

CONFIDENTIAL

(Press Conference #879
Executive Office of the President
February 12, 1943 -- 4.15 P.M., E.W.T.)

(this Press Conference was held for the American
Society of Newspaper Editors)

MR. EARLY: (to the President) Josephus Daniels is
present, sir.

(the President was Under Secretary of the Navy when
Mr. Daniels was Secretary of the Navy, during the first World
War).

THE PRESIDENT: What? Hello, Chief, how are you?
(shaking hands and laughing) Glad to see you. You embarrass me
terribly! (laughter)

MR. DANIELS: I am trying to earn a living now.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (more laughter)

(a chair was provided for Mr. Daniels)

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose I will get the same signals
soon, saying "All In" from the back of the room.

(pause here as the many editors continued to
file in)

THE PRESIDENT: There must be a big crowd here.

(pause)

All In yet?

MR. EARLY: Donaldson will announce it when they are.

MR. DANIELS: Mr. President, you might enlist all these
men, on the ground that the pen is mightier than the sword.

THE PRESIDENT: That's not a bad idea. What kind of

pen? (laughter)

(pause)

You say they are not in yet?

MR. EARLY: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: My Golly. Better adjourn out onto the lawn.

Q. A good-sized company.

MR. DANIELS: Just about all now, I think -- the last one.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

MR. W. S. GILMORE (of the Detroit News) (President of the American Society of Newspaper Editors): Mr. President, we appreciate your willingness to receive us today. Because we know what a strain it is to impose on your time, we shall not ask you any questions, but perhaps you would tell us something about your trip to Africa.

THE PRESIDENT: I will, very gladly.

And the first thing I want to do is to -- I have already thanked my Press Conference -- but to thank all of you people for keeping something secret. I think it was a better -- better kept secret than any other one that has happened in the country for a long time. You did a grand job. Of course, you didn't all know just where I was. (laughter)

But my old Chief's wife guessed that I was in Africa. She was about the only one that did. (more laughter) The Chief said that he had always had -- Mrs. Daniels always had a sort of sixth sense on things like that. So I wrote him back to tell

Mrs. Daniels that I had always known that in the old days.

Oh, back around 1913 -- 14, we had in the Navy a very clever and brilliant Rear Admiral by the name of Bradley Fisk. Well, Bradley Fisk had no "terminal facilities," otherwise he was extremely able. (laughter)

The first thing that reminded the Chief was when we were coming back from Baltimore -- or Annapolis -- one day in the trolley car, sitting side by side. And he pointed. There up on the hill was a sign. And he said, "Read that. That's the truest -- the truest sign that has ever been put up in this country."

And the sign said, "Fisk Tires." (loud laughter)

Well, old man Fisk, about -- Oh, five or half-past, when the Secretary was thinking of going home, almost every day would bring him a long twelve or twenty-page typewritten technical article on armor, or some new form of machine gun, or something like that, which no layman could possibly understand, and tell the Secretary he had to read that because he wanted action on it in the morning.

And I knew what he did with them, but I wasn't always sure.

So he went away one day. And Bradley Fisk came around to see me, and he said, "I have got to have action on about three different documents that I left with the Secretary."

I said, "Where are they?"

"I don't know. I can't find the documents on his desk."

I picked up the telephone. I called up Mrs. Daniels, and I said they were lost, and she said, "Hmm --" -- thought a

minute -- "I think I can find them."

I think you know in those days most of the politicians wore those long, full-tailed cutaway coats.

And she said, "I am going up to his closet. I think they are in the right-hand rear tail of his spare cutaway coat."
(loud laughter)

And they were. We got them back.

So she did have a sixth sense as to where people had gone, and where people kept things.

Well, on this African trip -- this is of course all off the record, as they say -- there are certain things that I suppose everybody ought to realize -- rather difficult to realize -- and that is that in a -- in a world war there are a lot of nations involved. You can't leave things to the military, otherwise nothing gets done. Now that's a dreadful thing to say, but the fact is that if you get almost all Admirals and Generals from different nations, or even one nation, talking over future plans, they spend a month or two in talking about why each plan or suggestion won't work -- get just a series of Noes.

On the other hand, if you get certain laymen to stick pins into them all the time -- prod them, if you like -- and say you have got to have an answer to this, that and the other thing within so many days, you get an answer. And that is -- that is true in this war -- partly true in the last war.

And that is why, after the November landing in North Africa, Winston Churchill and I started the military and the naval and the air to work on plans; and by about the first of January

we found that it wouldn't be until late Spring before they had plans, if they were left to themselves. It's a perfectly natural thing, they are all technicians.

So we decided that we would have them meet. I am afraid we met so that we could stick the pins in. And the result was that we gave them -- when we got there -- we gave them a week to bring -- bring out plans that were based -- based on technical things -- war operations -- during the balance of the war. And at the end of -- at the end of a week they were substantially completed; and in the next three days they were actually put down on paper and approved by everybody.

Well, of course, it also emphasized what we had come to learn last -- a year ago, when Churchill was here in January and again in June, and that is that the military or the naval can't simply say, "Now we are going to do this," press a button and have it done in a week or two weeks, or a month or two months, or three months. No human being can do that, where large operations over-seas are involved.

And I suppose it's perfectly obvious to all of us by now, that the lesson of last Fall, when everybody was yelling for a second front, has been pretty well learned. The second front had been not only planned but was in process of being organized and put through. But it took from July until November to perfect and actually put into operation the landings in North Africa. Well, of course, that is true with any large body of men, or even any large transportation problem for the Navy.

And the other thing where it also will be -- I hope

you will keep this, because it ought not to come out, for the sake of unity among our French friends -- when we got there on the 14th (of January), Mr. Churchill and I decided it would be a great chance to see if we couldn't bring (General Charles) De Gaulle and (General Henri Honoré) Giraud together.

