

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #763,
Held in the Study of the President's Home
at Hyde Park, N. Y.
August 22, 1941 -- 11.30 A.M., E.D.T.

Q Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. How is everybody? Did you have a nice ride?

Q Indeed.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think after this performance we can put the lid on. There should be no further news. I am not going to guarantee anything. I won't see Mr. Churchill over the week end, or Mr. Mackenzie King, or any other Prime Minister. You might play golf, as a suggestion. I don't think there is any news.

Oh yes there is too. I entirely forgot. I heard about and read that -- er -- speech by Senator Byrd (Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia), giving figures on defense production, and I sent it to the War Department to ask for a check on the figures, and the War Department said that most unfortunately all of the figures, except on planes, are completely inaccurate, and somebody -- unfortunately -- has misled the Senator. But -- er -- there are certain figures, of course, that the War Department -- er -- for obvious reasons can't give out the exact figures on, but they gave me certain illustrations -- er -- on things that they said it's all right to make public, which -- er -- illustrations are examples of all of the other cases -- of figures to use, except airplanes.

Er -- the Senator said that not a single tank had gone to England. Actually, we have turned over to the British hundreds of tanks of modern design produced during the last year. Some of these tanks, as

we all know, are in Egypt, and the papers have had various stories on the excellence of their performance. They are with the British in Egypt.

In the case of anti-aircraft guns, the Senator said the program provides for an average monthly delivery of only four 90-mm. guns a month during the balance of this year. The program actually calls for a monthly delivery of 61 for the four remaining months of this year, and the War Department believes that they will be met. In other words, there is a certain difference between the figure 4 and the figure 61.

And on -- another example is the 37-mm. anti-tank gun. The Senator said that these guns will be produced only at the rate of 15 a month.

Q Is that anti-tank, sir, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Anti-tank. Actual production in July was 72. August production will be 160; September 260 and October 320.

Q What was the Senator's figure on that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: 15.

Q 15.

THE PRESIDENT: There seems to be ---

Q (interposing) What are those months again, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: The next four -- July, August, September and October. There seems to be a certain discrepancy between the figure 15 and the figures that I have just given. Even if you add a zero to 15 you would still be way below the actual numbers. Er -- fourth, the Senator said that only 15 81-mm. mortars will be produced in the immediate months ahead. In July there were actually, instead of 15, there were 221 produced, and in August the figure is 340.

Q Excuse me, Mr. President, what type of gun was that?

THE PRESIDENT: 81-mm. mortar -- now you know as much about it as I do -- (laughter) -- and the figures for September and October will be even larger than 340, so there would seem to be somewhat of a difference between the figure 15 and the figure 340. The figures, of course, on the airplanes, are substantially correct, except that we said that the production of military planes progressively declined in the months of June and July, which is not strictly true. The number of training planes increased and the others remained steady -- the military planes, because there were certain changes in -- er -- design, and the testing of the new design to meet lessons that were learned this spring.

Q Training planes increase?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Training planes increase?

THE PRESIDENT: Increase - yes, and the others remained steady on account of change in design. But the fact that remains -- that statement as a whole in every single item, except planes, was full of discrepancies that ran just as high as those discrepancies which I have -- the War Department says it's all right to mention.

Q (interposing) Mr. President, what ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And I -- I -- one reason I did this -- this is off the record -- was because yesterday I got various messages saying, "My God, is that true what Senator Byrd has said?" Of course it isn't. For instance, various people concerned -- the editorial staff of the New York Times -- they wrote an editorial this morning saying this is terrible, if true. Well ---

Q (interposing) They also assured you a place in Heaven this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (he laughs) And -- er -- of course, it should be -- in all fairness to the statement -- somebody sold him down the river on the figures.

Q Did he cite what the source of his figures were?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Mr. President, do you happen to know what figures he did give on airplanes?

THE PRESIDENT: Exactly the same way you know. They were given out by O.P.M.

Q Yes. Was he talking about deliveries to the American Army, or total production?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He was just talking about deliveries -- completions.

Q Is there anything you can tell us, sir, about this Kearny ship situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Except that they are still conferring, and I suppose I will be called up by both sides in the course of the day.

Q Er -- John Green, who is the head of the union, told us when he came out that -- er -- the Government did not want to take over the Yard. Is that correct?

THE PRESIDENT: Not if we can help it.

Q Did you offer any other proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Tried to get them together. That was all.

Q Does it look as if you can help taking it over?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Does it look as if you will be able to take it over?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I can't guess.

Q Mr. President, on another subject, this Iran situation seems to be fairly hot, and one press association out of London yesterday said that you had been kept fully in accord -- were in accord on the policy that the British were adopting. Can you say anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Except that is an illustration of the freedom of the press in London. (he laughs) It isn't true. I don't know anything about it.

Q Mr. President, -- er -- aside from chlorinated water -- er -- Congressman Fish and Dr. McCracken of Vassar, both addressed recent America First rallies, and Fish has pointed out -- has gotten to the point now where he was quoted as saying that if Germany should lose, why America -- America would suffer through loss of markets and buying power.

THE PRESIDENT: If Germany loses?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: So, he thinks we wouldn't lose if Germany won. (he laughs) I don't think any comment that could be printed is necessary. (he laughs again)

Q Of course, Dr. McCracken has taken the point of view that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You know, once upon a time there was a fellow -- this you might use only as background -- there was a fellow who had a great deal more information and was a much more reasoning person than any of the people -- I won't say Fish or McCracken -- it's obvious whom I am talking about. His name is Senator Borah -- in many ways a very great statesman, and certainly with experience and information that was far better than most of the speakers. And he was the gentleman who in July, 1939 -- the famous conference upstairs -- after the Secretary of State, who had still more information than he had, and -- er -- said that, "From our information we really believed regretfully that a war would break out that year," turned to the Secretary of State and said, "I am sorry, Mr. Secretary, my information is better than yours. There will be no war this year." (he laughs) And yet he had been on the Foreign Relations Committee and everything else, and had

been there for years and years -- nearly forty years. In the Senate he certainly had far more information than any of these people that were going around making speeches today; and of course his error has become a classic.

Q Walter Lippmann says that these Senators -- the Foreign Relations group -- are people that got us into trouble over a long period of years.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and a good many other people have got us in trouble over a period of years.

Q Mr. Fish is on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House. Maybe that qualifies him to make a few errors.

THE PRESIDENT: I think -- off the record -- that is probably correct.

(laughter)

Q Mr. President, there seems to be quite a little confusion about this tanker situation. Some Senators yesterday put in a resolution asking for the investigation of whether there was really an oil shortage, etc. Any comment or anything you can say on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing. There is nothing to hide on the questions of stocks of oil, and location of the stocks of oil, and production of oil. There is nothing to hide on the world situation on tankers as long as the -- any information given to the Senate about the war use of tankers is not used to hurt the cause of Democracies.

Q Mr. President, have you heard directly from Mr. Stalin on the proposal of the three-party conference on supplies?

THE PRESIDENT: You have all the stuff.

Q Have you got to the point yet, sir, of naming your commission?

THE PRESIDENT: Of what?

Q Naming your commission?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q How soon.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. The time hasn't been set.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) The State Department is taking it up all the time.

Q Mr. President, off the record, is any written reply called for on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Off the record, the reply in effect has been made, because when the -- this has to be off the record -- I think it has been printed. I don't know, but there is no use to bring the subject up again. It isn't news. When the message was delivered by Steinhardt (Laurence A. Steinhardt, U. S. Ambassador to Russia) and the other fellow -- Cripps? -- er -- Mr. Stalin -- er -- informally thanked them very much for it and then made an oral reply which was taken down, the same thing as a written reply. You might call it a formal oral reply, and was taken down by way of what the diplomats would say, an "Aide Memoire". There is no difference between that and a written one. Same thing.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I think it was printed too.

