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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

September 25, 1984

The Briefing Room

12:13 P.M. EDT

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#1206-09/25
12:44 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE
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PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

The Briefing Room

September 25, 1984

12:13 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: The President's afternoon is the lunch with Prime Minister Mulroney, taking place in the Family Dining Room. Departure statements at 1:00 p.m. Open press coverage on the South Grounds.

At 2:30 p.m., the President meets with Henry Kissinger in the Oval Office. At 3:55 p.m., he meets with Joe Kittinger --

Q How long is --

MR. SPEAKES: -- no relation to Henry.

Q -- the Kissinger meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: The Kissinger meeting is 15-20 minutes.
(Laughter.)

Transatlantic balloonist will be here, Mr. Kittinger.

And at 4:00 p.m., reception for the Supreme Court Justices.

At 1:15 p.m. today, there'll be a background briefing on the President's meeting with the Prime Minister of Canada, take place in the briefing room.

Later this afternoon, we will have the schedule and fact sheet for tomorrow's trip. For your planning purposes, plan to be at Andrews to check in at 7:15 a.m.

Q Ooooh.

MR. SPEAKES: Air Force I pool will be at Andrews at 8:45 a.m.

Q Text, tomorrow, Larry?

Q Well, now, the sheet says 7:00 a.m. What do you think?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Change?

Q The sheet says 7:00 a.m.

Q The sheet says 7:00 a.m. check in. You just said 7:15 a.m. Is that a change?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. Check --

Q The summary schedule had said --

MR. SPEAKES: Check Mark, see.

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Q The text?

MR. SPEAKES: Text? The usual time.

The -- Is that your middle name?

Q Is it true --

MR. SPEAKES: "Text"?

Q -- two press planes tomorrow?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, there --

Q Why is that?

MR. SPEAKES: So we can have more room for you and your colleagues. And so you can go on one and everybody else can go on the other one. (Laughter.)

Q Is that expensive, having two planes?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, that --

Q Are more people going?

MR. SPEAKES: -- won't bother ABC.

Yes, we've had a steady group. And we've had a --

Q That's not so.

MR. SPEAKES: -- steady drumbeat of three-across complaints.

Q Criticism.

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q Nattering nabobs.

MR. SPEAKES: I mean, if you don't want it, you don't have to go.

Q We're asking questions.

MR. SPEAKES: I'm giving you answers.

Q There's nothing in my questions to imply that I want it or don't want it.

Q Is there any coverage of the Supreme Court reception?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Why was it --

MR. SPEAKES: First Monday in October. Opening of the court session traditionally.

Q Will anybody be there but the Justices?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have my list of -- Do you have your list there --

MR. ROUSSEL: A few of our staff --

MR. SPEAKES: Groyenko meeting.

MR. ROUSSEL: -- Justice.

Q What?

Q Wait. What's the answer?

MR. ROUSSEL: Carol Dinkins, people like that.

MR. SPEAKES: The Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Deputy Attorney General, the Solicitor General, Meese, Baker, Deaver, Fielding and Hauser. That's all I've got.

Q No Darman?

MR. SPEAKES: No Darman. That's trouble.

Q Going to tell them how to vote this season?
(Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Some questions that have been pending over the last couple of days on the Gromyko meeting on Friday, how that will work. The meeting in the Oval Office is scheduled from roughly -- from 10:00 a.m. to roughly about noon with a working lunch in the Residence. Once the Foreign Minister is --

Q -- door, please.

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Can somebody pull the door?

Q We can't hear --

Q Close that door, please.

MR. SPEAKES: Once the meeting and the lunch is completed, they will have met about three or four hours.

We do not have any specifics on how the meetings will be structured and we'll certainly announce that as time goes along. as to whether there'll be a one-on-one meeting or -- so forth.

Those who will attend -- I don't have the complete list; but, of course, it will include the Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor.