I said, jokingly -- I said, "Now we'll call Giraud the bridegroom, and I'll -- (laughter) -- I'll produce him from Algiers next Saturday afternoon. And you get the bride -- De Gaulle -- from London, and we will get them down here, and we'll have a shot-gun wedding. (loud laughter)

Well, Saturday afternoon came, and I -- I had my man there, but Winston couldn't produce the bride. (more laughter) And it took -- Oh -- until the following Friday morning before we could get De Gaulle there.

And then came the two days of conversations between them. And Churchill and I kept discreetly out of it, except that we got every afternoon a report of no progress; except that they had said, "Après vous, Gaston" -- "Après vous, Alphonse" -- and got nowhere. (laughter)

So we got down to Sunday morning, and we were to leave -- Churchill and I -- at Noon; and after great effort I got them to sign two very simple sentences. The first was that the one great objective that they both could agree on was the liberation of France. The second was that they would continue to meet together and confer, so that they could work as closely in -- in unity as possible toward that objective.

I had an awful time, because Giraud was willing to

sign any time, but -- but our friend De Gaulle was perfectly willing to say, "Yes, yes, yes," but he wouldn't sign it. I had to pull off some little dramatics to get him to do it.

Then we went out on the lawn to get photographed. And we had the -- you have seen -- some of you may have seen the row of four chairs: Churchill, De Gaulle, and me, and Giraud. Some of you people in the East have seen -- you may have many a time -- a little photographer that used to follow me around the country in the old days -- Sammy Schulman. He is a great boy, Sammy is. And there he was in Army uniform, in front of us with his camera. And I worked it out beforehand with Sammy. After the -- the pictures of the four of us were taken, Sammy Schulman in the front row said, "Oh, Mr. President, can we have a picture of the two Generals shaking hands?" (laughter) So I translated Sammy to Giraud, and Giraud said, "Mais, oui," and gets right up and holds out his hand. It took Churchill and myself five minutes to persuade De Gaulle to get on his feet to shake hands with his own fellow Frenchman. And we got them to do it. And I think you have all got that picture. If you -- if you run into a copy of the picture, look at the expression on De Gaulle's face! (laughter) However, the main point was that we got them together.

And, of course, on that North African thing, there have been an awful lot of sincere people, I would say -- especially what we call "liberals" -- who were awfully upset by certain events in North Africa. Well, there are two things that have got to be made perfectly clear, and the first is that we have a line of communications from Casablanca -- Oh, about -- about a thousand

miles long to get to the fighting front, and about 7 hundred miles long from the landing port of Oran, and about 5 hundred miles long from Algiers. We are going through country which until you have been there -- I had no idea of it until I got there -- is a country that is so heterogeneous.

Morocco, for instance, is not a French colony. It's only in the last thirty-one years that there has been a French Protectorate over what is known officially as the -- as the Riffian Empire of Morocco, with a perfectly good Sultan who is the spiritual and the temporal leader.

The Moors represent ninety-something percent of the population. And the French rule the place with a very light hand. They are good colonizers, only they are not colonizing there. They are doing well. They are building roads for Morocco. They are improving Agriculture. They are gradually putting in education, but they so far give no vote to the Moorish population, which is over ninety percent. And they have had pretty serious laws there as late as twenty or twenty-five years ago.

Now they like the French who are there over them, because the French understand them. They have had experience, and they don't want any change. And the Sultan is an intimate friend of the French governor.

Well, it's a perfectly simple thing, this French governor -- don't come out with it -- (Auguste) Noguès -- is all for one party. He is a very definite partisan. He is for Noguès. (laughter) And what he wants is to keep his position as Governor of Morocco, in a beautiful marble palace built by Maréchal

Lyautey in the old days right near to the Sultan, in Rabat.

And I don't hesitate to say that if, in my judgment, if Hitler had gone there, Noguès would have supported him, if he could keep the marble palace. (laughter) And he has been there for seven or eight years, and he is no more pro-Hitler than I am, or pro-Laval. He is pro-Noguès -- and the palace. (more laughter)

Well, it's much better in our own -- in the rear of our armies to keep a perfectly nice, quiet position in Morocco than it is to go off chasing rainbows as to the future of France.

Well, as to the future of France, I think everybody is agreed that we must not influence by any act or deed today -- by recognizing this, that or the other individual as to what that future has got to be. It has got to be chosen by the people of France at the end of the war. And that is why you have the great efforts by De Gaulle to be recognized as what he calls -- he calls "L'esprit de France," "L'âme de France" -- "The soul of France," "The spirit of France." Nobody is going to do that, because it would give an unfair advantage. Giraud wants to be recognized as the representative of France all over the world. I said, "No. That will give you an unfair advantage. Let France choose her own government. In the meanwhile, run your own little bailiwick wherever you may happen to be." Not a great many where the De Gaulle people are at the present time. Not a great many where the Giraud people are.

There has been so damn much ink that has been spilled by people in this country -- and people who talk on the Hill, and

elsewhere -- about it, and they don't know one blessed thing about it. You have to go there to understand it.

Now things are going along all right. What I want is the support of General (Dwight D.) Eisenhower. Now that is, after all, the main thing now, with the definite assurance that we are going to let France choose its own form of government at the end of the war. With the one proviso, you might say, that France -- I think no other nation should be allowed to choose a Nazi or a Fascist form of government. I think that is fairly clear.

Then the other principal thing -- except I was very much interested to see the development of different types of colonization in West Africa. It hasn't been good.

