

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #991

Aboard the U.S.S. QUINCY, enroute Algiers to Newport News, Va.
February 19, 1945 -- 6.30 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: Three years ago, when I was first talking about the United Nations, Winston (Churchill) said to me, "Where will you put it?"

I said, "Not Geneva. Geneva's unlucky, has an unlucky record. I don't want to hold it in any location. I want everybody pleased."

Although I don't think I will get it, I want to get a building like Al Smith's Empire State Building, just for the records and the records staff, and then have the conferences meet half the time in one of the Azores Islands. I was there once. In front of my house -- I knew a Portugese on San Miguel -- had a great big house. He used to like to take me out on the front steps. There, right in front of me, were royal palms and Norwegian spruce, growing side by side. It's a wonderful climate.

Q. Wouldn't it turn into a resort after a while?

THE PRESIDENT: Not on the little island. I wouldn't let anybody on it. Not even the press.

Q. How did you like Russia?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much. I will give you a story on that.

Yalta was Hollywood and our South all rolled into one. We lived in what used to be the Czar's palace. He and

his family had any number of very beautiful villas in the Crimea. And when the Czar went out in 1917, the Soviets took over all the properties, and they turned them into a series of sanatoria and rest places. And if you were a Communist -- if you needed a rest -- had a bad cold -- you made application, you were sent down there and you would be given a rest period there. The place was always apt to be filled with people. They ran from the Imperial Palace down to the small villas.

Town of Yalta itself is filled with villas, and when the Germans came in and put their bombs inside the villas, and blasted everything inside and then set fire to everything, the buildings were all gutted.

Q. Did that indicate that when they did it they felt they would not stay?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Did they do that when they came in?

THE PRESIDENT: No, when they got out.

Q. What can they do about getting reparations in kind from the Germans?

THE PRESIDENT: Get all they can.

Q. Will they have much to pay off with?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so. Got a lot of German prisoners.

Q. While you were over there, did you pick up any news of Hitler, how he was, what he was doing?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing. I talked with a lot of newspaper men. They were disguised as secret service men --

OGPU. They told me they had no information on him.

THE PRESIDENT: The Czar's palace was full of poor people, as everybody is in a sense poor in Russia. It was full of them up to the time the Germans took over. And then the Germans, before they went out, looted the whole palace. There was nothing left except two pictures in my bedroom.

Apparently the Czar, way back before 1917, was afraid that he would be murdered. He had numerous bedrooms which he occupied, and he used to change bedrooms almost every night -- sometimes in the middle of the night.

The Czarina's bedroom was up one flight. You have probably seen the little pamphlet made up by Kathleen Harriman. One part in this pamphlet proved to be untrue, the part about a secret stairway for Rasputin to go up at any time. There's been quite a discussion between Admiral King and General Marshall as to who was occupying Rasputin's room. The Rasputin story was apparently all blown up. She was just spiritualistic.

Q. Did the Judge (Samuel I. Rosenman) tell you how he had become a denizen of the Casbah -- the Casbah at Algiers?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think he said something about it.

Q. He took in all parts of the town.

THE PRESIDENT: He did.

I would give anything in the world to write a funny story about Farouk and Haile Selassie and, on the second day, Ibn Saud, but I don't dare do it.

Q. We have heard stories of that, about the tents

and so forth.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope they got some pictures showing the destroyer coming alongside -- with the guard lined up the length of the forecastle -- the King, a great big whale of a man -- big proportions -- sitting in a Louis Quinze chair, up on the forward gun deck, upon a great pile of Turkish carpets. Yes, I believe we've got pictures of them.

Q. Do you think they could be released? Don't you think it would be a good idea to show the movies at our annual dinner? They would be the hit of the show.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think it would be all right. I think we have gotten a movie in color.

Q. What did he seem to think of everything?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not even said to Sam (Judge Rosenman) what he said about the Jews. It was perfectly terrible. He doesn't mind the Jews there now, but he does mind the situation of the Jews that come there from Paris, London and New York. He makes all the difference in the world between them. The general feeling is that the Arabs want to be let alone. Do not interfere with the Arabs. Very interesting point of view. He is afraid that the Arabs will be controlled by the foreign Jews that come in. Says there's no way of keeping them in the bounds of Palestine.

Q. What is his conception of the outside world?

THE PRESIDENT: Pretty clever old boy.

Q. How did you lure him out of his country?

THE PRESIDENT: I just sent him a telegram asking

him to meet me.

