

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #986
Executive Office of the President
January 2, 1945 -- 4.15 p.m., e.w.t.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I -- I want to wish you all a very Happy New Year. And as I said to Steve (Early), all of you except a very small minority -- (laughter) -- which is fair enough.

I don't think I have any news at all. They probably told you this morning that the Message is going up on Saturday, and the Budget Director is holding a Seminar with the experts on Monday, and the Budget Message will go up on Tuesday. So that's a pretty good schedule.

MR. GODWIN: Some of us don't know whether you are going to take that Message or not. Has that been made public?

THE PRESIDENT: Going to what?

MR. GODWIN: Whether you will take the Message yourself?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I am not taking any. I am sending it up.

Q. Mr. President, do you endorse the recommendations made in the Byrnes Report (on Problems of Mobilization and Reconversion) this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Substantially, Yes.

Q. Any of them that you differ with?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Just a question of ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, would you care to say anything about the suggestion for work-or-fight legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so.

Q. Do you endorse that, do you, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so.

Q. Mr. President, when the Congressional Leaders left this morning they said that you had indicated that you were going to see Churchill and Stalin soon. Is there anything more you can say on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Except to enter into an argument with you as to what the word soon means. And I will give it to you just as shortly as that: anon. (laughter) You will find that they are synonymous, or practically so.

Q. Mr. President, do you think work-or-fight legislation should be limited to 4F's, or cover a broader field?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, now you are going into details. The details are up to Congress, to write the bill.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us about any future plans you have for Vice President Wallace?

THE PRESIDENT: Don't think I have any news for you on that -- today.

Q. Mr. President, in connection with the possible meeting, you told us two or three weeks ago that there were

some physical and geographical difficulties.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) Could you say now whether or not those have been removed and the way seems to be open for a meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Now you are still getting into whether the ice conditions of the North Pole or the South Pole would be preferable on the date set.

Q. The date has been set, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. The date has been set?

THE PRESIDENT: On a -- on whatever date is set.

Q. Mr. President, Prime Minister Churchill was quoted last week, just before he left Athens, as saying that he had had telegraphic correspondence with you relative to following the Germans into Greece and seeing that the -- that the Greeks were fed. Do you care to go into that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except to say that the one thing that seems the -- in a way the most important thing to do in all our dealings with rescued countries is to see that the population doesn't starve to death. We have all been thinking about that for a long, long time. Of course, we continue to think about it.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us something, please, if you can, about your visit with the French Ambassador (Henri Bonnet) yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Delighted to see him. And he asked

me what -- what he could do, and I told him one thing that I thought he should do -- of course, I have had queries all over the place, and he might as well answer them: he is no relation of the former Ambassador of the same name.

MR. GODWIN: Have you anything that might interest the public to say about this -- the spies that were picked up in New York yesterday, and the possibility of a spy offensive as indicated by those paper balloons? Possibly as Commander-in-Chief you may want to say something more about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Of course, on the -- on the two spies that landed, it was a grand job to have picked them up the way we did. We think they are the only ones who landed but, of course, we can never be sure; and the vigilance of the F.B.I. and the Army and Navy people is being continued at the highest possible level. On the balloons, quite frankly, ---

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I haven't got any more information than you have. Obviously, the first thing to do is to find out the origin of the balloons.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) That is not always easy.

Q. Mr. President, could you say whether the men apprehended yesterday will be tried in the same fashion that the would-be saboteurs were tried in June 1942 or so, I think it was?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you definitely, but I assume so.

Q. Military tribunal?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Mr. President, are the Byrnes tax proposals among those which you substantially endorse?

THE PRESIDENT: Tax proposals?

Q. He had three tax proposals in there.

Q. (louder) The Byrnes tax proposals.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, that is a thing that I can't tell you about yet, because the actual details are not yet worked up, but I am in favor of the thing in principle.

Q. Do you know whether Secretary Morgenthau also is in favor of them, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I said that is the thing we have got to talk over.

Q. He authorized a spokesman this morning to say that he hadn't been consulted on them. That is why I ask.

(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, he was consulted on them as much as all of us were.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your meeting this morning with Secretary Stettinius?

THE PRESIDENT: As to who? What?

Q. With Mr. Stettinius?

MR. GODWIN: Mr. Stettinius.

THE PRESIDENT: Did I what?

Q. Can you tell us anything about your meeting with him?

THE PRESIDENT: No. There were two of the new Assistant Secretaries -- the Under Secretary and one of the Assistants -- whom I hadn't seen yet.

Q. Mr. President, the British Ambassador was at the State Department today and said that he has been talking about methods of bringing this country, Great Britain and Russia into closer consultation on great problems. Have you given any thought to methods by which closer consultation could be achieved?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the only way to do would be to have a common capital for all three nations, and we can't have that. We are having very close cooperation between the three nations. The volume of correspondence and telegrams -- letters -- that goes on all the time, it would amaze you.

