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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 20, 2021

**Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki, September 20, 2021**

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

1:10 P.M. EDT

MS. PSAKI: Hi, everyone -- or good afternoon. Okay, two items for all of you at the top.

Today, the Biden administration is launching House America, a new initiative for the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness that will engage state and local leaders to set and achieve ambitious goals for reducing homelessness in America.

Homelessness was on the rise before the pandemic, and the last couple of years have just

exacerbated the problem. On any given night, more than half a million Americans were enduring the pandemic without the safety and protection of a home.

Thanks to the President's American Rescue Plan -- and Congress's -- everybody's American Rescue Plan -- communities now have historic housing resources to help more Americans obtain the safety of a stable home, including 70,000 emergency housing vouchers, \$5 billion in HOME grants, and significant investments to preserve and protect housing on Tribal lands. In addition, communities have \$350 billion in state and local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the Department of Treasury to support many needs, including homelessness and housing instability.

So, today, HUD is asking state, Tribal, and local leaders to work collaboratively with them to use these ARP funds and other existing federal, state, and local resources to rapidly reduce homelessness in their communities and add new units of affordable and supportive housing into the development pipeline by the end of 2022.

The initiative will promote the use of "housing first" -- the proven theory that the best way to stabilize the life of someone experiencing homelessness is to ensure that they have a home first without preconditions -- and so we are moving forward with that.

I also wanted to note that, tomorrow, the Senate Committee on Small Business is set to consider the nomination of Dilawar Sied [sic] -- Syed, excuse me -- for deputy administrator for the Small Business Administration.

He's a well-qual- -- he's well qualified to serve as deputy administrator of the SBA, which has been critical in providing relief to small businesses in the midst of the pandemic. He's lived the American Dream as an immigrant and as CEO of a small startup, with -- that will help small businesses -- that has been helping small businesses continue to create jobs.

He has the endorsement of more than 200 individuals and groups, and yet his confirmation is being held up in an unprecedented way and for no good reason.

These members have refused to show up at committee meetings, meaning a quorum cannot be reached and a vote cannot be held on his nomination. By refusing to show up at committee meetings, they are not just blocking his vote but also slowing help to American small-business owners and workers who are trying to build back [from] the pandemic.

So we wanted to call out that hearing that will happen tomorrow.

Darlene, why don't you kick us off?

Q Thanks, Jen. A couple of questions for you. The U.N. Secretary-General spoke to the AP over the weekend. And in the interview, he called on the U.S. and China to repair a relationship that he says is, quote, "completely dysfunctional." He warned of a potential new Cold War and said the U.S. and China need to be cooperating more on COVID and other global challenges.

So, do you have -- how would you respond to the U.N. Secretary-General on his call for the U.S. and China to be more friendly, I suppose?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, I would say the President's view and this administration's view is that our relationship with China is one not of conflict, but of competition. And so, we wouldn't agree with the characterization of the relationship.

As I would note in the readout of the President's call with President Xi just last week -- a 90-minute call that covered an extensive list of topics -- it was a conversation that was candid, but it was certainly not elevated. And we recognize that China is a country that while we have -- while we may take issue with some means they engage in the world, we also have areas we will want to continue to work together.

And that is certainly many of the topics that were raised by the Secretary-General. The President obviously has a meeting with him later this evening.

I would also note that, tomorrow, the President will deliver a speech, as you all know, at the U.N. General Assembly, and he will make absolutely clear that he is not looking to pursue a future -- a new Cold War with any country in the world. We will continue to pursue our interests. We will continue to lift up global priorities. But that is not the objective or the policy of the United States.

Q Another China-related question. Can you say how concerned the administration is about the stability of China's real estate sector, given the issues with China's Evergrande? And is it the administration's view that the People's Bank of China can keep those issues from spilling over into other sectors and possibly affecting U.S. interests?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me first note that this is a company based in China whose activities are overwhelmingly centered in China. That being said, we always are monitoring global markets -- obviously from the Department of Treasury primarily, including the assessment of any risk to the U.S. economy -- and stand prepared to respond appropriately if needed. But that

monitoring would happen primarily from the Department of Treasury and our Secretary of Treasury, of course.

Q And then one more really quickly. Is there any reaction from the White House to the conviction, earlier today, of the man who inspired "Hotel Rwanda"? He's a U.S. resident. He was the recipient of a Presidential Medal of Freedom.

MS. PSAKI: I understand. And I would like to get you a more comprehensive reaction to it. I know this is a question that others will have in the room, so let me venture to do that after the briefing.

Go ahead.

Q Okay, what does the President want to tell President Macron about the submarine deal?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, I think as had been noted in some reports, so let me just confirm this, I guess: The President will have a call -- it has yet -- is -- we're still working on the scheduling of it -- with President Macron in the coming days. And what I expect the President will do on that call is reaffirm our commitment to working with one of our oldest and closest partners on a range of challenges that the global community is facing. And he, of course, will discuss recent developments and our ongoing work together on a range of issues -- certainly our shared interest in the Indo-Pacific, but also a range of global challenges and issues.

I would also note that the President spoke, in his remarks last week -- acknowledged in his remarks, I should say -- he acknowledged that France has a substantial Indo-Pacific presence and is a key partner and ally in strengthening security and prosperity.

But most importantly, we continue to look forward to our close alliance with France -- one of our strongest partnerships -- as we work to address a range of issues in the world.

Q And you have no plans to abandon the submarine deal, do you?

MS. PSAKI: No, we do not.

Q Okay. And then, secondly, back in July, you opted not to lift to travel restrictions on international visitors. What's changed between then and now?

MS. PSAKI: Well, back in July, we also announced that there were a series of working groups that were both interagency and working with a range of countries and partners in the world

to determine what the most equitable and clear policies should be, moving forward, to resume broader international travel. And the older rules were not equitable, in our view, and they were a bit confusing. And so, this was an effort to pursue that.

As was announced in a call earlier today, but I can reaffirm some of the specifics that were announced: We -- starting in November, we will be implementing -- I should say, in early November, we'll be putting in place strict protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 from passengers flying internationally into the United States by requiring that adult foreign nationals traveling to the United States be fully vaccinated. Obviously, this is the conclusion of a policy process on that particular issue -- an important one facing many people around the world.

Go ahead.

Q Hey, Jen. Two quick questions on COVID, and then I --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- have one foreign policy question for you. Now that the FDA's vaccine advisors have recommended boosters for people 65 and up, how soon do you expect President Biden to get his booster shot? And will he do so on camera?

MS. PSAKI: He will do so, and he will do so on camera. I don't have a date for you exactly.

It's important to note -- just to take a slight step back -- that there are still a couple of additional steps in the process. While, you know, we view the news on Friday as an important step forward in protecting more people, saving more lives, the addi- -- the steps now is that ACIP is planning to meet. Based on their recommendation, we're, of course, prepared to operationalize on the plan. And that includes having the President get his booster shot as well.

Q And is the President still being tested for COVID regularly? And if so, how often?

MS. PSAKI: He is tested regularly. He was tested last week, and his test was negative. But he is tested regularly.

Q And just lastly on this front: Has he gotten or does he plan to get the flu shot?

MS. PSAKI: I will have -- I will talk to his doctor. I got a flu shot last week. They're broadly

available. But I will check and see if we have an answer to that question.

Q And then just on the foreign policy front, with the U.N. visit tomorrow: President Biden came into office declaring that "America is back" and vowing to "reinvigorate" U.S. alliances. But in recent weeks, we've seen European allies be unsettled by the execution of the U.S.'s withdrawal from Afghanistan; the administration has admitted to mistakenly killing 10 civilians in this drone strike; and now the U.S.'s oldest ally, France, has recalled its ambassador after being blindsided by this submarine deal with Australia. So, my question to you is, how is the President going to restore U.S. credibility at the U.N. this week after all that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, why don't I give you a -- preview a bit of what you can hear the President talk about tomorrow in his remarks. And, obviously, as you know, he'll have a number of bilateral meetings tomorrow, as well as later this week. And to the degree you all have questions, I'm happy to speak to those as well.

But what you'll hear him talk about tomorrow is the President is going to lay out the case for why the next decade will determine our future, not just for the United States, but for the global community. And he will talk -- and this will be a central part of his remarks -- about the importance of reestablishing our alliances after the last several years.

I also think it's important to note that reestablishing alliances doesn't mean that you won't have disagreements, or you won't have disagreements about how to approach any particular issue in the world. That is not the bar for having an alliance and important and -- partnership. And that has never been and it is not currently. And his -- with the goal, of course, of increasing the prospect of security and diminishing the prospect of war.

He'll also make clear that for many of the greatest concerns we have, they cannot be solved or even addressed through the force of arms -- whether that is preparing for the next pandemic, something the United States continues to be the global leader on; providing more vaccines to the world than every other country combined; addressing the threat of climate change as we look -- all look ahead to COP26; leveling the economic playing field; fighting for democracy at home and abroad; and against threats from cybersecurity -- ranging from cybersecurity to emerging technologies and terrorism.

Finally, he will also reaffirm that the United States is not turning inward, including as we look to the decision the United States made, the President made, to bring our troops home from Afghanistan. Anyone who reads that is not -- in that way is not reading it accurately. He will talk about his objective of turning our focus and our resources to the priorities and

regions of the world that are the most consequential.

Q But just given what's happened in recent weeks and some of the criticism that he's faced in many of the capitals of the allies whose partnerships he plans to, you know -- and vowed to reinvigorate, does he believe there's work to be done to restore that credibility? Or, you know, to --

MS. PSAKI: Is there a country or --

Q -- address the criticism that --

MS. PSAKI: Well, tell me which -- which country is telling you that we don't have credibility in the world?

Q I didn't say countries are saying there's no creditability. But there has been criticism in foreign capitals in recent weeks, including with many of the partners who the President said he was going to reinvigorate these alliances with. So how does he square --

MS. PSAKI: But what I think it's --

Q -- what has happened --

MS. PSAKI: The reason I asked that question is because I think it's important to note that criticism of a decision is different from criticism of the credibility and leadership of the United States, broadly speaking. And if you look back through the course of the last several decades, prior to the last administration, there are points of disagreement, including when we have disagreed with the decisions other countries are making, decision points -- when countries have disagreed with the decisions we're making.

But the larger point here -- and what you'll hear the President talk about tomorrow -- is that we are committed to those alliances, and that always requires work from every president, from every global leader. And his commitment is to make sure we are directing our energy, our resources, our diplomacy, and our efforts on the biggest challenges we're facing in the world.

And to him, that is the threat of climate, the threat of democracy, threat of leveling -- the importance of leveling the economic playing field, addressing and preparing for the next pandemic. Those are all issues that we will continue to work with our partners on, including those who may disagree with decisions we've made about a variety of issues.

Go ahead, David.

Q Back on the submarine deal. So in the conversation with President Macron, is it President Biden's view that the United States is responsible, in any way, for some kind of reparation, some kind of deal that will make up for part of the economic loss and also give a greater sense of a working partnership? Or is it his view that it's really up to Australia to make up any kind of economic loss out of this if there's any loss to be made up at all?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I know from a range of reporting, including perhaps yours, that there were a couple hundred jobs that they anticipate being lost in France. And certainly, that is a factor for them, domestically. We understand that.

But I think you can expect the President's call will be more about reaffirming the pr- -- our commitment, the United States' commitment to our alliance, to our partnership, and to working together on a range of issues, including security in the Indo-Pacific -- that that will be the broad focus of the call.

Q And one more. When you were in the Obama administration, we often talked about the need to reduce the amount of highly enriched uranium that's moving around the world. President Obama ran a number of summits, you'll recall, that were aimed at converting reactors from HEU to LEU.

So here we are helping Australia -- a very good player, a well-known non-proliferation advocate -- by having them build HEU reactors or building it for them. Without any reference to problems with Australia, what message does that send to the rest of the world about how committed we are on this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, David, the President's position and commitment to non-proliferation has not changed. We're committed to renewing American leadership in non-proliferation and addressing the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons. This, in our view, is an exceptional case, not a precedent-setting case. As many of you know and have followed this closely, we're not talking about nuclear-armed submarines. I know you're asking me about enriched uranium --

Q Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: -- but it's important for people to understand that as well. These are conventionally armed submarines that are powered by nuclear reactors.



There's also an 18-month process that we are undergoing on the implementation of this. But again, this was a decision made working with a country that has a long history the -- Australia -- as does the United Kingdom, as does the United States -- of being steadfast in support for nuclear non-proliferation and for the regime and its cornerstone, the NPT. And we all are committed to complying with our respective non-proliferation obligations as we implement over the next 18 months.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. Follow-up on Frank's, first of all, you said you expect a call in the next few days. Have the French actually committed to a call?

MS. PSAKI: We're in -- yes, we're in active conversation about a call.

Q I just wanted to make sure you weren't being sent to voicemail or anything like that.

MS. PSAKI: No, I don't think so.

Q Following up on the drone strike last week that the Pentagon now admits was a tragic mistake: What was the President's response when he learned about that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the President was briefed on Friday morning about the report that was going to be released and put out. I would say first: The President's view and all of our view is that the loss of any civilian life is a tragedy. As was made clear in the comments by the Secretary of Defense, by General McKenzie, this was done in error. And clearly, the investigation that will continue is something the President broadly supports.

So, as a human being, as a President, as somebody who has overseen loss in a variety of scenarios both as a leader and personally, it is -- his reaction is it's a tragedy, and every loss is a tragedy, and he supports the efforts to -- the effort to move this forward as quickly as possible and to have a thorough investigation.

Q You mentioned there's an ongoing investigation. Should it be anticipated that someone would be fired, demoted, not promoted, passed over, and held accountable within the military ranks for this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think what's important is that the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman -- and General McKenzie came forward and made very clear that this was -- they wanted to

see this move forward quickly, they want it to be as transparent as possible, they wanted to learn from what had happened.

It's also important to note what the circumstances were here in -- when this strike was made: This was a scenario where there were direct threats from ISIS-K against our troops who were on the ground in Afghanistan. And that was the scenario where the strike was made.

Obviously, it was done in error, and obviously there was a horrific tragedy that happened, but I'm not going to predict what the impact will be.

Q Two more quick ones -- one more on Afghanistan. Back on October -- or August 26th, the President said, "I've also ordered my commanders to develop operational plans to strike ISIS-K assets, leadership, and facilities. We will respond with force and precision at our time, at the place we choose, and the moment of our choosing." Should we still be anticipating that there will be military response to what happened there in Kabul?

MS. PSAKI: Against ISIS-K?

Q Yes.

MS. PSAKI: Yes. I think it's important -- this is a good question that's been asked. I think this is a version of what you're asking, but others have asked me this.

You know there's a difference between a self-defense strike based on an imminent threat to U.S. forces -- that's why I referenced that -- who were obviously on the ground, and these were threats -- as you all lived through and covered and as we communicated about in the moment -- and an over-the-horizon strike, where we typically expect to have more time to assess both the threat and the potential target. That is a point General McKenzie made -- an important point, I think, for people to understand as we assess over-the-horizon threats and targets moving forward in the future.

Q So, yes, at some point there might be something.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I would say, of course, the President's desire to continue to go after ISIS-K has not changed.

Q Okay. And then just the one last one then -- unrelated: the issue of immigration -- the ruling from the parliamentarian that legalization for DREAMers can't be part of the reconciliation as currently crafted. Given this is a top priority for a key voting bloc -- Latinos

here in this White House -- how personally engaged might the President get on this? Do you guys have specific alternative proposals that have a chance of actually getting passed under this Congress?

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are a number of senators who have spoken to their intention of putting forward alternative proposals because of their commitment and our shared commitment, of course, to moving immigration reform forward and protecting DREAMers and others.

And so, the President supports those efforts and certainly he has long stated his support for immigration being a part of reconciliation. That's really the next step in the process, but there are a number of members who are already working on that.

Q Jen, immigration and Haiti.

MS. PSAKI: Let -- I'll go to you next, April. Let me just go -- go ahead.

Q Well, I'll start there.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

Q So the -- the crisis at the border in Del Rio: We heard DHS say they're going to continue expulsions under Title 42. So what is the White House's message to Haitian immigrants seeking asylum? Is there a place for them?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think it's important for people to understand a couple of the components of what's happening right now on the ground. One, we extended TPS several months ago and again reevaluated to ensure that we were taking into account what was happening on the ground in Haiti. So that --

Q But for the people that are here.

MS. PSAKI: I understand, but that does apply to people who are here who arrived before a certain date, and I think that's an important component of what's happening.

If you're talking about the situation on the ground in Del Rio, one, it's a challenging situation. It's devastating to watch this footage. I think it's important though for people to also know that what we're trying to do is also protect people.

One, we've been conveying that this is not the time to come. We have been implementing Title 42. That's not just about people in the United States; that's also about protecting migrants who would come in -- come in mass groups and be in mass groups.

We are also surging resources and taking a multi-pronged approach. We've been working with the American Red Cross to bring [sic] in -- bring in much-needed resources. We've worked with World Central Kitchen to bring in meals. And we have been expediting repatriation flights both to a range of countries in South and Central America where people may have come from, if they are -- can be accepted back, and some back to Haiti.

That is what our focus is on at this point in time. And our message continues to be, as you've heard Secretary Mayorkas convey: Now is not the time to come, for a range of reasons, including we don't have the immigration system up and running in the way we want, including there is still a pandemic and Title 42 remains in place. And these are the steps that we're taking in part to protect the border communities, as well as the migrants themselves.

Q On a different topic, quickly. There will be a government shutdown if Congress doesn't act in 10 days. Can you tell us what the impact of a government shutdown would be on the COVID response from this White House?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our effort right now is to prevent a government shutdown and to ensure we are not facing a government shutdown. And, as we get closer, we can certainly discuss that, but right now that's where our energies are.

Go ahead, April.

Q Jen, back on Haiti. I hear that, but digging in the weeds a little bit more, the process for Haitian migrants has always, in this nation, been different than other nations. You have people like Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee who's calling for equal treatment and fairness when it comes to the Haitians at the border and overall. You're allowing Afghans to come in, Afghan supporters to come in, as well as Mexicans, and then Haitians are not allowed. Can you speak to that -- the issue of equity and fairness?

MS. PSAKI: Absolutely, April. I appreciate your question. Let me just take these different pieces side by side. Right? One, our immigration policy is not about one country or discriminating against one country over another. We want to end that and put -- and hopefully put an end to what we saw over the last four years.

Let me start with Afghan allies. Afghans who are arriving in our country are entering in a

sanctioned and orderly process that includes vetting and security screenings led by the Departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security. It's not about one particular country of origin, but we've outlined very specifically in here what those processes look like as individuals who are evacuated, go to lily-pad countries, go through security vetting before they come to United States on a range of programs.

As it relates to individuals who are coming across the border: Wherever they're coming from -- whatever country they're coming from, Title 42 remains in place. There are a range of programs that people who are in the country can apply for or may be eligible for, including TPS for Haiti, which is something that we still are continuing to look at and review.

The Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security are constantly assessing circumstances on the ground that would necessitate a TPS designation for any country, and they've obviously made a couple of designations over the course of the last couple of months as it relates to Haiti.