Q. How old is he?

THE PRESIDENT: Seventy-five, but don't print that. He said to me, "An Arab has no age. You and I are the same age." Now there's no secret about my age. He appears to be, and I think he is, well over seventy. The Minister, Colonel Eddy, thinks he is seventy.

Q. Did you smoke in front of him?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no liquor nor smoking, and I sent Anna ashore before he came aboard. It was a chance for her to see Cairo.

Q. Someone told us in Algiers the other day that you never say how is your daughter or your mother. You say how is your house.

THE PRESIDENT: He started off from Jidda on the destroyer, appropriately called the MURPHY.

Q. Has any ship ever had a cruise like the MURPHY had, with the tents and sheep aboard?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It was perfectly amazing.

I think you can work up some kind of story that won't give offense. Women are taboo. The fact that this was the first time he ever left Arabia is all right. He was wounded nine times in battle. He's quite lame. I gave him one of my wheel-chairs. I honestly don't know whether you should mention that. It might be taboo.

Q. Did he ask you for it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he saw me in it -- said it

would save him many steps at home.

Q. I think that it will do him a lot of honor to mention it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so too.

This ship was a busy place for two days, with visits by the King of Egypt, Haile Selassie and Ibn Saud.

Q. Was Haile Selassie as colorful and impressive as Ibn Saud?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Did Ibn Saud have his ceremonial coffee server and food taster at work on the food you served him?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't see him, but he may have done his work in the galley. After we got through with my coffee, he asked me if I would mind having his ceremonial coffee. So, in came his ceremonial coffee server. I tasted it. It was "Godawful." I drank two cups, but they were very small, tiny cups.

Q. Did you sweeten it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so.

Q. The coffee in Algiers now is nothing but charred date seeds.

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't they get real coffee?

Q. The American messes had it, but the native people themselves have great difficulty getting it.

Q. Can you tell us something about your plans when you get back?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't decided yet. I have only

just started to write. Sam has done some, and I have dictated a part of it. When I get back I am thinking of going up to Congress, to the well of the House, sit at a table in the well and have the broadcast from there. That would save time. I wouldn't have to do it again in the evening.

Q. That would be a rather dramatic thing to do, sir. Congress would love that.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got any date, because I haven't the faintest idea of what we are running into. We might run into some bad weather that would delay us.

Q. Will we pass between Africa and Madeira?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. How about the Canaries?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know about them.

Q. South of Bermuda? Will we go south of Thirty Degrees?

THE PRESIDENT: About that.

Q. Do you think the submarines that were forced down today were laying for us?

THE PRESIDENT: It might well be, but I have no way of knowing. They got two ships out of a convoy yesterday.

Q. As a result of this latest conference, do you think that there is any real assurance that you can give the American people and the rest of the world?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so, but we have to win the war first. That is tacked into everything we say: that we have to win the war first.

Q. Do you feel that the machinery you have provided is such that it will prevent any repetition of any other general war?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell how many nations will continue as members. If they all continue and abide by it, there won't be another war. This will take care of that.

Q. Do you think that these continuing Russian successes will hurt that work-or-fight legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't been home in more than a month. You know more about that than I do.

Q. Won't it take a pretty big job of salesmanship, once Germany collapses, to keep things going?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. In view of the progress made at this conference, do you think it will be necessary to have any further Big Three conferences?

THE PRESIDENT: That depends a good deal on the (San Francisco) conference on the 25th of April, which is not a conference to do the necessary work, but only to organize. Then we've got to go to Congress to get whatever we need. England can do it by Cabinet action. After that, I think they will have to go to work organizing. Might take a couple of months. We will provide the machinery. Then they will have the first meeting of the United Nations. When or where, I haven't the faintest idea.

Q. Then do you think the Big Three will meet?

THE PRESIDENT: First, we've got to get the

the authority. We will try to get authority to be a member.

Q. You have probably heard most of the Congressional reaction to the Crimea Conference. How does it look to you?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen any more than you have, but it's a generally favorable press.

Q. We saw one -- Wallace White's. It was good -- ran pretty true to form.

THE PRESIDENT: I got one exception. I think I've got it right here. No, I can't find it. Vandenberg agrees to go, but on the condition that he could not be bound by anything that was done.

Q. Would there be any action by which he could be bound?

THE PRESIDENT: He wants to be free to saw his head off.

Q. Stassen didn't put any strings on his acceptance, did he?

THE PRESIDENT: No, sir; Stassen will come back for the meeting.

Q. Maybe you will want to fire Vandenberg and put Dewey on? (laughter)

Q. Do you think Dewey would accept?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q. De Gaulle did not come to see you?

