) And that had to do with governmental employees largely, if you don't mind my refreshing your memory.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Yes, of course, there are two or three different methods. For instance, one method that has been suggested is to -- in those areas where there is a large demand for housing, and rents have started to go up, that the Congress itself, instead of leaving it to somebody else, should put a ceiling on what the total -- what the maximum increase in rents should be, as compared -- as compared with some base period. We do it on earnings, on corporations, and so forth, on the base-period method, and we might take the base period of what the rents were in 19 -- what? -- 38, 39 and 40, and put a ceiling -- a limit -- over an increase on that figure -- some percentage. 10 or 15 or 20 or 25 -- whatever Congress should determine.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, do you -- speaking of separate bills, does that mean that the Baruch Plan of a universal ceiling is out?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

MR. P. BRANDT: The Baruch Plan?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. P. BRANDT: The Baruch Plan?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It's a new one on me.

MR. P. BRANDT: It has been written about. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Pete, I must -- I must be mean and say does that prove one hill of beans? (he laughs)

Q What would be the object of a separate bill, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What would be the purpose of separate bills?

THE PRESIDENT: Easiest to put through Congress.

Q Mr. President, may we return to this proposed extension of time for men in the Service, for a minute?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

Q The proposed extension of time for men in the Service? I think one of the arguments which has made some headway is a "breaking of the faith".

THE PRESIDENT: I think it was put pretty well - I don't indorse the whole article, but Gould Lincoln today had a story that pointed out that very same thing, that a year ago as conditions were in the world, the Congress did not want to commit itself for too far ahead. Didn't know what the conditions would be a year later. Therefore they put it in, with the proviso that if at the end of that year it was necessary to keep the men in the Service, it could be done by one of two methods:

One was by the declaration of a national emergency by the Congress, which would do it automatically; and the other by an amend-

ment of the law. And when the men came in they came in under the whole clause and not just part of the clause. They came in for a year, subject to Congressional action. Well, that was the contract, and therefore it isn't breaking faith for Congress to act. Gould had it very well in his paper.

Q. Have you any preference between those two methods?

THE PRESIDENT: It's entirely up to Congress.

Q. Mr. President, if I may for a minute return to the price question, do you think that it would be better to control commodity prices by freezing them as of a certain date rather than by fixing ceilings on certain big commodities?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think you can give a general -- a reply to that as a general question. I think it depends a great deal on the article, perhaps even the locality.

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #756,
Executive Office of the President,
July 18, 1941 -- 10.50 A.M., E.S.T.

(The President reads over some typed sheets as the newspapermen
file in)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have anything today, except that I am
sending up to Congress next week -- I don't know what day exactly --
a Message on the Army, to avoid complete disintegration of the Army.
In general terms -- because, as we said last week, the burden is
very definitely on the Congress. Outside of that, I don't think
I have anything.

MR. GODWIN: Sir, are you going to read that message yourself?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. No.

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: Mr. President, could you tell us what is being
done to keep the sea lanes to Iceland open?

THE PRESIDENT: I think probably the only thing I can do is to refer to
the message, which was perfectly definite and perfectly clear, and
about which there can be -- er-- nothing further said, unless it
is pure speculation, which must of necessity be pure speculation.

The facts are, first, that -- to repeat in the vernacular --
that -- er -- it is felt by all military authorities, who have the
best access to not only information but to the defense needs of
the nation, and of the hemisphere, that the possible occupation
of Iceland by an unfriendly power would be a serious blow to national
and hemisphere defense. For that reason, from the military defense
point of view, it was necessary to help keep out any hostile power,

by the occupation of Iceland, a portion of which has already been accomplished. I am most certainly not going to tell you the future movement of troops. In other words, I don't think that it is right that I should pull a 'Wheeler'. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: How about quoting that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, you can quote that. (laughter)

Then comes that -- being the policy of the United States -- comes the second part of the question: Having occupied Iceland, are we going to leave the American garrison in Iceland to its own devices, or are we going to protect it? There may be some people in this country that say we shouldn't protect it. Obviously we have to. Equally obviously, we have to maintain the lines of communication -- safe -- open -- and that is why I said in the message to Congress, two things.

