

CONFIDENTIAL
Press and Radio Conference #918
Executive Office of the President
September 28, 1943 -- 4.05 P.M., E.W.T.

(there was much noise and talking as the newspapermen filed in, apparently with an air of expectancy)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve (Early) will have mimeographed for you afterwards about the Lend-Lease in the month of August. Aid to the fighting Allies reached a new peak -- 872 million dollars of Munitions, 728 in July. Industrial goods 152 million; about the same in July. And Foodstuffs 90; and 132 in July. Making a total of transfers for the month of one billion, 114 million for August, as against one billion and 18 million for July. That includes aircraft and parts, ordnance and ammunition, watercraft, combat and other vehicles, and so forth. There's no use to go into the figures any more.

I've got scooped -- I got scooped. I had rather hoped that I would be able to announce the fall of Foggia (in Italy) at four o'clock this afternoon, but they beat me to it, and that got in this morning.

The reason I hoped that I could announce it was because it is one of the most important successes from the strategic point of view that the Allies have had yet. It -- in other words, it brings a -- the air forces, land and sea support, measurably nearer to the heart of Germany. From

Foggia, the air forces can give a close cover for all the operations in Italy and the neighboring territory, including the Balkan -- the Adriatic coast, and especially northern Italy.

It is not discussing a military secret when I say that the German staff undoubtedly has drawn circles -- which I strongly recommend to you -- to see where -- what part of Europe those circles cover, using -- using Foggia as a center. And the radius of the circle -- the distance for our planes -- those distances, of course, would vary with the type of plane.

But it means that a very large part of Germany has been sleeping outside of the vulnerable area, and from now on they can no longer do so.

It stands out as a very successful combination -- complete cooperation between the -- not only between different nations -- the British, the Canadians and ourselves -- and I could add to that the French, who are in Sardinia, and -- and Corsica. There is no lost motion. And it represents a -- secondly -- very effective cooperation between land -- ground troops, and the air, and warships.

Probably one of the most interesting things that happened was down in Sicily, during the operations and again up in Salerno Bay, where they had actual engagements between cruisers and destroyers lying offshore, and German tank regiments that were within range on shore.

I don't think I have got anything else.

Q. Could you say anything about your tax

conference today, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) About what?

Q. (continuing) --- Mr. President?

Q. Taxes.

Q. Your conference on taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It is going along all right.

Q. Mr. President, will there be a Message on taxes at any time soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so.

Q. Mr. President, there have been reports that Sumner Welles might be given an important post. Is there anything on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No news at all.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, what about the Internal Revenue vacancy? Have you made any decision about that yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet. You mean (former Commissioner Guy) Helvering?

Q. Helvering.

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q. Mr. President, there have also been a lot of reports about prospective changes in the command of the Army. I wonder if you could discuss that at all today?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

Q. The prospective -- changes in the Army?

THE PRESIDENT: I thought -- I thought you might

ask that question. (laughter) So --- (and here the President went through the motions of rolling up his sleeves)

Q. Roll up your sleeves. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I guess the easiest thing to do is to quote the newspapers.

Q. (aside) That's the safest thing.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I want to do it, because a whole lot of you haven't had a chance to read the newspapers -- the way I read them. (laughter) And in the second instance, I want it down on the record of the Press Conferences. They will get published some day.

So I will start off and read you a few. One news story, and I am not going to comment on it, I am just going to read it; and then a couple of editorials.

The first is a story (by William K. Hutchinson, in the Washington Times-Herald for September 25) by the head of one of the three great news agencies, not the A.P. and not the U.P., but the I.N.S. (International News Service) -- the head of the Washington Bureau. Mind you, this is the head of a Washington agency. I just emphasize that a little.

(reading): "A group of influential White House advisers are planning today to give Lieutenant General Brehon Somervell personal control of the expenditure of 22 billion dollars in the coming year, by a complete reorganization of the entire Army production front.

"This domestic coup d'etat is the objective behind the cabal's efforts to oust General George C. Marshall from

his post as Army Chief of Staff and 'kick him upstairs' to a glorified but powerless world command over Anglo-American forces.

"Informed sources say the motive is to use the Army's vast production program, excepting aircraft, as a political weapon in the 1944 Presidential campaign.

"There is no evidence whatever that either General -- either President Roosevelt or General Marshall has ever heard of the purpose or potential effect of the plot. Knowledge of it, however, has spread terror through the highest ranks of the War Department."

(laughter)

The next is an editorial ("The Chief of Staff") from the New York Herald Tribune on September 22 (written by Walter Millis).

And the Tribune says,

(reading) "The mixture of unauthenticated 'news,' rumor, guesswork and innuendo which has exploded a teapot tempest around the figure of General Marshall is a brilliant example, first, of how to obstruct the conduct of the war, and secondly, of the vices of that whispering-gallery journalism into which we seem to be sinking. When 'reports' -- in quotes -- first appeared that the Chief of Staff might be chosen for Allied Commander-in-Chief of a Western European landing, they were regarded as compliments both to that officer's high abilities and to America's contribution to the war. Then a Service paper discounted the reports, on the obvious grounds

of General Marshall's vital importance in his present post; although, it added rather cryptically, that there were -- quote -- 'powerful interests which would like to eliminate him from Washington' it doubted that the President -- quote -- 'will be induced to transfer him.'

"This was prompted -- promptly embroidered by the Patterson press -- which has been so sleepless in its efforts to spread disunion among the Allies and confusion in their war planning --"

Mind you, this is a respectable paper that says this. (laughter)

(continuing reading): "...into the melodramatic tale that General Marshall has already been 'quietly removed,' because 'he won't subordinate his technical views on global strategy to Messrs. Roosevelt and Churchill' -- end of quote. The latter, according to this tale, wanted to waste American life in the Balkans, in order to protect British imperial interests, instead of going into France, where the war could be more quickly won.

