

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #983
Executive Office of the President
(Monday) November 27, 1944 -- 12.33 P.M., E.W.T.

THE PRESIDENT: I am the only person in this country who can't bet on the Army and Navy game.

Q. Why is that?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Can't you?

THE PRESIDENT: I have to be absolutely impartial.

Q. Not quietly, between you and "Pa"?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. (laughter)

Q. Have to sit on both sides of the field at once.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that I have to do.

MR. EARLY: The Army has the edge this year.

THE PRESIDENT: First half on one side, and the second half on the other side, so I'm all right. That doesn't mean that "Pa" can't bet.

GENERAL WATSON: No, sir. I'm taking anybody's even money that I can get. (laughter)

Q. You're really taking them.

Q. We are all here.

THE PRESIDENT: All here?

Well, I have to announce with very great regret, deep regret, the resignation of the Secretary of State.

And I have seen him, of course, quite a good deal.

I have been out there three or four times, and had long talks with him. And his doctors tell him, and he feels, that his complete recovery would be retarded by having the responsibility during that period of recovery. And he feels that it isn't right to the country to have him unable to carry out all his functions at this time.

Of course, he has kept in very close touch with the Department, and saw a good many people out there -- probably too many -- and he is coming along all right. It's one of those long things. He had had it two years ago, or three years ago, I think, when he went down to Miami and he had to stay for about three months. But he really is -- he is coming along all right; and the main thing to do, from my point of view, is to think a little bit about his recovery, to take the responsibility off of his shoulders at this time.

He will act -- I don't know what you would call it, but he will keep in very close touch with me, and be in and around Washington for a while, a good while; and I suppose you can say that he would act as -- to me -- as adviser on foreign policy. I won't give him a sheepskin for it. But he actually will be, as a matter of practical fact, of course, in close touch and do everything that he possibly can to carry on and carry out the wonderful start that he has made on the United Nations' plan, aiming towards peace during everybody's lifetime at least.

And I don't think there's any more news than that.

Q. How about a successor?

THE PRESIDENT: I just said there was no more news than that.

Q. Is that effective immediately, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Mr. President, for our guidance, do you expect to name a successor almost immediately, or can we expect that Mr. Stettinius will act ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I said there was no more news on that.

Q. Mr. President, you have gone through the form -- the formalities of submitting a resignation and your acceptance of it ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) --- have all been gone through?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Will there be any exchange of letters made public?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. The reason is that his letter of resignation -- that one -- is a short letter of resignation. No news in it. And the other letters are personal letters between the Secretary and me.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I told him yesterday that under the circumstances I felt I had to go ahead and accept it.

Q. The resignation effective as of yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No. When a successor is appointed.

Q. Effective when a successor is appointed?

THE PRESIDENT: When a successor is appointed.

Q. Mr. President, are you seeing Acting Secretary Stettinius today?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes. (adding) In fact, he is lunching with me.

Q. To change the subject a little bit, Mr. President, we hear that you might be taking a vacation pretty shortly.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I might go to -- I am -- almost any point, north, east, south and west. I am -- my plans, as I said before, are somewhat in a state of flux. I might surprise everybody. That is one reason why we have to keep -- go back to the -- to the old schedule of off the record.

Q. Mr. President, this is rather trivial, but some people are wondering how you are getting along with your cigarette supplies? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I am not smoking nearly so many. That is one reason.

Q. Because of the shortage, Mr. ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. Because of the shortage, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Because of my throat. I haven't smoked nearly so many cigarettes since last -- since Hobcaw. I learned to do -- not to do without them, because that would be tough -- (more laughter) -- but instead of the two packs a day that I did smoke, now I smoke substantially less than one pack, which makes it easier. And I am not hoarding.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

(hurried exits)

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

(laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #984
Executive Office of the President
December 19, 1944, at 4.15 p.m., e.w.t.

THE PRESIDENT: How are you?

Q. Have a good rest?

THE PRESIDENT: Good time. (then to Earl Godwin, sitting down in May Craig's chair) You threw May out!

MR. GODWIN: You look good.

