

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press and Radio Conference #994  
Executive Office of the President  
March 9, 1945 -- 11.23 a.m., e.w.t.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing that I have got today is the daily report from the Red Cross on the Ohio floods. And the gist of it is that a great many people have been driven from their homes. Everybody, so far, is taken care of. They are the greatest wartime floods we have experienced. But everybody is on the job. The Red Cross and Federal agencies were on the way before the rivers left their banks. And it really depends on whether we get rain. Any additional rain might drive the waters higher and, of course, we can't tell what will happen then, but so far the situation is -- what's the word? -- under control.

Jonathan, read that over and see if there is anything in it that is serious or not, that should not be given out ---

MR. DANIELS: (interjecting) Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and then you can tack it up on the bulletin board for anybody ---

MR. DANIELS: (interjecting) All right, sir. Make it available.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

I think that's all.

Q. Mr. President, has the war in Germany moved to a point where you think it might end suddenly, or without any

warning?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that's a crystal ball question. Nothing to that.

Q. Mr. President, more directly on the German situation, have you seen Bob Murphy since he ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Not yet, No. He is going to see me tomorrow or the next day.

Q. Tomorrow. Have you got to the point where you are going to appoint the American member to the German Control Commission?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose I have been thinking about that for the last two or three months. Nothing further on it.

Q. The Army and Navy Journal was speculating on the possibility it might be probably Patterson of the War Department?

THE PRESIDENT: Speculation.

Q. Speculation. Would it be a military man, or a civilian?

THE PRESIDENT: Speculation. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, sir, is there anything you could tell us following your conversations yesterday with General Hurley ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) With who?

Q. General Hurley, about the political situation in China?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, No. We have just begun to

talk. He is coming back, and the General ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- General Hurley and General Wedemeyer.

Q. Mr. President, Senator Barkley said yesterday you wanted a -- I think he used the words "best manpower bill possible at the earliest possible moment." Could you give us an idea whether you would prefer the May-Bailey bill which is a modified "selective" bill, or the "ceiling" bill that the Senate passed yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You know, I think the best thing for you to do is to read my Message to Congress on it -- the need for it. Anybody can make up their mind which bill comes closest to that Message. I think we do have to have some authority and not a purely volunteer system, because the volunteer system has been worked, and worked and worked. And the Message I sent on the -- not the theory but the fact, that we haven't brought in enough men. I am still shy of men.

Q. Thank you, sir.

Q. Mr. President, Admiral Nimitz said yesterday that the Joint Chiefs were now discussing the command setup that will be used in the Pacific for the final drive on Japan. Has any decision been reached yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He is lunching with me. You had better ask him after lunch. I want to know more about it.

Q. Do you think we will get an answer then, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt it. (laughter)

Q. Is there anything you can tell us, Mr. President, yet, about Ed Flynn's mission?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I told you boys who were with me. And for the -- general national reasons, it's best not to talk about it in any paper at the present time.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any hope of seeing Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek fairly soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I -- I don't, honestly, but you never can tell.

Q. Mr. President, have you ---

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) I might decide to this afternoon.

Q. What was that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. (interposing) Have you made up your mind, sir, whether you are going to go out to San Francisco to open the Conference, or to go later?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. Not yet. Sometime during the Conference. That's all I can tell you now.

Q. Mr. President, can you give us your reaction to Commander Stassen's address?

THE PRESIDENT: Reactions to what?

Q. Commander Stassen's address.

THE PRESIDENT: Address?

Q. Address on the radio the other night.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't hear it.

Q. His speech.

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't hear it.

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

Q. (continuing) Commander Stassen's speech.

THE PRESIDENT: I say maybe I knew there was a speech, but I haven't read it, or heard it.

Q. Can you tell us why Prime Minister Mackenzie King is arriving today?

THE PRESIDENT: He comes down all the time, either here or Hyde Park.

Q. Nothing special in this visit?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Can you tell us, sir, whether there is any significance in the fact that Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Halsey, General Wedemeyer, General Hurley are all here at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it's good flying weather.  
(laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #995  
Executive Office of the President  
March 13, 1945, 4.10 p.m., e.w.t.

