

Press Gaggle by Press Secretary Jen Psaki and Homeland Security Advisor and Deputy National Security Advisor Dr. Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall

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Briefing Room

• Statements and Releases

Aboard Air Force One
en Route Houston, Texas

11:26 A.M. CST

MS. PSAKI: Hi. Thank you for your patience. I'm sorry. All right. So, welcome again to Air Force One. We are thrilled to have Dr. Liz Sherwood-Randall with us. She's going to give us an overview of the first stop on the President's trip to provide a bit of an update. She'll be able to take a few of your questions, and then we'll let her go. And I'll do a full gaggle after that.

So we'll turn it over Dr. Sherwood-Randall.

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: Hello, everyone. It's a privilege to be here with you, to join the President on this important trip to offer the full support of the federal government to the people of Texas who have suffered tremendously over the past three weeks.

As someone who has worked for decades on strengthening our ability to prepare for and respond to emergencies, I want to underscore something the President has made very clear to us: In crises like this, it is our duty to mobilize prompt and competent federal support to American citizens, and we have to ensure that bureaucracy and politics do not stand in the way.

We look forward to meeting with Governor Abbott and other state and local leaders to learn more about the recovery situation on the ground and what more we can do to help.

As you know, the President directed us to rapidly mobilize as many federal resources as possible to assist Texas's recovery efforts, along with recovery efforts in the other states that were affected by the severe winter storm. He promptly approved an emergency declaration for three states — Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana — and a major disaster declaration for two states — Texas and Oklahoma.

These declarations have allowed FEMA and others to surge more than 2 million meals and nearly 2 million gallons of water, over 60 generators, and more than 100,000 gallons of fuel, and lots and lots of blankets to Texans. These numbers keep changing as we do more, but the bottom line is: We're very focused on meeting immediate needs, as well as providing direct, individual financial assistance to uninsured families to help them recover from the disastrous effects of extreme weather.

As of yesterday afternoon, FEMA had already awarded over \$9 million in individual assistance grants to Texans. More broadly, we've brought the full range of federal resources to bear in a whole-of-government effort involving the Department of Defense, the Agriculture Department, the Health and Human Services Department, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy.

All of these agencies and others have been working hard to provide Texans with the resources they need. For example, on the Department of Energy, they issued the most expansive emergency order in the history of the agency, which permitted Texas electricity generators to exceed emissions limitations on a temporary basis and thereby restore power as quickly as possible to those who had lost it due to the challenges presented to the energy supply chain and generation capabilities in Texas.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Rural Utility Service at the Agriculture Department has been working to help mitigate the impact of spikes in energy costs in rural areas.

I have spoken several times with Governor Abbott over the last few weeks to discuss what additional assistance the federal government can provide. We mobilized a whole-of-government effort to respond, and of course, the President has spoken directly with Governor Abbott and other governors in affected states to hear their concerns and give us guidance on how to address them.

Although we're encouraged by the progress that has been made and we're seeing the numbers come down dramatically right now in terms of who needs to still boil water in Texas, we'll continue to look for ways to help through this next phase of recovery.

When it comes to natural disasters like those we've experienced here, the President has made it clear that there is no such thing as a red state or a blue county; there are just Americans in urgent need. And that's why he has made it a priority to travel to Texas today to understand how the recovery is going and to express his gratitude to the dedicated first responders who he'll meet with.

As we continue to learn more in the coming days and weeks, one thing we know for sure is we cannot treat what happened in Texas and in the whole region, in the South, as an isolated event. The impacts reflect our shared vulnerabilities to extreme weather events and other threats, and the need for collective action to modernize and harden our critical infrastructure across the country so that we can meet the full spectrum of challenges that we will face in the future.

Going forward, we'll need very close collaboration among the federal government, states, communities, and importantly, the private sector to incentivize the kinds of actions that need to be taken to build the kind of resilient infrastructure that we can truly depend on in the future.

I just want to add my deep thanks to everyone who stepped forward to help and those who've made truly valiant efforts to deliver essential aid to those in need under incredibly difficult circumstances. Energy and water plant staffs, linemen and women, road workers, and many others have responded under extraordinarily challenging conditions to restore energy and water systems. Healthcare workers, already laboring under COVID constraints, have continued to work tirelessly. National Guardsmen participated in distribution of water and other essential supplies. Drivers have braved hazardous roads to move FEMA supplies to where they're most needed. And we know of lots and lots of citizen volunteers who've just selflessly extended themselves to help others in need.