THE PRESIDENT: Did you see Steve's (Early) announcement on that? It comes out about tomorrow, I believe. We are being very polite. Merely saying that he was unable to come

to see me.

Q. He was touring France at the time, wasn't he?

Steve has a chance to do a good job over there at SHAEF. They are certainly looking for him. And, by the way, Mr. President, Jonathan Daniels has handled himself very beautifully.

THE PRESIDENT: Really! I had an idea that at the very first conference he got everybody mad.

Q. No, sir. Actually there was a lot of laughter. Most everybody was laughing, though the transcript did not show it. Everybody was sort of jocular -- friendly gibing.

THE PRESIDENT: He will do all right when he gets his feet on the ground.

Q. He was in a tough spot. We had a lot of fun with him.

(taken by Wm. Rigdon, Lt.j.g., U.S. Navy)

(personally edited by the President)

(those present: Merriman Smith; Douglas Cornell; Robert G.

Nixon -- rough-draft copies of this press conference were furnished these newspapermen at the scene)

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Aboard the U.S.S. QUINCY, enroute Algiers to Newport News, Va.
February 23, 1945 -- 12.15 p.m.

THE PRESIDENT: The conference hours were not bad. We met in the afternoons, sometimes at four, sometimes at five, and continued through until eight or eight-thirty. It was tiring -- a bit of a strain presiding over a thing like that. You have to keep awake all the time.

Q. We have been studying the communique.

THE PRESIDENT: On the general run of the picture, I think the public was quite right; also the press at home -- virtually unanimously good -- saying it was a great achievement. You get that not only from the first reading but from subsequent readings. It's an extraordinary thing that there was so much unanimity in the whole of the conference.

Q. Is there any one accomplishment of the conference that stands out in your mind above the others?

THE PRESIDENT: I was going to mention that. Speaking in terms of years, it has been nearly four years that we have been in the war, six years the war itself has been going on, and there was little -- absolutely nothing to hang your hat on in those early days. Then every single few months since, we have made progress along one line or other.

This war is globular from the geographical point of view. It involves every nation in the world; you can see the number of subjects that are involved. There has not been a

period of six months going by without some marked step toward a better world. First few months were devoted to seeing that you would not get licked. The military were doing very well.

This United Nations thing goes back a long way -- goes back to just about the time we got in the war, and was based on the very simple theory that we could not have that happen again. And more and more nations have been coming to that idea. We have moved definitely forward without much loss of time. That is why I say there is not any one thing in the conference that stands out. They are all tied up together.

Q. Do you conscientiously believe that the conference can be the foundation of world peace for more than the generation of the men who are building that peace?

THE PRESIDENT: I can answer that question if you can tell me who your descendants will be in the year 2057.

Q. Can we look forward?

THE PRESIDENT: We can look as far ahead as humanity believes in this sort of thing. The United Nations will evolve into the best method ever devised for stopping war, and it will also be the beginning of something else to go with it.

Last year I flew to Teheran -- across Persia. Persia probably is the poorest country in the world. In the early days, Persia was a pretty well-wooded country. The Turks cut down all the woods. It has been a woodless country since. Ninety-seven-or-eight percent of the people of Persia are tenants. Only one or two percent of the whole nation owns land or property. The only part they live in Persia is in river bottoms.

Really, the people of Persia have no money. They can barely get enough to eat. The soil is all eroded -- boulders where there should be fields. There's no rainfall, because it hasn't got absolutely any moisture; sun can't draw any out of the land, and the moisture in the land runs off in a few hours' time. Persia has no purchasing power in the world except for certain things God gave it, like oil. It is neither sustaining nor has it any money to buy things.

Of course, the obvious thing for Persia to do is to improve its own country. Reforestation is the best hope, and the nation then might sustain itself, its whole standard of civilization would be a great deal higher. They could make more things than it could sell, buy many things it could not make.

The same thing is true about Iraq, Arabia, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Turkey. They've got no purchasing power to do anything with. Their only purchasing instrument is oil. Their people are not educated, do not get enough to eat, cannot cope with health problems. We talked quite a lot about this at the conference.

Now, of course, all that is tied up more or less with peace. A country that isn't moving forward with civilization is always more of a potential war danger than a country that is making progress.

I even talked to Ibn Saud about that -- mentioned the fact that I was a tree farmer.

One of his sons -- I don't remember which one -- was very much impressed, expressed his amazement. He said, "I

am a farmer too."

