

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #785,
Executive Office of the President
November 21, 1941 -- 10.45 A.M.

Q The A.P. man got stopped outside.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q The A.P. man got stopped outside.

THE PRESIDENT: He got stuck?

Q Stopped.

Q Suspicious this morning, eh?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, he's on Edgar Hoover's list. It's all right.

Q I didn't think it was out yet.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q I didn't think it was well known.

THE PRESIDENT: No. It isn't well known yet.

Q They just didn't know him with the haircut.

THE PRESIDENT: They don't watch them. But in Warm Springs, Oh my.

Q What are the prospects?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What are the prospects for Warm Springs?

THE PRESIDENT: Just hoping -- hoping. We have got the Marines down there.

Q Not planning to leave in a day or so?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q No departure this week?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I sent a letter, a few minutes ago, to Senator McKellar
(Kenneth McKellar of Tennessee) and Congressman Cartwright (Wilburn

Cartwright of Oklahoma) on the signing of Senate 1840, which was construction of highways needed for the national defense, calling attention to the fact that while a portion -- quite a large portion of the money is for roads that are urgently needed for the national defense, there is another -- there are other very large sums, which are for highway construction, which are not urgently needed for highway defense. In other words, a -- a place where we could have made an -- an emergency -- an emergency saving of a great many million dollars, but have not made it. And the only reason I signed the bill was to get the highways that are urgently needed for national defense.

Q Mr. President, is it possible that S.P.A.B. may by allocation orders postpone the building of the non-defense highways?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because part of it -- in fact nearly all of that under the bill is obligatory -- mandatory. It has to be allocated under the existing quota system.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, even if it can be allocated, they still can't get material. That is where S.P.A.B. would come in?

THE PRESIDENT: Pete, that is quite a suggestion. (laughter) I hadn't thought of it. I will think of it. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, have you decided what, if anything ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Steve, (Mr. Early) will you make a note of that?

MR. EARLY: Made, sir. (laughter)

Q Have you decided what, if anything, you will do about labor legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Have you decided what, if anything, you will do about labor legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. There isn't any news on it this morning at all.

Q Mr. President, have you had any reports to indicate what part American equipment is taking in the offensive in Libya?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, is any consideration being given to breaking diplomatic relations with Vichy?

THE PRESIDENT: With who?

Q Vichy?

THE PRESIDENT: Haven't heard of it.

Q Mr. President, have you any reason to feel optimistic about the Japanese talks?

THE PRESIDENT: About what?

Q The Japanese talks?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh well, that's one of those "Are you beating your wife?" questions.

Q Is there anything you could tell us about them?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, no.

Q Mr. President, any new developments in the coal strike?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

Q Any new developments in the coal strike?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think there will be anything until tomorrow.

Q Mr. President, are you supporting extensions to the question of how to get power to Massena, that new aluminum plant?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that's -- frankly, I don't know. I don't know enough about it. I don't know what the suggestion is on that.

Q Do you have any preference, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I have got ---

Q (interposing) As to whether it should be built with public or private

funds?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, of course the whole -- the whole fight in New York for these many, many years -- from 1929 -- has been over the question of transmission lines, and the policy of the State was always that they should be controlled by the State itself, and not by private capital.

Q Mr. President, when you speak of possible developments tomorrow in the coal strike, do you mean on your initiative?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I expect to hear from Mr. Lewis. (Mr. John L. Lewis, C.I.O.) (adding) Or his policy committee.

Q Mr. President, any developments on the Price Control bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I won't hear until Monday on that. I don't know what happened.

MR. D. CORNELL: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Short but sweet.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #786,
Executive Office of the President,
November 25, 1941 -- 4.05 p.m.

Q Any Warm Springs?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Any Warm Springs prospects?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you may.

Q This week, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: It looks a little that way. I am not dead sure yet. You can get your suitcase out.

Q Just get it out?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Just get it out?

THE PRESIDENT: Get it out and dust it off.

Q We have had it half-packed for ten days, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I ever gave the 'unpack' signal this time, did I?

Q Not quite.

Q We have been offered conciliation for ten days.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q We have been offered conciliation for ten days.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got many things for you today.

The first thing I am going to speak about is the one I feel most deeply about.

I am very sorry to get word from the State Department a little while ago that the President of Chile has died. It brings up a disagreeable

fact that the United States has been forced to apologize to the government of Chile for an article written in Time magazine -- a disgusting lie which appeared in that paper. It was of course immediately cabled to Chile. It had arrived at the time that the president had left office in a very ill condition, and we are informed -- we are informed by our Ambassador that this article was a notable contribution to Nazi propaganda against the United States. It is being widely used by the Nazi, Fascist and Falangist press, playing it up big. The American Ambassador to Chile shares wholeheartedly in the general indignation and disgust, and goes on to say to the Secretary of State: (reading) "This is another illustration of how some American papers and writers, by such methods, are stocking the arsenals of propaganda of the Nazis to be used against us."

The President is now dead. The episode will not be easily forgotten in Chile, and I wish to take this opportunity as President to express the deep regret of the Administration, and the American people, to the people of Chile, and especially to the family of the late president.

Q (interposing) Can we have him (the reporter) read ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) If you want a copy of that quote verbatim, you can have it.

It is the first time that I have had to go to that length in the last eight and a half years; but it was due.

MR. EARLY: (to the President) I think you ought to tell them where the article appeared, and what page.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't like to spread the article around. If you want to use it, that's up to you, but Steve suggests that it is in the November 17th issue of Time.

Q Mr. President, have the Time editors made any statement about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Not that I know of.

Number two. The railroad matter has been referred back to the Emergency Board, and I have sent two things out. First is a reconvening of the Board. I haven't physically signed the letters yet -- they are not ready -- but the Board has been telephoned to -- to please get here on Thursday if they can, and Friday at the latest -- Friday morning. And I have sent the following letter -- Steve will have copies for you when you go out -- to the Railroads and the Brotherhoods -- their representatives -- Mr. Pelley and Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Al Johnston.

(reading): "As a result of many days of conference in relation to the railroad problem, I am, on my own motion, reconvening the Emergency Board.

"I am hereby requesting the parties to appear before this Board.

"I am asking the Board to commence its hearings on Friday, November 28, and I hope that you will be ready to appear before it at that time.

"I suggest that each party be allowed one day to state their case, as this will greatly expedite the proceedings, and because of the fact that the Board itself has previously received information from each side.

"I am asking that the report of the Board be handed down on Monday, December 1st."

Well, that's all there is at that end of it.

And I hope we will be able to go to Warm Springs on Friday afternoon, to stay a few days. And I have asked the president of the Foundation to see if he can postpone the dinner once more, and start the custom of a third Thanksgiving, on Saturday night. (laughter)

The only other thing I have got is -- Mr. Bullitt I am sending,

early next week, as my Special Representative in the Near East area.

Well, that's about all.

Q What will be his special assignment?

THE PRESIDENT: He will be Special Representative to the President, to get information, look around, find out what the needs are, and come back and tell me.

Q Where will he be placed, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: In a plane. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, returning to the railroad situation, are there some special facts which developed since the Board decision that you think may warrant an upward revision?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't put it that way. I would put it this way: That there have been some special facts which in my judgment have materialized since the report of the Board.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Period.