First, communications between the United States and United States naval bases on the one side -- well, that means Bermuda, Newfoundland, and Iceland at the other end of the line -- will be kept open, obviously. You can't maintain a garrison in Iceland and not maintain the lines of communication. Just A-B-C stuff, and it can't be distorted.

Secondly, that in the protection of such communications they will be protected against what? -- attack, or threat of attack. Well, that's about all there is to say. Now there's nobody in this room that can define what 'threat of attack' is. I can't. Threat of attack! And the orders are to keep the communications open against ~~attack~~, or threat of attack. Now there is nothing else to be said. Now that you have all had for two weeks, but

when you get to the speculative end of things you are not writing new stories. That is about all there is. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, do you wish to make any observations supplementary to the publication yesterday of the list of blocked nationals?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. The -- is the list going to be given out?

MR. GODWIN: It's out.

Q Yesterday.

THE PRESIDENT: It's out? As you know, that list will be -- I suppose the -- some names will be taken off and some other names will be added. In other words, it is a fluid list.

Q Mr. President, on Wednesday, Chairman Olds gave you a plan for a Government corporation to buy generators, and allocate them to the utilities. I wonder if you could comment on that, and tell us what is being done about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I have got the memo right here on that subject. It is rather a technical matter. The steam generator manufacturers are working at full capacity on machines to be delivered this year and 1942, and in that memo will be, I suppose, the defense of our program for proceeding as rapidly as possible, so far as this year and next are concerned. They might possibly establish a complete power program, much of it -- that is, from 1943 to 1946 -- much of the program will be carried out by private financing.

The public part of the program under the National Defense Act of 1916, the President is authorized to build and operate steam and hydro plants useful for manufacturing defense materials. That authority was used to build Wilson Dam and the auxiliary steam

plants at Muscle Shoals. This authority can be delegated to such agencies of the Army ~~and~~ Engineers, T.V.A., and Interior. The R.F.C. under existing law, through a subsidiary like the defense plant corporation, can operate the money to build the plants. The R.F.C. subsidiary of that kind can, in the case of machine tools, insure the maintenance of a full log and future orders for generators, making sure that the manufacturers are sufficiently occupied. Well, that's about all there is. Think it's going along all right.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, have you received the letter from Colonel Lindbergh, suggesting that Mr. Lickes apologize?

THE PRESIDENT: I saw -- the press received a letter. I don't know whether I have got it --- (turning to Mr. Early)

MR. EARLY: (interposing) I checked with Rudolph Forster this morning. The letter has not yet been received.

Q Mr. President, with this message can you send troops outside the Western Hemisphere?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q General Marshall testified yesterday that you were using your 'discretionary department' for the financing of naval bases in Brazil.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Flying fields.

Q Flying fields?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you say whether any other countries are involved?

THE PRESIDENT: No; can't tell you. (he laughs)

Q How much ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Hemisphere defense.

Q Oh, Hemisphere defense?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Countries other than Brazil?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q More than Brazil?

THE PRESIDENT: That I can't tell you. Call it strategic points.

Q Points?

THE PRESIDENT: Strategic points.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us how soon the Government is likely to get started on the construction of these new aluminum plants that it is going to build?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know. I don't know what the schedule is. Just that a lot is needed.

Q Er -- Mr. President, in your message to Congress, the first report on lend-lease, you said something about negotiations to set the terms of repayment for lend-lease assistance to Britain. I wonder if you could tell us what is being discussed in the way ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I don't think there is any news on that yet. They are still talking about it.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Obviously it can't be very detailed. It's got to be general principles.

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: In that connection, sir, is there anything that would prevent Britain -- say we send wheat -- from selling it at a price greater than the price we quoted to her? In other words, could Britain make a profit on any lend-lease material?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt if there is any desire on the part of Britain to make any profit on food, for the nation or anywhere else.

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: Well, let's not limit it to feed them.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, anything else. I don't believe that anybody would want to do that. That wouldn't be quite -- quite --

Q Cricket?

THE PRESIDENT: According to Hoyle.

Q Cricket.

THE PRESIDENT: Cricket, that's the word. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. EARLY: (to the President) Did you hear little Falla during your Press Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he's an esquimaux dog.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #757,
Executive Offices of the President,
July 22, 1941 -- 4.10 P.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Jack, (Captain John Beardall) is that clear, or what?