"It is really difficult to characterize this utterly irresponsible sort of poison, distilled out of gossip without the slightest pretense of authentication. But already a care-free Congresswoman (Jessie Sumner, Republican, from Illinois) is repeating it on the floor; all the tongues are wagging furiously, and serious newspapers are speculating over what is no more than just that kind of rumor, for which the Army itself has long had an apt though inelegant adjective."

I don't know what that is. (loud laughter)

(continuing reading): "To us it seems outrageous that the absolutely vital question of the high command of the armies of the United States should be subjected to this process of disruptive and confusing tittle-tattle. It also seems improbable that General Marshall could either be transferred because of pressure or would himself wish a field command which could not reflect a greater prestige upon him than that he holds now. The global character of the war and his own remarkable abilities have combined to make the post of Chief of Staff actually that of a commander over all the field commands; and he has carried the responsibility so well that his name is already secure in the history of this war."

Then, they weren't content with that, and they wrote another one on the 23rd (also by Walter Millis, "The Whispering Gallery") I will just -- of course, some of this relates to other people -- I will just confine it to the question you asked.

(reading): "There was a time when normally intelligent persons were accustomed to suspect the anonymous outgiving, to insist on some reputable sources for their facts, and to accept news only when it had some pretense to confirmation. All that has apparently long gone by. In all the excitement concerning General Marshall, with columns about what -- quote -- 'has been intimated,' or -- quote -- 'has been learned' and what has been said by -- quote -- 'authoritative sources,' there has not appeared a single solid fact backed up by a

man who would put his name to it or supported, explicitly, by evidence that a freshman in history would look at twice.

"The public has reached the state in which anything in a gossip column, any radio commentator's rumor, any unsubstantiated piece of allegedly 'inside' information, or shrewd guesswork, is accepted as readily as -- often more readily than -- the confirmed, authoritatively published fact. This, one submits, is a really dangerous situation. There are many causes for it. Necessary war secrecy is no doubt the basic cause; but it has been aggravated enormously by the much less necessary secretiveness to which this tempts the official mind."

That is perfectly true.

(continuing reading): "The official habit of automatically suppressing every kind of news save the most innocuous has driven the most serious men, perforce, to the 'pipeline' and the keyhole. This in turn creates the opportunity for the calculated hint, the safely anonymous disclosure used by one official or clique as a weapon against someone else. It leads to the unavoidable but dangerous institution of the 'off the record' press conference, in which high personages can vent dissatisfaction, start rumors and cause unintended trouble without having to accept the attendant responsibility.

"The best newspapermen resent this sea of hint and rumor in which they are compelled to work if they are to fulfill their function. The mediocre ones swim along in it, too often without realizing how insubstantial it is in reality.

And the worst and most irresponsible deliberately exploit it -- as the Patterson and McCormick papers are constantly doing -- to create the maximum of division and obstruction and baseless suspicion in the conduct of the war and of affairs. The result is such an episode as that concerning the Chief of Staff. With no facts to go on, the commotion actually tended -- actually tended only to limit the most effective use of General Marshall's high abilities. Fortunately, it seems unlikely to have such results; but this is still a grotesque way in which to wage war. Conditions are partly at fault. Washington officialdom is very, very badly at fault. The press and radio are not without blame. But there will be no real cure until the public learns to demand facts which are facts, and not simply the echoes from a whispering gallery."

(then to Mr. Romagna): You can check on those.

(the story and the two editorials)

Q. Mr. President, can you give us any facts on it tonight?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Can you give us any facts on it?

THE PRESIDENT: The only fact I had today was the Foggia thing.

Q. Is there anything you could say regarding the reports about the status of General Marshall?

THE PRESIDENT: No, obviously not, because somebody will start one of the things referred to in the articles I have just been talking about.

In any case of a transfer, who is going to time the giving out of a proposed transfer? Who is going to do it? Is the press going to do it, by starting a rumor? No. It has got to be done when the time is ripe. There may be discussion about transfers without any decision having been made at this time. That is a perfectly natural thing. In other words, when I say there is no news on a thing, you know what I mean. I mean no news at this time. Now, that may mean that there will be news two weeks from now, a month, or ten months from now, or it might mean, equally, that the damn thing hasn't been decided on, equally. That's-- all I can say now is that there isn't any news on that now.

Q. Mr. President, there seem to be some leaks somewhere ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) --- from prominent places.

THE PRESIDENT: You are right! (laughter)

Q. Can you do anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Too many people. When you get the number of top people that there are in Washington, if you prevent leaks among my favorite old ninety percent, that's a pretty good average. Just like any profession, about ninety percent are pretty damn good eggs. We won't characterize the other ten (percent). (laughter) Now, out of a hundred percent of the top people in this Government, there are probably ten percent who leak badly.

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us anything

about the possibility of Secretary Hull going to Moscow?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing has been decided.

Q. Mr. President, can you comment on a report from London that a new economic arrangement has been entered into by the United States and Great Britain, reportedly covering Lend-Lease and other matters?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. If you can tell me -- tell me details, or anything, because I don't remember any new agreement.

Q. Have you had a report from Mrs. Roosevelt on her trip (to Australia and New Zealand)?

THE PRESIDENT: On what?

Q. From Mrs. Roosevelt, on her trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh my, Yes. We have been talking ever since she got back, getting a lot of news, and still got a lot to get. (laughter)

Q. Did she like Australia, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much.

Q. Sir, there have been reports that Admiral (William H.) Standley might not return to Moscow. Could you say anything about that now?

THE PRESIDENT: Not now. In other words, it's still in the talking stage.

Q. Mr. President, is it definite that Mr. (Norman) Armour will return to Argentina?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q. Ambassador Armour -- Armour?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he is going back, but I don't think the date has been set. I saw him this morning, and I told him to suit himself on the day he actually goes back.

Q. Mr. President, there have been some reports that a new post is being created in the State Department -- high up. Is there anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The new Under Secretary (Edward R. Stettinius) hasn't yet been sworn in.

Q. No, I didn't mean that. I meant new positions.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think probably better let him get sworn in first, and take a look around.

