

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #882  
Executive Office of the President  
February 23, 1943 -- 4.05 P.M., E.W.T.

Q. How are you, Mr. President?

Q. How are you?

THE PRESIDENT: Good "morning."

(then picking up two clippings) Did you see that?  
(holding one up) By Ernest Lindley -- The Battle Of Washington.

Q. Who?

THE PRESIDENT: (holding up the other clipping) By  
Walter Lippmann -- The Battle Of Washington. (laughter)

Q. Collaboration.

THE PRESIDENT: Who wrote it? Same thing -- same story.  
I think it's Lippmann's, but it may have been Lindley's.

Q. Lippmann.

Q. It's Lippmann's.

THE PRESIDENT: The (Washington) Post said it was Lind-  
ley's.

Q. The Post made the error.

MR. GODWIN: Wrong story.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Wrong byline. Maybe that's a "rubber  
stamp" paper.

THE PRESIDENT: Can't tell. May be. (laughter) Anyway,  
it's an exceedingly good article, ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- whoever wrote it.

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MR. GODWIN: I read it under -- under the other. I thought it was pretty good.

THE PRESIDENT: Good -- very good.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have been trying to dig up something, and the only thing I have got, at last, is the Executive Order that has been proposed to carry out the recommendations of the Bellamy committee -- the committee on occupational deferment of Federal employees -- very good report. I am very grateful to the gentlemen who did it. And the Executive Order has just come in. I haven't signed it yet -- I will very soon -- putting it into effect. I think that's the story that came out on Sunday morning, didn't it? I think so.

MR. GODWIN: A story came out.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, did you -- did you read Mr. (Josef) Stalin's speech, or Order, to the Red Army on the -- on its 25th anniversary?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't.

MR. GODWIN: Do you -- may I ask you a further question about it? He made certain statements in there to his Army which would indicate that after he had pushed the enemy out of the Russian territory, he was through.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't know. He didn't say that.

MR. GODWIN: That is, the way he -- he put it ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) He did not. He did not.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) He was talking about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Stick to the language.  
Don't try interpretations.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Well, sir, without ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I haven't read it, so I  
don't know what it was. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: That's -- that's a -- I didn't try to put  
it into his mouth, but I thought that is what he meant. I think  
a great many people ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You see what I mean,  
Earl?

MR. GODWIN: Yes, it may be a wrong interpretation.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether it is or not, be-  
cause I haven't read it.

Q. Mr. President, I got the impression that there  
wouldn't be any Germans left by that time. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: So, you see?

MR. GODWIN: Well, at any rate, you are not saying any-  
thing about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Honestly, I haven't read the thing.

Q. Mr. President, he also said that Russia was bearing  
the whole weight of the war, because there wasn't any second front.  
Would you care to say anything about that point?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing, because I did read that in the  
headline, but I haven't read the article; and you know what head-  
lines do to articles. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, the leading article in the Saturday  
Evening Post this week says that you and Mr. Churchill promised

Stalin to open a second front in Russia -- in Europe in 1942.

Do you have any comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I wonder where the Saturday Evening Post got that story from?

MR. GODWIN: Did you read it?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Did you read it?

Q. (interjecting) Good deal of detail. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am just asking, where did they get a story like that from?

MR. GODWIN: That's what we would like to know.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: That's what we would like to know.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that they have been reading any secret files of the Casablanca Conference, or that they decoded any messages between London, Moscow or Washington.

Q. Mr. President, their reference is not to Casablanca. It's to ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Oh.

Q. (continuing) --- the January conference of one year ago ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Oh.

Q. (continuing) --- at the White House, between yourself and Mr. Churchill, right after Christmas in 19 -- whenever the trip was.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. It was New Year's Day, 1942.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, after all, you are going into a perfectly futile argument. We did agree to start a second front of sorts, and when it came down to the point, it seemed best to start it at a place called Algiers, and Casablanca, it being the more -- most feasible of any point. That was done. Now, as I say, you can write pages and pages on what you mean by a second front. Well, no people -- two people in this room will agree. So there you are. At least, action was taken. If the Saturday Evening Post is talking about a year ago last January, I don't know.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, did you talk to Representative (Ed V.) Izac (of California) about conditions in cities where there are naval ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Conditions in where?

MISS MAY CRAIG: (continuing) --- cities where there are naval complements?

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Cities.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MISS MAY CRAIG: He is chairman of the sub-committee ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, we did not. We talked about the meat situation in California, ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Meat.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- May.

MR. GODWIN: Would you ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. GODWIN: Can you tell us something about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I am/trying to find out.

MR. GODWIN: They have been carrying on quite a crusade.

Q. Mr. President, the Army today announced that it ordered some troops to pick cotton in Arizona, and some of the farm Senators say that the furloughing of troops for harvesting won't solve the agricultural labor shortage at all. They still want deferments of their workers. Would you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think there are too many opinions, and too much comment already. I would say that when there are special cases -- the Arizona case is a very special case -- we would have a few furlough jobs to draw on. It's a crop that has to be got in for military reasons, if nothing else -- you can't eat it -- but you can use it for military -- great military needs. And there were some troops -- some colored and some white -- and I think for four or five days those troops are the kind of troops that can be used for that kind of an operation.