THE PRESIDENT: The first thing that happens ---

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) She says age before beauty!

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- the day I get home and you throw her out. (laughter) I think that's pretty tough. That's one thing I can't court-martial you on.

MR. GODWIN: Good.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether there's anything else I can court-martial you on.

MR. GODWIN: You can't court-martial me, I've got my draft card.

THE PRESIDENT: You don't think I could? And I could make it stick. That's easy.

MR. GODWIN: I belong to the musicians union. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You see, I can induct anybody.

MR. GODWIN: Can you?

THE PRESIDENT: I can induct any one of you.

MR. GODWIN: There's my draft card.

THE PRESIDENT: And the minute you get inducted, you're subject to court-martial.

Q. (aside) Serve you right if you inducted him.

MAY CRAIG: You can't induct us (ladies).

THE PRESIDENT: Pretty close to it. I can take you into the WAVES -- that's my own particular thing. How would you like to belong to the WAVES?

MAY CRAIG: What?

THE PRESIDENT: How would you like to belong to the WAVES?

MAY CRAIG: I'd like the WAC better.

THE PRESIDENT: Really?

MAY CRAIG: They go places.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

MR. EARLY: Good for you, May. (laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I won't say Merry Christmas yet, I see you all on Friday. I hear that your general health is all right. I have been getting reports once a day from Steve (Early) as to each person and his conduct, ---

MR. EARLY: (interjecting, laughing) Oh!

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and so forth. So far, it has checked pretty well. You are to be congratulated on such good reports. Otherwise, I don't know anything. The "big chief" is here, sitting in his accustomed chair. He has been away a long time. Threw a lady out, in order to get it!

(laughter)

MR. GODWIN: You embarrass me. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got any news.

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Bevin said in London last week that you initialed the Quebec British plan for British stabilization of Greece. Could you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't that denied?

Q. Don't think so, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: State Department? I think so.

Q. No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think they said something in a more polite form than that.

Q. Is it to be denied, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't bring it up again. I think it's contentious. I found a new word when I was away: contentious. (laughter) I wouldn't bring it up. There is nothing in that.

Q. Mr. President, some of your strongest supporters in the Senate, as well as some of your most ardent opponents ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Sounds as if you are getting contentious again. (laughter)

Q. (continuing) Let's just leave it your strongest supporters then -- went into detail yesterday, and some of them today, I think, in saying that they thought the time had come for you, the President, to re-state the foreign policy of the United States. That came from Senator Pepper and Senator

Guffey also. Is there any comment you would care to make, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't think so. I wouldn't try it yourself, to re-state it, either.

Q. I beg your pardon?

THE PRESIDENT: If I were you, I wouldn't try to re-state it yourself, any of you. It's on the record.

Q. Mr. President, in that connection, the Evening Star last night had a headline which said "United States opposes partitioning of Poland," whereas the Times-Herald had a headline "United States supports partitioning of Poland."

THE PRESIDENT: Now that ---

Q. (continuing) I wonder if you would care to indicate your preference as between those two? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well now, there I am perfectly willing to state my preference. I much prefer the Star to the other paper in Washington. I didn't say newspaper, I said paper.

Q. What is the distinction, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. What's the distinction?

THE PRESIDENT: Just that distinction between -- between a decent paper and a -- a -- another type of paper.

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Contentious! That's the way.

MAY CRAIG: Well, Mr. President, this is a contentious question, but I would like a serious answer. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You would find it awful hard to get, May.

MAY CRAIG: There's a good deal of question as to

whether you are going right or left, and I would like your opinion on which way you are going?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going down the whole line a little left of center. I think that was answered, that question, eleven and a half years ago, and still holds.

MAY CRAIG: But you told us a little while ago that you were going to have Dr. Win-The-War and not Dr. New Deal.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) That's right.

MAY CRAIG: (continuing) The question is whether you are going back to be Dr. New Deal after the war ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no. No. Keep right along a little to the left of center, which includes winning the war. That's not much of an answer, is it?

MAY CRAIG: No. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: However, you have broken the ice, May.