Ibn Saud said, "I am too old to be a farmer. I would be much interested to try it, if I wasn't too old to take it up."

Take the Arabian, for instance. If you want to start a farm, you might build a dam, or start a pond or lake, but it would all evaporate overnight, the air is so dry. But there is plenty of water lying fifty or sixty feet below the ground. Now, if you can keep it below the ground to prevent evaporation, and put in pumps run by oil, you can get it out of the ground and do your irrigating at a very low cost.

This is just an example of how to do the same thing from a different angle.

Q. Wouldn't that be a long-time proposition?

THE PRESIDENT: Growing trees is a long-time proposition.

Q. Do you mean that the conference looked ahead over a great many years?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure, we are looking at the human race, which we hope won't end in fifty years.

Q. Is there anything you could say in the way of what new aspirations you have for lasting peace, as a result of this conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think there is anything to add to Dumbarton Oaks. What I am trying to do is add to the machinery which could protect them, and give the people in the many little nations a chance to be heard, as well as the

large nations. I hope in time all nations will be members of the assembly. Arabia is small in extent of population and territory. They ought to have a chance to tell other nations what they need. But it is awfully difficult to handle things of moment that come up through the large body.

All the little nations who haven't got it want this, that or the other thing. They would constitute the security council which would be available all the time, constantly meeting for three purposes: to work out many things, like pumping water out of the ground. That would encourage a larger number of people to discuss matters like that between themselves -- put them in touch with the right people -- financial men -- from other nations.

The second point would be to eliminate causes of friction referred by them through the various channels which are provided in the covenant.

The third thing would be to prevent war, step on war before it got started. That causes a need for force enough to save them from war, and is a project for those best able to carry on war: the five big nations with the greatest possibilities along those lines of prevention, who are to be the permanent members of the security council.

Q. You said you hope that in time all nations would be members?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Do you look forward to the time when Germany and Japan would purge themselves sufficiently to become members?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so.

Q. On that line, do you think Germany and Japan in the foreseeable future should ever be permitted to re-arm?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I hope for armament to be decreased all along the line, including even the Big Five.

Q. How soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not a crystal gazer.

Q. But as to Germany and Japan, other than in the foreseeable future, do you think they should be kept disarmed?

THE PRESIDENT: I went to school in Germany under the old Emperor William I. The railroad employees were not in uniform -- wore uniform caps. The school children were not in uniform, did not march all the time. But it was not a military-minded nation then. That was way back in 1888 or 89. I was in school off and on until 1896.

The young Kaiser came in in 1889. At the time I left Germany, the railroad employees all over Germany were in uniform. The school children were in uniform. They were taught to march. And if you were living in a boarding house and needed more coal you would call up Darmstadt, the provincial capital. By the time I left, you were calling up Berlin if you needed more coal. That made all the difference in the world. The government was more centralized. German family life was a decent family life. Gradually they got militaristic.

Now, if a nation can do that in fifty years, why couldn't you move in the opposite direction? Why can't you move in a non-militaristic method?

Q. Until they definitely move in the other direction, do you think the United Nations will see to it they don't arm in the meantime?

THE PRESIDENT: I agree absolutely. That is part of the agreement.

Q. How about Japan, on the same question?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no personal experience in Japan. I cannot answer it by observation. But after all, Japan until 1856 was closed to any outsider, closed for many years -- centuries. But if they could militarize and become a great modern military nation by 1903 -- the year of the War with Russia -- if they could do that from 1856 to 1903, then they can go the other way, too. It largely depends on what leadership they have -- what their objective is.

Q. Have you got any idea that you can tell us, about the occupation of Germany? Do you favor a long-term occupation by American troops?

THE PRESIDENT: I suggest that the first thing for us to do is to win the war. We cannot crystal-gaze. We have not won the war yet.

There hasn't been any announcement of the different zones that the various forces will occupy. I don't know whether the original zoning plan was announced yet or not.

The original zoning plan was, roughly -- this is old, not true now -- was that Russia would occupy Eastern Germany, England would occupy Western and Northwestern Germany, and that we would occupy the area from the turn of the Rhine at

Mainz, south to and including Baden, Bavaria and Wurtenburg, with a supply corridor to the sea at Bremen. But that was complicated, and has not yet been settled.

We talked about having the French come in for a zone. The delineation of this zone would change either our zone or the British. The French will be consulted before it is finally settled.

Q. Do you anticipate a Pacific Conference this year?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Only the one of the 25th of April.