You know, a lot of people don't think things through. Suppose, as I said to -- well, never mind what it is -- a great many don't. But probably in the Legislative branch -- the other day -- suppose you have a division that has had 38 weeks of training, and they need four more weeks before they are ready to go. If you start to take ten more or twenty more out of each company and put them back on the farm, you will be slowing up the readiness of that division to go into the fighting front. On the other hand, there are -- there are other troops which are not exactly in that character, they may be Services of Supply troops back home, or engineer troops, like some of these in Arizona.

If you take them out for four or five days, it is going to slow things up. It all depends on the individual case -- the locality and the troops available. That is just a little sidelight.

We helped -- when was it? -- last autumn, in getting in the sugar beets in Montana. We happened to have available, very nearby, some troops that could go in and help on that, and they undoubtedly will have to do it again, in a great many special instances.

Q. Troops were used in Montana, you said?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so. You had better check up. It is my impression they were.

Q. Mr. President, have you had any report on Congressional reactions to your letter about the McKellar bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Apparently the Judiciary Committee is going ahead and report out the bill that has been ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I am told it has been improved.

Q. Could you improve that bill?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Could you improve that bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Could what?

Q. Could you improve a bill of that sort?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think so. I think they were working, when I last heard, to put it under the limit of -- Oh, what was it? -- 35 to 43 (hundred dollars) ---

Q. (interposing) The original bill was 45 (hundred,

dollars).

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Going to reduce it.

THE PRESIDENT: It was put back to that. As I saw in the paper, they were putting in something to protect the Civil Service. I don't know -- I don't know what has been done.

Q. Mr. President, you would have to amend the original Civil Service Act in order to protect it, as it provides that anybody subject to confirmation shall not be under the Classified Civil Service.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't know. I would call that one of the -- I won't say "molehills." It is a "molehill" in relation to the war.

Q. It's a "mountain" in relation to the Civil Service.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes. But, after all, this is war. I hope that a great many things which are done in the war may be revised or repealed when we get back to those things I mentioned last night -- normalcies.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what Madame Chiang Kai-shek is doing today?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea.

Q. Mr. President, did you see Archbishop (Francis J.) Spellman before he took his recent trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q. There has been a great deal of speculation about this trip of his. Is he carrying any message from you, or performing any mission for you whatever?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, I couldn't comment on a thing like that, obviously. He is going over, however, principally in his capacity as the Chaplain -- Chaplain Bishop of the Catholic Church to ----- . Then he is going to visit quite a number of our military and naval units. I think I could say that that was the primary objective of the trip.

Q. Mr. President, ---

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

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, I read an editorial yesterday, saying that -- saying that you seem to be crossing a bridge in the company of a "devil" named "domestic appeasement," and it expressed apprehension lest you fall off. Would you care to comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't got time to go into the -- what they call "nuances" -- look up the word -- (laughter) -- I have forgotten the ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, could you say what you expect to see repealed at the peace conference?

THE PRESIDENT: It has nothing to do with the "price of eggs." Let's win the war, ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- that's the point.

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us anything about that conference you had yesterday with Mr. (Cordell) Hull and Dr. (Isaiah) Bowman, and others?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think anything more than what has been said. We are doing it carefully, taking up this, that

and the other subject. I think -- I think that you can -- it will have to be pretty general and pretty vague -- I think you could write a piece to the general effect that we are considering some kind of -- and you will have to say "some kind" -- now don't speculate on what that means -- it means some kind of a meeting of representatives of the United Nations to take up a subject.

And the subject is the subject of post-war food. If you in the same sentence say "not relief," I think you will see the point. At the end of the war there will be -- there will be certain relief problems. A rather definite line is being drawn between those problems -- keeping people from starving, getting in food where it is most needed, sending in seed, sending in -- in some cases -- agricultural implements to make food crops, with the hope that all over the world we can save lives and improve malnutrition just as fast as we can. That, of course, is an emergency thing which comes as a result of many years of warfare. And the relief organizations are working on that at the present time. The State Department and Governor Lehman are talking with other nations in regard to a conference on relief.

But what I am talking about is something entirely different, and that is a -- a United Nations conference on the more permanent food supply of the world; and nothing more detailed than that has been decided on. When I say that, I talked about -- (I am) talking about world crops.

Well, just for example, we had in 19 -- what was it? -- around '34, a world wheat conference, the -- with the general idea that the surplus of wheat in the world determines the price

of wheat, and unless there is some agreement between the wheat-producing nations, the unfortunate farmer is subject to a series of fluctuations, so that he never knows what he is going to get for his wheat. And that first conference -- knowing no more about the details than I do -- got along pretty well. And it nearly went through -- I have forgotten -- it doesn't make any difference -- except some of the wheat-producing nations -- not many of them -- would not go along.

And then there was another one that was in process of being held, I think in 19 -- the spring of '39, before this war broke out; and they had about got to an agreement when the war broke out.

Well, I just use that as one of the subjects that a general food conference would take up, with the idea of preventing famines or surpluses by general agreement of the wheat-producing countries, at the same time giving the wheat producers a reasonable assurance of a decent crop.

Q. Mr. President, would you expect to include in such a conference countries like Argentina, which are pretty big producers, among the United Nations?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That's a detail. That's another detail that hasn't been taken up.

