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**White House Press Briefing
James s. Brady Press Briefing Room**

White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs

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Commences at: 1:18 p.m. EST [41 minutes]

Press Sec.: Good afternoon. Let me – before I take a few of your questions, let me... A couple of announcements for you. First of all, the President made three phone calls today to foreign leader: first, to Prime Minister Harper of Canada; next, to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia; and lastly, to Prime Minister Brown of the United Kingdom. We'll have a readout for you guys a little bit later on what was covered in each of those calls.

In addition to that, the President has just talked to Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and congratulated her on her appointment. And I want to read a statement from the President on that:

Governor Paterson made a wonderful choice in appointing Kirsten Gillibrand to fill Secretary Clinton's seat in the United States Senate. I am confident that she will continue Secretary Clinton's distinguished service to the people of New York and to our country. During her career, Kirsten has been a strong voice for transparency and reform in government, and shares the belief that government should be open, accessible and work for all of our citizens.

In Congress and as the Special Counsel for the Department of Housing and Urban Development she worked to strengthen public and private partnerships, to invest in infrastructure, and in New York's economy. At this time of great challenge, I know that

Kirsten has the integrity, character and dedication to public service to help us achieve our greatest goals.

And also we'll have some information later today on executive orders – later this afternoon. And with that, let me take a few of your questions.

Press: Thanks, Robert. This morning, this event with the bicameral or bipartisan leaders that the President had, obviously what he wants to do is draw on as much bipartisan support as he can for the stimulus package. But will there come a point when the President and Democratic leadership in Congress just decide to have the vote and pass the package, whether Republicans like it or not? They're asking for things that are probably not likely to get in there.

Press Sec.: Well, let me step back and give you a little...maybe begin with a little bit broader answer, because I think there was a lot of agreement in that room this morning about the notion that we are facing an economic crisis unlike we've seen in quite some time. There was an agreement that we must act quickly to stimulate the economy, to create jobs, to put money back in people's pockets. And there was a commitment to ensuring that the funds that are appropriated to do that are spent quickly.

The President was pleased to be part of the meeting with members of the House and Senate – both parties. He wants to hear ideas, and hopes that Washington can put aside its partisan differences in order to get the American people what they deserve, and that is, a package that will get the economy going.

Press: Well, let me ask that a little bit different way, then. Republicans came out to the stakeout and talked about some ideas having to do with taxes and other things that they really want to see in that package.

Press Sec.: Right.

Press: Is the President going to listen to those ideas and include them so he gets their votes?

Press Sec.: Well, the President is certainly going to listen to any ideas. As he said in his first meeting on Capitol Hill...

Press: *[Inaudible.]*

Press Sec.: Well, let me answer it largely the way you asked it. He wants to solicit those ideas. As you know, the letter came down from the House Republicans asking to see the President about a series of ideas, and that meeting happened today. The President will also go to Capitol Hill the

beginning of next week to talk to the Republican caucuses and solicit their input and their ideas.

The legislative process, as we all know, is a long and winding road that we assume will continue until we get a package that Congress passes and the President signs. We look forward to continuing to seek their ideas, to seek their input, and have a process whereby those ideas can be debated and voted on. I think that's what the American people want, and I think, most of all, that's what they deserve.

Press: Robert, this morning the President talked about at least a three-legged stool, in terms of packages for the economy. What are the other legs aside from the stimulus package? And second question, and perhaps related, does the President intend to go back to Congress and ask for more money to clean up the banking system?

Press Sec.: Well, I think the President has said throughout the transition and throughout this process of putting together a reinvestment and recovery plan was that that alone was not a magic or silver bullet for this economy. Obviously, there is going to be – *have* to be a financial stability package to ensure that credit flows, that families are able to borrow money, that small businesses are able to borrow money. And I think, as the President said today at the beginning of that meeting, that we are going to have to very quickly look at a financial regulatory system that ensures we don't get into this mess again.

I think, actually, there's probably more legs to that stool that he talked about; that only through a series of all of these things happening are we likely to move the economy in a place that creates more jobs, that lends families and small businesses the money that they need, and ensures the American people have confidence that this kind of stuff isn't going to happen again.