Q On Mr. Bullitt. Does the Near East take in what is usually recognized by the State Department?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say, roughly -- geographically -- this Libyan area, and the Nile area, and the Red Sea area. I don't know. Maybe the Persian Gulf area.

Q (interposing) The reason I asked ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Maybe Palestine.

Q That includes French North Africa? I wonder if that came in?

THE PRESIDENT: That's practically impossible. You can't get across from one to the other, unless you want to get shot down.

Q Do you include Turkey?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Turkey?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us what you talked about today with Governor Tugwell of Puerto Rico?

THE PRESIDENT: I just asked a lot of questions, that's all, and got a lot of answers. I am going to ask some more questions and get some more answers.

Q Did the question come up on importing Latin American foods to solve the price situation down there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. That was one of the things we never discussed.

Q Mr. President, have you had a report on the Machinists' strike out in St. Louis?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I heard last night, though, something that I didn't know about St. Louis. I think it might interest everybody. There was quite a serious strike going on in the Anheuser-Busch plant. (laughter) It was rather interesting that it affects such an essential part of the munitions supply, and secondly, the strike has been in progress for twenty-six years. Am I right? Twenty-six years. Rather interesting. That's why we are going to have labor legislation.

Q Mr. President, would you like to discuss the labor situation?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Would you like to discuss the labor situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think so. We have talked about every phase of it last night. They have gone back to hold hearings.

MR. D. CORNELL: Thank you, Mr. President. (laughter)

FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NOVEMBER 25, 1941

Statement by the President to the Press Conference
today:

The first thing I am going to speak about is the one I feel most deeply about.

I am very sorry to get word from the State Department that the President of Chile has died. That brings up a disagreeable fact -- that the Government of the United States has been forced to apologize to the Government of Chile for an article written in Time magazine -- a disgusting lie which appeared in that magazine.

It was of course immediately cabled to Chile. It arrived at the time that the President had left office in a very ill condition, and we are informed by our Ambassador that this article was a notable contribution to Nazi propaganda against the United States.

It is being widely used by the Nazi, Fascist and Falangist press. The United States Ambassador to Chile shares wholeheartedly in the general indignation and disgust. He reports to the Secretary of State that this is another illustration of how some American papers and writers by such methods are stocking the arsenals of propaganda of the Nazis to be used against us.

The President of Chile is now dead. I am deeply sorry.

The episode of the article will not be easily for-

the one I feel most deeply about.

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The President of Chile is now dead. I am deeply sorry.

The episode of the article will not be easily forgotten in Chile.

I wish to take this opportunity, as President of the United States, to express the deep regret of the Administration and the American people to the people of Chile; especially to the family of the late President.

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CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #787,
Executive Office of the President,
November 28, 1941 -- 10.55 A.M.

MR. GODWIN: Who is that guy? (looking in the direction of Mr. Eugene Casey)

THE PRESIDENT: Why, hello little stranger.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you for the "little". (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Are you packed?

Q All ready.

Q Mr. President, it looks like you are going into competition with the apple people.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. An apple a day.

Q When do you think we will be back?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q When do you think we will be back?

(answer not heard)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Why -- still hope to get off this afternoon at three o'clock.

I was asked in the front row when I would come back. I can't answer the question because I don't know. I hope to stay until Tuesday, but I am not sure that I can.

If somebody will ask me what the reason is, the reason is the Japanese situation.

I have here a release, which you will get when you go out, in regard to merchant vessels. This is after consultation between State, War, Navy and Maritime Commission.

(reading): "American merchant vessels sailing on routes between the United States ports and ports of Spain, Portugal, and their adjacent

island possessions will not be armed at this time.

"American merchant vessels sailing in the inter-American trade between ports of the United States and ports of Central and South America will not be armed, at this stage.

"American merchant vessels sailing on routes in the Pacific ocean will not be armed under existing circumstances.

"Public announcement will be made of any change in policy affecting any of these routes."

And that is all.

Q Mr. President, could you say how long you think the "existing circumstances" may prevail?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I would ask that question in Tokio and not in Washington.

Q Is there anything you can tell us sir, about these Japanese situations -- I mean negotiations?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's better not.

MR. GODWIN: If you have read newspapers carefully, I think you would come to the conclusion that we have been getting news based on Tokio, to a large extent, in that respect. I just simply throw that out.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that probably is true, Earl, and it has been based on an American policy of infinite patience.

Q Well, Mr. President, could you say, sir, whether these negotiations have broken down temporarily?

THE PRESIDENT: No. They have not.

Q Mr. President, did the Japanese yesterday bring any response to the memorandum -- the document presented by Mr. Hull?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Mr. President, can you tell when the next meeting will be held with the Japanese?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Can you tell us, sir, if there were any new developments in your talks with the Japanese different from those that they have had from Mr. Hull?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I would say just exactly the same.

I think I could tell you, for background -- but only for background -- that the situation seems serious, because our one desire has been peace in the Pacific, and the taking of no steps to alter the prospects of peace, which of course has meant non-aggression. Really boils down to that.

And also -- as background -- I was, last spring, talking along the line of general peace for the Pacific, based on a settlement of the war between China and Japan -- the restoration of peace there, plus a permanent arrangement for non-aggression in the Pacific, and the restoration of normal economic relations, access to raw materials.

And as you know, the Secretary of State, with even more patience than I have -- which is saying a whole lot -- had been holding conversations from, I think it was April. And in the middle of them came the Japanese expedition to Indo-China, which is very far afield, and caused us very great concern, because it seemed to be a reasonable -- to show a reasonable parallel with the Hitler methods in Europe. As for example, the infiltration, over a period of several months, of the German armies into Roumania and Hungary, placing themselves in the position where strategically they were all set to attack Yugoslavia and Greece.

And of course the -- the drawing of the parallel made peacefully-inclined people over here to wonder whether this occupation, with a

limited number of troops in Indo-China, was the beginning of a similar action in the Far East, placing obvious American interests in great jeopardy if the drawing of such a parallel was justified.

The American flag, of course, does fly from the Philippines. And even before the Japanese went into Indo-China, one might almost say that the Philippines were located in a horseshoe, with Japanese military control over the coasts of China, all the way down to the southern border of China, and Japanese military control on the opposite side -- the east -- over the mandated islands, so called.

You look at a map closely, that is a sort of a horseshoe, open at the southern end, and the Philippines in the middle of it. I think a study of the map would be advisable for all of us, because the Hitler method has always been aimed at a little move here and a little move there, by which complete encirclement, or the obtaining of essential military points, was merely -- that was a prelude to the extension of aggression to other places. It's a perfectly obvious historical fact today. And we are of course thinking not only about the American flag in the Philippines, not only about certain vital defense needs which come from that open end of the horseshoe, but we are thinking about the -- something even more important, and that is the possible extension of control by aggression into the whole of the Pacific area. And we are thinking about what it would mean to this country if that policy were to be used against us in the whole Pacific area. I don't think that anything more can be said at this time. We are -- we are waiting.