There was some rumor as to whether there would be follow-on meetings following the President's meeting. We do not have anything scheduled with the President or Secretary Shultz.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: ON BACKGROUND, we would expect, if there is a follow-up that would develop out of Friday's meeting, it would be Groyenko-Shultz and not Gromyko and the President.

ON THE RECORD

MR. SPEAKES: Questions about whether Mondale is being briefed, as you know, Bud has already briefed both candidates for President and Vice President on the Democratic side. He has offered to brief Mondale further on U.S.-Soviet relations; but there's been no follow-up from the Mondale people on that.

Q Do you know how recent that offer was?

MR. SPEAKES: Do you know? It's been since the Gromyko meeting was scheduled. This is --

MR. SIMS: He briefed him before Mr. Mondale's meeting with Gromyko was scheduled and has offered, since that was scheduled, to brief on U.S.-Soviet relations.

Q And they haven't taken you up on it?

Q Mondale brief Reagan on his meeting?

Q Larry, are you just talking about Mondale specifically, or also his staff?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm talking about Mondale specifically; but --

Q What about briefing his staff? Has any of that gone on?

MR. SPEAKES: No, there's none of that going on. But I would assume, if they were interested, then we could work out something for them.

Let me get through all this, Mick, and I'll come back.

As far as Mondale briefing the administration on his meeting with Gromyko, we've had no contact with them about that. They have not offered.

The meeting itself, we don't expect the Soviets to have specific proposals, nor does the President intend to make any specific negotiating proposals; but we do have a number of ideas to put forward, and we expect that once the President broaches them in the meeting and there's some discussion, that there will be some time required on the part of the Soviets for reflection.

Our main objective is to clear the air of misunderstandings in this relationship and to renew a process of dialogue after this period of impasse.

For example, on the subject of arms control, after the -- since the Soviets broke off the talks some months ago, we've done a considerable amount of work, and we have new ideas in arms control, which we have not presented.

We feel the need to get together with the Soviets on a general basis. And we'd expect them to want to have time to review the substance of this week's meetings, before there could be any specifics on their part.

We would anticipate the need for other meetings at senior levels in order to move the process forward. When something like that might occur, is not yet clear and would, of course, depend on our discussions with the Soviets this week.

So, as far as this week, our expectations -- the President's expectations are for no immediate results. And we see no need for immediate results, beyond a resumption of dialogue.

Yes.

Q Are you telling us this because -- in the context for the statements that have been coming from Moscow and Chernenko? Are you trying to -- Well, some of what you're telling us sounds similar to the McFarlane briefing from Friday. I'm wondering if you're talking about low expectations specifically because of Chernenko, Tass --

MR. SPEAKES: No. This is generated purely from our own expectations and is not based on recent Soviet statements.

And speaking of that, you've had the President's comment on the Tass, Radio Moscow reaction to the UN speech in which he said he never gets good reviews from Tass.

Q We heard his quip. I mean, does he have a substantive comment?

MR. SPEAKES: The facts are the facts.

We believe that the substantive Soviet response to the President's speeches and policy initiatives that began eight months ago will come over time and in the diplomatic discourse that will take place in the coming days, weeks and months.

Q Larry.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Is there a plan to brief us on Friday?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q And when would that be?

MR. SPEAKES: Secretary Shultz will brief on the record following the Gromyko meeting. And I would judge it would be in the --

Q For cameras?

MR. SPEAKES: -- 2:00 p.m. time -- I would assume, yes.

Q After lunch or before lunch?

MR. SPEAKES: After lunch. After the meetings.

Q Any departing statements?

MR. SPEAKES: There are no departure statements scheduled at present.

Q You do expect a photo op?

MR. SPEAKES: I would expect a photo op, yes.

Q Foreign Minister Gromyko told us in New York that he will talk to us "next time." So are you going to make arrangements for him to speak to us --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I would assume he would make his own.