On your second question, and I said this yesterday, the economic team is putting together a series of proposals and some ideas for the President on a financial stability package. The principles that were outlined by Secretary-designate Geithner to the Finance Committee, and by Larry Summers to the House and the Senate last week before – I think it was last week; they all run together – the votes on the additional \$350 billion that include a plan to address home foreclosures, to ensure that executive compensation is reined in, and again, to ensure, as I've said a couple of times already here today, that the money that banks receive is lent to consumers – families and small businesses – to ensure that the economy works. And I think that's – he looks forward to hearing recommendations from his team on that.

Press: Is there a time frame on that, Robert?

Press Sec.: Soon.

Press: Robert, I know that the President has said that he wants to create between 3 to 4 million jobs with this package...

Press Sec.: Save or create.

Press: Exactly. There is skepticism among Republicans whether or not this could happen. What kind of reassurances has he given? Then, on Pakistan, was he consulted before the strike, or did he consult with Pakistan on that?

Press Sec.: Well, let me take your Pakistan question first. As you know, I'm not going to comment on those matters. On creating jobs...

[Laughter; overlapping, inaudible comments.]

Press: Can you repeat your question? What do you mean by that, Robert? What do you mean by that? You will never speak of any operational action taken by the United States military? Is that what you're saying?

Press Sec.: I'm not going to speak about these matters today.

Press: Okay, I was just a little confused because you took the question and then...

Press Sec.: But I gave you my answer.

Press: And that... Okay, second question.

Press Sec.: My answer was, I wasn't going to talk about that. The first question related to saving or creating 3 or 4 million jobs in order to get this economy going again. The charge that he gave his economic team was to come up with a plan that would do just that.

Our CEA-designate Chair, Christine Romer, presented the President in December with a report and some modeling about what would happen to our economy if nothing was done to reinvigorate it. And we've released some of that information to you on some Saturday morning radio addresses that showed us getting quickly into an unemployment rate that is in the double digits.

The team was presented with that data, and came up with a plan to ensure that we can create or save three to four million jobs to get the economy

moving again. We have all the confidence that those goals can be met given some of the things that the President has outlined that he hopes Congress will do: spending money on infrastructure and investments, and putting money back into people's pockets; some assistance for state governments as they deal with budget crunches; and ensuring that things like Medicaid and health care aren't cut. But the economic team put that together, and we believe we can meet those goals. Chip?

Chip Reid: [CBS] On this idea of bipartisan, obviously he has made very clear he wants a broad bipartisan majority to pass this stimulus package. But you've got people, even like Dick Durbin, his good buddy, who says if it's passed with 63 votes or 73 votes, history won't remember it. And you've got Republican leaders now saying that on the House side, Democrats are just *barreling* ahead with very little interest in any kind of bipartisan support. Does he need to be twisting arms of *Democrats* to get them to take the idea of bipartisan support more seriously?

Press Sec.: Well, I think the letter that was sent and the action that was taken on that letter to put together a bipartisan meeting today should demonstrate for Democrats, Republicans, and the American people that the President is serious about doing this in a bipartisan way. Again...

Chip Reid: But Democrats on the Hill don't seem to be serious about it. Is he applying pressure on them to get them into the fold here?

Press Sec.: Again, I think the meeting today demonstrates – and the existence of members of both parties demonstrates – the willingness to work in a bipartisan manner. It's what the American people most deserve.

Again, I think that one of the things we have to stress is that there was a lot of agreement in that room this morning. Some tendency is to cover things that we disagree on. I think there's -- there should be also a tendency to cover what *is* agreed upon, which is that we're facing a great crisis, that we must act quickly, and that we do so in a prudent way that changes the way Washington has previously done business. Those are the tests that the President has set forth for his economic team.

He believes that Congress is making good progress. He appreciates that, and looks forward to making sure that something is on his desk by President's Day recess so that we can get this economy moving again. Jay?