And on the way back -- with President (Getulio) Vargas -- lunched with him -- a perfectly -- you know, it's an amazing thing. On Wednesday I flew 650 miles in the morning, down to Liberia. I had the President of Liberia to lunch with me at our camp. I flew back to Gambia in the afternoon. I left. I had supper on a cruiser that was in the harbor. I got on a plane at 10.30 p.m. I got to Natal, Brazil, in the morning, and I had lunch with President Vargas that day.

It's an amazing thing: Wednesday in Liberia, Thursday in Brazil!

And I don't like flying! (laughter)

Not one bit. The more I do of it, the less I like it.

And of course there we did give out the statement. It has been a great menace, more than we realize in this war, the

fact that the Germans could have, if they had gone after it -- up until last November -- they had it in their power to establish -- take over Dakar and use it as a raider and submarine base. It's a direct threat against Brazil and this continent -- West Indies, and so forth.

And I think before the war -- when the war is over, we have got to take certain steps. First, to demilitarize Western Africa all the way down. And secondly, possibly to have a strong point either in Dakar or Bathurst -- one of those places -- where we will have sufficient air, and sufficient Navy, and sufficient fields -- airfields, and so forth, to prevent any aggressor nation in the future to re-establish a threat against this continent.

Well, as to details I have no idea; it isn't worth talking about. But you have an objective. When people ask the details about an objective, I say, "I am not interested," or "I am not ready to talk," or "We haven't studied the methods and the details." We can all agree on the objectives. I never worry very much if we have a six months' debate in Congress as to -- as to methods or details -- or debate in the press -- as long as we are agreed on objective.

I think that is one of the things that would help the country an awful lot if we could all bring it out. The objective is the -- is the -- the principal thing. And most of us -- ninety percent of us, I think, can agree on the objective. Make it clear that that -- the other part of it is good space-filler, -- (laughter) -- and of -- of real use, because it makes people think. All right. But no hard feelings over a difference on detail, if

we are agreed on the objective.

I don't think there is anything else that I can think of. Steve (Early), is there anything else I was going to talk about? You are going to see, what? -- General (George C.) Marshall, Admiral (Ernest) King, Donald Nelson, Paul McNutt, and Prentiss Brown.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) And others.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. EARLY: And others, Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: And others. That's fine.

I am awfully glad you came this year. I understand that one or two people here -- Elmer Davis (O.W.I.), and -- it was said it wasn't an unnecessary burden on our railway transportation to have you come here. But I suggested to Elmer to bring you here to let you see people, and so forth and so on.

I thought it was a bit of a waste of time. I know of no place in the United States where you can get more misinformation than in the National Capital. (laughter) I think you realize that too.

And, of course, having seen things over there on the African -- African front, it reinforces my thought that if we would just use our own heads back home, and pay less attention to (Washington, D. C.) -- you could say all through this country -- it would be a mighty good thing -- just use our native instinct.

So I hope that you will all use your native instinct back home, more than you will rely on news out of Washington.

MR. DANIELS: Mr. President, would you mind telling

them, --- (warm applause for the President interrupting)

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) What's that?

MR. DANIELS: (continuing) --- off the record, the story you told me about the Rumanian priest?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. It's rather a nice motto, and I believe it's true.

The Orthodox Church in Rumania has a proverb, and the proverb runs something like this. Mind you, it has the blessing of the Church. It says, "It is permitted to you, my children, in time of danger to walk with the Devil until you have crossed the bridge."

(laughter, and more applause for the President)

(excerpt of the first part of this Press Conference for Josephus Daniels)

(Notebooks PC-XII, page 183, and PC-XIII, page 1 -- JR)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #880
Executive Office of the President
February 16, 1943 -- 4.05 P.M., E.W.T.

Q. How did you survive? (the dinner at The White House Correspondents' Association's Smoker, last Friday evening)

THE PRESIDENT: Fine. A very sober dinner. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Where?

Q. Disappointingly so?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, not in war-time.

Q. One person seemed to have too much.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. One person seemed to have a little too much.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Mac (M. H. McIntyre) wrote a letter today, so it will be a good thing.

Bill (Hassett), what have you got?

MR. HASSETT: I don't know a thing.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. HASSETT: I regret I haven't got a thing.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Can't you think something up?

MR. HASSETT: I would have to go and collect it pretty quick. Doesn't necessarily need to be true.

THE PRESIDENT: This fellow Hassett isn't any good. He says he can't think anything up. (laughter)

(then to Mr. Godwin): You look extremely quiet today.

(then to May Craig): What are you thinking, May?

(laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: I couldn't tell you.

THE PRESIDENT: Starting something?

MISS MAY CRAIG: Yes.

MR. MERRIMAN SMITH: (loudly, and a little unrestrained)

Mr. President, we have been asking ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now -- now -- now --

(with mock gestures of straightening out his coat) (much laughter) ---

MR. MERRIMAN SMITH: (continuing) --- we have been asking Bill Hassett for two days now about Marshal (Semyon K.) Timoshenko. Can you help us?

THE PRESIDENT: Ask Mona Lisa! (laughter)

(Mr. Hassett yesterday, in answering this same question, had said he checked with the President and got nothing but a Mona Lisa smile)

Q. Where is she? (more laughter)

Q. Is she one of the "sweet young things"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes -- one of the "sweet young things."

MR. GODWIN: Working for O.W.I. (Office of War Information), Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: (turning to Mr. Elmer Davis, O.W.I. head) How about that, Elmer?

MR. DAVIS: We could use her. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: What did he say?

THE PRESIDENT: He says he can use her.

MR. GODWIN: All right. (continued laughter)

Q. Mr. President, have you followed this controversy

of (Representative) Clare Luce's (Republican from Connecticut), on so called freedom of the air?

THE PRESIDENT: Haven't got time.