Q. Mr. President, would that call for a continuing organization?

THE PRESIDENT: May I put it this way: that this would be an exploratory conference, with, I think, a complete understanding on the part of every member of it that it would be

exploratory. That is why I can't talk about "happy thoughts." It is exploratory. That is your first step. Now what comes next depends upon what they recommend after exploring the subject.

Q. Has it been decided where it would be held, Mr. President, that conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No. But I will give you a tip on that: I am very much against conferences in any large city -- anywhere. The most effective -- from the point of view of things done quickly and effectively -- was at Casablanca. It was not known generally that we were there. Everybody got to know everybody else extremely well, which is always a good thing; and the smaller the place, and the fewer the interruptions, the greater the success.

Q. Has the approximate date been set? Has it definitely been decided to hold the exploratory conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q. How soon do you hope to hold it, Mr. President?

Approximately ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That I don't know.

Q. (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I would put it -- what? -- this spring.

Q. Yes.

Q. Well, Mr. President, I find more interest in the Capital now, in the food supply. Now -- during the war. Would you talk about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think so. Why should I? Any of you people starving? (laughter)

Q. Not this week, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Anybody here starving? (more laughter) I don't think anybody in this country appreciates what so many other countries are going through. How would you like to have brussels sprouts twice a day, every day in the week throughout the year? Well, there are only 45 million British and Scotch and Welsh who are doing that at the present time.

Q. Mr. President, you -- your using the general term "this spring" would indicate that it would deal with problems during the war as well as post-war?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. This is post-war, mind you. I would call it: post-war exploratory.

Q. But the conference will be held while the war is going on?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Now you are getting me to commit myself on when the war ends. (laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I had to be a little cagey, didn't I? (laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #883  
Executive Office of the President  
March 12, 1943 -- 11.00 A.M., E.W.T.

Q. Good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning -- good morning.

Q. Good morning, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: How is everything?

MR. GODWIN: Good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. Godwin) Is that your Draft  
card?

MR. GODWIN: I have got it. Want to see it?

Q. (aside) 4-F.

THE PRESIDENT: You haven't got your short-snorter card,  
have you?

MR. GODWIN: What?

THE PRESIDENT: Got your short-snorter card with you?

MR. GODWIN: I am not a short-snorter. Have you got  
one of those Draft cards?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. I carry my short-snorter  
around with me, but I don't carry my Draft card.

MR. GODWIN: I would like to join that.

THE PRESIDENT: But if you don't carry that short-snorter  
card around with you it costs you money.

Q. Draft card might cost you a little "time."

THE PRESIDENT: Might too. (laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to give you -- give you something here that I think will be of great value, if it -- if there could be some kind of a story about it. And I suppose it relates to a statement made by the Generalissimo (Chiang Kai-shek) way back in -- on the 26th of February, but I suppose that communications out of China are a bit difficult, and I don't believe we have heard about it over here. I haven't seen anything printed about it. It might have been.

In regard to Thailand, which we used to call Siam, the Generalissimo sent this message to the people of Thailand. It is fairly long, and I don't believe you will want -- no particular reason why you shouldn't have the whole thing -- it's two pages, single-spaced; and I think it would be a good thing.

It's -- in a way it does relate to -- Oh, what? -- the general point of view of the United Nations in regard to territory grabbing.

It's addressed to the soldiers and citizens of Thailand, and if you will let me, I think I can summarize it for you: expressing his understanding of the difficult situation that Thailand found itself in when Japanese aggression invaded them, but today the situation has become a world-wide struggle, and that China's feelings toward Thailand have continued on a basis of peace for more than one thousand years. There are 3 million Chinese living within the borders of Thailand, and that China has always considered Thailand a sister country, and wants to do everything after the war that they can to restore the prosperity and the independence of Thailand. And it speaks of the United

Nations' conference declaration on the first of January, 1942, dedicating the United Nations to the liberation of all the nations in captivity under Japan and Germany and other Axis countries, in order that they might have political independence restored to them.

And I think this probably is your lead: I can, however, give my solemn word -- you can quote this, if you want to -- I can, therefore, give my solemn word that China as well as her Allies have no territorial ambitions in Thailand, and have no intentions of undermining her sovereignty and independence. The Thais, however, should recognize the fact that the territory and freedom of Thailand can only be restored to her through the victory of China and her Allies.

Maybe that has been printed, but I think it is worth -- worth doing, because it is a pretty simple, straight declaration of not only the policy of China but of the United Nations, in regard -- in regard to Thailand. It will be a useful thing to do.

Q. Mr. President, does that also include Korea?

THE PRESIDENT: I have read through just this. Don't bring up any other ---

Q. (interposing) I thought it was in that statement.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Korea is not in it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It's an address to the soldiers and citizens of Thailand.

Q. Mr. President, have you had any word as to the reaction in Thailand to that statement?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't. We have -- we have practically no information that is coming out of Thailand at all. I think that's all I have got for the minute.