Q. Mr. President, have you any comment to make on General (Douglas) MacArthur's statement, which seems also to have attracted a great deal of attention?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so. There is nothing that I disagreed with. Everything he said is perfectly true. For instance, the island-hopping -- I think I said it in a speech last April or March -- we are all against island-hopping.

Q. That was what was rather perplexing about it, sir, that he should have mentioned it, and given the impression -- at least to the reader of it -- that his plans against island-hopping had been rejected ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No.

Q. (continuing) --- and that we were now committed to a course of island-hopping.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not for a minute. I am very

much against it.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press and Radio Conference #919
Executive Office of the President
October 1, 1943 -- 10.55 A.M., E.W.T.

MR. GODWIN: A hard-working President here, shirt-sleeves and all.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Shirt-sleeve diplomacy, remember that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Go on.

MR. GODWIN: Ed Stettinius (new Under Secretary of State).

THE PRESIDENT: I remember that antedated dollar diplomacy.

MR. GODWIN: Yes, that's right.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: With Ed Stettinius as a shirt-sleeved ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. GODWIN: Ed Stettinius would be a good shirt-sleeved diplomat.

THE PRESIDENT: I think so too.

MR. GODWIN: Don't you think so?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have just -- about three minutes ago I got a flash from General Eisenhower, that at eleven o'clock this morning our troops entered Naples. (cries of "Ah" and "Good")

I don't think I have got anything else. (laughter)

Q. Did he say anything about conditions in the city?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not in here. (the flash)

Q. Mr. President, along that same vein, there have been some recent stories expressing worry over the situation inside Rome, particularly the Vatican. Do you have anything new on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, there's nothing new on it, except the fact that in this advance from the present line I have seen some stories in the papers this morning that the next stand by the Germans would be on the line of Rome. I don't know where that comes from, because it is awfully difficult to guess where the next stand will be. One of the stories said that that was the next line of hills. Well, that is substantially not true, because there are hills between the present line and the Rome line all the way, with the exception of a few plains like the Foggia plain. And I don't know where the Germans are going to make a stand, and I don't think General Eisenhower knows.

However, there is one thing that I think we can say, and that is that naturally the advance is going to continue, and that every effort shall be made by the Allies to prevent any damage to Rome, and of course to the Vatican. We are doing everything possible to prevent active fighting leading to any destruction in Rome. I can't go into any details, but that is the objective.

I think that from all we know, that Rome is

definitely occupied by the Germans. I think it is also clear that the Vatican is surrounded, in the same sense that they have had German troops in the -- what is it? -- the Colonnade, where Saint Peter's -- Saint Peter's Square; and that -- I don't want to say that the Holy Fathers are in a state of siege, but if you have troops in your front yard, and everybody going in or out is questioned and inspected, it isn't a very -- you can't say that it is complete freedom.

And of course, in a sense, our march northward is a march looking toward the liberation of Rome and the Vatican, and the Pope. We are going actually just as fast as we can, and we hope that Rome will be restored, both in culture and the monuments, and the religious capital of the Catholic Church, without any -- any destruction.

The -- in the last analysis, it will be the Germans who will decide it, and not ourselves.

Some people have referred to it as a kind of a crusade to free Rome and the Vatican. I think it has certain elements of a crusade.

I don't think there's anything else on it.

MR. GODWIN: Do you not think, sir, that there is a possibility the Nazi armies will endeavor to induce destruction from our side?

THE PRESIDENT: That is perfectly possible.

MR. GODWIN: Possible -- blame it on ourselves.

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly possible.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, can you tell us anything about ---

Q. (interposing) When you talked -- when you talked with Mr. Walker (Postmaster General) yesterday, did you take up the Commissioner of Internal Revenue?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, ---

Q. (interposing) Can you tell us anything about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- actually I don't think I talked to him at all. I think he just brought somebody in to be introduced.

Q. Can you tell us anything at this time, sir, concerning the future of General Marshall?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) No.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You know, it might be possible, if it hadn't been determined, and there are a -- lots of people's faces would get red.

MR. GODWIN: Did you see the New York Times's story about that this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: They have it.

THE PRESIDENT: Have they?

MR. GODWIN: From London.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, that's another -- this is off the record, of course -- it's one of those curious things, but we all know among ourselves, sometimes, that stories out of here get telegraphed to London, and then a

London date-line put out.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) That is just one of the -- one of the old -- it's part of the game.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell anything about the visit with Norman Armour?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there's anything to tell. I said the other day he is going back, but the date hasn't been determined. That's about all there was. All the rest was public news ---

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- about the Argentine.

Q. (continuing) --- can you tell us the purpose of your conference yesterday with (Lieutenant) General Omar Bradley?

THE PRESIDENT: I wanted to talk over the Italian -- the Sicilian and the Italian campaigns with him. I haven't seen him since the -- since the Tunis campaign.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us when you are going to send a Message to Congress on food, or subsidies? There's a story that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't written anything yet. I am going to decide on the whole thing over the weekend.

Q. What will be the subject?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. What will be the subject?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, there are -- Oh, what? -- ten or fifteen of them.

Q. (interjecting) Which one comes first?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I have got a lot of messages, but I haven't gotten around to sending any this week.

Q. Mr. President, is Mr. Edwin Wilson still Ambassador of Panama, although on the Mediterranean Commission?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know what his official status is. He is going over to be the -- I don't know if it has been announced, or not ---

VOICES: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- to be the American member of the -- what I call the Mediterranean Commission.

Q. Mr. President, the returning Senators who have been around the world have manifested considerable concern as to our ability to use air bases, and so forth, after the war, claiming that six months after it's over, it's over for us commercially too. Is there anything that is being done along the line of establishing ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) We have been working on that for about, I should think, six or eight months, and they are getting along. But, of course, there are so many ifs and ands on the termination of the war.

And then I can say this, that the objectives are rather -- rather simple. In other words, that we will have a free air, and the -- with one -- with one limitation, and that

is that we all feel -- I have talked with the Prime Minister about this, and various other people have talked to other Allies in the war -- we all feel that internal aviation ought to be owned and run by the country itself.