Q (softly) Excuse me, I didn't mean to interrupt.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Getting back to the oil situation there has been a suggestion that the shortage on the East Coast -- that the whole country up to the Rocky Mountains might as well suffer, and that the rationing might apply, and tank cars might as well be taken away from the West -- Middle West for the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What for? For punishment?

Q Just to make everybody unhappy equally. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Beyond me.

Q Mr. President, we understand that you cut off imports of crab meat.

THE PRESIDENT: Of what?

Q Crab meat.

THE PRESIDENT: Crab meat?

Q Yes. We get a lot from Japan. I wonder if that had any particular reference ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I never heard of it. (he laughs) On that crab meat, I will have to tell you -- this is off the record -- a very amusing story. Old Dan Roper, when he was Secretary of Commerce, had under him the Fisheries Bureau, and one day in Cabinet I said, "Dan, have you got any news for us today?" Yes, indeed I have," says Uncle Dan, "Crabs". I said, "What??" -- (laughter) He said, "A most amazing thing. I am very much worried. You know, up there on the coast of Alaska they have these wonderful crabs." And he said, "That big across." (the President indicated with his hands a width of about thirty inches) I said, "What??" Well, he was measuring somewhere -- twenty-four to thirty inches across. Literally with his hands. "Oh, no," I said, "You're exaggerating." "No," he said, "I tell you they are that wide across." And I said, "Dan, Dan, you're exaggerating." "No," he said, "my people tell me. I have never been there -- they are that big across." And he wouldn't yield one inch -- (laughter) -- as to the size of this crab.

I said, "What about it?" "Well," he said, "the Japs are coming in there, just up to the three-mile limit, and they are catching these

crabs. I said, "Dan, you must be exaggerating." "No, the Japs are catching these crabs. On the boat they catch them they have a crab factory." I said, "What?" -- (laughter) He said, "They do everything to that crab." I said, "Dan, they are as big as that?" "I tell you it's as big as that." And he said, "They take them on the boat with all these nets that catch them, when they go to lay their eggs I think it is." And he said, "They process them right on the boat. Take out the meat and boil it, whatever it is, and they do all the canning right on board."

Well, actually, that part of it is ours. The Japs have been coming in the Alaskan boats and have been catching crabs with their nets and doing the whole processing right on board. An amazing thing. Whenever I hear about crabs I think of Uncle Dan's hands. (laughter) Not the fish that got away.

Q Mr. President, in connection with your Executive Order on this crab meat, may we use that for background -- that the Japanese are processing?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, they have been doing it for years.

Q Are they still doing that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know. We had -- I really haven't heard -- this has got to be off the record, because it is so damn old. Er -- the Japanese salmon catch or crab catch in the last of the year -- we did take up at that time a rather interesting point in -- I don't know whether you would call it international law or international relations. Off Alaska somewhere up to the northern end of the bend -- (indicating) -- there is a shelf that from the coast you go down to -- I don't know -- fifty or one hundred fathoms, and this shelf that goes out is about sixty to one hundred miles. In other words, beyond any three-mile or

twenty-mile limit.

And er -- in other words, to get to the spawning grounds both the salmon and the crabs have to go across this shelf, and being a shallow shelf, you can put down these nets -- gill nets and crab nets etc., and catch these fish in the area that they have to traverse to get to the spawning grounds.

Well, of course, we have always protected at that time of the year salmon and crabs that were going up the estuaries of the Alaskan rivers at the mouths of the bays. They have always been protected, and these Japs were catching them sixty, eighty and a hundred miles off shore in waters that they had to traverse, and I frankly -- I don't know what happened, but we took up with the Japanese government the stopping of the fishing -- the netting on that shelf. A nice point, of course. If you are going to protect them, you have got to protect them all the way out to deep water, even if it is a hundred miles.

Q Delegate Diamond inserted something in the Congressional Record saying that Alaska is going to get ready to do some shooting, if the Japs ever stop them. They were pretty much exercised about it for a while.

Q Well, if we say the Japanese have been -- in relation to the Executive Order, have been sending in 24-inch crabs, will you stand by it?

(laughter)

Q Mr. President, on this production matter, do you feel that over-all the production has been satisfactory from a military point of view?

THE PRESIDENT: It has never been satisfactory.

Q But it has not lagged behind the program?

THE PRESIDENT: Behind estimates? In some things it is ahead of estimates, and some things behind. Of course, that is on the -- on the assumption

always that the -- that the original estimates were right. There is always the human possibility that they were too low. And there is the possibility in some other cases that they were too high. But on the actual estimates the averages were up too.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Somebody -- I don't think anybody has asked Mr. Knudsen in the last two or three months. I should think somebody ought to ask him. You remember he talked about airplanes and gave the figure of 85% of the estimates. Quite a long while ago. And what his present estimate is, I don't know, but pretty close to the estimate. I got up to -- as I remember it, the original estimate -- you will have to check on this -- don't quote me -- the original estimate I think was 1500 planes in -- first of July, and they were up to -- what the actual figure -- what? -- 1465 as I remember it at that time. That is a month -- that is a monthly production.

Q Mr. President, one more local item. Your friend Elmer Van Wagner is going to run for Supervisor again in the town, and in that connection, he has made quite a point on this troublesome equalization taxation rate question. Of course his view is that in the town of Hyde Park, and not only here but in some other towns in the County, if the assessments were generally increased they would have a better equalization rate and thus get more returns for our State monies, you see, and they would have a better shake all the way around, and they wouldn't lose anything, and the taxes in dollars and cents would not be any higher. I don't know whether you have recalled anything, or you think that is worth commenting on.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. There are too many local complications

to every -- every town in the country, as you know -- I mean county. Every township has a process of its own, and the -- the old method of complete township freedom was taken in hand by the legislature years ago when they put through the equalization bill.

Q (interjecting) Uh huh.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It is a very desirable thing to have all valuations of real estate -- er -- using the same principle all through the State, not just the County, the whole State.

Q Oh, he doesn't question the principle at all. As a matter of fact he is for it. He thinks that we lag behind and were not taking advantage of it.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that has been true, when I was Governor.

Q In Dutchess County as a whole.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q (interposing) To that extent you are ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) There was less uniformity than in almost any other county in the State.

Q Mr. President, one more question. Is your meeting Saturday with the Duke of Kent social? Do you intend ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Purely social. Nothing else. In fact, no pictures even. No broadcasts. No nothing. Too bad. (he laughs)

Q Are you going to take him to church?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Are you going to take him to church?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you that on the record, but the chances are -- No, because Dr. Wilson's away.

Q At Campobello?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Campobello?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

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

Q Thank you, sir.

Q We are glad that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You put the lid on.

Q Durno has been elected delegate to go. (to church)

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) That might almost cause me to go. (laughter)

George needs it. (more laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #764,
Executive Offices of the President,
August 26, 1941 -- 4.15 P.M., E.S.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve (Mr. Early) we might as well get that started now.

(handing typewritten sheet to Mr. Early)

The first thing I got is a statement, which you needn't take down.
Steve sent it down to be put on the mimeograph -- one page.

(Reading): "This Government is prepared to send a military mission to China. The mission will be sent for the purpose of assisting in carrying out the purposes of the Lease-Lend Act. Being organized and will operate under the direction of the Secretary of War. The chief will be Brigadier General John Magruder. The function of the mission will be to study in collaboration with Chinese and other authorities the military situation in China, and need of Chinese government for materiel. Formulate recommendations regarding types and quantities of items needed to assist and procure in this country and in delivery to China of such materiel to instruct in the use and maintenance of articles thus provided. Give advice and suggestions of appropriate character toward making Lend-Lease assistance to China as effective as possible in the interests of the United States, of China, and of the world effort to resistance to movements of conquest by force. Sending this mission is in keeping with, and on a parallel line to sending a similar mission to the Soviet Union. The purposes of the two missions are identical."