Q. Mr. President, yesterday two members of the National Resources Planning Board (Charles E. Merriam and George F. Yantis) had a conference with you, and upon leaving they said that there had been some discussion with you on methods of continuing post-war planning, whether or not Congress approved the appropriations for the Board. Could you tell us what ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I don't -- I don't -- I guess you must have misunderstood them, because what I am sure they intended to say, which was all we -- the only thing relating to that subject we talked about was the necessity of continuing planning, the burden thereof resting solely on the Congress. In other words, the methods to be used -- in other words, the -- the responsibility for continued planning rests entirely in Congress -- nowhere else, you see.

And I -- I will just give you an example. They have listed for submission to Congress -- any time that Congress wants -- a list of about 7 billion dollars' worth of public works to take up the unemployment caused by demobilization and by closing down war plants at the end of the war -- it will be a very great many people.

Now on those 7 billion dollars' worth of projects, it's all very well for the Congress to pass legislation, but you don't start human beings to work on a project by legislation, as we all know, you have to have your engineering and your -- especially

the specifications for the job, all completed beforehand. Now, out of the 7 billion dollars of various projects -- of course, Congress is to determine them -- which ones -- only about one billion of them, so far, have been engineered and have had specifications written for them. Well, of course, one billion dollars' worth of work doesn't employ very many people.

MR. GODWIN: This one billion is out of the seven billion?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Now, we would be ready to go ahead with one billion out of the seven, because it's ready practically to let the contracts or to start the work. If it is done by contract, the contractor knows just what he has to do and can bring in his figures within ten days, and start -- start the dirt flying within the -- within another two or three weeks. On the other hand, if it hasn't been engineered and specifications written, it may take six months or a year before you can get it done.

So the problem is rather squarely up to the Congress, as to whether we are going to have a great hiatus without any jobs that can be given -- except on paper -- at the end of the war, or whether we will have jobs that are ready to start. That's the simplest way of putting it.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, would you care to make any comment on the element of frankness in the character of our admirals?

THE PRESIDENT: The what? (laughter)

Q. On the element of frankness in the character of our admirals?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't get it. (more laughter)

Q. Well, ---

Q. (interposing) Russia, sir.

Q. Would you care to comment on the Standley affair?

(Admiral William H. Standley, our Ambassador to Russia, who told a Press Conference in Moscow that Russia was not telling its people about American Lend-Lease aid)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh! Oh! I was thinking of another admiral. (more laughter)

Q. Is there more than one?

THE PRESIDENT: I know a number of admirals and generals that your -- your hypothetical question might apply to. It's all right. I don't think I want to comment on that.

Q. How about the other instance of frankness?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. How about the other instance of frankness?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, sometimes they are too frank, just like all of us in this room. Sometimes they are not frank enough. Sometimes, again, like all of us, we talk too much; other times we talk too little.

Q. (interposing) Mr. ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) All of which says nothing. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, we seem to have a

new military hero in the Southwest Pacific in (Lieutenant) General (George C.) Kenney. Could you tell us anything about his trip?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't -- I expect to see him in the next two or three days. He is just back here on consultations.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) All you can say is that he did a grand job down there.

Q. (continuing) It has been a long time since we talked to you. In that period you saw Representative (Adolf) Sabath, and a group from the Democratic National Committee. I wonder if you could tell us your reactions on those conferences?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any news on that. Let's get ahead with the war.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, just to help get ahead with the war, is there any advice or comment that you could make regarding the Russian situation that might be helpful in keeping the thing out of speculation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no; except I wouldn't do too much speculating. You know what happened to the country in 1929 as a result of speculation. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Some other kind of speculation.

Q. Anything you could tell us on Manpower, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing. No news on that now.

Q. Mr. President, do you have a report from Leo

Crowley on the F.D.I.C.'s operations? (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I have had -- I have had it for about a week. I have got it here on my desk. (picking it up)

Q. Mr. President, may I ask another question?

THE PRESIDENT: It's an analysis -- now, wait a minute until I answer the first question. (laughter)

Q. I beg your pardon.

THE PRESIDENT: This is an analysis of the banking developments in the past ten years. I will just give you one or two high points, and Steve (Early) can give you the -- give you the report. He has it out there.

MR. EARLY: It also includes the letter, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: And the letter, afterwards.

It says, from the serious asset impairment that the banks suffered in 1933, they have now recovered to the strongest asset position of record, which I think is worth playing up, because as you all know the more confidence we can establish on the part of people in the banking system of this country in time of war, as well as in time of peace, the better it is. The banking system is so constituted because of these assets that it seems ready to meet any war demands that may be made.

As a part of this, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation has saved from loss more than one and a quarter million depositors, that is to say 98.8 percent (99.8%) of the depositors in 390 insured banks that remained closed at the time of the closing of the banks.

Notwithstanding the loss -- the assumption by the Corporation of 50 million dollars of losses that would otherwise have fallen on the depositors in these 390 banks, the Corporation itself has accumulated a surplus of 325 million dollars. The Corporation could be liquidated today, and could repay all of the insurance assessments paid by the banks, and the entire contribution of the Government, together with a dividend on the contribution of the Government, of seven percent.

Well, that's not a suggestion that we should liquidate the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, but it just shows that if we would liquidate it we would come out in very, very nice shape. The -- this insurance of deposits today is providing full protection for more than -- this is an amazing -- perfectly amazing figure -- more than 65 million accounts in the banks in this country. That is a very amazing thing. The bank loans during -- in the prosecution of the war to agriculture and industry are very definitely promoting production of food and essential civilian and war goods. It's rather an interesting report. It's worth a story on.

