

White House press briefing [via ABC News Live]

04/05/23

2:26:11 p.m.

2 minutes and 32 seconds

ED O'KEEFE: And just real quick, not a question, but a request — following up on Mary's question about who's going with the President from the Biden family and the wider clan: can we get clarification at some point in the process of that, of how exactly this is paid for? There have been questions in the past about when he travels with family or when people are staying here about how that is handled.

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah and we're not doing it any differently than other families who have — have been in the White House, who have held this — held office, and — and so, you know, we'll share more when we have more to share on, who's going to be traveling with him. I don't have that information, so don't want to get ahead of that. But of course, the President is a President that follows the law. And does — does — does these types of things in the appropriate fashion — the appropriate way. [TO MEMOLI] Go ahead.

MIKE MEMOLI: Hey, Karine. You mentioned the President traveled to Minnesota this week. He had a meeting yesterday on artificial intelligence. You said he's looking forward to this trip to Ireland as well. In any other news environment, these might be stories that are really driving both national and local headlines. But as the questions that you've got yesterday indicate, there's one other story really dominating the news right now. Can you talk about the White House's strategy to make sure the President's message is getting through to the American people. And the president — the former President's legal troubles are likely not to go away at all this year, is there concern that this will take away from the President's ability to communicate that message this year?

JEAN-PIERRE: Well, we've been very clear. I — here at the podium yesterday, as you just mentioned, and today, we've been very clear what our focus is on. I actually got questions on AI — a few questions on AI yesterday that we were able to answer and speak to from the podium. Look, our focus is going to continue to be the American people. What you all cover is up to — to all of you, but we're going to do our best to stay the course, to talk about the issues that matter — right — when we think about the economy, Americans really care about the economy. They want to hear how the President is going to. Lower — continue to lower costs for them. And that's what we're going to continue to talk about. And so, that doesn't change anything. We talked about AI. We went to Minnesota — talk about CHIPS and Science Act, a very historic piece of legislation that's going to make a difference in creating good-paying jobs and bringing jobs back here to — to this country. And so again, things that were not going to stop to talk about these critically important issues that the American people really want to hear from this President about, so we're just going to stay the course. That's our focus.

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2:38:25 p.m.

50 seconds

MAREK WAŁKUSKI: Twitter labeled National Public Radio as a government-influenced entity, putting NPR in the same category as Russia Today or Chinese media. Do you have a comment?

JEAN-PIERRE: Yes, so social media companies make their own, independent decisions about content rules, so I won't comment on Twitter's rules, but what I will say more broadly — I will say there's no doubt of the independence of NPR's journalists and has been — if you've ever been on the receiving end of their — of their questions, you know this. You know that they have their independence in journalism. NPR journalists work digitally [sic] to hold public officials accountable and inform the American people. The hard-hitting, independence nature of their coverage speaks — speaks for itself and so I'll leave it there.

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2:41:47 p.m.

2 minutes and 49 seconds

PETER DOOCY: First on the news of the day, does it bug President Biden when former presidents suck up all the oxygen?

JEAN-PIERRE: What's important to the President is to continue to focus on the American people. That is what's important to the President.

DOOCY: So is good to lay low for a few news cycles then?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, look, here's the thing — here's the thing, Peter and this what we will speak to. We will speak to the fact that this is a President who has been able to get historic pieces of legislation done. When you think about the infrastructure, legislation something, that, you know, we heard many times during the last administration, Infrastructure Week, Infrastructure Week. Guess what this president was able to do? He was able to bring both — both sides together to get this done. And now we have — we're seeing investments in the country, a rebuilding in the country that we haven't seen in 70 years. That's what the President cares about. He cares about the fact that Medicare is now able to — to — to work, you know, talk to Big Pharma to lower — and to negotiate and lower costs. That's what the President cares about. What he wants to see is, how do we build on his economic policies and economic plan that has been able to turn this country around from when he first walked in from — from, you know what we saw happen in the last administration. Basically, a mess when it came to the economy, when it came to dealing with COVID. So, let — what the President wants to do is to build on that and that's his focus. He wakes up every morning thinking about the American people. He goes to bed every night thinking about the American people.