JIM WRIGHT: Mr. President, maybe you could do something, or tell us something about these many stories and comments editorially of the last few days, about the differences between these countries and how dangerous it is to the relationships, and so forth? That really, I think, concerns a good many people, that trend of the discussion in the last few days.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Jim, I think the -- the thing comes down to this. It's a perfectly natural thing. Anybody that has to write all the time ---

JIM WRIGHT: (interposing) It's what?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- anybody who has to write all the time for public consumption, I am not talking about the press, I am talking about anybody who writes for a

magazine, or anything like that -- or writes a book -- is to lose sight of the difference between the principles -- this is nothing new, I have said it so many times -- and the details. And if you establish principles, they are a guide.

People -- to use an illustration, which is of course not parallel in any way, but there were -- we were talking to Steve, just before you came in, about the Ten Commandments -- (Mr. Early began laughing) ---

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) All of them?

MR. EARLY: (aside) Just one of them.

THE PRESIDENT: All of them. All Ten. (laughter)

MAY CRAIG: (aside) Steve! (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: And they are pretty good principles, but they are very often interpreted differently in individual cases. And that is the practical problem about peoples of the world, as well as individuals. They are perfectly good principles, but very often the existing facts among the -- in relation to this particular valley, or that particular town, or that particular minority group, will vary from one case to the other. You do the best you can, and Steve agreed to that. You do the best you can.

JIM WRIGHT: Do it feebly or do it well?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

JIM WRIGHT: Do it feebly or do it well?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

JIM WRIGHT: On all Ten?

THE PRESIDENT: All Ten. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, has the decision been made about whether the Secretary of State will accompany you, when you do meet with the other chiefs of ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, you will know about that sometime after we meet. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Had you finished with that parallel of the Ten Commandments?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better not pursue it any further. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: The business that Jim is talking about does worry lots of folks, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- and you might want -- if you haven't finished with that, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes?

JIM WRIGHT: (interposing) I was talking, Mr. President, about that story quoted from the London Chronicle, for example, in today's paper ---

VOICES: (interposing) Economist.

JIM WRIGHT: I beg your pardon -- Economist.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen the story itself, ---

JIM WRIGHT: (interjecting) Well, there were some pretty direct ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- just excerpts about it.

Well, it depends a little on how you approach the subject, whether you want to approach the subject out loud

or not -- in print. There are lots of things that you don't want to put down at this particular time. It doesn't do any good. As for instance, as to -- what? -- Steve's interpretation of the Ten Commandments. It isn't -- it isn't a thing which probably is good at this time to pursue. We don't get much further. It does -- it does fill a certain number of lines, but that's about all. Doesn't get the world much further ahead.

Q. The inference would be, Mr. President, from what you said, that you are hopeful of reconciling what differences there are?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, don't you think there are differences? Don't you think that they are necessary?

Q. Inevitable.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely. They are inevitable. Some are important. Some are not very important.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. EARLY: (to the President) I am going right over and surrender to J. Edgar. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: As you get older, some of them are easier to keep.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It's a new year, and I like to rub it in at the beginning of a new year.

MR. GODWIN: All right.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Jim Wright, talking to Mr. Early) Jim, what are you doing, congratulating him?

Q. He wants to know which one, sir. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Steve always makes a good subject for conversation.

Q. I don't know how he is as an interpreter.

Q. I hope he interprets the Ten Commandments liberally.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (continued laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press and Radio Conference #987
Executive Office of the President
January 5, 1945 -- 11.11 a.m., e.w.t.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you might -- if you want to notify your offices on the space question, that the Message tomorrow is going to be uncomfortably long. You might just as well set aside space for it, those who print Messages in full.

Q. What will that be, sir, about 65-75 hundred?

THE PRESIDENT: More than that. -- Around eight thousand words. Terrible. I am ashamed of it. But it's wartime. War-time produces things out of proportion.

Q. Any tables and charts?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No.

Q. Do we get any extra newsprint? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Do we get any extra newsprint?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so.

Q. Mr. President, have you thought whether you might broadcast that, after it is delivered by the Clerk?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I probably will, tomorrow night.

Q. Do you know what time ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Not the whole eight thousand words. Just a summary.

Q. Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In my position, I am not allowed to summarize.

Q. (continuing) --- will there be any possibility of any advance copies today -- this evening?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe so, Paul (Leach). I don't think we will get it out until tomorrow morning.

Q. Quite a mechanical problem ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, ---

Q. (continuing) --- involved there?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- yes.

Q. Can you tell us, Mr. President, what time it will go up on the Hill?

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Hasn't been set yet, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve hasn't got the time yet.

Q. How long, Mr. President, a half-hour?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. EARLY: The President would like nine-thirty to ten, or not later than ten -- ten to ten-thirty. The networks have not been asked.

Q. Steve, will you say that again?

MR. EARLY: Nine to nine-thirty, or ten to ten-thirty. Not later than that.

Q. Mr. President, have you discussed American foreign policy in this ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. (continuing) Will you discuss American foreign

policy in this Message?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, something about it. Won't be all the eight thousand words though.

