

White House Press Briefing
10/01/20
11:24:19 a.m.
5 minutes and 7 seconds

JOHN ROBERTS: Kayleigh, if I could start off, I'd like to ask you for a definitive and declarative statement without ambiguity or deflection. As the person who speaks for the President, does the President denounce white supremacy and groups that espouse it, in all their forms?

KAYLEIGH MCENANY: This has been answered yesterday by the President himself, the day before by the President himself on the debate stage. The President was asked this. He said sure three times. Yesterday he was point blank asked do you denounce white supremacy and he said "I've always denounced any form of that." I can go back and read for you in August 2019: "In one voice, our nation must condemn racism, bigotry, white supremacy. In August of 2017: "Racism is evil and violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and other hate groups." I have an entire list of these quotes I can go through with you.

ROBERTS: But just —

MCENANY: He has condemned white supremacy more than any President —

ROBERT: — but —

MCENANY: — in modern history.

ROBERTS: — just to clear it up this morning can you — naming it — make a declarative statement that you denounce — that the President denounces it.

MCENANY: I just did. The President has denounced it repeatedly.

ROBERTS: You read a bunch of quotes in the past. Can you —

MCENANY: The President was asked this.

ROBERTS: — but just —

MCENANY: You're contriving a story

ROBERTS: — no, I'm not.

MCENANY: — line and narrative.

ROBERTS: I'm just asking —

MCENANY: He said —

ROBERTS: — to put this to rest.

MCENANY: I just did. I read you all the quotes.

ROBERTS: You read me past quotes.

MCENANY: They're in writing —

ROBERTS: Can you do it currently?

MCENANY: — and I will put them in an email. Paula.

ROBERTS: So, Kayleigh, I'm just — can you right now denounce white supremacy and the groups it espoused?

MCENANY: I just did. The President has denounced —

ROBERTS: You read me a bunch of quotes from the past.

MCENANY: — white supremacy, the KKK — [ROBERTS SHAKES HEAD] — and hate groups in all forms. He signed a resolution to that effect. The President just last week — perhaps you all weren't covering it — but just last week, expressed his desire to see the KKK prosecuted as domestic terrorists. This President had advocated for the death penalty for a white supremacist, the first federal execution in 17 years. His record on this is unmistakable and it's shameful that the media refuses to cover it. [TO REID] Yes?

PAULA REID: Kayleigh, thank you. The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security say that racially-motivated violent extremism is one of the most deadly threats in the U.S. Does the White House agree with that assessment and what is it doing to combat this threat?

MCENANY: The President has done quite a bit to combat this threat. First of all, last week, he — in addition to saying he wants to prosecute the KKK as domestic terrorists — he said that lynching should be a national hate crime. Again, I think there's no stronger signal that you can send than advocating for the execution of a white supremacist, the first time there's been a federal execution in 17 years. He's been unmistakable.

REID: Saying you want to do it is different than actually doing it.

MCENANY: He continually condemned it and it is really —

REID: His record on this —

MCENANY: — it's really —

REID: — to what John's been talking about, is mixed.

MCENANY: — it — it is —

REID: He's condemned it.

MCENANY: — it's not mixed.

REID: He's equivocated it. At times, he's said he didn't want to acknowledge it or address it. His record is very mixed on this issue.

MCENANY: His record is not mixed in the slightest.

REID: His record is mixed.

MCENANY: And when you go back —

REID: His record is very mixed.

MCENANY: — in history, you can see that.

REID: I have his history right here.

MCENANY: When you go back in history, you can see that.

REID: I have his quotes. It's extremely mixed.

MCENANY: Justin Jackson has praised the President as someone who's served underserved communities. This President, with Mar-a-Lago, was the first Palm Beach club open to African-Americans and Jews.

REID: But while that's important, his record —

MCENANY: And in fact —

REID: — is mixed.

MCENANY: — he was — he was praised —

REID: He has not been consistent on the issue —

MCENANY: — he has been —

REID: — of white supremacy.

MCENANY: — entirely consistent.