Q. I wondered if you were looking forward to a meeting with Chiang and the Prime Minister later in the year?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. I will probably go out on the 25th of April, or at the end of the conference. Just to say "howdy do," that is all.

Q. Do you think there is any chance the Prime Minister will come?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I will only be acting as host. I do not want to project myself into that conference. It is a United Nations conference.

Q. Will Russia be asked to come into any talks of the Pacific problems, before the defeat of Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q. As far as the record stands now, they have not been asked?

THE PRESIDENT: Nobody has. I won't go into that now.

Q. What prompted that question was your latest conference with the Prime Minister at Alexandria, the story about British promise of help against Japan.

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody wrote that story. It was wrong. The talk was not on that.

Q. You know who wrote that? Stephen T. Early!

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, he had to fill up space, eh?

Q. Like a columnist, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: At the last conference with Churchill in Quebec, we talked about it. He said emphatically that Britain would do all it could to help us against Japan. She had already sent a large number of ships to the Pacific. I don't know just where they are, but they are there.

Q. Why aren't we using those Italian battleships that were anchored near the QUINCY?

THE PRESIDENT: They are two lovely new ships, but who wants them I don't know. They are in perfectly good shape -- carry 15" guns. I wanted to use them to transfer food between North Africa and Italy. Nobody in any Navy agreed with me. In other words, I regard them as "bottoms," the Navy regards them as battleships.

Q. In the meantime, what happens to them?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I am going to take that up when I get home. They are perfectly good ships.

Q. Would we be permitted to say you went over and back in the QUINCY?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Can we say you were in a cruiser?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q. We were permitted to tell that on the Pacific trip.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it will be all right to say a naval vessel. What about it, Bill (Admiral Leahy)?

ADMIRAL LEAHY: I think it would be all right, Mr. President, to say a cruiser. I cannot see any objection to that. But do not use the name of the ship.

Q. I've noticed comment from the States about the close work between the three military staffs at the conference. Have the Russians been brought into the Combined Chiefs of Staff?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes and No. The situation is, Russia will be in any discussions affecting her troops, but not in anything against Japan. They will have nothing to do with anything in the Pacific. It is an obvious fact that Russia has been neutral, and we will respect that neutrality.

Q. They have a non-aggression pact with Japan that comes up for renewal soon. Somebody said it was to be brought up at San Francisco.

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, it's purely speculative. I don't think anybody mentioned that fact once.

Q. Can you say anything about the importance of the Pacific War? The American people have been wholly pre-occupied with the war in Europe -- the Russian drive, and the

Western Front. Do you think the country realizes they face a long, hard war in the Pacific?

THE PRESIDENT: That's a hard thing to say. They blow hot and then cold. A certain element, particularly the Hearst press, for example, are still yelling about us using the wrong strategy, that we should take the American troops out of Germany and put them in the Pacific.

But our strategy is clear: first clean up Germany, and then go after Japan just as hard as we and the British can possibly do so.

We are either hot or cold. I think it is important to emphasize that industrially at home. Yes, a lot of people will feel that the war is won when Germany collapses. Of course, it's not true.

Q. Have you decided yet on the day that you will go before Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I get in Wednesday morning. I should think Friday, as a guess. You know about poor old "Pa."

Q. Has there been any decision on the funeral?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably the day we get back.

Q. Do you know whether there will be a funeral service at the White House by any chance?

THE PRESIDENT: I will give you a story on that, to go out the night we get through the Capes. The present plan is to have the interment service at Arlington that morning. That will be the interment service. They will have a High Mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral. What day that will be, I don't

know. I will attend the interment service.

Q. That will be Wednesday, the day we get in?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. When will we be able to transmit that story?

THE PRESIDENT: As soon as we get through the Capes.

Q. Will there be any prior announcement of his death?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that Frances (Nash Watson) and (Jonathan) Daniels will release a short announcement about it, about the time we get through the Capes, maybe in time for the evening papers.

Q. Will we be permitted to announce your plans of your going up to Congress in the story?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but no specific date. I want to have a talk with the Congressional people first. It'll probably be a joint session. I am fairly certain it will be Friday some time. I don't know what time. They may want it in the morning, or around noon.

Q. Would it be safe for us to say that?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess so.

Q. Doesn't your schedule of meetings with Mr. Churchill run one about every three to six months?

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

Q. Going back to Quebec next summer?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

I saw one story from London that the "Mrs." and I are going back over there. It would be after this United Nations

was finished.