MR. EARLY: Mr. President, it has been a long time since you defined "background". For the benefit of the newcomers, will you do it again?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Steve suggests I define "background". "Background", as I

remember it, is that it is not to be attributed to me in any way, or to the White House in any way. But it is just so it will help you to write your stories.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And I don't think I would attribute it to "high sources in the Administration", but you call it "best information obtainable in Washington" or something like that. (laughter)

Q (aside) I don't know any better.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It's the Government. In other words, it's the Government of the United States. It isn't -- it isn't the President, and it isn't the Administration. It's your Government. That's the point of it.

Q On that basis, Mr. President, is -- is it, since you are not to be quoted, is there real danger of extension of this into the adjoining country -- Indo-China -- now?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, with that background, you had better write your own stories.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, would this mean that we are working for the status quo?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Have been ever since -- for a long time.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Wait a minute. I wouldn't say working for the status quo, Pete, because we ---

MR. P. BRANDT: (interposing) Temporary status quo?

THE PRESIDENT: You have got to leave China out of the status quo. We are certainly not working for the status quo in China.

Q (interjecting) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Or Indo-China, for that matter.

Q Against further aggression?

THE PRESIDENT: Against further aggression. We are working to remove the present aggression.

Q Are you back on the record, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No. That is still background.

MR. GODWIN: That Chinese situation is absolutely solid and set, is it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely.

MR. GODWIN: No chance of compromise?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: And that is still of the record, I suppose?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That is off the record altogether.

MR. GODWIN: Not off the record -- background.

THE PRESIDENT: Background. Yes.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Mr. President, if you are through with that phase of the Conference, there was another thing that I wanted to take up. Early in your Administration, you did a very effective job commenting on National Committeemen practicing law in Washington. I wonder whether, in the light of present developments, you have anything to say about former public officials representing defense contractors here now?

THE PRESIDENT: Jim, go and ask the Attorney General. There is some kind of a -- I don't know whether it is -- whether it has been introduced or not, but the Attorney General and I were heartily in favor of some kind of legislation that would meet that exact question of yours. Now what the status is, I don't know, whether it was introduced or it is being prepared.

MR. J. WRIGHT: (interposing) Well, Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) There are several Members of the Congress that are also very much interested.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Well, there are several approaches to that. One of them is for Congressional investigation of these activities. The second is to bar any public official from such activities for two years after he leaves.

THE PRESIDENT: You know that used to be the rule.

Q No. Only in the Treasury, I think, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: No. In others too -- in the Navy Department -- and I was there -- almost before we were born -- years ago. You couldn't practice law either for -- against the Government, or lobby, or anything like it for two years, and that was the general rule. Now, when it was repealed, I don't know. That is very historical.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Do you think it would be a good thing to have something like that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Well, Senator Hatch, I believe, has a bill of that sort, in the last few days.

THE PRESIDENT: That is why I say you had better ask Francis Biddle, because I don't know what the ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- details of it are.

MR. J. WRIGHT: We did ask him at the last press conference he had, about his attitude on it, but he seemed to be passing -- he did not say any more than that it was up to Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it has gone beyond that. I think -- we are heartily

in favor of it. You can put that down. A good idea.

Q Mr. President, the Island of Puerto Rico ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) By the way, this is off the record entirely.

Don't you think that should apply to the press too?

MR. J. WRIGHT: Lobbying?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

MR. J. WRIGHT: Yes. By all means.

THE PRESIDENT: Resigning from the active newspaper field, going into the lobbying field -- why shouldn't that apply to the press in Washington?

Q Would that apply to Government jobs?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Would that apply to retaining Government jobs too?

THE PRESIDENT: No. But it would apply if you did take a Government job.

(laughter) Then you would get stuck.

Q Mr. President, the Island of Puerto Rico is very much excited over a Caribbean plan, which they have understood would involve their economy and tie it to that of other islands in the Caribbean. I understand that Governor Tugwell had that under consideration in talking to you about it.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's -- the way you state it there's nothing in it at all. In other words, there is going to be a study of various forms, in which Puerto Ricans will take part, on the economics of the whole area, and all the islands there may be from the adjacent mainland. And I personally think it's sort of silly to worry about a study which hasn't yet begun, especially in view of the fact that Puerto Rico will be in on the study.

Q Mr. President, in that connection, is there anything planned ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No plan. There is no plan about that.

Q In that connection, is there any plan of appointing a joint Anglo-American board for ---

THE PRESIDENT: That might be one of several steps. In other words, the whole situation.

Q Mr. President, have you any assurances from the independent steel companies that they will abide by arbitration in this ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Only what I have read in the papers. I haven't heard anything for the last three or four days.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. D. CORNELL: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #788,
Executive Office of the President,
December 2, 1941 -- 4.00 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought I would get you all crossed up this morning, and have you in here on time.

Q We were quite surprised.

THE PRESIDENT: Was afraid somebody would drop 'daid'.

MR. GODWIN: Good morning, Boss.

Q This will teach you to be on time once.

MR. GODWIN: We're here.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. Good.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have here a seven-page letter from the Emergency Railway Board, in regard to the settlement of the Railway demands. And Steve (Mr. Early) has had it mimeographed, and you will get it outside. I don't think you want me to read it all now. I will just read the first two paragraphs.

(Reading): "Your Emergency Board is honored and pleased to report to you that its proposals for a mediation settlement of the threatened railway strike have been accepted or acquiesced in by the representatives and spokesmen for the contending parties.

"It will be necessary for the representatives of some of the labor organizations to submit the proposed settlement to meetings of their general chairmen for final approval. These meetings will be held in Chicago on December 4. However, your Emergency Board has been assured that the representatives of these organizations who participated in the mediation negotiations will recommend the approval of the proposals contained in the mediation agreement. We are confident that the specific proposals for settlement of the railway dispute which we submitted to the parties will be formally approved without change by all of the parties. The railroad officials have already accepted the mediation proposals."

The rest of the letter relates to the provisions of the mediation

settlement, and it will be awaiting you outside. So I trust that that is the end of that trouble that we have been having for a couple of weeks.

Q Mr. President, the State Department ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) And then -- Oh, yes -- also tomorrow they are going to give me the formal report and a transcript of the proceedings, and then I will thank them very much on behalf of the Government.

Q Mr. President, if the Japanese march in on Thailand, can you tell us ---

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q If the Japanese should march into Thailand, could you tell what the United States Government will do?

THE PRESIDENT: What was the first word in that sentence? (laughter) That is why I asked you to repeat the question. Everybody can get it.

Q 'Providing'. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Anything else?

Q Mr. President, a State Department spokesman said today that you have asked Japan for an early reply to Secretary Hull's proposals. Did that take the form of an ultimatum, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What proposals? And who was the State Department authority?

Q I can't tell you that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well then, I can't answer the question.

Q Mr. President, we were told at the State Department that you had asked Mr. Welles to make certain inquiries of Japanese representatives ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) That is correct.

Q (continuing) --- or the Japanese government, through their representatives, this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) Is there any indication of the nature of those inquiries?

THE PRESIDENT: Let me put it this way, that ---

MR. CHARLES HAMILTON: (interposing) Mr. President ---

VOICES: Sh -- Sh.