REID: What has this White House done —

MCENANY: And it is —

REID: — combat —

MCENANY: — shameful —

REID: — what —

MCENANY: — it is quite shameful —

REID: — the FBI says is one of the —

MCENANY: — it is quite shameful —

REID: — deadliest —

MCENANY: — let me speak, Paula —

REID: — threats in this country?

MCENANY: Paula, we're not having a debate on a cable news channel —

REID: You're — you're —

MCENANY: — right now.

REID: — saying that he —

MCENANY: You need to let me finish.

REID: — that he condemns it. I have his record right here. It's mixed.

MCENANY: You need to let me finish —

REID: His record is mixed.

MCENANY: — cause it's quite funny that the media goes haywire about interrupting in the debates and then chooses to pursue that very same tactic themselves. This is a White House briefing. You ask a question and give me time to answer.

CATHERINE LUCEY: The President said in the debate that *Roe v. Wade* was not on the ballot

ant that Judge Amy Coney Barrett's view was not known. She signed a newspaper ad in 2006 that called for a "end to the barbaric legacy of *Roe v. Wade*." And the President has explicitly promised to support judges that overturn *Roe*. Was he downplaying her views on Tuesday night and what do you say to the American public whether *Roe* is on the ballot?

MCENANY: The President has been clear that he would never ask a judge to pre-judge a case. Judge Amy Coney Barrett has, on multiple occasions, said it is never appropriate for a judge to impose that judge's personal convictions, whether they derive from faith or anywhere else on the law. She said that she continues to stand and believes the core proposition if there is ever a conflict between a judge's personal conviction and that judge's duty under the rule of law it is never, ever permissible for that judge to follow their personal convictions in the decision of a case rather than what the law requires.

LUCEY: Can the President expect her to overturn *Roe*? He has said he would only appoint judges that would overturn *Roe*.

MCENANY: The President would never ask a judge to pre-judge a case and what I would also says is we fully expect that the Ginsburg rule be followed throughout the course of these proceedings. It was then Senator Joe Biden who set the Ginsburg rule in saying that there are no questions on how Ginsburg will decide any specific cases that may come before her and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg indeed applied that rule throughout the course of her hearing on the First Amendment religion clause and various other issues.

LUCEY: How can you say that her views are not known?

(....)

11:29:53 a.m.

3 minutes and 41 seconds

JILL COLVIN: Can you explain why it's appropriate for the President to be holding rallies this weekend in two areas that this White House has declared to be red zones in Wisconsin?

MCENANY: Yeah, so the President believes that people have a First Amendment right to political speech. He is having a rally. People can choose whether or not to come.

COLVIN: But the governor has — has pegged the White House to please not continue having events like this. Your own coronavirus task force says this is an area people need to be really careful in, doubling down on social distancing, so why is it right for the President to be coming in there and holding another rally or two rallies?

MCENANY: Well, we — we employ measures to protect rallygoers. We encourage —

COLVIN: But I mean, we've all covered these —

MCNENANY: — mask-wearing, hand sanitizing —

COLVIN: — rallies where people are shoved together, thousands of people standing close to each other and not wearing masks.

MCENANY: — did you watch the Democratic nominee's rally yesterday? There was social distancing there, so I assume you guys expressed the same line of questioning to the Democrats but what I would say this is. There really seems to be two standards of health in this country. One for Trump supporters or one for everything else. 1,300 health experts literally signed a letter that said "we don't condemn these gatherings" — speaking of the protests that we all saw play out. We do not condemn these gatherings as risky for COVID-19 transmission. We support them as vital to the national public health." So, it's vital if you're protesting but somehow political speech is no longer vital when it comes to a Trump supporter. Kaitlan?

KAITLAN COLLINS: So, the Proud Boys, or people who consider them to be members of this group, give voice to these misogynistic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, anti-immigrant views. They're a despicable group by pretty much anyone's standards. So when the President was asked about them and you say he denounced them, that's what you insist he did on the debate stage the other night, if that's the case, then why are they celebrating what the President said on the debate stage in front of millions of people?

MCENANY: Well, I don't speak for that group, so I'm not sure why you're asking me why they're saying a certain thing.

COLLINS: But I'm saying if someone denounced you, you probably wouldn't put it on a t-shirt and made badges of it, right?