(The Prime Minister of Canada, W. L. Mackenzie King, was a guest at this press conference)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I invited the Prime Minister, who has been here for the last few days, to come into our press conference today, explaining you would not question him, because the press conferences are -- as you all know -- are just as much for my information from the press, as they are for the information of the press from myself, or any visitor who is here.

But I did prepare a little statement which I think Jonathan (Daniels) has for you after -- mimeographed afterwards.

(reading): "During the Canadian Prime Minister's visit to Washington, Mr. King and the President discussed questions of general international interest, as well as those more specifically concerned with the relations between the two countries; relations which are as firm and friendly as ever."

And I brought him up to date on a thing that happened this morning, which was my reception of the American delegates, and our talking about accommodations and press accommodations, and so forth and so on.

(continuing reading): "Among other things, a survey was made of questions arising out of the recent Crimea Conference and likely to arise at the forthcoming San Francisco Conference. They discussed in part the place which Canada will occupy in the new international organization.

"The President and the Prime Minister also had an opportunity of discussing questions of international economic and trading policy which both their countries will have to face as soon as hostilities end. They agreed that the solution of these questions should be sought along bold and expansive lines, with a view to the removal of discriminations and the reduction of barriers to the exchange of goods between all countries. They recognized a common interest in working toward these objectives.

"It was felt that the United States and Canada, with their long experience of friendly relations and their high degree of economic interdependence, should meet the new problems that peace will bring in the same spirit of cooperation with the other United Nations that has sustained their common war effort."

I could go on for many paragraphs about that common interest, and the way we have handled the problems between the two sister nations side by side in the past. Of course, Mr. King and I are very, very old friends -- personal friends, as you know. But since he has been Prime Minister, we have developed that friendship into a practical way of handling common problems between the Dominion and the United States.

And I think those various things that have come up between us -- they have already received names, the Ogdensburg agreement, Hyde Park agreement -- I think that relations between Canada and the United States in the past ten years have been an outstanding example of what you can do by common consultation and laying one's own problems before the other fellow, which is an outstanding example of that spirit of which two countries that are neighbors and cousins, you might say, can get along to their mutual benefit.

Which is not in the copy which Jonathan will give you.

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

JIM WRIGHT: Mr. President, did the St. Lawrence come up in your discussions?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

JIM WRIGHT: Is there a disposition to forget about that, for the time being?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Oh, No.

JIM WRIGHT: I had understood that that agreement which was presented last time was going to be allowed to go by the board for a while?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We didn't discuss it. We have the same point of view, I think, Mr. King and I, that the St. Lawrence is a very great natural and national asset to both nations; and the time is going to come -- the quicker the better -- when it is developed for the mutual good of the two nations. Buffalo papers please copy. (laughter)

JIM WRIGHT (Buffalo News): Copy from us.

Q. Mr. President, on the basis of your discussions with the delegates this morning, and with the Prime Minister, can you give us anything that might be helpful to us in connection with the questions which you expect to arise at San Francisco?

THE PRESIDENT: We didn't talk about those questions at all this morning. We were talking about the physical arrangements entirely. And I think that they are planning, in general, to follow the methods that were used at the Mexico Conference, which seem to be pretty satisfactory.

And the Conference will be open to the press and the radio -- movies and stills. It's all right. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there has been some confusion as to how the freedom of action which is granted the individual American delegates is going to resolve into a common American viewpoint out at San Francisco, specifically the freedom of action about which Mr. Vandenberg has talked. Was that matter discussed here this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Could you tell us how they are going to resolve into an American viewpoint? Will it be a unit rule, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I -- I don't honestly know. I don't think the question has come up. Stettinius hasn't said anything about it.

Q. Mr. President, have you decided when you are going to San Francisco, to open the San Francisco Conference

or go at the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I asked for advice on that this morning. Either the beginning or end.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I expect to hear.

Q. (continuing) --- do you know whether General O'Dwyer is going to run for Mayor? Did you and he discuss ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q. (continuing) --- his plans?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) No -- just what I read in the paper.