Q. Plan to ration "globaloney"?

(laughter)

Q. Mr. President, have you got comment on some of the controversy which has been developing over the requested resignation of Mr. (Ferdinand) Eberstadt (Vice Chairman), down at the War Production Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I read it in the paper this afternoon.

Q. Were any appeals brought to you by any of the Army and Navy ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) They were not. I read that. That's -- by the way, that's -- this is off the record -- that's on the (Washington Evening) Star. Nothing was said to me at all.

Q. "They were not" is on the record?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Mr. President, do you know whether any appeal has been made to Mr. (James F.) Byrnes (Economic Stabilization Director)?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

Q. Mr. President, Moscow has just announced the official fall of Kharkov to the Russian troops. Would you care ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Grand. Grand.

Q. (continuing) About a half-hour ago.

THE PRESIDENT: That's fine. They have got two or

three strong points now that they have recaptured. And, of course, every strong point that is (recaptured), that gets out of their (the Germans) control as a strong point -- a junction point -- along that whole line, makes it more difficult for the Germans later on in the Spring to undertake any counter-offensive. So, from the point of view of the safety of the Russians against a counter-offensive, it's -- it's -- I think it has a great deal of significance. Rostov gone -- Kharkov -- and Kursk.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, if they lose the strong point on the -- on the line which they are now defending, and they retire to a line shorter than Moscow south, would it still make it more difficult for them to launch an offensive from that new line?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends a little bit. As I understand it, on the southern -- southern half of the line, these points that have fallen to the Russian armies, back of them on the west is rather flat country, where it would be difficult for the Germans to conduct an offensive ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- between -- between the present line -- the Kharkov line -- and the next line from the west.

Q. Mr. President, this plan for incentive payments for farmers is meeting pretty stiff resistance up on the Hill. I was wondering if you wanted to say anything about that, as to the desirability of that, as against the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I can't, Jim, because I haven't had a chance to talk about the thing -- that phase of it -- with Secretary (Claude) Wickard since I have got back. And all I know is what I have read in the paper. It's an awfully -- an awfully difficult subject to talk about, unless you "bone up" on it.

Q. Mr. President, have you any thought of "boning up" with the people that Mr. Wickard fired for advocating the Parisius Plan?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I didn't know he had fired them.

Q. (Gardner) Jackson?

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. No, I don't know anything about it.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything you can say on prospects on the Hill that there will be some legislative limitation to prevent the 25-thousand-dollar net limit from operating?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better ask Mr. (Robert) Doughton (Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee). You can intimate to Mr. Doughton that you have got an idea that he got a letter from me today. Maybe he will let you see it.

Q. Today, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. IRVING BRANT: Mr. President, have you familiarized yourself at all with Senator (Kenneth) McKellar's bill which would take 70 thousand Government employees out of Civil Service and require their confirmation by the Senate?

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THE PRESIDENT: Only what I read in the paper. What figure was set, 48 hundred?

MR. IRVING BRANT: No. The original bill would take out 35 thousand, but he amended it to take out 70 thousand.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh.

Q. He dropped from 45 to 33.

MR. IRVING BRANT: Well, I figured out that if the -- if there was debate in the Senate on one appointment out of a hundred, and they limited the debate to 5 minutes to each side, which is pretty short for the Senate, that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) You are right.

MR. IRVING BRANT: (continuing) --- it would take -- (laughter) -- 45 minutes a day for every legislative day for an entire year to pass those one out of a hundred. (more laughter) I would like to ask whether you think the Senate in war-time could be better employed? (continued laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I think there's a little line in the Bible that says, "Thou hast said it." (more laughter) That's not a bad idea.

MR. IRVING BRANT: (interposing) Well, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I think -- I think that is rather ---

MR. IRVING BRANT: (continuing) --- could I ask you another intriguing question?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I don't think there have been columns written about topics of that kind the way they have about topics affecting the Executive branch of the Government.

I think you have got a great field of action there -- (much laughter) -- especially those of you who have to write those pieces so often a week. I think there's something for you to go after. Good idea.

MR. IRVING BRANT: Could I ask you another question, not as President but as a citizen of New York? You see, the real idea in that is that the (two) Senators from each State will pass on the appointments from those States -- the nominations -- and that is proportionate to the population. So the State of New York would get about 7 thousand nominations. And if the (two) Senators from that State took 10 minutes apiece to consider them, it would take them six hours per day, six days a week for an entire year to pass on them. (laughter) Now those are accurate figures, and I would like to ask whether, as a constituent of the two Senators from New York, you approve of that?

THE PRESIDENT: As a taxpayer, I am deeply interested. (more laughter) Got any more? This is good.

MR. IRVING BRANT: That's enough.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, think up some more.

You know, I will tell you what it's like. We all have been working, in the last two or three years, on the same old subject of cutting down on the Non-War expenditures of the Government. Well, we are getting down now so that we are talking about 3-1/2 percent of the total expenditures of the United States. And we are going to have pages and pages of the Congressional Record that will talk about the reduction of that 3-1/2 percent to 3.4 percent -- pages and pages.

If you would just figure out -- make an estimate of how many pages, hours, and minutes are devoted to the discussion of saving one-tenth of one percent -- this is perfectly proper -- and then figure out the cost in time, salaries of Members of Congress, their clerks, their committees, and the printing of the Congressional Record, just see whether actually in saving one-tenth of one percent on the amount of Non-War expenditures, it doesn't cost more than the saving itself. That's a nice point. Check up on it.

Well, for instance, things like this: I saw the other day that they voted in committee to abolish the National Resources (Planning) Board -- they have got a perfect right to do it -- but they have been preparing, as you probably -- I don't know, most of you probably don't know, because there is very little publicity given those reports -- they are all public -- that are made by the National Resources Board -- all kinds of post-war planning. Any amount of planning has been done.