MCENANY: The President did denounce them. He was asked will you tell them to stand down he said sure and went onto say —

COLLINS: He said standby, which seems like an instruction.

MCENANY: — he said stand back and then just yesterday, when he was asked, he said specifically stand down, a synonym with stand back and the President said sure when asked by the moderator whether they should stand down. So, again —

COLLINS: No, he said —

MCENANY: — another — it's really interesting. The media seems to be the only one putting the names of these groups into headlines, into media reporting. He didn't know who the Proud Boys were. The first time I heard of them was in the debate, but the media continues to put these names into circulation and give them a lot of public attention.

COLLINS: But he was given about —

MCENANY: Justin?

COLLINS: — 12 hours, more than that, since from the debate when he was asked to clarify yesterday and he didn't come out and clarify yesterday. Instead he did what you did when John asked you to unambiguously denounce these groups, you just pointed to past things that you've said. You can't — I just don't understand why you knew you were going to get these questions and you don't have a statement ready to just say we do, unambiguously, denounce these views —

MCENANY: Kaitlan —

COLLINS: — and that those are not supporters —

MCENANY: — you know what is —

COLLINS: — that we welcome.

MCENANY: — do you know why people have lost trust in the media? There was a reporter from your network yesterday — your network — in a tweet said —

COLLINS: Why are you bringing that up? I'm asking you a question. I don't even know what you're going to bring up that has nothing to do with what I'm asking you —

MCENANY: — I sat here —

COLLINS: — right now.

MCENANY: — I sat here while you lobbed your partisan attack questions, so you will allow me to give an answer. The President and someone from your network said yesterday in a tweet the President dodged a question about white supremacy. That was a tweet from a CNN reporter. The President specifically, verbatim was asked yesterday white supremacy do you denounce them, to which he responded: "I have always denounced any form of that." Those are the facts and CNN I know that truth is of no moment to your networks but those are the facts.

COLLINS: Those aren't the facts. Why are Republicans — Republicans are calling on the President to be more forceful, his own party.

(...)

11:36:41 a.m.

2 minutes and 18 seconds

JOHN DECKER: As you know, the President has criticized the mail-in voting process quite a bit over the last two weeks. The other day, he said "they found a lot of ballots in a river" Who is they?

MCENANY: So, what the President was referring to are something that we've seen just in the last seven days where in Wisconsin, there were trails of mail ending up in a ditch. That's — I believe the specific he was referring to —

DECKER: Where? Where is that?

MCENANY: — included absentee ballots.

DECKER: Where specifically? In this particular statement though, who is they that found those ballots and where is this river anywhere in this country?

MCENANY: The local authorities. It was a ditch in Wisconsin that they were found. I can get the article to your inbox if you'd like.

DECKER: So — that's fine.

MCENANY: And beyond that —

DECKER: If he misspoke, that's fine.

MCENANY: No. That's — that's —

DECKER: So he meant — he meant —

MCENANY: — I believe —

DECKER: — a ditch — a ditch —

MCENANY: — that's what the President was referring to.

DECKER: — rather than a river.

MCENANY: And you're really — you're missing the forest for the trees here. The point is —

DECKER: I just want to know. I like — I cover the news —

MCENANY: — when it's —

DECKER: — and I like to report accurately in the news.

MCENANY: — you're —

DECKER: — and when the President said they found a lot of ballots in the river, I simply want to know where is the river?

MCENANY: No, you simply want to ignore the fact —

DECKER: I don't.

MCENANY: — of the matter. Again —

DECKER: I get asked —

MCENANY: — please allow me —

DECKER: — so many questions —

MCENANY: — to respond.

DECKER: — to my Fox affiliates

MCENANY: Please allow me to respond.

DECKER: — where is this river.

MCENANY: Allow me to respond to you.

DECKER: And I can't give them accurate information —

MCENANY: Allow me to respond.

DECKER: — and that's why I'm asking you.

MCENANY: This is — this is what is happening here. You are ignoring the problem here, which, last week in Pennsylvania you had ballots found in a ditch. That's a fact. In Wisconsin seven military ballots, all marked for Trump, were found cast aside. There are problems with mass mail-in voting. I understand — I actually don't understand the lack of journalistic curiosity and reporting on this. There used to be —

DECKER: I want to know where the river is.