Q And no matter whether it's the people who left -- the Haitians that left in 2010 and traveled to South America and are now trying to travel here -- or the ones who left after this earthquake -- either way, what is there for them to go back to when these planes are taking them back? The nation is in unrest. The President was assassinated. There are gangs that people are scared to -- they're scared of. Democratic rule is not necessarily in place. The people are calling -- particularly those here in this nation are calling for the elections not to be held, you know, on time because of unrest there. And then you also have the issue of the earthquakes.

So what is there to go back to? What are you deporting them back to?

MS. PSAKI: Well, April, I will say that our objective and our focus is not only in implementing current immigration policies. We have also been working to provide a range of assistance, working closely with officials from the government as individuals are going back to Haiti, to provide a range of financial assistance, to provide a range of technical assistance. That is ongoing.

And we certainly support and want to be good actors in supporting Haiti during a very difficult time, as you noted, with a government that is still working to get back to a point of stability, with recovery from an earthquake. And that's why we have a range of programs, options, as well as financial support in place.

Okay. Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. To follow up on Ed's question on immigration: In the big picture, right now, how confident is the President that he'll be able to enact some sort of long-term pathway to legal status for millions of undocumented immigrants at some point before the midterms, whether it's through reconciliation or through some other --

MS. PSAKI: It's a long time before the midterms. I know that's a tough thing for you to hear, but it's a long time before the midterms. I can't give a projection for you. It depends on a lot of factors, including working with members of Congress.

The -- what I can tell you, though, is that the President is absolutely committed to putting in place a path to citizenship, to putting in place long-overdue measures to fix our immigration system -- to make it more moral, humane, and workable, frankly. And obviously, he supported and continues to support having immigration measures as a part of the reconciliation process.

And as I noted to Ed, the next step is really to see alternatives proposed by senators, who have already said they have every intention of doing exactly that.

Q Along the same lines -- just to follow up on that -- we've also seen the parliamentary rule against the effort to increase the minimum wage through a reconciliation bill. We've seen other priorities on the Hill that both the President and Democrats campaigned on -- you know, police reform, gun control -- also stalled. Is there a recognition in the White House now that some of the priorities that he and the party campaigned for last year are just simply not going to happen, not going to become reality before the midterms?

MS. PSAKI: No.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Jen. Back to the drone strike: You said last month, "Our over-the-horizon capacity can work and has worked in going after ISIS targets and killing people who went after our troops." But you guys didn't kill people who went after our troops; you killed 10 civilians, including 7 children. So, does the President still think these over-the-horizon strikes can work?

MS. PSAKI: Absolutely. And I will just reiterate, as our Secretary of Defense conveyed, as Secretary -- as General McKenzie conveyed, that there was a serious mistake. The Secretary of Defense has authorized, as I noted before, a thorough review of the investigation just

completed by U.S. Central Command, including the degree to which the investigation considered all available context and information; the degree to which accountability measures need to be taken, at which level; and the degree to which strike authorities, procedures, and processes need to be altered in the future. That's an important process.

I would note, which I noted earlier, that there's a difference between a self-defense strike -- which is exactly what this was, and I would note there was one prior to this that was a successful self-defense strike -- and those that pose -- that is posing an imminent threat to U.S. forces -- who were, as we all know, on the ground at that time, facing real threats in real time -- and an over-the-horizon strike, where we typically expect to have more time to assess both the threat and the potential target.

That is a different approach -- and it requires a different approach and is a different approach internally, and General McKenzie spoke to that last week as well.

Q Some of the victims' relatives are saying that they want to be relocated here. Is that something that the administration is going to help them do?

MS. PSAKI: I'm certainly -- I'm not aware of that request -- or that ask. I'm happy to certainly speak to our national securities team and see what that process would look like.

Q And then a question about what's going on at the border: Is somebody asking the foreign nationals who are walking in in Del Rio, Texas, and setting up camps on this side of the border for proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first of all, I can re- -- I can re-address for you or re-talk you through what -

Q But that is the --

MS. PSAKI: -- steps we take.

Q -- but that is the policy for people who fly into the country. So if somebody walks into the country, right across the river, does somebody ask them to see their vaccination card?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me explain to you again, Peter, how our process works. As individuals --

Q It doesn't sound like it.

MS. PSAKI: As individuals come across the border and -- they are both assessed for whether they have any symptoms. If they have symptoms, they are -- the intention is for them to be quarantined; that is our process. They're not intending to stay here for a lengthy period of time. I don't think it's the same thing.

Q But they're here. What's the difference?

MS. PSAKI: It's not the same thing. These are individuals -- as we've noted and as we've been -- discussed, we are expelling individuals based on Title 42, specifically because of COVID, because we want to prevent a scenario where large numbers of people are gathering, posing a threat to the community and also to the migrants themselves.

So, those are the policies that we put in place, in large part because, again, the CDC continues to recommend Title 42 be in place, given we're facing a global pandemic.

Q Where's the Vice President on any of this? Isn't she supposed to be addressing the root causes of migration?

MS. PSAKI: Absolutely. And she has been addressing the root causes of migration by working with countries in the region to ensure they have the assistance they need to reduce the number of people who are coming and trying to make those journeys across the border. We've actually seen some reductions in some of those numbers.

That doesn't change the fact that this is a very challenging situation in Del Rio. We're working to implement our policies, and we're working to ensure we are also addressing root causes.

Q And just a quick one on boosters: Why did the President say in August, "Just remember, as a simple rule: Eight months after your second shot, get a booster shot" if there is not enough data to support that for the general population?

MS. PSAKI: Well, what the ~~President~~ [Surgeon General] also said is that, "I want to be very clear, the plan is pending the FDA conducting in an independent evaluation of the safety and effectiveness of a third dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and the CDC's Advisory Committee."

We are right now in the week of September 20th. The advisory committee is meeting on Thursday. We've seen some recommendations that we felt was a step forward in providing more protection to people across the country. And we'll wait for that process to play out.



Our objective and our role is to ensure we have the capacity, the number of shots to provide them to the American people.

Q Sixteen out of eighteen FDA advisors say there is not the science. The President talks about "following the science." Is this a case of him getting ahead on the science?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first of all, I think what you heard Dr. Collins and Dr. Fauci convey yesterday is that this is going to be an ongoing process.

I would remind you that the percentage of individuals, at this point, who would be eligible to get a booster are largely people over 65, because those are people who would have had the second dose six months ago.

If we're looking at when we're going to have available data -- that's what the CDC and the FDA looks at -- they need enough data to make assessments. No one is suggesting that there will never be boosters. We are suggesting that there needs to be a process to be seen through for when boosters should be approved and when a broader swath of the population is eligible.

Go ahead, Kelly.

Q Back to the international COVID vaccine requirements for travelers. A number of individuals and European allies have been pressing for access to the United States: families that have been separated, business relationships that have been affected by it. And so, before the President goes to the United Nations General Assembly and has meetings with foreign partners, this is when the decision is announced that vaccination will allow people to come into the country. Is that part of the President's, sort of, foreign policy outreach this week -- the timing of this decision?

MS. PSAKI: If we were going to make things much easier for ourselves, we would have done it prior to June when the President had his first foreign trip or earlier this summer.

This is when the process concluded. We want to make the information available to the public. We're basing it on science and when the process concluded, and here we are today.

Q Do you anticipate that Americans who are coming back to the United States would be affected by this having to be tested? Would there be any opt-out policy for those who don't want to do that?

MS. PSAKI: You mean people who don't want to be vaccinated --

Q Yes.

MS. PSAKI: -- who are Americans?

Q Yeah, that are unvaccinated Americans who would be flying home from foreign travel.

MS. PSAKI: So, there would still be requirements for these -- for individuals -- Americans who are not vaccinated -- including providing proof of a negative test result taken within one day of their departure and providing proof they have purchased a viral test to be taken after arrival for Americans who are not fully vaccinated -- which, at this point, would obviously apply to children as well.

Q And one last point. Given the whole political timing, or at least the timing seen in a political context of this vaccine requirement -- following up on what Jeremy was asking -- does the President go into UNGA knowing that his relationship with allies has hit a bumpy patch?

MS. PSAKI: Look, I think the President's view, having been on the world scene for 50 years, is that you always have to work on your relationships, and that includes with global leaders.

But he believes that our relationships are sustaining, over the course of many decades; that every step he's taken from the moment he took office was with the intention of rebuilding alliances and rebuilding those partnerships that were frayed over the last four years.

And his view, as I've conveyed over the course of the early part of the briefing, is that that doesn't mean that the bar is we will always agree with everything our partners and allies do, nor will they agree with everything we do, but that our relationships are stronger -- they have a stronger basis, and that we have an opportunity to work together on the global issues that the world is facing. And that's what he expects the focus of the next few days to be.

Go ahead.

Q Some of the President's counterparts who will be in attendance at the U.N. this week have not gotten vaccinated; some have had COVID in the past. Any pause in sending the President into the U.N. General Assembly chamber and the potential that it could be a superspreader?

MS. PSAKI: We obviously take a range of precautions, including ensuring the President is tested -- obviously, he's vaccinated. But there's no intention to change our plans to have him

deliver a speech there.

Q A couple quick questions approaching the line of questioning that Peter was asking you about, but perhaps approach from the other side --

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

Q -- on behalf of people who look at what happened last week and were disappointed. They may be six-plus months out from their second shot and they want a booster shot today; they don't want to wait. Can you explain the process to those people --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- and address their concerns?

And in particular, get at the question of accountability, because it was the eight health experts who surround the President, who are best known to the country -- perhaps most trusted by the country -- who suggested that this would be the week. Who were these people who were deciding that it shouldn't be this week or that shouldn't be people under the age of 65?

MS. PSAKI: Well, even -- those eight health experts who, you're right, put out the statement in August based on data that we had -- that they had available to them as health experts suggesting the waning influence -- or the waning impact, I should say -- the waning effectiveness of vaccines, they felt they had a responsibility to make their recommendations, their views public to the American people. That's exactly what they did.

There's also a process in place for a reason. And I would say -- I think any of us would say -- to anyone who's frustrated or who wants to have their booster shot now: That process is in place for a reason so that you can trust what the final recommendation and the final outcome is. And it includes -- obviously, last week, there was -- the FDA had their own review and their own process, a formal meeting of the Advisory Committee. ACIP is meeting this week.

But this is not the last meeting. I think that's important for people to understand, and Dr. Fauci referenced this yesterday. There will be additional data. There will be additional data from probably Moderna, from J&J, others in the coming weeks. There'll be more data for people who are younger than 65. They will look at all of that.

This is an ongoing process. This is not a decision that there will never be boosters for others. This is the first step in a process -- a positive one, in our view -- about protecting more

people.

And -- but it is also important to keep the FDA as the gold standard and ensure that process proceeds so people can trust their recommendations.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you. So, just to follow up on David's question: So it sounds like there isn't an offer in the works to the French to ameliorate some of the harm to the U.S.-French relation? No offer in the works to make up for some of the economic damage?

MS. PSAKI: The real focus of the meeting -- of the call, I should say -- whenever it's finalized and scheduled -- is about reaffirming our commitment -- the President's commitment, the United States' commitment -- to our partnership and to working together on a range of issues, including the Indo-Pacific.

Q So, just to clarify, that means we're not offering the French anything?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not aware of a plan to offer anything.

Q And then on the drone strike, do you know if there's any discussion for the administration or for the U.S. to pay some of the families of the victims of the drone strike?

MS. PSAKI: That is something that was referenced by -- General McKenzie referenced, I should say, ex gratia payments. And they're exploring that option from the Department of Defense. But I'd really point you to them.

Q And then one more thing on the -- on national -- on international travel. Do you know if there's any discussion, right now, about how the U.S. will decide who is vaccinated, what counts as vaccinated? Will the Chinese vaccine count? Will the Russian vaccine count? AstraZeneca? Is there discussion on what exactly is a "vaccine" and "vaccinated"?

MS. PSAKI: Yes, this is all a part of the process. It's going to be implemented, again, in early November. In terms of how the proof of process will work, which is a very good question, that's part of what the implementation interagency discussions will focus on.

Q So we'll have an answer before November?

MS. PSAKI: Yes, exactly.

Q Thank you.

MS. PSAKI: Hopefully sooner than that.

Go ahead.

Q Yeah, just a technical thing on the international travel policy. You talk about unvaccinated Americans; what about like green card holders, visa holders? Would they -- people who -- you know, who under the current travel policy can get into the country, would they have to be vaccinated or would they have to do the testing protocol like Americans?

MS. PSAKI: That's a really good question. I'll have to ask what the specification is there for them.

Q Okay. And then on immigration and the parliamentarian's ruling -- you've sort of gotten at this, but I'm just wondering about the President's level of commitment to this being in the reconciliation bill. Does it have to be in reconciliation? Is there a point at which it gets thrown overboard like the minimum wage did? And are there any concerns about losing certain senators -- Democratic senators -- who insist that this be in there?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as our comment last night made very clear, the President absolutely supports efforts by senators who have already come forward -- Leader Schumer has, other senators -- about introducing alternate proposals and seeing if they can work their way through the process. So that's where we stand right now. I think that reflects his commitment.

But, obviously, we don't determine the outcome of the parliamentarian process.

Go ahead.

Q Jen, a follow-up question on Haiti. There are photographs and reports of border agents on horseback using what appeared to be whips on Haitian migrants. Does the administration view that as an appropriate tactic? Can you speak to that? There are people who are upset about it.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah, understandably so. I -- I've seen some of the footage. I don't have the full context. I can't imagine what context would make that appropriate. But I don't have additional details.

Q Should they be fired?

MS. PSAKI: And, certainly -- I don't have additional context, April. I don't think anyone seeing that footage would think it was acceptable or appropriate.

Q And then, DHS said it will be -- that are -- said yester- -- said Saturday that federal agencies will be partnering with the Haitian government to provide assistance to the returnees. Can you elaborate on what that assistance will entail exactly?

MS. PSAKI: You mean to the people who are returning to Haiti?

Q Correct.

MS. PSAKI: Yes, we've been in close contact with the government about -- when people return, what that looks like. Let me get you some more additional details about what that looks like when they get on the ground.

Q Can I follow up on that? Jen. Jen.

MS. PSAKI: Oh. Go ahead. Go ahead, Yamiche.

Q Thanks so much, Jen. I want to follow up on the question about Haitians -- and specifically, these -- these photos that are surfacing; on Border Patrol agents seemingly using whips. I know you said that there's no context that it would be seen as inappropriate. So, the question really is: Why would this be happening under the Biden administration? Is this going to stop? What would the -- I wonder, sort of, what are going to be the consequences if what we're seeing is what we're seeing?

MS. PSAKI: I mean, Yamiche, it's all good questions. We just saw this footage. It's horrible to watch. I just have to get more information on it.

Q Can I ask a follow-up?

Q If this is true, will they be fired? If this is true will they be --

MS. PSAKI: Again, April, I don't have more information on it. I've also seen the video. I can't imagine what the scenario is where that would be appropriate. I'm certainly not suggesting that. But we've just seen the footage short -- earlier this morning.

Q And if I could also ask -- I was talking to Haitian American advocates this weekend. They say that deporting people back to Haiti is like dropping people into a burning house. This idea that -- the country is just not in a place where it can handle this. Haiti is -- Haitian officials have said, "Can you please have a pause on this?" Is there any sort of discussion being made to make exemptions for some of these migrants? If so, who would those people be? Or are all of these people just going to end up dropped back in Haiti?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, I would say: I mean, we are constantly assessing circumstances on the ground. Obviously, the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security are the ones who would assess circumstances like TPS status, which would be one that we granted and adjusted over the course of the last several months to account for circumstances on the ground in Haiti.

I don't -- can't make any predictions of that. But I would just reiterate that, obviously, our objective here is to not just work to address the circumstances, which are very difficult, in Del Rio, but also to continue to work with the officials in Haiti to improve the conditions, to provide assistance. We're doing all of these pieces at the same time; it is not just one at the same time. But I can't predict for you what an assessment would look like or what the outcome of that assessment would look like.

Q And a quick follow-up on the photo. I know you said that you're still assessing it. But just to add, if this is what we see, is the -- is it the President's stance or the White House's stance that whoever these border agents are -- using what seems to be whips on migrants -- that they would be fired or at least never be able to do that again?

MS. PSAKI: Of course, they should never be able to do it again. I don't know what the circumstances would be. It's obviously horrific -- the footage.

I don't have any more information on it, so let me venture to do that --

Q But why won't you say "fired"?

MS. PSAKI: -- and we'll see if there's more to convey.

Karen, go ahead.

Q But, Jen, why can't you say "fired" if they -- if they are -- that --

MS. PSAKI: I think --

Q This is a humanitarian issue.

MS. PSAKI: April, I absolutely understand your question. I think I've been very clear about how horrific the footage is. I don't have more information.

As a U.S. official, it's a -- I have a responsibility to get more context and information.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. Two on COVID. Does the White House have an expectation now on when kids younger than 12 will be able to get the vaccine? Is this before Thanksgiving? Are we thinking the end of October? What's the latest right now?

MS. PSAKI: I'm also -- and have self-interest, as do you, Karen. I understand. I think you heard -- you saw Pfizer put out their data. Obviously, that's just a step. They had to -- it has to go through the full approval process. So, I can't make a prediction of that at this point. But, certainly, we were encouraged to see that. But it needs to move its way through the official government process.

Q And on the international travel today, you talked about the policy process. What was the White House looking or the administration looking to see in order to get to this point today to make the change? Was it the vaccination rates in Europe?

And how will the contact tracing work? And what resources will be put to that? Because that's not been something we've seen a really solid, robust effort in the U.S. on over the last year and a half.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah. So this -- this was a process -- this was an ongoing process, as you all know, that we discussed pretty extensively here.

CDC is going to issue a contact tracing order that will require airlines to collect comprehensive contact information for every passenger coming to the United States and to provide that information promptly to the CDC, upon request, to follow up with travelers who have been exposed to COVID-19 variants or other pathogens. And these requirements will apply globally.

That's a good example of where the -- some of the considerations. As we were making these



policy decisions, we had to account for and plan for and ensure that we could implement this policy in a way that was clear, that was equitable, that provided -- that ensured that there was equal treatment around the world of how people could come into the United States given COVID protocols. But that's an important question. We wanted to make sure we addressed a lot of those internally as well.

Go ahead.

Q Also on the international travel announcement, it did not include an opening of the land border -- north or south. Is the administration worried that any easing at the southern border would be contributing to the immigration problems? And is -- was that a factor in that decision?

MS. PSAKI: Well, this is an all -- an ongoing process. Right? Title 19 is what is in place, of course, at land borders; it's being extended for another month, through October 21st. We don't have any updates or predictions at this point in time. But, obviously, we're continuing to consider -- as is evident by our announcement today -- how we can return to a place of travel and people being able to move from country to country, including at our land borders. But I don't have any prediction of that at this point.

Q Hey, Jen?

Q Jen? Jen?

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

Q You may not have seen this because it happened just minutes before you came out, but the Supreme Court has set a December 1st hearing date for the Mississippi abortion law that's a direct challenge to Roe v. Wade. Any reaction?

MS. PSAKI: I had not seen that -- you're correct -- before I came out, and I'm sure we can venture to get you a more substantive reaction to that.