Press: The President wants this package to be bipartisan and he wants it to be stimulative. But when it passed out of the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday, not one Republican voted for it. And there are lots of elements of this bill that economists say are not stimulative. There's \$726

million for after-school snacks, \$50 million for the NEA, \$44 million to repair the USDA, and \$200 million to work on the National Mall, including grass. Does President Obama think that what passed out of the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday was bipartisan and was stimulative?

Press Sec.: There's no question that the President believes that the bill is stimulative. Our analysis of the legislation right now is that 75 percent of this money will be spent in the next 18 months to create jobs and to get people working and to get the economy moving again. Absolutely, it's stimulative. It puts money back in people's pockets that we believe they will spend and help the economy.

Look, I don't want to get into this or that vote count in certain committees. This is – as I said, this process is long and one that will wind through many curves, and the President looks forward to working with members of Congress from both parties to ensure that it happens. Major?

M. Garrett: [*Major Garrett, FOX News*] President Bush, after 9/11, said the United States and its government was engaged in a war on terror. Is that what this administration calls it, and if not, why? Secondly, on your point about stimulative, the CBO has said that \$219 billion of the \$825 billion in the House bill cannot be spent and will not be spent until 2011 at the earliest. How is that...?

Press Sec.: Is this the CBO report that came out earlier this week?

M. Garrett: Yes.

Press Sec.: Okay.

M. Garrett: Yes. What is the President's appraisal of that CBO analysis, and what do you know here that the Congressional Budget Office, a neutral observer, doesn't know?

Press Sec.: Well, let me outline what we know.

M. Garrett: Don't forget the first question.

Press Sec.: The first question I think I alluded to some yesterday. Look, I would point you to the words that the President said in his inaugural address about the challenges that we face.

On the stimulus package – and I've got a letter that we'll make sure that each of you have that our OMB Director sent to the Senate Budget Committee Chairman, Kent Conrad – we believe, looking at the packages

that exist, that 75 percent of the money will be spent out in an 18-month period of time, with great stimulative effect.

The CBO report looked at a...only a portion of the legislation and looked at that portion of the legislation before it began the committee process that Jake was talking about – a snapshot in time that's long past. It doesn't reflect increased spend-out rates. The letter that Mr. Orszag sent to Conrad states that the administration will hold the line on ensuring that at least 75 percent of that money is spent out over an 18-month period. And there are things that can be done in the legislation to ensure that that happens.

Let me give you an example, just so you know. There's a provision to speed the money that says if in -- I think in the CBO analysis was 120 days on some projects -- if the money is not spent, then that money is basically reshuffled to other projects. They found that the spend-out rate on 120 days was actually less than a spend-out rate on 180 days – right? So that legislation gets tweaked to 180 days, because the CBO determined that that reshuffling of money would delay its spend-out rates.

So those tweaks can be made, and have – I think in some cases have been made, to ensure that three-quarters of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act are spent in the first year and a half. That will create jobs; that would get people working again; get the economy moving again. That's what the President set out to do, and that's what this bill does.

M. Garrett: If I could follow up, since you mentioned Christine Romer. She has a very substantial body of written work as an economist, assessing what brought the United States out of recession and depression. And in each of those reports, she concluded it was monetary policy that was a driving force in lifting the U.S. economy, not direct government spending. She said that about the Depression and subsequent recessions. What is it about this circumstance that gives you greater confidence than she found, looking at all of those economic circumstances that direct spending can turn the tide?

Press Sec.: Well, I'm not an economist and I don't play one on TV, and I won't play one on TV today. Obviously, the Fed and a number of other places have taken a lot of monetary steps that I think many have commented – we have very few of those left.

The report that she prepared for the President, based on the package that we were putting together, did show that the plan would create jobs, would stimulate the economy, would make important and necessary investments

for our long-term growth. She's confident, the economic team is confident, and most importantly, the President is confident, that this is a package that will help turn our economy around.

Things will likely get worse before they get better. But I believe, and the President believes, that Congress has to act quickly to ensure that this package gets on his desk by President's Day recess, so that we can begin turning the economy around. Chuck?

