

White House press briefing  
07/05/22  
Time N/A  
2 minutes and 31 seconds

PETER DOOCY: How did the President go from blaming high gas prices on Putin to Big Oil to small-business owners now?

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: Well, here's the thing about that, Peter, is when you look at — as of this morning, when you look at the crude oil and when you look at wholesale oil prices as well, they've declined about 15 percent. And so, retail gas prices, however, have only declined just about 3 percent over the same time period as we have seen with crude oil prices and the wholesale gas prices and meanwhile, those same retailers are profiting; their profit have gone up about 40 cents — nearly 40 cents in that same period of time. So, what the President is saying is that everyone along that chain, around that production chain line, needs to — needs to make sure that they're doing what is possible, their part, in bringing down the costs for the American people. That is what we're asking. Consumers should not — should not be the first to pay and the last to benefit.

DOOCY: Jeff Bezos says the President's tweet about this is "either straight ahead misdirection or a deep misunderstanding of basic market dynamics." Which is it?

JEAN-PIERRE: As you know, we completely disagree with Jeff Bezos. Look, we will continue to call on everyone along that distribution chain, as I just mentioned — from oil companies, to refineries, to distributors, to retailers — to pass their lower cost through to consumers. That is what is important: to make sure that we should not make, again, consumers pay first and get that re- — and get that relief last.

DOOCY: Okay. And then, on a different topic: Why is there a voicemail of the President talking to his son about his overseas business dealings if the President has said he's never spoken to his son about his overseas business dealings?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, first, I'll say that what the President said stands. So if he — if that's what the President said, that is what stands. And second —

DOOCY: He's leaving a voicemail —

JEAN-PIERRE: — secondly —

DOOCY: — about a *New York Times* article —

JEAN-PIERRE: But secondly —

DOOCY: — considering — concerning Hunter Biden's business dealings —

JEAN-PIERRE: — Peter —

DOOCY: — and it says, “I think you’re clear.” How is that not him talking to his son about his overseas business dealings?

JEAN-PIERRE: We’re not — from this podium, I am not going to talk about alleged materials from the laptop. I will —

DOOCY: So are you disputing —

JEAN-PIERRE: I am not —

DOOCY: — that it’s President’s voice on the voicemail?

JEAN-PIERRE: — I am not going to talk about alleged materials on a laptop. It’s not happening.

DOOCY: Are you disputing then that it is not —

JEAN-PIERRE: Peter, I refer you to his son’s representative.

DOOCY: Okay.

(....)

Time N/A

5 minutes and 22 seconds

BRIAN KAREM: Overall, there was a — there was a published report today that say overall frustration among Democrats with President Biden. Is this administration concerned about that criticism from Democrats? And it also says that the President is incapable of the urgency needed because of Roe v. Wade being overturned. Any response from the administration to those published reports?

JEAN-PIERRE: So when you say “Democrats,” you mean Demo- — elected officials or —

KAREM: Mm-hmm. Elected Democratic officials’ overall frustration with the Biden administration.

JEAN-PIERRE: Okay. So, here’s the — here’s the thing I’ve — I’ve heard — I’ve heard of this. The President has shown, if you look at the different issues that have come up most recently — in particular, let’s start with gun violence: The President showed urgency. He showed fury. He showed — he showed frustration. He spoke to that issue every time that he could, whether he was in Uvalde or Buffalo or did a primetime address. And we were able to get a first step — still a lot more to do — a bipartisan gun reform piece of legislation, which is something that has — we have not seen in 30 years. A lot of that is because of his leadership. Something — the same

thing that he was able to do 30 years ago, when we saw the assault weapons ban. So, that — he showed urgency there, and we were able to deliver in a bipartisan way. When it comes — when it comes to *Roe v. Wade*, within hours of the announcement of the decision that we heard from SCOTUS, he put forth executive authorities that went into — that went into effect with the medication that's approved medication from FDA, and also making sure that — calling on DOJ to protect women who are crossing the lines because they have to make a decision on their health. And those are things that actually matter. There's more work to do. He's going to look at everything that he can do on the legal authority. And — but here's the thing: When it comes to *Roe*, when it comes to a precedent that's been around for nearly 50 years, what needs to happen is Congress needs to act. We have to codify *Roe*. We have to make sure that it is the law of the land. And that's what he's going to keep speaking to.

KAREM: Well, with the criticism of the President, is this administration concerned about how the Democrats will perform in the midterm elections?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, as you know, I can't talk about the midterms from here. That will get me into big trou- — (laughs) —

KAREM: Is the President concerned?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, I — I'm just saying I got to be careful about that.

KAREM: Has he expressed any concern?