Q. Was that what you read in the paper, that you were going to support him against Mayor LaGuardia?

THE PRESIDENT: No. One paper was right and one was wrong. I only read it in two papers.

Q. Which paper was right? (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there is to be a meeting in New York in the near future to launch (Senator James M.) Mead on the gubernatorial draft again. Something you want to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I hadn't heard a thing about that.

Q. Mr. President, do you feel that the recent developments in Romania square with the Yalta declaration on liberated areas?

THE PRESIDENT: O my God! Ask the State Department.  
(laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there has been a good deal

of speculation, and otherwise, as to what the position of the various members of the Big Four (Three) were on the voting procedure question at Yalta -- I mean the -- both Dumbarton Oaks and the Crimea Conference. Could you clarify for us, to any extent, whether this final decision was or was not a victory for any participating nation, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That -- that -- of course, that's the trouble with answering the question at all. People will line up and say that is a victory for Mr. Stalin, or for Mr. Churchill, or for me. I should say it was a common agreement. Well, that means that it wasn't a victory for anybody, because they were all agreed. Honestly agreed as being what -- what we all thought it was the best thing to do. In -- what shall we say? -- history, the question of who proposed it first is the -- is the smallest end of it. If anybody has a better idea, we would be glad to consider it.

Q. Mr. President, is it true that under the Yalta agreement on voting procedure that two of the Big Powers have the power to over-rule discussions on any proposal that might be brought up, not only force but anything else?

THE PRESIDENT: As I remember the thing -- the easiest way of putting it -- on everything that is procedural, not the actual use of force, you have to have seven out of eleven, or maybe six out of eleven. Don't say it's seven. It's a majority.

Q. Any seven, or do they have to have a certain number of the Big Powers?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Any seven?

THE PRESIDENT: Any seven. In other words, you can look into things, into anything you want, and go through all the preliminary procedures by a majority vote. You don't have to have unanimity at all -- the majority vote of the eleven. When it comes to -- oh, what do they call it? -- the use of power or sanctions, that requires a unanimous vote of the -- of the five larger nations.

MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, could you tell us about your conversation with Mr. (Senator Alben W.) Barkley on the Interim Civil Aviation Agreements?

THE PRESIDENT: Interims?

MAY CRAIG: Interim Civil Aviation Agreement, not the Convention you sent to the Capitol, but the Interim International Civil Aviation Agreements?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that we go ahead on the interim government of a country which surrenders, on the principles that were announced. For instance, we have not yet made up the four zones of Germany -- the occupied zones. We are still at work on that. But we did say that France should have a zone. And then the only other thing that we all know is that during that period, the council -- allied council in wherever it is -- Berlin or somewhere else -- their decision will look after that interim period.

MAY CRAIG: I am sorry. That was not what I meant. I meant the Chicago Civil Aviation Agreements, one of which

was the Convention which came to Congress, but there was an Interim Agreement. There is a good deal of contention in the Foreign Relations Committee about it.

THE PRESIDENT: May, I don't know enough about it to answer that.

MAY CRAIG: I thought Mr. Barkley had come to see you about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MAY CRAIG: No?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Mr. President, have you received word as to who will be Mr. (Isador) Lubin's opposite number on the reparations commission?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. I haven't heard at all.

Q. When will he go to Moscow?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose pretty soon, Pete (Brandt). I don't know -- I haven't heard. I saw him yesterday. He ought to be starting very soon.

Q. Mr. President, would you care to commit yourself on the subject of night baseball? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that Clark Griffith gave you the right "dope." I am one of the fathers of night baseball, as you know, and I am all in favor of baseball so long as you don't have perfectly healthy people that could be doing more useful work in the war. I con- ---

Q. (interposing) Do you think within the -- pardon me.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I consider baseball a very good thing for the population during the war.

Q. Do you think within the definition, Mr. President, it would be possible for the big leagues to operate this year?

THE PRESIDENT: Why not? It may not be quite as good a team, but I would go out to see a baseball game played by a sandlot -- and so would most people.

Q. Mr. President, could you give us any inkling as to the difference in treatment to be accorded Austria as against Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: There is to be, as I remember it, an Allied council in -- in Austria -- in Vienna -- which will look after that end of things.