C. Todd: [*Chuck Todd, NBC News*] Robert, two questions. One, do you rule out asking for another stimulus package after this year if the economy -- if there's a determination that more spending...?

Press Sec.: Look, let's get one done -- [*laughs*] --

C. Todd: Okay.

Press Sec.: -- and start seeing that impact the economy before I get into hypotheticals about what we might do later on in the year.

C. Todd: And other U.S. officials have confirmed these Predator drone air strikes - - Pakistan. What is it about...[cannot] confirming whether the President was consulted...?

Press Sec.: I'm not going to get into these matters.

C. Todd: How does that compromise operational security?

Press Sec.: I'm not going to get into these matters.

Press: Don't you think there's justifiable curiosity, Robert, about the President's first military action...?

Press Sec.: I think there are many things that you should be justifiably curious about, but I'm not going to get into talking about this.

C. Todd?: If other members of the U.S. government are confirming this, why is it that you can't comment on it.

Press Sec.: I'm not going to get into these matters.

Press: What concrete, hit-home factors will the average person see after 18 months of this 75 percent payout?

Press Sec.: Well, we believe that more people will be back to work. We believe more people will have money in their pocket to spend. We believe that

through a series of steps we'll also have a financial stability package that will have credit flowing so that people can borrow money, that will address, begin to address, the home foreclosure crisis that millions of Americans face, whether they live in homes that are being foreclosed in, or they live near homes that are being foreclosed in.

I think there are a lot of things that the American people will see as a part of this package. That's why the President believes, and members of Congress shared in that belief today, that it has to get done quickly.

Press: Do you see any turnaround in economic indicators that that will be noticeable after 18 months?

Press Sec.: Well, I refer you to the reports that we put out about this. I do think that, as I've said, as the President has said, this is – it's not going to get better overnight. We didn't get here overnight. And things are likely to get worse before they get better.

Our hope is that this work can be done quickly, that the money can get into the economy quickly. That's why we're committed strongly to ensuring that that money is spent prudently, but done in a way that does it quickly enough to create jobs, and that all those tests can be met by this package. Yes, sir.

Press: Robert, the President this morning expressed a degree of concern over the...some banks that have remodeled their offices, he mentioned bathrooms and so forth. And these are some of the same banks that have gotten taxpayer assistance. Does he plan to try to recover the money, or what did he have in mind there?

Press Sec.: Well, I think as I've mentioned, as was outlined in principles that Larry Summers sent to Congress and that Secretary-designate Geithner have talked to the Finance Committee about, that as we move forward with a financial stability package, he's asked his team to ensure that safeguards and controls are put into place to ensure that money that's gotten doesn't go to line the pockets of people that may have gotten us into some of these messes.

That's the charge that he's given his economic team to come back to him on as we move forward on these packages. The American people need to be reasonably...the American people need to be greatly assured that their hard-earned money is not going to the bonuses or the remodeling of an office at a bank that's in trouble. That money needs to go directly to the American people in the form of loans, whether it's a student loan, or an auto loan, or a small business so that it can meet its payroll.

That's what the financial stability pack-age *should* do, and that's what he's asked his team to ensure that it's put together so that the next money that's spent to stabilize our financial system is spent differently and more transparently than that first set of money was used for.

Press: Will he try to recover the money?

Press Sec.: I'm not going to get ahead of the recommendations that the team are going to put together and put in front of the President. Laura?

Laura: [*Full name unidentified*] If the stimulus package winds up passing Congress with no or very minimal Republican support, will the administration view that as a disappointment?

Press Sec.: Well, again...

Laura: It's not a hypothetical because...

Press Sec.: Yeah...

Laura: ...given the committee vote it's a very real possibility in the House, so...

Press Sec.: Well, we've all spent a lot of time in Washington. I'm not going to prejudge the final outcome of a legislative vote based on the inner workings of a particular committee vote. I think we can all go back and look and find examples of reasons why.