Outside of that, I don't think I have any news at all.

Q. Mr. President, there is some question about our policy toward Italy, whether we are going to feed Italy or whether the British have agreed to feed Italy. Some of the people in the War Department said that some of your promises during the campaign may have just been made during the campaign. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: (inaudible) -- how much is going in.

Q. Is there a new program being agreed upon?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. Absolutely. There is more food going in.

Q. Have you any idea whether 300 grams go ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, I don't know. Two eggs, or one? I honestly don't know. We are getting more food into Italy.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I suppose you might say more calories. I can't tell you in terms of grams or pounds. More calories.

Q. Mr. President, one question that seems to be discussed in the last day or so, in connection with that, is whether the necessary shipping is now available, or whether that is still a problem that has to be solved?

THE PRESIDENT: Shipping is still a problem, a very great problem.

Q. Still is.

Q. Mr. President, some people seem to think that a good deal of the talk about Italy could be cleared up if the initial Armistice terms were made public that have been suppressed for some time, and they seem to think that the military ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is considered important by the people on the spot, the military people on the spot. There are a lot of people back home who know a great deal more about that, of course -- in their own estimation.

Q. Mr. President, ---

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

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, it was announced on the ticker, within the last fifteen or twenty minutes, that (British) General (Bernard L.) Montgomery has been placed in field command of the First and Ninth Armies. Can you discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. The usual story -- newspaper story. I heard it.

Q. This was an announcement.

MR. EARLY: Yes, sir.

Q. On the ticker.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean that he is taking command of the one -- the First Army, is it?

Q. And the Ninth, sir.

Q. The First and the Ninth, sir.

Q. Do you know why that was done, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Regular field operations. If I were there, I would probably know more about it. Done by Eisenhower.

Q. There is some stuff coming over from Europe that it was done because of the loss of communication between Bradley's headquarters and the First and Ninth, because of the bulge -- Bradley south of the bulge and these armies are north of the bulge.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not over there, on the spot. Don't you think the source ought to come from there -- the news? I don't know why they should ---

Q. (interposing) It doesn't imply, does it, sir, that he has been made ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Oh, No. Oh, No.

Q. (continuing) --- the (deputy supreme) commander?

Q. Mr. President, has Vice President Wallace written you a letter requesting that he be allowed to become Secretary of Commerce, if a vacancy should occur?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to look in my personal files.

Q. You haven't seen it in your files? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if I had I wouldn't tell you. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, have the date and place for the meeting of the Big Three been set?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes and No, if that will help you

a lot.

Q. How long does the "Yes" apply?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. How long does the "Yes" apply?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you see, the trouble is I might give you a hint as to whether it's the southern hemisphere or the northern, if I said anything at all. It would depend on ice conditions a good deal.

Q. Will President De Gaulle participate, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't discussed it at all. Sorry not to be more helpful.

Q. Mr. President, dispatches out of Paris this morning indicate that General De Gaulle has received some communication from Washington indicating that France is going to get a considerably increased amount of war material. Have you forwarded such a communication to him?

THE PRESIDENT: Don't -- don't put it in that way. I shall not have anything to say about it now. Wait till the Message -- wait till tomorrow Noon.

Q. Might expect something then?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Might expect something then.

Q. Mr. President, will your Message say anything about the manpower draft?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. I think I said that the other day.

Q. Will your Message also, sir, refer to possible

new policy on Italy? Dispatches out of Rome ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Wait a minute. Don't ask me any more questions about what is going into the draft. I did the other day, by mistake, say that that manpower was going in, and so I got stuck on it, but I can't talk about what is going into the Message beforehand.

Q. Well, aside from the Message there have been indications that there has been a joint agreement by the United States and Great Britain on Italy, and that there will be an announcement shortly?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know what that is -- honestly -- I have no idea.

Q. Mr. President, is there any possibility that other leaders than the Big Three might attend that conference?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Really honestly don't know.

Q. Mr. President, will Secretary Stettinius accompany you to the meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you will know that about a week after the meeting's been held. (laughter) Not getting very far this morning, Bert (Andrews). (more laughter)

Q. Well then, that indicates, Mr. President, that the meeting will follow the pattern of the Teheran, Casablanca ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It will follow the 20th of January! (much laughter) Now that's a real piece of news.

Q. Yes, sir. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That's good for a lead. (more laughter)

Q. (aside) It has been written.

Q. Even if it is obvious, what I was getting at, though, sir, is this indicates that the plans for the meeting will follow the Casablanca and Teheran patterns of meetings being held in secrecy while they are in progress?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when we take the thousands of questions, I could very safely say to you that no two meetings are the same, though I can tell you the agenda will be somewhat different from Casablanca, and somewhat different from Quebec, and somewhat different from the ones here. Every meeting is different, as in natural history there are different species, although most of them belong to the same genus, if you know your lineal theory.