That is, of course, with the exception of the Lend-Lease Act which does not apply to the Soviet Union. Er -- (reading)

"General Magruder has had long experience in China. Has twice served there as Military Attache. He will be working on familiar ground, among people he knows well, and to whom he is well known. An adequate staff of thoroughly qualified officers will accompany General Magruder."

You will get copies of this.

Q Mr. President, one question on that specific thing: The Chinese Minister indicated this morning they might give strategic advice as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Give what?

Q Strategic advice as well.

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

Q Mr. President, on that -- why does not the Lend-Lease Act apply to Soviet Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: It just doesn't.

Q Mr. President, your announcement says that these men will call with Chinese and 'other authorities'. Can you explain the 'other authorities'?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, but I will make a guess: That it probably applies to the method of getting material to China which might have to go, for example, through Burma. That would be other authorities, wouldn't it?

Q How about the Russians?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q How about the Russians?

THE PRESIDENT: Same thing.

Q When would they really leave?

THE PRESIDENT: I think inside of about two weeks.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, I may have missed some recent conferences, but have you issued a similar statement like that with regard to Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

MR. GODWIN: Is there anything you can say about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing yet.

Q How soon do you expect to appoint the Russian mission?

THE PRESIDENT: Soon.

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing unusual in delaying that, is there, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not a thing.

Q Mr. President, the Japanese Ambassador told us on Saturday that he thought the gap between our respective policies must be bridged.

Would you care to tell us how you think that gap could be bridged?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Secretary of State has already been asked that question. (laughter)

Q (softly) Without much success.

THE PRESIDENT: Er -- the only other thing I have got is, I am making progress on the new War Department building. Start taking this down, Earl. (Mr. Godwin) (the President laughs) Er -- it seems to be the best solution to put the greater part of the building on the so-called Quartermaster site, and perhaps a small portion of -- of the -- er -- parking area on the -- what is it? -- south end of the Agricultural Farm. So that makes it entirely within the bill.

MR. GODWIN: Does it make it all in Virginia?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Isn't it all in Virginia?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Wait a minute. That is the building under this appropriation, you see.

Then comes the question of the size, and -- er -- oh, what shall I say? -- I have rather come to the conclusion that there is -- while there are two sides to the question of traffic congestion -- er -- perhaps a building of two million -- two and a quarter million feet, instead of four million, would be able to get the traffic to it.

One thing -- it does not seem to be clear -- that the building as proposed by the War Department -- over four million feet -- would require the staggering of the hours of work by as much as two hours,

from the people who first went there in the morning to the people who last went there in the morning, in order to get them all there. Same way, in the afternoon, start the first crowd going home two hours before the last crowd went home; and that is a pretty difficult thing. So it looks as if I would finally make the decision not to make the building more than two, or two and a quarter million square feet, which probably could be handled.

Now, that also raises another question. Er -- I am very anxious to go ahead and finish, have finished, or make progress in finishing this -- er -- what do they call it? -- northwest triangle up here. In other words, carry out the plans to put the War Department there, and on the other side of Hospital Hill to put the -- the new Navy Department. And eventually, I again -- I hope before I die to be able to tear down the two excrescences down in Potomac Park, the present Navy Building and the present Munitions Building. Now, if that is carried out the Navy -- the new Navy Building would obviously hold the whole of the peacetime Navy establishment, and the same way the -- a War Department developed on the site which we have already begun, would probably hold the whole of a peacetime military establishment, on certain conditions.

And it brings up another subject that happens to be almost a fully grown child of mine. Nobody knows it. Nobody has ever seen the child -- yet. It's an idea.

We have in the Government an enormous number of papers, which are not archives. They are records. Well, there is all the difference in the world. Archives are supposed to be -- er -- really tremendously important papers relating to our national history, and rather

limited in their total scope. On the other hand, there are millions and millions of records which are occasionally looked at, but which are not of general historical importance, but which are of family or geneological importance. For instance, we have, I think, in -- somewhere around three million individual jackets of the Civil War soldiers and -- soldiers. And the tendency of any Department is to hang on. It's -- it's not merely acquisitive, but it is retentive.

And here are these three million jackets. Now the individual soldiers that served in the Civil War actually they are referred to about ten a day, that is all. In other words, one filing clerk can handle the whole thing and get them out as needed. We have -- oh, what? -- public lands records -- the development of the great West -- oh, as far as -- back, I don't know -- 1820 or 1830 -- I think the Interior Department has jurisdiction over them. There are millions and millions of those and only -- what? -- ten or fifteen of them referred to in the course of the day. They are records rather than archives, and what we need is a great records building. The Census records, they are dead. The Census records going back as far as, I think, 1790. Those are records, and they certainly are not archives. They ought not to be kept in the -- the building devoted to current Administrations.

Now, my thought is that this new War Department building over there would be built on extremely simple lines, and that when this emergency is over, and the War Department is -- reverts to a peacetime status, they will be able to come back here to their regular place in this quadrangle -- triangle -- which we are developing, and that in peacetime this building over there, of two million, or two and a

quarter million feet, should be the -- I think the word is repository, for the records -- the dead records of all these Departments.

I always think of this retentive spirit. I went over, in pursuance of this subject -- two or three years ago -- to the State Department one afternoon -- after all the people had gone home -- because they assured me that in the State Department over here they only had very current records. Nothing more than four or five years old. Everything else was stored. Well, frankly, I didn't believe it, and I went over there, and I got into a wheel chair, and I wheeled through various rooms, and came to a closed door which had been separated off.

One of these great doors was opened up, and there was a great, big, long room -- oh, I suppose six or eight people had worked there in the course of the day -- nobody there, they had all gone home -- and along the sides of the room and stacked out into the middle of the room were hundreds of square feet of filing cabinets. So I -- at random I said, "Open that one." And in there it happened to be a case that was devoted to consular reports of the year 19 -- years 1907 to 1911, on the 'History and Future of the Mongolian Pony'. (laughter) It's very nice, but it wasn't exactly current, or of great importance at that particular time. It was a record story, and it ought not to have been in that building, which was -- State Department -- yelling for more space. They had it right there. So I hope that this new building, when this emergency is over, will be used as a records building for the Government.

MR. GODWIN: Can I ask a question at that point? There were certain aesthetic considerations with respect to this ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now this ---

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) Does this take care ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now this takes care of it entirely. This new site down there is not in front of Arlington Cemetery.

MR. GODWIN: No.

Q Mr. President, can we get to trivia for a moment? (laughter) Mr.

Edwin S. Smith ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Don't think 'Mongolian Pony' is way above --- trivia?

Q Yes, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Good God! I don't like your implication. (he laughs)

Q The term of Mr. Edwin S. Smith expires tonight ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) -- of the National Labor Relations Board. Any plans in that connection?

THE PRESIDENT: No decision yet.

Q Can you tell us what Mr. Matthew McCloskey of Philadelphia came to see you about today?

THE PRESIDENT: If you want to know, he was talking to me about a new Mayor for Philadelphia, and I said I didn't know enough about it to have any opinion.

Q Did he ask you to recommend a Mayor? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. He came to tell me that there was a paucity of candidates.

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Did Mr. David L. Lawrence of the -- the National Committeeman of Pennsylvania come to see you today?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Neither of the David Lawrences. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, could you tell us about this conference that you just had with Secretary Knox and Mr. Biddle?

THE PRESIDENT: It's the preliminary to what I told you at Hyde Park, to -- er -- discuss the method of operating the Kearny plant.

Q Any decision?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. The next step will be that they will list the different methods, and then after that they probably will have a talk with the owners of the plant.

Q Mr. President, will the Navy abide by the recommendations of the Defense Mediation Board in operating that plant?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends who operates the plant.