I think you're all familiar with what the position of this administration is on a woman's right to choose, as is evidenced by the Department of Justice's announcement about their intention to -- their -- to file lawsuit and challenge the Texas law -- given our commitment to protecting.

I will note -- and you may have seen this, but since we're on this topic -- a couple of people

have asked, over the course of time, our position on the Women's Health Protect Act. We rolled out a statement of administration policy in strong support of this as well this morning. I know, different question, but same pool of topics.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you so much. Following up on Haiti. Some of the Haitian migrants at the border told VOA that they were treated worse than their Spanish-speaking counterparts. They were denied the chance to change clothing, that they were not given adequate information on their deportation or their deportation status. And we had one guy say to us, "It was like being in jail, no food, nothing." You know, what is your response to this? Is this policy?

And then just secondly -- Haitian Americans say that this mass deportation and this treatment of people at the border is -- is the President going back on campaign promises to their community.

MS. PSAKI: In which campaign promise?

Q To help them kind of get over some of the challenges facing Haiti and also to help people migrate to the U.S.

MS. PSAKI: Well, the President committed to extending temporary protected status to Haiti, which is something he did. And he extended that -- we extended that to a longer period of time to account for the turmoil on the ground following the assassination, on the ground, of their leader. So that was the campaign commitment that he made.

But I think we can -- I can assure people that that is not our policy. Obviously, any circumstance where individuals are not treated humanely, whether they are coming to our border or not, is not in line with the Biden administration policies.

This is clearly a very challenging circumstance on the ground, one where we have worked under our Department of Homeland Security to expedite surge resources, which includes World Central Kitchen bringing in meals, the American Red Cross bringing in much-needed resources to the population.

These are all steps we've taken from a humanitarian perspective. It does not mean that every individual -- that there aren't individuals, as are -- as you evidenced, that didn't have experiences where they did not have access to these resources. But our policy is to provide resources, is to prevent [sic] -- to treat people humanely.

But we also need to implement what is our law and what is our -- and what that is implementing -- Title 42 -- and continuing to ensure that people who are not coming here lawfully are sent back to the countries they came from.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Jen.

MS. PSAKI: Okay. Last one.

Q Two quick questions.

MS. PSAKI: Yep.

Q On the French getting -- the French sub deal. Lockheed Martin was -- had a major part of that contract between the Australians and the French. Headquarters down the street are not far from here. Are they going to be carried over to the new U.S.-U.K. deal? Do you know? Are they going to be involved in that?

MS. PSAKI: I'd have to check on the specifics of the deal.

Q Okay. Second question. So when -- when's the President going to hold another news conference where we can ask our questions to him about all of these issues about inflation, about the border, and Afghanistan?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the question -- the President took questions probably four or five times last week. So, I would point you to that.

Thanks, everyone.

Q Can we see about getting the Homeland Security Secretary to come here and answer --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- questions, instead of going to Texas and answering them there?

MS. PSAKI: We can, but it's important for him to go to Texas, too.

Q Absolutely.

MS. PSAKI: That'd be great.

Thanks, everyone.

1:59 P.M. EDT

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<b>Sent Date:</b>	2021/09/20 20:06:44
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<b>To:</b>	Mayorkas, Alejandro /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
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<b>Subject:</b>	FW: Washington Post: Mayorkas says he was 'horrified' by images of horse-mounted Border Patrol agents confronting Haitian migrants
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/21 10:22:25
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

**Washington Post: Mayorkas says he was 'horrified' by images of horse-mounted Border Patrol agents confronting Haitian migrants (John Wagner)**

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said Tuesday that he was "horrified" by images of horse-mounted Border Patrol agents attempting to grab Haitian migrants and use their animals to push them back toward Mexico and promised a "swift" investigation.

"I was horrified by what I saw," Mayorkas said during an appearance on CNN. "I am going to let the investigation run its course, but the pictures that I observed troubled me profoundly."

Mayorkas was responding to scenes captured by news cameras and photographers Sunday along the Rio Grande. In one instance, an agent is heard on video shouting an obscenity as a child jumps out of a horse's path.

"One cannot weaponize a horse to aggressively attack a child," Mayorkas said. "That is unacceptable. That is not what our policies and our training require. ...Let me be quite clear: That is not acceptable."

Amid heavy criticism on Monday night, the Department of Homeland Security announced a formal inquiry into the episode, which it said Mayorkas directed after seeing the videos.

Mayorkas said he has also directed the Office of Professional Responsibility, DHS's internal oversight office, to send personnel to the area full-time.

"Any mistreatment or abuse of a migrant is unacceptable, is against Border Control policy, training and our department's values," Mayorkas said, pledging the investigation that was launched will be conducted "swiftly."

"The public needs and deserves to know its results," Mayorkas said.

He said the department will take action "with full force based on the facts that we learn."

The Border Patrol typically uses horse-mounted officers to access difficult or roadless terrain, and at times as a crowd-control tool, not unlike other law enforcement organizations.

Contrary to some reports, the agents in the images were not carrying whips but were seen swinging their horses' reins. They did not appear to strike anyone.

Border Patrol chief Raul Ortiz, who addressed reporters in Del Rio on Monday, said he made the decision to deploy the horse patrol agents to "find out if we had any individuals in distress, and be able to provide information and intelligence as to what the smuggling organizations were doing in and around the river."

Ortiz said that he was confident the agents were "trying to control" their animals but that officials would "look into the matter to make sure that we do not have any activity that could be construed" as misconduct.

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<b>Subject:</b>	CHS Member Intel for tomorrow
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/21 21:51:19
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

Good evening, sir.

Attached is the latest Member intel we have for the **Majority**. You'll see that we have some pending requests for suggested talking points, but please let us know if you would like additional information on any other anticipated questions. We should have the Minority intel document ready within the hour, and I will provide additional updates as information comes in.

Also attached is a collection of tweets CHS members (both majority and minority) have issued about Del Rio.

Please let us know if you need anything else or different in the interim.

Thank you,  
Alex

**Alexandra Carnes**  
Deputy Assistant Secretary (House)  
Office of Legislative Affairs  
Department of Homeland Security  
C: (b)(6) O: (b)(6)

**Sender:** CARNES, ALEXANDRA /c (b)(6)



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FULL COMMITTEE HEARING  
WORLDWIDE THREATS TO THE HOMELAND: 20 YEARS AFTER 9/11  
SEPT 22, 2021 | 9 AM**

**MAJORITY**

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## CHS Member Tweets Regarding Del Rio September 2021

### MAJORITY

#### Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-MS)

- House Homeland Security Committee Dems Twitter, September 20<sup>th</sup>: “These videos and photos from Del Rio showing U.S. Border Patrol’s mistreatment of Haitian migrants along the border are horrific and disturbing. This mistreatment runs counter to our American values and cannot be tolerated. @DHSgov Secretary Mayorkas must take immediate action to hold those responsible accountable and ensure that all migrants are treated in accordance with the law and basic decency, as this Administration has promised to do since day one.”

#### Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX)

- September 19<sup>th</sup>: THREAD - “This year Haitians have witnessed the assassination of their President and another debilitating earthquake that has affected over 800,000 people and killed thousands.
  - Many of the individuals that fled to the US Southern border are attempting to escape political oppression, persecution, instability and state failure. Haitians are among some of the most vulnerable people in the world.
  - For decades, Haiti has been, and remains, one of the poorest countries in the world. These migrants will be returned to Haiti, Mexico, Ecuador, and Northern Triangle countries. We have a duty to increase humanitarian aid to these countries.
  - Further, we must exercise a humanitarian aid approach towards the Haitian people that helps stabilize the US Southern border.
  - Even as the Biden Administration uses Title 42, continued from the previous Administration, there still must be a legitimate attempt to hear from the Haitians on our border who are seeking asylum based on credible fear of returning to their home country.
  - I am calling on the Biden Administration to continue to send additional personnel to the border region, including Del Rio or to Eagle Pass, and to give the migrants the opportunity for legitimate claims to be heard regarding whether or not these families can be admitted.
  - I’m grateful to the Biden Administration for responding to what may be a few unaccompanied children and providing them the resources they need. Finally, I expect to travel to the Southern Border, where the Haitians are located.
  - I have frequently traveled to Haiti over the years, through the crises it has faced, including political and natural disasters. The Haitian people have a strong relationship with the United States.
  - This situation must be handled with the dignity and compassion that Biden Administration is working on.”
- September 18<sup>th</sup>: THREAD - “The refugees that have fled to #DelRio are human beings fleeing the most desperate circumstances. Violence, extreme poverty and political oppression.
  - They’re not coming to endanger our lives, they’re coming to save their own. Haitians have added great contributions to our nation in medicine, education and science; as well as other immigrations who have contributed to a better quality of life for all Americans.
  - We must have compassion and empathy for these desperate families, women and children. We are a nation of immigrants and refugees who have fled to the shores of America for a better life.
  - As the Statue of Liberty reminds us, those very immigrants have helped make America a better nation. I encourage the Federal Government to allocate more resources to process these refugees.”



## CHS Member Tweets Regarding Del Rio September 2021

### **Yvette Clarke (D-NY)**

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “This is inhuman and utterly unacceptable. I am calling for an immediate investigation into these videos and photos from Del Rio showing U.S. @CBP’s treatment of Haitian migrants along the border. Whips in 2021? The nerve.”
- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “I’m calling for an immediate halting of Haitian repatriation flights and reemphasizing the need for a comprehensive pathway to citizenship. More than 14,000 Haitians will be expelled from the United States in the coming weeks, and it is unconscionable that DHS would seek to return Haitian migrants to a country in turmoil. My colleagues and I have repeatedly spoken out and penned numerous letters requesting the ceasing of targeted deportations of Haitian migrants. However, this dangerous and wholly unnecessary practice continues. Haiti is still reeling from a series of compounding crisis: Rising coronavirus rates and vaccine hesitancy, a political crisis stemming from President Jovenel Moise’s assassination, increased gang violence, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake where more than 800,000 people have been affected and 650,000 are still in need of emergency humanitarian assistance, a tropical depression leaving almost 2,000 dead, and thousands without shelter. I am calling for a humanitarian moratorium on these targeted deportations. Now, more than ever, we must reimagine the immigration system in a humane, just, and fair manner. I am the daughter of immigrant parents from Jamaica and this is personal to me. I have dedicated my career to building an immigration system that lets people live without fear and gives immigrants – like my parents – who sought a better life and to contribute to our nation, a fair opportunity to thrive.”

### **Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-NJ)**

- September 17<sup>th</sup>: “Yesterday, myself, @NydiaVelazquez, @RepPressley and over 50 other lawmakers wrote a letter to the Biden Administration urging them to halt the immediate deportations of Haitians in light of the recent earthquake and political violence and resulting humanitarian crisis.”

### **Kathleen Rice (D-NY)**

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “The appalling mistreatment of Haitian migrants by U.S. Border Patrol agents must cease immediately. Migrants should be treated in accordance with the law and basic human decency – not met with the same violence they are trying to flee.”

### **Val Demings (D-FL)**

- September 17<sup>th</sup>: “I’m part of this effort. We made a commitment to help shelter Haitians displaced by disasters and unrest. It is inappropriate to force them to return while the country remains dangerous and unstable.”

### **Nanette Barragan (D-CA)**

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “In the span of a few months, Haiti experienced several crisis, including a devastating earthquake and hurricane. Haitians are coming to us for help. We should stop these deportations, not expedite them.”

## CHS Member Tweets Regarding Del Rio September 2021

### MINORITY

#### Ranking Member Katko (R-NY)

- House Homeland GOP twitter, September 18<sup>th</sup>: “This crisis is a direct result of President Biden’s reckless and dangerous border security policies. People from around the world continue showing up at our borders attempting to enter illegally. What will it take for this administration to act?”

#### Michael McCaul (R-TX)

- September 19<sup>th</sup>: “President Biden has lost control of the border. His border policies demonstrate that our country’s national security is not a top priority for his administration.”

#### Clay Higgins (R-LA)

- September 15<sup>th</sup> : retweeted House Homeland GOP tweet from a FOX correspondent, “Just a reminder: There is still a crisis of epic proportion at our southern border that the Biden administration continues to ignore.” re: Bill Melugin’s tweet, “BREAKING: Our drone is currently over the international bridge in Del Rio, TX, where Border Patrol & law enforcement sources tell us over 4,200 migrants are waiting to be apprehended after crossing into US. Local BP holding facilities are overwhelmed and over capacity. @FoxNews

#### Dan Bishop (R-NC)

- September 18<sup>th</sup>: “Americans have had enough of Biden’s open-border experiment. Put Trump’s asylum policies fully back in place, stop promising amnesty, and secure the border now, @POTUS. #BidenBorderCrisis.”
- September 17<sup>th</sup>: “This disaster began with the Biden Admin, and it can end with them. They have the power to secure our border but simply refuse to do it. #BidenBorderCrisis.”
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: “In response to news reports about FAA TFR over Del Rio – “Rather than secure the border, the Biden Admin wants to censor Fox News for covering his abject failure.”

#### Ralph Norman (R-SC)

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “Has anyone heard from VP Harris? Is she still in charge of the southern border?”
- September 19<sup>th</sup>: “Mr. President, secure our border.”
- September 17<sup>th</sup>: “We have seen well over 1 million illegal immigrants cross our border this year. This administration saying they’ve made “progress” down there is a giant slap in the face to all Americans.”
- September 17<sup>th</sup>: “Instead of trying to secure our southern border — this administration has worked to keep it open.”
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: “Border Patrol encountered an average of 4.6 people every minute, of every hour, of every day last month. That’s one encounter every 15 SECONDS.”
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: “208,887. This number represents the incompetence this administration continues to show along our southern border.”

#### Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA)

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “My first bill in Congress, the REACT Act, would require @DHSgov to test all migrants illegally crossing our border for #COVID19. For the safety of border patrol agents, border communities, and migrants, must improve COVID-19 testing at the border. #IA02”

## CHS Member Tweets Regarding Del Rio September 2021

- September 17<sup>th</sup>: "I have visited the border twice & have heard from CBP agents and officers about how overwhelmed they are every day. They need support immediately. #IA02 @HomelandGOP and I will continue to fight to keep our communities safe and healthy and support CBP."

### August Pfluger (R-TX)

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: "THREAD: I spent the day in Del Rio, TX with local and state leaders and law enforcement—what I heard, and what I saw, was devastating. There were nearly 15,000 migrants gathered at the port of entry with hundreds more gathering every hour—up from 12,000 just the day before. Most were military aged males between the ages of 18-35. The majority of migrants were Haitian, but I talked to migrants from 6-7 countries including Cuba, Venezuela, Honduras, and more. When I went in up in a helicopter to survey the scene, migrants were literally being pushed over the border. Why is the administration not taking the proper steps to deter this situation? 400 more CBP agents are being sent to Del Rio and CBP is utilizing flights to repatriate Haitians back to their home country, but based on what's happening on the ground, this is not nearly enough to tamper the chaotic situation. This crisis has reached a boiling point—Del Rio officials are not equipped to handle nearly 15,000 migrants pouring into their community. What will it take to wake this Administration up to the realities of this crisis? There is a real human cost to Biden's weak border policies."

### Andrew Clyde (R-GA)

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: In response to Sec. Mayorkas September 19<sup>th</sup> tweet stating that the border is closed – "The nearly 1.5 million illegal migrants crossing the border this year seem to have a very different interpretation of the "a very clear message" that the Biden Administration claims they delivered."
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: "When will the Dems acknowledge the #BidenBorderCrisis? When the number of encounters doubles in one day? When they triple? Or when they quadruple? This year so far 1.5 million migrants have crossed our Southern border illegally!"

### Jake Laturner (R-KS)

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: "August marked another month of over 200K illegal immigrants crossing into the U.S. & over 12K migrants are still camped out under the bridge in Del Rio, TX. Where is our Border Czar VP Kamala Harris? Where is President Biden? This is a national security & humanitarian crisis."
- September 18<sup>th</sup>: "In just two days over 11,000 illegal immigrants have crossed over our southern border into Del Rio, Texas, and that number continues to grow. Border Patrol Agents are overwhelmed and holding facilities are at capacity. This is the reality of the #BidenBorderCrisis."
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: "Another 200,000+ illegal immigrants crossed our southern border in August—a 317% increase from last year! Since Feb 1, over 1,200,000 illegal immigrants have been apprehended at the border but President Biden continues to turn a blind eye to this full-blown crisis."
- September 15<sup>th</sup>: "While President Biden mandates vaccines for American citizens, thousands of unchecked illegal immigrants from around the world are entering our country every single day. This humanitarian and national security crisis is only getting worse."

### Kat Cammack (R-FL)

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: "Border security is national security, but this administration has done very little to deter immigrants from traveling to the U.S. Over 1.2 million immigrants have crossed the border since February 1st. Let that sink in. 1.2 million. This is the #BidenBorderCrisis."

## CHS Member Tweets Regarding Del Rio September 2021

- September 20<sup>th</sup>: “The #BidenBorderCrisis is growing worse in Del Rio. We've seen the drone footage and colleagues of mine have been on the ground showing our overworked CBP officials doing the best they can. We have got to get serious about securing our borders. This country depends on it.”
- September 17<sup>th</sup>: “This video was just sent to me by a CBP agent in Del Rio, TX. These border crossings are happening live, with many people coming from Haiti. This isn't immigration. If you aren't pissed, you're not paying attention.”
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: “Doubling in one day...this situation is out of control. CBP is already without the personnel and resources necessary to control the "new normal" surge, but now being faced with migrants who know they'll be admitted. And President Biden, meanwhile, can't acknowledge this crisis.”
- September 16<sup>th</sup>: “How many people is one million, you ask? Wyoming population: 580k, Vermont population: 623k, Alaska population: 724k, Montana population: 1.08M. More than 1.2M people have crossed the southern border since February. This is the #BidenBorderCrisis.”

<b>From:</b>	KRISHNASWAMI, CHARANYA (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	(b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	Murray, Royce (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: ACLU statement on Del Rio, Haitian expulsions
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/22 16:33:00
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

Thanks so much for sharing this, (b)(6) — much appreciated.

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**From:** (b)(6) (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 22, 2021 2:52 PM  
**To:** Murray, Royce (b)(6) KRISHNASWAMI, CHARANYA  
(b)(6)  
**Subject:** ACLU statement on Del Rio, Haitian expulsions

**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of DHS. DO NOT click links or open attachments unless you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your component SOC with questions or concerns.

Hope you're both doing okay. The ACLU just issued the statement below, I wanted to share in case helpful.

**ACLU Condemns Biden Administration's Deplorable Treatment of Haitian Migrants and Reiterates Call to Immediately End Title 42 and Overhaul CBP**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 22, 2021

CONTACT: Analise Ortiz, ACLU, [aortiz1@aclu.org](mailto:aortiz1@aclu.org), 480-709-0503

WASHINGTON — In light of the inhumane treatment of Haitian migrants and asylum-seekers at the border, the American Civil Liberties Union is reiterating its call for the Biden administration to immediately end Title 42 and overhaul U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Since March 2020, the U.S. government has turned people away at the border using Title 42, a purported public health policy, as a tool to justify mass deportations of people seeking asylum and other migrants.