Q. Mr. President, have you decided on any new job for Vice President Wallace yet? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That's like saying the same thing.

Q. Mr. President, was there anything significant in the fact that the British Ambassador gave you a copy of "The English Spirit" yesterday, in view of some of the British Editorials? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: English Spirit? Oh. Here it is. I am taking it with me, taking it with me to the Pole.

Q. Can you tell us anything about that meeting with Lord Halifax yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: We had an awfully good time.

Talked about all kinds of things under the sun.

Q. Mr. President, would you care to comment on the reports that orders are now being prepared to ban virtually all conventions of ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. I read that in the paper this morning. That is the only comment I can make on it. But I don't know. I haven't read it. I haven't seen Jimmy Byrnes since then.

Q. Mr. President, you said more supplies were moving into Italy. Does that mean ---

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

Q. You didn't say that?

THE PRESIDENT: I said something about that would be in the Message, and then I said I would say nothing more about it.

MR. EARLY: No, Mr. President. More supplies moving into Italy.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean are going into?

Q. Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. I was thinking about the -- the French -- the French troops -- additional troops. Yes, there are certainly more supplies going into Italy.

Q. Does that mean, sir, that Richard Law's mission over here to get more shipping to move supplies has been successful?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't put a thing that way. You had better put this off the record. And it is the true --

the true fact that -- you can write the general idea -- when I went over to Casablanca, I happened to stop in an African port -- west coast, and I saw there a tanker, quite a big tanker about one-third full of oil.

And I spent the day there, and I just happened to ask the question, "How long has that ship been here?"

And they -- local people -- said, "It has been here about fourteen months. We are using her as a station ship for oil for the planes that are necessary -- the patrol planes -- until we can get the tanks put up."

I said, "Where are the tanks?"

"Well," they said, "they are here on the ground, but we haven't got the means -- the mechanics -- to put up the tanks. Just as soon as those tanks are put up, the tanker will be emptied into them. We have been using her as, what we call a store ship."

And then I started a review as to where all ships were. It was a natural tendency, in hundreds of different parts of the world where you have to have supplies, to use the ship that brought the supplies in as a store ship. It makes it much easier to unload as you need it. Of course, that ties a ship up. She can't make a voyage.

So the British and ourselves went into the question of how many places there were, how many ships were tied up as store ships, and we dug up between us a lot of them. Oh, I suppose we dug up fifteen or twenty ships in different places in the world, and issued orders that they must be unloaded at

once and put the ships back into regular work. Well, the time had come -- that was nearly two years ago -- and the time had come about two months ago, when there were -- everybody felt that there were probably a lot of missing ships being used as store ships.

Well, that is one of the things that Law came over on, in order to use to the best use -- highest use and quickest use -- all of these ships all over the world that weren't being used. Well, we have dug up quite a lot of ships, and that is the net result of what Mr. Law came over here on -- and the use of ships that are going into commission.

• There is a ship shortage, although we have dug up quite a lot of ships that were, again, being used as store ships or confined to a small area. And it has been very useful. And it is a thing that, I suppose no matter how long the war lasts, you have to make an effort to see that some ambitious commander in some given area doesn't keep ships for his own use, and put them into the world war navy -- a distribution of them.

So that's about all it was.

Q. Mr. President, what was your personal reaction to the action of the House in making the Dies Committee a permanent body?

THE PRESIDENT: Wouldn't you say that that is really a question for the House?

Q. The House has already expressed its sentiments, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. I think that's up to

the House.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press and Radio Conference #988
Executive Office of the President
January 9, 1945 -- 4.05 p.m., e.w.t.

THE PRESIDENT: I was looking for a whipping boy for today's conference. I used Steve for it last week. I'm looking around to see which one I would use today.

Q. Got anything to whip him for?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Just to change the subject, that's all. (laughter) That's what I used Steve for the other day.

Q. He's sturdy. He can stand it again.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (then to Mr. Godwin): How is it going, all right?

MR. GODWIN: All right.

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe I can pick you out.

MR. GODWIN: Pick May Craig. She never gets any publicity. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. I know it. May, you can sit down. (she did)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve says I haven't got any news at all, and that's the highest authority.

Q. Mr. President, in your Budget Message you foresaw a need for permanent mediation machinery for the adjustment of labor disputes. Is there anything you could tell us about what you had in mind? Do you have in mind continuing W.L.B., or establishing a completely new labor agency?

THE PRESIDENT: The thing has got to be worked out with Congress. Get them to study it. I don't think it has got beyond that stage yet.

Q. Mr. President, did you have legal opinion as to whether you could constitutionally draft nurses?

THE PRESIDENT: Had a lawyer tell me.

Q. That you can?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. The Department of Justice?

THE PRESIDENT: I asked about it particularly.

MR. GODWIN: Under what law, the regular Selective Service law, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you will have to ask the Attorney General. I couldn't go into the legal details of that. I only used to be a lawyer. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Well, would it be a headache for the draft boards? Is it a draft board matter?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Is it a draft board matter?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. You had better ask the Attorney General.