MR. GODWIN: Are we going to get that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Steve has got that out there.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, everybody is thinking about income taxes now. Did you ever ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I am, too. (laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: (continuing) I thought so. Did you ever express yourself, or will you, on -- I don't like to say the "Ruml Plan," but any plan for getting on a current payment ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, I don't think so, May. It is -- after all it's rather squarely a Congressional function. I know ---

MISS MAY CRAIG: (interjecting) Talk about it in principle.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- after all -- after all, we talked about it in theory -- I don't know when it was -- a couple of months ago. And the fact, of course, still remains: the individual does, especially in the higher brackets, save a great deal of money in taxes to the Government through the Ruml Plan. In other words, the richer individual taxpayer will pay less money to the Government, under the Ruml Plan -- actual -- actual drawing of checks out of his bank payable to the Collector of Internal Revenue. Now that -- that seems to be pretty well established. Instead of which, of course, in other countries -- England, for instance, where the war is going on -- the more people had the more they contributed to the government. Period.

And I don't think I need say anything else, except to bring out that simple fact, that in most of the cases the richer the person, the greater the income of the person, the more saving they make out of actual tax payments to the Government in the year 1943.

Q. Mr. President, could you illustrate how that works?

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No.

Q. (continuing) I don't understand it.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it does. It does. I have got the Treasury figures to prove it.

Q. Mr. President, is that true if you incorporate the Carlson proposal, proposed by Representative (Frank) Carlson (Democrat of Kansas) ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) I don't know.

Q. (continuing) --- which would ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Now you are getting over my head.

Q. (continuing) --- which would take the larger or higher of the two years? Doesn't that take care ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I couldn't tell you, because I don't know.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, you have no objection to the pay-as-you-go plan, have you? It's the -- isn't it the forgiveness matter that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, now you are getting into awfully deep water, because when you talk about the forgiveness thing, you can divide the room up and talk two sides. One side will say it's forgiveness, and the other side will say the Government will get just as much money.

Q. Well, that's about what you said when you discussed it before.

THE PRESIDENT: Before. But the fact does remain that the Government, from the -- from the richer taxpayers of this country gets less money under the Ruml Plan than they get under the existing plan.

MR. GODWIN: You mean "Ruml" as the Ruml Plan? There are some other plans ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, I am talking about the Ruml Plan.

Q. Isn't that due to reductions in income in 1943?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Isn't that due to reductions in income in 1943?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, No. Oh, No. Due to the Ruml Plan.

Q. I don't see where -- how the Ruml Plan would have any effect. (much laughter)

Q. Well, Mr. President, Mr. Ruml's testimony denied that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. Mr. Ruml's testimony took the opposite view from yours. He felt ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) But it isn't a question -- it isn't a question of "view," it's a question of taking the figures on somebody's existing return. I mean to say, it's all mathematically -- there is only one answer: mathematical. It can't be a question of opinion.

Q. Mr. President, where can we find those figures? I think that is what we are trying to get at. I think all of us would like to get the answer to this question.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the Treasury -- I don't know why the Treasury shouldn't give them out.

Q. The Treasury has given me figures, but I have never seen any that the receipts of 1943 ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) They sent -- they sent

me a memorandum giving those figures for -- Oh -- all the different brackets of people; and -- well, starting with -- what? -- the 10-thousand-dollar brackets, and then working on up until you finally got to the brackets that contained the ten richest men in the United States -- suppose you call it bracket "A". And there are the figures which I suppose are mathematically correct. I think they are, because it's a question of taking out a piece of paper and figuring with a pencil.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) On -- of course, we can't give the names of any of these people, obviously.

Q. Could you give us those figures?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Could you give out those figures?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no objections to the Treasury giving them out.

Q. Mr. President, do those figures show that the actual collections by the Treasury would be less this year under the Ruml Plan, or do they show that from rich people and other people less money would be collected if you collected one year's tax, than if you collected two years' taxes in one? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Now wait a minute. You are going over the heads of all of us. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: (aside) He's a Wall Street guy.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, do you think it would matter if you get less from ten men, if we get more from a lot of other people?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you get more from all the other people?

MISS MAY CRAIG: The general opinion is that you would, by collecting from current income, get more over-all.

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know about either, May. My impression was the other way.

Q. Your impression was that the net take of the Government would be lower under the Ruml Plan this year than it was last year?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q. Mr. President, when I talked to the Treasury people about it, they said the loss would be in the case of executives who were ready to retire this year. They named about four of them. So far as I could see, it would have no effect elsewhere.

MR. GODWIN: (aside) A lot of argument, but no news.

Q. I would like to ask you if you have any comment to make on this other query from my office the other night, saying that Erika Mann, the daughter of the German novelist (Thomas Mann), was making a lecture tour in which she was saying that Premier (Josef) Stalin was present at Casablanca, and that the Press was -- was going to be awfully sore about it when they found out.

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) He must have been under the table. (loud laughter) We didn't see him. Pretty clever stunt if he was. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, when you came back from Casablanca you were asked whether you planned to see Premier Stalin, and

you said that "Hope Springs Eternal."