In other words, let -- let me put it this way. Suppose that a Canadian line -- what? -- to the Bahamas ---

Q. (interposing) Sir?

MR. EARLY: Bahamas.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Didn't hear that, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Canadian airline to the Bahamas, or to Puerto Rico. One is British, and the other is American. There is no reason in the world why that line should not be allowed, and allow the Canadian planes to refuel in this country, but not to pick up passengers from, let us say, Buffalo to Miami. You see the point? That -- that would be internal communication and transportation. There is no reason they shouldn't refuel in this country.

And I am -- and -- and I will give you another instance. A British line from England to Australia or New Zealand, headed this way, there is no reason they shouldn't refuel in New York and San Francisco. They ought not to be allowed to pick up American passengers in New York or San Francisco.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And I think we will agree on that.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- could you substitute the word "African" for some of those places?

THE PRESIDENT: Same thing.

MR. GODWIN: These Senators were all upset about the African ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Same thing exactly.

Q. Mr. President, is it your -- your view that this plan of a -- a free air is also shared by Mr. Churchill, I thought you said?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so, Yes.

Q. Yes.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Think -- think it has been under study for quite a long while. And we have -- we have talked it over informally, but it -- it hardly -- hardly reached the stage of talking about individual airports and things like that.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And also, I think we are agreed that commercial and passenger air navigation, where -- where the -- the route can be made to pay for private concerns, should be run by private concerns and not by Government.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) So that that is quite an important point that should be made now, because it will avoid a whole lot of silly discussion later on. In other

words, we don't -- we don't want to put the Government into the commercial and passenger air business.

There would be a few -- probably a few exceptions to that -- to that rule. For instance, we might find some part of the earth that we would want communication with, and on that particular run it wouldn't pay -- you couldn't get private capital to go into it. Well, in that case, if we all thought it -- Congress thought -- such an important point to have communication with it, then probably we could have a Government or a United Nations line, which of course would be run at a loss, but for the sake of opening up new territory.

Q. Well, Mr. President, are they right in their fear that we have no assurance six months after the war of any bases in other countries or islands, or the right of establishing airlines ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, I would say, in the same sense, that we have no assurance that six months after -- after the war is over you and I will be alive.

I think it's going to work out all right.

Q. Mr. President, in your definition of free air, you meant, I presume, free use of airports now being built?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q. Mr. President, does the ownership of those airports make any difference that you see?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. I don't know why, if we say over here in this country that we want American citizens to own American ports, why we would have any right

to say to the British that we wanted to buy the Croydon airport. Mutuality.

Q. Well, part of this agitation seems to be that we should exercise sovereignty over airports built with our money in foreign countries.

THE PRESIDENT: What? How would we like that if they said that to us?

Q. Mr. President, another question enters into this international airways, such for instance as the -- as our making a reciprocal arrangement with England, whereby we carry passengers to England on our planes, and they carry passengers from England to the United States on their planes.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that -- that ---

Q. (adding) It's a matter of rates.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. (continuing) They have a lower standard of living, they have lower wages -- perhaps subsidies -- with the possibility that American competition couldn't last very long. I understand that the airlines want to -- want to have identical rates in a case of that sort.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know in the old days -- you are too young to remember it -- the terrible row of fights between the shipping lines, every line trying to under-cut every other line. And it got to the point finally where you could -- this was the day of the great immigrations to this country -- you could bring immigrants in here from the other side for about 25 dollars apiece, all carried at a loss.

It was an effort to -- to get the mastery of the immigrant trade.

Well finally, as you know, we came to a form of subsidy. A good many years ago it was called -- it was disguised but it was a subsidy, and we might as well meet that frankly -- it was a "mail" subsidy, but actually it was a subsidy. It was not -- it was disguised under the word "mail."

Now I don't know -- we haven't got to the point -- that is -- that is a detail -- of making it possible for American lines to live in competition with other countries. The only other answer is to bring their cost of living, wages, and things like that, up to ours. I think that's a little bit more difficult method of handling it.

Q. Mr. President, those same Senators, I believe, were somewhat concerned over the depletion of our own oil resources by the war effort, when a great deal more of the oil might come out of Iran and Iraq.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have asked -- I have asked the aviation people -- and the Army, because an awful lot goes into trucks -- to find how much we use in comparison with the other Allies. I haven't got those figures, therefore you can't make a comparison until you get the other side of it.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press and Radio Conference #920
Executive Office of the President
October 5, 1943 -- 4.03 P.M., E.W.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody asked me the other day about somebody else who had -- I think it was without very much investigation -- spoken about the supply of oil to the ---

Q. (interjecting) Louder.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- Allied armies and navies. I said the thing had been under constant checkup, and I would find out about it. Well, this is the result. This is not to be taken as a statement from me, but if you want copies of it -- the gist of it -- Bill Hassett will have them.

The impression is getting around that the British have been refraining from supplying oil from their controlled resources, in order to preserve their reserves for future use. But the facts do not support this impression.

The British have been anxious to increase the delivery of oil from their controlled resources for the bunkering of vessels for civilian consumption, and for phases of the war program.. Tanker tonnage has been up until very recently the restricting factor in providing theatres of war and the civil population with an adequate supply of petroleum products.

It has consequently been imperative that tankers be employed in the shortest haul, regardless of supply resources, so that the largest possible amount of oil would be moved in the fewest possible number of ships.

Well, you know -- what is it? -- six months ago we were all of us having an awful time over a sufficient supply of tankers to supply the armies and the fighting fronts -- Australia, and the Mediterranean, and everything else. And the proportion of tankers that had been sunk by submarines was very high. Then about -- beginning about six months ago, the situation began to get better, and we weren't losing nearly as many tankers as we had before that. But the situation of the shortage of tankers was the over-riding factor in the distribution of oil.