Q. The French newspapers, and later the Paris radio stations, broadcast a story that you were going to see De Gaulle very soon. Have you asked him to come over to Pennsylvania Avenue?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no plans on it at all. I read only what you read. If you say anything on it, say I would be glad to see him at any time.

Right off the record, the poor, dear man, I am inclined to think, has no knowledge of what to do. It was a very bad break for him. Not from my point, but from his. He was all tied up in engagements.

Q. The people in Algiers were certainly anxious for you to meet.

THE PRESIDENT: Reading from old papers this morning, when Paris broke the story that De Gaulle was going to be invited to the Conference, they followed that up with several stories of how France had been at the Conference, a third story that De Gaulle had been invited, a fourth story was that France would be invited, and a fifth story that De Gaulle would not agree to go, if he was invited at the last moment.

Q. Do you recall when was the last time you appeared in person before Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Last year.

Q. Are you sure it was last year? Wasn't it just before you went to Casablanca?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. De Gaulle has announced that French Indo-China is to be soon liberated. By whom, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: This is very much off the record. For two whole years I have been terribly worried about Indo-China. I talked to Chiang Kai-shek in Cairo, Stalin in Teheran. They both agreed with me. The French have been in there some hundred years. The Indo-Chinese are not like the Chinese.

The first thing I asked Chiang was, "Do you want Indo-China?"

He said, "It's no help to us. We don't want it. They are not Chinese. They would not assimilate into the Chinese people."

I said, "What are you going to advocate? It will take a long time to educate them for self-government."

He said they should not go back to the French. They have been there over a hundred years and have done nothing about educating them. For every dollar they have put in, they have taken out ten. The situation there is a good deal like the Philippines were in 1898. The French have done nothing about it.

With the Indo-Chinese, there is a feeling they ought to be independent but are not ready for it. I suggested at the time, to Chiang, that Indo-China be set up under a trusteeship -- have a Frenchman, one or two Indo-Chinese, and a Chinese and a Russian because they are on the Coast, and maybe a Filipino and an American -- to educate them for self-government. It took fifty years for us to do it in the Philippines.

Stalin liked the idea. China liked the idea. The British don't like it. It might bust up their empire, because if the Indo-Chinese were to work together and eventually get their independence, the Burmese might do the same thing to the King of England. The French have talked about how they expect to recapture Indo-China, but they haven't got any shipping to do it with. It would only get the British mad. Chiang would go along. Stalin would go along. As for the British, it would only make the British mad. Better to keep quiet just now.

Q. Is that Churchill's idea on all territory out there, he wants them all back just like they were?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he is mid-Victorian on all things like that.

Q. You would think some of that would be knocked out of him by now.

THE PRESIDENT: I read something Queen Wilhelmina said about the Dutch East Indies. She's got a very interesting point of view. I think it was a public statement -- the plans about her islands -- that differ so from the British plans. The Javanese are not quite ready for self-government, but very nearly. Java, with a little help by other nations, can probably be ready for independence in a few years. The Javanese are good people -- pretty civilized country. The Dutch marry the Javanese, and the Javanese are permitted to join the clubs. The British would not permit the Malaysians to join their clubs.

Her idea for some of the Dutch possessions is to eventually give them their independence. When Java is ready for

independence, give her help and make her a member of a federation. Sumatra the same.

I asked her, "What about Borneo?"

She said, "We don't talk about that very much. They are still head-hunters. It might be one hundred years before we could educate and civilize the Borneo head-hunter crowd."

I said, "What about New Guinea?"

She threw up both hands and said New Guinea has the lowest form of human life in the world, their skulls have least developed, and they understand civilization probably less than any part of the world. British New Guinea and Papua are probably two hundred years behind the rest of the world.

Q. This idea of Churchill's seems inconsistent with the policy of self-determination?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is true.

Q. He seems to undercut the Atlantic Charter. He made a statement the other day that ~~it~~ was not a rule, just a guide.

THE PRESIDENT: The Atlantic Charter is a beautiful idea. When it was drawn up, the situation was that England was about to lose the war. They needed hope, and it gave it to them. We have improved the military situation since then at every chance, so that really you might say we have a much better chance of winning the war now than ever before.

And when I get back to Washington, I suppose people like Krock will write nasty articles about how I always get scooped. That is perfectly true. But I think it is much

better to get scooped than to talk all the time. Then there's the time element. The Prime Minister goes before Commons the day he gets home -- breaks loads of stuff. People like Krock don't like it.

Q. Do you remember the speech the Prime Minister made about the fact that he was not made the Prime Minister of Great Britain to see the empire fall apart?