Q Mr. President, there are rumors that Lend-Lease has been misused. Would you care to comment on those rumors?

THE PRESIDENT: Where?

Q There have been printed rumors.

THE PRESIDENT: I mean -- but where?

Q One of them that I read in a local paper was that the British had run up large bills at a local restaurant -- whiskey -- liquor.

THE PRESIDENT: Where?

Q The restaurant? Occidental Restaurant.

THE PRESIDENT: I am very certain that that was never charged to Lend-Lease. And I suppose it's a perfectly fair thing to say, in view of these columns -- I think it has got to the point where it can be said, in view of your raising the question, that there can be no doubt that there is an organized campaign to spread rumors, distortions of half-truths, and I fear -- (indicating) -- it says falsehoods -- you probably

know the word -- being launched by certain forces to sabotage the program of aid to opponents of Hitlerism. And your -- the column which you quote is probably a very good example of what I am talking about. And of course it is perfectly absurd to make any allegations along the lines like that -- general lines, because they just plain aren't true. Awfully easy to make allegations and they're read all over the country. Don't say that it is a denial on my part or on anybody else's part.

I think it is a perfectly fair thing to say that all stories of that kind are, as I remarked before, vicious rumors, or distortions of fact, or falsehoods. Now, in other words, that is not a denial. You know my old complaint about things. The denial -- er -- method is awfully easy for the press to use, but the actual fact is that this type of story -- in certain types of newspapers -- ought to be labeled for what they are, and the story is the labeling of them as falsehoods, and the spreading of rumor for purposes of sabotage rather than the denial. Denial does not make any difference one way or the other. It's just plain dirty falsehood. Might just as well call it by its right name.

MR. GODWIN: Are you familiar with an article -- I think it was published in Time? The report of it was that Lend-Lease money had been utilized by English interests in such a way that the product of this transaction interfered with or competed with American-made goods.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course ---

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) Are you familiar with that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Of course, what the origin of it was is this, that they did have -- dating back a long time -- long before any Lend-Lease

program, or anything like that, where they were trying to build up their own -- er -- foreign exchange, they had some contracts down there -- I think it was the Argentine -- which required certain steel to carry the contract. And in the performance of this contract -- it was entered into long before Lend-Lease -- they did deliver the material, which was part steel, in carrying out the contract. Now, nobody in their wildest dreams could say that that was selling Lend-Lease material. (he laughs)

MR. GODWIN: Was it American steel that they sent down there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It was their own steel, but of course they imported steel from us.

MR. GODWIN: I don't want to appear to be putting you on the spot, of course.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Well, you see ---

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) I am very much interested in the statement that you make, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That's the kind of half-truth that is just as bad as a whole falsehood.

MR. GODWIN: I was going to ask a question which was more than evident. Do you have time to devote to these things -- this tremendous Lease-Lend program?

THE PRESIDENT: The thing was raised, I think, on the floor of Congress, or in the Senate. It was checked very carefully both here and in London. Q That same kind of thing is coming out with regard to tankers now. Stories that the British have tankers in commercial use, which is being picked on in the Senate.

THE PRESIDENT: Being what?

Q Well, it's being kicked around in the Senate that the British are using tankers for commercial purposes, while we are not.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course that is the kind of variation -- you have got to tell me where. We ran down the other question. We said, "Where?" to -- er -- the person who asked the question -- what? -- about the steel, and we narrowed it down finally and we agreed it was steel to the Argentine. I think on the tankers in commercial use, where?

Q They are basing their argument, Mr. President, on total figures of tankers in existence at the start of the war -- estimated sinkings according to official figures, and they say that there will be more in commercial service than they have got -- more than they need for war use.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, that does not hold water, that kind of a statement. It means nothing. When you deduce from total figures you do not know where the rest of it is going.

MR. GODWIN: Can you answer this question? Has the British government asked for -- for any more tankers? The rumor's out -- 70 or 100 tankers.

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you. I can only tell you in terms of merchant ships. I think the story was in today's paper about the laying down of more ways for more merchant ships. Now some of them may be tankers.

MR. GODWIN: No. This is a statement which came from the Senate anonymously. The anonymous Senator said that 70 tankers -- I know the story said 100 oil tankers -- for carrying oil would be taken from America for British needs. Do you happen to know anything about that at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. As a matter of fact, of course, on the oil situation, there are two reasons to believe that in the East this question

of domestic oil will be better by spring. The two reasons are the fact that there will be a lot more tankers launched and put into commission by then, on the assumption that the sinkings don't increase, and we will have a greater number available; and the second is that the two pipe lines will be in use sometime this spring. Of course that will help.

Q Mr. President, has Judge Rosenman reported to you yet on his study of the O.P.M. and O.P.A.C.S. priorities trouble?

THE PRESIDENT: We are nearly ready to tell you something. The papers are now being worked on. And the problem, of course -- this particular problem is the problem of priorities. And there are a great many factors that enter into priorities. There is -- er -- domestic use, and what is very important is the fact that in addition to domestic use there are other things like South American Good Neighbor policy, this new ^[Economic Defense Board?] Economic Council, and er -- the Vice President.

There is the problem of -- of China, and, I think, equally important, is the problem of working out -- er -- on the use of priorities -- giving work -- putting people to work in industries that have those plants that have to close down, or transfer to other defense projects, or the substitution of other things for the plant itself to make. And that is the -- being worked out, so that while there may be, in the next few weeks, a certain amount of hardship, I think to tide it over we will have to use Unemployment Insurance for a while, until we get the organization perfected -- er -- so that there will be a little leeway of thirty days or sixty days before any given plant is closed down for lack of materials; and that during those thirty days, or sixty days, the Federal authorities, the State

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authorities, and the local authorities will all cooperate to put those people to work somewhere else, as nearby as possible, or in the same plant on other things.

Q Mr. President, that would indicate that you favor an inter-departmental committee on priorities?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not necessarily.

Q There have been published stories, Mr. President, that a seven-man board ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There have been all kinds of things. A seventy-man board.

Q I haven't seen that one, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: One-man board suggestion. You will see it when the thing comes out. You will have to wait about twenty-four hours.

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

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #765,
Executive Offices of the President,
August 29, 1941 -- 10:50 A.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: How are the boys this morning?

Q Quite a story last night.

THE PRESIDENT: You have written enough --

Q (interposing) That's the way we feel.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- until tomorrow. (To Mr. Godwin): Getting
old?

MR. GODWIN: (sitting down) Old man. I had a glass of beer and two alka-
seltzers this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: You can make this a very short party.

MR. GODWIN: What?

THE PRESIDENT: I say you can make this very short. I will give you a
local story on this new building. I would like to have some comments
from you on this proposition over here.

MR. GODWIN: Are you going to say something about it?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to see it some time. I don't know yet.

I don't think there is any particular news. I suggest that, as
you have already written yourself out last night, you should take a
little holiday. I'll have a story tomorrow afternoon.

Q Story tomorrow afternoon -- tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q (continuing) On the Far East, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: The Roosevelt Home Club. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Are you going home tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: Tonight.

Moses Smith's farm. Come up and see it. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, on the twentieth of last June the German Charge was handed a copy of your reply on the sinking of the Robin Moor. Has any reply from the German government ever been received?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you will have to ask the State Department.

Q I did, sir. They wouldn't tell me.

Q Mr. President, would you care to say anything about your meeting with the Japanese Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so.

Q Any comment on it at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Not more than what was said yesterday.

Q Do you think we are getting anywhere?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that there is no news on that today. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, are you ready to name the mission to Moscow yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, no. We are talking about that. I suppose by next week, early in the week, it will be ready. I think you can assume safely that Mr. Harriman will go.