So, in closing, President Biden continues to pledge the full support of the federal government to these efforts. And we're here, landing shortly in Texas, to demonstrate our commitment to serving all Americans in these challenging times.

Thanks very much, and I'd be happy to take a few questions.

Q What incentives are you talking about to help Texas harden its grid? And how is that okay to allow Texas to be independent from the national grids?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: Well, as you know, we have a federal system in which states set their own policies with respect to a number of things. And in the case of Texas, decades ago, Texas chose to function as essentially an autonomous grid. So it's not really linked into the system in the rest of the country, with the exception of El Paso, which has some connectivity outside of the state.

And importantly, Texas has chosen not to make the kinds of decisions that would provide for the supplies that you would keep for an emergency — that is to invest in the kind of resilience that other states, which are regulated, are required to invest in. And so that means that they don't have the kind of backup in terms of supply or generation capability that they needed to have in this crisis.

The question now going forward is whether the state of Texas decides that it wants to move in the direction of creating more resilience on its own systems, because it has the capacity to do that if it chooses to.

Q Does the President support the idea of federal taxpayers subsidizing that retrofit in Texas?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: This would not be a decision that would be a federal decision. There are ways in which we can support Texas in moving in that direction. But fundamentally, the first decision has to be made by the state of Texas about what kind of energy system it wants to maintain, what kind of energy market it wants to maintain, and whether the financial incentives are structured for the kind of investment that needs to be made in resilience.

Q Is the President going to sign — is FEMA going to sign off on Governor Abbott's request for more disaster — major disaster declarations? He asked for at least 54 more counties for now, and he wants the whole state.

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: So, my understanding is that we've already added enough — not "we" — that FEMA has already added a number of additional counties where individuals can apply for disaster assistance, going from 77 up to 126 today.

So as states — or as the individual counties are assessed for need on the ground, if that need is evident, then they're added. And that's a decision the FEMA Acting Administrator, who's here on the plane with us and visiting the state with us today, will be making. I know that just last night he added 17 counties, for example.

Q In your view, what does Texas need most now from the federal government, in your conversations with Governor Abbott?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: The emergency assistance that we're providing — just the kind I described — helping individuals who don't have insurance, for example, to recover from these storms' impacts — if they have burst water tanks or other damage that has been done — that they need access to that federal assistance to recover. I'd say that's the most immediate need.

The longer-term project, as we've discussed, is the need to ensure that, in the future, Texas is able to contend with the kinds of extreme weather events and other threats to the grid that it may face, and how we can collaborate with Texas in providing technical advice and encourage the kind of evolution of their system that will enable them to be more capable.

Q In terms of the timing of the President's trip, did you delay it for, you know, to — not — obviously not immediately delayed. But did you push it to avoid the acute part of the disaster? Or was there thought to that?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: From the very outset, when we discussed taking a trip, the guidance he gave was we should only go when we won't interfere with the emergency response capabilities that are necessary to deliver for the people of Texas.

So we're coming today at a point at which the judgment was made that it was a time that we could come without disrupting what needed to happen.

Q Did President Biden, in his conversation with Governor Abbott, communicate a desire to sort of incentivize or to push Texas to consider joining the two grids?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: That wasn't an element of the discussion, no. The discussion was really focused on immediate needs and on the imperative of ensuring that we flowed all federal assistance that we could from the full range of agencies into Texas and into the other states in the region, of course, as quickly as possible.

Q Do you think that issue will be discussed today?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: I think today is mostly going to be focused on hearing from the emergency responders in the FEMA Operations Center about what worked and take lessons away for future response.

One of the things that I have been charged with in my role is thinking about how, in a new administration, with eventually a new confirmed FEMA Administrator, we may want to improve on the performance of our delivery of services. Because there's always room for improvement, in my experience, even with the best of efforts that we have been able to implement thus far.

Q And is there anything the federal government can do to help Texans who have sky-high electricity bills right now? I mean, obviously, the grid is separate, but is there anything that the federal government can do to help those people?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: We've looked into this. It's very important to note that these bills have now — the prices have come way down. They spiked very high, and they came way down. There isn't a federal authority to regulate that in Texas, but we are looking at, for people who've needed it most — and it's especially in rural areas — we have some capacity to help on that score as a federal government.

