

White House press briefing

09/07/22

4:08:17 p.m. [via *Washington Post* Live]

2 minutes and 41 seconds

PHILIP WEGMANN: Just like Peter mentioned earlier on, I know that the White House is not going to comment on the specifics of the raid at Mar-a-Lago or the subsequent investigation. But I'm wondering, as the President watches this story play out in the news just like every other American, does he think that the leaks about the investigation are helpful or harmful to the country? Does he want those leaks to continue or to stop?

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: I'm not going to comment on anything that's related to the investigation. It's an ongoing investigation. As you know, the Department of Justice is leading that investigation. We're just not going to comment from here.

WEGMANN: And then one more then. Last Friday, the Energy Secretary said that green technology in California — that that state was in the lead and showing the rest of the nation how it's done. The state is currently bracing for blackouts. They've set ambitious goals and, you know, yet, in particular, their governor is asking folks there not to charge their electric vehicles. Does the President agree that California is an example for the rest of the country as it transitions?

JEAN-PIERRE: I haven't seen those specific statements — I would like to see it in fuller context — that the Secretary has made. So I'm not going to comment on something that I haven't seen in full. But if you have another question, I'm happy to take it.

WEGMANN: Sure. So, by my count, the White House — you know, you've gotten a lot done this summer and certainly, there's a lot —

JEAN-PIERRE: Really? Have we? I think we've said that a few times.

WEGMANN: — and the — the President has a lot —

JEAN-PIERRE: And you guys have reported it, too. So —

WEGMANN: — the — the President —

JEAN-PIERRE: — you guys have backed this up.

WEGMANN: Well, so, all of your accomplishments aside, the President still hasn't done a sit-down interview in over 200 days. Is he dodging us? Is there a reason why he doesn't want to do a sit-down?

JEAN-PIERRE: Oh, absolutely not. The President loves talking to you all. He takes your questions all the time. He took Peter's question last Friday. I'm sure Peter was excited about that.

WEGMANN: It was the last question he took. I have another.

JEAN-PIERRE: No, he did take a — he actually — Ed, he took another question when we were — when we were traveling.

WEGMANN: But in all seriousness, a sit-down interview is much different than when the President has —

JEAN-PIERRE: No, I hear you. I hear you. The President is going to —

WEGMANN: — 10 or 15 seconds.

JEAN-PIERRE: — he is happy to talk to you all. As you know, he does it multiple times during the week. I don't have a sit-down interview to announce or provide or — or schedule at this time and, you know, look, the — you guys know Joe Biden. He's been a senator for 46 years. He was Vice President for eight years and, you know, you guys have followed him and have had multiple conversations — some of you, sit-down conversations — with him and — and once we have something to share, we will share that.

WEGMANN: Thank you, Karine.

(...)

4:17:19 p.m.

2 minutes and 5 seconds

PETER DOOCY: As refugees were being evacuated from Afghanistan into the U.S. last year, why weren't they all being thoroughly vetted?

JEAN-PIERRE: So are you talking about — what are you — what are you — what are you referring to?

DOOCY: Well, so as the White House was managing the Afghanistan withdrawal last year, we were told “no one is coming into the United States of America who has not been through a thorough screening and background check process.” But now there's this DHS inspector general who says CBP “admitted or paroled” evacuees who were not fully vetted into the United States. That is not good. That is different than what you guys said. So how did this happen?

JEAN-PIERRE: No, it's not different than what we have said. That very report, it did not take into account the key steps in that rigorous — you heard from us — rigorous and multi-layered screening and vetting process the U.S. government took before at-risk Afghans were permitted to come to the U.S. Again, I would refer you to the DH — DHS comments on this. It did not take into full account of what the other agencies are involved in making sure that this multi-layered process and screening process they — it is a — it is a multi- agency effort, and it did not — this particular report did not include that.

DOOCY: Okay. But — so in the last week or so, we've heard the President calling elected Republicans a threat to the country. Does he think MAGA Republicans are more of a threat to the country than people DHS says may pose a risk to national security and the safety of local communities?

JEAN-PIERRE: Again, DHS has disputed this report. It's — and it said it didn't take into account the key steps that we have taken as a U.S. government, the rigorous, multi-layered screening and vetting process that we take as a government. That was not part of the report. Again, this report is not accurate. I know that our team has spoken to your team about this, and the DHS has provided a comment saying just that. So, again, I refer you to DHS.