The horrifying videos of U.S. horse-mounted Border Patrol agents charging toward Haitian migrants in Del Rio, Texas is the latest in a line of human rights abuses resulting from the Biden administration's continuation of Trump-era border policies and the failure to address CBP's culture of abuse.



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ACLU\_national-logo\_Blue-EmailSignature

<b>Sender:</b>	KRISHNASWAMI, CHARANYA (b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6) Murray Royce /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Sent Date:</b>	2021/09/22 16:37:01
<b>Delivered Date:</b>	2021/09/22 16:33:00

<b>From:</b>	White House Press Office (b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	REZMOVIC, JEFFREY / (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki, September 22, 2021
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/22 18:19:59
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

The White House Logo

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 22, 2021

**Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki, September 22, 2021**

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

2:08 P.M. EDT

MS. PSAKI: Hi, everyone. Okay, today, the administration announced a historic new donation in the global fight to defeat COVID-19. President Biden announced that the United States is purchasing an additional half a billion Pfizer vaccines to donate to low- and lower-middle income countries around the world.

Before today, the United States had already committed to donating over 600 million vaccine doses to the world. That includes 500 million Pfizer doses that we purchased earlier this summer to donate to 100 countries in need -- the largest donation of COVID-19 vaccines by a



single country ever.

Overall, we have now shipped nearly 160 million of these doses to 100 countries around the world -- from Peru to Pakistan, Sri Lanka to Sudan, El Salvador to Ethiopia.

To put this in perspective, the United States has now delivered more free doses than every other country in the world combined. Millions more get shipped each week. And importantly, our donations come with zero strings attached.

Today's announcement brings our total to over 1.1 [billion] vaccines donated to the world to - overall. And we're building from here. This is obviously a huge commitment.

And another piece to put it in perspective: One shots here -- for every shot we are delivering here, we are giving -- or we are committing three shots to the rest of the world.

This commitment also comes as part of a Joint EU/U.S. Vaccine Sharing Commitment that the United States and Europe will share doses globally to advance -- enhance vaccination rates, with a priority on sharing through COVAX and improving vaccination rates urgently in low- and middle-income countries. We welcome the EU's announcement today that they will donate over 500 million doses. This is in addition to the doses we have financed through COVAX.

And these announcements came as part of today's, of course, summit -- Global COVID-19 Summit -- which gathered together -- convened heads of state and leaders from over 100 countries.

Let's see. With that -- I just also wanted to also note the Vice President also spoke just recently at the summit. And she announced that the U.S. is contributing at least \$250 million to establish a new Global Health Security Financial Intermediary Fund at the World Bank to coalesce resources for pandemic preparedness.

With that, why don't you kick us off.

Q Thanks. Media on the border have reported that many Haitians are being released into the United States. Can you clarify why they're not being placed on expulsion flights to Haiti? And does the administration have any concern that these releases undercut the public messaging that Haitians should not come to the border?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me explain to a little bit of how the process works. So, DHS -- the

Department of Homeland Security -- continues to expel migrants under Title -- CDC's Title 42 authority. Those who cannot be expelled -- and this has been the case and been our policy and process for migrants coming from any country around the world -- under Title 42, and who do not have a legal basis to remain, are placed in either expedited -- or a form of removal proceedings. And individuals who are not immediately removed are either placed in an alternative to detention or transported to an ICE facility.

If they are placed in an alternative to detention, there's also a process required -- a legal document -- a document they would have. As a part of that process, Border Patrol agents collect biometric and biographic information: fingerprints, photos, phone numbers, and an address in the United States, and also run a background check as a part of the process.

And those who do not report, like anyone who's in our country without legal status, are subject to removal by ICE.

I give you all of that to understand the different steps in the process. Obviously, there are flights. We need to have enough flights to transport individuals to Haiti or to other countries. And there are a range of flights, as you know, that are going to different parts of the world, depending. And those are in process.

So if we're not -- if there isn't a flight ready yet, those are individuals -- those individuals may be placed in alternatives to detention. And there, as I noted, is this mechanism where these documents are required.

Q And could you offer any further details on the call that happened late this morning between President Biden and President Macron? How long did it last?

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q How was the tone? What -- how much -- you know, there was quite a bit of detail in the readout of plans for the meeting. How much of that was worked out beforehand, before the presidents even got together?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Well, as we've noted in the past -- to take your last question first -- there have been ongoing discussions and engagements at a variety of levels between the United States and France. So, certainly, the possibility of a meeting was something that was naturally discussed in advance, but also natural for the President to raise that and discuss it at the leader level.

In terms of the tone of the call: It was friendly. It was one where -- we're hopeful and the President is hopeful this is a step in returning to normal in a long, important, abiding relationship that the United States has with France.

It was about 30 minutes long. As we noted in the readout and as you said, it was extensive. But part of the -- and during the conversation, the President reaffirmed the strategic importance of France -- French and European engagement, I should say, in the Indo-Pacific region -- something that we look forward to continuing to work with them on.

And as we said in the readout, the French ambassador will return to Washington next week, and he will then start intensive work with U.S. officials. So that will be part of the ongoing next steps that we go from here.

And as we also noted, they will meet in Europe at the end of October.

Q And if I may just quickly follow up --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- on that. Boris Johnson, earlier today, dismissed French anger over the submarine deal, saying that French officials should "get a grip." Substantively, does the administration agree with the Prime Minister's criticism that the French had failed to acknowledge the value of AUKUS and the submarine deal to global security?

And then, secondly, is calling on the French to "get a grip" helpful at this point?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I can only speak for our relationship with the French and our relationship with the United Kingdom. And I will say that the President during this call, as we said in the readout, acknowledged that there could be more of a -- there could have been more discussion in advance of the announcement. And that was an important -- an important message for him to convey during that conversation.

So I can't speak to the comments, and whether they're constructive or not, from other countries.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. A follow-up on immigration, and then I have one on the schedule today. So, Secretary Mayorkas has now been asked twice on the Hill and he's not been able to provide

an answer to this. So I want to ask you, do you have the numbers: How many Haitians have been deported? How many have been processed? And how many have been allowed to stay in the United States?

MS. PSAKI: I certainly understand why you're asking, and understand why people have been asking Secretary Mayorkas. Those are numbers that are -- the Sec- -- the Department of Homeland Security would have the most up-to-date numbers.

Q But why is it so hard to keep track of a simple number like that? Why can't you give it? Why can't he give it? It's been -- two days now he's been asked that.

MS. PSAKI: I'm certain they will provide it. It's an absolutely fair question to ask. And I'm certain he just wanted to have the most up-to-date numbers to provide.

Q On the campaign trail, then-candidate, now-President Biden said, quote, "We're going to restore our moral standing in the world and our historic role as the safe haven for refugees and asylum-seekers." How does what's happening on the border right now with Haitian refugees square with that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, which aspect of what's happening at the border?

Q What's happening with the Haitians.

MS. PSAKI: Do you mean the photos we've seen?

Q Them being sent back --

MS. PSAKI: Or do you mean --

Q -- the photos. Yeah. Them not --

MS. PSAKI: Well -- well, first, we understand and agree that this has been an incredibly heart-wrenching issue. We've watched the photos of Haitians gathering under a bridge, many with families, and the horrific video of the CBP officers on horse -- on horses using brutal and inappropriate measures against innocent people.

I think it's important to take -- to address that and separately address what our immigration policies are, and understand that people are combining them. But that's why I asked that question.

I would also reiterate that there's an investigation that will be completed by next week -- which the Secretary confirmed -- that will determine the next steps on both policy and personnel. All important questions people are asking. And in the interim, those individuals were placed on administration -- administrative leave and will not be interacting with any migrants.

So, as it relates to those photos and that horrific video, we're not going to stand for that kind of inhumane treatment. And obviously, we want this investigation to be completed rapidly.

I will say, on the broader question you were asking: The President remains committed to putting in place a humane and orderly immigration system that includes an established and efficient process for applying for asylum, that includes a range of programs for individuals to apply to stay in the United States. That requires Congress acting, and it requires also health conditions improving as we are in the middle of a pandemic. And we are continuing to expel people coming from a range of countries, as we are continuing to apply Title 42, because there is a global pandemic that is ongoing.

So, I would think it's important to note that our policies, our border restrictions are being applied not just to Haitians, but to people who are coming irregularly to migrate to the country from anywhere. Ninety thousand -- more than ninety thousand people were expelled in August. That was even before what we've seen in the troubling photos under the bridge.

We are applying immigration laws. We are applying what are -- what are border requirements. And we are applying Title 42, which, again, is a health -- a health application, given we're in a global pandemic.

Q And just quickly on the schedule today, with all the Democrats that are here: Would you describe where we are at on the President's economic plan as a make-or-break moment?

MS. PSAKI: I would never describe it that way. But I -- well, I would say, look, this is an important moment where we're in the -- in a pivotal period of our negotiations and discussions. And we always knew and have always known that as we get close to points where there are votes called or where there are key moments that Congress has on the calendar, that, you know, there needs to be deeper engagement by the President -- that's what you're seeing happen today.

As you've seen in our announcement of his schedule, he's meeting not just with leadership; he's also meeting with members of a range of caucuses across a broad spectrum of beliefs in

the Democratic Party. And he sees his role as uniting and as working to bring together people over common agreement on where -- and on a path forward. And that's his objective.

So, yes, these meetings are important. He's looking forward to hearing from people and looking forward to playing a role in bringing people together over achieving our shared goal of lowering costs for people and making the tax system more fair.

Q Jen, the border?

MS. PSAKI: Oh, go ahead. Go ahead, April. And then I'll go --

Q Jen, just bear with me because there are a lot of moving parts on this issue.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q Members of the Congressional Black Caucus were here today meeting with the national security team, Cedric Richmond, and Susan Rice. Can you give us an update -- because they were talking about Haiti, the immigration issue at the border. Could you give us an update on that?

And what is expected for tomorrow's meeting with civil rights leaders, be it teleconference or what have you, with White House officials?

MS. PSAKI: Just so I -- what do you mean by "an update," exactly? An update on what happened in the meeting?

Q Can you tell us what happened in the meeting, what was given to them, what did they ask for? Because Black leaders are making big asks of this crisis moment.

MS. PSAKI: What -- tell me more about what you think they're asking for.

Q Okay, what they're asking for -- asylum process, what does that look like? Reverend Al Sharpton is going to the border tomorrow to see what that looks like, if people are actually being able to get asylum who's here.

Also, you talked about the condemnation of what the Patrol agents were doing with the reins or whip, whatever, with the intent to lash, to hurt people, to keep them away from the border. They want to know is that practice going to still be in place -- horses and the lashing, those kinds of issues.

MS. PSAKI: So I just wanted to have clarity on exactly what you were asking about, April; that's it.

On the second piece, there is nex- -- there is an investigation that is ongoing that the Secretary of Homeland Security has made clear he wants to happen quickly, and he wants the outcome to be done by next week.

Once that process is concluded, that will be a deter- -- that will help be a determinant in any policy decisions and personnel decisions both. All important questions. I'm sure that was what was conveyed as well.

On the first part, I think wh- -- in the answer I gave just a few minutes ago here, I think what we are conveying to anyone who are our partners -- whether they are civil rights leaders, members of the CBC, and others who have important questions here -- is how outraged we also are by these photos in this video, our commitment to this investigation, but also how our immigration processing system works.

And in response to Aamer's question before, what I tried to lay out is what happens, right? No matter where you are coming from, if you are irregularly migrating, we are still applying Title 42 because we are in the middle of a public health crisis. This is what is conveyed to anyone who has questions.

Those individuals who are eligible to stay in the United States through -- through a range of our programs that -- they would be allowed to stay in the United States through a range of our programs.

If they are -- there are some who are placed into removal processes where they also can make the case, whether it's fear or fear of returning back to countries, et cetera. They will go through the process as well.

So, I'm sure what they are doing is explaining exactly what our immigration processes are and reiterating, as well, our outrage at the photos in the video.

Q So -- but I -- bear with me because this is moving pieces -- but with asylum, there are people -- advocates, immigration advocates, especially for advocating for the Haitian migrants right now that are saying that this administration is breaking U.N. policies and its own policies by moving people out before allowing them to ask for asylum. Is that the case?

MS. PSAKI: First of all, April, what we are doing: One, Haiti has Temporary Protected Status for people who arrived here before July 29th. That is not a status that most other people who are migrat- -- irregularly migrating from other countries have.

As individuals -- as we go through this process, as I outlined just a few minutes ago, individuals who cannot be expelled under Title 42 -- a range of reasons why they not -- may not be able to be -- those individuals are placed into removal proceedings. That is where the process would take place, where they would apply for a variety of programs. While they're in that process, they are required to also provide biometric and biographic information and data.

So, that's how the process works. What is important for people to know and understand is that this is how our immigration and border requirements apply to everyone, whether they're coming from Haiti or any country in South or Central America.

Q But you have Africans as well that -- you said there were people from other places, but you have Africans -- Cameroonians, Ugandans, and Senegalese -- who are coming to that border as well. What happens with them as they are looking for asylum? Do you lump them into the same category with the Haitians that are at the border, be it Del Rio or wherever along the border?

MS. PSAKI: I think the point I'm making, April -- and then we just have to move on --

Q Yes. I'm good with that.

MS. PSAKI: -- to get to more people -- is that anyone who's coming from anywhere, if there's Temporary Protected Status for their country, as there are for Haitians who arrived before July, they can apply through that program.

If they're coming from other countries where we don't have that status, then they are expelled according to Title 42. If they are not -- if they're -- can't be expelled according to Title 42, they're placed in expedited removal or in alternatives to detention no matter what country they're coming from.

Go ahead, Jeff.

Q Thank you. Going back to the phone call this morning, briefly, with the French President, did President Biden apologize to Emmanuel Macron?



MS. PSAKI: He acknowledged that there could have been greater consultation. And the call, again, as I stated earlier, was a friendly call, and there was agreement that we wanted to move forward in our relationship.

Q The French translation said that open consultation, quote, “would have made it possible to avoid the situation.” The English translation said, “the situation would have benefited from open consultation.” So, similar, but not entirely the same. So did the President apologize to his French friend?

MS. PSAKI: He acknowledged there could have been greater consultation. But again, this call was really focused on the path forward and returning back to normal and the important work we have to do with the French ahead.

Q Was the President using this as a learning point, perhaps? Who does he believe -- or should he have been more aware of the potential fallout from this? Has he had conversations with any staff members, like the Secretary of State or the National Security Advisor, about exactly how this breakdown happened?

MS. PSAKI: We always look to assess how we can make improvements to how we do consultations, and, certainly, they'll apply -- and that -- part of that happens through conversations with members of his national security team, and we'll work to apply those moving forward.

Q Does he hold Jake Sullivan responsible for this?

MS. PSAKI: He certainly doesn't hold anyone -- he holds himself responsible, and, certainly, though, he has a responsibility to talk to his team always about how we can best manage our diplomatic relationships, and that's what he does in any scenario.

Q One more small question --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q -- on the meetings this afternoon. On the price tag: Is the President still committed to a \$3.5 trillion price tag, or does he believe now that more flexibility on that number is warranted?

MS. PSAKI: Well, even before today or before this week, the President has always been open to negotiations and discussions and knew that he was not going to be, alone, able to wave a

magic wand and pass a proposal, right?

So, part of the objective today, while he's meeting -- as he's meeting with a range of members with a range of viewpoints -- which we welcome -- is to see where people are and work to see how we can get this across the finish line moving forward.

What he's encouraged by is the fact that there is actually -- I know we focus a lot, understandably, on areas of disagreement -- there's a lot of agreement -- a lot of agreement on lowering costs for American families, on making sure we're investing now in addressing the climate crisis, in making the tax system more fair. There's a lot of agreement on that.

And there's -- now it's a point where we need to figure out what the path forward is. The President is going to play a role in, hopefully, uniting people around the next steps.

Go ahead.

Q Just to follow up again on the French. You said in the statement that there will be a meeting in late October. Is that in France? Is that on the sidelines of the G20 or the COP26?

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are some international forums that are happening next month that might bring the President to Europe. I don't have any formal announcements yet to make. But to your question, we're still finalizing what it looks like exactly.

Q Democratic negotiators on the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act say the bipartisan talks are dead. Is that the view of the White House? And any response to this announcement, that it's apparently over?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I'd also say there was a statement put out by Senator Booker, who is a key - - I think you were referencing that -- I think that was the statement you were referencing.

So, I would say that, first, the President is -- and everyone in the administration -- we have strong s- -- we have been strongly supportive of Senator Booker and Representative Bass in their efforts, and we're greatly appreciative of their efforts, which we consider to be ongoing.

Unfortunately, Republicans rejected reforms that even the previous President had supported and refused to engage on key issues that many in law enforcement were willing to address.

And so, we are disappointed; the President is disappointed. Even after Senator Booker and Representative Backs [sic] -- Bass did yeoman's work, even after they worked to secure law

enforcement support and were willing -- showed they were willing to find consensus.

So, yes, we acknowledge, of course, what the negotiators have conveyed publicly at this point in time. I can convey to you that in the coming weeks, we're going to consult -- the President - - we will all -- our team will consult with members of Congress, the law enforcement civil rights communities, and victims' families to discuss a path forward, including potential executive actions the President can take to ensure we live up to the American ideal of equality and justice under law.

Q And on the situation on the southern border: The meeting today with members of the CBC, the Vice President talked to the Homeland Security Secretary to express concern. How often does this get to the President? Does he get briefed on these situations, or is he just getting it in news reports?

MS. PSAKI: Of course, he gets briefed on them -- absolutely -- by his team.

Q Okay. Well, to the point, then, we were trying to ask him about yesterday: What is his impression of this situation down there? What does he make of how those Border Patrol agents were -- seemed to be interacting with these migrants? And, you know, where is he on dealing with these wide range of immigration issues that continue to challenge this government?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Ed, on the subject of the video footage and the photos, the President was horrified by that, just as we all were. He, of course, received a briefing, an update from his national security team on the efforts by the Secretary of Homeland Security to launch an investigation and one that he would like to see concluded rapidly.

As it relates to our efforts to implement our immigration laws and border requirements, the President is quite hopeful, as he conveyed on his first day in office when he introduced an immigration bill, that we can take steps to put in place a more humane, a more orderly system, especially after a very broken one over the last several years, that has better asylum processing, that has a more -- a better system and a range of programs individuals can apply to.

The President also believes and knows, as we all do, we're in the middle of a global pandemic and we need to continue to administer Title 42, which expels individuals who come to the border.

So, he is horrified by the photos and the footage. He is also committed to implementing and

abiding by our laws.

Q And what is your understanding of what transpired in the Oval Office yesterday when we were all in there trying to hear from the President and the Prime Minister?

MS. PSAKI: Which aspect?

Q Well, the British Prime Minister in the American Oval Office called on British reporters, and then, when American reporters tried to call on the American President, we were escorted out -- we'll put it that way.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think, in that circumstance -- and I think our relationship with the United Kingdom and with Prime Minister Johnson is so strong and abiding, we will be able to move forward beyond this -- but he called on individuals from his press corps without alerting us to that intention in advance.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Jen. Just following up on this very basic, but very important question. You're telling us that the DHS chief has the most recent numbers about how many of these Haitians under the bridge have been sent back and how many have been released into the U.S. The DHS chief is telling us that he doesn't know. So, who else can we ask?