The distance from Abadan in Iran -- that is up the Persian Gulf -- for instance, to Noumea, Caledonia -- New Caledonia, is 9 thousand 8 hundred miles, compared with 5 thousand 7 hundred miles from California to Noumea. And from the United -- the United States Gulf -- Gulf of Mexico -- and Caribbean ports to the United Kingdom was 46 hundred miles compared with 11 thousand miles from Abadan round the Cape -- Cape of Good Hope -- to the United Kingdom.

It is obvious that one ship will therefore carry more oil from California to Noumea than a ship from Abadan to Noumea. And the same way, the ship would carry more oil, because of the shorter distance, from the United States Gulf and Caribbean area to the U.K. than from the Persian Gulf to the U.K. When ships are scarce, the increased amount that can be carried on the short haul as compared with long haul is the controlling factor.

Now that was the condition until very recently,

and until the Mediterranean was pretty well opened up. And the opening up of the Mediterranean was the result of our occupation of Sicily and the lower part of Italy. Had the British been permitted to increase the supply from the Persian Gulf, before the Mediterranean was opened up, a wastage of our very meager supply of tankers would have resulted, and the extent of our military and naval operations would have been seriously restricted.

When, however, a short while ago the Mediterranean began to open up to our ships, and it appeared tanker tonnage would increase in relation to the demand -- that was less sinkings -- the War Shipping Administration, the British Ministry of War Transport, the Petroleum Administration for War, and other Government agencies, began to arrange for a re-allocation of the tanker tonnage so as to alleviate the disproportionate drain on the reserves of the United States in the Western hemisphere, and at the same time to effect a distribution of the supply of oil between American and British controlled sources. And that will require of the British a fairer and larger share.

Such a program is merely carrying out the policy directive long since issued by the War Mobilization Committee, at my suggestion, to all interested agencies, that in order to relieve the demands on our own crude oil reserves and refining capacity, crude oil production as well as existing refining capacity, primarily from the Middle East and secondarily for the Caribbean area, should be increased and used to the

fullest extent possible within the limitations of shipping facilities for meeting the heavy demands for petroleum in the war effort.

The improved transportation situation, through the increase in tanker tonnage, and the opening up of the Mediterranean, has enabled us to make definite progress with this program. Arrangements are now being made to increase the movement of gasoline and distillate fuels from Abadan -- that is the Persian Gulf -- to points previously supplied from Western hemisphere sources. Substantial shipments of crude oil are being brought to our own East Coast from the Caribbean in order to utilize fully our refining capacity.

Within the limits of shipping, everything is being done to reduce military demands of the United Nations on our own oil reserves and refining capacity.

In other words, the scare is proving not to be a scare. The situation is well in hand.

Q. Mr. President, you said that isn't to be taken as a statement from you. Is it a statement from anyone else of the situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You can say that I explained it, but put it third-person. Don't -- don't put it in a quote.

Q. Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. (continuing) --- the Ways and Means Committee has reacted rather unfavorably to the tax program, and I

wonder if you would care to make any comment on it?

THE PRESIDENT: On the tax thing?

Q. The reaction of the Ways and Means Committee to it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. The next action is on the part of the Ways and Means Committee.

I had brought over to show you one of the most beautiful -- I don't know whether it's a sword or a scimitar. You can look at it after the conference. It was sent me by the King of Arabia (Ibn Saud) whose two sons were here the other day, you know. A very wonderful piece of Arabic workmanship. And one of the most valuable parts on it is the Damascus blade, which goes back many centuries. The -- the mounting is much -- on the scabbard -- much more modern, but the Damascus blades, so Amir Faisal told me the other day, are extremely rare. Of course, the world has not known how to make Damascus or Toledo blades, I suppose, for a good many centuries, but this blade is an original piece of Damascus steel, and I thought you would be interested in seeing it.

For just a very small handful of you, I might add that this was a gift not to Franklin Roosevelt but to the President of the United States. (laughter)

Q. (interjecting) Are you referring to the Ways and Means Committee? (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And it won't cost the taxpayers anything.

Q. Mr. President, did the call of the sons of the

King of Arabia have any bearing on the oil question which you were just discussing?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. No, it just happened one followed the other, that's all.

War operations -- there isn't very much news. In the -- in Italy, the Fifth Army and the Eighth Army are consolidating their positions, and making fairly good progress up the peninsula. As I said the other day, nobody knows yet where the Germans are going to make their next main stand. And I would call attention to the fact that in the -- in the center, and to a certain extent on the right flank, they have to traverse mountain ranges that go as high as eight or nine thousand feet high. So it isn't just an afternoon's walk.

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us something about the organization of the Fifth army, sometimes referred to as an American army and then with reference to a British?

THE PRESIDENT: They are both. Both British and American.

Q. Mr. President, we understand that your former Ambassador, Mr. (William C.) Bullitt, is running for office up in Philadelphia.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) Have you any comment on his candidacy, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not politically. As you know, Bill is an old friend of mine. I can't comment on -- on his

campaign any more than I can campaign for mayor in any other part of the country, except the State of New York. That's old stuff. I was very, very glad to hear that he was going to run, when he told me about it.

Q. Anything at all, Mr. President, on your visit last evening with the Chilean Foreign Minister (Joaquin Fernandez)?

THE PRESIDENT: I had a very good talk with him.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any observations on a Japanese code that would permit the beheading of an Allied aviator?

THE PRESIDENT: I have nothing more than what the papers have got.

Q. Would you care to express any opinions on that action?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that the country has drawn its own conclusions from it. It isn't the first instance of barbaric conduct on the part of the Japanese. We have a number of other instances -- not of beheading but of the kind of inhuman, cruel treatment that -- I suppose this is the worst thing I could say to the Japanese -- shows their lack of civilization. That is the one thing that gets under their skin, when you accuse them of not being civilized. I think you can use that. I don't very much care if I offend their feelings. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, you made an exception in the case of New York State. We have an election on up there.

Is there something you would care to say about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Only my usual. I expect to vote for my old friend and associate who was part of my administration when I was Governor -- General Haskell.