THE PRESIDENT: Dear old Winston will never learn on that point. He has made his specialty on that point. This is, of course, off the record.

(taken by Wm. Rigdon, Lt.j.g., U.S.Navy)

(personally edited by the President)

(those present: Merriman Smith; Douglas Cornell; Robert G. Nixon; Admiral Leahy)

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THE PRESIDENT: How did you find the rest of the gang when you got back? Was he (Jim Wright) behaving all right?

Q. Fairly amenable.

THE PRESIDENT: Good. That's fine. That's good news. Jim behaving all right?

Q. He seems to. No bad reports.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a curious thing, I didn't hear a thing from May (Craig) the entire time I was away. She never wrote to me, or cabled me, or anything. (laughter)

MAY CRAIG: I wrote you before you went, though.

THE PRESIDENT: You mean you wrote me up -- (laughter) -- or down, in other words. That's all right.

John (Mr. Jonathan Daniels, taking Mr. Early's place while he is away in Europe), have we got anything this morning?

MR. DANIELS: Not a thing, sir.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have had a good report from the three gentlemen who went for a nice fishing trip with me. They find that everybody is all right on their return. They seem to be happy, and I hope everybody else is -- like I am. That's about the only news I have got. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, yesterday, in -- I assume it was in transposing as you went along in the delivery of your

speech, you dropped out one phrase there about the things that would require Senate confirmation, and you said, "as will some of the other things (arrangements) agreed to at Yalta."

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there is some money needed.

Q. Is that reparations commission, too?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. (adding) Reparations, I mean.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. There are -- they are small details, important to the general picture, but they are small details.

Q. I assume from the text of your Message that you referred to other treaties than the ones that would grow out of San Francisco, and so on?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. There will be other treaties, undoubtedly, that come along like clockwork.

Q. Reparations in there?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I really don't know.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I haven't gone into that.

Q. (continuing) --- wouldn't the ceding of German land to Poland require a treaty such as we had in the last war -- ceding Alsace Lorraine and other territories? In the last war, Germany signed a treaty ceding these things. Wouldn't there eventually have to be a treaty ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) When did we sign our treaty with Germany after the last war?

Q. Well, we didn't sign ours for some time. We didn't ratify it.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) What? Well, when ---

Q. (continuing) The Treaty of Versailles provided for the ceding of Alsace-Lorraine to France, and so forth.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what is your idea in the future?

Q. Well, my question was as to whether there would not eventually have to be a treaty ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Oh, I suppose we will have a treaty with Germany some day.

Q. (continuing) --- ceding the territory which Poland -- the German territory that Poland takes?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That is -- I hate to use the word the first day I am home, but it sounds to me like an awfully "iffy" question, ---

Q. (interposing) Do those treaties ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- although I am not -- I am not a -- what is it? -- kind of a glass ball you look into -- a crystal-ball gazer. I don't know. I would like to win the war first.

Q. Do those treaties that you said might come along like clockwork, do they envisage in the Dumbarton Oaks plan treaty settlements ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I was thinking of the fact that I was sending treaties up to the Senate every month or two -- some treaty with some nation. There are a great

many treaties with a great many nations. I don't think there is any one.

Q. Could you tell us whether France is going to join in sponsoring the United Nations Conference, or have you had ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't heard this morning. Better ask the State Department.

Q. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, in the section of your speech in which you referred to reparations, you -- you said afterwards that the United States had no intention of subscribing to any slavery for the German people.

THE PRESIDENT: Any what?

Q. Slavery for the German people.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. ROMAGNA: Slavery -- slavery.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh.

Q. For the German people. It is said that the Russian point of view is that the Germans should provide labor to build up the destroyed areas inside Russia. Can you give any indication of the American attitude to that in the reparations section?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that comes under reparations.

Q. What was that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it comes under the general clause of reparations as we all talked about reparations. If I were Russian and I wanted to do something down in the

Crimea, for instance, to remedy what I saw -- there isn't enough labor there -- I don't think it would be a bad idea to get some German soldiers -- ex-soldiers -- down there to clean up all that mess. You ought to see it. I couldn't write about it without seeing it.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what Ed Flynn is doing in Moscow?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q. What Ed Flynn's mission to Moscow is about?

THE PRESIDENT: Not on the record. The three (press association) boys who were with me know all about it, and it is probably one of those international things that it is better not to write about -- there are such things in the world -- for the sake of one's own country, and of the world.