Q On the Mondale -- the briefing of Mondale -- or Mondale's briefing of you, I'm not clear. Does the White House want Mondale to give them a fill on his meeting with Gromyko?

MR. SPEAKES: We would certainly be receptive to it if, indeed, he did desire. But there's been no contact from him.

Q And do you want to brief him? I mean, is there -- Do you feel -- Does McFarlane or other people in the administration feel the need of a further briefing of him in this matter?

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MR. SPEAKES: Lou, I guess you'd have to say that we, as a courtesy, made an offer and that the offer has not been taken up. And so that's where the matter lies.

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Q Did you ask Mondale --

Q Would you like him to brief you before -- I mean, right away on the --

MR. SPEAKES: If he wishes to, we would certainly take anything that he passes along, yes.

Q Are you critical of him for not asking to do that?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm not being critical in any way.

Q What's that?

MR. SPEAKES: No criticism intended or implied. The offer's been made, and if -- that's -- if he wishes, either way, for us to brief him, or to pass along something to us, we'd be glad to have it.

Q Have you seen any receptive --

Q Do you have any plans to have Kissinger come out here after he meets with the President?

MR. SPEAKES: Not to come here, but if he talks out there, he will. (Laughter.)

Q If he talks out there, he will talk out there, is that it?

Q Thank you.

Q The future's getting nearer. (Laughter.)

Q Still has a --

Q Closer than you think.

Q Tip O'Neill says that that kitchen business was a blatantly stupid alibi on the part of the President. Is there a response?

MR. SPEAKES: As usual I have nothing to say to Tip.

Q Well, do you have anything to say to Mondale who also decries it, but in less inflammatory language?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Or to anyone who suggests that --

Q How about to Herblock?

Q -- that the President -- well, is the President -- does he wish he hadn't said it? Or does he reconsider it?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't have anything on that, Sam.

Q Have you talked to him about it?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Has he received the report?

Q Well, what does he think -- let me ask -- what does he think about it? The reaction to it -- there appears to be a

great deal of reaction.

MR. SPEAKES: The reaction seems to be centered in the Democratic camp.

Q All right. What does he think of that reaction then?

MR. SPEAKES: He doesn't have anything to say about it, as we have nothing to say about what the Democrats have had to say in the last six months?

Q Did he think it was a dumb thing to say?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Does he, himself, think it was a dumb thing to say?

MR. SPEAKES: Andrea, what kind of -- that's a dumb question. (Laughter.)

Q Has he received the report?

MR. SPEAKES: To seize upon a phrase. (Laughter.)

Q Well, what does he think of it?

Q Was he distressed about it?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no. There's no concern in the White House or the administration whatsoever about it. The man was making a description that, somehow, became news in The New York Times on Sunday -- or Monday morning, despite the fact that the State Department announced the same thing four days ago -- that it was 75 percent complete.

Q Yes, but the point is --

Q It was what he said --

Q -- does he feel, as some of the critics have said, that it was trivializing the incident -- to say something that --

MR. SPEAKES: No. Absolutely not -- in no terms. No.

Q Has the President received the report, yet, on the car bombing?

MR. SPEAKES: No. The way that's working is that, as you know Ambassador Murphy went there, and he took with him the Ambassador that is involved in our contacts with other countries on terrorism -- Oakley -- Robert Oakley. And Oakley's team remains there, and --

MR. SIMS: Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Huh?

MR. SIMS: He returned to New York yesterday, and reported to the Secretary, and we will probably get a report to the President today.

Q Hopefully today?

MR. SPEAKES: Okay.

Q Want to repeat that, Larry? We couldn't hear it back here.

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MR. SPEAKES: He says that Oakley did return to New York yesterday -- did report to Shultz -- and we anticipate getting it, possibly today.

Q Larry, what --

Q Do you know what's in it?

Q -- how are we describing the Murphy -- what Murphy's doing between Lebanon and Israel? Are we now negotiating between the two?

MR. SPEAKES: I wouldn't describe it that way.