Q As head of the mission, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, can you expand any more on just what Mr. Biggers ---

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Can you expand on just what John Biggers is going to do in London in synchronizing production?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the best way to put it is this: that -- you remember some -- quite a long while ago, we sent Harriman over there, primarily for one thing, which was the maritime end of things -- general

world shipping is what it amounted to, in order to assist in getting aid over to the -- to the Democracies. And his position normally and naturally enlarged itself beyond shipping to take into consideration -- er -- totals of production, and supply materials of all kinds. Now we have got to the point where I need another general trouble-shooter -- just what he is now. Mr. Harriman's going to Moscow as head of this mission -- er -- will take him away a short time from London. He has got to have some trouble-shooter in London to take his place during his absence, and Mr. Biggers is going over there -- er -- to take care of Mr. Harriman's work in London, while he is away from London. Also, because he is a specialist on the production end, to tie that in more thoroughly to our production problems that has been done before. I think that really explains it. It is an exceedingly important -- er -- place to be filled at all times. Somebody there.

MR. GODWIN: Er ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It does not take away in any way from the important work Mr. Harriman is doing. Of course, as I said before, Mr. Harriman will become available for use in other places. He has been, as you know -- he has been in the Near East -- quite a long while down there, and he is going to -- to Russia. And in effect I have doubled the number of my trouble-shooters. Harry Hopkins remains a trouble-shooter, and I add Harriman to him.

Q Would it be fair to say that Harriman becomes your Lend-Lease administrator at large here?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I wouldn't put it that way. (he laughs)

Q Will Mr. Biggers stay in London? Will it just be temporary, or what?

THE PRESIDENT: What? As long as it is necessary.

Q Can you say anything about who is going to take charge of production when Mr. Biggers is leaving?

THE PRESIDENT: Who is going to take charge of production?

Q At. O.P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: No. I suppose O.P.M. will work it out in due course.

Q I thought you named the divisional head?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, how large a mission do you expect to go to Moscow?

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

Q Would it be more than half a dozen?

THE PRESIDENT: Something like that.

Q Mr. President, what is the situation now on the War Department building?

THE PRESIDENT: On what?

Q The War Department building?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, as soon as I can, I am going over to see the site.

But there is one thing -- I was just telling Earl (Mr. Godwin). There is rather an interesting prospect which has come up, and I don't mind throwing the thing out as -- as what? -- I call it a trial balloon.

Out West, in a number of cities -- er -- there have been built -- I don't know that there are any in the East -- er -- solid buildings, that is to say, buildings where the only -- the only daylight in them is from the outside of the -- of a quadrangle -- quadrangle -- four-sided building; but there are no courts on the inside, no windows on the inside.-- a completely solid building, which means, of course, that -- er -- it saves a tremendous lot of money, but you do have to work under artificial light. And where they have been tried it worked extremely well.

Of course, practically all -- er -- air nowadays, in the insides of building -- buildings -- is brought in mechanically. Whether it's -- er -- refrigerated -- air-cooled or air-warmed, it is brought in with fans from outside the building. Most of it is ejected also by mechanical processes.

Er -- we know a great deal more about that sort of thing than we ever did before. And the same way in light -- with these new tube lights, whatever they are called. Artificial lighting very often is a great deal better to work with than daylight, because it is uniform all over the room, and because it doesn't vary in intensity, whether the sun is shining, or whether it is a very, very dark day. And I am studying the question now of the possibility of a solid building, with artificial light, and artificial air and -- er -- save an enormous amount of money, and from the point of view of a great many of the specialists and doctors, etc., a better building for people to work in.

MR. GODWIN: About how many million square feet would it take, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you would save all the courtyard space.

MR. GODWIN: You had two million square feet ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. GODWIN: You had two million square feet, when you spoke of it the other day.

THE PRESIDENT: That is another kind. Let us say two million feet.

MR. GODWIN: Cubic feet?

THE PRESIDENT: Two million feet might not hold all of the wings, so that you have daylight into the rooms on each side of a corridor -- an enormous number of wings. Well, that means inside walls -- er -- on

courts and niches, and so forth and so on. Call it two million feet. You probably haven't two million feet. Let us say twenty wings. Now you still would have two million feet but it would be a solid building, you see.

MR. GODWIN: I see.

THE PRESIDENT: No courts whatsoever. Just a four-sided building. Oh, I don't know what you do with these figures, because they are by way of -- er -- suppose it was one thousand feet long, and one thousand feet wide, you would only have four outside walls. Think of all those room on the inside. No windows.

Q It would be on the Quartermaster depot site?

THE PRESIDENT: Somewhere in that direction.

Q But not ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) South of the Arlington Farm.

Q Uh huh.

Q But not along the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I am going out to look at it.

Q Today?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know when I am going.

Q Mr. President, the second anniversary of the World War is approaching.

Is the outlook better to you than on the first anniversary?

THE PRESIDENT: I am making a speech on Monday, which is the second anniversary.

Q Mr. President, would it be too broad a question to inquire -- er -- whether as a result of the latest developments you are hopeful that war in the Pacific can be averted?

THE PRESIDENT: I would call it too long and too broad. (laughter)

Q (interposing) (softly) May I shorten it?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Both the question and the ocean.

Q Mr. President, can you explain what the Supply -- function of the Supply Priorities and Allocations Board is going to be?

THE PRESIDENT: That was all taken up yesterday afternoon. I think it was all pretty generally and completely explained, and I don't think there is any necessity or advisability of trying to paraphrase language that all of you people got yesterday afternoon -- last night. Because if I were to -- if I had a transcript of what was said I would read the transcript to you. Otherwise, I might change the sentence a little bit, and somebody would call attention to it. You see my difficulty?

Q Mr. President, the Secretary of State said you would probably see Admiral Nomura again. Has any date been set for that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q Mr. President, your old friend Senator Byrd introduced an economy resolution in the Senate Finance Committee yesterday, and the Committee adopted an amendment to the tax bill, setting up an investigating committee to find out how we can cut down on non-essential spending. Do you think we can cut down on non-essential spending?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q How much would you say?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I have advocated it for a long time. You see, I don't pass appropriation bills.

Q Mr. President, Secretary Hull also told us that he expected you would probably reply to the Prime Minister's message.

THE PRESIDENT: I imagine that is correct.

Q Could you tell us how soon?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (he laughs)

Q Could you tell us whether it is being drafted now?

THE PRESIDENT: What the reply will be? No. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #766,
Executive Offices of the President,
September 2, 1941 -- 4.05 P.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what's the news? Where's Pa? (General Watson)

Q He wasn't outside.

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't he? He's back. I don't know where he is.

(To Mr. T. Reynolds): Is that true that you filed 15,000?

MR. T. REYNOLDS: 14,776.

THE PRESIDENT: That's a long-distance record.

MR. GODWIN: At Hyde Park?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. T. REYNOLDS: The previous week-end was 12,200, so it isn't all fun.

THE PRESIDENT: It's all right.

MR. T. REYNOLDS: Doug Cornell at least equaled me, and I think heavier.

THE PRESIDENT: Telegraph company's making money.

MR. D. CORNELL: They'll declare a dividend.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. D. CORNELL: They'll declare a dividend.

Q That's a lot of news.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you suppose, taking it by and large, that they make money on press rates?

Q They get about -- they get a quantity ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) They get what?

Q Less than one cent a word.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I was wondering whether they make money on it or not.

Q I think they do.

THE PRESIDENT: They do?

MR. GODWIN: I should think they would if they had idle equipment.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: Like those night rates, and that stuff.

Q They are not altruistic. They are in business to make a profit.

THE PRESIDENT: They never get any night business out of Hyde Park. Everybody goes to bed early. Those boys are in bed at ten o'clock every night. (he laughs)

MR. GODWIN: I used to catch McIntyre in bed at ten or eleven o'clock -- in the morning. (laughter)

Q If you continue making these speeches, Western Union will do even better.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

(To Mr. Godwin): You should have been there Saturday. I took them for a Mark Twain. (laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't been back long enough to find out anything.