MS. PSAKI: You can certainly ask the Department of Homeland Security. I am confident, Peter --

Q The chief says he doesn't know.

MS. PSAKI: I am confident he wanted to have the most up-to-date numbers, and we will venture to get you those, I promise you, this afternoon.

Q Is this an issue of not knowing, or is this an issue of a lot more people are being released into the U.S. than are being sent out?

MS. PSAKI: That is certainly not the issue. First, I think it's important to reiterate what I conveyed earlier about what the actual process is: Individuals are expelled under Title 42. If they can't be expelled under Title 42, they are put into a removal process. If they're put into a removal process, they're either transported to an ICE facility or released with a legal document. That legal document includes fingerprints, photos, phone numbers, an address in

the United States, and a background check. That's the process that transpires. That's a part of our immigration process, regardless of where you're coming from.

Q And just because you keep using Title 42 to defend this administration's immigration policies: That is a Trump-era regulation. You guys came in saying that the Trump-era immigration policy was very inhumane.

MS. PSAKI: Title 42 is not an immigration policy; it is a -- it is a health authority, because we're in the middle of a pandemic. The Trump administration approach to immigration was inhumane and was immoral. That's why we need to put a new policy in place, and we need Congress to pass that policy.

Q Unified control -- Democratic control of Congress. Many months in office. You have not even tried.

MS. PSAKI: That's not actually true. There's been a --

Q Well --

MS. PSAKI: Peter, just to --

Q -- when's the vote?

MS. PSAKI: -- just factual here: --

Q Okay.

MS. PSAKI: -- there's been a bill proposed first day in office. Currently, it was proposed as a part of -- steps were proposed as part of the reconciliation process. The parliamentarian rejected that proposal. They're going back and proposing new options. The President supports that. He would like to see immigration reform pass into law more humane processes.

Q Just one more. Has President Biden ever been to the southern border?

MS. PSAKI: In his life?

Q Yes.

MS. PSAKI: I will have to get -- look back in my history books and check the times he's been to the southern border. I'd be happy to.

Q We have been looking all morning and we cannot find any record of him visiting the border as President, Vice President, Senator, or even as a concerned citizen. Why would that be?

MS. PSAKI: I can check and see when the last time or when he may have been. But tell me more about why you're asking.

Q Because this is a President who makes a point when there are disasters in this country, like a wildfire or a hurricane, to go and see for himself firsthand what the needs are of the local community so that he can have an informed POV to make policy. Why doesn't he do that -- why doesn't he go down to Del Rio, Texas, and see what's going on?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first of all, Peter, I think the situation at the border is the result of a broken system. And the President certainly relies on his experience.

So, whether it was the work he did to address root causes as Vice President, his efforts when he was in the Senate to support comprehensive immigration reform -- steps that at a time were done -- being done and work toward in a bipartisan way -- something that certainly we think should be the case today -- he uses all of his experiences to inform how he governs, how he approaches challenges. And certainly, he looks, again, at the last four years and the separation of children who were ripped from the arms of their parents as a way he does not want to proceed.

So, all of his experiences and his time in office -- whether Vice President or Senate -- inform his approach to issues.

Go ahead.

Q The Brazilian Health Minister tested positive for coronavirus. He shook hands and spent time with Boris Johnson on Monday. Boris Johnson spent time privately with President Biden yesterday in the Oval Office. Can you just give us a sense of the level of concern at the White House about that? What, if anything, has been done? How often the President gets tested? And any updates?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. The President is tested regularly. I think I conveyed to you he was tested last week. I can check if there's more -- a recent test over the last several days.

But as it relates to this specific incident, of course we take our protocols very seriously. White House protocols and his presidential travel protocols are based on CDC risk mitigation guidelines, and that includes the CDC definition of a “close contact” to determine when someone may be at higher risk for contracting COVID. Based on this definition and precautions put in place by our team and the U.N., we're not implementing any new protocols -- or new testing as it relates to those incidents.

Q There's nothing different -- there's nothing different that happened in the last 24 hours since he was with Boris Johnson because of his --

MS. PSAKI: Correct.

Q -- exposure?

MS. PSAKI: Correct.

Q Okay. Let me ask you about this meeting a little bit later today, if I can. First, does the President want a vote on both the reconciliation budget package -- or the budget reconciliation package and the bipartisan infrastructure package to take place on Monday?

MS. PSAKI: The President trusts the leadership of Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer, and certainly he'll work closely with them to get these across the finish line.

Q Who -- bottom line: Americans are watching this. Who needs to give here: the progressive Democrats or the moderate Democrats?

MS. PSAKI: Sometimes there's need for compromise from every end, but he'll know more after these discussions today, in the coming days.

Q So let me ask this then, if I can, Jen: So, the President he --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q -- he campaigned -- in his first months in office, he campaigned on this message of unity and competence; that he could make Washington work, that he would rebuild, revitalize these alliances. Now Americans are seeing headlines about Democrats divided about what they're going to do on this agenda. France is furious at the U.S. There's frustration among allies about Afghanistan. What should Americans make of that, given what they've seen in

recent weeks?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me take each of those issues. The President just had a friendly phone call with the President of France where they agreed to meet in October and continue close consultations and work together on a range of issues.

Q And where he acknowledged the failure -- right? -- that he should have communicated better in advance though.

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, I think, in terms of the level of American concerns, acknowledging there can be closer coordination and consultation, I don't think is going to be the height of concern for most of the American people. But anyone who's concerned about our relationship with France can rest assured that they had a friendly phone call and we have a path forward.

Q Poll numbers are reporting 3 percent --

MS. PSAKI: On the second --

Q -- which is why I ask --

MS. PSAKI: -- and the sec- -- on the second --

Q -- because Americans are expressing this concern.

MS. PSAKI: -- on the second piece, I would say: This is a messy sausage-making process. The President today -- what Americans should be encouraged by is the President is bringing people of a range of viewpoints on big, important packages that are going to make their lives better, here to the White House, to have a discussion about it. He's rolling up his sleeves. He's welcoming them to the Oval Office. He'll have some COVID-safe snacks, whatever may happen.

People should be encouraged by that. And that's the kind of President he is. He's going to be deeply engaged with getting bills and legislation across the finish line to make their lives better.

Q I guess then, just to punctuate that: Why do you think, in the most recent poll from Gallup, that 43 percent of Americans now approve of his handling of the job, which had been well above 50 percent only a matter of weeks ago? What do you think, in the eyes of Americans, has changed that you guys have not done well enough?



MS. PSAKI: Well, I think the country is going through a lot right now. And people are still under the threat of COVID; that is concerning to a lot of people. We see that in polls as well. Even as they approve of the President's handling of COVID, that's still something impacting people people's lives. There's a great deal of anxiety about that. We understand that.

But our objective is to keep pushing his agenda forward and keep making their lives better, and, you know, look at that over the long term.

Go ahead.

Q Jen, I was struck by what you said in response to Ed's question about what happened yesterday in the Oval Office.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

Q Can you shed a little bit more light on this? Did the President feel he was upstaged by the British Prime Minister yesterday?

MS. PSAKI: I think the President has not spent a moment worrying about it.

Q Can I ask you -- because there are so many issues that we have discussed here --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- that are of interest to the public -- everything from the collapse of the police reform negotiations on Capitol Hill today to the pivotal period we're in: Nine -- eight days before the end of the fiscal year and no deal yet to avoid a government shutdown a week from tomorrow. When can we expect to hear -- or when can we expect to have the opportunity to ask the President substantive, pointed questions about these matters in a way that he will elaborate on his views?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, the President knows that he was elected not to just get the pandemic under control and put people back to work, but protect our democracy and stand up for what's right and be transparent. And, certainly, part of that is engaging with all of you.

I would note that he answered questions 135 times leading up to September; three times last week. And he'll keep looking for forums to answer the questions from all of you -- something

that he sees as vitally important to our democracy.

Q But in this month of September, most of the occasions we've had have been fleeting. In fact, there are some occasions where he's only taken one question and walked away, and most of those occasions have occurred outside of this building.

So, when can we expect to have an opportunity to actually ask the President questions in a formal setting?

MS. PSAKI: Again, Steve, I'm not trying to diminish your ask for a formal press conference -- which certainly, I'm sure, we will have another one -- but I will convey to you that as it relates to providing information to the public, elevating the importance of the freedom of press to our democracy, that I don't know that the format, whether it is multiple shorter Q&As or a longer, formal press conference is at the top of the list of the American public's concern.

Go ahead.

Q We intend to raise the matters of concern to the public at those press conferences.

MS. PSAKI: As you have during 140 times you've asked the President questions.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. A couple to follow. On Macron first: The French had called for the cancellation of the EU-U.S. Trade and Tech Summit in Pittsburgh next week. After the phone call today, do you expect that to go forward?

MS. PSAKI: We're still -- our officials who are planning to attend are still planning to attend.

Q But no sense if the Europeans are?

MS. PSAKI: We're continuing to plan for an inaugural meeting of the -- of the group in Pittsburgh as a follow-on to the commitment made several months ago.

Q The readout said that the U.S. was committed to reinforcing its support for French counterterrorism operations. I'm wondering if that is sort of a broad, "We're allies and partners," or if that was, "We should read between the lines that that is some new commitment that we have given to the French," in terms of, like, tangible support.

MS. PSAKI: I would -- I would read it more as the former, in that they're an important partner in the Indo-Pacific, they're an important partner around the world.

And certainly, addressing the threat of terrorism that has metastasized and changed over the course of the last 20 years is a vital priority for us, as it is a vital priority to the French.

And as I noted, when the ambassador comes back, there will be consultations. Obviously, there'll be a meeting between President Biden and President Macron, and I'm sure they'll discuss this and a range of issues.

Q The Fed today shifted forward their projection of when the economy would be ready for a rate hike, which suggests economic strength, which I assume you'd be happy about. But, obviously, many Americans are still struggling. So, I wondered if you agree with that assessment from the Federal Reserve?

MS. PSAKI: We certainly agree with the -- the independence of the Federal Reserve and their right to make decisions it deems necessary on monetary policy.

I would note that, even just yesterday, the OECD projected 6 percent GDP growth -- certainly, a positive sign -- which is nearly double what was projected in December. And the OD -- OECD also increased its projection for U.S. GDP growth in 2022.

So, we've seen a number of positive signs as it relates to economic growth. That doesn't mean that every issue -- to your point -- every American is having as it relates to inequality or access is solved. It's not. But our focus and our policies is to address those over the long term.

Q And then one last one on the Congressional meetings today. What's sort of the format of them? You seem to have leaders coming in, then moderates, then progressives. Why isn't everybody in the same room? I mean, I think we've heard from all three of these people where they are, and it seems like you're kind of inviting an echo chamber rather than a chance for people to hash it out, with the President sort of playing moderator.

MS. PSAKI: Look, I think the President wants to hear from everybody on what they're most excited about, what concerns they may have. And he wants to play a role in hopefully unifying members of the party around the path forward. And he felt this was the most constructive format at this point.

I will tell you this is probably not going to be his last engagement with a single member of Congress in these important days forward.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. I wanted to ask -- just building on something -- did President Biden offer French President Macron anything, any commitments to make feelings feel a little better?

And then, in addition, did Macron ask for anything?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I can't -- I'll point you to the French to speak to President Macron. I would say that the -- the conversation was really about the path forward. And as I noted, the President acknowledged that greater consultation would have been helpful in this case. But it was about how to work together as we look ahead; it was not about offering a specific proposal or policy item.

Q Can I ask you about immigration? Now that the parliamentarian has ruled against including immigration in reconciliation -- and I recognize that Democrats are going to push for other avenues within reconciliation --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q But beyond reconciliation, what is the Biden administration's path forward for immigration? The President, as a candidate, made -- raised -- you know, campaigned on this issue. What can -- what type of relief is possible? And what can the Biden administration do to bring that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, I would say our current and immediate focus is on supporting the efforts of senators who have been vocal about their desire, as you said, to put forward alternative proposals to be considered by the parliamentarian and see where that goes.

There are a range of passionate leaders in the Senate, in the House who want to see immigration reform happen. And we will certainly continue to work with them to see what vehicle and path forward -- what that looks like. But I don't -- that's our next step right now -- is assessing -- is them putting forward an option for the parliamentarian to consider.

Go ahead.

Q Jen, back on the French call for a moment. Did the President seek or receive any clarity from President Macron on why the French wanted -- decided to recall the ambassador and take that step which had never been taken before?

And does the President himself think that that step was commensurate with the offense?

MS. PSAKI: You know, I think, Anne, as I -- as I've conveyed a little bit, the focus was really on the relationship moving forward. And as we noted in the readout, the French ambassador is returning later on this week. And the 30-minute call was really more about how we can work together in a substantive way on shared areas of interest.

Q So he's not worried that the -- Ambassador Étienne would be yanked again if the next thing doesn't go right?

MS. PSAKI: I think he has committed to working together to ensure there is a consultation moving forward -- close consultation, as is evidenced by their plans for a meeting in October.

Q And then, quickly on the coronavirus summit this morning. The President said rightly that the U.S. is a leader in vaccine donation. But, as you well know, there is criticism of the U.S. for the prospect of booster shots -- a third shot, in many cases -- for Americans before most in Africa have had one. Was that a topic of discussion? Why didn't we hear anything from the President or from the U.N. ambassador on that point today in their opener?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we're now donating three shots globally for every one shot we've put in the arm of an American. And our view continues to be that we can do both and it's a false choice. Our view also continues to be that, frankly, the rest of the world needs to step up and do more.

And now we're at the point where, of course, we've now committed to over 1.1 billion vaccines donated, but we're also committed to -- we also have a partnership with the Quad; obviously, they're meeting later this week -- to produce at least 1 billion doses.

Our work to boost vaccine manufacturing in South Africa is going to produce 500 million single-dose regimens in Africa, for Africa.

And we will continue to do more -- share doses, scale manufacturing, invest in vaccines abroad. You heard the President talk about that. But we also need the world to do more, especially developed economies that can do more to contribute to this effort to defeat the pandemic.

Go ahead. I'm sorry, Jeff, I'll come to you next.

Q Quick -- just following, Jen, on Anne's question there. You keep saying that the President will engage in deep consultations with the French. You could have said that in 1949 when the French first joined -- joined NATO.

So I'm trying to understand here what is different now, after this, than it was before. Is the President's vision here that you simply go back to the way things were, where clearly that consultation process failed? Or is the President's vision that you have a new project of some kind with the French that begins to make reparations for what they view as what they've lost?

MS. PSAKI: I think, David, it's more about, we've had a strong relationship for many decades. Of course, yes, there's been ups and downs in that relationship. But the President's objective is that we should go back to normal and that we should go back to a relationship where we work closely together on a range of issues facing the global community: addressing COVID, the global economy, security, the Indo-Pacific. And how we work together and those mechanisms we'll determine as we keep having close consultations and discussions moving forward.

Q One question on the Quad meeting which is coming up --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q -- on Friday. So, they'll have the Australians there, but then you'll also have India and Japan. Would you envision for them a similar kind of military role that you've now defined for -- with the Australians?

MS. PSAKI: AUKUS -- what would it become? JAUkus? JIAUKUS? (Laughter.)

Q Awkward AUKUS? I don't know. Something like that. Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: Look, I think, David, that the announcement of AUKUS last week was not meant to be an indication -- and I think this is a message the President also sent to his -- to Macron -- that there's no one else who will be involved in security in the Indo-Pacific. Of course, it's a topic of discussion, an important topic in conversations as it -- with the French, with a range of countries who have a direct interest in the region.

I can convey to you that we will have a preview call on the Quad meeting, which I know there's a lot of excitement about, for -- probably tomorrow, in advance of that meeting, where we'll go through more detail of the planned agenda for the meeting as well.

Go ahead, Jeff.

Q Jen, China's Evergrande agreed to settle interest payments on a domestic bond today. I know this is very wonky, but it's impacting --

MS. PSAKI: We love wonky in here.

Q -- the markets.

MS. PSAKI: Everyone's a nerd in here in some way. (Laughter.)

Q Is -- is the White House satisfied with that solution? And are -- do you have more concerns about contagion from that particular company?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I said the other day -- and I'm happy to talk to the Treasury team to see if there's anything more we can offer. Obviously, the majority of their business is in China or has been in China. And we, of course, closely monitor the markets and the impact on the global markets, which is something, certainly, the Treasury Department does. So, that's where we look and assess in terms of how it relates to the United States.

So, I don't have anything new to provide from here, but I'm happy to check with them if there's anything in addition.

Q All right. And just to follow up on the meetings this afternoon: Can you give us a sense of how President Biden plans to bridge those divides? I know he's going to listen. And I know you've talked about him wanting to hear from all sides and be more engaged. How does he get there? What does he do? What does he say? What does he give up?

MS. PSAKI: The meetings haven't happened yet.

Look, I think the President wants to play a role in talking and reminding people of what we have in common, how we can be united in making people's lives better in this country.

He understands -- and he's been a part of the Democratic Party for 50 years -- he understands there are disagreements -- some of those are on the margin, some of them are larger.

He's going to listen, he's going to engage, and he's going to, hopefully, play a constructive role as the leader of the party, as the President of the United States, on moving this important

agenda forward.

But it's hard for me to assess in advance of the meeting. Maybe we'll have more to say after they're over.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. On global vaccines, the administration has previously noted that there's been logistical challenges in getting vaccines out to the countries that are actually in need. Just with this latest round that you just announced today, has the administration adopted any new strategies for increasing the actual deployment of these vaccines, not just the procurement of them?

MS. PSAKI: Well, those cases -- I don't know if you're -- are you referring to any specific country, or just --

Q Just, in general, you all have noted that it is difficult, in many cases --

MS. PSAKI: You're right. It has --

Q -- to get these on the ground. So --

MS. PSAKI: -- it has been. What is a good sign, I should say, is that because we've now distributed, donated vaccines to a range of countries around the world, we've been able to work through some of those regulatory, legal, logistical hurdles that have been -- have been challenges in some places.

There are requirements in some countries as well that they need -- they have needed to address in order to make it easier to donate vaccines, whether it's ability to transport or maybe they have regulatory requirements. But now that we've done rounds of donating 160 million doses to a range of countries in the world, it should be easier moving forward.

Q And building off that, is the -- are the places where these vaccines that you just announced going, are they the same range of countries that you all previously announced?

MS. PSAKI: Yeah, they are. So, we're going to donate these doses to the same 100 low-income countries as we previously announced the donation of the 500 million doses to in June.

So, specifically, that's 92 low- and middle-income countries, as defined by Gavi's COVAX



Advance Market Commitment; and eight -- and all African Union member states -- and eight additional countries to cover the African Union: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, the Seychelles, and Mauritius.

Q And then, quickly, just on police reform. You mentioned earlier that this is not going to be the end of the administration's efforts, but are we looking at an end of bipartisan efforts in this way? When Biden goes back on the Hill to talk with Democratic leadership and potentially taking executive action of his own, are we going to see another round of attempting to work with Republicans on this issue, or is this officially a place where Democrats just think they have to go it alone?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we're never going to close the door to bipartisanship. Obviously, they just made this announcement today. And we'll see, through consultations, what the best steps are moving forward. And, again, as I noted earlier, that includes leaving the door open to executive actions.