Q How would you describe it?

MR. SPEAKES: I would describe it as, as the Secretary of State did yesterday, as an opportunity to take advantage of his presence in the region, to undertake consultation in some of the countries that are in the region, and an update -- to get an update of their views.

Q Was he talking to them about the withdrawal of troops from Southern Lebanon?

MR. SPEAKES: I would not be specific, as he has not been specific about what his conversation is -- it's an opportunity -- he's in Cairo at present, after having been to Damascus, and --

Q Can you tell us -- is he going back to Syria?

MR. SPEAKES: I wouldn't state his ongoing plans, but it's likely that he will visit other countries, or may return to some that he's already visited.

Q Is Shultz coming to the White House on Thursday to brief Reagan about his Gromyko visit?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the tentative plan, yes.

Q What was the question?

MR. SPEAKES: Is Shultz coming to the White House on Thursday to talk to the President about his meeting which takes place Wednesday.

Q Will we hear anything about that -- will he talk to us, or will --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I would assume that the Secretary and his party will brief on his Gromyko meeting in New York on Wednesday following the meeting.

Andrea?

Q Well, I assume that Shultz has to remain to hear the speech at the U.N. -- or is he coming here on Thursday -- and can you tell us something about the rest of the President's preparations on Thursday -- anything -- Anybody's coming in, or --

MR. SPEAKES: No. I don't know of any other outside visitors. Do you know of any that are coming in?

MR. SIMS: The President of Peru is coming in -- he's got a priority visit --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he'll be in --

Q Is that the only thing he has on Thursday -- on the public schedule?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have it before me. There may be other events.

Q Well, will he spend most of the day preparing on Thursday for --

MR. SPEAKES: We don't have a -- I just don't have Thursday's schedule, so --

George?

Q Do they listen to Gromyko?

Q Is the President planning to confer with Nixon, or has he conferred with him about Gromyko?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't have anything on that.

Q Can you say "no"?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't have anything on it.

Q Is that a "yes"?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have anything on it, period.

This is the week ahead -- this is Thursday -- here you can have that back.

Thursday the President has the President of Peru; lunch with the Vice President; and then he spends about an hour in preparation for the Gromyko time in the afternoon. So, it's --

Q What's he doing in the morning?

MR. SPEAKES: He has 30 minutes with Belaunde, and an hour and a half of personal staff time, and then 30 minutes to meet with other -- other advisers on a separate subject -- an hour with the Vice President for lunch; 30 minutes after lunch a taping session in the afternoon --

Q For what?

MR. SPEAKES: -- an hour of personal time; 60 minutes for Gromyko; 15 minutes to meet with his personnel people; and 30 minutes for doing photos with outsiders -- congressional, and so forth --

Q What's the taping, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: We don't customarily announce those -- so it's a day that begins at 9:45 a.m. and concludes at 5:15 p.m. if everything stays on schedule.

Q Then he goes to Camp David?

MR. SPEAKES: Probably, yes --

Q Can we go back to the Soviet statement -- I mean, what is -- are you disappointed with the statements made by Chernenko, and Tass?

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MR. SPEAKES: Well, you have to look at the context of when Chernenko's statement was made. Unless he's got a fast speech-writer, it probably wasn't written before --

Q. He wrote it himself.

MR. SPEAKES: I know it, but -- he writes fast. (Laughter.)

Q In long hand, on yellow legal pad --

MR. SPEAKES: It was probably written before the President's speech was made.

Q All right, but -- you have that, and I assume they can actually write a speech in 22 hours -- if they wanted to change it -- and they also -- you know, you have the Tass criticism and -- what do you make of all that?

MR. SPEAKES: Where were you when I just --

Q You went through -- you didn't say, give a specific response to that.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I did.

Q I didn't hear it.

MR. SPEAKES: I know.