Q. Mr. President, is there to be any change in the status of Italy? I think the Italian Ambassador suggested that he was wanting to become a member of the United Nations.

THE PRESIDENT: There was an agreement the other day to give Italy certain things. I haven't seen it, and I couldn't tell you off-hand -- don't remember it -- what those items are. But apparently Italy is more satisfied in getting more authority over the internal management of things since this has come about. That is within the last two or three days.

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

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

(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What was it?

Q. I was going to ask about Leon Henderson. Is

he through ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, he is working. Going to keep on working. All right.

Q. Still working.

(copy of this press conference  
for Prime Minister Mackenzie  
King)

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press and Radio Conference #996  
Executive Office of the President  
March 16, 1945 -- 11.10 a.m., e.w.t.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing I have got is the setting up of a committee -- I think you know about it -- but this is the formal letter ---

MR. DANIELS: (interposing) That's already been announced.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. DANIELS: That was announced before.

THE PRESIDENT: That was announced.

MR. DANIELS: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Assistant Secretary (Will L.) Clayton; Shipping -- Food -- W.P.B. as well as the War Department. Marvin Jones from War Food; Captain (L. H.) Strauss from the Navy -- that they will meet together personally, attending any meetings. For the purpose of the committee is to examine all the related factors that pertain to the capabilities of the United States to export items for the support of the war other than direct military Lend-Lease commitments.

Well, the reason for that, as you know, is largely food, but not entirely food; and this committee is to act as a clearing house more than anything else.

I ought to stop and let somebody ask me a question, because it is -- I'll be asked by somebody, I don't know who,

about starving this country to death. (laughter) And then I would have to ask him what paper -- what paper they represent -- what are their orders -- because that makes a lot of difference, you know.

There is a tendency -- and I think this had better go off the record entirely -- there is a tendency on the part of certain -- not newspapers but "papers" to scare the people. They forget that we are still at war.

And the easiest way to illustrate it is to ask a question of this supposititious person who asked me the question: suppose we are -- in the world supply -- suppose we are short of sugar all over the world. Well, we are not, I am taking an illustration which isn't -- isn't a good illustration; but something else, something that everybody uses. And suppose we find that by cutting our consumption in this country, you and I, ten percent -- well, I think we would live. But, by doing -- by not doing it, if we didn't cut here, there would be some country on the other side where people are really starving -- have been starving for some time now, not only malnutrition, but the worst kind of hardship.

Take -- well, take for instance, the example of Holland, which is a very bad case. Some -- some countries that need it a lot more than we do. Well, there is a tendency among the papers -- an inclination -- to make an issue out of that, that they would oppose our cutting down on our consumption, and thereby let the people of some other country starve.

I think it's a question -- the country will be all

right on it when it is explained, but I rather object to the time wasted in explaining a thing like that. We are decent people in this country. The owners of these papers are not decent people, if they take that line.

And the thing -- the thing is a matter of compromise, of course, doing the best thing we can as a matter of -- what? -- justice -- not exactly\* the word I want -- of decency. The war is not won yet. We have got to tighten our belts -- this that and the other thing -- before the war is won, probably -- the German war and the Japanese war.

And I think the country will back up the idea of keeping some people alive, by continuing certain restrictions that have been in effect, or adding others. I can't yet bring myself to think that we have suffered very greatly in this country, compared with some other countries. I don't think we are going to suffer very greatly. But, as a matter -- as I say -- of justice, we are going to solve these problems in the best way we can.

Q. Is all that discussion off the record, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q. Can we use it for background, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Can we use it for background?

THE PRESIDENT: Use it for background, but I was talking entirely informally.

Q. (interposing) Well, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And the reason I would rather have it left off, for background, is that I don't want to bring the newspapers into it at all.

Q. Well, may we attribute this to you?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Attribute it to the attitude of the Administration, and of a large majority of the American people. (laughter)

JIM WRIGHT: Mr. President, I think it would be a good deal more effective if we could say this was your view. I -- honestly, I don't see where the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Leave out the stuff, Jim, about the papers, and the rest you can use.