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Is there any more definite news on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not yet. (laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. GODWIN: That's all right.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #884  
Executive Office of the President  
March 16, 1943 -- 4.05 P.M., E.W.T.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got a special story for you girls today.

Q. Providing one?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Providing one?

THE PRESIDENT: Dandy.

MR. GODWIN: Cooking? Is it cooking?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Cooking?

Q. Cooking?

MR. GODWIN: Cooking? You know, the Japs say ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Coffee! I am just trying to justify what I said (about it).

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got a story for you housewives -- male and female. You know, sometime ago the Mayor of New York (Fiorello LaGuardia) said something about how to make coffee, and in general we were in agreement -- my recipe was a little bit different from his, but the same idea. And he came in today, and he said, "We are justified. We are proved right. We have found up there an old copy of Epicurus -- (holding up high an old book) -- translated from the Greek in 1656, which is good authority on account of its age." And in the back of the book is written in longhand -- (showing them the writing) -- the following -- which

I had translated, and Steve (Early) can give it to you afterwards, but it's a funny old translation.

(reading): "How To Use Copha." (spelling): C-O-P-H-A. And of course, you see, at that time in Europe it was one of the new things.

Q. (aside) How do you spell that?

Q. (aside) C-O-P-H-A.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing reading): "Take a pint & 4 spoonfulls of water & sett itt bye the fier -- F-I-E-R -- & boyle itt a little -- B-O-Y-L-E -- then take itt fro the fier & putt in halfe an ounce of Copha, then sett itt to the fier & keepe itt boyling now a quarter of an hower, sometymes stirring itt to prevent burning, when itt is settled Drink itt hott. The next day ---"

Now here is the crux of it -- (laughter) ---

"--- The next day the same quantetie of water putt to the same Copha that was left the day before -- (more laughter) -- and next boyle itt, then add to that a quarter of an ounce of fresh Copha & order itt as the first. This due for 4 dayes -- (more laughter) -- & the 5th day beginn anew." (more laughter)

(this was written on the back page of a translation of Epicurus's Morals, printed in London in 1656)

So there we have the most ancient authority on how to prepare coffee in all the world.

Q. Do you think that was coffee, Mr. President?

(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Do you think that was coffee?

THE PRESIDENT: Do I what?

Q. Do you think that was coffee?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, sure it was coffee. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: That's better than any I get.

Q. Is that what the Mayor came in to see you about?

(loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) It was! He came all the way from New York to talk to me about that!

Q. How do you get the half-ounce?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. What is a half-ounce of coffee -- a teaspoon?

Q. (interjecting) A teaspoon.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You girls ought to know, ---

Q. (interjecting) A teaspoon.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- something like that.

Q. Mr. President, after about five days wouldn't you have an unusually large amount of grounds in the pot?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it would be very good to keep the original ounce with the half-ounce each day.

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Coffee ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Help win the war.

MISS MAY CRAIG: I would rather not win it at that rate. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: O, May, that is so typical of so many of you -- (laughing) -- including the men.

I don't think I have anything besides that.

Q. Mr. President, there has been some comment in the papers, editorial and otherwise, regarding plans which have been put forth to deal with post-war problems; and the criticism has been directed toward the fact that we should attempt to win the war first. Have you any comment to make on that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think that's worth comment. It's a glittering generalization. What do they mean by it? I don't know.

Q. Well, Mr. President, can you comment generally on the proposal for the formation of a United Nations' Council now?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there's any news on that. We are trying, of course, as everybody knows, to increase conversations, in order to arrive at better understanding through knowledge of each other on all the post-war problems.

Q. Mr. President, do you see any problem in the fact that our -- that the other members of the United Nations are unable to determine what American policy is?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they have done it pretty well, haven't they, for a number of years?

Q. They seem to have some uncertainty about it.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, No. What you want to do is to write some kind of a constitution for this, and a constitution for that, and dot the "Ts" and cross the "Is", and the world situation -- we are trying, first of all, to win the war, and secondly to work toward certain objectives. That is as far as we can go at the present time.

Q. What I was thinking of was the "T" in the word

"Senate."

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Crossing the "T" in the word "Senate."

(the President made no oral reply)

Q. Mr. President, there have been some recent attempts, or rather resistance to the "Little Steel Formula," the most recent one being the coal miners' Union saying that they are going to get a two-dollar-a-day increase or not go to work on April first, if their contract isn't in force. Can you discuss that for us?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think you want to pre-judge a case.

Q. Mr. President, are you going on the air in the next week or so?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q. Mr. President, can anything be said about Mr. Eden's visit so far? (Sir Anthony Eden, Foreign Minister of Great Britain)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. It's what I -- the word I used just now, the word "understanding" -- better understanding throughout the world -- talk over problems and thoughts that various people have.

Q. Would you care to say anything about the visit of the (National) Grange members yesterday? (Albert S. Goss; H. E. Babcock; and Ezra Benson)

THE PRESIDENT: That's the same sort of idea, only that's a domestic one. We are working on that whole problem.

It's a very difficult problem -- awfully difficult.

Q. (aside) Let's go?

MR. GODWIN: (aside) What?