Q Do it again -- in a different way --

Q No, I didn't hear it. I heard you talk about what you thought was --

MR. SPEAKES: We believe that the substantive Soviet response to the President's speeches and policy initiatives that began 8 months ago will come, over time, in diplomatic discourse over coming days, weeks, and months.

Q I heard that -- I didn't hear what --

MR. SPEAKES: That's it.

Q -- what your reaction is to Tass and to Chernenko.

Q I don't believe what they're saying --

Q Is that it -- so you have no reaction to Tass and Chernenko?

MR. SPEAKES: That's it. I've -- I've --

Q He pointed to the President's quip about Tass.

MR. SPEAKES: I prefaced it -- help him, Sam.

Q You mean the one-liner thing?

Q So, Larry, the White House doesn't believe what Tass is saying? Or doesn't take it seriously -- a serious response? Is that -- doesn't take it as a serious response, is that it?

Q Shhhhhh.

MR. SPEAKES: Who said that?

Q We're asking --

Q I'm asking.

Q Good question.

Q I'm asking -- if the White House --

Q Could this be the substantive Soviet response to his speech?

Q So what is this? An unsubstantive Soviet response?

MR. SPEAKES: When you asked what we thought of the reaction by Tass, my reply is as follows, which I'll be glad to repeat if you didn't get it.

Q I still would like to know -- well, what is this? What is the Chernenko and the Tass then?

Q Chopped liver. (Laughter.)

Q Does the White House, then, not take the Tass response as being a serious Soviet response?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not going to characterize the Tass response --

Q Ahhhhh -- that's an answer.

MR. SPEAKES: The Secretary of State will be meeting the Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union on Wednesday in what promises to be a lengthy session. The President of the United States will be meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister on Friday which promises to be a fairly lengthy session. At that time I think you will have a better feel about what the Soviets feel about the President's United Nations speech. However, we hope there will be series of ongoing diplomatic contacts at the ministerial level and at other levels in the coming weeks and months, which will let the Soviet response to our U.N. proposal and those previous proposals which have taken place over the past 8 months -- they will unfold.

Q Larry, there's a study, or a report coming out of London that says that the United States is training military astronauts. Do you know about that?

MR. SPEAKES: Haven't seen it, but a lot of times those London reports aren't right.

Q It's in "Janes Fighting Ships."

MR. SPEAKES: I know.

Q Well, if you know, then give us a response.

Q They're usually --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the answer to that.

Q If you know about it, have you not asked --

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't know about it except the brief wire story.

Bob?

Q Well, can you find out and let us know?

Q Do you have any reason to believe that Chernenko's address was intended or designed merely for public consumption as opposed to their private position?

MR. SPEAKES: You mean, do we consider it a diplomatic response, or -- it was clearly a

public speech that was for public or private consumption, however you wish to consume it.

Q Do you have any reason to think that it's consistent with the private position?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I see. Is it consistent with -- We haven't had much of a private position from the Soviets in recent weeks, and until we -- as once again, all this array of meetings and diplomatic contacts unfolds over weeks and months, then we will have a little bit clearer position on how the Soviets feel.

Q So how do you characterize Chernenko's speech?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not characterizing, Chris, I'm sorry. I just can't get it in a three-liner that will creep across the screen.

Q Ohh.

MR. SPEAKES: Leo.

Q -- President Reagan will tell Gromyko -- you said he will not offer specific proposals -- beyond what the President said in his speech yesterday at the UN in regard to what he hopes the new wave of contacts may be with the Soviets, will the President on Friday have anything either further to add or be more specific regarding some of those proposals he already did outline yesterday?

MR. SPEAKES: The latter.

Q I want to go back to Beirut.

Q In other words, -- can you be more specific --

MR. SPEAKES: You can get a ticket out here at the airport.

Q The President and other U.S. officials have said that bad as the damage was in this latest Beirut incident, the security apparatus that was in place probably prevented it from being worse. The President pointed specifically to the fact that the van did not get inside the walls of the Embassy. Well, do you have information to challenge, then, the report that it was actually guards of the British Ambassador who just happened to be on the scene who shot at the van and stopped it where it was?