Q. (interjecting) Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I guess that's all right.

Q. Mr. President, have you had any response yet from Chiang Kai-shek about the possibility of a meeting at San Francisco with him?

THE PRESIDENT: He is one of the inviters. China is one of the host nations, as I remember it.

Q. I think the question was, Mr. President, have you heard when the Generalissimo may come to San Francisco?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to see Commander (Harold E.) Stassen today, or in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: I think ---

VOICE: (interposing) Today.

MR. DANIELS: It's today.

THE PRESIDENT: Today. As a matter of fact, he is the first person I see after you all leave the room.

Q. Does the conference have a bearing on the San Francisco meeting, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so, ---

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- but I would ---

Q. (interjecting) Pardon me.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I'd go a little slow in guessing, because I think it's chiefly about whether, between now and then, he'll have time to go back to his command.

Q. Personal problems, rather than ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, yes.

Q. (continuing) --- the Conference?

Q. Mr. President, yesterday you saw General Bill Donovan. Is there anything you can tell us about your talk with him?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing, Jim (Wright). Just clearing up some routine matters -- nothing of importance.

Q. You didn't take up this proposed super-spy system, as they call it in some of the other "papers" that you referred to? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. That was of such importance that he never even mentioned it. Neither did I.

Q. I see.

Q. Mr. President, in this current Hollywood

motion picture strike situation, the field producers are caught between two labor boards and two A. F. of L. groups. (laughter from the President) There have been numerous suggestions that you might take some action to end the stalemate. Do you plan to go into that?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't done a thing. In fact, I have read only the newspaper headlines. I haven't even read the stories.

Q. Mr. President, I wonder if you would care to comment on these published reports as to the social problems that reputedly are following in the wake of the curfew, in such places as New York, because large numbers of service people are on the streets after midnight with no respectable place to go, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't been there. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there have been new rumors of peace feelers from Germany. One of them was supposed to have come via Sweden.

THE PRESIDENT: I saw that this morning.

Q. There have been reports, too, that Von Rundstedt had been relieved of his command, and was supposed to have made some armistice proposals to our armies. Can you give us any illumination on those reports?

THE PRESIDENT: We have nothing here at all, and I think the British Foreign Office said they heard nothing of it.

Q. In that connection, Mr. President, can you now

throw any light on your conversations with Mr. (Robert) Murphy? He has been here for almost two weeks, and we assume that you have been talking about the problems of German occupation.

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think I've only seen Bob once. Came to lunch the other day, and I reminisced about my boyhood in Germany. That was all.

Q. Have you now settled the question of the -- precisely what zone American troops will occupy?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, No. In fact, I am glad you mentioned that, because it is something I want to ask about. I haven't heard of it since Yalta.

Q. What is holding it up, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Don't know anything about it. I haven't asked about it since I got back.

Q. Mr. President, do whatever reasons which have prevented publication of the Italian armistice terms still prevail?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask the State Department. I don't really know what is holding it up.

Q. They always refer us to the War Department, which refers us to the White House, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What? (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there has been a rumor that you were considering inviting Mackenzie King to be temporary chairman of the San Francisco Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: There will be a lot more of those between now and the 25th. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, since Yalta a new government

has been set up in Romania where Premier Groza describes that government as representative ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think that one's so ---

Q. (continuing) --- of the Romanian people.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- catchy, you had better ask the State Department too. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, has there been any decision yet on the new command setup for the Pacific?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Do you expect there will be one soon, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) I think it depends entirely on the kind of operations.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #997

Executive Office of the President

March 20, 1945 -- 3.07 p.m., e.w.t. (one hour earlier)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the most important thing I have is setting up an inquiry into the new question of guaranteed wage plans. As some of you know, I have been talking about it for ten years. In other words, what might be called the annual -- annual "take home" a person can make under our wage system. And it is only lately that the trade unions have become interested in the question. Therefore, it's new.

And I wrote, last December, to Justice Byrnes about a study of it, and he took it up with Chairman Davis of the War Labor Board, and submitted a report, suggesting that a study should be conducted by a specially appointed commission charged with the duty of examining into the experience which industry and labor have thus far had with these plans. I will give you a copy of this when you go out.