THE PRESIDENT: Ask Charlie ---

MR. CHARLES HAMILTON: (interposing) Never since Mr. Theodore Roosevelt have we needed a big stick as much as we do today, so I am giving this to you. (hands a big ash cane to the President)

THE PRESIDENT: I think, By Jove ---

MR. CHARLES HAMILTON: (interposing) I got it in Wales.

THE PRESIDENT: Charlie, thanks ever so much. That's one thing I have longed for. (laughter) Only, Charlie, for your own safety, don't stand in the front row. That's all right. That's a good hefty one. (holding it up to the reporters) You know, it has got an awfully nice balance. It has got an awfully nice balance.

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Well, somebody was asking you a question.

(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT. No!

MR. GODWIN: Yes! I think we might have got something out of that.

THE PRESIDENT: I do too. I think it's all right.

Q Mr. President, you started out to say, "Let's put it this way." (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What was it we were talking about? Was it the -- something before Congress was it?

MR. GODWIN: No.

Q The nature of the inquiries made of Japan.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let's put it this way. And this answers a good many questions at the same time. Try to make this as short as I can.

As you know, since last April, we have been discussing with the

Japanese government some method to arrive at an objective. The objective was permanent peace in the whole area of the Pacific. It seemed at times as if progress was being made toward that objective. And during that whole period, up to I think it was the end of June, we assumed that as both nations were negotiating toward that objective, that there would be no act which would be contrary to the desired end of peace.

We were therefore somewhat surprised, the end of June, when the Japanese government sent troops -- I think to a specified over-all total, in other words, a number which would not be exceeded -- into Indo-China, after very brief negotiations with the French Vichy government; the conclusion of which arrangement the Vichy government let it be understood rather clearly that they had agreed to this number of troops, principally because they were powerless to do anything else.

Sometime thereafter, after the troops had gone there, the conversations were resumed between Japan and the United States, and for a while they seemed to be making progress. But again we made it perfectly clear that the objective which we were seeking meant the taking of no additional territory by anybody in the Pacific area.

And the other day we got word from various sources that already, in Indo-China, there were large additional bodies of Japanese forces -- various kinds of forces -- naval, air, and land -- and that other forces were on the way; and that even before these other forces had arrived, the number of forces already there had greatly exceeded, in Indo-China, the original amount which the French government had agreed to, and that the forces that were on the way would still more greatly exceed the original number.

And the question was asked this morning of the Japanese government,

at my request, very politely, as to what the purpose of this was -- what the intention of the Japanese government in doing this was, as to the future; and eliminating, of course, the possibility that it was for the policing of Indo-China, which was an exceedingly peaceful spot beforehand.

And we hope to get a reply to that very simple question shortly.

Q Was there any time limit put on it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. That's a silly question. One doesn't put a time limit on things any more. That's the last century. We are at peace with Japan. We are asking a perfectly polite question. I think that's all.

MR. J. HENRY: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q I remember Theodore Roosevelt put it ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, yes. But that's the last generation. That is almost worthy of a first headline. (he laughs)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #789,
Executive Office of the President,
December 5, 1941 -- 11.00 A.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got here -- they are ready for you when you go out -- the supplementary report of the Emergency Board on the railway situation. And it's a printed report. You have had the letter of transmittal already. That tells the whole story.

Q Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes?

Q (continuing) Will you take any further action in regard to the Report's recommendations about the Railway Express Agency?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Do you know what is going to be done about that? They refuse to compromise.

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q The Railway Express Agency ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Oh.

Q (continuing) --- refused ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think that is being taken up between the owners of the company and the men, directly.

You know, the Railway Express Agency was formed in the old days by the old express companies, the Adams, the American, and the National, et cetera, soon after the -- the parcel post ran by the Government went into effect, and of course decreased business in the old companies very greatly. And the railroad companies, as I understand it, bought the stock, or the control of the stock, in the old private express com-

panies, and it is now owned by the railroads.

Q Would it be your thought, sir, then, since the railroads themselves have accepted the report, that they would do likewise with their subsidiary?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got any thought. They are talking among themselves at the present time.

Q Mr. President, have you any plan before you for some sort of agreement or understanding between the C.I.O. and A.F.L., looking toward ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q (continuing) --- settlement ---?

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q Mr. President, have you any comment to make at this time on the defense strike bill just passed by the House?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us if Mr. Murray (Philip Murray, President of the C.I.O.) has reconsidered his resignation from the Mediation Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the thing is -- the subject is -- what do they call it? -- in suspense at the present time.

Q Mr. President, have you any comment to make on the story the Chicago Tribune had yesterday morning, regarding alleged war plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have any news on that. I think the Secretary of War is saying something about it today.

Q Mr. President, the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, which is building a supposedly defense housing project in Alexandria, and in an "A" residential zone, and busting it up, claims openly before the City Council that they are building this on the request of the highest authority in Washington. You are the highest authority I know. Is it you? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It must be a higher authority. I don't know.

Q Have you any word as to the Japanese reply yet, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: They are going to see the Secretary of State at 11.15 this morning -- which made me late this morning, I was talking to the Secretary. He is coming around here to lunch with me about one o'clock. And until he comes around for lunch, I won't know anything about it.

Q Mr. President, I think it was last week you had a conference here with Governor Edison of New Jersey. Did that concern the political situation up there in any way, or Mayor Hague?

THE PRESIDENT: It did not.

Q Mr. President, when are you going to name a successor to General Fleming?
(Philip B. Fleming, Wage and Hour Administrator)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't taken it up at all.

MR. GODWIN: Well, Mr. President, have you any idea that the -- there will be any announcement, or explanation, about this Japanese conversation today?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

MR. GODWIN: Can you tell me ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't got the faintest idea. In fact, I won't hear about it, as I said, until about one o'clock.

Q Mr. President, about ten days ago you approved a project in Wisconsin for a powder plant -- a \$65,000,000 plant -- to be located at Merrimack.

THE PRESIDENT: Has the location been set?

Q Well, that's the question now. (laughter) They closed the real estate office.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I approved any project. I think I made a definite recommendation. I think I approved merely the building of the

powder plant, and that is as far as I have gone.

Q Do you know anything about why they have stopped the acquisition of land in Merrimack?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't know they had.

Q They closed up the Government real estate office.

THE PRESIDENT: I have no idea.

Q Mr. President, the House Appropriations Committee did not put in its bill the request for the Douglas Dam ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I hope very much it will be put in, in the Senate, because all of the defense agencies are agreed that the power from that proposed Dam is a very essential thing to national defense. So I am hoping it will be put in in the Senate.

Q Mr. President, is Ambassador Steinhardt going to return to Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. He is still reporting about Russia.

Q How long will the report continue, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: That -- it will continue until it is ended. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, yesterday we were given some details about an encounter between a Navy ship and an Axis submarine. Does that mean a change of policy, and are we going to hear about such things from now on?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I hadn't had any report from the Navy Department, except what appeared -- that the SALINAS fired some guns at the submarine, either before or -- I don't know whether it was before or after she was actually torpedoed. I couldn't tell you about anything else but what the Navy gave out.