Q. Mr. President, do you care to discuss the budget for the next fiscal year?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I haven't had a chance to see Harold (Smith) today. I am going to see him tomorrow.

Q. Mr. President, if you are going down a little left of center, how does that match with the six appointments you sent up to the Hill on the State Department?

THE PRESIDENT: Very well.

Q. Would you call them a little left of center?

THE PRESIDENT: I call me -- myself -- a little left of center.

Q. You call what, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I call myself a little left of center. I have got a lot of people in the Administration -- oh, I know some of them are extreme right and extreme left, and everything else -- a lot of people in the Administration, and I cannot vouch for them all. They work out pretty well, on the whole, in the -- in the course of ----- . Just think -- think, this crowd here in this room -- My Lord, you will find every opinion from -- between left and extreme right.

Q. We are not in your Administration, Mr. President.

Q. (interposing) Do you find them all for you?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Do you find them all for you?

THE PRESIDENT: No. A surprising number are.

Q. Mr. President, would you welcome, and do you see the prospect of an early conference with Mr. Churchill and Mr. Stalin?

THE PRESIDENT: I saw that. Yes. A highly speculative story.

Q. I asked you if you saw the prospect of an early conference?

THE PRESIDENT: I said it's highly -- highly -- what? -- what was the word I used about it? -- speculative.

Q. I would like to eliminate the speculation and go to the highest source. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I know you would. So would I. You are not the only one. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, in being a little left of center, you have noticed in your life that many a progressive or liberal stays where he is and becomes hopelessly conservative as time goes on.

THE PRESIDENT: And you are exactly the same age as I am.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, do you feel that you are getting more conservative?

MR. GODWIN: I think I am.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you?

MR. GODWIN: That's in contrast to some of the things I see.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's -- that's bad. You must be older than I am. (much laughter) Old age hasn't crept up on me yet. You ought to be careful. You ought to watch that; it's a serious thing when it happens.

MR. GODWIN: You watch that Senate a while.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: You watch that Senate a while, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) That's right.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- you'll find out where you are.

Q. But no flat statement has been made, nor a date fixed for your next meeting with Mr. Stalin and Mr. Churchill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Not true.

Q. Mr. President, whatever became of the

generalship for Mayor LaGuardia? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That is -- what's the word? -- it's a French phrase: entrant.

Q. What's that?

Q. (aside) Bring the axe.

Q. Could you interpret that, sir -- translate it?

THE PRESIDENT: If that means anything to you, it's grand.

Q. He has still got the uniforms. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, did Mr. Churchill ever sign the Atlantic Charter?

THE PRESIDENT: Nobody ever signed the Atlantic Charter. Now that's an amazing statement.

Q. Where is it, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you're thinking in awfully -- oh, what will I say? -- banal phrases and thought.

There isn't any copy of the Atlantic Charter, so far as I know. I haven't got one. The British haven't got one. The nearest thing you will get is the radio operator on the AUGUSTA and on the PRINCE OF WALES. That's the nearest thing you will come to it. It's one of the things that was agreed to on board ship, and there was no formal document.

And the aides were directed to have the scribbled thing, which was -- great many corrections, some I suppose in Mr. Churchill's handwriting, and some in mine, and some in the -- who was it? -- Sir Alec Cadogan's handwriting, some in scraps of paper, some in Sumner Welles's handwriting -- and

the aides were directed to have it sent off to the British government, and to the United States government, and released to the press. That is the Atlantic Charter.

Q. Well, Mr. President, is it not true that all of the United Nations have signed the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Oh, Yes.

Q. (continuing) --- obligations of the Atlantic Charter ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) There -- Yes, that ---

Q. (continuing) --- through the Declaration of Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that was done on the first of January, 1942, ---

Q. (interjecting) '43. 2?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and that's all signed.

There was one amusing thing that happened to it. The original was, I think, typewritten in the State Department. And finally, on the first of January, 1942, came in -- the Ambassadors came in a great part of that day. We had two or three sessions. And we all signed up. And then a little later on Brazil and a couple of other countries signed, over in the Dining Room in the White House, which was all decorated with flags.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that right?

MR. EARLY: That was Mexico and the Philippines.

