BRIAN BENNETT: I have a question about the death toll in Gaza. Does President Biden have confidence in the casualty numbers coming out of Gaza?

JOHN KIRBY: The President watches this very, very closely — um — And you've heard him talk about the more than 30,000 people that have been killed and he said the majority of women and children and he's also said that's unacceptable. And, as we've maintained time and time again, the right number of civilian casualties ought to be zero. But in terms of, you know, what — what specific number we're quoting or citing on any given day. I mean, we're doing the best we can, working with the Israelis to ascertain that the scope of the civilian suffering, but it's obviously immense.

BENNETT: Has — has his confidence in the numbers coming out of Gaza increased since late October when he said he had no confidence in the numbers?

KIRBY: You've heard the President talked about the numbers and talk about the concern —

BENNETT: [Inaudible]

KIRBY: — and the most important thing, aside from obviously how tragic that is, is what we're doing to alleviate and help improve conditions in Gaza, including through this temporary pier today.

DARLENE SUPERVILLE: Does the President, who is a former chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, agreed with the current chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Justice Alito should recuse himself from 20 cases involving the 2020 election or January 6 because of the reporting of the upside down flag flown outside of this house?

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE: So, obviously, we've seen the reporting — uh — and I — I don't want to comment on the specific report — on that reporting. What I can say more broadly, is that the President believes that the American flag is sacred. You've heard him say that and it's owed proper respect and honor of the brave men and women who have defended our — our country for generations, and we should be respecting that flag. We should be making sure that it is respected in that way. It is sacred. As for anything else, the conduct or recusing himself, that is something for the court to decide. I just don't have anything else to add, and just want to be very clear. The American flag is sacred. That is something that the President has — believes in and you've heard me say this before at this podium many times.
WEIJIA JIANG: I’m going to try again.

JEAN-PIERRE: On Morehouse?

JIANG: Not on Morehouse. No.

JEAN-PIERRE: Okay.

JIANG: On the flag.

JEAN-PIERRE: Okay.

JIANG: So, given the flag incident, does President Biden believe that Justice Alito can rule in — with impartiality for all the cases involving January 6?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, look, and this is something that I have spoken to the President about and it basically it — what I laid out is how he feels that the American flag is sacred, and we should be respecting that flag. I do not want to get into the business of the specific actions that — that Supreme Court justices if they should recuse themselves or not on a — on a — on a Court. That is something for the Court, more broadly — they have to make that decision. That is something that we're not going to step into. We're not going to comment from here. But, more broadly, we can say from the reportings that we have seen that, you know, we believe that the American flag should be respected. It should be — this is a — if you think about the brave men and women who have sacrificed, given their lives to protect our nation, it is — it is — we just — that is something that we will always say and be really, really clear about. I cannot speak to if he should recruit — recuse himself, how he should move forward in the Court. That is for the Court to decide.

(....)

JEAN-PIERRE: Go ahead.

PETER DOOCY: Thank you, Karine.

JEAN-PIERRE: Sticky fingers.

DOOCY: Yeah.

JEAN-PIERRE: That’s what you called yourself — you said you had sticky fingers.
DOOCY: Well, I kept dropping my notebook. I’m just so excited to be here again. There — there is a billionaire, Ray Dalio, quoted by the Financial Times — he's saying now that the chances of a civil war in this country are around 35 to 40%. Do you think the chances are that high?

JEAN-PIERRE: I am not in a place to give probabilities or, you know, I don't — I don't gamble. I don't spend my time in Vegas, so I couldn't speak to that, but what I can say is the President has been really clear about the need to continue to fight for our democracy. That is one of the reasons he jumped into the election back in 2019 what he was seeing across the country we're seeing obviously in Charlottesville and what he saw there — the vile, the — the hatred. — um — and it was concerning to him and so — but, you know, you move forward and from there to January 6, 2021. That was a very scary time in our democracy. That was a stain on our democracy. What we saw happening at the Capitol, all rioters — or 2,000 riders wanting to turn over a free a fair election. So, obviously the President wants to continue to fight for that — continue to fight for our democracy, fight for freedoms, and that's where we're going to continue to stand. I can't give probability. I don't even know who this — who you're speaking of.

DOOCY: Okay. Then, I have some on the big story of the day.

JEAN-PIERRE: Okay.

DOOCY: President Biden think about the world's number one golfer, Scottie Scheffler, being cuffed and then hauled in for a mug shot for what appears to be a misunderstanding at a traffic stop?