MR. GODWIN: The Navy gave out about that. They said it was counter-attacked, but previously -- that -- I think that the Navy has been silent regarding any encounters, if any.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I suppose the easiest way of putting it is this, that it's so difficult to -- for the Navy to give out a story, without a false impression being given to the public. During the World War we had, of course, a lot of destroyers all over the place; we had a lot of cruisers all over the place; we had a lot of armed merchant ships all over the place. And, on the other side, we had a lot of sub-chasers. And we had some submarines of our own.

At the end of the war, I did a little figuring, and I figured out that if we listed as sunk everything that had been fired at by a lot of very enthusiastic people on those ships, in perfectly -- in honest -- their own honest belief, we would have sunk about 725 German submarines.

Actually, as I remember it -- and of course we got this at the end of the war, from German figures on submarines that were in certain -- pretty well known localities, and were obviously the ones that were fired at -- I think we sank 16 -- actually.

So it's a pretty silly thing for anybody to say that a submarine was sunk, unless you actually saw it sink, or else blown up; or unless it came up to the surface and surrendered. That happened once or twice in the World War. It's a little bit difficult for all you people to write stories about having sunk this submarine or that submarine. In the old days, of course, it was thought that if a lot of oil came to the surface it meant that the submarine was sunk. Of course that just isn't true, as proven in the World War.

Q Mr. President, you have been seeing numerous labor people lately and you have an appointment today with Van Bittner of the C.I.O. Is there any connection between these engagements?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. None at all.

Q Could you tell us the purpose of your meeting with Mr. Bittner?

THE PRESIDENT: Just that I haven't seen him for a long time, that's all.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I don't think that there is any story in that.

Q Is it inflation that makes your new books cost twice as much as the first set?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It's because -- it's because the first publishers were a little over-optimistic. (laughter)

Q Thirty bucks is too much.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. GODWIN: (to the President) Did you know that Wells Hawks (old-time circus press agent) had died?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Did you know that Wells Hawks died this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Did he really? Too bad, poor old Wells.

MR. GODWIN: He was very sick.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. He had been for a long time.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #790,
Executive Office of the President
December 9, 1941 -- 4.10 P.M.

(This is the first War Press Conference)

MR. EARLY: Tremendous conference.

THE PRESIDENT: They will get damn little.

MR. EARLY: Tremendous numbers. It's all right.

Q How are you, Mr. President?

Q How are you, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, fine. There's darn little news, except that I haven't finished my speech.

Q It's going to be pretty late?

THE PRESIDENT: Pretty nearly finished though. That's old stuff (indicating typed sheets before him). That's the third draft. I am now completing the fifth copy.

MISS MAY CRAIG: You've got a new system out there.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MISS MAY CRAIG: A new system out there. It's going to take a long time to get in.

THE PRESIDENT: What's that? What do you have to do? Have they frisked you?
(laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: Practically.

THE PRESIDENT: Now May, I don't think that's nice.

MISS MAY CRAIG: They did Fred Hale once.

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to hire a female Secret Service agent around here to do the frisking.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Remember the time they frisked Fred Hale at a reception?

THE PRESIDENT: At what?

MISS MAY CRAIG: Remember the time they frisked Senator Hale at a reception?

THE PRESIDENT: Terribly funny.

MISS MAY CRAIG: He never got over it.

THE PRESIDENT: He never got over it.

MISS MAY CRAIG: The sacred Hale person.

THE PRESIDENT: He was here before you and I were born.

(pause here as newspapermen continue to file in)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have anything on operations. I think -- I don't know whether you have had this before. There was an attack this morning on Clark Field in the Philippines, resulting in some officer and soldier casualties; and General MacArthur is trying to get further information. That was early this morning.

Q Have you talked with General MacArthur, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not personally on the telephone. He has been telephoning two or three times to the Chief of Staff.

Hmm -- one or two bills -- I don't know who the authorities are ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, a little louder, please.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I am sending to Senator McKellar (Kenneth McKellar, Democrat, of Tennessee) a note, saying that I understand that a bill has been introduced in the House authorizing and directing the President to consolidate N.Y.A. and C.C.C. in a single agency, to be known as the Civilian Youth Administration. While I have not had an opportunity to examine the bill in detail, I heartily approve the objective, and I understand that the Budget has gone into it also, and has approved it. That's about all I have got.

MR. GODWIN: What was that final name? Civilian Youth what?

THE PRESIDENT: Civilian Youth Administration. C.Y.A. instead of N.Y.A.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

Q Mr. President, are you considering any revamping of the defense transportation setup?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

Q Any revamping of the defense transportation setup?

THE PRESIDENT: Why a question like that? It's working awfully well.

Q I beg your pardon?

THE PRESIDENT: Why a question like that? What is the objective?

Q A report has been booted around that a Federal Coordinator of Transportation is being considered ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no.

Q (continuing) --- with wide authority over all transportation agencies.

THE PRESIDENT: No. It hasn't been considered.

Q Thank you.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us of your discussions with S.P.A.B. this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think I can. It was a conference -- of course O.P.M. was there also, and several other agencies. I should say that there were two -- that there were, you might say, two concurrent policies that were agreed on. The first was to -- on the present program, which is now getting into full production -- to go ahead with a speed-up of it. Well, that involves, of course, probably working seven days a week, and pushing the speed of the existing program to such an extent that we will get a great many more actual deliveries in the -- what? -- calendar year nineteen-thirty -- nineteen-forty-two, than the present program

calls for.

Then the other policy that comes with it is to enter into a still greater expansion of plants, which means new plants and additions to old plants, thereby increasing the total volume of production as fast as that can be attained. In other words, a -- a speeding up, and an increase of totals, working toward an all-out effort. Of course, a great many other things which will form a component part of that phrase -- an "all-out effort".

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) We also talked about the -- certain things called priorities, and as you will see from what I say tonight, there is not at this time any shortage in food -- foodstuffs. In other words, there is enough for all of us, and enough left over to help the food situation among those who are fighting against the same evil that we are fighting against.

On a very large number of articles in normal civilian use, there is also no shortage at the present time for civilian use, or for defense purposes. Oh what? -- lipstick. (laughter)

(aside): Thank you, May. (May Craig)

There is, however, for this new program, a very great shortage in most metals, and it seems clear that in putting the program into effect we shall have to do two things. The first is to increase the original output of the raw material or metals, and the second is to divert from civilian use to defense needs at least fifty percent -- at least half -- of all metals which during this past year have been going to civilian and not defense purposes. It means that people will have to do without a great many metal things, which they have been

able to get up to this time.

Q Mr. President, this speed-up thing in production will about eliminate any unemployment in the automobile industry, will it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think you can put it that way, because after all, if I said it would end it, then you would come back at me a month or two from now and say, "How about these people that have been thrown out of work temporarily while they were retooling the factory?" You see?

Q I was thinking ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Not permanent.

Q Governor Van Wagner told you sometime ago.

THE PRESIDENT: No. There won't be any thrown permanently out of work.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It's just like the usual slump in the automobile business, you know. About every summer they stop working for a month to get the tools for the new models out. Well, there may be something like that occurring in various plants, not only automobile but lots of other things, where they are retooling for defense purposes.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the figure of fifty percent a few minutes ago in the automobile industry, and some of the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. I didn't say there.

Q No. I know you didn't ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Metal uses.