Among other things, they have gone into all the details of what we have talked about before as the "back-log," so that when a lot of people leave the munitions factories at the end of the war, and a lot of soldiers come home, they will have some jobs waiting to be done that are peace-time jobs.

Now I suppose most people, because they don't all think things through -- most people don't -- why should they? -- they get an idea that all Congress has to do is start making an appropriation for some public works, and that the day after the appropriation is made somebody down here will let the contract for the

particular project, and the second day they will begin to hire a lot of people to carry it out.

Well, of course, actually, when Congress makes an appropriation for a given public project, unless it has been all engineered and architected, and the specifications drawn beforehand, necessarily it's just like any -- any private individual building a building. It takes months before you can actually let the contract. And after you have let the contract to the successful bidder -- what? -- as soon as he knows he is going to do it, it may take him another month or two, or even more, before he gets his materials on the job, before he has hired his people. And there is a big lag.

Well, we found that in 1933 and 1934, when we went in for a program of public works, that it was a long time after a project was decided on by the Congress -- and it is the Congress, properly, that decides on the project -- before the dirt began to fly and people began to be employed.

And the National Resources Board over these last few years has been working on problems of that kind, getting them engineered and architected, and specifications all ready, so that if the Congress, when the time comes, decides on the project, we will save months by all this preliminary work at very low proportionate cost getting the thing started.

Well, in the same way, this Planning Board -- I know "planning" is not a popular term -- has been working on all kinds of things that can't be put through just by legislation. It will take a great deal more than legislation, such as what are we

going to do with a great many new communities that we have set up in this country? We put in factories and powder plants, and so forth and so on -- munitions plants, we might say, out on the prairies. We have taken a small village and turned it into a great industrial center, in many places. What are we going to do with it at the end of the war? Are we going to try to put something else in it? Are we going to plan what kind of thing should go in it? Or are we going to wait for a directive, after the crisis has developed?

And I am inclined to think that keeping on getting ready for the post-war period is going to save the nation, I would say, almost several billion dollars in time, in lack of employment, in the uncertainty of employees. Those are all translatable into terms of dollars, first and last.

On the other side, if we wait to do our post-war studying until after there is a post-war period, we are going to lose a great deal of money. Well, the money doesn't come out of the Government, it comes out of the pockets of the people of this country.

And I might put it this way: that in this respect I am in a role that I am not often played up in by some people. I am the great saver of money, the one watchdog on the pockets of the people of this country; and that the spendthrifts, in the last analysis, if we don't plan ahead, are going to be those people in the Legislative branch of the Government who vote to do -- to end planning.

I don't care how planning is done. They can abolish

the National Resources Board, if they set up somebody else -- some other organization to do the work. Perfectly immaterial as to who does it, as long as it gets done. And that is up to the Congress.

MR. IRVING BRANT: Mr. President, I have done some more mental arithmetic.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Good.

MR. IRVING BRANT: (continuing) If by several billion you meant two billion, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

MR. IRVING BRANT: (continuing) --- and -- and if the National Resources Board can speed that up, if it speeds it up by eight hours, it would save its entire appropriation. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: (aside) He's good.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, will you comment on the impending visit of Madame Chiang Kai-shek?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think she is coming this week.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I think she is going to hold a Press Conference for the male side, as well as the ladies.

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: Will it be a joint Conference, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: A joint Conference of yourself and ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. It will be a joint Conference with you and May. (laughter)

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL: Fine.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #881
Executive Office of the President
February 19, 1943 -- 10.45 A.M., E.W.T.

(this is the joint Press Conference of the
President and Madame Chiang Kai-shek)

(three chairs were placed in front of the
center window, away from the President's
desk. Madame Chiang occupied the chair
in the center, Mrs. Roosevelt was at her
right, and the President at her left)

(as the newspaper men and women filed in
quickly and silently, Mrs. Roosevelt talked
with Madame Chiang, remarking that the
floor should be raised up so that one
could see)

Q. (aside) What's that bracelet the Madame has got
on?

Q. (aside) Amber, isn't it?

Q. (aside) Amber.

Q. (aside) Is it?

Q. (aside) What's the color of Mrs. Roosevelt's
dress?

Q. (aside) Pink -- or rose is good enough.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: May I take this opportunity, not to

introduce Madame Chiang to you, but introduce all of you to her.

Madame Chiang, this is nearly our one-thousandth Press Conference in ten years, and the fact that the Press and I are not only on speaking terms after all those years is perhaps a very good -- good sign. We still talk to each other. I think we rather like each other. (laughter)

You have got a very representative group here. There is no country in the world, I think, that has more newspapers on a population basis -- and magazines -- than we have. They are very live wires. But I can tell the Press something besides that, and that is that I wish that we -- the Press and myself -- knew half as much about China as Madame Chiang knows about us, as a special envoy. That is very different from most special envoys who come to this country. And her visit to us is going to be of real help in the days to come, not only because -- I suppose the people of China and the people of the United States for a very great number of years -- well over a century -- have been, in thought and in objective, closer to us Americans than almost any other peoples in the world -- the same great ideals.

China, in the last -- less than half a century -- has become one of the great democracies of the world, remembering always that their civilization is thousands of years older than ours. And that is why I feel that we in this country have a great deal more to learn about China than China has to learn about us.

Madame Chiang knows this country, and I am going to ask her, therefore, to say -- as an old friend -- just to say a few words. And afterwards -- remembering always that this (Press)

Conference is not quotable for either of us -- in other words, treat it just as if it was any regular Conference of mine -- and you will receive her, and perhaps she will be willing to answer a few questions of the "non-catch" type. (laughter)

(then to Madame Chiang) And so I present to you the American Press.

MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK: (rising from her chair) Mr. President, Mrs. Roosevelt, ladies and gentlemen of the Press: I haven't made any preparations for a speech. I don't know what I am supposed to say to you today, but I confess that I have often heard that the pen is mightier than the sword, and when I saw all those pencils flashing across the pages as the President spoke, I must confess that whereas I had been to all the fronts in China, and have never felt any fear so far as Japanese swords are concerned, I do not know whether I felt fear or not when I saw all your pencils flashing across the pages. (laughter)

However, I don't think I do, because I see flashes of smiles coming from your faces, so I feel that I am amongst friends, and that I have nothing to fear from the Press, although I understand that there are such questions as "catch" questions.

(laughter) I don't think you are going to put -- heckle me with them. I am sure you won't.

I want to say one thing to you, and that is that we in China have always had social democracy throughout these thousands of years, and that we are now depending on our Press, now and in the future, so that in time we shall really realize not only social democracy but political democracy as well; because, as I

said, the pen is mightier than the sword, and from what I have seen of your American Press, I am sure that our hopes of the Chinese Press will also be realized.

I am particularly referring to the President's trip to Casablanca. I am sure that all of you knew about it, and yet there was not a single word in the Press about it. And I think that shows beautiful cooperation between the Administration and the Press. And it is particularly necessary, during these war days, that there should be such cooperation. And I want to congratulate you on your tact, and on your integrity.

Thank you. (applause)

Q. (simultaneously) Could you tell us something ---

Q. (simultaneously) Madame Chiang, ---

(loud laughter)

Q. Are you here, Madame Chiang, on an official mission, or on a personal visit; and that is a friendly question?

MADAME CHIANG: This is a personal visit. It is not an official mission. I came here for my health.

Q. At the same time, you made quite an impression with your speech yesterday, which might percolate into official mentality? (laughter)

MADAME CHIANG: That is for you to judge. (more laughter)

Q. Madame Chiang, has the President asked you to remain here to act as "liaison officer" between him and Congress?

MADAME CHIANG: I don't think the President needs me, or anybody else, for that purpose. (laughter)

Q. Madame Chiang, what -- this is a big question, I know -- (more laughter) -- what is -- what is the first thing that you think we can do to help China?

MADAME CHIANG: You mean the Press, ---

Q. (interjecting) Oh, No.

MADAME CHIANG: (continuing) --- or the American people?

Q. (continuing) I mean the people of this country.

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I can answer that: with more munitions. We are all for it. That is unanimous.

MADAME CHIANG: The President is right. (laughter)

Q. Madame Chiang, I am going to ask this question, and if it is an improper one I know the President will correct me -- (laughter) -- something very funny about it, but my -- my impression is that there is more unanimity of opinion in support of the Chinese than almost any other, and the one criticism, or the one question that I have heard was that the Chinese people -- government, or whatever it is -- are not supporting their own war with manpower as well as they might. Now if that is a question that the President would like to -- me to ask, and you can discuss that -- throw a light on something ---

MADAME CHIANG: (interposing) I cannot quite understand it. That the Chinese government ---

Q. (interposing) Perhaps I can put it this way. The one -- the one tremor of criticism -- or question -- that I heard around the Capitol yesterday, after your two magnificent speeches, was that the Chinese are not utilizing their manpower to their full extent. And that question might well be publicly -- and if

you care to discuss it now, this is a good time.

MADAME CHIANG: We are using as much manpower as there are munitions to be used. We can't fight with bare hands. We have fought with no overhead protection throughout five and a half years. But we can't go there and fought (fight) with our bare hands, although we have fought with nothing but swords ---

Q. (interjecting) Yes.

MADAME CHIANG: (continuing) --- in hand-to-hand combat. But it is not true when it is said that China is not supporting the front with her manpower, because we are.

Q. Thank you.

Q. Madame Chiang, I have heard about as many different pronunciations of your name as there are radio announcers. Would you tell me how your name is properly pronounced? (laughter)

MADAME CHIANG: Properly pronounced? English fashion, or Chinese fashion? (more laughter)

Q. One of each, if you don't mind. Tell us.

MADAME CHIANG: American fashion, I suppose it would be "Jee-ung." (say as one syllable) When I say English, I suppose it is the same thing. But if it is Chinese, it is "Jee-ahng." The accent is different.

THE PRESIDENT: (aside) Very interesting.

Q. Say it again?

MADAME CHIANG: "Jee-ahng."

Q. Madame Chiang, would you care to speak about the American air force in China, what it means both in morale and in active support?

MADAME CHIANG: Yes. I can't pay sufficiently high tribute to the American volunteer air force -- the American Volunteer Group -- when they first came out to us.

We were being terrifically bombed in Chungking, because our Chinese air force -- we only started with a few hundred planes in the beginning of the war; and as time went on those planes dwindled. Russia at first sent us planes. Later, they themselves became hard-pressed, and less and less planes came. And as you know, planes like everything else wears out -- wear out, only they wear out quicker; and we could get no reinforcements.

Then the American Volunteer Group came, and they not only helped us materially, because they made it possible for our people to feel that America is really heart and soul with us in our common cause to fight against aggression, but the planes actually kept the enemy planes from bombing indiscriminately civilian centers -- certain civilian centers, such as Chungking. Not all China, because the air force was not large enough.

But I think the greatest help was the feeling on the part of our Chinese people that we have not fought and bled alone, and that America was helping us, and that America is really our ally.

Q. (interposing) (loudly) Madame -- excuse me.

MADAME CHIANG: (continuing) Yes.