Q. Mexico and the Philippines.

THE PRESIDENT: Mexico and the Philippines.

That's where I got caught. Nobody caught on. The press was there, though.

And the British Ambassador was sitting on my right -- I mean the Brazilian Ambassador was sitting on my right, and the copy wasn't there! I delivered a speech, and then asked the signatory powers to sign. But there was nothing to sign. It was in the Department safe, and the keeper of the Department safe who knew the combination was out in Bethesda, which didn't help at all.

And I said all right, we haven't got the document for you to sign; and I wrote out longhand very simple words: we hereby approve and join in the document of the United Nations set up on the first of January last.

But before writing it, I looked for a pen, and there wasn't any pen! -- (laughter) -- because the pen wouldn't work -- didn't have any ink in it. It finally ended by my borrowing the pen -- I used really strong language -- luckily I wasn't on the air -- (more laughter) -- as to the lack of pens, and I borrowed the fountain pen of the Brazilian ---

Q. (interjecting) Mexican.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- Mexican Ambassador -- Najera, that's right. I think they have got that.

MR. EARLY: That's it.

Q. Mr. President, that Statement that was issued to the press said it was a Statement signed by yourself and by

the British Prime Minister. Is that literally not true, sir, that it was merely presented through you -- that it was not a document ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What Statement to the press?

Q. When the Atlantic Charter Statement was issued?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Issued through the White House.

THE PRESIDENT: It isn't a formal document. He has got a lot of his handwriting -- some of mine -- in it, and I don't know where it is now.

Q. I understand that, sir, but the caption on that Statement that we received said it was a Statement signed by yourself and the British Prime Minister. I was just trying to clarify whether that document actually had signatures on the bottom of it, or whether it did not?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think it's probable, in time, they will find some signatures -- documents and signatures.
(laughter)

Q. The spirit still is there, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we all agreed on it, that's all I know. I have got some memoranda that were signed by the British Prime Minister, but it wasn't the complete document. It isn't considered signed by us both.

Q. My recollection is that the thing that came up to the Capitol said at the bottom, "Signed Roosevelt and Churchill."

THE PRESIDENT: It couldn't have. He went back

to England.

Q. The formal message of transmission, sir, I believe, said ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) --- that it was signed.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It was signed in substance. Now whether -- whether ----- . There is no -- there is no formal document -- complete document -- signed by us both. There are memoranda to the -- to the people there and to the radio people.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Whether or not it was signed, you promulgated and stood for it, and you stand for it now?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And sent for the radio man and said put this on the air. That's all.

Q. Have you, since that time, Mr. President, wished that you had a formal document which was signed, sealed and attested?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except from the point of view of sightseers in Washington. I think that they will -- they will like to see it, perhaps not so much as the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution of the United States. Well, if you wanted to exhibit it, there isn't any good reason we can't.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #985
Executive Office of the President
December 22, 1944 -- 11.10 a.m., e.w.t.

MAY CRAIG: (sitting down) Nobody got killed coming in today.

Q. Where's Earl (Godwin)?

Q. He's here.

Q. Here he is.

THE PRESIDENT: There he is!

MR. GODWIN: Merry Christmas!

MAY CRAIG: You got quite a class now.

THE PRESIDENT: Now the last guest has come. Go into dinner. (laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Before we have the rush for the door -- probably quiet -- it is better for me now to wish you a very Happy Christmas, all of you. Maybe you will all be here a year from now. That is not meant as a prognostication, but a simple statement of fact between gentlemen and ladies.

I don't think I have got anything at all. I could -- I could say this, that -- several people have asked me to do it -- those at home this Christmas, we can best help the Christmas season of the fighting men, whom we are thinking about a good deal these days, if we carry on our respective duties, doing those things that will contribute to winning the war as quickly as we can; and therefore I think we should resolve

to keep on the job and maintain the steady output of supplies that are needed by these fighting men on the front.

Outside of that I haven't got anything.

Q. Mr. President, the Chicago Sun had a story that you conferred with Chairman Hannegan down at Warm Springs, with a governmental position for Hannegan talked about. Can you prove that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have any news on stories of that kind, Pete (Brandt).