And therefore, Justice Byrnes's advisory commission has been asked if they will undertake the plan and start right away to do it. Several of the facts have been studied before by the Department of Labor -- quite a lot to go on. Industries differ very much. An annual -- annual wage is relatively simple in some industries, and exceedingly difficult in other industries. You will know more about it when this commission reports.

I think that's about all I have got.

Q. Mr. President, Mayor LaGuardia has in effect overruled Justice Byrnes, so far as New York City is concerned, and so far as the midnight curfew is concerned. Do you have any comment to make as to who you think is right in the controversy?

THE PRESIDENT: Better ask Justice Byrnes. It has already been given out. It was done with my approval.

Q. Does that mean, Mr. President, you would stick by the midnight curfew?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Does that mean that you think we ought to stick by the midnight curfew?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will put it this way. Most of the country has accepted the request. The City of New York has not accepted it. And I was in favor of the original request. Of course, it isn't an order. I think that's about all there is to say.

Q. Mr. President, does the Government have any plans for preventing the stoppage of work in the coal mines, should the operators and the union not reach agreement by March 31st?

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry to have to say that that really is an "iffy" question.

Q. The word "if" wasn't there, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: It was cleverly done, I will say that. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, in connection with manpower

legislation, can you say whether you would believe in penalties being imposed or applied against workers who refused to take or stay in essential jobs, as well as penalties applied to employers who violated employment ceilings?

THE PRESIDENT: Don't you think it would depend on the case a good deal? What we are trying to get is manpower, in the most useful way. We have to do it, or else ---

Q. (interposing) Can't hear you back here.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- jeopardize the war.

Q. Thank you, sir.

Q. Could you discuss the food situation, if you please, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I read an awful lot of -- lot of stuff. I don't think I am ready to answer that yet, because the food situation depends largely on the person who writes the story. I could write both sides of it. I think the country ought to know. I will try to have something by Friday on it, as to what has happened to food. It's worth analyzing.

Q. Will that -- your plan is for Friday, sir? Is that a statement you plan at the press conference, or a message to Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: I thought I would just talk.

Q. Yes. I wondered if it involved a message?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Do you think, sir, that a Congressional investigation would be advisable and helpful?

THE PRESIDENT: That's a trick question.

Q. It's a what?

THE PRESIDENT: It's a trick question.

Q. It wasn't meant as ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I know it -- (laughing) -- but it's tricky, because I don't -- I don't like to criticise Congress. I feel a little bit about it -- I think you had better put this off the record -- what can we find out about it that we don't know already? I honestly don't know. There are a good many people in the Government who can tell about the whole thing in half-an-hour.

Of course, I, having been in a legislative body, have a little bit the feeling that if I ever inclined to do what I have seen other people do, I would pass a resolution that hereafter, in America, all food in the country is going to be just twice what it is now. Resolve it. I don't know what good it is going to do. Maybe they will find something useful. I would be delighted if they did.

Q. (interposing) Well, Mr. President, I would like ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) The old thing in the Bible about making two blades of "sheep" grow where one grew before. It's a little like that.

Q. Mr. President, I would like to, if I may, go back to this curfew question. Does the Administration, you or Justice Byrnes, intend to do anything to try to bring New York City back in line with the midnight curfew?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, what can we do?

Q. There's a lot of sanctions that they could bring in -- bring to bear, I suppose, on manpower ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) What?

Q. (continuing) --- everything from gas and lights. That's the way they have always talked before.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't thought about it.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #998

Held in the Little White House at Warm Springs, Georgia  
Thursday, April 5, 1945 -- 2.00 p.m., c.w.t.

(Sergio Osmena, President of the Philippine Commonwealth, was present at this press conference)

THE PRESIDENT: President Osmena and I have been having a nice talk, and I thought you could come up and write a story for release when we get back to Washington. It may be in another week or ten days.

The President and I talked about many things, and it so happened that while we were together this morning, the announcement about the fall of the Japanese cabinet was told. It is a piece of very good news. Outside of that, we have been talking about a great many things to do with the Philippines.