Go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. What's the level of concern right now at the White House about the possibility of a government shutdown next week?

MS. PSAKI: Well, until -- until a CR has passed that funds the government, we'll certainly have a concern. But our goal and our focus is on preventing that from happening.

Obviously, the House passed the CR with -- including a raising the debt limit attached. The Senate could pass that today and we could all rest easy the government is not going to shut down. The American people could rest easy. We'll see what happens.

Q Has OMB started working on contingency plans for that possibility of a shutdown?

MS. PSAKI: They're always working on contingency plans. But our focus is on preventing it from happening.

Go ahead.

Q Jen, I spoke with several organizations that have been helping Haitian migrants, and they're saying that even though you have been saying that the U.S. is going to continue with the immigration policies that we have, that it's not a fair process. And for a country that talks about racial justice in this country, that the policies aren't applied aptly.

And so, I asked them what are some things that they were talking about, specifically on the meter -- on metering. Is the administration going to put less, sometimes, concentration on guns, ammunition, and border patrols, and also put people in places that can help push the process along? Some of them say that their numbers -- they get their numbers and they're bypassed or that they're just skipped over or not chosen at all. That was one of the issues that they have. That's the first questions that I had.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Well, first, I would say, one, as a part of our effort, we have surged resources, and we will continue to surge resources to help address the latter part of your question.

On the first part, the reason I went through what I did before about how our process works is to convey that this is how our application of our immigration laws, border requirements work no matter where you're coming from. And we had not -- we expelled more than 90,000 people in August -- that was prior to the gathering of Haitians under the bridge and all of the photos and the visuals that are so heartbreaking.

And as it relates to policies -- also a very good question -- as we go through this investigative - - investigation to these two border -- to these Border Patrol officials, who obviously were in this horrific video, that will impact -- it could impact policies. It could impact, certainly, personnel.

We'll let that process expeditiously conclude and then we'll -- I'll defer to the Department of Homeland Security on what that impact will be.

Q And then a question on police reform. Derrick Johnson, NAACP President, said -- in reference to politicians that have really not helped in this effort -- he said that, "They have chosen to stand with those who have lynched the very people they are meant to protect and serve." And it's "disheartening that there is a lack of courage and bravery to bring about true reform."

And I know you asked -- been asked questions over and over about police reform and how realistic we're actually going to see this, but is there any fear that the very people that the President has brought into these meetings over and over on police reform -- many of them are now not having faith in what can really happen?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not sure I totally understand your question.

Q Did -- the President has had meetings with Derrick Johnson.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q He's had meetings with the National Urban League, even Reverend Al Sharpton. And we're seeing quotes by them now, saying how they don't even believe that this administration or those who are working --

MS. PSAKI: Critical of the President on police reform?

Q Absolutely.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I -- I just was trying to understand your question.

Q Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. PSAKI: I would say, in Senator Booker's statement and the statements and comments of the negotiators, they've been clear about the support of this administration. As these negotiators were attempting to come to an agreement that had to meet the high bar that they had, they asked us to leave them space for their -- those negotiations to take place, and that's exactly what we did. And we supported them behind the scenes in any way that they asked for.

But we also agree that it's unfortunate and disappointing that Republicans rejected reforms that even the President had supported, and refused to engage on key issues that many in law enforcement were willing to address. We agree that's incredibly disappointing. And these reforms are long overdue, and that certainly is the President's point of view.

Go ahead, Francesca. And then I think I got to wrap it up here in a minute.

Q Thank you, Jen. Two on the travel restrictions.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q Are there any circumstances in which that early November vaccine mandate that the White House announced this week that that would slip a couple weeks, maybe into December or potentially into early next year?

MS. PSAKI: On what basis?

Q Well, that's what I'm asking. Are you -- is the White House committed to the early November deadline? Because early November is a vague --

MS. PSAKI: Well, we were in control -- we were in control of when we announced it would be implemented. Right? And we announced early November.

Q Okay. And so, you are committed to early November, specifically?

MS. PSAKI: We announced it would be implemented in early November. That's what we're planning on.

Q Okay. And then, as far as unvaccinated foreign nationals go, is the White -- is there any procedure that the White House might be considering for those people to be able to enter the country still, given that -- that many of those countries, those people may not have access to vaccines?

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are going to be certain cases where people may not have access, and we will deal with those accordingly. And we will have some exceptions that will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Thank you, everyone.

Q (Cross-talk.)

MS. PSAKI: We'll do this again tomorrow. Thanks, every- --

Q Can you take some from the backrows next time?

MS. PSAKI: Absolutely. We'll start in the back next time.

Q That would be awesome. Thank you.

2:59 P.M. EDT

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<b>Sender:</b>	White House Press Office (b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	REZMOVIC, JEFFREY /o (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Sent Date:</b>	2021/09/22 18:19:46
<b>Delivered Date:</b>	2021/09/22 18:19:59

<b>From:</b>	ESPINOSA, MARSHA /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	Mayorkas, Alejandro /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>CC:</b>	HIGGINS, JENNIFER /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
	REZMOVIC, JEFFREY /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
	ULLOA, ISABELLA /o=(b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	FW: KTSM: Photographer behind controversial photos speaks exclusively to KTSM
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/24 12:05:33
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

**KTSM: Photographer behind controversial photos speaks exclusively to KTSM (Natassia Paloma)**

EL PASO, Texas (KTSM) – The photographer behind images depicting Border Patrol agents on horseback told KTSM things are not exactly what they seem when it comes to the photos.

The photographs, which were taken Sunday, appear to show agents on horses with a whip in hand. The photos caused outrage because from certain angles, it appears to show Border Patrol whipping migrants, but photographer Paul Ratje said he and his colleagues never saw agents whipping anyone.

“Some of the Haitian men started running, trying to go around the horses,” Ratje said.

Ratje is a photographer based in Las Cruces and has been in Del Rio since Friday. He said took the photographs from the Mexican side.

“I’ve never seen them whip anyone,” Ratje said. “He was swinging it, but it can be misconstrued when you’re looking at the picture.”

The photos drew immense criticism from many on social media and the White House said it will investigate.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki called images “horrific.”

Vice President Kamala Harris was also asked about the photos, and called them deeply troubling. Harris also said there was a thorough investigation into how agents are treating migrants.

###

<b>Sender:</b>	ESPINOSA, MARSHA /o=Exch (b)(6)	(b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	Mayorkas, Alejandro /o=Exch (b)(6) HIGGINS, JENNIFER /o=Exch (b)(6) REZMOVIC, JEFFREY /o=Exch (b)(6) ULLOA, ISABELLA /o=Exch (b)(6)	(b)(6)
<b>Sent Date:</b>	2021/09/24 12:05:32	
<b>Delivered Date:</b>	2021/09/24 12:05:33	

<b>From:</b>	YEE, BRITTON / (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6) OPE_Tasking / (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>CC:</b>	OSLLE_Tasking / (b)(6) (b)(6) OSLLE Team / (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	Fwd: SIGNIFICANT CORRESPONDENCE REPORT: 09.24.21
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/24 16:10:12
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

OSLLE has no comments.

**From:** (b)(6) (b)(6)  
**Sent:** Friday, September 24, 2021 3:57 PM  
**To:** LAWRENCE, JAMIE; YEE, BRITTON; FONG, HEATHER; Wollenhaupt, Charles L; Silas, Traci; Miron, Mike; MAYER, JASON; Bynum, Brandi; Streeter, Ryan; Hanson-Takyi, Julia; Washington, Karinda; HINKEN, ANNA; CONOVER, GARRET  
**Cc:** OPE\_Tasking  
**Subject:** SIGNIFICANT CORRESPONDENCE REPORT: 09.24.21

Good afternoon All,

Please see the attached ESEC Significant Correspondence Report for correspondence received by the Department in the prior 24 hours. ESEC request your review and comment on any letter that your office has an interest in due to a related stakeholder communication, upcoming outreach/OPE engagement, or an S1 engagement/meeting event – specifically in regard to the following:

1. Proposed signatory recommendation
2. Priority due dates(s) recommendation
3. Component lead recommendation

Please return your recommendations to OPE\_Tasking by **9:30AM on Monday, September 27.**

Please note: Negative responses are required.



Best,

(b)(6)

Jr. Analyst

Contractor- Immersion Consulting, LLC.

Office of Partnership and Engagement (OPE)

U.S Department of Homeland Security

(b)(6)

(202) 923-6143

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**From:** Clark, Nancy (b)(6)

**Sent:** Friday, September 24, 2021 3:52 PM

**To:** Front Office Review CC (b)(6)

**Cc:** Fauquet, Stephanie (b)(6) ESEC-External Liaison <ESEC-

(b)(6) (b)(6) Blackwell, Juliana

(b)(6) OPE\_Tasking (b)(6) CARNES, ALEXANDRA

(b)(6) GEER, HARLAN (b)(6) WU, MIKE

(b)(6) SEYLER-SCHMIDT, GUSTAV (b)(6) BROOKS,

REBECCA (b)(6) FALLON, KATHLEEN (b)(6)

REZMOVIC, JEFFREY (b)(6) ULLOA, ISABELLA (b)(6)

O'CONNOR, KIMBERLY (b)(6) BRAUN, JACOB (b)(6)

LUGO, ALICE (b)(6) HIMMEL, CHLOE (b)(6) HIGGINS,

JENNIFER (b)(6) CALLAHAN, MARY ELLEN (b)(6)

**Subject:** SIGNIFICANT CORRESPONDENCE REPORT: 09.24.21

Attached for your review is today's significant correspondence report. Based on our review and standard business practices, ESEC recommends tasking these letters to the below Components, with recommended signature level and priority. We ask that counselors provide any substantive guidance on letter assignment (in bullet format), response messaging, and letter priority. OLA and OPE should provide input on priority and signature levels if incorrect. We are asking for this input by **10 am Monday morning. If no response the letter will be tasked as reflected here.**

Control Number	Date Received	To	From	Summary	Counselor	Tasked	Signature Level	Pr Le
1221478 21-3704	09.24.21	S1	Sen. Hagerty	Writes to urge that, in the event of a government shutdown, to designate all border security and immigration-enforcement personnel, including CBP Border Patrol	(b)(5)			

				and ICE deportation officers, as essential employees who may continue to work.
1221511 21-3992	09.24.21	POTUS	Judith Browne Dianis Advancement Project	Writes to offer the Administration counsel on immigration practices and policies that would benefit migrants fleeing to the U.S.
1221514 21-3993	09.24.21	S1	Multi-State Attorney General's	Writes urging the Administration to be more compassionate in its handling of Haitian refugees at the border.
1221510 21-3706	09.24.21	S1	Sen. Moran	Writes to express my strong concerns with the ongoing and growing humanitarian and national security crisis at our southern border.

(b)(5)

Please submit any guidance to ESEC-External, Stephanie Fauquet, and Juliana Blackwell, all are copied on this e-mail.

**Definitions of Priority:**

Urgent/High: 14 Business Days to Final  
 Routine: 30 Business Days to Final

Is Interim Necessary (YES/NO)? 1 Business Day.

Regards,

(b)(6)

Office of the Executive Secretary  
Office of the Secretary  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Desk: 202-282-9397  
Cell: 202-868-2332

(b)(6)

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<b>Sender:</b>	YEE, BRITTON / (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6) (b)(6) OPE_Tasking / (b)(6) (b)(6) OSLLE_Tasking / (b)(6) (b)(6) OSLLE Team / (b)(6) (b)(6)
<b>Sent Date:</b>	2021/09/24 16:10:09
<b>Delivered Date:</b>	2021/09/24 16:10:12

<b>From:</b>	White House Press Office (b)(6)
<b>To:</b>	REZMOVIC, JEFFREY /o= (b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, September 24, 2021
<b>Date:</b>	2021/09/24 18:44:42
<b>Priority:</b>	Normal
<b>Type:</b>	Note

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WASHINGTON

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 24, 2021

**Press Briefing by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, September 24, 2021**

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

2:34 P.M. EDT

MS. PSAKI: Hi, everyone. Okay. We're thrilled to have Secretary Mayorkas join us here today. He's going to be making some brief comments providing you an update, and we'll take as many questions as we can. I would just be mindful of your colleagues so we can get around to as many as possible.

With that, I'll turn it over to Secretary Mayorkas.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you very much. And good afternoon, everyone. Less than one week ago, there were approximately 15,000 migrants in Del Rio, Texas, the great majority of whom were Haitian nationals. This was the result of an unprecedented movement of a very large number of people traveling to a single point of the border within a matter of a few days.

We responded with a surge of resources to address the humanitarian needs of the individuals, many of whom include families with young children.

We also applied our months-long standard operating procedures at the border, which we have been applying to all migrants encountered at the border during this very challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As of this morning, there are no longer any migrants in the camp underneath the Del Rio International Bridge. I will walk through what we have done, how we have done it; explain the processes; and provide data that you have requested.

But first, I want to make one important point. In the midst of meeting these challenges, we -- our entire nation -- saw horrifying images that do not reflect who we are, who we aspire to be, or the integrity and values of our truly heroic personnel in the Department of Homeland Security.

The investigation into what occurred has not yet concluded. We know that those images painfully conjured up the worst elements of our nation's ongoing battle against systemic racism.

We have been swift and thorough in our response. First, we immediately contacted the Office of Inspector General and launched an investigation into the events that were captured in the disturbing images of horse patrol units.

We ceased the use of horse patrol units in the area. The agents involved in these incidents have been assigned to administrative duties and are not interacting with migrants while the investigation is ongoing.

I directed the personnel from the CBP Office of Professional Responsibility to be on site in Del Rio full-time to ensure adherence to the policies, training, and values of our department. The highest levels of the CBP Office of Professional Responsibility are leading the investigation, which will conclude quickly. The results of the investigation I will make public.

The actions that are taken as a -- are as a result of the -- what we have seen in those images. The investigation will be compelled -- the results will be compelled by the facts that are adduced and nothing less.

Let me be clear: The department does not tolerate any mistreatment of any migrant and will not tolerate any violation of its values, principles, and ethics.

Now I would like to turn to our operational response. DHS led the mobilization of a whole-of-government response to address the challenging situation in Del Rio. DHS immediately worked to address the acute humanitarian needs of the migrants themselves by partnering with federal and nongovernmental agencies and entities. We rapidly deployed basic services like drinking water, food, clothing, and portable toilets.

I am grateful to the Red Cross for providing more than 17,000 hygiene kits and the World Central Kitchen for contributing more than 14,000 meals per day to supplement other food programs.

We surged medical resources and capacity, including over 150 medical professionals, to provide health services to ensure the safety of the migrants, employees, and the surrounding community. We provided personal protective equipment, including facemasks. We erected four climate-controlled tents to support housing for vulnerable populations.

Let me go through our operational response. Simultaneously with the humanitarian response, we in the Department of Homeland Security implemented a series of operational measures to process migrants consistent with existing laws, policies, and procedures. In particular, CBP -- Customs and Border Protection -- surged 600 agents, officers, and DHS volunteer force personnel to the Del Rio sector to provide operational support.

We also -- DHS officers and agents conducted 24-hour patrols for general safety, as well as to identify anyone who might be in medical distress.

ICE, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Justice provided transportation support to transfer migrants out of Del Rio to other Border Patrol sectors with capacity.

Working with the Department of State in Haiti, DHS increased the number of removal flights to Haiti commensurate with the country's capacity to receive.

Importantly, USAID has established a \$5.5 million program to provide on-the-ground assistance to repatriated Haitian migrants.

Nearly 30,000 migrants have been encountered at Del Rio since September 9th, with the highest number at one time reaching approximately 15,000.

Today, we have no migrants remaining in the camp under the International Bridge.

Migrants continue to be expelled under the CDC's Title 42 authority. Title 42 is a public health authority and not an immigration policy. And it is important to note that Title 42 is applicable and has been applicable to all irregular migration during this pandemic. It is not specific to Haitian nationals or the current situation.

Some more data: To date, DHS has conducted 17 expulsion flights to Haiti with approximately 2,000 individuals. Those who are not expelled under Title 42 are placed in immigration removal proceedings.

Let me take a step back and explain the process. There are two exceptions to the applicability of Title 42, the public health authority. Number one is if an individual has an acute vulnerability, such as an urgent medical care. And two, if, in fact, our operational capacity is such that we are not able to execute the Title 42 authority that rests with the Centers for Disease Control.

I should also say that there is a Convention Against Torture exception if someone claims torture, which is a distinct legal standard.

Individuals, as I mentioned, with acute vulnerability can be accepted from the Title 42 application. Approximately 12,400 individuals will have their cases heard by an immigration judge to make a determination on whether they will be removed or permitted to remain in the United States. That is a piece of data that has been requested of us.

If someone is not subject to Title 42 expulsion for the three reasons that I explained -- acute vulnerability, operational capacity limitations, or a Convention Against Torture exception -- then the individual is placed in immigration proceedings. That means they go before an immigration judge in an immigration court.

If they make a claim that they have a basis under law to remain in the United States, then the judge will hear and adjudicate that claim. If the judge determines that the claim is not valid, the individual will be removed.

An estimated 8,000 migrants have decided to return to Mexico voluntarily, and just over 5,000 are being processed by DHS to determine whether they will be expelled or placed in immigration removal proceedings under Title 8.

We have previously articulated publicly, we've previously expressed that in light of the fact that we had such a significant number of individuals in one particular section in Del Rio, Texas, that we were moving people to other Customs and Border Protection processing centers to ensure the safe and secure processing of those individuals. And we will assess the ability to exercise the Title 42 public health authority in those processing centers.

And if any of the exceptions apply, then we will place those individuals in immigration enforcement proceedings. But if we are able to expel them under Title 42 -- because that is indeed a public health imperative as determined by the Centers for Disease Control -- we will do so.

And with that, I'll take your questions.

MS. PSAKI: Steve.

Q Thank you. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for coming in to take our questions.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Of course.

Q The first question is that I was hoping you could explain more of your view that these agents on the border acted in a way that violated policies or procedures. Could you tell us what they did wrong to start?

And then my second question has to do with what this episode -- how this episode informs your understanding or thinking about the current and ongoing asylum review, and whether, perhaps if the administration were to take a more permissive stance to -- toward asylum, membership in a particular social group, that this episode could be seen as one of many in the future.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So I -- I think, if I may, you're conflating two very different phenomenon, two very different processes.

First of all, the images, as I expressed earlier -- the images horrified us in terms of what they suggest and what they conjure up, in terms of not only our nation's history, but,



unfortunately, the fact that that page of history has not been turned entirely. And that means that there is much work to do, and we are very focused on doing it.

But I will not prejudge the facts. I do not, in any way, want to impair the integrity of the investigative process. We have investigators who are looking at it independently. They will draw their conclusions according to their standard operating procedures, and then the results of that investigation will be determined by the facts that are adduced.

Now, with respect to the asylum process that has -- that is an independent process -- and I'm not sure I understood your question, if you're asking about the definition of a particular social group. And just for everyone's benefit, the asylum laws provide that an -- the first step in an asylum process is a claim of credible fear.