Q Have you found out what kind of a War Department building you are going to have, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes -- practically. I did do that.

Q Can you tell us ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I have been going over the preliminary plans, and it will be probably a pentagonal building -- that means five-sided, if you don't remember your Greek -- (laughter) -- and will have in one of the interior -- er -- courts, it will have that thing I was talking about, which is a solid block, about -- what? -- 175 feet each way, to test out this windowless proposition. See if it works. But it is only one out of perhaps about 15 of these interior courts. And it will house not 40,000 people but about 20,000 people.

Q Did you decide on the location?

THE PRESIDENT: Location is on the -- er -- what do they call it? -- the Quartermaster site, and everybody's approved it. It does not interfere in any way, from any angle, with the view of Arlington.

Q (interposing) Mr. President --- "

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And it's generally approved by the Fine Arts Commission, and the Budget Office, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission; so apparently -- I don't know how happy they are -- but at least they are together.

MR. GODWIN: Does that take into consideration traffic?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Other things that -- building service?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It is believed that that can be handled with 20,000 but not with 40,000.

MR. KINGSBURY-SMITH: Mr. Ambassador, can you tell us --- (loud and prolonged laughter)

MR. KINGSBURY-SMITH: Can you tell us ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Call me Governor for short. (more loud laughter)

MR. KINGSBURY-SMITH: Can you tell us whether any reply has gone forward to the Japanese Prime Minister?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to get any information from the State Department.

Q Mr. President, did you know before you went away what the mysterious Russians were coming here for?

THE PRESIDENT: That is one reason I said at the beginning that I hadn't been here long enough to find out. I didn't find out.

Q Is there any chance of having the Moscow conference in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: I should think that would be a very silly question.

(laughter)

Q Mr. President, getting back to the War Department a minute, does that mean that you have abandoned, or are adhering to your hopes about the great records building?

THE PRESIDENT: No. This we hope will be the records building at the end of the emergency. And we are all agreed -- I talked to Congressman Woodrum about it this morning -- and he agrees heartily that we should continue to finish out this northwest -- what is it? -- quadrangle -- triangle -- whichever it is; --

(interposing)

Q /Rectangle.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- and keep the War Department building at least to the original size, and possibly a little bigger, so that the War Department, after the emergency is over, can return to it; and the pentagonal building can be used for records.

Q Will this new building require the full \$35,000,000? Do you expect ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I hope not.

Q Mr. President, can you discuss details such as salary, or status, of the various members of the S.P.A.B.? (Supply Priorities and Allocations Board)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think so. There has been a statement given out the other day, and there was a conference held with members of the press who were here at the time.

Q Mr. President, in your speech yesterday you said it would be necessary to step up the total of production.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) I wonder if you would expand on that a little, and tell us

how you propose to go about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I propose to spend more money and turn out more products.

It ought to be done --

Q (interposing) How much more money, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) -- for national safety.

Well, I am not ready to send my Message to Congress yet.

Q How soon?

THE PRESIDENT: Anon, -- (he laughs) --
(interposing)

MR. GODWIN: /Mr. President, this question arises ---

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) -- which means soon; and soon means any time between
now and the first of January. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Can they speed up by spending money that they have? I understand that about half of that money has been appropriated -- say fifty million dollars. Has it already been spent or allocated?

THE PRESIDENT: Nearly all has been allocated.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: And the orders have gone out on a good deal -- good deal more than half, and of course probably in the course of the next -- what? -- sixty or ninety days, orders will be given out for the balance of it.

MR. GODWIN: May I continue that question then, sir? A lot of that money, I believe, was spent, or would be spent -- planned for factories -- larger facilities for manufacturing. Well now, have they reached the point where the new factories can increase the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It works both ways. You can't say that all of the monies are used that way. Some of it will. And a larger proportion, as I understand it now from O.P.M., War and Navy -- a larger

proportion than originally intended is going to be devoted to the use of old factories, instead of building new ones.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Uh huh.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Because it was perfectly correct, we were not distributing our efforts efficiently with the smaller people, and they have been at work on that for the last month or two, and especially in view of the fact that because of priorities there will be a good many plants all through the country that will have to stop making certain things for purely civilian use. And they are trying to use those factories and convert them into defense products.

MR. GODWIN: Will this speeding-up include any longer working hours?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh no. You mean not any more than the constant addition to the second and the third shifts. That is going on all the time.

Q Mr. President, also in connection with your speech yesterday, you said something about making greater efforts to protect shipments. Can you tell us what you had in mind there?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. There isn't any news on that. It means what it says; that's all.

MR. PAUL LEACH: Mr. President, have you had a survey made, or have you seen one, relative to using two and three shifts in existing plants, where now only one or two shifts are working?

THE PRESIDENT: What you mean, Paul, you mean ---

MR. PAUL LEACH: (interposing) Er -- using machines?

THE PRESIDENT: We are trying to increase the second shift. For example: You take a Navy Yard. As you know, the first shift -- the first shift -- this is an old story that I talked about three or four weeks ago -- is about 80% of the total, the second shift is about 15%, and

the third about 5%. I talked to Frank Knox about it, and we are trying to build up on this second shift until we get about 35% of the total people employed. That means of course that many more men employed. The question is largely one of materials coming along fast enough from the raw material people. We hope to get a ratio of about 60% first shift -- I am not talking about all industries, because they vary -- but 30% second shift, and about third -- 10% third shift.

MR. P. LEACH: That's all on Government-operated plants?

THE PRESIDENT: Same thing would apply to all the others too.

MR. P. LEACH: Do you expect to get that ratio in getting material?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. From the plants -- from them to the point.

Q Mr. President, you said in your speech yesterday that we shall have to do everything in our power to defeat Hitlerism. Could you define 'everything' more?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It speaks for itself.

Q Mr. President, do you -- speaking about spending more money, can you give us any idea now on the Lend-Lease ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Not yet. I am working on it, and I will probably have something by -- oh -- the end of the week, or about next Monday or Tuesday.

Q That will come first -- first Lend-Lease and later the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes.

Q This new request, Mr. President, the new Message -- will that be for the current fiscal year or to carry on in the next fiscal year?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea.

Q In other words, are we spending ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It will be available just as fast as it is

possible to place it. If it will be called again -- what? -- a general appropriation bill, or whether it will be called a deficiency -- I don't know.

Q In other words, there won't be any calendar -- er -- hedge on it. In other words ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q It will be spent as it can be spent?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh yes. Just as fast as it can be placed.

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

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #767,
Executive Offices of the President,
September 5, 1941 -- 10.55 A.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. Godwin) Well, Judge, how are you this morning?

MR. GODWIN: Very good, Squire.

(pause here) (Captain John Beardall confers very briefly with
the President)

MR. GODWIN: Did you read what Guy Mason said about the budget?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

You will all be asking about the attack of yesterday, so we might
as well clear that up first.

There is nothing to add, except that there was more than one at-
tack, and that it occurred in daylight, and it occurred definitely on
the American side of the ocean. The -- er -- this time there is nothing
more to add except two thoughts I have. I heard one or two broadcasters
this morning, and I read a few things that have been said by people in
Washington, which reminded me of a -- perhaps we might call it an alle-
gory.

Once upon a time, at a place I was living at, there were some
school-children living out in the country who were on their way to
school, and somebody undisclosed fired a number of shots at them from
the bushes. The father of the children took the position that there
wasn't anything to do about it -- search the bushes, and take any other
steps -- because the children hadn't been hit. I don't think that's a
bad illustration, in regard to the position of some people this morning.

The destroyer -- it is a very, very fortunate thing that the de-

stroyer was not hit in these attacks. And I think that is all that can be said on the subject today.