JEAN-PIERRE: So I — I've seen the reports of — uh — Mr. Shuff — Scheffler’s arrest. I just want to say that our hearts go out to the individual that was killed.

DOOCY: Unrelated.

JEAN-PIERRE: No, let me finish in the auto — in the auto accident that preceded his arrest. Obviously, someone did die. Someone was killed, preceded his arrest that, obviously, he was not involved in. Uh — so, I want to make sure that we share our condolences to that family and their loved ones. Anything else as specifics to his arrest, that would be something for local authorities to speak to.

DOOCY: I think — just — I — you guys have spent a good chunk of this week —

JEAN-PIERRE: Yep.

DOOCY: — talking about how you don't want anybody to ever go to jail again for possessing marijuana. Do you think that somebody who was involved in what appears to be a misunderstanding of a traffic stop should be facing 10 years in prison?

JEAN-PIERRE: There — we've seen the reports. There — there's a process there. We have to let the legal authorities do — go to their — you know — process and how this all works. I can't comment from here, from the lectern about something that's being looked into by local
authorities. I got to be mindful about that, but let's not forget. Someone lost their lives [sic]. Not obviously — that preceded this, but there was an individual that was killed and there's a family that's mourning a death of a loved one. And so, we want to be sensitive to that as well. [TO LEE] Go ahead.

M.J. LEE: Thanks, Karine. Can we still assume that the Kansas City Chiefs will be visiting the White House this year celebration of their Super Bowl victory?

JEAN-PIERRE: So, what I can say is all the team — per usual, when there is a champion — uh — uh — championship team gets invited. I don't have anything to add on their attendance or how that looks, but the team is always invited. All — everyone on the team is invited. I just don't have anything beyond that.

LEE: So, can you confirm — you said everyone on the team is obviously invited. Is the Chiefs kicker Harrison Butker welcome at this White House?

JEAN-PIERRE: What I can — you would have to — uh — obviously — um — what I can say is we invite the entire team and we do that always. I don't have anything beyond that.

LEE: Given his recent comments, is he specifically welcome at this White House?

JEAN-PIERRE: We invite the team. We invite the team. It's an invitation that goes to the team. And so, it's up to the team who comes and who doesn't come. That's the way it usually works.

[TO WANG] Go ahead.

SELINA WANG: Thanks, Karine. Just going to take another stab at this.

JEAN-PIERRE: Which one? Which stab?

WANG: So the President concerned that having a Supreme Court justice —

JEAN-PIERRE: Oh, okay.

WANG: — who is it such a high position of power, displaying a flag in his house in such a way that that could fuel more extremism and division in this country?

JEAN-PIERRE: I just have to be really mindful when we're talking about the highest court of the land. That is — we're not going to step into the ring who should recuse themselves or not. That is for the courts to decide — that Court to decide.

WANG: And then, what is the sense here about the wife’s role here? Whether it is a Supreme Court justice, whether the senator or president, should she be able and entitled have our own political opinions and views without having them tied to her husband or not?

JEAN-PIERRE: I don't have any comment on his wife.
3:35:02 p.m.
1 minute and 40 seconds

PATSY WIDAKUSWARA: It’s basically to follow up with my colleagues that have asked about Morehouse. I know you can't preview the content of the speech.

JEAN-PIERRE: Yeah.

WIDAKUSWARA: “But is the President mindful of how black students were protesting in campus might see a parallel of their experience of injustice between themselves and the Palestinians? Has he [OTHER REPORTER COUGHS] input about this? Is he sympathetic to that?

JEAN-PIERRE: Look, the President is sympathetic to the fact that many communities are in pain. He has said that. He is a very sympathetic to what people are feeling right now. He knows that it is a difficult time. And he respects that. He truly does. And — uh — and, you know, that is also why he also respects the fact that people have the right to peacefully protest. And it is a difficult time and we get that. He gets that. Uh — and — you know, as President, he makes incredibly difficult decisions. Uh — and — but he also understands, as President, there are people who are going to feel pain in a different way or see actions that he's taken differently and different views, but this is what our democracy is all about — having different opinions, having different views, and being able to express your voice and be able to — be very clear about that. And so, that's why we've been saying when you all have been asking about protest and what the President's going to do, he's going to do what he's been doing for the past several months when there have been protests. Respect the protesters who are doing it peacefully, understanding that all Americans have the right to speak their voice. That is part of our democracy. That is part of who we are.