Q. Mr. President, we understand that Mr. (James F.) Byrnes (War Mobilization Director) is calling an inter-departmental meeting of interested offices in connection with the immediate benefits to soldiers who are coming home incapacitated for further -- for further service. Could you tell us something about what you might have in mind in connection with such a program?

THE PRESIDENT: That's why the conference is being called -- to talk it over.

Q. Are there any specific proposals, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet. We want to hear everybody first.

Q. When is that conference, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Very soon, I think.

Then, on the other front, the Solomons and New Guinea, I think some attention -- a little more attention should be given to the -- what amounts to a real defeat of the Japanese, in their retirement from the central Solomon Islands.

There isn't a day goes by that our air and our naval forces don't account for quite a number of Japanese barges, and apparently these barges are both wood and steel. And we are destroying a great many of them all the time. Of

course, they are not large ships, but the destruction of those barges must mean a great deal to the Japs in slowing up their movements, either for defense or -- or offense in that area. You have read -- read about it so often that I think we are apt to overlook the fact that in the past -- what? -- thirty days we have destroyed a very large number of barges, which is the only means of transport that they are using from island to island, with of course occasional very small escorts -- destroyers. We are also getting a certain number of those escorts.

Well, the net result is that it's a proof, I think, of Japanese weakness in that whole area, both on New Guinea, Salamaua, and Lae, and Finschhafen, and their last-minute evacuation from a number of these places. We are getting a good many of them when they start to evacuate. It is in line with their mass retreat at -- at Kiska, and the whole operation is proving that the legend of Japanese invincibility is not being carried out by them.

I have got only one other thing. I will make it off the record -- entirely off the record. It's just -- just another instance of -- I will be polite and call it carelessness on the part of some people in this country. And this doesn't apply to the press -- it may apply to certain small sections of the press.

I got from England the other day, it came from our Embassy over there, a very simple statement. It came from Winant.

(reading): "The Daily Mirror today publishes -- that is the English Daily Mirror -- publishes the following dispatch from its New York correspondent."

I don't know the man's name; there's no use to put it in here.

(continuing reading): "A strong group of United States Senators will open a campaign in Congress next week to have General MacArthur made supreme commander of the Asiatic war theatre. This group openly expresses -- mind you, this is the New York dispatch -- openly expresses disapproval of the appointment of Lord Louis Mountbatten to Southeastern Asia, believing that the entire campaign should be under MacArthur.

"Senator Bridges, who will lead the -- this is all quotes -- lead the Senate campaign for MacArthur said today -- quote -- 'We have recently won much new support in the Senate.' The Senate battle is being -- I love it -- the Senate battle is being preceded by a vitriolic anti-Mountbatten campaign in a section of the American press. The Ohio State Journal contrasts the 'sincere attitude' of MacArthur with 'the somewhat flamboyant air of Mountbatten' adding 'it would be a tragic thing if MacArthur were to be shorn of his authority while in London a glamour boy is elevated.'

"Some papers are publishing letters from readers containing insulting references to Mountbatten. Here is an example, quote, 'If it turns out that America's number one hero MacArthur is to play a subordinate role to ex-playboy

Mountbatten in the Far East, a wave of anger will sweep this nation that will bode certain Washington people no good."

And Winant's only comment at the bottom is, "This type of press story is certainly not helpful." Which I might add is an under-statement on the part of the American Ambassador.

Well, that kind of thing doesn't help this war. That's all right too. The press has a perfect right to do that sort of thing. Most of the press -- a great majority -- wouldn't think of doing a thing like that. It isn't a campaign thing then, within the press as a whole, for doing it; but we all know that there are certain papers and certain individuals who not only don't hesitate to do a thing like that, but rather specialize in it.

Now as a matter of fact, all these stories written with malice aforethought or otherwise, they show an extraordinary ignorance of geography -- my old hobby. You have got a situation today where the only way that MacArthur could get to Mountbatten, or Mountbatten get to MacArthur, say -- suppose Mountbatten wanted to go down and talk to MacArthur? How would he get there? He can't go by air direct. He has to go from Burma back -- he has got to back-track. He has to go southwest to Colombo, Ceylon, and then follow the rather risky flight that the Senators took about a month ago. It's a 32 mile -- 32 hundred mile hop from Colombo, Ceylon, to Australia. It's always a risk in a plane making a 32 hundred mile hop with no landing place. And the same way, if MacArthur

wanted to see Mountbatten personally, he would have to make that long hop to Colombo and then back-track and go northeast up -- up to Burma.

Physically, those two theatres of operations -- Burma on the one side and Australia on the other -- are just as far apart as we are from -- from France. Well, you can't have a -- a command of an area or two areas that are one thousand miles apart, that is perfectly obvious. It's a -- it's an entirely different operation. The supplies to Australia, for example, all come from over here, from San Francisco or the East Coast, through the Panama Canal. All the supplies for the Burma forces and the China forces go -- did go around the Cape of Good Hope. Now, most of them are going through the Mediterranean, since we have got it opened up. They go to Karachi in India, and then across India by rail to our forces in Burma, and then over the mountains to our forces in China.

If -- if, for example, any of our commanding officers in Australia wanted to go up and see Chennault in China, they couldn't go. They would have -- they would have to go clear back to Colombo, Ceylon, and then to Burma, and then over the hill to China.

So it's a question of -- what shall I say? -- not even adolescent geography because most adolescents know their geography better than that.

So that's all off the record. It's just for information.

Q. Mr. President, is it still too early to say anything about Secretary Hull's going to Moscow?

THE PRESIDENT: You would have to ask him.

Q. Ask him?

THE PRESIDENT: I saw him this morning. He hadn't made up his mind when to spill the beans. (laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press and Radio Conference #921
Executive Office of the President
October 12, 1943 -- 4.21 P.M., E.W.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the important news today is the -- the agreement that has been made between Britain and Portugal for the use of certain bases in the Azores.