DOOCY: On the Taiwan president's visit, if China tries to takeover Taiwan, is President Biden still committed to putting U.S. boots on the ground in Taiwan?

JEAN-PIERRE: We — we've answered this question multiple times. I'm not — I'm not — I — I don't have anything else to share.

DOOCY: Okay. And then on the China spycraft, why did President Biden say about the China spycraft in February, “we were able to protect sensitive sites against collection” if that's not true?

JEAN-PIERRE: I'm not going to go into — dive into any reporting. That's not something I'm going to do. I'm not going to confirm any reporting. Look, we knew the flight —

DOOCY: It's not reporting. The DNI said today that the U.S. does not appear to have provided critical new insights into the People's Republic of China. So, is it they didn't provide any new critical insights or they didn't get anything?

JEAN-PIERRE: I would refer you to the ODNI if you have specific questions on their reporting. What I can tell you from here and what we have said many times is that we knew the flight path of the balloon before it crossed the United States. We took precautions in advance to ensure that it didn't get sensitive information and when it — when it — when it comes to technology, like this balloon, it has limited additive value compared to other means of intelligent collection. And we have said that and the — and the bottom line is this is an administration that identified the problem and took action.

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2:47:53 p.m.

1 minute and 43 seconds

PHILIP WEGMANN: Former Vice President Pence said that if the shooter who killed six people in that Christian school in TN was motivated by a hatred toward Christians should be categorized as a hate crime. I'm wondering what the President thinks about that kind of designation?

JEAN-PIERRE: It's not for us to decide.

WEGMANN: And then, today, Indiana just banned puberty blockers, hormone therapies, and gender transition surgeries for minors. I'm wondering what the President's reaction is to the Indiana governor signing that bill into law and does the President have a position on at what age these kinds of therapies and surgeries are appropriate?

JEAN-PIERRE: That's something for a child and their parents to decide. It's not something that we believe should be decided by — by legislators. So I'll leave it there. But — well, you know, in the past couple of months, we have seen a record number of LGBTQI bills — anti-LGBTQI bills — more than 600 of them have been filed in state houses and a significant number of them have been anti-trans bills and you know, targeted at youth and this is a President that has said that, when these — these are some of the bravest people he knows and — but no one should have to be brave just to be themselves. And so, this is a President that has been committed to this community, that has been committed to our — to our kids in the trans community, to trans youth

and he's going to continue to fight for them. But — but again, I'm just gonna to leave it there.

WEGMANN: Thank you, Karine.

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2:51:25 p.m.

1 minute and 44 seconds

GERREN KEITH GAYNOR: On Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signing a concealed — permitless concealed weapon law, I know you released a statement, does the White House feel that when laws like this are passed as states like Florida that it undermines the work he's doing to address the nation's gun epidemic?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, look, we think it's shameful. It's certainly shameful, and tragic, especially after a school shooting. That's what — that's what the Florida governor decided to do. And again, we spoke — we spoke about this last week. And if you think about this bill — this law, it eliminates the need to get a license to carry a concealed weapon. This is what was signed after we heard what occurred in Nashville, Tennessee, after we heard three kids and three — three administrators were, you know, were — were and so, look, what — we think it's the opposite of common — common sense gun safety, which we know majority of Americans want to see. This is not what they want to see. They want to wait to see a way — in a common-sense way on how we're going to protect our communities, how we're going to protect our kids, and how we're going to protect Americans. And so, you know, too many lives have been ripped apart — too many lives have been taken and the President's going to continue to call on Congress to move forward with the assault weapons ban. He's going to be very clear about that, the high-capacity magazines, require safe storage of firearms, eliminate gun manufacturers' immunity from liability, and require background checks for all gun sales, and for state officials to take action on the state level, as well. But it is incredibly shameful to see what was done in Florida and — and again, it's just unfortunate after a tragic event.