The President strongly believes, and members of Congress that were here today representing Democrats and Republicans, believe we're in a crisis and that we have to act quickly. That's the charge that he laid out for his economic team. That's the charge that Congress understands and that Congress is acting quickly on.

He's happy with the progress that they've made, and that the American people deserve two political parties that can work together to address the most urgent and important needs of the American people in this economy. And that's the definition by which we'll measure success.

Press: Would he veto a bill if it didn't have Republican support? Would he veto the bill?

Press Sec.: Guys, guys – you know, you guys are at least several weeks ahead of where the process is.

Laura: [*Full name not provided*] Just to follow up – I mean...

Press Sec.: No, hold on, let me give you a fuller answer to the myriad of hypothetical questions. The President believes, and Congress believes... That's why they came together today to work on this -- this is a work in progress. It didn't end today; it didn't start today. There's a committee process; there's a floor process. We all understand the different sausage-making aspects of legislation. I think it's a little premature to prejudge all of this.

I think the one thing you can take from today is, the President underscored his willingness to listen to ideas from both parties, invited members of both parties in both the House and the Senate to come down and share those ideas; looks forward to going up to Capitol Hill Tuesday to do the very same thing, and continue making steady and sure progress on legislation that will – we believe, will get this economy moving again for the American people.

Press: [*Unidentified*] Robert, in the interest of either speed or a bigger bipartisan vote, the President's got the bully pulpit now. Does he anticipate traveling, trying to sell the plan more, turn up the heat, perhaps, in members of Congress and their districts?

Press Sec.: Well, I think the President believes that the steps that happened today and that have happened in the past few weeks are constructive to getting strong bipartisan support for this. I don't know of any travel plans that the President has at the moment. I think his work and attention are urgently needed here in Washington. He will travel up to Capitol Hill to listen to more of those ideas, and ensure their outcome. Ann?

Ann: [*Possibly Ann Compton, ABC News*] State of the Union address – will he deliver one?

Press Sec.: I think it is likely that he will speak to Congress, to a joint session of Congress sometime in February. I don't believe that we've got a date nailed down as far as that. I know there's been interest among your bosses as to when that might be, and how that coincides with *Dancing With the Stars*, but, uh...

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: And I don't mean Congress when I say *Dancing With the Stars*.

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: So it's something we'll do. I just don't know the time frame for when that happens, and when that will take place. Michael?

Michael: There was a report today that the President is withdrawing Jim Jones and Larry Summers from the World Economic Forum at Davos. Is there a reason for that? Is there some message that's trying to be sent for the fact that the two of them are not going as originally planned?

Press Sec.: I don't know anything about that. So I don't have anything for you on that. I apologize. Pete?

Pete: Robert, if by your estimate, 75 percent of this money would be spent in the first 18 months, that means 25 percent wouldn't, and therefore wouldn't be useful in the immediate term of jump-starting the economy. Why spend that, then? Shouldn't that be done in a different form[at] [inaudible]?

Press Sec.: The President – this administration's committed to ensuring that... I'll read the letter: "We're committed to maintaining at least a 75 percent spend-out rate for the package as a whole as the legislation moves through the Senate and House, and into conference." And again, I'll get you guys all a copy of the letter that was sent to Senator Conrad.

Pete: __ the other 25 percent is excessive, then?

Press Sec.: No, I think that -- and I'll get you some comments from Peter Orszag on this -- that we also want to ensure that, in *his* terms, we don't create an air pocket whereby there is no economic recovery and reinvestment, and that somehow it all just stops at once. I think Peter thinks that's important, and so does the President.

Press: You had a question yesterday on Osama bin Laden. You said you would check and get back to us.

Press Sec.: I think folks *did* check and get back to you guys.

Press: [Same as above] They did?

Press: Robert?

Press Sec.: Yes – Peter.

Peter: [Last name not provided] What level of tax cuts is the President willing to accept in this stimulus package? And also, there's been some analysis that shows that the tax cuts that have been proposed would not necessarily help small business, but would help business at large. Does the President have a feeling about that? Should whatever level of tax cuts is present, should that be targeted for a small business?