Q. Mr. President, in line with your comment in this Message on the State of the Union, on rumors made in Germany, there is a paper down South that has a new slogan, that the only hope the enemy now has is to cause confusion, distrust and suspicion on the home front. Do you have any comment on such a slogan in the newspaper?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's all right. It's true.
Pretty good idea.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us yet whether you have got a new post lined up for Vice President Wallace?

THE PRESIDENT: Same reply as last time and the time before. I've forgotten what it was, but it goes. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, among the criticisms of the Ward seizure case, Montgomery Ward in Chicago, is the remark has been made that it is -- the question has been asked, does this constitute a new concept in regulations of industry by Government in having a seizure to enforce an order of a bureau?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because as a good many people have tried to point out, have tried to make a parallel between it and the Petrillo case, in the Petrillo case they were -- it was the kind of "ditty" that didn't seem to be important to winning the war, and in the Montgomery Ward case it would. I think they were both findings of fact by the W.L.B.

Q. Mr. President, anything new on the Greek situation? I see that reports -- latest reports are that the offer of truce has been withdrawn by the British commander-in-chief. I wondered if there were any new developments?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't heard that, except as a flash. We have had nothing, except as -- literally from the other side, but I have had nothing personally.

Q. Is it possible to say that the United States Government and the British are cooperating on the possible offering of a new truce to the ELAS forces?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't comment on it because I haven't heard any word yet.

Q. Mr. President, the Congressional Leaders said that you were aware of a downward trend of American public opinion on our foreign policy. Can you give any more on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No -- other than what I made.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any more information than has come in on the press services about this operation in the Lingayen Gulf?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing at all. I think you will get some news sometime this afternoon, around five or six o'clock.

PAUL LEACH: Mr. President, General Bradley this afternoon ---

MR. EARLY: (to the President) Is that statement publishable now?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. EARLY: That news, is it five or six o'clock?

THE PRESIDENT: We expect some news around five or six o'clock.

MR. EARLY: Is that all right to publish that now?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. You can publish that now. I think the news will come down here from General MacArthur. Probably be released out there.

What is it, Paul?

PAUL LEACH: - General Bradley, in an interview this afternoon in France, said that the German breakthrough as it has developed might shorten the war, that it has been --

not been a successful operation for the Germans. Have you any information on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I would have to ask Bradley more details. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, Harold ^{Mac}McMillan announced last Friday that the United States and Great Britain were on the verge of agreeing to a new plan for increasing aid to Italy. Can you tell us anything about that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. They are -- they are having a bit of a time, I think it was -- oh, what? -- a couple of weeks ago. I asked them to increase the number of -- what was it? -- calories to 300 now.

Q. Grams.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. 300 grams, sir.

MR. EARLY: Grams.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. And they are having a good deal of difficulty in getting it over there in ships, and a lot of people have been disappointed because it hasn't been carried out. And we are working on ways and means to get more grams over there, to come up to the 300 a day.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That's easy.

MR. GODWIN: Yes, sir.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #989
Executive Office of the President
January 16, 1945 -- 4.00 p.m., e.w.t.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: May (Craig), you are the president of the ladies' press association, or are you the ex-president?

MAY CRAIG: Ex-president.

THE PRESIDENT: Ex?

MAY CRAIG: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, ---

Q. (interposing) Political boss.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. The political boss. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You can still do something about it. If you will go to the Mrs.'s next press conference, she will give you some story, and Miss Charl Williams will give you a story on -- wait a minute until I look and see -- (laughter) -- on the roster of qualified women, which was started by that last White House conference.

MR. EARLY: (aside) Educational.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I won't tell you anything about it. They have made up a roster, and it isn't final -- 230 names. You know about it?

MAY CRAIG: Yes, sir. We asked her to get it, but we didn't know whether she could or not.

THE PRESIDENT: She is getting Miss Charl

Williams to give it to you to give it out.

MAY CRAIG: Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Outside of that, I don't think I have anything. (laughter) I had a talk -- (more laughter)

MAY CRAIG: (aside) This is a private conference.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I had a talk this morning with various members of the Congress and Senate -- and General Marshall, Admiral King -- in regard to the national service act; and I am sending up, probably tomorrow, a letter from the General and the Admiral and myself to the Committee, emphasizing the extreme need for certain action on the national service act, because we need the people, both in the Army and in production.

Q. Can you tell us what that certain action is, Mr. President? You said you were exercising -- pointing out the extreme need for certain action?

THE PRESIDENT: For certain action -- for some action. Well, it was largely taken care of in the Annual Message, which you have read.

MAY CRAIG: I didn't quite understand, Mr. President. Did you mean national service or universal service, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No, no. National service, ---

MAY CRAIG: (continuing) --- limited -- limited service?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- yes.

Q. Will that letter, sir, be signed by you and General Marshall and Admiral King, or will that be separate?

THE PRESIDENT: The Message -- the letter will be sent to me, and I will transmit it.