MCENANY: — there used to be curiosity.

DECKER: Where is it?

MCENANY: In fact, The Washington Post — before President Trump highlighted the problems with mail-in voting, they said the result was an unexpected stress test of mail balloting systems when this was tried. Many of which were designed to handle only a small portion of the vote and are not ready to scale up in response to the pandemic. So, the media once said mail-in —

DECKER: So there is no river?

MCENANY: — voting is not to scale up in the middle of a pandemic. Now, there's no journalistic curiosity where we're finding —

DECKER: We've been over this.

REID: He's asking you about it.

MCENANY: — Trump ballots cast aside. There's no journalistic curiosity when a hundred —

DECKER: I'm asking you where the river is —

MCENANY: — thousand —

DECKER: — and you can't give an answer.

MCENANY: — ballots were sent out —

DECKER: If you — if you say the President —

MCENANY: — in Brooklyn.

DECKER: — and a ditch —

MCENANY: They were inaccurate ballots and then a —

DECKER: — then you say —

MCENANY: — hundred thousand more.

DECKER: — you meant a ditch.

MCENANY: Shameful filibustering —

DECKER: I just want to know where the river is.

MCENANY: — and lack of journalistic curiosity.

DECKER: I'm very curious. Where's the river?

(...)

11:43:04 p.m.

3 minutes and 17 seconds

JENN PELLEGRINO: The President recently unveiled his platinum plan, which is geared toward the black community, promises to create three million new jobs, \$500 billion in asset capital. It's a lot of money and nobody really seems to be talking about that. Can you tell us how it will be administered and how the White House will follow up to keep track of the success of the plan?

MCENANY; Yeah, this is a very important plan for the black community. It also bears mentioning that, in the pandemic as we regained job, roughly four in 10 jobs lost among black Americans have been gained and it took Obama-Biden two years to do that. So, we're indeed outpacing in job growth for the black community and the Latino community. And the President has promised this community that he is looking to create three million jobs in the next term. He wants to create 500,000 new black-owned businesses, increase access to capital in black communities, almost \$500 billion, he's done that with Opportunity Zones. And it's estimated that about a million people will be lifted out of poverty and given opportunity because of this. Among another of — among another number of items, I should say, in the plan where he wants to prosecute the KKK as domestic terrorists and make lynching a federal crime.

Again, all of that lost upon the media as they misreport, take out of context, ignore the verbatim words of this President when he denounced white supremacy yesterday, when he denounced it at the debate, when he's denounced it more than any other President in modern history. And in fact, something else lost upon the media is the absolute turning of a blind eye to Antifa, carrying the water for Democrats, the media apparently agrees with Jerry Nadler that Antifa violence is a myth. In August Senate hearings, Democrats refused to condemn Antifa. Again, no journalistic curiosity here despite that Andy Ngo, who is a victim of Antifa, said Democrats have mastered — Democrats — he should add the media too have mastered the art of making its violence appear innocuous. Their violence isn't innocuous. Antifa is not an idea. Andy Ngo can tell you that because he was beaten by a group of protesters — Antifa protestors, suffering brain bleed. Another man can tell you this who, in 2019, the victim — his name is Adam Kelly — suffered from a concussion and got 25 staples in his head but still, silence from Democrats, ignoring this group from Democrats. And in fact, as we just saw recently, there was a Trump supporter who was killed by a 100 percent Antifa man. That is how he described himself. And again, no reporting here but I guess I did the job of the media by getting this information myself. This man, who was 100 percent Antifa, this man, in fact, had been arrested before at 2:00 a.m. on July 5 in a public protest, carrying an illegal weapon. He resisted arrest. He was taken to jail where he was merely given a citation, put back on the streets, and the very next month, this 100 percent Antifa man was lying in wait before he killed an innocent Trump supporter. Ideas do not target police officer. Ideas. burn down buildings. Ideas do not kill innocent Americans. organizations do. And Democrats should condemn the shameful group in the same manner President trump continues to condemn white supremacy.

COLLINS: He's condemning white supremacy. He's condemning white supremacy.

REID: He needed an example.