JEAN-PIERRE: I got to be careful about that. Look, the President wants to make sure that we continue delivering for the American people. He has said — what I can say from here — if we are in a position where Congress does not act, as we're speaking to on *Roe v. Wade*, and does not codify *Roe*, make that — make *Roe* the law of the land, then the American public should make their voices heard. They should make their voices heard at the ballot box. And that is something that he's going to call on. That is going to be something that he's going to speak on very loudly and very — very aggressively, as you — as you laid out. And this is an important, important issue. He has said this was an extreme decision by the Court. He has said this is going to change the lives of so many women, upend their lives, if you will, because of this extreme decision and it should not stand and what we saw a couple of weeks ago is not — almost two weeks ago — is not — is not the end. It is only the beginning and we just have to keep working towards that.

KAREM: And finally, as far as — a different matter entirely, but as far as a letter that was presented to you, signed by 70 members of the White House Press Corps, any reaction from the administration regarding that letter?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, you could say — I responded to you, didn't I?

KAREM: Yeah, you did say —

JEAN-PIERRE: Okay.

KAREM: — you would talk to us.

JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah.

KAREM: But that was all I heard. Is there anything else you could add?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, look, you know, we're — we're coming — you know, we're coming into a different — a different place of the CO- — of COVID. Right? Things are starting to open up. We're even doing tours here. We had 7,000 people out in the — in the South Lawn yesterday, military families and others, to celebrate Fourth of July, which was a wonderful event. It was great to have — to see our military families out there. And so, you know, we understand. We want to make — we want to be accessible. We want the President to be — his events to be accessible and we are working to that, with the understanding that we have been working through, as we look at his events during this pandemic, and we're trying to — we're trying to see what the next steps are.

KAREM: So, you're going to open up everything for us?

JEAN-PIERRE: I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that we're willing to work with you on this. And this is also a priority of ours.

KAREM: Thank you.

JEAN-PIERRE: Okay? All right, great. [TO DETROW] Go ahead.

SCOTT DETROW: So, just following up on the executive actions — I mean, the ones that the President had hinted we might hear more of Friday, you say are still being talked about: I mean, there's — there's broad frustration among voters we've talked to, among many Democratic lawmakers that you had this unprecedented situation of more than a month of knowing pretty much what was going to be, likely, in the ruling. You had — the dynamics on the Court were clear in place when this case was heard. There's a lot of frustration of why weren't those orders deliberated and decided and ready to roll out at a faster pace, and here we are, about two weeks later, talking about when that next wave might come out. I mean, what's your response to that general frustration[.]

(....)

4:03:36 p.m.

1 minute and 40 seconds

ASHLEY PARKER: On what we were just talking about, which is guns, but also on a range of issues — abortion rights, the threat to American democracy — why do you think so many members of your own party, elected leaders, voters, activists, pundits — why did they all seem to, in this moment, disagree with that assessment you just gave?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, I can't speak for them. I can only speak to what we're trying to do. I can only speak to —

PARKER: But why do you think that's not coming through, what you're trying to do?

JEAN-PIERRE: Again, I — again, I'm not going to speak for them. I would — I would speak — I would go directly to these folks, these activists, and our Democratic colleagues and speak to them directly and I'm sure they will give you a very clear response on why they feel that way. Look, you know, this is a President that has been working tirelessly, day in and day out, since he's walked into this administration fighting for the American public. That is what matters to him. That is what is important is delivering every way that he can to make sure that we get things done. I mean, let's not forget: While, again, there's more work to be done, there was a bipartisan gun reform piece of legislation that has been done that has not been done in 30 years. That matters. Is there more work to be done? Absolutely. Is he going to call for more action and do the best that he can? Absolutely. This is also a President, in his first year of office, has had more executive actions on gun reform, on fighting gun violence than any other President at this time. So that matters as well. His actions should speak — should speak as well for how he's — how he's delivering for the American public.

(....)

4:12:53 p.m.

2 minutes and 47 seconds

SIMON ATEBA: I would like to know what's the difference between President Trump watching TV, even pleading to go to the Capitol while — while the Capitol was being attacked, and President Biden going to the beach and having fun while Supreme Court justices are on the attack by a verbally violent mob? What's the difference between those two leaders?

JEAN-PIERRE: Wait, what's the comparison you're making? Could you say the first part?