Now the present American air force -- as the President has just said, we need munitions. We have got manpower. We have even got trained pilots, but we haven't got the planes, nor have we the gasoline. And the point is, how are we going to get them? But the President has solved so many difficult questions, he has

come through so many great crises with flying colors, that I feel that I can safely leave that answer to him. (much laughter)

Q. Madame Chiang, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Madame Chiang, you are absolutely one hundred percent right on what we want to do, and what we are trying to do; and I might even say what we are beginning to do, in addition to the present very small number of planes that are operating in China.

But I think that if you will look at the old map again -- as I have said so often -- you will realize that while we can fly planes to China, we have to fly all the other things that make planes go into China, to keep them running. It's a -- it's a problem of transportation. We can't fly there directly across the ocean. We can't fly there from Russia. And therefore we have to fly in from the Southwest. And it means that a plane going in -- a transport plane -- has to get itself in, and the gasoline to get it in, and enough gasoline to get it back again for another load, and still have something left over to leave in China to keep the fighting planes going.

I don't suppose that there is any one task that is being studied more by transportation people -- the military people -- than the problem of getting the wherewithal with the plane to go into China.

And all I can say is that we are doing the best we can, and we are definitely going to increase that aid -- I hope and I think -- reasonably fast. It is not even merely a sentimental question. It's an actual problem of winning the war. And we are

just as keen to knock out Japan as China is, and we are going to help in every way, from every possible angle and direction.

I think I said it -- suggested it the other day, that the Japanese line at the present time, all the way from Burma to the Dutch Indies, out to the Solomons and the North through the Mandated Islands, is a very long ways from Tokyo, besides being a long ways from here. And I think I suggested the other day, in what I said at the (White House Correspondents' Association) dinner, that it isn't enough just to move forward inch by inch, island by island. If we took one island, in the advance from the South, once a month -- twelve of them a year -- I figured out it would take about fifty years before we got to Japan.

And therefore, obviously, just looking at the map -- you don't have to be learned in strategy -- it's a perfectly obvious thing to a layman that the way to hit China (Japan) is to cut that line. And that is our objective, to cut the Japanese line up near the top of the line. And today that can be done, and we are going to do it more and more by using China as a base of operations; and with that, of course, if the base of operations can be established with sufficient equipment.

And it is not only cutting the line, but it means hitting Japan in the Japanese islands themselves; and that is a perfectly definite policy.

If I were a member of the Chinese government, I would say, "But when?" "How soon?" "Why not a little more?"; and I say that as a member of the American Government too. Just as fast as the Lord will let us, with the best brains that we can bring to

bear on it.

Now that, I think, is a very simple summary of what we are trying to do, without going into the details of the method and the military operations themselves. Everybody in Washington, I might say, is pledged to hurry it up and increase it, and make China a large and an important -- probably in the long run the most important base of operations against our common enemy.

Q. Mr. President, could you permit direct quotes of the phrase, "Just as soon as the Lord will let us"?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I wouldn't. A lot of people wouldn't like to have the name of the Lord taken in vain. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, that seems to indicate that the strategy and the policy will be a little more, or more aid -- Lend-Lease, or whatever it is -- to China, plus the stepped up military or naval cutting of that line? Is that correct, that the two go on at once?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't say it's a change in policy. I would say a greater emphasis on trying to find out ways and means.

Q. Will it clear it up then, in the minds of people that read a great deal of argument on that sort of thing?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think that's all right.

Q. Madame Chiang, how much aid has China received from Russia, which generally has to be before they were so sorely pressed? Did you receive aid from Russia in any great volume?

MADAME CHIANG: We received quite a (good) deal of aid from Russia then.

Q. Madame Chiang, might I ask if you could give us any suggestions as to how that aid might be stepped up? Do you have anything specific you might suggest to us?

MADAME CHIANG: You mean ---

Q. (interjecting) As to how our aid might be improved at present?

MADAME CHIANG: The President just said that "as soon as the Lord will let us." He didn't want that to be quoted. Well, I might say -- add on to that, "The Lord helps those who help themselves." (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q. Madame Chiang, do you object to being quoted directly about the Lord?

MADAME CHIANG: I think I shall follow the President exactly.

Q. Do you care to extend your remarks, Mr. President?
(laughter)

Q. (aside) Wonderful!

Q. (aside) How about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, have you got anything to ask me, because we have got to get along pretty soon.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, you have noticed a growing argument between Congress and Selective Service; that is, the farmers want the boys to come home to do a little planting. The Army doesn't want it. It's coming to the point where that's going up on the Floor for a probable vote. Have you any suggestions to make about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have, but I don't know that the time is right ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- ripe for it.

You know, there has been an awful lot of discussion about the total number of men in the Army. I see pieces in the paper on how many men should we have in the Army, and so forth. Well, that was decided six months ago, and why should we talk about it any more? -- I don't know. It was decided last autumn -- definitely. Seven and a half million men in the Army on December 31, 1943. It has never been changed, that figure. It is a figure which was arrived at by the Commander-in-Chief, after hearing all sides -- the necessity of the Armed Forces. There has never been any change in it -- still 7 million, 5 hundred thousand men in the Army, December 31, 1943.

Now! I can't tell you how many men in 1944; I haven't got the faintest idea. I can look ahead to the autumn when the figures will come in again -- the figures of needs. And sometime this autumn -- as I did last autumn -- we will adopt a -- a goal for the number of men in the Army in 1944. Now what it will be, I can't even guess. Nobody can guess.

I suppose I get as much in the way of summaries of what people ask for as anybody in Washington. That is how this figure of 7 million, five was arrived at. There are a lot of people that want it 10 and 12 (million). I think somebody, I think -- somebody said 13 (million) for this year, or for the future. I can only go as far as the end of this year; and the figure is 7

million, five. Now there are all kinds of details, where the additional number above what we have now -- where it will come from; and that is being talked about. We do -- we ought to have 7 million, 5 hundred thousand, from the point of view of military necessity.