Q. With a Message of your own to accompany it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: A few kind words. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, you probably know it, I just make the statement, that Philip Murray was a very imposing witness before the Military Affairs Committee of the House today, and simply knocked down national service as a compulsory matter entirely. Does this letter go into any argument about the -- the matter of -----?

THE PRESIDENT: Did he have any alternative for it?

MR. GODWIN: His -- Yes, as I recall it. I covered the hearing. His alternative -- you may not call it an alternative, but it was a better -- a better use by voluntary methods of existing manpower.

THE PRESIDENT: We don't think it will bring results.

Q. Mr. President, have you reached any decision yet on bringing the interim agreements on the air conference into force?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet. I haven't seen it for some time.

Q. Mr. President, there have been numerous reports that there may well be further revisions or additions to that Mexico water treaty over the Rio Grande and Colorado. Do you contemplate taking any action similar to that on the oil

agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No.

Q. Mr. President, over the week end, Chairman Connally of the Foreign Relations Committee proposed an interim council of United Nations to handle on a joint basis some of the problems that will confront the United Nations. Have you given any thought to such an idea?

THE PRESIDENT: Not any more than what you know already. I am going to see, anon, the Prime Minister of Britain and the Marshal of Russia.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything new on Cabinet changes, particularly with reference to Labor and Commerce?

THE PRESIDENT: You probably won't know anything about Cabinet changes or not until anything occurs. (sic)
(laughter)

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Is that vague enough?
(more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there have been some reports from London lately, with reference to the War Crimes Commission, that its operations apparently have run up against a stone wall, or something or other. Could you throw any light on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I can. I don't know enough about it, about what the internal workings of it have been.

Q. Mr. President, some of the British newspapers yesterday and today were somewhat disturbed over what they

said was a situation that the Secretary of State was going to Mexico, but Mr. Hopkins was going to attend the Big Three meeting. Anything you can -----?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It's hard enough to comment on the American press. (laughter)

Q. Can you tell us, Mr. President, if the Secretary of State will go with you?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you anything about anything, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, on the subject of national service ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- except the word anon, that's all. Just the word anon.

Q. (aside) Anon or anonymous?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) But you will know after it's all over.

Q. Mr. President, on the subject of national service, do you have any preference with respect to civilian penalties versus a special unit of the armed forces ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think that's up to the House Committee who is handling it.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any comment on the Big Three meeting becoming a Big Four meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, I was a little slow on the "uptake" that time. The Washington Post carried a story this morning -- Washington Post, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

MAY CRAIG: (continuing) --- saying that Senator Brewster said yesterday at the Mayflower that Stettinius was to be shunted off to Mexico and Hopkins to go with you. So that was American press.

THE PRESIDENT: That was American press. It shows how difficult it is to control it. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, is there any comment you would like to make about some reports that there was a delay in the meeting of the Big Three?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess it's one of "them" things. Same category.

Q. Mr. President, three years ago you said that baseball should continue as a morale builder, and so forth. We were asked by the sports people today to ask whether you still felt that it could continue?

THE PRESIDENT: If it's possible to continue it without hurting the employment of people, or the building up of the Army. I still am all in favor of baseball, but I don't think that a perfectly healthy young man should play baseball at this time.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any comment on Senator Vandenberg's proposal for special treaties to keep Germany and Japan weak?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we talked all about it the other day, when I had the Committee in, and we agreed on everything. Had a very pleasant meeting, and we agreed to say nothing

further about it.

Q. Agreed on ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What? They agreed, and I agreed.

Q. You mean that you agreed with them, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Did you agree with Senator Vandenberg's ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, and they agreed with me.

Q. Did you agree specifically on the Vandenberg plan, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I said that we agreed to say nothing further about it.

Q. Did Senator Vandenberg agree to say nothing about it, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I just said that I wouldn't say anything more about it.

Q. (aside) Anon.

Q. Mr. President, do you agree with Senator Pepper's statement yesterday, that Senator Wheeler's speech might give aid and comfort to the German people to make them continue on, in the hope that they can stop us from carrying out unconditional surrender?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't the Secretary of State say something along that line last week?

MR. EARLY: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: That's what I thought. (laughter)

Q. What are you going to do with Steve (Early), Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. What are you going to do with Steve? We understand he is going overseas?

THE PRESIDENT: Which direction?

Q. That's what we would like to know.

THE PRESIDENT: So would I. I don't think that his -- what do they call it? -- itinerary is made out yet. He is going, some time.

Q. Is his itinerary going to coincide with yours, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, because I haven't seen it. (laughter)

Q. You mean you haven't seen his, or yours?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. You mean you haven't seen his, or your itinerary?

THE PRESIDENT: He hasn't seen mine and I haven't seen his. He doesn't know where I am going, is that right, Steve?

