

White House press briefing

08/01/22

2:03:51 p.m. [via C-SPAN]

42 seconds

JOHN KIRBY: There's no change. We – we've not ramped up the rhetoric. We've not changed our behavior. Everything we've done is consistent with our obligations and our commitments.

NANCY CORDES: But if the policy hasn't changed, then why was the speaker being urged not to go?

KIRBY: I don't know she was urged not to go. Who urged her not to go?

CORDES: The President said on August [sic] 20 that the military doesn't think it's a good idea for her to go.

KIRBY: The speaker makes her own decisions and what we did was provide her context, analysis, facts, information, so that she can make the best decision possible for every stop, for every overseas travel. And, again, I'm not going to get ahead of her or her staff here with respect to the rest of this trip.

(...)

2:08:01 p.m.

3 minutes and 12 seconds

TYLER PAGER: It seems like this trip obviously is sparking a little more anxiety inside this building and throughout the administration, and I understand you said that the President respects the independence, but given the national security risks at play and China's escalating rhetoric, was there not a discussion inside this administration of whether or not you should take a more defensive stance, as MJ alluded to, if there are other countries at play here, we might see a different response, given what China has said it might do in response to a trip that puts all Americans at risk and their national security. Did the President feel that maybe this is a different case and that maybe he should be more involved, or the team should be more involved than they might get?

KIRBY: I mean, again, I'm not going to get into the details of the conversation. They were comprehensive discussions about – about what she wanted to achieve on this trip, where she wanted to go, and we provided her the same set of context and information that – that we have in the past with respect to her overseas travel. I'm not going to get into the details of that.

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: Phil in the back.

PHILIP WEGMANN: I guess I'm wondering, why did the President bother with this drama from the beginning? I mean, why not – rather than saying the military doesn't think it's a good idea, who not call the Chinese bluff or tell them to pound sand when they start bellyaching about the possibility of the trip, given as you pointed out, there's no change in policy and there's precedent for Pelosi to visit Taiwan.

KIRBY: So, what's the drama?

WEGMANN: Have you watched the briefings the last couple weeks? I mean, there's been this question of whether or not –

KIRBY: Yeah, I've been here the last few weeks. I haven't seen drama. I think –

WEGMANN: [INAUDIBLE]

KIRBY: – I think you are manufacturing it with your question. We have been nothing but clear with the Chinese about where we stand on the issues, and the One China policy, and our support for a free Indo – free and open Indo-Pacific. Look, I want to go back to what I said in the beginning, cause – and I hope you took note. Nothing has changed. There's no drama to talk to. It is not without precedent for a speaker of the house to go to Taiwan, if she goes and I'm not confirming that she is, and it's certainly not without precedent for members of Congress to travel to Taiwan. It has been done this year and I'm certain that it will be done in the future. We have no interest, as I said in my opening statement, of increasing tensions here. We have no interest in changing any of the approach that we take as a government or in keeping with our allies and partners to wanting to see cross-strait tensions be resolved peacefully without a unilateral change, so I don't know about the drama that you're – you're claiming exists, it's quite the contrary here and the point that we have made, I made it again today and President Biden made it with President Xi is everything here is consistent. There is no reason to use a potential visit to – to – to justify or to spark some sort of crisis or conflict. We certainly aren't, have no interest in that, and there's no justification to use a potential visit as a pretext to conduct what could be escalating measures, such as the ones I detailed in the opening statement.

(...)

2:15:17 p.m.

46 seconds

KELLY O'DONNELL: Because of the closeness between the speaker and the President, it does raise the question about is she sort of pressing a foreign policy that may in fact put the President in a bad position. Is that the sense of this White House?

KIRBY: Well, the President is comfortable with the position that this administration continues to take, which has long-standing historic precedence and I went through it all in the opening statement. The President is very comfortable with our policy with respect to China and to Taiwan and he had an opportunity last week to reaffirm those policies and his views in his direct discussion with President Xi.

(...)

2:30:37 p.m.

1 minute and 56 seconds

CECILIA VEGA: Did – were you able to get a sense of the President's reaction to Senator Manchin yesterday repeatedly refusing to get behind and endorsement for a reelection? And does the President – and if you did get a reaction to that, feel like members of his own party are undermining him on that front?

JEAN-PIERRE I mean, I – you know, I saw those interviews. I wouldn't say he was undermining. From what it looked like to me, Sen – President – Senator Machin is very much focused – he went on the shows to focus on the – the Inflation Reduction Act. He was very – he was zeroed in on that and laid out why this is going to be a benefit for middle class families and why it's going to lower costs and why it is an investment – a historic investment in – in – you know, that we have not seen in a long time, whether

it is climate change or – or just in general as we try to reduce inflation and fight that back and figure out how do we continue to lower the deficit.

VEGA: He was repeatedly asked whether he would support President Biden in the 2024 – for reelection and he repeatedly refused to go there.