But, really, this is an area in which, again, Texas — Texas, considering what kind of market it wants to maintain — that incentivizes the kind of investments in resilience, both in supply chains and also in generation capabilities — will be important to managing pricing over time in the state when it faces emergencies.

Q Can you just weigh in real fast: Was wind — how much of a problem was wind power in the crisis?

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: So as the Electric Reliability Council of Texas has said, that was not a bulk of the problem in Texas. The biggest problem in Texas was that you had freezing in of natural gas wells and freezing — and shutdowns of the natural gas plants under extreme weather conditions. So they couldn't get the natural gas to the generation plants, and they couldn't generate electricity at those plants.

In addition, they had a brief period of the nuclear power plant, which also provides baseline power, it went offline briefly. It was brought right up — back up as quickly as possible. That was not a significant loss of generation capability.

This does point up the importance of creating a context within which we can ensure that we manage supply and generation under extreme circumstances. We need baseline generation power, and we need to be able to incorporate our renewables in a way that allows us to store them — because it's not always windy or sunny. And that's one of the things that technologically we'll be working to do in the work we do on the clean energy transition in this administration.

MS. PSAKI: All right, thank you.

Q Thank you.

DR. SHERWOOD-RANDALL: Thank you. It was great to see you.

MS. PSAKI: Thank you so much.

Okay, just a couple more details.

So, obviously, Dr. Sherwood-Randall talked about our first stop. The President will also tour the Harris County Emergency — well, yeah, she talked about that — Emergency Operations Center. He will thank volunteers at the Houston Food Bank. This is one of the largest food banks in the country, serving approximately 1.1 million people — very large; it serves the community.

He will also deliver remarks at the NRG Stadium, which is also being utilized as a mass vaccination center. Up to 6,000 vaccinations are distributed from that center on a daily basis, just for your knowledge.

I think we shared with all of you a number of people the President will see today while he's in Texas: Governor Greg Abbott, of course, who will spend most of the day with him; Senator John Cornyn, who's meeting us on the ground; Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo; Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner; Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia, who's tentative — we'll see — we'll confirm once we get to the ground; Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee; Congressman Al Green; and Congresswoman Lizzie Pannill Fletcher.

With that, we will venture to get you a week ahead, I promise you. But we didn't have too many details. It's a little bit changing, so we'll try to do that by the end of the day.

So what should we chat about?

Q On the conversation the President had with King Salman, can you say if the issue of Jamal Khashoggi — whether the report from the DNI that's forthcoming or even just the issue of his killing — was a part of the conversation yesterday?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have more to read out from the call. I can tell you broadly that the President raises, as do every — as does every official at every level, concerns we have about human rights abuses and steps that we expect the government and officials in the country to take moving forward, and certainly that was a part of the conversation.

I can convey to you that we expect the report, separately, to be released later today by DNI, and that's where it would certainly come from.

Q Jen, did the White House know about Senator Sanders's and Senator Wyden's plan for the corporate changes for — on a tax? Did they know about — did you all know about that ahead of time? Did President Biden know about that ahead of time?

MS. PSAKI: We have not yet even reviewed, as of the time when we took off, their proposal. Certainly we are well aware of Senator Sanders's commitment and steadfast commitment to raising the minimum wage. The President shares that commitment, but we have not reviewed that proposal.

Where we are now is we are looking for the best pathways to increase the minimum wage moving forward. As you know, the House Bill will — which we hope and expect will pass later today — will include an increase in the minimum wage.

We obviously also know that the parliamentarian ruled in the Senate, so there is a pa- — there is going to be work ahead. The President himself will be engaged in that, as will our team, but we have not yet reviewed that proposal.

Q So they didn't give you all a heads up? And do you support the measure?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, we haven't reviewed the measure. We are certainly aware, and we have been in close touch with Senator Sanders. The President has himself been in touch with him over the course of the last several weeks. But we don't have — we have not reviewed and we don't have a final conclusion on that proposal.

I will tell you that we are committed to finding the best path forward to increasing the minimum wage, and that will require a number of conversations with leaders in Congress and members who are committed to this issue moving forward.