(Captain Beardall comes over and confers with the President
about a telegram the President is holding and reading)

THE PRESIDENT: (TO MR. GODWIN) I scooped you on that Commissionership.

(referring to the appointment of Guy Mason as Commissioner of the
District of Columbia to succeed Melvin C. Hazen)

MR. GODWIN: I knew about it.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: I knew about it.

THE PRESIDENT: What? Two minutes before it went up to the Senate!

MR. GODWIN: No, fifteen. (the President laughs) That's all right,
though. It's okay.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (he laughs again)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't have any news until about one minute ago, and
Captain Beardall handed me a copy of a dispatch that just came in
to the Navy Department, that today they established a radio and
cable censorship in Japan, and that -- er -- the details -- er --
are being sent to all Washington and New York offices of the R.C.A.
and cable companies. So you can check on that.

Q Is that an official Japanese government censorship, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, do you expect an aggressive move -- aggressive move by
Japan in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: Ask the State Department.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us when you expect to fill the vacancy in your Cabinet?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Can you tell us when you are going to appoint an Attorney General?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know yet.

Q You have someone in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know yet.

Q Mr. President, have you read the speech Mr. Welles is delivering at the Norwegian Legation this evening?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Didn't know he was.

Q Mr. President, Mr. Welles said yesterday that he has information leading him to believe that Germany will make new acts of aggression in Europe. Could you elaborate on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better ask him.

Q Mr. President, is it expected that the black list of those 1800 firms in Central and South America will prevent any further danger of nazi influence in Latin America?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. I wouldn't go so far as to say that.

Q Are any further steps in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe.

Q Mr. President, in your Message yesterday, you didn't say anything about the possible repeal of the prohibition against using Selectees outside of American territory. Is there any move in prospect on that, or has that been put on the shelf?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask them on the Hill. The Message has gone.

Q Mr. President, if Mr. Ickes doesn't know, and Admiral Land, I wonder if

you could tell us are we going to give one hundred more tankers to Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't even seen them. I mean Mr. Ickes and Land, not the tankers. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, has the Administration taken any recent action to try to get the American oil companies and the Mexican government into line on the expropriated oil?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. I haven't -- I haven't heard of that particular subject, oh -- for over a month. You had better ask the State Department. I haven't heard about it at all.

Q Mr. President, what do you think about soldiers writing to their Congressmen protesting against being kept in Service?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have any news on that.

Q Mr. President, I see David Coyle's book on your desk. What do you think of it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's a good book. (laughter) I think the other one is too -- "You Can't Do Business With Hitler" -- which I have just begun to read, by Douglas Miller. It really is. It's an amazing book.

Q Did you see the ad which was in the paper this morning -- by Willkie?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I got it even before that. (laughter) I got -- it's what you might call -- advance information.

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Did you get a report with government advance information, Mr. President, regarding the 50% cut in automobile production?

THE PRESIDENT: What did I do?

Q Regarding the 50% cut ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no. Of course, I think probably -- I think probably general curtailment, not only of automobiles for civilian use, but other things like -- what? -- iceboxes -- that we ought to use the -- the word, in so far as the manufacturing goes, and the labor involved, we are all using the word 'curtailment'. Well, it is not. The real word is 'substitute' -- 'substitution'. In other words, it's not a cutting-off of the manufacturing, it is substitution of manufacturing something else with the same plants, and largely the same tools, and the same workmen. One article in place of another article.

MR. JOHN HENRY: You don't mean the horse and buggy, do you, sir? (laughter)

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: No, that particular phase of it was ended, so far as news went, soon after 1937. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Well, you mean that they are not making iceboxes, but they are making something else?

THE PRESIDENT: Something else, that's it. It is a substitute of manufacturing, that's the real way of putting it.

Q Mr. President, the point they make on it is that it takes time to substitute, that is, that you can't transfer an automobile plant to making something else in a month or two months.

THE PRESIDENT: What? Sure. What O.P.M. and O.P.A.C.S. are trying to do is not to cut off one day and wait to put a substitute in several months later. The effort is to tide that interim period over.