Economic need, flight from generalized violence does not qualify as credible fear, but rather credible fear is credible fear of persecution by reason of one's membership in a particular social group.

What is the definition of a "particular social group" was significantly constrained -- that's an understatement -- in the Trump administration. And there is a body of law that speaks to that definition, and that definition is currently under review.

Q Right. But, Mr. Secretary, if I may -- and forgive me for -- just to follow up on this point --

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Yes.

Q The question was: If this administration were to take a more permissive stance toward that definition, could this be -- what we've just experienced in the last several weeks -- just the first of many similar instances to occur in this country on the border?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: What instance are you referring to? I'm sorry.

Q Well, we have 15,000 migrants who -- that the United States government has had to now process. And --

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So, we determine -- we determine the standards to apply in a claim of persecution according to the principles that a government should have both domestically and in the international architecture with the treatment of individuals who are fleeing persecution by reason of their membership in a particular social group. It is not a tool of deterrence to define what a "particular social group" means.

MS. PSAKI: Tam.

Q Yeah. The people who -- sorry, I'm here hiding behind a mask. (Laughter.)

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: I'm sorry. Thank you.

Q The people who were under the bridge -- you've talked about -- some of them have gone to Mexico, some of them have been flown to Haiti. The others, are they spread out at CPB holding facilities? Have some been released into the community or released to family members awaiting hearing?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So you ask a very --

Q What's their status?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So let me be clear: So, some have been returned to Haiti, indeed. Others have been moved to different processing facilities along the border in light of operational capacity, and then many of them will be returned to Haiti from there. And if any of the exceptions apply, they will not be returned to Haiti but placed in immigration enforcement proceedings.

I should say "released" is a very general term, and I may need to drill down on that, if I may. Individuals -- some of them are detained; some of them are placed on alternatives to detention. We remain in touch with them. We monitor them to ensure their appearance in court at the designated time of appearance. Does that answer your question?

Q It does. One other question.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: And I gave --

Q Yeah.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: -- and I provided the data, if I need to -- to do so again.

Q Yes. No, I got that. The broader question is that it seems like there are border crises that keep popping up, sort of like whack-a-mole. Every month or so, there's another clump of people or another major issue or unaccompanied minors or -- and is there a plan to maybe have, you know, like FEMA-type teams that go to these crisis points? Or is the goal to

somehow stop having these crises that keep breaking out?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Well, look, you mentioned FEMA. So two points, if I may. Let me first address the fund- -- well, let me go in reverse.

From an operational response perspective, we addressed the challenge of unaccompanied children in March. And I said then that we had a plan, we were executing our plan, and it would take time. And in fact, within 60 days or so, we went from an average time of an unaccompanied child in a Border Patrol station of 124 hours to less than 25 hours, and we did that through our operational capacity throughout the Department of Homeland Security, as directed by the President, in an all-of- government effort.

Here, last weekend, we had approximately 15,000 individuals in the Del Rio section. I committed to addressing that within 10 days, and today we have none. And that was because of the Department of Homeland Security's assets, with the assistance of others across the government. That is something very different than the fact of the dynamism of irregular migration writ large and the fact that this is a situation that has occurred from time to time, ever since I can remember, in my more than 20 years of government service.

And the President has spoken very powerfully about this from day one and before he assumed office. First and foremost, and most fundamentally and foundationally, we are dealing with a broken immigration system, and we need legislative reform.

And everyone agrees. In a world where unanimity is so difficult to achieve, there is one thing that -- as to which there is unanimity, and that is the need for comprehensive immigration reform. And unfortunately, it seems to remain elusive, but our real dedication to achieving it is unrelenting, and we continue to do so. Number one.

Number two, we have a three-part plan: We invest in the root causes to address the need -- to address the reason why people leave the homes in which they live and take a perilous journey that they should not take. Second, the building of safe, orderly, and humane pathways. And third, rebuilding an asylum system and a refugee program that were dismantled in the prior administration.

This takes time, and we are executing our plans.

MS. PSAKI: Ed.

Q Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for being here. I know we had suggested it'd be great

to have you, so it's good to see you in the same week we made that request.

Starting with the situation in Del Rio, the mounted units are temporarily suspended. Are you considering eliminating them altogether?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So we're going to -- we're going to take a look. What we are focused on right now is addressing the urgency of the situation in Del Rio under that bridge. We are still getting through it.

Remember, as I mentioned in response to the prior question, we still have operational needs across the border with respect to this particular population of individuals. But we're going to be taking a look at this.

What the horse patrol is customarily used to do -- for everyone's benefit -- is -- you know, horses are able to cross terrain that might not otherwise be traversed. And what they often do -- and, in fact, most often do -- is assess the situation and actually assist in helping people in distress. And that horse patrol -- the horse patrol that the Customs and Border Protection employs -- the Border Patrol, specifically -- has actually saved lives many times before. But we will take a look.

Q And just on -- because yours is such a sprawling department, you face multiple issues at once. The situation regarding Afghan refugees that are being processed by your department -- we've had a few questions on that that haven't entirely been answered, and I'm just curious if you know how many cases of forced marriage or so-called "child brides" has DHS found in the system so far?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: To my knowledge, we have not found one. But I will tell you that we have experts at the airport and beyond who understand that phenomenon very, very well, who know how to detect the indicia, the signs of any such activity, and are able to place people in secondary screening, discern the facts, and make the decisions that the facts so warrant. We are very skilled in that.

MS. PSAKI: Rachel.

Q Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I know you said you'd be looking into this, but the President was really clear today. He said those Border Patrol agents on horseback seen in those images "will pay." He said, "It's dangerous." He says, "It's wrong." And he said, "There will be consequences." So do you disagree with that?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Oh -- I know the President was echoing the sentiments of the American public in response to the images and what those images suggest, but I want to speak to the fact that this investigation will be based on the facts that the investigators learn, and the results of the investigation will be driven by those facts and nothing less and nothing more.

Q But the President said that they would pay, so you guys are not on the same page on that?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: I think the President was speaking in terms of the horror that he observed from seeing the images and what they suggest.

MS. PSAKI: Phil.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: That investigation will have integrity, I can assure you of that.

Q Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I understand you guys have been saying since January 20th you inherited a broken system; there's a lot of work to be done here. But you have thousands of people living in squalid conditions, limited opportunities to go through asylum processes here. Advocates have been warning about situations like this for months now. How much responsibility do you, does the administration take for these situations continuing to, kind of, pop up in various places?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So if you're -- if you're addressing the situation in Del Rio, I will tell you that it is unprecedented for us to see that number of people arrive in one discrete point along the border in such a compacted period of time. That is unprecedented.

We have the Chief of the Border Patrol, Raul Ortiz, is, I think, a 30-year veteran and he has not seen that before. And what we do when we see something that is unprecedented is we respond, and respond we did.

MS. PSAKI: Steve.

Q Some Democrats have wanted you to be more lenient on the asylum claims because of the earthquake that Haiti went through. Have you considered that at all, sir?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So, let me -- let me speak to that. We studied the conditions in Haiti a number of months ago, as is our legal obligation to do so. And based on the country conditions that we observed and studied, what we did is we designated Haiti for Temporary Protected Status for those Haitian nationals resident in the United States who were here

prior to July 29th. And we were mindful of the assassination that occurred, and we were unsure of the results of that assassination in terms of the stability of the political order.

Once a new leader took office and things seemed to settle down, we determined that the July 29th date was equitable to address the humanitarian relief of Haitian nationals already resident in the United States.

We have continued to study the conditions in Haiti, and we have in fact determined, despite the tragic and devastating earthquake, that Haiti is in fact capable of receiving individuals. And we are working with Haiti and with humanitarian relief agencies to ensure that their return is as safe and humanely accomplished as possible.

I was around -- I was at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services on January 10, 2010, the date of the last earthquake in Haiti, and that was distinct from the earthquake that devastated people more recently. That had far greater geographic repercussions than this one now.

This one, as devastating and tragic as it is, was more geographically limited, and we made a determination based on the legal standards and the facts that, in fact, individuals could be returned to the country as a whole.

MS. PSAKI: Peter.

Q Thank you very much. Just to go back, please, to the images of these mounted Border Patrol officers: You said on Saturday -- or rather, on the 20th, "To ensure control of the horse, long reins are used." The person who took these photos of the Border Patrol agents says, "I've never seen them whip anyone." So, why is the President out there today talking about people being "strapped"?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: So let me -- let me correct the statements in your question, if I may. It was --

Q They're direct quotes.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: No, no -- if I may. It was on Friday when I was -- actually, it was on Monday, I believe, when I was in Del Rio on the ground and I made the statements without having seen the images. I saw the images on the flight back, and I made the statement that I did with respect to what those images suggested.

There -- the horses have long reins, and the image in the photograph that we all saw, and that horrified the nation, raised serious questions about what it -- let me finish -- about what occurred and of -- as I stated quite clearly, it conjured up images of what has occurred in the past.

Let me -- let me finish.

There's also a question of how one uses the horse and how one interacts with individuals with the horse. And so I'm going to let the investigation run its course. I'm not going to interfere with that investigation. The facts will be determined by the investigators, and then the results will be driven by the facts that are determined.

Q And just to follow up, please -- before the facts are in, is it helpful to your investigation for the President of the United States to use inflammatory language, like people being "strapped"?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Let me just be very clear and repeat what I've said: I am not concerned with respect to the integrity of the investigation. We know how to conduct an investigation with integrity. I served as -- 12 years as a federal prosecutor. There were a great deal of comments in many of the cases that I handled in the public sphere, and I know how to maintain the integrity of an investigation, and this investigation will have integrity.

MS. PSAKI: Just a few more. Peter, go ahead.

Q Mr. Secretary, thank you. Are Title 42 expulsions, sending Haitians back to danger in Haiti, immoral? Yes or no?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: No, they are not. They are driven by a public health imperative.

Q I understand the public health imperative --

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: But let me --

Q -- but are they immoral?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: But let me -- let me explain, because -- let me be quite clear: We do not conduct ourselves in an immoral way. We do not conduct ourselves in an unethical way. In fact -- in fact, we are restoring people by reason of the immorality of the past administration. We are reuniting families that were separated.

Let me explain something -- the reality of the situation -- because we're dealing with a great number of individuals who are encountered at the border in a congregate setting and placed in Customs and Border Protection -- you know, Border Patrol stations. And that can cause the significant spread of a pandemic.

And it is in light of the operational realities that the Centers for Disease Control made a determination in its public health expertise that Title 42 authority must be exercised. It is a statutory authority. And they made the determination that the public health of the migrants themselves, our personnel, local communities, and the American public require it.

And that is why we are exercising that authority to serve the public health. Over 600,000 Americans have died. More than 40 U.S. Customs and Border Protection personnel have died. Many migrants have gotten sick.

We are doing this out of a public health need. It is not an immigration policy. It is not an immigration policy that we would embrace.

Q With all due respect, sir --

MS. PSAKI: Okay, Rachel. Last one.

Q -- your statement acknowledges the treatment --

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead, Rachel.

Q -- of Haitian immigrants.

Q Secretary, thank you.

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead. Go ahead. We've all been civil here. Let's have Rachel -- let Rachel have her question.

Q The congregation under the bridge -- the congregating there -- just mentioning COVID -- what is the situation there? I know that the crowd has been dispersed. Do we know who has tested positive? If people got sick, any kind of symptoms among this group of 15,000, you said?

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Yeah, so, we did not -- we do not te- -- we did not test that



population of individuals. We do not know -- I do not know, I should say, if I may be perfectly accurate -- I do not know whether anyone was sick with COVID.

We certainly had some individuals get sick, not specifically with COVID, to my knowledge, and we addressed their illnesses. In fact, we set up medical tents that had a certain standard of ability to address medical needs.

It is -- it was ho- -- it's hot in Del Rio, Texas. We had cases of dehydration. We had other situations. And that is precisely why we surged one hundred -- approximately 150 medical professionals to address the medical needs of that population. That is why we set up medical facilities with the appropriate equipment to address their medical needs.

And I must say, what I saw of the Border Patrol and other personnel was, quite frankly, heroic. They took -- this is not their customary obligations, and yet they took great pride in addressing the needs of the people.

Q With all due respect, sir, your statement -- that "this is not who we are" -- belies the actual treatment of Haitian immigrants not just in this administration, but in administrations of both parties, going back decades. And you seem to be distinguishing between violence and violence. What is the difference between --

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: I'm sorry --

Q -- the type of violence that Haitians are fleeing in Haiti and the type of devastation and -- other devastation that they're fleeing, as compared to other immigrants and asylum seekers?

Democrats left and right, up and down, have been talking about the violence that people have been fleeing in Central America and South America. And the President, even during his campaign, talked about the fact that this created a need to create a pathway and an asylum system. This doesn't seem to be the case when it comes to Haitian immigrants.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Oh, if --

Q And, in fact, the images are a true graphic representation of the way Haitian immigrants and immigrants of African descent have been treated, not just by this administration.

MS. PSAKI: I think we have to finish the question so we can answer it.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: If I may, I would respectfully disagree with you. And let me -- let

me say --

Q I happen to be an immigrant and have been on the wrong side of the U.S. immigration for the last 20 years, so I have some experience with it.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Oh, no, no, no -- I wasn't commenting on your personal experience, sir. And I am an immigrant as well. I wasn't commenting on your personal experience. I was respectfully disagreeing with an assertion that you made, if I may.

Because if --

Q So, what is the difference --

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: -- if -- if I may: An asylum claim is determined based on the facts that are presented in the individual case. In fact, the Title 42 authority has been applied to irregular migration since the very beginning of this administration and before. And it has applied to individuals from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and other countries.

It has been applied equally, and the exceptions that I cited have been the exceptions that have applied to all. There are three exceptions: the Convention Against Torture; acute vulnerabilities, such as extreme medical needs; and operational capacity. Those are the three exceptions.

Title 42 authority has been applied, irrespective of the country of origin, irrespective of the race of the individual, irrespective of other criteria that don't belong in our adjudicative process and we do not permit in our adjudicative process.

MS. PSAKI: Thank you, Secretary Mayorkas.

Q And one follow-up -- the whipping -- the whips, the horse whips --

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Sir, that is something -- that is something that horrified us all. And, you know, this morning, I was on radio, and the interviewer said that it was -- it troubled, very profoundly, the Black and the African American community. And I said one thing -- and this should be clear: Those are not the only communities that it horrified. Those are not the only communities that it concerned. Of course, that concern might be most acute, given the history in this country and in other parts of the world. But all of America is horrified to see what those images suggest.

MS. PSAKI: Thank you so much, Secretary Mayorkas. Appreciate your time.

Q One more question.

MS. PSAKI: He'll come back. I promise. I know there's lots of questions, but we have to let him go back to his job.

Q Thank you, Secretary.

SECRETARY MAYORKAS: Thank you all. Thank you.

MS. PSAKI: Thank you so much, Secretary Mayorkas.

Q You're welcome anytime.

MS. PSAKI: You're always invited. Open invitation.

Okay. Two items for all of you at the top. In addition, today, the Treasury Department released data on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, which shows that through the month of August, state and local ERA programs -- Emergency Rental Assistance programs -- have distributed more than 1.4 million payments to households, totaling more than \$7.7 billion, to support the housing stability of vulnerable renters and landlords. So, 420,000 households were served in August -- an increase of about 24 percent since July.

Over \$2.3 billion in rental assistance was distributed in August, which represents roughly three times the amount spent in May.

We distri- -- we expect distribution progress to continue, but even if this pace simply maintains, it would mean 3 million payments to renters in need and \$16.7 billion in Emergency Rental Assistance spending, which would have a very meaningful, positive impact on 2021.

And just quickly on the week ahead: Throughout -- we'll obviously have more to convey to all of you over the weekend, just to set expectations.

But throughout next week, the President will continue to engage with members of Congress and congressional leadership on his Build Back Better agenda and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal. They will also discuss passing the continuing resolution, providing disaster relief, and avoiding default.

And on Wednesday -- and we're obviously leaving some space to do exactly that. And on Wednesday, the President will travel to Chicago, Illinois, to highlight the importance of COVID-19 vaccine requirements for businesses.

And, again, we'll have more as the weekend proceeds.

Josh, why don't you go ahead.

Q Thanks, Jen. Two questions. First, the Quad's meeting here at the White House. The President said he doesn't want a new Cold War with China. And yet, we've also seen cyberattacks; businesses are reporting supply chain issues with their suppliers in China. What confidence does the administration and its allies have that China also does not want a new Cold War?

MS. PSAKI: Well, what we can speak to is what our intention is, and you heard the President convey clearly in his speech at the U.N. General Assembly earlier this week that our relationships with China, our approach to China is one of competition and not one of conflict.

I will say as it relates to the Quad -- which is, I think, ongoing, unless it -- unless it wrapped -- and we'll have a robust readout for you with all the deliverables -- but the focus of that is not -- it's not a security meeting or security apparatus.

This is -- the focus of this group is on COVID, climate, emerging technology, and infrastructure -- all areas where it's incredibly important to coordinate with key partners who are in the global community, including in that region.

Q Understood. I guess I ask because the Australian PM said "free democracy" without saying "China." But I guess the second area is Afghanistan, where we had this drone strike. And we now know that this was an aid worker. How did this happen? What does this tell us about our intelligence in Afghanistan? And what are the procedures for accountability going forward?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I know, last Friday, the Defense Department did an extensive briefing on this and put out an extensive statement where they conveyed clearly that this was a horrible mistake, that this was a tragedy, as is the loss of civilian life in any occasion and certainly in this case.

There's also been -- they've also -- they also announced that they would look back at the CENTCOM review that they announced last week.

So that is a process that would be ongoing and undergone at the Department of Defense.

I would note -- and I'm not sure if this was exactly your question -- but some have asked about what it means for our over-the-horizon capabilities and capacities -- and I don't know if that is what you were getting at -- as we look to Afghanistan, as we look to preventing terrorists from, you know, threatening our partners or even threatening our homeland.

One, of course, we watch that closely from our intelligence community; they do regular briefings, as you've seen, on the Hill. But also, over-the-horizon capacity is not the same as steps that were taken as it was in the case of this drone strike or the strike before it, where our troops are threatened on the ground and where immediate action needs to be taken in order to prevent or attempt to prevent their lives from being threatened. Obviously, this was a horrific mistake.

Over-the-horizon capacity, you have more time to consider, to look at targets, to consider intelligence, and that's the difference in how we would approach it moving forward. But there would be a look at the CENTCOM review, and that's something that would come out of the Department of Defense.

I just want to jump around because I promised I would.

Okay, let's go to Al Jazeera first.

Q Yes, thank you. I've been trying to ask this question for months; I appreciate you taking it. It's a freedom of the press question.

Members of the administration -- you, recently, this week -- talked about the importance of journalism to democracy. The President also made a point of saying his presidency was different from his predecessor.

So why is President Biden keeping the Trump-era charges against Julian Assange? Why is he allowing the prosecution from publishing the truth about human rights abuses in Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantanamo? And does the President believe the ongoing detention of Assange is reasonable, even moral, given the transparency delivered and the greater good served?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I don't have anything new to say on the -- on Julian Assange, and I would point you the Department of Justice on that.