MR. EARLY: Yes, sir. (more laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a good team. It's all right.
(more laughter)

MR. EARLY: They've just hollered for the Ten Commandments.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

(continued laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #990
Executive Office of the President
January 19, 1945 -- 11.10 a.m., e.w.t.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve (Early) gave you out -- about, I think, a half-hour ago -- a story about the making permanent through the Japanese war -- to the end of the Japanese war, certain Boards that have been functioning now for quite a long while, the Combined Production and Resources Board, the Combined Raw Materials Board, and the Combined Food Board. Very interesting thing that they have worked so awfully well. And I thought I could comment on it, because it is worth -- it is worth sometimes saying -- telling two sides of the story.

(reading): "We hear a good bit about differences between the United States and Britain -----"

I don't think you need to take this down. Have you got a mimeograph of that?

MR. EARLY: Ready after the conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve will give you a mimeograph of the same thing, but it's still worth reading:

"We hear a good bit about differences between the United States and Britain, but perhaps we hear less of how really effectively they are working together in winning the war; and also in meeting the economic problems of the areas that they liberate.

"Together with Prime Ministers Churchill and

Mackenzie-King, I have just outlined the work the Combined Boards are to do from now until the end of the war with Japan. The Combined Food Board, the Combined Raw Materials Board and the Combined Production and Resources Board provide a strikingly successful example of United Nations' collaboration on some of the urgent and difficult problems of the day."

I might say each day that follows every other day.

(continuing reading, not literally): "The Boards are dealing now with serious shortages in such commodities as tires and trucks, coal, textile, footwear, animal protein foods and fats and oils. In each of these items the shortage is big enough to affect military requirements, civilian needs and relief activities in all the areas. In the case of the Combined Food Board, for example, representatives of other countries also participated in the development of appropriate international programs for certain commodities; like, for instance, Newfoundland fish and Australian wheat. There have also recently been added -- certain commodity committees have been added on the Combined Food Board -- representatives of countries whose supplies and requirements, through the progress of military operations, have again become, or will become, important factors in the international distribution of vital supplies; well, for instance, France and Belgium and The Netherlands and Norway in the case of fats and oils. The requirements of the USSR have been related to the activities of the Boards through the Departments of the member governments concerned with the conclusion of the annual protocols by which the USSR supply

programs are terminated."

I think the new -- the committee called Protocol for this fiscal year 1946 is in process now and will be handled between now and the 30th of June, and signed up for another year.

(continuing reading, not literally): Through the Boards, former occupied countries are being helped to start up their manufacturing because we want to ease shortages in plants and manpower here, and in Britain and in Canada. We are acting with awareness, too, of the acute need to restore employment in the liberated areas, thus minimizing unrest.

"Coal offers a good example of the working of the Combined Boards. It was clear at the beginning of 1943 that the United Nations as a whole faced a serious deficit. The Boards worked out solutions through the appropriate national agencies.

"These solutions reached dramatic proportions. From Britain came expert opinion that production could be stepped up if surface outcroppings could be worked on a mass production basis similar to what we call in the United States strip mining. In consequence, the used machinery market of the United States was scoured for such types of machinery -- some machines, for instance, that had been in service along the Mississippi levees for twenty years were requisitioned -- and a total quantity of machinery estimated to exceed in capacity that used in digging the Panama Canal was expedited to Britain during 1944.

"Most of it has now arrived and in many parts of Britain the operations are under way with the result that twelve million additional tons are expected to be mined before the

end of the present coal year. This coal helps supply SHAEF needs in the Army and northwest Europe as well as those relief requirements for the Mediterranean that can be filled by our present limited transportation.

"The Combined Food Board has proved to be a most useful mechanism for assuring an efficient and reasonably equitable distribution of vital food resources among the various United Nations. On the basis of detailed information interchanged constantly among its Commodity Committees, the Combined Food Board has developed many -- has developed additional international plans for meeting the increased war demands and for offsetting, in so far as possible, the early loss to the enemy of important items. The shortage of rice after the fall of Burma -- just another example -- and other areas of Southeastern Asia is illustrative of the problems which have confronted the Combined Food Board. The Japanese occupation absorbed areas which normally export 95% of the rice entering into world trade. The Board moved promptly to insure, first, that exports from the remaining rice areas were maximized; and second, that such supplies were equitably shared, and wherever possible, rice substitutes were provided.

"The Boards have set a model for economic cooperation between the United Nations in overcoming excessive nationalism and in gaining cooperation between former rivals both on the national and international plane.

"On the American side, the direction of the Raw Materials Board has been, since its inception, the job of William

L. Batt. We owe him a deep debt of gratitude for his part in keeping an effective flow of strategic materials coming during the war, despite the fact that many of the former rich sources for these materials have been continuously in Axis hands."

So, on the whole, I am very glad that the Board -- the three Boards have been established. And chief reason for the extending of it -- two reasons -- the first the necessity of it, and secondly is the good work they have done already. I think that covers Food, and so forth.

Q. Mr. President, has the 1945 Protocol with Russia been signed? About two weeks ago we were informed that it ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I can't quite hear you.