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

MR. GODWIN: I didn't ask anything! (laughter) May I see the title page of that (Epicurus book)?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: May I see the title page of that?

THE PRESIDENT: It's rather nice.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #885  
Executive Office of the President  
March 19, 1943 -- 10.50 A.M., E.W.T.

Q. (espying a box of candy called Chi-Mar-Tan on the President's desk, which they had to read upside down) Looks like a box of Chinese candy.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Looks like a box of Chinese candy.

THE PRESIDENT: It's Chinese candy, made out of Sesame nuts -- smallest nut in the world. I only know it in the crossword puzzles as the word "til." I don't know whether we grow them in this country or not. Does anybody know? Do we grow Sesame nuts?

Q. It's grown in Central America.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it?

Q. Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Is it really? It's a Chinese thing originally?

Q. Yes.

MR. DONALDSON: (interposing) All in.

Q. (continuing) Imported from China. It's pressed for the oil.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have anything except this -- just background stuff for you.

I think you want to be very careful in talking about the food meeting of the United Nations that I hope we will hold within the next two months. Make it perfectly clear that this is not

the immediate post-war relief -- entirely different subject -- this is the long-range subject of nutrition of the -- well, of the populations of the world, and a -- a better production of food, and a better distribution of food. The relief subject is coming along very well, and there will probably be a meeting on post-war relief sometime this spring also.

Q. United Nations meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. But don't confuse the two subjects.

Q. Mr. President, that meeting yesterday with Isaiah Bowman, and Secretary (Cordell) Hull, and so forth, is that on -- on one of these ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, everything.

Q. On everything?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. It was general post-war relief?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. And both -- both these things were mentioned, with a lot of other things too.

Q. Lot of others.

Q. Mr. President, at the last (Press) Conference, there was a generalized question asked you about your attitude toward post-war planning, and you made a generalized answer, I think; and out of that grew the impression that you were cool toward the Senate Resolution by Senator (Joseph H.) Ball and three other Senators (Hatch, Hill and Burton). Nobody ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No.

Q. (continuing) --- asked you specifically what you thought about the Ball Resolution. Would you care to comment

on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, perhaps the only thing I could do would be to talk for a minute on what might be called background on it.

I wasn't cool toward the Resolution at all. It was a Senate Resolution, purely a Senate Resolution, and purely within the rights of the Senate to express their opinion. I told them that I couldn't discuss the language of it -- that is purely a Senate matter -- but on certain general objectives, looking toward a more secure peace for the world, that I -- I believed that it would help some time -- I wasn't putting any time on it, either -- help in the general picture of having the world know that the United States is, as a whole, ready and willing to help in maintaining future peace.

Well, I thought it would help for the rest of the world to know that, as time goes on. In other words, I didn't discuss language; that is purely within the rights of the Senate. And I didn't discuss the various clauses, because that again is purely within the rights of the Senate. But, certainly, I wasn't cool.

Q. Would it be correct to say, then, that you endorse the broad principle?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes.

Q. Mr. President, back to the conference on food, we were told the other day that a tentative date had been set for ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. A tentative date had been set?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have asked for a certain --

certain date, but we haven't had the answers yet.

Q. Can you tell what nations are included in that?

THE PRESIDENT: All the United Nations.

Q. None outside?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

MR. P. BRANDT: Would the conference be held here ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. P. BRANDT: (continuing) --- in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope not, Pete. I think it would be dreadful to subject them to Washington. (laughter)

Q. (interjecting) Canal Zone?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You know, it's an interesting thing -- this also, we might almost say, is off the record -- very close to it -- I had one or two very good examples. On a conference with a lot of people, one of the first objectives is to get them together, so that they know each other, so that they can talk to each other frankly. If it is held in Washington, they can't get to know each other in the same way, because almost every one of you has got a -- a "pet" in the crowd, and they all know that. And almost every one in the crowd has got a "pet" in the newspaper profession. So they are terribly careful what they say to each other. They are -- they are circumscribed. They are limited. They are not frank. They can't get to know each other.

Well, we have had a couple of staff conferences here, one in -- what was it? -- December and January -- early January, '42, and another one in July. My Lord! We didn't get nearly as good or as quick results as when we met in Newfoundland in

August, 1941, or in Casablanca a month ago. That was grand. But a big city conference is -- is almost automatically -- I don't think there's anybody to blame -- I am not putting any blame on anybody -- it's just one of those -- one of those human things. It doesn't succeed nearly as well as if you put them off in a quiet place. So maybe I am looking for a quiet place.

Q. Do you have one?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. I have four or five in mind.

Q. In this country?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, in this country. (laughter)

Q. How about Monticello?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. How about Monticello?

THE PRESIDENT: Not big enough. It would be very nice to have it there -- rather nice idea.

Q. Are "pets" excluded from the Canal Zone?

(more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us some of the general conclusions which are in that Manpower Report, which the committee of Justice (James F.) Byrnes, Judge (Samuel) Rosenman ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There aren't any.

Q. Can you tell us something about the findings of fact?

THE PRESIDENT: There aren't any. (laughter)

Q. (interposing) What is in the report, sir? (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Bill (Lawrence), I am

sorry -- I am sorry, but there have been -- there have been various memoranda about various things, and not only from that group that we are talking about but quite a lot of other people too.