Q Mr. President, there is one thing that occurred to me, and I wondered if you could clear that up: Was the identification of our ship solely by that little flag astern, or were there other ships going with this destroyer? Were there larger ships that made identification much easier?

THE PRESIDENT: She was alone at the time, clearly marked. Er -- of course an identification number on her, plus the flag. And the fact remains that, as I said before, there was more than one attack.

Q Uh huh.

Q Mr. President, does that mean more than one torpedo, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) More than one attack.

Q On the same ship, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: On the same ship.

MR. GODWIN: From the same ship?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: On the same ship?

Q Is there anything to account, sir, for the bad aim? Any naval explanation of that? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That is -- that question is a little bit beyond my power to answer.

Q Mr. President, one of the papers said this morning that some unidentified person in the Navy Department had said this was approximately 150 miles west of Iceland. Is that correct?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't give you the exact position at this time.

MR. GODWIN: What did you say, sir, about being on the -- you said on the American side of the ocean?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Plainly on the American side?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q You said, plainly on the American side?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: As one landlubber to a sea expert, is it at all possible for a submarine commander to make a mistake of identification in broad daylight at that torpedo distance? Do you care to answer that?

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I suppose it could be put this way: If the -- this is from -- just plain layman's language -- pretty common sense -- if a submarine had its periscope up above the surface, do you see, there is no excuse for -- er -- the wrong identification. And, of course, most torpedoes are fired from a visual sight of the objective. That means you have got to have your periscope up above the surface. There is, of course, another way: As you know, every -- almost all Navy ships -- German included -- or Italian -- have listening devices, and they can hear the propellers, or machinery, of the other ships at some distance. Therefore, it is physically possible for a submarine to fire at a sound.

MR. GODWIN: Well, is it accurate?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course it isn't nearly as accurate as if you see what you are shooting at.

MR. GODWIN: I see.

Q Mr. President, how would you class this incident with regard to a shooting war?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, well, those are hypothetical questions. I said that was all there was to be said about it.

Q As another landlubber, I would like to ask a question here. Is it possible for a destroyer to be on the American side of the Atlantic, and still be within the zone delineated by Mr. Hitler as a belligerent zone?

THE PRESIDENT: Such a zone -- of course, in the first place, we have never been notified of it, and in the second place it was said to be a blockade. Well, of course, everybody knows that a blockade is never recognized unless it is effective.

Q Mr. President, could you say whether in -- whether the GREER in -- er -- promptly firing back, or promptly counter-attacking, behaved in accordance with its instructions -- in accordance with our policy?

THE PRESIDENT: Any information to the contrary ---. What would you do if somebody fired a torpedo at you? (laughter)

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, can you say whether there was more than one attacker?

THE PRESIDENT: More than one attack, I said.

Q Mr. President, was the periscope above the water in this case?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Was the periscope above the water in this case?

THE PRESIDENT: That I can't talk about at the present time. It makes no difference if it was below that they fired at an unknown ship. If it was below the water and they fired at an unknown ship, we would make every effort to discover the identity of the ship. Well, what would you do, again?

Q Mr. President, is any search of bushes being made out there?

THE PRESIDENT: Any what?

MR. GODWIN: Search of bushes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Yes?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, I don't go along with the father of those children.

Q Mr. President, can you say at this time ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You might almost say that the schoolteacher is searching the bushes.

MR. GODWIN: Who is he?

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) Even where a father wouldn't.

Q Mr. President, can you say at this time whether any alteration has been made in orders to the Naval vessels?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q You can't say, or it hasn't been ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. Nothing's been done.

Q Going back to this occurrence at sea. At one time, if a vessel was attacked they were going to tell poppa. They don't do that any more.

THE PRESIDENT: I know it. Isn't that a funny thing? (laughter)

Q They don't wait for the parent to say, "Go ahead, boys."

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Poppa only gets -- I mean the schoolteacher only gets burnt on -- oh, what is it? -- Tuesday evening and Friday morning. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, what is the schoolteacher going to do if they find this marauder? What can be done? Seriously, can you discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose eliminate him. Try to.

MR. GODWIN: That's the idea.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) 'Eliminate' is a reasonably good word.

MISS MAY CRAIG: I am confused as to who is the schoolteacher.

THE PRESIDENT: I am the schoolteacher. Call poppa some of these people that are saying, "Forget it. The children were not hit."

MISS MAY CRAIG: Well, originally, they were telling poppa though.

THE PRESIDENT: What? Well, I guess you will have to work it out for yourself.

Q One transformation -- poppa has become the schoolteacher.

Q Mr. President, on the basis of information you have -- er -- are there any grounds for diplomatic action in the case?

THE PRESIDENT: I told you I had nothing further to say on it today. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, some of us have had the opportunity of seeing how these forces operate with a convoy. Er -- this -- this incident, does it change in any respect the way we have been operating for some weeks?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at the present time.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, can the -- what the Commander of the GREER saw in the way of a torpedo wake, and if he saw the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I told you I can't go into details at this time any further.

MR. GODWIN: Shall I stop? You know what I am going to ask you?

Q Mr. President, what were the conditions of light?

THE PRESIDENT: Daylight.

Q Good daylight?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh yes.

Q No fog?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q No fog?

THE PRESIDENT: Good visibility. Put it that way.

MR. GODWIN: How about it?

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now, let's see, what else have we got? Oh, yes, here's one thing I want to talk to you about, because I think it's a pretty good illustration.

You remember -- oh, what was it? -- several months ago. I suppose we had better make this off the record entirely, not even background, because it is something between us.

Several months ago, the MALAYA came into New York harbor on Sunday morning, in broad daylight. Well, Frank Knox was talking to some of you over at the Department about not publishing ship movements, and -- er -- they did a stupid thing in having the MALAYA come in, and five million people see it. And there were certain newspapers in this country who said, "Why -- why should we live up to the request of the Secretary of the Navy about ship movements? Everybody knows it -- a lot of people see ships moving around."

And -- er -- well, it was explained very carefully at that time that if there were German spies in this country, and everything is published in the newspapers, all the 'head fellow' has to do is to sit at his desk and read all about everything from the papers. He doesn't have to hire anybody. He gets the whole thing right there. In other words, all he is is a clipping bureau. And he is able to send the information at no cost -- er -- which he gets through the American press.

Well, we all understood that at that time. And since that particular episode, there have been a lot of British, and some Canadian, and some

other ships that have come in here for repairs, and the press has been just one thousand per cent about it -- good about it. They have been perfectly fine in not listing these ships.

Well, everybody -- we all knew that the ILLUSTRIOUS was down at Norfolk, and we didn't say a word about it, except a few -- one or two types of papers -- er -- until -- er -- this young fellow -- what was his name? -- Mountbatten, went down the other day, and the Navy Department said it was perfectly all right so long as it was -- er -- general knowledge for several months, to mention the fact that the ILLUSTRIOUS is at Norfolk.

Now, when it comes down to the other question of -- the -- er -- turn-out of certain supplies, like planes -- er -- if we give out a monthly statement, the German fellow behind the desk can get it all from the paper. And as you know, we have given it out through the O.P.M. on planes, but we haven't given out -- what? -- other -- er -- figures on things like -- like depth charges, and machine guns, and so forth and so on. It has been pretty well kept.

The other -- yesterday I had a very interesting talk with the Attorney General, and Edgar Hoover, and he showed me -- I have it in my hand -- some German information -- that is to say it's a German request of some of the German agents in this country, showing that things that you and I know about, are still not in the possession of the German government, except through very careful search -- in other words, the hiring of spies to find out what the production is, and where it's going.