I would say, though, that we do think of ourselves and we are approaching this from an entirely different approach of the last few years as it relates to freedom of the press. And I think the Department of Justice's actions as it relates to the prosecution of journalists, or how we're going to look at or go after records -- something that the Attorney General made an announcement about, the President has spoken to -- is very clear evidence of exactly that.

Q But does the President see this as a freedom of press issue with respect to Assange? Or does he separate --

MS. PSAKI: Again, I have nothing -- I have nothing new to speak to on Julian Assange.

Q This is something that I emailed you about months ago, so there's been time to -- to (inaudible) this.

MS. PSAKI: I understand. I understand. I still don't --

Q Is there something --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have a new comment from here.

Go ahead.

Q You guys don't want to touch --

Q Yeah, thank you.

Q I have one more.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Go ahead.

Q I've been waiting months.

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

Q Thank you. You know, we've talked about the images that these -- that the Al Jazeera footage exposed with respect to the horses that --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q -- along the border, the pain that that conjures up for African Americans in this country. The President has condemned this, but, you know, the President has also promised African Americans in this country that he had their back.

Al Sharpton has said this week, "We're being stabbed in the back. Mr. President, we need you to stop the stabbing, from Haiti to Harlem." He's talking about the failure of the police reform bill.

What does the President need to do to address this? What does he need to do more for the community? You said this week there's been the engagement with leaders, but does the President need to do more than that? And what should he be doing?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, I would say, since you referenced police reform, the President is absolutely frustrated that we haven't been able to move forward with police reform. He supported the efforts by negotiators on the Democratic side, on the Republican side, to try to find common ground.

He also was frustrated that they couldn't find -- move -- they weren't able to move forward, despite the fact that there was agreement from even police organizations and others about what -- about what the path forward looked like. So, he's incredibly frustrated.

It requires Congress moving forward in order to have that kind of lasting impact. But the President has also been clear he's going to engage with advocates, engage with members, and also consider options like executive actions -- which is something that we did not act on because we wanted to leave space for these negotiations to continue.

Q But does that make the African American voters feel recognized, that they are being seen, that they're being heard? I mean, bring it down to the laymen level.

MS. PSAKI: You asked me specifically about police reform, so that's why I addressed that specific question.

I would say that the President has been an advocate for civil rights changes, for reforms that are needed, for equity across our system from -- for many, many decades, and that is a central tenet of his presidency. And that is evidenced in a range of executive orders that he signed early on in his presidency; his advocacy for voting rights, for police reform; and certainly the comments and remarks you heard him give this morning.

Go ahead.

Q Jen, thanks. The former President, last night, in response to these subpoenas that were announced by the January 6th Committee, said that he was going to assert executive privilege. He's not in the executive branch anymore, so I don't think he can do that.

Has he reached out or have his people reached out to the Biden administration to say, "Hey, we don't want communications between former President Trump and Mark Meadows," for example," to be released"? And how would this White House deal with that kind of request?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I'm not aware of any outreach. We don't get regular outreach from the former President or his team, I think it's safe to assume.

I would say that we take this matter incredibly seriously. The President has already concluded that it would not be appropriate to assert executive privilege, and so we will respond promptly to these questions as they arise, and certainly, as they come up from Congress. And certainly, we are -- we have been working closely with -- with congressional committees and others as they work to get to the bottom of what happened on January 6th, an incredibly dark day in our democracy.

Okay, let's go to Yahoo.

Q Jen, throughout much of the spring and early summer, our vaccination goal was 70 percent for adults. What is it now?

MS. PSAKI: It's much higher than that. I'm happy to get the -- the up-to-date-to-today data from the COVID team. I know it's over 75 percent. It's something that we see continue to climb. It's something that we've seen climb over the past several weeks as mandates have been put -- put in place by companies; as there has been, unfortunately, a rising fear of Delta; as people have seen horrific images on television. So, we have seen encouraging climbs in vaccinations and vaccination rates in communities across the country.

Q No, I'm sorry, I understand that, but what are -- what goal are we trying to hit? When will we know that we've succeeded in our vaccination efforts?

MS. PSAKI: We're going to try to get as many people in the country vaccinated as humanly possible. We're not going to put an end-limit on that. It's a -- it's a continuing work, a continuing top priority of this administration.

Shelby, go ahead.



Q Thanks. So, we know that the Vice President has been tasked with addressing the root causes of migration. A Democratic congressman from Texas told CNN yesterday that the Vice President's trip to Mexico and Central America had no impact. So, first, I'm wondering if the administration can just detail some tangible examples of the actions in addressing the root causes of migration that have had a tangible, you know -- an actual impact.

And then, secondly, what specific causes -- root causes is the Vice President currently addressing to help curb Haitian migration from places like Chile and Brazil?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think, as the Vice President and the President have both conveyed, this is going to be a long-term effort. And what the focus is on is addressing root causes like corruption, like economic circumstances that are impacting people and prompting them to want to come to the United States.

So that requires working with governments both to put in place new migration proceedings and processes, or limitations, sometimes at borders. We've seen some impacts of those over the course of the last several months.

It also includes providing assistance and engaging closely with these leaders on what steps can be taken. And the Vice President has been deeply engaged in this.

But, again, as it relates to Haiti, as it relates to our broken immigration system, the clear step that needs to be taken is an immigration bill needs to pass Congress. It's a broken system -- one that is ineffective; one that is not moral, in many cases, at this point in time. It's long overdue.

There are a lot of Republicans out there giving speeches about how outraged they are about the situation at the border, not many who are putting forward solutions or steps that we could take. So, we're a little tired of the speeches. We'd like to partner on solutions and working together to address this problem that has not been partisan in the past.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Jen. Two quick questions. The President met, just two days ago, with a group of lawmakers -- five hours of meetings. Does he have a better sense after all of those meetings -- five hours of meetings -- as to whether or not the vote will take place this Monday on the bipartisan Senate bill in the House of Representatives?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our work did not stop after those five hours of meetings. And the President has always known that this would be a key inflection point -- and we are certainly at one, right at this moment -- because while there is broad agreement on the need to lower costs for childcare, for elder care, for college, for preschool, the need to rebuild bridges and roads, the need to address the climate crisis, the need to re- -- have a more fair tax system -- there are discussions about the size.

Now, as the President said multiple times this morning, the package will cost zero dollars. There are a range of revenue options that can cover whatever the cost of the package looks like. But these are important discussions that need to be had. We know that there are differences of opinion among members of our own party. And we're still at work at it, and our team was still at work yesterday.

I will say, as it relates to the next steps here, we want to win the vote when it happens. That's our objective.

Q The second question has to do with COVID protocols that exist in the West Wing, in particular.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q The President meets regularly with his counterparts, like today --

MS. PSAKI: Yep.

Q -- from around the world. He meets with lawmakers. He meets with activists, with private citizens from time to time. When new ambassadors present their credentials, they do so right now via Zoom. Is there a particular reason why the President doesn't meet with those new ambassadors face to face, like has been done in the past by other Presidents?

MS. PSAKI: I know he's eager to do that in the future. I don't have any more information or prediction of when that may happen, but, certainly, something he looks forward to doing. And he respects and values the role of ambassadors who are serving around the world.

Q So is there a particular reason why he's not doing that right now -- why he's doing it by Zoom?

MS. PSAKI: It's not a COVID reason, but I'm happy to check if there's a plan for welcoming ambassadors in person anytime soon.

Chris, do you have a question? I don't want to jump -- I don't want put you on the spot. Or Chris may not.

Q I have a question on Quad --

MS. PSAKI: Anne, go ahead.

Q I'm sorry.

MS. PSAKI: That's fine. It's a Friday.

Q I wanted to clarify something --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- you said a moment ago. And then, I have another question. When you say that the President has determined that it's not appropriate to assert executive privilege in the January 6th documents matter, is that a blanket statement or would you -- or are you going to evaluate the requests from the investigating group as they come in one by one with an eye to not assert executive privilege?

MS. PSAKI: It's an eye to not asserting executive privilege, Anne, and obviously some of this is predicting what we don't know yet, but that is certainly his overarching view.

Q Is there something that you wouldn't turn over that you can think of?

MS. PSAKI: I don't think I'm going to get ahead of a hypothetical.

But that is what's important for people to know and understand is, that's the principle through which we're approaching this.

Q Okay. And then separately, on the potential government shutdown, has there been any determination or thought quite yet to what happens to ongoing COVID-related work during a potential shutdown? I'm thinking of potentially like the Department of Labor working on their mandate ideas.

MS. PSAKI: So, we, obviously, want to do everything we can to avoid a government shutdown. I can tell you that, as it relates to exemptions, our expectation is because it's public

health work, is that the vast majority of work on COVID would be exempted. But I think it's safe to say that even if that -- even with that being the case, that having the government shutdown and having the impact on systems, on processes, on personnel is not ideal and -- more than not ideal, is -- would be -- it would be challenging, as we're fight -- facing a pandemic, as we're working to get a lot of programs' funding out to people across the country, which is why we're -- we're focused on avoiding it.

Go ahead, Patsy.

Q Thank you, Jen. I have two questions on the Quad Summit and an apology to Anne for cutting in line. So on --

MS. PSAKI: Oh, it's okay. We tried to call on Chris, but he's -- (laughter) --

Q So, on Quad --

MS. PSAKI: It's okay. Go ahead.

Q President Biden said that the Quad is on track to produce 1 billion doses of vaccine by the end of 2022. I believe it's "produced" and not "delivered." And then also, on the doses already pledged, the initial 500 million doses announced in June, that's 200 million delivered by end of 2021; the rest by mid-2022; and then, the latest 500 million announced delivered by the end of the next year.

So, first, can you confirm if I have that timeline right? Second, can the world wait that long, especially if the goal to end the pandemic is by end of 2022? That delivery timeline does not seem to support that.

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me confirm the specifics here. So the timeline for delivery of the -- of these 500 million doses: First 200 million doses will be delivered by June of 2022, I think as you said; second 300 million doses will be delivered by quarter three of 2022. In total, we'll donate 1 billion doses of Pfizer. That's part of that total. Obviously, we've already donated 160 million doses already to date.

What I will say, Patsy, is that right now, we are still the world's largest contributor of vaccine doses by -- more than every other country in the world combined. We have committed to give more -- for every one dose here, we've committed to give three doses overseas. That is more than anyone else. No one else in the world can say that.

So -- and we're also helping produce -- add to manufacturing capacity. The Quad partnership -- who is here, of course, meeting as we speak -- is on track to produce at least 1 billion vaccine doses by the end of 2022. We're also working to boost vaccine manufacturing in South Africa.

But we need help from the rest of the developed world, and the rest of the developed world needs to also step up. We're going to continue to increase our role in contributing vaccines, contributing know-how, making sure that we are playing a constructive role in bringing an end to the pandemic. But we need the rest of the world to step up, and that's what our focus is on.

Karen, go ahead.

Q And a second question on Quad. Did the President discuss over-the-horizon capacity with Prime Minister Modi, in particular whether it involves Pakistan or India?

MS. PSAKI: It's -- I know we were going to give a -- put out a joint statement. I'm not sure if it's out at this point in time. The Quad meeting was also ongoing when I came out here, but we'll have a lot that we will put out to all of you.

Go ahead, Karen.

Q Thanks, Jen. Two questions. The DHS Secretary several times said he didn't want to impair the integrity of the investigation to the Border Patrol agents. He said, "I will not prejudge the facts." Did the President prejudge the facts when he said, "I promise you those people will pay"?

MS. PSAKI: I think what you heard from the President is a very human and visceral response to those images, which I think reflects how a lot of people in the country felt when they saw them.

There is an investigation the Department of Homeland Security is overseeing. That will determine what the personnel decisions may be, any other policy decisions, and that needs to see itself through.

But I think the President wanted to make clear to people who watched those photos, who had understandably emotional responses, that that's not acceptable to him, even while the investigation is being so -- is being -- is happening and moving forward. That will determine what the consequences will look like.

Q And on the reconciliation package, Senator Manchin told reporters on Wednesday night that the President, quote, basically just said, "Find a number you're comfortable with based on the needs you still have and how we deliver it to the American people." The President today said, "Forget the number" and that lawmakers shouldn't be focusing on that topline number. So what changed from Wednesday's meeting, when he said, "Give me a number," to today, to "forget the number"?

MS. PSAKI: I know that sounds hard to believe, but they're not actually contradictory. What the President was trying to convey today repeatedly is that there's a lot of focus on the topline number, but ultimately, there are a range of proposals on how to pay for it by making the tax system more fair so, actually, the cost is zero. That was the point he was making.

So -- and that's why he's been so focused on telling the story of the substance. And as it relates to Senator Manchin, or anyone else who may have different points of view -- and we welcome that in the Democratic Party, of course, in democracy -- yes, part of this is a disagreement -- or discussion, I should say -- about what the size of the package -- what the topline, even though it's going to be paid for and will cost zero, will look like. So, both things are true.

Go ahead.

Q Can I ask, what's the -- how do you -- when you talk to the President, what's his approach at this point in time with his domestic agenda? And the reason I ask that --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q -- is because there have been moments, particularly with COVID relief, where he was basically like, "I need this, and I need this now" to lawmakers. Lawmakers I spoke to who met with him on Wednesday were very clear he was soliciting information: "What are you looking at? What do you need? What's important to you?"

When does he hit the moment of, "All right, I need this now. Like, we need to get this done. This is my red line. We're moving"?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I talked to the President about this, this morning. His view is that this is a process, and he understands and has lived through many of these processes in the past. And his approach is, "You have to listen. You have to hear people out. You have to answer their questions."

And, yes, at a certain point, you need to forge a path forward and look to unify a range of viewpoints on wherever there may be some marginal disagreements.

We're in the middle of that inflection point now. And the next several days, weeks are going to be pivotal on that; there's no question about it.

But he also understands and has been through enough of these processes before to know that he needs to listen, he needs to be a partner with members. And he's ready to pick up the phone, invite people down -- COVID-friendly snacks, as I said the other day -- to play a constructive role in that.

He also knows that sometimes those conversations need to happen at a staff level -- a senior staff level or senior staff-to-member level or staff-to-committee level. He knows, of all people, how this process works, and he's just evaluating, hour by hour, how he can be the most constructive in unifying a path forward.

Go ahead.

Q Just one other question. What, if any, comment does the White House have on the apparent results of the new GOP-backed review of ballots in Maricopa County? The draft report appears to show the President earned 99 more votes; the former President, 261 fewer.

MS. PSAKI: It confirmed what we have all known for some time and what millions and millions of people in the country know.

Q And with Republicans pushing for similar reviews in Texas, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, is there anything the federal government or the White House can do to address that, given that members of your party are concerned about this ongoing attempt, or actual review, of ballots?

MS. PSAKI: It's a good question, Ed. I'll have to check and see if there's anything substantively, which I think is what you're asking me, that we would have the power to do in this case.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Jen. Two topics, really quick. First, the President has said and you have tweeted that allegations of wrongdoing based on files pulled from Hunter Biden's laptop are

Russian disinformation. There's a new book by a Politico reporter that finds some of the files on there are genuine. Is the White House still going with "Russian disinformation"?

MS. PSAKI: I think it's broadly known and widely known, Peter, that there was a broad range of Russian disinformation back in 2020.

Q Okay. Moving on to the border, following up on a question from earlier in the week: Why hasn't President Biden ever visited the southern border?

MS. PSAKI: What would you like him to do at the southern border? And what impact do you think that would have on the policies?

Q Why doesn't he want to go?

MS. PSAKI: I don't think it's an issue of wanting to go; I think it's an issue of what's most constructive to address what we see as a challenging situation at the border and a broken immigration system.

And his view is: The most constructive role we can play is by helping to push immigration reform forward; helping reform the broken policies of the last several years; and listening to his team of advisors, who have been to the border multiple times, about what the path forward should look like.

Q So why is this the one crisis then that he thinks he can manage better from here without having seen it than going to the southern border and seeing it?

MS. PSAKI: I can assure you the President is well aware of what the challenges are in our broken immigration system, something he watched closely over the last four years.

Okay. Go ahead, Steve.

Q Just to put a fine point on your answer to Karen's question --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q -- because I'm sure that the union officials and lawyers who will be representing these agents are going to --

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.



Q -- want to know: Is it your view or the White House's position that what the President said this morning is not legally operative, with respect to consequences, and these people "paying" was simply his personal view and not representative of actions that the government will take?

MS. PSAKI: The President was not prejudging the outcome of an investigation either; the President was responding from his heart and responding to seeing horrific photos that we have seen over the last several days.

Q But he is the head of the executive branch; the Constitution vests him with the authority in Article Two. You're saying that what he said will not necessarily be the outcome?

MS. PSAKI: Again, there's an investigation that's ongoing. I don't know that anyone saw those photos and didn't have a similar reaction to the President's, and that was what it was a reflection of.

Go ahead.

Q Thank you, Jen. As you know, Afghanistan's situation is so bad and lack of food in Afghanistan. I don't know that the United States has any plan for humanitarian help and assist with Afghan people?

MS. PSAKI: We actually do. So, I would say the Department of Treasury actually, today, announced two general licenses to allow humanitarian aid to continue to flow in Afghanistan, despite U.S. sanctions. And our priority is, of course, ensuring that 100 percent of humanitarian assistance goes directly to independent organizations like U.N. agencies and NGOs who can provide vulnerable Afghans with critically needed food; emergency health needs, including COVID-19; and other urgently needed humanitarian relief.

So, all funds are directly closely vetted through local and international partners. This is one of the reasons we've been focused on getting the airport up and running. And these NGOs and U.N. agencies are experienced in working in challenging environments to get the food and assistance to exactly the right people.

Q Jen. Jen. Thanks, Jen.

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

Q Jen, what's the --

MS. PSAKI: Okay, last one, and -- sorry, last two.

Go ahead.

Q Quickly, Nancy Pelosi said, as we've noted, that there was going to be a vote; they hope to pass both the bipartisan infrastructure bill and the social safety net multitrillion-dollar bill, with details still to be ironed out. What is the political risk for Democrats if that does not pass on Monday?

MS. PSAKI: We want -- when the vote happens, we want to win the vote. That's what our focus is on. We'll let leadership determine the next steps beyond that.

Q Understanding that but recognizing, as we've heard from some progressives, that they may have as many as 90-plus votes who would oppose this right now if there isn't passage by the Senate on the social safety net bill. What's it -- I mean, what's at risk? This is ultimately what the President ran on -- that he could get these things done. So what is the risk, in terms of the motivating factor for Democrats?

MS. PSAKI: Our objective is for when the vote is called for us to be able to win the vote, so I don't think that's a point we're planning for at this point in time.

All right. Oh, Rachel, last one.

Q Just one quick question on the January 6th select committee in Congress. We know they sent out those subpoenas to Trump's inner circle. Congressman Adam Schiff said that he would ask the Justice Department to enforce those subpoenas if necessary. Does the administration and the White House support that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I know that they've been called to appear in October, I believe, if I saw in reporting. So, in our view, it would be premature to discuss either point -- discuss this, I should say -- or speak to it because the subpoenas have just been issued and we haven't seen their response quite yet.

Thanks so much, everyone. Have a great weekend.

3:36 P.M. EDT

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