JEAN-PIERRE: But here's the thing – but here's – okay – so here's – here's what I'll say about this and you know we – we from the podium – I really cannot dive into any election. But I've been really clear and the President's been asked this question many times and he intends to run in 2024. He plans to run in 2024, that is way off. Like, we are – we are a long ways away from 2024 and here's the thing. Our biggest thing right now is to not be distracted. You saw chips passed last week which is going to be a huge investment in manufacturing and really strengthening the supply chain – was just talking about our national security, so we're strengthening our national security. Huge deal and now what – I mean, we still have a few things ahead of us that's going to be really important to get that done for – for the American people. So, we're going to stay focused and so, we're not going to be distracted and that's – that is how we see things at this time.

(....)

2:38:35 p.m.

1 minute and 34 seconds

FRANCO ORDOÑEZ: I know you're a little tired of asking about – or answering questions about 2024 –

JEAN-PIERRE: Oh, I am never tired! Never tired!

ORDOÑEZ: – and Biden running – whether he will run. I was just – you know, with former President Trump talking about his paperwork and potentially before the midterms, why – when will President Biden file his paperwork? And wouldn't that help kind of nip some of these questions in the bud?

JEAN-PIERRE: I mean, the President has said that he intends to run. He – he's said that multiple time, so there's that. I'll put that out there. But again, we are – we have some – you know, we have some work to do in the next couple of days and weeks that we're going to focus on. We're not going to be distracted by what's happening with the former President. That is not our focus. Our focus is, you know, as we are talking about the Inflation Reduction Act, which is – which is historic, as I just laid out, which is incredibly important as we talk about lowering costs of prescription drugs for our seniors, as we're talking about getting some of that energy, lowering costs of energy for -- for families who are sitting around their kitchen table trying to figure out how they are going to pay for whatever item that – that is incredibly important to them. So, that is what this is going to do. And so, we're going to continue to talk about that. We see – we see the Inflation Reduction Act as a down payment, as a promise that we – the President has made. And so, we're going to continue to make sure we get that over the fish – finish line.

(....)

2:43:00 p.m.

4 minutes and 11 seconds

PETER DOOCY: Is President Biden thinking about pulling his support for the Inflation Reduction Act?

JEAN-PIERRE: No.

DOOCY: Because he promised it wasn't gonna raise taxes on anybody making less than \$400,000 a year, but the Joint Committee on Taxation says that is not true.

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, that is incorrect.

DOOCY: So, the Joint Committee on Taxation, which you guys heralded as an effective body when you were selling the infrastructure package, is not to be trusted here?

JEAN-PIERRE: I said it is not correct because – I will give you why it is not correct. Because it is incomplete. The JCT report that we're currently seeing is incomplete because it omits the actual benefits that Americans would receive when it comes to prescription drugs, when it comes to the – lowering energy costs like utility bills, it does not include that and we have some experts – don't have to trust me. We have experts that say the exact same. Kimberly – Kimberly Clausing from UCLA: "Many key factors are left out in these tables, including importantly, the effect of deficit reduction, the positive effects of the spending on clean energy and the benefits from lower drug prices" that I stated. Seth Hanlon, Center for American Process: "Republicans don't mention that the JCT includes an imputation of corporate taxes – i.e the 15% minimum on corporations with less than \$1 billion of profit – to income groups and it does not include the major provisions that benefit people, including the tax cuts and drug savings" – prescription drug savings.

DOOCY: And – so, Penn-Wharton, where the President used to – University of Pennsylvania, he used to be a professor there – Penn-Wharton Budget Model says this Inflation Reduction Act is actually going to increase inflation in 2024. Does the President worry about that?"

JEAN-PIERRE: So, we agree with Senator Manchin. You heard him a couple times yesterday -- and disagree Penn-Wharton as a – as – as do a number of qualified experts, which I'm happy to read out. But I – you know, I do wanna say that it is quite ironic that congressional Republicans are complaining – or – are – have a false off – a false outrage on – on this Inflation Reduction Act that is actually going to do something and help the American people lower costs when, you know – when they have offered nothing to do that. What they have offered is to increase taxes on Americans making less than \$100,000 a year and what they have introduced is actually sunseting Medicare and sunseting also Social Security after five years and that's how they want to deal with -- how to help the American people. We are talking doing the complete – absolute, complete opposite.

DOOCY: And just one more. It's been three days now since a Chinese official publicly threatened to murder Speaker Pelosi. Where is the president coming out to respond to, at the very least, say, "don't do that?"

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, first, we talked – Kirby was just here talking about how – I have not seen those reports, so I'm just going to say –

DOOCY: That they were maybe going to shoot down her plane or that it would be within their right to shoot down her plane.

JEAN-PIERRE: -- oh, okay. Alright, well, we have talked about that. We have said there is no need for this type of saber rattling, it is unnecessary. The president has been clear that there's no change in the One China policy. We continue to support the Taiwan Relations Act. What we are seeing from – from

– you know, what we’re talking about right now – and to be clear, the Speaker has not confirmed, as you heard from my colleague just moments ago, that she is going to Taiwan. It has not been confirmed and, you know, the history of this – of congressional members going to Taiwan is not uncommon. It is something that has happened in the past. And – and so – again nothing has changed and the president has made that very, very clear.