The origin of this was at the conference between Mr. Churchill and me last May when he was here. And the reason is -- perfectly simple one -- is that it was made by the British because it was based on a treaty of alliance between Britain and Portugal that goes back, the inception of it -- as I remember it -- in the 13th century. It's quite far back.

Q. 14th.

Q. 14th.

THE PRESIDENT: 14th? 14th century, that's right -- thirteen hundred and something (1373).

And it has been an actual treaty, still in existence, that was made as a formal document in the reign of King Charles First, or King Charles Second. In other words, round -- round the -- I think it was Charles Second -- around the end of the 17th century.

And you will probably all want to know where we get off. Well, first of all, where do Britain and ourselves get off? We have assured Portugal -- so has Britain -- that we have no desire to gain territory by taking the Azores away from Portugal. Portugal has that assurance from us as

well as Britain. And in the second place, on the actual use of the Azores, I think that all you can say at the present time is that Britain and ourselves are allies, trying to win the war; that we conduct joint operations. And while we have no agreement with Portugal, it seems obvious that in -- what shall I call it? -- in emergency cases we would use British facilities to protect American life and American ships. Period.

Q. Mr. President, in your speech in May 1941, you also spoke of the importance of the Cape Verde Islands. I wonder if they entered the picture at all now?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at the present time.

Q. Sir, you speak of these assurances giving -- given to Portugal by us. Are they recent assurances, or the old ones we gave in 1941?

THE PRESIDENT: Recent. Since last May.

Q. Mr. President, can you say anything about other United Nations going in there in emergencies also?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think it might apply to not necessarily United Nations, but nations that are at war, just the way we are. I don't think, for instance, that El Salvador, which is a United Nation, would use the facilities, because I don't think they have got any ships running across the ocean.

Q. Mr. President, the government of Venezuela announced yesterday that their President is coming up here to make a visit. Can you tell us something about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I invited him sometime ago,

and I understand he is coming up -- I have forgotten the exact date -- in January, I think. But you had better let me -- let me check on that. Wilson (Brown the President's Naval Aide), will you check on that? I have got a cable in today. It's either December or January.

Q. Mr. President, have you any comment on the fact that a vice president has been appointed in Argentina?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't even know it. (laughter)
Don't say I said that, because I should. (more laughter)

I have got some statistics here, which if you want to use them I will get -- I haven't had them mimeographed, but they are rather interesting.

In that big raid of our planes out of England the other day, when we sent out 855 planes last Friday against Bremen and Vegesack, I would like people in this country to get some idea of how they are contributing to a raid of that kind, and what -- what -- what it means in the way of supplies, quite aside from the training of men and the building of planes, to make that raid possible.

They carried some two and a half million pounds of bombs. It's a graphic way of showing how the united effort in this country is helping to wage the war on the other side.

Two and three quarter million rounds of ammunition.

Q. Million, or billions, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Million -- two and three quarter million rounds of ammunition.

Eight hundred pounds of maps. (exclamations from the newspapermen)

They flew a distance of at least 850 thousand miles. And in taking off and landing and taxi-ing, they traveled over 14 hundred miles on the ground.

They burned almost a million gallons of gasoline. And that is one reason for cutting down on automobile travel in this country.

And they burned 25 thousand gallons of oil.

There were more than five thousand American crew members that took part in it, and they were over on the flight -- they were over enemy territory for periods ranging from two to six hours.

Then, on the -- on the naval end, I have said something before about the -- what I thought was almost a lack of credit for what our submarines are doing in the Pacific. It's an amazing record. And I think I mentioned before that we believe, honestly, that we are sinking a great deal larger Jap tonnage each month than they can possibly replace. The average monthly sinkings during the past six months, mostly by American submarines, is approximately 130 thousand tons of their shipping a month. Well, you see, that is about a million four hundred thousand tons, if it goes on at the yearly rate, and half of that, about -- about 750 thousand tons for six months -- 700 thousand tons.

And I got one other thing, as a suggestion to people in this country, which comes from the other side. Actually,

it came from one of the newspapermen over there, who sensed the feelings of people in the -- in fact, he had come out -- been in and come out of one of the occupied parts. And I think that it is very important to the morale of the French in France for us to occasionally give a hand to certain people in certain happenings in the occupied countries. For example, France as a whole isn't aware, because they haven't got many methods -- means of communications -- they are thrilled at the liberation of Corsica. And this particular man suggested to me that if a few people in this country could give a little "glad hand," it would be a grand thing for the morale of the French people everywhere. Corsica is a very tangible part of France itself, although it happens to be an island right off France and governed by France itself; and if people could say something about, "Here is the first instance of a place right close to the mainland of France which has been liberated from the German yoke." We need a little bit more of -- as he put it -- of applause rather than Bronx cheers.

Well, I don't think I have got anything else.

Q. Mr. President, in connection with these figures, a few months ago you called this a war of liberation ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) --- a war of survival, rather. The war seems now to be going into a new stage. Do you think that the war of survival still applies, with figures like this?

THE PRESIDENT: I said a war of survival? About what? Japanese shipping?

Q. No. In providing -- giving a name to the present world war?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh -- Oh. It's a different thing altogether. I don't know, I had forgotten that. (laughter)

Q. Hitler might call it that, might he not?

THE PRESIDENT: I never read his mind. (adding)
Thank God. (then to Charlie Fredericks, his personal bodyguard)
Let me have a cigarette in that back pocket (of his coat hanging on the chair).

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

(the newsmen started to leave)

THE PRESIDENT: I tell you what -- I have got one thing. I thought somebody would ask the question, but I didn't hear it. (laughter)

Ah, I've got it. I was looking for my cigarette case. (it was on his desk under some papers)

You remember we took up last week the question, which I ran down, about the use of oil -- British oil versus American oil. And of course, when the story was given out by one of the travelers on the Hill -- five of them who were fellow travelers -- (laughter) -- we demonstrated quite clearly that if a year ago, before the Mediterranean was opened and when the submarine sinkings were very high, that if we had adopted the policy of using raw materials in accordance with the size or wealth of a country, or available supplies, that we would have got far less oil to the battlefronts. And evidently this particular gentleman would have advocated

at that time that we should have used oil solely in connection with the ownership of it, and regardless of the fighting needs of getting the oil there with the -- with the least risk.