Q What message did the U.S. want to send to Iran with the bombing in Syria? And then, how does that influence or change the negotiations to get Iran on the nuclear deal?

MS. PSAKI: Well, first, let me say, in terms of what message we are sending: We are sending — the President is sending an unambiguous message that he's going to act to protect Americans. And when threats are posed, he has the right to take an action at the time and in the manner of his choosing.

He also is going to take those actions in a manner that's deliberative and that has the objective of de-escalating activity in both Syria and Iraq.

In terms of our engagement — or you're talking about Iran?

Q On the nuclear deal. Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: On the nuclear deal? So the status of that at this point in time remains that the United States is open to having a diplomatic conversation, to sitting at the table and having that discussion with our P5+1 partners, as well as the Iranians. We are not going to take steps to ease sanctions. We have not put that on the table. So right now the Europeans have issued an invitation, and we're waiting to hear back, the last I've heard, from the Iranians.

Q Do you have any update on the casualties? I hadn't seen anything — numbers — before we left.

MS. PSAKI: I don't have an update. I would certainly refer you to DOD on that. I know they'll be briefing later today.

Q Jen, what is the legal authority for these strikes, as you yourself said in 2017, when the last administration was here, that "Assad is a brutal dictator," as you said at that time, "but Syria is a sovereign country"? So what's the legal authority for this action?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me first address the legal authority for this specific action.

As a matter of domestic law, the President took this action pursuant to his Article 2 authority to defend U.S. personnel. The targets were chosen to correspond to the recent attacks on facilities and to deter the risk of additional attacks over the coming weeks. As a matter of international law, the United States acted pursuant to its right of self-defense, as reflected in Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. The strikes were both necessary to address the threat and proportionate to the prior attacks.

And I can assure you — and I spoke with the national security team — that there was a thorough, legal process and review in advance.

As it pertains to the attack in 2017, 2017 was an attack on Syrian military installations in response to a chemical weapons attack. Last night was a strike on militant groups in defense of U.S. personnel under attack in Iraq. There's a massive difference in both policy and law.

Q What is President Biden's red line? For the last administration, Donald Trump communicated, "Basically, if an American was killed, there would be action." Here, there's no evidence an American was killed. It appears to be a non-American civilian contractor. What is the Biden administration's red line?

MS. PSAKI: I've been doing this long enough not to set new red lines on behalf of a President of the United States and the Commander-in-Chief. But what I can reiterate for you is that this action was taken — it was a proportionate military response. It was conducted together with diplomatic measures that were also underway. It included consultation with coalition partners. And again, it sends an unambiguous message about the President's commitment to protect American and coalition personnel.

Q Did the President communicate to King Salman that this strike was coming in advance? And which countries and which leaders were told in advance of this happening?

MS. PSAKI: I'm happy to check with our national security team if there's more we can read out about which coalition partners were briefed in advance. But that was certainly part of our engagement in advance of the strikes.

Q On Russia, the White House released a pretty forceful statement today on the annexation of Crimea. When will we know more about whether we're going to see additional sanctions on Russia?

MS. PSAKI: Weeks, not months. It's an ongoing process, and as you know, that process includes, of course, a review of not just their engagement in the 2020 Election, but also the bounties that were reportedly on troops, and also the SolarWinds attack. There's a number of components.

We want to give the team — the cyber team, the national security team, the time to complete that process. And, of course, as in any case, the President resolve — has the option, I should say, of responding in a manner and time of his choosing, seen and unseen. But I would expect weeks, not months, before we conclude that review.

Q And on Neera Tanden, do you know if she has spoken with Lisa Murkowski or Kyrsten Sinema yet?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any updates on her specific engagements, and we have not read out those specific engagements from our end. We certainly would leave it to members of the Senate to read out, if they would like to, their private engagements with our nominees.

Q And on Khashoggi one more time: Are you saying that you are unaware of whether — that he brought up that with King Salman, or that you're just not willing to give additional information at this time?

MS. PSAKI: I'm saying I have no more from the call to read out for you.

Q And should we expect to hear from Biden today on the — once the House bill passes?

MS. PSAKI: Yes. We are — I'm just going to knock on wood here. (Knocks on a side panel.) Hope that's okay. That's not wood. That's fine.