Q. Is there something in the works, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Is there something in the works?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh my, Yes. Always. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, do you foresee the probability of any other conferences on matters that you might have been talking about yesterday with the State Department people and Dr. Bowman ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) They are developing.

Q. (continuing) --- besides on food and relief?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't got any plan in regard to date, or even plans on the definite subject, but we are talking over -- what? -- two or three, or four other conferences.

Q. Mr. President, when you speak of the -- of the United Nations in the food conference, you mean just the "Big Four" (United States, Britain, Russia and China), or a whole bunch ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no. All the United Nations.

Q. When you speak of these other conferences, do you mean mainly economic subjects?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. At this time, economic and financial. And of course, the economic ones slide over, like this food conference. It's a question of -- for instance, nutrition. Well, nutrition is part economic and part that horrid word that we don't use any more -- "social." (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, will newspapermen be permitted to cover the food conference when it occurs?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope not. (laughter)

Q. May I ask, sir, if that was one of the reasons why you are moving it away from Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: Why, I explained all that. (more laughter)

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, can you explain ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, I am looking for -- this is a new word -- efficiency.

Q. And the newspapermen, sir, are they efficient?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (meaning the President was not implying that newsmen were inefficient) But they sometimes slow down efficiency on the part of others. They are very efficient themselves. That's the trouble, they are too efficient.

Q. Mr. President, has any decision been reached on the National Service bill that Secretary (of War) Stimson wrote about?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q. I mean, there is still a division within the Government ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It isn't a division. What will I say? -- what will I say? -- it's more a question of when. I want to avoid National Service just as long as I possibly can. It may not be necessary to have it. On the other hand, it may be necessary to have it.

Q. Can you say why you want to avoid it as long as you can, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think -- I think it creates a lot more machinery, of necessity -- it makes things in many ways more complimented -- (I mean) complicated; and some people will say regimentation. Well, of course it is. You can't win a war without regimentation. What I am trying to do, honestly, is to keep it off as long as I can. Maybe we can, all the way through. Maybe we will have to come to it.

Q. Do you see anything in the -- in the Kilgore-Pepper bill as a possible substitute for this?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know it. I think I have seen a copy, but I am not familiar enough with it.

Q. (aside) That's all?

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #886  
Executive Office of the President  
March 23, 1943 -- 3.40 P.M., E.W.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing I could -- Steve (Early) could dig up was a letter -- formal letter of resignation from (Brigadier General) Pat Hurley as Minister to New Zealand, and my acceptance of it, which he has all typewritten for you, and you can get outside afterwards. And that's the only news I have got.

Q. Have you anything else in mind for him, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. Oh, Yes. That is all arranged. He is leaving to -- mission to the Middle East -- Near East -- as my Personal Representative of the President, to report on various things.

Q. Is he also on active duty with the Army, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so. I think he draws only one salary.

Q. Will he go to Russia, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: If necessary -- no plans for it -- general utility man.

Q. Major (John) Henry with him, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I think Major Henry is with him. I don't know. (laughter)

MR. EARLY: That's not a military secret.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, are you going to make the Manpower Report public?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. The Manpower Report, made to you by ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What Manpower Report?

Q. The committee with Mr. (James F.) Byrnes, (Harry) Hopkins, (Bernard) Baruch ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, that alleged Manpower Report. (laughter) I think I have covered that the last time I was here.

Q. Is it an alleged report?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, ---

Q. (interposing) Would you care to say anything about it, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- isn't that right, Bill (Lawrence)? I covered it the last time.

Q. Do you care to discuss it? (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you can't catch me that way. I am too old a hand.

Q. Mr. President, would you care to make any comment on (Prime Minister Winston) Churchill's speech?

THE PRESIDENT: On who?

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Churchill.

Q. Churchill's Sunday speech?

THE PRESIDENT: I was very keen about it -- listened to it.

Q. Mr. President, last summer the Government warned

Japan against using poison gas against the Japanese -- against the Chinese, after having received some -- what was described as authentic reports that that had taken place. Similar reports came out of Chungking yesterday. The Chinese high command issued a formal communique on the renewed use of gas on their troops by the Japanese.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't heard about it. I will check up on it.

Q. Can you tell us how the Eden conversations are getting along?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q. (Sir) Anthony Eden's?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. I saw him -- what was it? -- yesterday, before he left. He is going away, and will be back -- soon.

MR. GODWIN: Have you, sir, heard anything from the mine operators or the mine workers?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not a thing. Has anything happened today?

MR. GODWIN: Something has happened. They seem to be getting along. I wondered if you had anything ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Not a thing.

MR. GODWIN: They agreed -- apparently agreed to go along.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think anything has come in. I would have had it in my mail.

Q. Mr. President, about a month ago John G. Winant

(our Ambassador to Great Britain) said he was going back to London in about two weeks, and he seems still to be here. Is he going back?

THE PRESIDENT: He is. I asked him definitely to stay here until Mr. Eden had come and his visit was concluded here. He is going to go back very shortly, I suppose.

Q. Mr. President, do you feel any concern about the inflation bills in Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: They haven't got quite as far as this end of the Avenue yet, so I will have to withhold comment.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Not very good!

MR. GODWIN: Not very good.