Press Sec.: Well, I think the President believes that a tax cut should be targeted toward creating jobs and getting the economy moving again. I don't know that there's a magic dry erase board with a center proportion or figure on it somewhere in the White House. The President believes that those tax cuts should go to creating jobs and putting money back into the pockets of people who've seen their wages slide, even as some have done quite well in an economy that is suffering for them. I think that's what the package does. Christina, do you have...?

C. Bellatoni: [*Christina Bellatoni, Washington Times*] Two for you. Did the President give his email address to anybody in that bipartisan congressional meeting today?

[*Laughter.*]

C. Bellatoni: And, then, why was Mark Dybul first asked to remain as coordinator of the Global AIDS Office, and then asked to submit his resignation? What type of leader would President Obama like to have in the AIDS office?

Press Sec.: Yeah. I was going to think of something cute on the email address, but nothing comes to mind that would be good. I think we covered the BlackBerry yesterday; that there's a small group of people that are able to BlackBerry with the President so that he can stay in touch with them.

I think that the President has certainly asked members of Congress that have ideas to call the White House. I know that Rahm has certainly given out his cell phone number to members of the House, the Senate and probably a lot of you all in here...

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: ...to stay in touch if people have ideas that meet the President's test of getting the economy moving again. I don't have anything on the AIDS office. I have not read anything on that.

Press: On his BlackBerry, Robert: the President said yesterday when he left here that it wasn't up and running yet. Is it up and running today?

Press Sec.: I will check. I believe that it – I believe that it is. But I will – I will double-check on that. Margaret?

Margaret: [*Full name not provided.*] Thanks. We've been getting some pre-action, I guess you'd call it, today from family planning advocates who expect that the President will lift the gag rule on NGOs accepting funding and talking about abortion, etc., and I'm wondering if you can, in advance, give us any sort of preview about his thinking on this – its impact? And

also, how might that -- is there anything comparable domestically that he's planning to do with regard to abortion policy?

Press Sec.: As I said yesterday, as a part of my overall career advancement, I've found it useful to get out of the way of a principal that might be making news on certain subjects later on in the afternoon. And I will exercise that right again today and ask you to stay tuned for a statement from the President, possibly, on those issues.

Press: Yesterday you said that there would be a very limited number of waivers for the ethics lobbying policy. There's thousands of people covered by that policy. Does "limited" mean dozens? Does it mean a handful? And also, where are those waivers being approved? Is it being approved at the Cabinet Secretary level that is then forwarded to the Counsel's Office, or is that something that Rahm is taking a look at every waiver request as it comes in?

Press Sec.: I think that that work is done mostly out of the Counsel's Office. And I should restate part of what I said yesterday relating to ethics: that I think many observers that have watched the way administrations conduct their business, either ethically or in the open, found that the policies that the President outlined and signed on his first full day at the White House exceed that of any other administration in the history of our government.

Press: [*Same as above*] Can you give any estimate? I mean, limited numbers -- should we expect many more?

Press Sec.: I don't have anything more than "limited number."

Press: The President spoke on Tuesday about how he wanted to have a new way forward with the Muslim world. How is he going to start bringing that about? And does he still intend to travel to a major Islamic forum in the first 100 days to take that message?

Press Sec.: Let me punt on that until we have something to add to it specifically. Obviously the President was, in his first act in the Oval Office, involved in reengaging this country in a process to bring about a lasting peace to the Middle East. Some of the content of the calls that he made today were about that.

You all saw and read his comments yesterday at the State Department regarding what's happening in the Middle East, and obviously a commitment in former Senator George Mitchell to be actively involved in this process to bring about that lasting peace. Former Senator Mitchell is somebody who has a long record of bringing about peace in troubled

parts of the world, and I think the President believes that he's got the right person for the job. Mr. [Harwood?]?

Press: When does the President expect to appoint a so-called auto czar? And do you contemplate flexibility in that March 31st deadline for the firms to demonstrate viability under the terms of the bailout?