President Osmena is just back from the Philippines itself, and he tells me about the terrible destruction in Manila -- about three-fourths of the city has been destroyed. We talked about -- wait until I get this memorandum, just to use as background -- first was the military campaign and the possibility of intensifying it. There are still a great many Japs in pockets in a number of places all through the Islands. We have not been to Mindanao, have we? Eventually, we will get to Mindanao where President Osmena says he has some very good guerillas fighting. Our joint forces are working up

toward the center of the Islands. That is partly Morro country, so there we get a great many Morros working together with the American and Filipino forces.

Then we talked about more current problems, after the Islands are cleared of the Japanese. We are absolutely unchanged in our policy of two years ago, for immediate Filipino independence.

That brings up a great many things, like relief, the rebuilding of communications, roads, highways, bridges, and so forth, so as to get civilized life running in a normal way. I don't know yet -- I am not ready to announce dates, because nobody knows when the country as a whole will be ready to go ahead with the distribution of relief without being fired on. The relief probably ought to be undertaken by us on a perfectly definite plan. I put it to President Osmena this morning.

There are certain things which we have a definite responsibility on, which was not the fault of the Filipino people that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, but they have been terribly hurt by the result of the war. And in the process of taking the Island back, we obviously ought to restore certain damages like highway bridges, or tunnels, or highways themselves destroyed by the Japanese, and those practical things.

There are other things which are not immediately practical, in one sense. For example, in Manila, the famous old Cathedral -- which is one of the oldest cathedrals in the Far East. I think this country will want, as a gesture of

sentimentality, to restore the Cathedral of St. Dominic. Other things, like wrecks and harbors with Jap ships, it certainly is our duty to take those wrecks and blow them up, so commerce at different ports will be able to function again.

Then we discussed all kinds of things on the question of rehabilitation in regard to trade. We have not yet gotten from the Congress a definite statement as to the tariff question. After 1898, we gave to the Spaniards, who defeated the party at that time, ten years to work out the tariff problem; and we have been under a tariff ever since, which has been fixed from time to time by the Congress of the United States after commissions in those cases have sat. I don't think we can treat the Filipinos any worse than we did the Spaniards on problems of that kind. My thought is we should maintain the present tariffs between the Philippines and the United States after they get their independence. In their present status, give them a chance to turn around before we get a new tariff, and we ought to consider the economic needs of the Filipinos as a whole.

It seems obvious that we will be more or less responsible for security in all the Pacific waters. As you take a look at the different places captured by us, from Guadalcanal, the north coast of New Guinea, and then the Marianas and other islands gradually to the southern Philippines, and then into Luzon and north to Iwo Jima, it seems obvious the only danger is from Japanese forces; and they must be prevented, in the same way Germany is prevented, from setting up a military

force which would start off again on a chapter of aggression.

So that means the main bases have to be taken away from them. They have to be policed externally and internally. And as a part of the western Pacific situation, it is necessary to throw them out of any of their mandated ports, which they immediately violated almost as soon as they were mandated, by fortifying these islands.

And we were talking about what base or bases will be necessary, not for us nationally, but for us in the world, to prevent anything from being built up by the Japanese, and at the same time give us a chance to operate in those waters. The Philippine waters occupy a very large part of the Pacific Ocean, and undoubtedly we accept a mandate to keep security in that part of the world. The Filipinos and ourselves would in propinquity maintain adequate naval and air bases to take care of that section of the Pacific.

Then we talked about American technical assistance. All of this will be a special mission to keep us in touch, with all of this being predicated on the permanent setting up of a Philippine independent government. We talked about the time, but nothing was decided as to dates. It all depends on how soon the Japanese are cleared in the Islands. This autumn, we hope, which would be prior to the date of July 1946, set by the Congress.

Now, what else was there?

Then, of course, we discussed all sorts of important things which are detailed really, such as the question of

the redemption of emergency notes, as we do now in so many places, including Italy and Morocco -- something which the soldiers and sailors can use to buy anything they want. Of course, there is very little left to buy. We have had to issue a kind of emergency note for the Armed Forces, to tide them over, in case they wanted to buy some things to send home.

