

Pre-press conference briefings, May 23, 1956.

Legislative matters. President suggested he say that he keeps on his desk list of the more important legislative matters that he hopes very much Congress will pass this year, and that he will give to Mr. Snyder to be handed out. Of course there are some one hundred measures he wants, based on recommendations made in three major speeches. It was pointed out that Mr. Summerfield was most anxious that a boost be given to the postal pay rate increase. Adams cautioned that the business of trying to set up priorities was a little dangerous.

Foreign Affairs.

Soviet Arms Cut. President fully briefed. Said that all the Soviets were doing was instigating a "new look" which we had done a couple of years ago. He pointed out that Russia still has 115 divisions. Difference, magnified in press, between Dulles, Wilson and Stassen simply difference in words.

Egypt recognition of Red China. President informed. Said "the U.S. does not act on the basis of any one fact."

Aswan Dam. Yesterday the Secretary of State had said that he didn't think we would contribute anything to the Aswan Dam if the Russians provided money.

Israel-Saudi Arabia. Last shipment of arms to Saudi Arabia was done under much earlier agreement.

Civilians still in China. Of the 41 prisoners there are 13 remaining. Talks are continuing in Geneva.

Mr. Truman. Urges U.S. sends representative to the Vatican.

Mutual Aid Cut. Yesterday Foreign Affairs Committee cut 1.1 billion, sharply reduced amount that could be used in Europe. Persons explained that the vote on bill would be delayed until after June 6th because California delegation has to go home for elections. He had agreed to this. Suggested that cut was affected by Russian disarmament action.

Jewish soldiers going to Saudi Arabia. Have to have visas.

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Defense Department squabble as to who has best weapons, etc.

President knows all about it - is weary of it. Was informed that two Congressional committees think they are going to investigate matter - Symington and Chavez. President mentioned that Symington when he was Secretary for Air, had defied Forrestal and gone to San Francisco and made a speech in favor of the B-36s (which never proved useful). President said that quarrels between services had been going on for a long long time. President said that if he knew anyone who was guilty of leaking confidential material, he would be punished.

Donavan's Report that President had suggested a third party.

President said he had many times in conversation remarked on fact that like-minded people in north and south cannot get together in same political tent and vote. Nothing ever got beyond stage of academic discussion.

Harry Cain. President was reminded that Cain has charged that people in Departments were using the "number's game" on him and that he did not get proper information.

In this connection, Murray Snyder reminded the President that Mr. Hatkin's lawyer had made the statement that the "Interests of the country are not paramount, the interests of the individual are."

Nicaro records. President was reminded that at a previous press conference a reporter had asked him a question about this, and his answer that the reporter should get in touch Mr. Brownell. Mr. Brownell's answer had been that the Department of Justice did not comment to outsiders on the subject of matters under investigation. They are still looking into it. President was briefed about disappearance of papers.

Treasury Surplus. President will stick by Humphrey's statement of no tax cut possible at this time, any surplus could be applied to debt reduction. Will emphasize fluid condition of economy. Gabe suggested he re-emphasize here "~~physical~~ fiscal integrity."

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H. Bomb tests. President mentioned in this connection that it was possible that fall-out being attributed to this blast belonged in reality to fall-out from an explosion of the British in Australia.

Sobeloff. President has gone all over record -- it is a good one -- that he still hopes for confirmation.

Bridges Bill. Sedition cases. President thinks this is case where responsibility belongs to states.

Dr. Snyder's comment that if asked, he would not recommend the President go to Colorado this year.

Campbell's comment that the defense department had retained illegally funds that should have been turned back. Complicated legal situation, but seems to be basis for his contention.