Q. Has the 1945 Lend-Lease Protocol with Russia been signed, the one before the 1946 one you were talking of? We were informed a few weeks ago that it hadn't yet been signed.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have been operating since the 30th of June. The 1945 one?

Q. Yes, sir. But about three weeks ago we were informed that it had never been signed yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. You would have to find out. We are working under it. It's all right. We -- we didn't stop -- we didn't stop sending things to Russia on the first of July, that's the best answer.

Q. Mr. President, do you see any postwar use for these Combined Boards?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I would hate to

guess. We have got -- we have tried out all kinds of methods and things, and there is no question that the experience gained by them will be very valuable to any work that we have done by the United Nations, after -- after they are set up.

Q. Mr. President, Prime Minister Churchill has announced that Foreign Secretary (Anthony) Eden will accompany him to the -- for the coming meeting of the Big Three. Can you now tell us whether Secretary Stettinius will go with you?

THE PRESIDENT: Why, you had better ask him.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) The State Department, Mr. President, suggested that we ask the White House. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Tell them that the White House -- tell them that the White House suggested that you ask them.

Q. Do that, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: They used to say in the old days, "And the Lord have mercy upon your miserable soul." I don't know where you will end up. (more laughter)

MAY CRAIG: There's another name for that, Mr. President. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, would you have any objection to Mr. Stettinius telling us the answer to that question?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no objection, No. I think that's all right. (to Mr. Early): We have no objection?

MR. EARLY: Don't see any.

THE PRESIDENT: He can answer it if he wants to.

Q. Mr. President, on -- on a question somewhat

akin, the day before yesterday Mr. Stettinius was asked whether we had extended or joined in an invitation to General de Gaulle to attend the Big Three meeting, and he said that that was a matter that only the President could comment on.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there isn't any news.

Q. Mr. President, is there any news on the Italian economic situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think so. Except that I am still disturbed by it.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) We are trying ---

Q. (continuing) --- a new Italian Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Italian Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: (pausing) You would have to ask Mr. Stettinius on that. (laughter) I know about it, but I won't tell you. It's up to the State Department. It's on that phase of it.

MR. EARLY: Couldn't be announced, Mr. President, until it was sent to the Senate, in any event.

Q. Anything new on Henry Wallace, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. (interposing) Any ---

Q. (continuing) Wallace?

THE PRESIDENT: What about him?

Q. Any news on Vice President Wallace?

THE PRESIDENT: What about him?

Q. That's what we want to know.

Q. That's what we want to know. (laughter)

Q. What about him after tomorrow, Mr. President?

Q. What's he going to do for a living after tomorrow?

(more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think he'll starve. Now, that's a real tip. (more laughter)

MAY CRAIG: You mean Agriculture?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MAY CRAIG: You mean Department of Agriculture?—Oh, oh! (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MAY CRAIG: Do you mean Department of Agriculture?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think he'll starve. That's all I said. Now, don't try to interpret it.

JIM WRIGHT: Well, Mr. President, will he have to live on hybrid corn? (continued laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Jim, pretty good idea. Good corn.

TOM REYNOLDS: Mr. President, this being the last full day of your Third Term, it might be proper to ask if you have any general reflections on what was done in the last four years, and where do we go from here?

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you what I will do. I will tell you a great secret, what happened at the Cabinet meeting last week. Probably a good many of you got -- know -- know of this beforehand, but I was asked that same question at the last Cabinet meeting -- and we have another this afternoon --

and I say that there were three of us there that had probably been thinking along the same lines, cogitating I think is the word. And one of them was Mr. Ickes, and the other was Miss Perkins, and I was the third.

And I -- I -- I sort of guessed that all three of them had -- all of us had come to the same conclusion, and that was that the first twelve years were the hardest. (laughter)

Now -- now you're all buffaloed. You will all try to interpret that, and you will all guess wrong. (more laughter)

Q. Can you help us avoid that error, Mr. President?
(loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, I cannot. (more laughter)
I am supposed to give out facts. I am not supposed to interpret.

Q. We could use a few facts. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well now, there's a fact. The first twelve years were the hardest. That is good, you know. That is real news.

MR. EARLY: (aside) You hope.

MAY CRAIG: Well, I am wondering, Mr. President, about the significance of the word first? (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You're worse than Tom.

Q. Tom Reynolds spoke about the last four years. Is this the last last four years?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Jim, you're just as bad as the rest.

Q. Mr. President, is Mayor LaGuardia still "entrant"?

THE PRESIDENT: On what?

Q. You said a few weeks ago that Mayor LaGuardia was "entrant" (on--tran), I think that's the way you pronounced it, and I was wondering if he is still ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. He has come and gone, and I will still see him again very soon. He is taking another "train." It's all right. (more laughter)

Q. Sir, could I take that out of the figure of speech? I wonder if I might ask if the project to send Mayor LaGuardia to Italy has now been discarded?

THE PRESIDENT: There isn't any news on it now. That's all I can tell you.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

(more laughter)