Q Yes, sir. In the automobile industry and some others, there is a cut already of fifty percent or more. Can you give us any idea ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I have no idea where that would fit into the total of the fifty percent, but it would be in it.

Q Mr. President, you have had a number of discussions with labor leaders

in the last couple of weeks. A number of them have suggested the calling of a conference of labor and industry, to see if they couldn't sit down together and work out some kind of a voluntary program, in the place of anti-strike legislation. Are you giving any consideration to calling such a conference?

THE PRESIDENT: I am. And that is all I can say. Whether it would be an unofficial off-the-record, or an official conference, I haven't got the slightest idea. I am giving it consideration. Don't -- don't write it up as meaning this that or the other thing, because frankly I don't know.

Q Mr. President, are you informed whether O.P.M. requisitioning procedure contemplates employing the Justice Department and the Courts -- the new procedure approved by S.P.A.B. to requisition critical materials?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That is over my head.

Q Mr. President, are there any further details you can tell us about the attack on Hawaii?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. Not yet.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Mr. President, there have been a lot of questions put up to Congress, and if you like you can put this one off the record, but could you make any comment about domestic responsibilities for that surprise?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly not. I don't know anything. Neither does anybody in Congress.

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Oh.

Mr. President, this is not an impudent question, sir, but it might clear up things. Do you intend to give the public the benefit of all of the reports you get?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say this -- and this is not off the record, because I am going to say it tonight -- I can't remember the exact phraseology, but I am going to give -- all of us are going to give everything to the public, on two conditions. They have to conform -- all information has to conform with two obvious conditions before it can be given out.

The first is that it is accurate. Well, I should think that would seem fairly obvious.

And the second is that in giving it out it does not give aid and comfort to the enemy. And I should think that those two conditions ought to be put up in every office in Washington.

Q Where?

THE PRESIDENT: In Washington. That includes newspaper offices as well as department offices.

Q Mr. President ---

Q Mr. President ---

Q Excuse me ---

MR. P. BRANDT: There is no use to have that put up in department offices, because it is impossible to get any information from any department now, on the material that is a matter of record.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, but are you sure that it conforms to both conditions?

MR. P. BRANDT: To both of them, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Who told you that?

MR. P. BRANDT: What? They give you the run around.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, then, you can't assume that the information has con-
formed to the two conditions.

MR. P. BRANDT: You ought to have someone there who can say whether it does conform, and we are not ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, that has got to be determined by the higher officers -- the Army and Navy.

MR. P. BRANDT: But we have been told that these officers have no information -- have instructions not to talk on any subject.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is probably correct.

MR. P. BRANDT: Where does that put us? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It means that you have got to wait -- sit and wait on this information, because you can't determine ---

MR. P. BRANDT: (interposing) No. I am not talking about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- until certain information conforms to those two principles of it. We can't leave that determination in the hands of a third assistant -- what? -- Captain or Major in the Army, or a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy, who is a third or fourth assistant to the officer. It has got to come from the top.

MR. P. BRANDT: I am talking about what is already a matter of record. It is a question of saving us time. We spent four hours getting some information which was a matter of record.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, but lots of these things may be matters of record. It does not mean that they conform.

MR. P. BRANDT: Can we print that then?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly not. You are going to get it as soon as the information conforms to those two principles. Just as soon. Now that is perfectly easy. That is a very simple rule to go by. Those two things have got to be accurate. In other words, it has got to have been proved. It can't be a flash of what somebody thinks in the matter. I want it to be an accurate record. Now that is the first thing.

Now the mere fact that one bureau in one Department gets a flash,

for example -- I should think as a matter of fact -- mind you, this is war -- this ought to be checked before that one bureau gets it out. It should be checked by somebody in authority.

And then the second thing is that it will not be information that will help the enemy. Now you fellows can't determine that. The papers are not running the war. The Army and Navy have got to determine that.

MR. P. BRANDT: This morning we wanted to find out how much had been appropriated for Guam, and whether any work had been done on Guam. And there was no information available. And of course ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, the matter -- matter of the amount of the appropriation is a matter of public record. There is no reason why you shouldn't have that.

MR. P. BRANDT: That is what I am talking about.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Now, first of all, you find out what was appropriated. You don't have to go to any Department, you have got it in your own office. Now the other point, as to whether we should tell you what had been done, most certainly I don't think that that ought to be printed.

MR. P. BRANDT: You could say whether it had been started, because the appropriation is from April.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, all right. Now, what was the appropriation for?

MR. P. BRANDT: For improving the harbor.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. P. BRANDT: For improving the harbor, etcetera. That was the Congressional authorization.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you have got a very simple question there. I haven't got the faintest idea whether it was actually started or not. It doesn't make any difference, the way things have turned out. Between April and

now, you would have to get a company with a dredge. That's the first thing, to go out and do it. Then after that he has got to get his equipment together. After that he has got to find shipping. So now it might have been determined -- perfectly conceivable -- I am not saying that this was done. I am more ignorant than you are on this, because you boned up on it.

MR. P. BRANDT: No I haven't.

THE PRESIDENT: Well then, we are both doing it now. It is perfectly possible that if there was not enough shipping available to send that dredging material out there -- the dredge, the machinery, etcetera -- that under priorities it was thought that something else was more important. I think it is an awfully small matter, Pete, because really, dredging out the Harbor of Guam was not going to save that Island.

MR. P. BRANDT: We spent four hours on two paragraphs. All I want to know is if somebody in the Army can tell me whether they can or cannot give it out, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There may be reasons.

MR. P. BRANDT: (continuing) --- rather than give us the run-around.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the trouble is that they are much maligned men. If you would come here and ask me what the press doesn't know about that, for ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

MR. P. BRANDT: (continuing) I think if that -- it apparently is a blanket order not to give out any information. If that will conform, you can ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There might be all kinds of questions. Suppose, for the sake of argument that we had something out there -- I don't know.

MR. P. BRANDT: We have had cases like that -- by digging it out -- but the officers ought to know. And there is no reason why it can't be given out.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, Pete, you have got to remember the psychological condition of these officers.

Q What about our psychological condition? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Your toes haven't been stepped on, and theirs have.

MISS MAY CRAIG: (aside) Yes they have too.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) They are in the position of having their toes -- by everybody looking askance at them, and saying, "Huh! Were you the leak?"

Q Well, Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Well, Mr. President, in that connection -- in connection with this question Mr. Kluckhohn asked a few minutes ago. There have been a lot of reports which I think you might help us clear up, if possible, to the effect that one reason why the Japs were able to get over Pearl Harbor was that there were a lot of leaves granted -- someone slept -- let everybody go to Honolulu for the week-end. That is the report. I think that if it could be cleared up, I think it would help.

THE PRESIDENT: How do I know? How do you know? How does the person reporting it know?

Q I am sure I don't know.

THE PRESIDENT: And neither does the person starting the report.

Q What's that?

THE PRESIDENT: And neither does the person starting the report have any information. You have to remember that.

Q They -- they might have some information, mightn't they, for ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. Absolutely impossible.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Mr. President, may I ask you, sir, if your answer about my question on Congress -- you said "Certainly not. I don't know anything. Neither does anyone else in Congress."? Is that on the record?

THE PRESIDENT: On the record, yes.