Press Sec.: I don't want to get ahead of any announcements that the President might make, per my dictum earlier. I think that obviously, the auto industry is something that this government has been involved in at the end of the previous administration, and obviously those are issues that this administration will be involved in. But I don't want to get ahead of sort of where any of those announcements might be made.

Press: Does March 31st give you adequate time – give the administration adequate time for judging the viability of those firms?

Press Sec.: Well, I think the...as I've... I think the plans are due sort of mid-February. I think that once those come in we'll have a better sense of sort of how to evaluate all that.

Press: Robert, could you explain the kind of information the President will be getting in his daily economic briefing, and what it might add to what the general public knows about what's happening in the economy?

Press Sec.: Well, I did not go to today's -- or I think today's has maybe not happened quite yet. But yesterday, they ran through what some of the economic statistics that the government has come out with, what that means about what we know about the overall health of the economy. Obviously, it wasn't good news; the jobless claims numbers were bigger than they've been in quite some time, and the housing news was quite grim, too. Mr. Summers went through some developments, as well.

The President asked that this be done each day in a way that's analogous to the highly professional way that he gets intelligence information each day; that we obviously don't have a comparable department that does that, and this is done throughout government by Treasury and NEC and CEA and a whole host of other departments that could find, on any given day, being part of that briefing and information that's brought to the President's attention on different news, I think, without getting into the specifics of exactly what he sees each day.

Press: Thank you. There has been some talk about making the White House a green example on your environmental energy front. Is there any thought to doing an energy audit, having some experimental energy-saving pro-

grams here at the White House to make this a natural laboratory for energy efficiency?

Press Sec.: You know, I know the President – obviously this is an issue that...energy efficiency was something he talked about extensively throughout the campaign, the need to make our country far less dependent on foreign sources of oil and energy. And I believe that some of that will take place here in the White House. I don't have anything specific, though, on that right now.

Press: Thank you, Robert.

Press: Robert, before we let you go, could you stick with the week-ahead Friday tradition...

Press Sec.: Which is...?

Press: [*Same as above*] ...and give us a look ahead?

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: The Super Bowl is in a week...

Press: You need to tell us everything that's going to happen next week, every day.

Press Sec.: And succinctly, so that we can all write it down...

Press: Out of an overabundance of caution.

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: Sure. I'm not yet sworn in as the White House Press Secretary, so...

Press: In addition, some...at least a rough sketch on the weekend plans...

Press Sec.: Yes.

Press: Thank you.

Press Sec.: I'm far more informed about that than I am about your previous question.

Press: We'll ask you next Friday.

Press Sec.: You give me a little heads up and I will be more prepared for the traditions I'm not yet familiar with. The last scheduling guidance that I

got for the President was that he would have an economic meeting in the White House tomorrow, and I *will* find out for you whether that's something that we'll do a picture or a spray of.

Press: Who with?

Press Sec.: Let me get all that information; I think it will be a broader group of people. And we'll also...I will endeavor to get you guys a little better guidance for this week. My former colleagues neglected to tell me about your Friday traditions, so...

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: So let me work on...

Press: Nothing on Sunday?

Press Sec.: Nothing that I know of right now, and I asked for guidance on the whole weekend.

Press: Is he going to church?

Press Sec.: I don't know; I can certainly check on that.

Press: Radio address topic?

Press Sec.: The radio address will happen and...

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: That – I guess I buried the lead on that, right? I will endeavor as a good peace offering to try to get that to you all at a time that is easier for you to use and understand and won't have you checking your inboxes at six a.m. on a Saturday.

Press: Are you going to keep posting that on YouTube, or is it going to go on the White House -- a video of that going to go on...?

Press Sec.: I think the plan is for it to go. I'm sure that's a tradition, too.

[*Laughter.*]

Press Sec.: I believe it will go on the White House website. You know, the hope is that – the President talked about making sure the American people understand what he's thinking and what goes into his decision-making process, and we think YouTube and other outlets, the website, are good

ways for the American people to understand where he is and what he's thinking. And we'll continue to do that. I think he's excited about doing that.

Thanks, guys. See you, guys tomorrow. Or see you Monday.

[End of briefing.]