ATEBA: So, I'm saying now: What's the difference between President Trump not doing anything while the Capitol was being attacked and President Biden not doing anything when protesters — while the Supreme Court justices were under attack in their own homes with their families and with their children?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, I — there are two major differences here. First of all, our predecessor was very — we have said that his behavior on that day, on January 6th, was atrocious. The President has said that. And we are going to let the Select Committee — the January 6 Select Committee continue to do their independent review of that — their hearing. And you guys all saw for yourselves, the American people saw — have seen for themselves what — what the — what our predecessor has done — his behavior and his involvement. So that is not the same. That is absolutely not the same. We are talking about what we saw on January 6th. We are talking about an attack on our democracy. We are talking about a very dark day that the person who was here before us seemingly, if you watch, was very involved, so that's very, very different.

Now, fast forward to — to this President. This President is fighting for women's rights. He's fighting for women's freedom. He has spoken out. He's been very clear about what needs to happen next. He put out two executive authorities that lays out ways that we can protect women. He has — he has said that he's go- — everything is on the table. We're going to see what else we can do. But he also has spoken very truthfully and very honestly with the American people, which is: If we want to see Roe become the law of the land, we also have to act. We have to hold Congress accountable and make sure that they act and that that cannot happen. Then Americans need to go to the ballot box and that is — that is very different and to say — and to say that there is no difference, that is — that is just unbelievably wrong.

ATEBA: But is it a concern that a Supreme Court justice may be harmed?

JEAN-PIERRE: I'm — I'm moving on. I'm moving on.

(....)

4:15:46 p.m.

1 minute and 48 seconds

PHILIP WEGMANN: I got a policy question about some of the oil that was released from the Strategic National Petroleum Reserve, but first a follow-up. We have all heard it. The President likes to say "I will always level with you." He says that again and again. Moments ago, though, you seemed to dismiss Peter's question about his conversation with his son, Hunter Biden, with regards to his business dealings, and I'm wondering: How is that silence consistent with the President's promise to always level with the American public? Because, you know, in public, he says he hasn't discussed these business dealings and then, at least according to the voicemail that's been obtained by the *Daily Mail* and the *Washington Examiner*, it certainly seems like he was seeking to do exactly that — have a conversation about these business dealings. Is he leveling with the American public on this?

JEAN-PIERRE: Phil, I hear your question, but what I can tell you from here, standing at this podium, is that I cannot comment on any materials from the laptop and I would refer you to the representatives of Hunter Biden. That's what I can share with you at this podium, at this time.

WEGMANN: Okay. And then there's a Reuters report out this morning that says that more than five million barrels of oil that were released from the emergency oil reserves were exported to Europe and Asia last month, and some of it, reportedly, was actually heading to China. Is the administration aware of those reports? And does the President mind that some of this oil that was meant to ease paying for consumers is headed overseas?

JEAN-PIERRE: I have not seen that report, so I would honestly have to go look into it and see what — what the truth is in that — in that statement that you just laid out and see exactly what's happening. I — I just have not seen that report.

WEGMANN: Thank you, Karine.

(....)

4:17:41 p.m.

1 minute and 27 seconds

EDWARD LAWRENCE: The Atlanta Fed GDPNow tracker is showing that the second quarter — it's estimating second quarter is negative growth — 2.1 percent. Should that hold — the U.S. has been in recession for the first half of this year. Does the President believe that we are in a recession, first of all? Second of all, if that does hold, does the President accept responsibility for his policies as part of that?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, first, do we believe we're in a recession? No. That's — that's my answer to you on that. So, there is a nonpartisan data that came out recently — the National Bureau of Economic Research, which I'm sure you know, very well, Ed. It determines and defines recession and so let me just quote here for a second: "In recent decades, the two measures we have put the most weight on are real personal income less transfer and nonfarm payroll employment." So that is from the nonpartisan National Bureau of Economics Research, again, determines the definition of recession, so here are the facts. The facts are this: We've averaged more than 400,000 jobs every month for the past — over the last — I should say, over the last month — three months. We've held steady — that 3.6 unemployment rate. Consumer spending remains strong and above pre-pandemic trends. Business invest- — investment remains strong, and household balance sheets remain strong, so we do not believe that we are in a recession, and we have a nonpartisan entity to speak to that more directly and more specifically.

(....)

4:19:56 p.m.

59 seconds

EBONY MCMORRIS: Is there anything or any consideration that the administration can do when it comes to regulating military-style ammunition, whether that be in production? Is there anything that the Fed can do to move in that capacity? Since you're not getting anywhere with — on guns, what about ammunition? Any talks?

JEAN-PIERRE: So we believe that the best way to really have a comprehensive gun reform is through legislation, is to work with Congress as it comes through the federal level. The President has done the most executive action than any President at this time in their administration and so now what we are going to continue to do and — and continue to focus on is to — is to work with Congress to do more and one of the things that I've just been pointing out is the banning of assault weapons, which we believe is incredibly important, as the President led on this issue back in 1994.