Q. Is that on the record, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is off the record.

Q. Mr. President, why was San Francisco chosen for the United Nations' meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: It looked like a pretty good place.
(laughter)

Q. What about the date, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: The date was the -- I wanted it -- this is also off the record, there is no use in printing silly things like this -- I wanted it at the end of March, as you know. And we talked it over, and after a day and -- well, they all got together with -- the Secretaries of State got together on the date, and this seemed to be about the earliest date

they could all agree on.

Q. Mr. President, will the Foreign Economic Administration be placed under the Department of Commerce?

THE PRESIDENT: What's Foreign Economic Administration? Who is that, Crowley?

Q. Crowley.

MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I hadn't thought of it for a month and four days.

Q. Mr. President, did you talk over the Palestine question with the Arab King (Ibn Saud)?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q. Were there any conclusions arrived at?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Did that discuss, also ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is off the record.

Q. No conclusions?

THE PRESIDENT: No conclusions.

Q. Did you discuss the matter with Mr. Churchill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. And the same ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The same thing there.

(laughter)

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, what is the present status of Jesse Jones? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Had assumed right along he is

ex-Secretary of Commerce.

Q. What about the Loan job?

THE PRESIDENT: The Loan job? Why, he was in that as Secretary of Commerce.

Q. So he now has no official connection with the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, just answer your own question. He is ex-Secretary of Commerce, we know that?

Q. Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: He was then head of the Loan thing as Secretary of Commerce. Q.E.D., what do you say? (more laughter)

Q. Well, Mr. President, I thought he was Loan Administrator in R.F.C. before he was Secretary of Commerce?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. I don't know.

Q. Is it true, Mr. President, that Mr. Jones remains as Loan Administrator until you appoint a successor?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Then he is no longer Loan Administrator?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No.

Q. Does he know that, Mr. President? (loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I should -- I should have asked that question at Yalta. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, are you satisfied with the bill that the Senate Military Affairs Committee reported out on the so called work-or-fight question?

THE PRESIDENT: A curious thing, nobody even sent it to me.

Q. What was that?

Q. Didn't hear that.

Q. What was that?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't even seen it.

Q. (aside) Haven't seen it.

Q. Mr. President, one more question on the Lending Administrator. Do you hope to send up a nomination soon, for that job?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think so. Soon is a very good word.

Q. Will it be a nomination, or will you be able to appoint without confirmation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That is off the record too, because honestly I haven't looked at that thing at all. I have had a number of people write in and apply for the job.

(laughter)

Q. Mr. President, while you were away, there was published what purported to be a confidential memorandum to you by General Donovan, to coordinate the intelligence agencies of the Federal Government. Would you comment on that, on the way it was made public?

THE PRESIDENT: May be in that basket. Do you want to go through it? (laughter)

Q. (softly) No.

VOICES: (after slight hesitation) Yes! Yes!

(much laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there have been reports from London that you might visit there after the San Francisco ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) From London, or was it one of those dispatches that was sent over from here for London to send back here? (laughter)

Q. I don't think so, because there were several of them -- different sources. The reports in London are that you might visit there after the San Francisco conference.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I haven't even been to Hyde Park yet. I haven't got any plans. I will probably have to, as I intimated yesterday -- I may have to do some more traveling.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I really haven't got a plan.

Q. (continuing) --- sir, talking -- returning to questions relating to Yalta, could you tell us how long it might be expected that the reconstitution of the Polish government will require?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't had -- since I got back -- I haven't had anything from Mr. Harriman, so I don't know any more than you do.

Q. Sir, is it -- is it anticipated that it is possible that the new government might be formed in time to be represented at San Francisco?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know. I have no idea at all.

Q. Mr. President, is this Government withdrawing its recognition of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as independent governments?

THE PRESIDENT: That was not even discussed. I don't know.

Q. They are still recognized, aren't they?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better ask the State Department.

Q. Mr. President, has Ambassador Hurley returned to this country?

THE PRESIDENT: He is coming back, ---

Q. (interjecting) He is?

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, have you been apprised ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I think within -- today or tomorrow.

Q. Have you been apprised in your dispatches from Chungking of the announcement of the Generalissimo that he is going to convoke a constitutional assembly next November, and begin a broader form of government?

THE PRESIDENT: That is very interesting. I didn't know that. When did you hear that?

Q. It's in the morning paper from Chungking, March first. November 12th.

THE PRESIDENT: Was it announced?

Q. I believe so.

THE PRESIDENT: Very interesting.

Q. Any comment, sir, on the decision to hold a presidential election in Brazil?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) No. I did know that.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. You look very good, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: All right.