Q Mr. President, returning to your two conditions, I wonder if you could, for our guidance, define that second condition -- "giving aid and comfort to the enemy."? The thing that troubles me -- does that mean that no bad news is going to be given out?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It depends on whether the giving out is of aid and comfort to the enemy.

Q Mr. President, who will determine that as the over-all judgment? Will you determine it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Army and Navy.

Q Are they going to operate individually on this?

THE PRESIDENT: No. They work together very closely.

Q But the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy will each determine what should come from his Department?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes -- or jointly.

MR. J. WRIGHT: But there isn't to be one give-out of news then, under this setup?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there isn't, Jim, in London, for instance. They have consultations first, and they give out in London war communiques to the public. It is divided, as I remember it, into three different kinds of communiques. One is Army, one is Air, and one is Navy. And I think in London the way they have worked it out, to apparently the

satisfaction of everybody -- the press too -- those are, each one of them, broken down into general fields.

For instance, on the Navy end, it's -- there is a field called the Mediterranean field; another one called the Atlantic, and I suppose now there will be another -- the Far East. And in the air end, there is a -- three fields there are at the present time. There is the Libyan field, the Mediterranean, and the attack on the -- daily attack on Germany field; and the domestic field. It seems to work out all right. Then of course, before they are all given out, the three fighting arms over there -- we have only two, -- talk it over between them, and see that they don't clash in what they give out.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Mr. President, most of the newspaper offices here have had a lot of complaints on the way that system has worked. Have you heard of those?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I have heard some things, where the shoe is on the other foot. (laughter)

MR. D. CORNELL: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you know what I mean.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Yes, I do. Some of it started ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Some of it at the start was a little stupid ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Some of it at the start over there was a little stupid.

They straightened out in a few weeks.

THE PRESIDENT: Remember we have only had forty-eight hours of it.

MR. KLUCKHOHN: Not here. I mean over there.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

(most of the newspaper men had left the room at this point)

MR. J. MINIFIE: Will there eventually be a censor that we can get our teeth into?

THE PRESIDENT: It is awfully hard to answer it. Talk to Steve about this.

MR. J. MINIFIE: I was saying that I thought that in the Army and Navy they were getting on awfully well considering.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether -- well, you have been in London. I don't know -- do you think their system was pretty good?

MR. J. MINIFIE: Very good. And then particularly -- the best thing about it is they never cross up, and you can't get ahead of the Army and the Navy about that.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

MR. J. MINIFIE: (continuing) But, if you have a censor who is responsible, you can get a tip. The little man will kill it; but you can get the chief censor, and he usually lets it go.

THE PRESIDENT: Very good. Of course, I think we may look into it. Don't you think those two qualifications are pretty good?

MR. J. MINIFIE: Fundamental, sir -- fundamental. We must have them.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Talk with Steve about them, because as I have just said, we have only been at it forty-eight hours.

MR. J. MINIFIE: It sounds funny for a newspaperman to be advocating a censorship.

THE PRESIDENT: What we want is to get the news out as soon as we can, subject to the two qualifications, and do it in the most convenient way.

MR. J. MINIFIE: (interjecting) Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, our objectives are exactly alike. Talk to Steve about it. It is going to work all right.

(to Steve Early): I wish you would talk with him.

MR. EARLY: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: And of course, I want you to get the London experience.

After all they have been at it over two years.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Yes. All right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And if we have a little bit more centralized source to go to when there is something that breaks between the regular announcement times ---

MR. J. MINIFIE: (interjecting) Yes, sir. Exactly.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- that would be a good thing.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #791
Executive Office of the President
December 12, 1941 -- 11.00 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you take anything off my desk?

MR. EARLY: Sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Did you take anything off my desk?

MR. EARLY: Not a thing. I laid several things on your desk. Not guilty --
of taking anything.

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to take another look. (the President found what
he was looking for)

I have got about five different things this morning. You might
as well work too, you know.

Q We are, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't look at me that way, Earl. (Earl Godwin)

MR. GODWIN: We were hoping something had developed in this half ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) None of it is front page stuff, I suppose;
but it's all right.

MR. GODWIN: Cheerful?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Cheerful?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they are factual. Neither one way nor the other.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got a number of things, all of which shed a light on
operations.

The first thing is that I received yesterday morning a very fine
telegram from the Prime Minister of Great Britain and Lord Beaverbrook,
offering to help the United States in any particular where we were

short of any materials, and specifically offered to turn over to us the product -- the output of three shell-making plants in Canada, in case we need that immediate output. The thing is being studied at the present time. I just use that as an illustration of the spirit.

Number two, the Treasury reports that on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday -- this week -- we sold, through banks, defense bonds of five million, five hundred and ninety two thousand dollars, (\$5,592,000) as against last week's sale, on the first three days of the week of two million, four hundred and seventy four thousand dollars.

(\$2,474,000) In other words, a -- 126% up -- more than double.

Through the Post Offices in the same period, at five big offices, we sold one million, five hundred and ten thousand (\$1,510,000), in the first three days of this week; as compared with eight hundred and fifty two thousand (\$852,000) the first three days of last week, or an increase of 70%. And the Post Office stamp sales -- again just in five of the biggest Post Offices -- went up 25%.

Hmm -- at my request, I got -- this is a sort of detail, but it will fit in somewhere on the inside page -- the Great Lakes ore movement, from the top of the Great Lakes, has now closed for the season, on account of the Lakes getting frozen. The ore movement -- mostly by water, of course, during the navigation season of 1941 -- was 80,000,000 long tons, as against 65 - 1/2 million long tons in '40; and also -- as against -- what might be called the first World War period, when the best record got up to 66 - 1/2 million tons. The total stock pile of ore is 2,000,000 tons on hand at the plants greater than it was on -- at the opening of the season in April. That is to say -- I wouldn't put it that way -- we start the winter season

with 2,000,000 more tons in the stock pile than this time last year. We have enough new ore carriers which will go into service on the Great Lakes -- new ones -- that we believe will enable us to get all the ore that is needed in 1942.

I signed last night -- and Steve will give you copies -- an Executive Order, relating to certain regulations in setting up eight defensive sea areas. You will get the list. Portland, Maine; Portsmouth; Boston; Narragansett Bay; San Diego; San Francisco; Columbia River, and Puget Sound. And the Navy says that there is not only -- no reason why this shouldn't be made public in detail. It has all the -- the directions of these -- it meets the purpose of these arrangements, but it would be a good thing to have it made public for the use of our own navigation -- coastwise navigation -- so that they will know where they can go, and where they ought not to go.

And finally, I am about to sign a Proclamation, which I think probably ought to be stressed a little bit, because it has nothing to do with war operations, but it has to do with the conduct of the war -- in regard to the Red Cross. The third Whereas clause -- Steve, you have got a copy of this?

MR. EARLY: It will be ready, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (reading):

"WHEREAS in preparation for just such an emergency as we are now facing, the American National Red Cross has been spending funds at the rate of more than one million dollars a month, which is but a small fraction of the amount that the organization now requires in order to carry out effectively its functions as an essential auxiliary of our armed forces, particularly as a friendly liaison in welfare problems between the man in service and his family at home, and as a key agency in the civil-defense plans: --- etcetera.