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, if I can refer to this Christmas message, one of the -- one of the Congressmen who came back from the front, I think Overton of Louisiana, made this statement, a statement like this: that twice American forces had been so depleted or so shy of ammunition that it gave the Germans -- the enemy -- a chance to build up this particular drive. I may not have it exactly right, but ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) One of the other papers had it differently.

MR. GODWIN: Did you -- that was -- that was Overton's -- I didn't see it in a newspaper -- do you care to say anything about that, or anything related to it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It depends a little bit on which Congressman you talked to.

MR. GODWIN: Sir?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends a little bit on which Congressman you talked to and which paper you write for.

Q. Mr. President, is there any announcement about

Mr. Henry Wallace's position after ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no.

Q. (continuing) --- the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Nothing at all.

Q. (continuing) --- inauguration?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at all.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us about the war situation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. It would only be an expression of one individual ---

Q. (interposing) You haven't anything ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- who doesn't know much more about it than the press has -- very little more. Of course, I get certain dispatches but nothing very recent -- the dispatches from Paris, I think it is; at least, they have that date-line. They are, I think, up to Tuesday or Wednesday, that's all.

Q. That's all that's in the morning papers, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, yes.

Q. (continuing) --- up until Tuesday. I thought maybe you had something you could give us informally?

THE PRESIDENT: I have nothing further than that.

Q. Mr. President, have you had a chance to talk to Budget Director Smith?

THE PRESIDENT: Talked to him on the phone yesterday.

Q. Would you give us any idea of what the Budget is going to be? (the President shook his head)

Q. Mr. President, could you ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Of course, on the Budget, in a time of war, you must realize that you can make it up any one of a great many ways. You can make it up on the assumption that the war will last for six months, or that the war will last longer than that. And they are working on that now. The general -- the general picture will be that it has got to be that the war -- any assumption as to date is an impossible thing; and therefore it will be a budget that will contemplate the continuance of war until Germany is licked. And I am not -- I am not assuming now any more than I have before.

Q. Mr. President, do you contemplate saying anything in addition to your general Christmas greeting ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Not at all.

Q. (continuing) --- in your speech?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Mr. President, on this budget matter, has this current German offensive changed the picture at all, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No. Just the same.

Q. (continuing) --- or the suppositions of what is ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) No, it hasn't changed my thought that I have had all along. I think I am about one of the few people that hasn't said when the war's going to be over.

Q. Mr. President, may I ask a question about the

Atlantic Charter which was discussed at our last press conference? It seems that recently a number of people have felt that we are losing the purposes, or that they are slipping away from us ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Again, it depends on which paper you read.

Q. Well, I would like to hear from the President and not merely from others. I would like to know what the President thinks about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I ought to prepare something a little formal and think it over, but I will try it.

There are certain -- you might call them documents, because is a telegram a document? -- I don't know -- pronouncements, call it that, that in all history have been made. Some of them are of a good deal of importance, some of them do have an effect on -- on the thinking of a public towards objectives, and for a better world.

And the Atlantic Charter stands as an objective. A great many of the previous pronouncements that go back to many centuries, they have not been attained yet, and yet the objective is still just as good as it was when it was announced several thousand years ago.

And I think that the objective of the Atlantic Charter is just as sound, if you believe in that kind of objective -- some people don't, some people laugh at it -- just as valid as when it was announced in 1940 (meaning 1941).

There are a lot of people who say you can't attain

an objective or improvement in human life or in humanity, therefore why talk about it. Well, those people who come out for the Ten Commandments they will say we don't all live up to the Ten Commandments, which is perfectly true, but on the whole they are pretty good. It's something pretty good to shoot for. The Christian religion most of us in the room happen to belong to, we think it's pretty good. We certainly haven't attained it. Well, ---

Q. (interposing) Wasn't that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- the Atlantic Charter is going to take its place, not -- not comparing it with the Christian religion or the Ten Commandments, but as a definite step, just the same way as Wilson's Fourteen Points constituted a major contribution to something we would all like to see happen in the world. Well, those Fourteen Points weren't all attained, but it was a step towards a better life for the population of the world.