And I don't think that you can run a war that way. It isn't conducive to the winning of a war, if you base -- base the winning of it on who owns the oil, and where. You use it the nearest place you can get it, if you want to win the war.

Well, another question came up. There was one gentleman, I may be -- I may be misquoting him, who talked about 30 thousand civilian trucks which had been sent to Australia, obviously with the implication that we shouldn't have sent civilian trucks to Australia. So I checked up on it, before I got back this morning, and I found the following facts.

In the first place, the basic figures that were cited by this fellow traveler are wrong. He said 30 thousand trucks a year, at least he was so quoted. Actually, in two and a half years we have shipped to Australia a total of 21 thousand, 135 trucks. It's rather a serious discrepancy. And during that same period we have turned over for civilian use in the United States 750 thousand trucks. Well, that's neither here nor there, it's just a little comparison.

But there are certain other factors. We had on hand in this country a very large number of trucks at the outbreak of the war, a far larger portion of trucks in the United States than they had in Australia, proportionately.

And incidentally, in Australia, those of you who

have been there know that in the -- in each State they have a different gauge of railroad track. You can't -- you can't -- you can't put things onto a railroad at one end of Australia and send it to the other end without changing from one freight car to another about four separate times, which is not conducive to quick or efficient transportation in time of war.

The result was that they needed relatively more highway use for their freight and the moving of supplies, relatively, than we do here. They needed, in other words, relatively more trucks than they did railroad cars. But the chief trouble was -- in this statement -- was that the trucks were called civilian trucks. They were only civilian trucks in the sense that they were not of military design. That is the distinction which is made in the War Department.

And of these trucks some 12 thousand of the 21 thousand sent were commandeered by the Australian army for straight military transport. Over half were immediately commandeered, and all the others that were run by private companies -- not the government itself -- the majority were used by the private companies for war transportation.

And then finally, they failed to note, in this statement, that all of these trucks were ordered with the approval of General MacArthur.

So much for that.

I have got a flock more things, but you've got enough today. (laughter) |

MAY CRAIG: Well, Mr. President, I would like to ask, as long as you are commenting on the five travelers, will you comment on the million men that could be saved with Russian bases?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes! I've got one on that!
(laughter) May, you're a mind-reader.

Oh, let's see, where is that?

(pause)

Well now, -- now let's get -- let's get geographical. As I understand it, he said we would save a million American lives if the Russians would let us use their bases in the Pacific.

Well, let's do a little old-fashioned practical work -- on you, May. (laughter)

MAY CRAIG: (interjecting) Can't do arithmetic.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Supposing -- supposing, just you and I, supposing we were to use those Russian bases. What would be the first thing we would do? We would have to send some troops over there, and some labor, and then we would send a lot of planes.

What do you think the Japs would do then? They would try to stop it, is that right? They would try to stop us.

How would they stop us? Maybe they didn't find out about it until we got some planes there. They would start invading Siberia, wouldn't they?

Now, if they invaded Siberia, I suppose the Russians would resist, wouldn't they? But Russia -- suppose Russia

isn't ready to go to war with Japan at the present time, what happens then?

In other words, doesn't it all come down to the practical question: Does Russia -- is Russia going to war with Japan at the present time?

Suppose Russia says, "No, we don't want to, at the present time, we have got something more important in hand; we have knocked Germany down three or four times; if we can knock her down three or four times more, maybe she will take the count"? That is rather practical.

Now are you really able to say that in general strategy that we ought to stand up and demand that Russia go to war with -- with Japan? I don't think you and I know enough about it.

Q. Mr. President, in the New York Times this morning there is a rather thoughtful story out of London, that all this discussion about joint rights in the air bases and oil fields all over the world, which have been emphasized by the Senators, is an unfortunate thing. Is that the way you feel about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I got an excerpt from some of the London papers.

We always have to remember that when public servants get up in a legislative body, or in an administration -- either one -- and say things, and not -- the effect of which is not carefully thought out -- this is the press too -- it does create bitterness in other places. And I don't think one of our roles -- that is on the part of those people and papers

that would like to win the war -- that doesn't mean everybody -- I don't think we ought to deliberately go out and try to create bitterness. And yet some of these British editorials have shown bitterness.

For instance, the Daily Telegraph charged that "the so called secrets, which of course weren't secrets, disclosed by the Senators during closed sessions of the Congress were childish nonsense." Then it went on and called for public debate on the whole matter, on the general ground that long-range results will probably be excellent, improving and making even more lasting Anglo-American cooperation.

Now that is why I am of two minds. Oh, it takes me a certain amount of time to dig up stuff like what I have been talking about this morning, and last week. It's time consuming. And -- but it -- it -- it does -- it does lead up to a more sound public opinion. It gets them interested; teaches them geography; it teaches them problems of -- of supply; moving men overseas; the need for more -- more ships; and the need -- need for more planes, more everything else.

So, in -- in one sense I -- it's a damn nuisance -- perfectly easy to answer; and in the other sense probably it's a good thing. It makes for publicity and discussion and everything like that. And I have -- I have never -- I have never deliberately dodged that, have I?

Q. No sir, but basically can you give any assurance as to guarantees that might satisfy these people a little bit, guarantees as to progress going beyond the immediate present?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think a large majority are not deeply hurt by it. I think they understand that it's part of democracy.

Q. Mr. President, there is another conflict of testimony that you might clear up. One of the Senators said that the British -- British officers wore American uniforms to avoid being shot by the French. Another report is that they wore the American uniform because they -- the pants are long-legged and protected them against mosquitos. Could you tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that -- I think that's a matter that is very properly for Senatorial debate. (laughter) But, as long as I was talking about trousers, it had better be a closed debate. (more laughter)

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

MAY CRAIG: You did all right.