And also, we have to remember that people of your age and mine, Earl, are too old to go out and fight. For an Army, in the fighting end of things, we have to have people who are reasonably young. And that is a matter I have no objection to their talking about and making all kinds of suggestions. But the fact remains that from the military point of view: 7 million, 5 hundred thousand men in the Army at the end of this year!

Q. Mr. President, in that connection, would you care to comment on the criticism of that policy, which has been voiced in Congress; namely, that by building up such a large Army here, in view of transportation difficulties of the men, and the large amounts of equipment needed to train men, that we are thereby depriving China and Russia -- who are ready to fight -- of the munitions with which they could fight, if they ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Absolutely nothing in it at all. Munitions will supply everything that we can get to Russia and China.

Q. Does that figure of 7 million, 5 hundred thousand, Mr. President, include officers also?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not, but you had better check. I think not.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, do you want to comment

on the House Military Affairs' action on the Kilday bill? (Representative Paul J. Kilday, Democrat, of Texas)

THE PRESIDENT: On what?

MR. P. BRANDT: The Kilday bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Pete, I don't know anything about it.

What is it?

MR. P. BRANDT: Sets up categories of dependents, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No.

Q. (continuing) --- single men to be taken first, then finally those with -- fathers will be taken last?

THE PRESIDENT: As long as they give me physically fit men.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Well, you know, that means when you come down to it, it comes pretty close to putting people -- on the average there are some fit men who are over 35 years old, but most men over 35 are not sufficiently good for combat service. They can't walk 30 miles a day for 3 days running.

Q. Mr. President, when you say seven and a half (million) in the Army, how many does that mean? Total armed forces?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you that. The Navy is working along to -- up to about a million now, and by the end of this year -- you had better check these figures -- the total of them is between two million, or two and a half million.

Q. (interposing) Well, the argument ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) The same with the Marine Corps, Navy, Coast Guard, WAACs, and so forth and so on ---

Q. (interposing) Doesn't that bring you to between ten and eleven (million)?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- between two million and a half.

Q. Doesn't that bring you to between ten and eleven?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Doesn't that bring you to between ten and eleven?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, seven and a half and two and a half are what? -- 10. (laughter)

Q. About 8 hundred thousand officers.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Mr. President, at the time you first announced this seven and a half million Army substantially, I believe you added the other categories up, and I think that the total figure was 10 million, 8 hundred thousand. Is there any change in that?

THE PRESIDENT: Did that include officers?

Q. Yes, sir -- 750 thousand.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely right.

Q. Well, sir, the "farm bloc" -- if you recognize that term -- seems to think that you can't have that Army and do the Spring planting -- can't have that Army and food this year. I think that is probably a correct statement of their case. Is that worrying you at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, of course.

Let me tell you a nice story, and as an illustration. I was talking to one of the newspapermen in North Africa who had come back from Russia -- and I can merely tell you, I -- I didn't

check on it or anything like that, but he is a perfectly reputable newspaperman, and I suppose that it's a perfectly legitimate story -- in the spring of 1942, after they had withstood the Russians (Germans) all through the winter of 1941 and 1942, the Russian line having been pushed back from 20 miles of the city to nearly a hundred miles from the city. Nevertheless, Moscow was in real danger, even in the spring of 1942; and they had gone through a very tough winter. They didn't have enough fuel, and they didn't have enough food -- they hadn't laid in enough food.

So the Russian authorities took -- I think it was 300 thousand school-children -- Oh, between the ages of -- what? -- 12 to 18; and they took them out to a radius of perhaps a hundred miles from the city, all the way out. And they planted every acre of fields as soon as the ice was out of the soil. And as soon as they had done that, they put them into the woods -- the forests. And they took pretty good care of these children -- it was war -- of course, not as well as they had taken care of them in time of peace. And they cut wood until harvest-time came, and then they put them back in the fields to harvest all the food that they possibly could. Then they put them back in the woods again.

And in that way Moscow was supplied, by autumn, with enough wood to keep people warm. I mean reasonably warm -- not the way we heat our homes. And they had enough food to live on -- men, women and children -- in this great city with millions of people in it.

They didn't have enough manpower there to put grown-up people, either men or women, into this work. The men were

fighting, or running the transportation -- or the women were running the transportation, and fighting, and all the utilities, and they were in the munitions factories which still remained in Moscow.

And the result, this fellow said to me in Casablanca -- the winter of 1942 -- and 1943, this winter -- has been -- there has been relatively less suffering, and fewer problems of food and heat than the previous winter. I use that as a little illustration.

And I thought I was a little previous about six months ago! I said once that I thought that the younger people in the villages and towns of this country could help the farmers of this country very, very materially. We have -- we have sporadic examples, like the case of the town -- I don't know where it was -- California, I think -- where they had a prune crop -- I don't know whether it was prunes, but something like that -- all ripening inside of one week.

And they couldn't get labor.

And the whole town turned out -- the drug-store fellow, the soda-water fellow, the doctor, the lawyer, the newspapers -- the linotype man and the editor -- and the women of the town. Not a large number -- I don't know, what? -- I think twelve hundred people in the town. But they all turned out and helped pick the prunes. And the result was that at the end of the week the prune crop was in.

Now we haven't done nearly enough of that. That doesn't mean that that is the solution of it, but at least it will help

in the problem of getting in the harvest for our needs, and the needs of our Allies -- stuff that we ship abroad.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you.

Q. (aside) Let's go, boys.

Q. Thank you, Madame Chiang.

(extra copy for Madame Chiang Kai-shek)

(Notebook PC-XIII - Page 28 -- JR)