And every -- every once in a while somebody comes forward with something else, and will in the future. It depends a little bit on how you are built.

Q. Mr. President, you -- did you mean to imply by that -- you didn't mean -- did you mean to imply by that that we are as far from attaining the ends of the Atlantic Charter as the world was a thousand years ago?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, No. Oh, No. The world goes a little bit by peaks and valleys, but on the whole the curve is upward; on the whole, the -- over these thousands of years

human life is on a great deal better scale than it was then. And we have got a long ways to go.

But things are better, and things are going to get better, if we work for it. There are some people who don't like to work for it -- some people in this room -- who are -- what will I say? -- congenitally "agin" that sort of thing. Well, that is part of the peaks and valleys.

Q. Mr. President, you spoke of 1940. Wasn't that 1941?

MR. GODWIN: 1941.

Q. The Atlantic Charter?

MR. GODWIN: August, wasn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: 1941, Yes. That's right.

MR. GODWIN: August, 1941.

Mr. President, the -- I think the important statement that you made, I was going to ask if you would permit a quotation of "just as valid as announced in 1941"?

THE PRESIDENT: (nodding) Yes. Well, that's all right.

Q. Mr. President, have there been any further developments toward a meeting between the Big Three?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. And -- and, by the way, when it is -- when it is made -- a development is made, you won't be told. (laughter)

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) There is such a thing known as security for a ship or for a plane, which we have to

maintain, as we have in the past. It would be vital about maintaining it when they have known about the fact that I had gone -- a pretty good guess as to which way I had gone would be the same thing.

MR. EARLY: Make that off the record.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That's off the record.

MR. GODWIN: Is there any chance of inviting or bringing, then, Mr. Stalin here, do you think?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That has to be off the record.

MR. GODWIN: That's all off the record, too?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Any steps been taken for quarterly meetings of Foreign Secretaries?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it until I read about it in the paper.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything that could be said to further our understanding as to what has held up this meeting up to this point? Since you have said you were anxious to meet, Mr. Churchill has said the same thing.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again, I have got to tell you off the record. It's largely a question of geography. There aren't three people in the same place. You can't hold a conference in several different places. There has got to be one place. That has to be off the record, too. In other words,

to find a place that three of us can go to.

Q. Does the fact that the Premier of Russia is also actively at the head of the armed forces have a bearing on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. Oh, Yes. Oh, all kinds of factors.

Q. Mr. President, Secretary of War Stimson said yesterday that the Germans have to be ready for a Russian attack at any time along the eastern front. The diplomatic circles are quoted here in Washington as having said that the Russians have already assured us of a winter offensive very soon. I wonder if you would comment on any of that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I couldn't. Now you're getting into tactics -- strategy -- the military end.

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us something about your talks with Senators Pepper and Guffey the other day?

THE PRESIDENT: Very nice talk. On the telephone. It was on the telephone.

Q. Mr. President, what did you tell them that persuaded them to change their minds about the projected filibuster?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) I don't know. I haven't got any news on a thing like that.

Q. Are you going to meet with that group -- do you expect to meet with that group after the first of the year when the new Congress comes in?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea.

JIM WRIGHT: Mr. President, there has been some discussion of a joint chiefs of staff for political and economic questions, similar to the joint chiefs of staff for military questions. Is there anything comparable to that in contemplation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that was a columnist suggested that, wasn't it? It was a columnist, that's right.

JIM WRIGHT: I am not a columnist. I wrote about it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes. They are -- all we can say is that they are with us, an unnecessary excrescence on our civilization. Excuse me. (laughter)

MAY CRAIG: Well, Mr. President, -- (more laughter) -- but, Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) For the reason, May, ---

MAY CRAIG: (interposing) But you got one in the family! (loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Yes, that's true. That's different. (continued laughter) Very good -- very good. That's perfectly true, May, but it's a little bit different. In the -- mostly it's a diary. (Mrs. Roosevelt's "My Day") (more laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Goodbye.

(continued laughter)