Er -- they have sent out certain requests to their agents in this company -- country -- asking for -- er -- a breakdown of the total

number of airplanes produced during a given month; how many are this type of pursuit plane; how many are that type; how many this type of bomber; how many the other type of bomber; how many are training planes. And then a second series of questions sent to all their agents: Where are they going? What is the destination of these planes? Is it American Army? Is it Great Britain? Is it Canada? Is it Africa? Is it Near East? Is it the Far East? They all want to know.

And from our point of view, I think we all recognize that if we hand out all this information every month, not only planes but tanks, and so forth and so on, it makes the German information task vastly easier. And that is why the question is an important one. It helps Germany, if we give out all the details and figures.

Now I am not shutting down on certain totals at this time, but the question is going to arise as soon as we know that -- er -- published yesterday -- that -- er -- the increase in planes during the month of August was about -- what was it? -- 390?

MR. GODWIN: 394.

THE PRESIDENT: 394 -- four hundred planes more than the previous month.

Now there are a lot of people who know they can get the stuff around, fairly well, to the breakdown. You can probably -- by snooping around in a perfectly legitimate way -- get that breakdown, find out how many planes there were of different types -- er -- how many training planes; how many big bombers; how many small bombers, etc. And if it is published it is going to be of definite aid to the Axis powers.

Now, there is no particular reason why those figures -- I suppose we ought to, when it comes to the question -- the question of appropriation bills -- we ask for more money -- why those figures could

not properly be given to the Committees of the Congress, with the understanding that they will not be made public.

Now, off the record -- er -- that is rather a difficult job, but -- (he laughs) -- nevertheless, there are certain -- the Legislative branch of the Government is entitled to certain information in making -- working out new appropriations, and if there is any leak from up there, well, it certainly isn't the fault of the Administrative branch of the Government.

Neither would it be the fault of the press, if the press did not publish it, and that is why I am going to -- er -- just throw out the suggestion at this time -- without anything like a formal request, the suggestion that we consider pretty carefully publishing in the press, figures of production in this country, on the ground that it would be definitely of aid to the Axis powers. Er -- O.P.M.'s been giving that out. I think probably that the Army ought not to give out any statement about tanks. Actually, and again off the record, the number of tanks produced this past month has shown a very, very great rise over the figure of -- er -- the previous month, and the month before that. I think it's a mistake to aid the Axis powers by giving the actual figures.

MR. FRANK KLUCKHOHN: Mr. President, could I ask a question while we are off the record? I would like to get your opinion on this, because it has been advanced by Senator Byrd and other people, that hold that it is more important to drag this -- any deficiency, out in the open, at this stage of procedure, and get it corrected, than it is to keep that kind of information, at this stage, from the Germans. Have you -- what is your idea on that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think probably that in those cases -- er -- the deficiencies -- er -- you must depend in the first instance on going to the Departments concerned to get their figures. In other words, being -- being accurate in the first instance, getting the real, actual facts.

And that is why -- I am talking -- I am still off the record -- we are talking about -- er -- improving our information service in two lines. First, through the public, and secondly for Members of the House, and Members of the Senate, so that instead of going to one man, or another man, and getting figures that are based on different facts, different methods -- as you always can -- that they will get something absolutely authoritative from a bureau of the Government and -- probably would be Lowell Mellett's Bureau -- which would -- er -- get the figures that everybody could agree on.

If you go around -- I have often used the example -- an airplane may come out of a factory, complete so far as that factory is concerned. Now, some Agency of the Government may very easily -- er -- in -- put that down as a completed plane. All right. Now, suppose there are two other steps. The factory doesn't put the artillery on the plane, and the plane may sit there without any guns. Well, the fellow that is doing the gun work, as soon as he gets the guns on to that plane, he will call it a completed plane. And then there is the navigational instrument fellow, and he will, just as soon as he gets his navigational instruments on the plane -- he will say the plane's completed. But, suppose the plane hadn't got any propeller? Now, as soon as the propeller fellow in charge of that has got a propeller on the plane, he calls it complete.

In other words, we have got to have a -- er -- a basis to go on, a criterion as to what is a completed plane. And that is why you can get all kinds of different figures, whether you are a Member of the Senate or a Member of the Press. And what we are trying to do now is standardize it, and lay down rules as to what is a completed plane. Well, that has never been done. I think it will help everybody.

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President, is there some -- some way of figuring a standard of measurement on these things? After all, I think the people, certainly the editors and readers, are interested in the comparison.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) They don't remember from one week to another how many planes were produced, but they do want to know about any progress.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) Have you been able to work out either a horse-power or gun-power method, in order to show progress, and still not disclose the type of plane? Or would it be possible that -- after this information is -- er -- known to all, to make it public? We have to guess at figures on bombers because that seems to be the great interest. How many of these planes are trainers which come off like Chevrolets; and how many come off like bombers, which are Rolls Royces?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, that's the information the Germans are crazy to get.

Q I was just wondering ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) If we could get the thing explained to the American people -- I suppose next month I will go on the air and explain

it to the American people in a single word.

Let me give you an example: A year ago there was a certain -- er -- figure that we hoped we would get -- had hope we would reach -- in other words a line going on up -- constantly increased production. Well, those were totals. Let us say, for example, that instead of putting it in total of airplanes, you put it in total of man-hours. Now, that's a much more important thing, and sufficiently difficult to explain, and made infinitely more difficult to explain because there are a whole lot of people -- columnists, and so forth -- who would want deliberately to leave that end of it out in what they are telling the American people.

If you have last year's figures that was based on -- well, it was considering military needs of the time, and the great bulk of the planes were pursuit planes of the -- fighter planes. All right. In the last three or four months all the military authorities here, and on the other side, and our observers said, "You are making too many pursuit planes and not enough bombers." Right.

Now a bomber must take some figure -- it is not a correct figure because I don't know what the -- the figure is, but a bomber takes, let us say, three times as many man-hours to turn out as a pursuit plane. Therefore, Q.E.D., if you have the same number of man-hours, you will turn out only one third in bombers as you would have turned out in pursuit planes. Therefore, it throws last year's figures, I suppose, into the discard.

Now, we are increasing, of course, on our bomber output, but it is only in the last five months that we have been changing over, and that -- there is a certain lag on that change-over, of course. You

can't simply issue an order Monday and have it start on Tuesday. We are not making as many pursuit planes. We are making more bombers, but with the same number of man-hours.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I think people will be able to understand that.

Q Mr. President, I think you agree we are up against the problem ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh sure.

Q (continuing) For instance, it may be charged in defense production, that if we can't run these figures, we are using -- adopting a partisan attitude on it. There is a problem there. Do you agree, sir, on the figures, how difficult it is?

THE PRESIDENT: I do. It's a real problem. You see, I am not asking anything special, except that you recognize that there is a problem.

MR. GODWIN: May we go on the record, sir, now?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: May we go on the record? The Baruch matter -- have you anything to say about his visit here with you?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I heard that there were various versions in various papers. There were certainly -- some of the versions of what he said didn't at all conform to what we said.

MR. GODWIN: Would you care to correct them?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: May I ask another question? There is a story of oil and other supplies being shipped somewhere -- to Spain. Do you know anything about that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Hadn't heard of it at all. You had better check with -- I don't know who -- State Department.

MR. D. CORNELL: Mr. President, is -- are the Free French eligible for Lend-Lease assistance?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask the State Department that question, because they will reply to it in State Department language.

MR. D. CORNELL: That's what I am afraid of. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, we are getting reports from some of our cable sources that Mr. Sayre of the Philippines is about to be replaced, or will be replaced as head of the Commission by Mr. Henry Grady. Do you have such a plan?

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it, although, of course, stories of that kind started two days after Sayre got there. I think -- what? -- three years ago.

Q Mr. President, a while ago, in connection with what might be done to the attacker of the GREER, you used the word 'eliminate'. Can we quote that one word?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so.

MR. T. REYNOLDS: (loudly) (among other loud voices) Thank you, Mr. President. (laughter)