Q Well, we understand from that -- that -- you understand that they will develop by a gradual process?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Did Mr. Henderson discuss his Order with you before he issued it, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I have been talking to people about it for about a year. Lots of people.

Q Mr. President, you said 'maybe' on further steps to be taken about German infiltration into South America. Could you elaborate at all on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I have -- 'maybe' covers it.

Q Would it be trade ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Just 'maybe' covers it.

Q Mr. President, on this automobile cutting down, there has been some question as to the delimitation of authority in such matters, and priority matters generally, by the O.P.M. and O.P.A.C.S., and there was one report that you had an Executive Order on your desk delimiting that authority. I wonder if you could tell us anything about that subject?

THE PRESIDENT: Merely in the gossip columns.

Q In that connection, Mr. President, Mr. Henderson, is he confined entirely to non-defense industry? Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

Q Mr. Henderson's work, of course, is confined entirely to non-defense industries, and O.P.M., of course, is concerned with defense industries?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. It's a collaboration -- a cooperation -- and all things of that kind that tie them together. The longer you live the more -- the less -- the less -- what shall I say? -- rigid lines appeal to you.

Q Mr. President, referring to that report in the gossip column about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What? A little louder.

Q In that report appearing in the gossip columns, have you delegated yet the authority given you under the Vinson Act on -- over priorities?

I think that is the Executive Order referred to.

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you. I haven't the faintest idea. I

know that there is nothing stuck on my desk. (he laughs) There

ain't no bottleneck here! (laughter)

Q Mr. President, do you see any significance in that censorship order from Japan?

THE PRESIDENT: (pausing) Yeah! (laughter)

Q Mr. President, could you elaborate on that 'yes'?

THE PRESIDENT: No! (loud laughter)

Q Mr. President, certain Senators have been scooping the press on the military moves of our Government. Has our Government taken any steps to stop those leakages?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Under present conditions Senators have their full constitutional prerogatives to say anything that they want -- any time -- any place.

Q I understand that, but what I mean is, somebody's leaking that stuff to them, are they not?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd say not any more than you fellows get leaks. You don't print them. You don't talk them out loud. A few of you do, but not many. It's a very small percentage. And it's a very small percentage of Senators that leak stuff to the public that they happen to know. I'd say about the same proportion as in the press. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, it's an old question, but when the Senators --

a Senator will make a statement on the floor in debate, it is a part of the public record. Newspapers -- the radio -- are almost bound to ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Absolutely.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- report them. Have you anything further to say about that? I think you probably said that.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. It's a terribly complex problem. Of course, when the Constitution was written, there was no such thing as the transmission of news. If it was -- something was said on the floor of either House where the Congress was meeting -- New York or Philadelphia -- it might be known in New York or Philadelphia, but it would come out in the papers two or three days later maybe, because they didn't print every day, and well, the country didn't know it. But ever since the telegraph came in, and the radio, anything that's said on the floor of either House, of course, is public property inside of an hour. It's something worth thinking about.

Q Mr. President, the Constitution provides for a secret session, in the event that the national good is endangered by debate. Has anybody that you have heard of suggested that that be done?

THE PRESIDENT: Have you ever heard of the effectiveness of any secret session?

Q (softly) No, sir. (laughter)

MR. T. REYNOLDS: Mr. President, in your conference this morning with Senator Connally and Senator George, and Mr. Welles, did you get a complete fill-in on new international developments?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we were talking over certain rather technical questions of several laws, with the net result that it was decided to do

nothing about them.

Q Did those include the Neutrality Act, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, are you contemplating any new steps to better the collaboration between O.P.A.C.S. and O.P.M.?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, I think things will go on all the time as the program develops. I wouldn't say that categorically at all. I wouldn't say 'No' categorically. It is just every agency of the Government we are trying to improve all the time. Not those specifically.

Q Mr. President, anything being done on defense transportation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Well, it's a very good example of just what was asked. Probably the administration of defense transportation as a whole is serving the needs of defense as it's being conducted at the present time. Now, that doesn't mean that three months or six months from now we may not have to change certain administrative methods. Therefore, we are studying it every day that goes on, and I don't know whether later on we are going to make any changes or not. It's possible. But, as of today, we probably will rock along the way we are going for a while.

MR. T. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Mr. President.