

White House press briefing [via CBSN]

05/04/22

3:55:54 p.m.

2 minutes and 46 seconds

PETER DOOCY: Jen, why did you guys say anything about the leaked draft memo at the Supreme Court?

JEN PSAKI: How do you mean?

DOOCY: Well, in the past, you have declined to comment on leaked materials. So, why now?

PSAKI: Well, Peter, I think, as you would note and was reported, the Supreme Court confirmed this — this document was accurate, even it was — if it is not the final opinion.

DOOCY: The President had a statement out before they confirmed that it was real. So, what changed?

PSAKI: And in that statement, he made clear we don't know if this is accurate. We don't know if this document is accurate or the leak is accurate.

DOOCY: And to follow up on a question earlier, do you guys think — does the President think the leaker should be punished?

PSAKI: Again, that's up for the Department of Justice and others to determine. What our focus is on is not getting our — distracted — or our eye off the ball of what is most important to people across the country here, which is not the leak and the story of the leak. It is the fact that women's healthcare is at risk for millions of people across this country.

DOOCY: The President said today: "What happens if you have states change the law saying that children who are LGBTQ can't be in classrooms with other children?" What is he talking about?

PSAKI: Well, I think, Peter, we've seen extreme laws that target LGBTQ families, their kids across the country and I think what he's saying is: We don't know what they're capable of, given what they've already done to date.

DOOCY: Which state is trying to segregate LGBTQ children in the classroom?

PSAKI: Well, I think we've seen laws that are incredibly discriminatory. That's what the President is referring to and the fact that he doesn't know what additional steps could be taken by extreme wings of the party that would rather divide rather than work on issues that the American people actually are focused on and actually are impacting them.

DOOCY: So, another one about abortion. Why is the President talking about the judgment to choose to abort a child?

PSAKI: Well, the President's view on a woman's right to make choices about her own healthcare is well known, well documented, well stated.

DOOCY: He said "abort a child." Is that —

PSAKI: I understand, Peter. But what I'm telling you is what his position is.

DOOCY: And how can you guys say this is not a political issue when the President's statement about this talked about getting pro-choice officials elected?

PSAKI: Did I say it's not a political issue?

DOOCY: Yes. You actually said, "Some call it a political issue. It is not" — aboard Air Force One.

PSAKI: Well, because the vast majority of the public believes that this should not — that this should not be overturned, meaning I meant to say it's not a partisan issue, and I don't think it is. There are many Republican and independent women, men across the country who do not believe the Supreme Court should overturn a woman's right to make choices about her own healthcare. In fact, only 30 percent in recent polls thought they should. So, that's what I'm referring to.

(...)

3:59:04 p.m.

42 seconds

CATHERINE LUCEY: And on the comments today and yesterday: When he was asked about abortion, the President really focused on privacy, LGBT children, married couples. Why isn't he speaking more directly about how this impacts women, poor women, women of color? How comfortable is he talking about this?

PSAKI: He has. He did yesterday, both in his written statement and when he addressed this publicly. His point, as he's continued to talk about this over two days, is also that this brings into question our fundamental rights and the fundamental rights of people across this country on who they marry, what choices they make about their own healthcare. And that goes to his own experience fighting against, again, Robert Bork in — in his nomination many years ago.

(...)

4:05:35 p.m.

2 minutes and 11 seconds

CLEVE WOOTSON: I wanted to pivot to Ukraine. Secretary Austin recently said — and I want to get the quote right — "We believe that we can win, they can win if they have the right equipment, the right support." How does the administration actually define "winning" in

Ukraine? And does it mean that every last Russian troop is out?

PSAKI: Well, first, I would say the way that President Putin defined — defined “winning” a war that he started from the beginning was taking over Ukraine, enveloping Ukraine into Russia, taking away their territorial integrity and their sovereignty. Clearly, that has not been successful. You know, he expected and was planning to be marching through the streets of Kyiv, victorious, next Monday. Clearly, that is not what is going to happen. He wanted this to be a moment to divide NATO, to divide the West. Clearly, that is not what is happening. We’ve said we want Ukraine to win. We’re going to do everything we can to help Ukraine defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity and to strengthen the Ukrainians’ hands on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. That’s our role. And they are defending their homeland courageously and bravely from the continued attacks from the Russians. But they’re going to define at the negotiating table, as we’re strengthening their hand, what they consider success on the battlefield and at the negotiating table. And we’re here to support their efforts.

WOOTSON: I just want to follow up to make sure I’m clear. So, if Ukraine is fine with Russia taking over the eastern part of the country, for example, is that what the U.S. would consider a “win”? Is that what —

PSAKI: The Ukrainians are going to define what a successful outcome looks like for them. But what I think is important to note and not lose sight of is how the Russians have defined this. And they have already lost their — by their definition. They have not taken over Ukraine. President Putin is not going to be marching through — down the streets of Kyiv. They will not own the territorial integrity and sovereignty of this country. They have not divided NATO. So now, at this point: Yes, what we’re trying to do is to — is strengthen their hand at the negotiating table, both by supplying weapons on the battlefield, both — and supporting them with whatever needs they have. But it is for them to define through those negotiations.

(...)

4:12:50 p.m.

1 minute and 27 seconds

SEBASTIAN SMITH: The “MAGA crowd,” as he called them today — this was almost half the people who voted in 2020. Does the President ever feel that maybe there could have been done — he could have done more early on to try and reach out to those people? And does the extreme rhetoric basically signal that, you know, there’s no going back now and they’re sort of out of, you know, beyond the pale for him and — yeah?

PSAKI: I think what the President — one, the President will be judged by Americans by his actions and what he does to make their lives better and the point he’s making is that there are — the platform of and the policies of many — far too many of these Republicans — these “MAGA Republicans,” as he refers to them — follow the whims of calling out Mickey Mouse and opposing policies that will help make the lives better of many, many Americans who may have voted for Trump, may have been independent, may be Democrats — including lowering the cost

of prescription drugs, lowering the cost of eldercare, doing more to expand access to healthcare. And his view is that a lot of these policy positions and the rhetoric is extreme and that follows what we saw a pattern of by his — his predecessor. But he is going to continue to look for ways to work together — and work together with Republicans in good faith where there's opportunity and he believes you can do both.