"I hereby proclaim the beginning, as of this date, of a Red Cross War Fund Campaign for the raising of a minimum sum

of fifty million dollars; and appeal to the American people to make this campaign an overwhelming success."

I think it is very important that we carry this out as an essential part of the war.

Q There is no reason why the Gulf can't be a defensive area, is there, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't -- I couldn't tell you. It might be called one any old time, but it's not in this.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Mr. President, the British, for obvious reasons, have been carrying on intensive production of anti-aircraft guns, whereas we haven't. I was just wondering ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Whereas we haven't?

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: I mean that naturally it is -- my understanding is that they have naturally gone in harder for it than we have to this point, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Have they?

MR. KLUCKHOHN: (continuing) --- but we have been doing other things.

THE PRESIDENT: Have they?

MR. KLUCKHOHN: I don't know.

THE PRESIDENT: Neither do I. (laughter)

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: I was going to ask whether any consideration down here was being given to get any of that production, in line with the Prime Minister's offer?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think that that particularly figures -- I haven't studied the particular figures, but I think your premise is all wrong. That's all I can say.

Q Mr. President, would you care to make any comment, sir, on the attitude expressed by various Latin American governments in support of our position?

THE PRESIDENT: That what?

Q The attitude expressed by various Latin American governments in support of our position?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say just two words. First: Excellent. And second: Wholly Satisfactory. That's three words. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you decided who will go to the American conference in Rio?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not yet. We haven't discussed it.

Oh, I have one other thing that I might as well tell you about, because the thing only came up this morning. That is this:

In the World War, everybody that was in it -- both sides, I think -- and in the present war all those who were in it since the first of September, the papers have not carried columns, and pages, of the names of casualties. That was done by common consent. And the thought of both the Army and the Navy is that we should conform to that common consent agreement.

Just as soon as it is possible, the next of kin of both -- both the death list and the casualty list -- the wounded list, always just as soon as we can possibly get it, we send it to the next of kin, so that there is nothing hidden from the people who are interested in the man's name, and we get it to them just as soon as we can. The newspapers will give out the totals of killed and wounded.

And I want to express the hope that the newspapers of the country, and the radio -- of course they do not do it on the radio, probably, any way -- will not print the lists, for very obvious reasons. It gives information to the enemy.

Q (interposing) Does that mean, Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You will get the totals, and the families will get the names.

Q Does that mean, Mr. President, that Press Associations should not distribute them?

THE PRESIDENT: Should not what?

Q Should not distribute them?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it would be far better, because if the Press Associations do distribute the individual names, it is performing a very useful service, perhaps, on checking up just where the people were, by a little obvious deduction -- putting two and two together -- finding out where this man was serving, and the other man was serving. I don't see why the rule should not apply to Press Associations as well as individual newspapers.

Q Will this be made public here?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Will this be made public here, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not the list as a whole. The totals will. And all the families will be notified. And of course locally -- in local papers, nobody can prevent the fact from coming out -- as soon as the mother, or the wife, or something like that, knows that there has been a casualty -- of printing the name of the person -- "so and so was wounded," or, "so and so was killed." What I am talking about are the long columns -- death columns, that's all.

Q We have had -- already had some ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You have had some already. They were mostly locally used. In the Washington papers were the names of people that have been killed or wounded. That's all right.

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, there is no objection to their local publication then?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, my own thought is this, that I think it would be much better not to put it as a list. It takes a little more space -- put it in -- in the form: Mrs. so and so -- or, Miss so and so was informed of the death of her husband, or her brother, or son, or whatever it may be. I don't like this idea of long casualty lists. It is not a good thing.

Q Mr. President, is the Garrison at Wake Island still holding out?

THE PRESIDENT: So far as we know, Wake Island is holding out -- has done a perfectly magnificent job. We are all very proud of that very small group of Marines who are holding the Island. We have no further information today. They are holding out. We knew that very early this morning.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Mr. President, some of us are still nervous about whether we are going to be scooped or not, on the real facts in Pearl Harbor now.

THE PRESIDENT: The Secretary of the Navy got there last night, and that is all that I can ---

MR. J. WRIGHT: (interposing) We hear people say that on Saturday they are going to tell all, and publish all, and so on, and that -- that those of us who heard these stories ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, I don't think that anybody had better publish anything in the way of stories until we get a report from the Secretary of the Navy.

MR. J. WRIGHT: That is what I would like to know. What is going to be done if they do go ahead with this threat?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I should say that we would remember the people who did it. I don't know. And the War Department doesn't know. The Navy Department doesn't know.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Just as a specific case -- yesterday, on the floor of the Senate, there were a lot of things said there that seemed to be transgressing entirely our own understanding of what ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think you are absolutely correct.

MR. J. WRIGHT: (continuing) But you cannot ignore what a Senator says on the floor of the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: No, but you can characterize it in one of those well known news paragraphs -- you know -- which are not entirely factual. (laughter) Is that a polite way of putting it, Jim? In other words -- now this has got to be off the record, because I can't criticize individuals. The Senator who made those statements didn't know one damn thing about it. He repeated somebody's gossip. He made it as a statement of fact, which he had no right to do whatsoever. And that has to be off the record. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Were you speaking of yesterday afternoon's debate?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. J. WRIGHT: I think that should be on the record, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: What? (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I think that should be on the record.

Q In quotes, Mr. President.

Q Why not, Mr. President?

Q We need that kind of useful ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) All right. Will you ---

Q (interposing) He doesn't know a damn thing about it ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Leave that all in, but leave out the word "damn".

Q Can that be read back to us?

MR. ROMAGNA: (reading): The Senator who made that statement didn't know a thing -- (laughter) -- about it. He repeated somebody's gossip. He made it as a statement ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Of fact.

MR. ROMAGNA: (continuing) --- of fact, which he had no right to do whatsoever.

Q Are we permitted to use direct quotes on that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. Early): What do you think, Steve?

MR. EARLY: I think "third person" is all right.

THE PRESIDENT: I think "third person" is better.

Q Mr. President, did you see the British Prime Minister's statement yesterday, sir, in Commons about that? He said the loss to the American Fleet could not be over-rated?

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly true. I had said it first thing -- beforehand -- in very slightly different terms.

Q Mr. President, are you contemplating any change of the hours in the Wage-Hour Act -- that forty-hour limitation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not that I know of. In other words, I think that stays forty hours, and everything over that is time-and-a-half pay.

Q Mr. President, are you contemplating longer hours for Federal employees?

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

Q Mr. President, can you tell us ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It has been in -- what? -- the Navy.

MR. EARLY: Discretionary.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it could be done at the discretion of the Department.

Q Can you tell us anything about the Labor-Management Conference you are going to call next week?

THE PRESIDENT: There will be a Labor-Management Conference next week, I think on Wednesday. I wanted to have it on Monday, but there were certain prior engagements of the people involved, and we have got, perhaps, to put it off to Wednesday.

Q Have you selected a Moderator, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not yet. Perhaps I have, but he doesn't know, so I had better say "not yet".

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Thank you, sir.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: I shouldn't ask about what I know nothing about.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: I shouldn't ask about what I know nothing about.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.