Q. Mr. President, on the question of the Japanese mandates that you say will be taken away from them, who will be the controlling government in those mandates, the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say the United Nations. Or -- it might be called -- the world, which has been much abused now, will have a chance to prevent any more abuse.

Q. Mr. President, aren't the Philippines under a sort of preferential tariff as compared with other nations?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is true.

Q. A lot of articles are on the free list like sugar, etcetera, aren't they?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. My idea is to continue that, and give them a few years to get things worked out in a peaceful world, so we can get a permanent tariff treaty with the Filipinos. A thing like that takes time.

Q. Could you say anything further about the technical setup of harbor control plan on the mandates?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think the nations as a whole have given it a thought. It is too early.

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned the collapse of the Japanese cabinet. Do you think there is any connection between that and the Russian renunciation of the non-aggression pact with Japan?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't know. I would get into what you boys call the speculative field if I tried to answer.

Q. It certainly didn't make the Japanese feel any better.

THE PRESIDENT: No. It is not very much out of line, which I would have prognosticated if I were a prognosticator.

Q. You knew the facts so well you didn't have to prognosticate. (laughter)

Q. President Osmena, are you going to San Francisco?

PRESIDENT OSMENA: No. I am going back to Manila. We have a delegation going, however, with General Carlos P. Romulo heading the delegation.

THE PRESIDENT: You see, from the legalistic point of view, the Filipinos have been headed for nearly ten years toward a definite step: a date for independence, which has not arrived. They are leaving it to my discretion -- the setting of the date -- at any time between now and July 1946. What I hope the real story is -- I hope to set it long before that.

Q. You think you can set a date before all organized resistance ends in the Philippines?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. When I say organized resistance there is a chance that for years -- several years -- there

may be organized resistance on the part of the Japanese troops, organized only in having an objective of killing Filipinos or Americans, and working against us in the form of guerillas. It may take several years to do that. I wouldn't call it organized resistance, except that you have to watch your step when you go into the woods.

Q. Mr. President, do you think we will have a chance to talk with you again on other subjects before you go, such as the three-to-one vote?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you will see me several times before I go. Some of the boys cannot get their facts straight. It would really be fun if I went on the air and simply read the things which have appeared in the paper. Of course, you know that it is not true factually.

Q. There certainly have been as many different interpretations as I have ever seen on anything.

THE PRESIDENT: As a matter of fact, this plea for votes was done in a very quiet way.

Stalin said to me -- and this is the essence of it -- "You know there are two parts of Russia that have been completely devastated. Every building is gone, every farm house, and there are millions of people living in these territories -- and it is very important from the point of view of humanity -- and we thought, as a gesture, they ought to be given something as a result of this coming victory. They have had very little civilization. One is the Ukraine, and the other is White Russia. We all felt -- not any of us coming from there in

the government -- we think it would be grand to give them a vote in the Assembly. In these two sections, millions have been killed, and we think it would be very heartening -- would help to build them up -- if we could get them a vote in the Assembly."

He asked me what I thought.

I said to Stalin, "Are you going to make that request of the Assembly?"

He said, "I think we should."

I said, "I think it would be all right -- I don't know how the Assembly will vote."

He said, "Would you favor it?"

I said, "Yes, largely on sentimental grounds. If I were on the delegation -- which I am not -- I would probably vote 'yes.'"

That has not come out in any paper.

He said, "That would be the Soviet Union, plus White Russia, plus the Ukraine."

Then I said, "By the way, if the Conference in San Francisco should give you three votes in the Assembly -- if you get three votes -- I do not know what would happen if I don't put in a plea for three votes in the States." And I said, "I would make the plea for three votes and insist on it."

It is not really of any great importance. It is an investigatory body only. I told Stettinius to forget it. I am not awfully keen for three votes in the Assembly. It is the little fellow who needs the vote in the Assembly. This business about the number of votes in the Assembly does not

make a great deal of difference.

Q. They don't decide anything, do they?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

By the way, this is all off the record.

(taken by Dorothy Brady)