I would expect, obviously, we are going to remain very involved behind the scenes with Democrats, with Republicans, with many members and officials at every level as we work toward House passage. We take nothing for granted. If the bill passes, I certainly would expect you to hear from the President.

Q Jen, what are you doing about this influx of migrants coming to the border right now? I know you've addressed this, sort of, broadly right now, but is there any concern that the President and this administration's sort of messaging may unintentionally be inviting more migrants to come to the country right now?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me be abundantly clear — and at every opportunity, this is what we convey from the President to the Secretary of State, to our officials in the region: This is not the time to come. It's a dangerous trip. We have limited processing at the border, but it is very, very limited. The vast majority of people who come to the border will be turned away, back — to take the treacherous journey back. This is not the time to come. We need time to put in place a humane immigration system, working with members of Congress to do that.

Q Jen, this week, Justin Trudeau said that President Biden and the administration have committed to taking an active role in getting his citizens Spavor and Kovrig back. Is the U.S. thinking about — or is the administration thinking about withdrawing the request for Meng Wanzhou's extradition in order to help Justin Trudeau out?

MS. PSAKI: I certainly know this is a priority to the Prime Minister. We all know that. And it's something he spoke about after the meeting. But I would refer you to the Department of Justice. That's a legal — would be a legal decision and action.

Q And one more foreign policy question.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

Q Again, with MBS in Saudi Arabia, he's alleged to have involvement in Khashoggi's murder. I mean, are sanctions possible? Cuts of arms sales? Could he be sanctioned personally?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me first say that we've been clear at every level that our intention is to recalibrate the relationship, and this would be a different relationship with the Saudi government.

At the same time, of course, we want to end the war in Yemen. We want to ensure the humanitarian crisis is addressed. And the President and every member of our team is not going to hold back in voicing concern and taking action as needed about humanitari- — or about human rights abuses.

I will say again that we expect the report. We are going to abide by our legal obligation to have that report released through our intelligence community. Once that report is released, I would expect, you know, any actions would be announced after that report. So stay tuned.

Q On the minimum wage, has the Senate parliamentarian's decision caused the President to rethink his views on the filibuster at all? There is certainly push coming from the left to just do away with it to get some of these policies — Voting Rights Act, minimum wage.

MS. PSAKI: Certainly we've seen that, and we're well aware of the push. The President continues to believe that a package that will bring necessary relief to the American people; that will get shots in the arms of Americans; that will reopen schools; that will get direct checks to people that is supported by 70 percent or more of the American public, including the majority of Republicans, should garner Republican support. And we are still working toward that.

Q On Carrizo Springs, you have said that isn't a detention facility. But can they leave of their — can they leave?

MS. PSAKI: The facility in Texas?

Q Yeah. Can the people being held there leave? Or — or what is — how would you describe it?

MS. PSAKI: I would describe it as a shelter. I would describe it as a place where we keep kids, who are under the age of 18 and taking a treacherous journey into this country, safe. I would describe it as a place where we ensure that kids who are here without their parents are not — where they can live and be safe, and we can work to process and find them a home, whether it's with a family member or with a vetted, approved family — I'm sorry about that — vetted, approved house to stay in, where they can get access to education, mental health services, health services.

There are no good choices here. The only other options are to send kids back, which is what the prior administration did — we don't think that's humane — or to send them to homes that have not been vetted. There have been a range of problems with that, including kids being sent into trafficking.

So this is the best choice we found. We had to open the facility because of the impact of COVID and the fact that other facilities are — you know, we can't use all of the beds that are available in order to abide by COVID protocols.

Q The acting Capitol Police chief said there's known threats to the State of the Union address. Is the White House aware of those threats? And is that factoring into any of the timing right now of when the President plans to deliver?

MS. PSAKI: I would send you to the Secret Service for any comments on those specific threats. I can tell you, broadly speaking, that we are — the President and the entire team has decided that he's not going to speak to his forward-looking agenda, much of what he talked about on the campaign — his Build Back Better agenda — until after the American Rescue Plan passes because that's where our focus and our — our focus is at this point in time.

Q Back on the airstrike: Can you peel back the curtain a little bit and talk a little bit about the decision-making process, like over what period of time was the President considering doing the strike? Was it something he decided on quickly, or did he need days to think about it? Any of that, sort of, behind-the-scenes?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Well, again, I know the Department of Defense is briefing today, as is the State Department, and hopefully they will be able to provide you additional color. I will say that it was important to the President to ensure there was a proper intel assessment and to take the time to do that and ensure there was work done to identify the right targets. And that's why it has been a couple of days since the initial attacks.

But in terms of additional color, I would send you to the Department of Defense or the State Department.

Q And does he think that Assad should go — must go? Does the President think Assad must go?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, I think that the President has long said — or long before he was President — that, you know, he believes that there needs to be a diplomatic solution, a political path forward. You know, I don't think — I think, clearly, the circumstances in Syria remain as dire, or more, today than they were just a couple of years ago.

Q Did the White House invite Ted Cruz to join the other congressional members — the congressional delegation today?

MS. PSAKI: There was neither an invitation nor a request for him to attend. There are a number of members of both parties attending and joining the President on the trip today.

Q I have a question from my colleagues at the Voice of America. They ask: More than 30 Democrats have sent President Biden a letter asking him to give up sole nuclear launch authority. Does the President have any view on whether he should be the only person with the nuclear codes?

MS. PSAKI: I would certainly have to look at the letter and talk to our national security team. And I have not seen the letter. I can talk to them and see if we can get you a response.

Q To the Voice of America.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. Voice of America. We have to do that.

Q Back to the strike yesterday — I mean, it does raise questions, again, about returning the Article 1 power back to Congress. Tim Kaine is out with a statement this morning about it as well. Secretary Blinken, during his confirmation hearing, said that the administration wanted to take a look at that. Do you agree with Democrats? Does President Biden agree with Democrats that those should be reformed or repealed, even — those authorizations?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, I think I outlined very clearly what the legal authority was. And certainly the President is always happy to have a conversation with members of both parties about how we can work together on a range of issues, including our national

security approach, moving forward.

Q For clarity — maybe I missed this: Have you said which members of Congress were notified in advance of this strike?

MS. PSAKI: I did not give a detail on that. I'm happy to check and see if there's more — any specifics on that we can also offer.

Q Does the White House have any — given the Khashoggi part of the conversation with King Salman yesterday, whether or not Khashoggi was a topic or not — given what we know about his responsibility, MBS's responsibility here, does the White House have any reservations about MBS's position in the line of succession that he would be the future leader of Saudi Arabia?

MS. PSAKI: Again, this is for the government of Saudi Arabia to determine the path forward on and their future leadership.

I will say that the President has been clear, and we've been clear by our actions, that we're going to recalibrate the relationship, including ensuring that engagement happens counterpart to counterpart, and hence the President spoke with the King. And that that's the appropriate counterpart — head of government, head of state. And that's what we would anticipate moving forward.

Q Lastly, yesterday, you celebrated 50 million shots since President Biden took — began his term. That was only 36 days. It gives you a lot of time left to 100 days. What is the goal? What do you think we can achieve in 100 days, in terms of vaccinations right now?

MS. PSAKI: Well, clearly, we're ahead of schedule and working to expedite vaccines to the American people across the country. And even visiting the vaccination center that the President will be visiting today is an example of the kind of facilities that we are investing in, that we're working with, directly through the federal government, to expedite that. I'm not going to set a new goal for you here today, but I can confirm for you and certainly reiterate for you that the President wants to meet that goal and surpass it. And, you know, maybe we'll have more to say soon.

Q Can I ask — this kind of trip is a very traditional consoler-in-chief kind of mission for a President to do.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

Q How does President Biden prepare for this? How does he feel about doing this sort of thing?

MS. PSAKI: You know, I traveled with him last Friday to Michigan. I'm just forgetting where we went. And, you know, he was — he had a conversation with the Acting FEMA Administrator on the call, and he was already asking when he would go, when it would be appropriate for him to go, because he likes to see the details and likes to see things in person. And he wants to see how the public is engaging and have those conversations. And that's important to him as — in terms of his governing style. It's important to him to hear directly from people on what their needs are.

And I expect that what he will do during this trip today is ask every single person he sees, "What do you need? How can I help you more? And what can we get more for you — from you — for you, from the federal government?" And it's important to him that he does that on the ground, in person — he has that direct engagement.

Q Thanks, Jen.

MS. PSAKI: Thanks, everyone.

11:58 A.M. CST