MR. SPEAKES: No. The reporting I've seen indicated that the Lebanese contract guards fired, U.S. Marines fired, and I didn't see anything about the British firing.

Q You have had no reports that it was the British guards waiting for the Ambassador who stopped them and that the U.S. Marines actually never fired shots?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't have that.

Q I see.

Q Do you, Bob?

MR. SPEAKES: Deborah?

MR. SIMS: We don't have the report.

Q Larry, those of us who listened to the President's speech rather than actually being able to go there -- he sounded very tired. Is he all right today? Is there something wrong?

MR. SPEAKES: First class condition. Fit as a fiddle. He was deliberately pacing his speech in order to allow the interpretation to keep as close as it could to the text.

Q Well, I mean he was being interpreted yesterday at the UN and his pace was nothing like what it was today.

MR. SPEAKES: Secretary Regan spoke to the President just before he went in and said that interpretation normally runs a sentence or so behind and the President decided to set the pace at that pace so that they could keep up with him.

Q Larry, do you know why he made so many mistakes in delivering the speech? I mean, was there trouble with the teleprompter, do you know?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Ben.

Q Had he ever seen that speech before?

Q No.

MR. SPEAKES: He wrote it.

Q He wrote it?

Q I wouldn't claim authorship of that speech. (Laughter.) Have you read it?

MR. SPEAKES: He had considerable time with the speech, yes.

Q Chernenko wrote it.

Q That's the worse thing you could say about it.

Q Did he use a typewriter?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Did he use a typewriter or --

MR. SPEAKES: All longhand.

Mike?

Q On another topic?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Bruce Springsteen is complaining that the President is using his name in campaign speeches. He's also complaining that George Will is writing favorable things about him. (Laughter.)

Q Will will stop at nothing.

Q Has he got in touch with the White House to complain and ask that they please stop it?

MR. SPEAKES: Pete and I are the contact with the music world and he has not filed with us. (Laughter.) And if he's talked with anybody else, he's barking up the wrong tree.

Q Before using Bruce Springsteen's name in a campaign speech, has the President ever knowingly heard one of his songs? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I was briefed by my 14 year-old last night so I'm an expert on it. I don't know whether the President has, but he does like that U.S.A. song that Brucie does.

Q Brucie? (Laughter.)

Q Really, Larry.

MR. SPEAKES: To us in the business, you know. (Laughter.)

Q Why did the President mispronounce his name in New Jersey?

Q There goes New Jersey. (Laughter.)

Q Did you give him the wrong name?

MR. SPEAKES: He had it right.

Q It's not "Springstine" either. (Laughter.)

Q He got it wrong.

MR. SPEAKES: Let the record show where the anti-Semitism stems -- from where it stems.

Q Go ahead, Helen.

Q Did Baker see the President in New York yesterday because of the Grove City legislation?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the subject of Howard Baker's meeting.

Q Is the President backing away from the Contadora process?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Well, why didn't he mention it, and -- you know, because

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the Sandinistas now are saying because they've accepted the U.S. is suddenly backing away and is not interested.

MR. SPEAKES: No. The situation on that is as, I think, the State Department described it a couple of days. I guess they addressed it. But the Contradora countries have asked the Central Americans to provide comments on the latest draft of their proposal. The document had been forwarded, I believe, to nine nations. These comments are due in mid October. Expect these comments, then, to set the stage for negotiation of the draft document.

We view that Nicaragua's announcement is somewhat hypocritical. They say they're prepared to sign the latest working draft of the Contradora treaty. Yet, at the same time they announce their intention to undermine one of its key provisions by allowing full participation in their elections.

They're clearly seeking to close off debate on those provisions of the draft concerning the size of military forces, clarification and control.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: This is not a new proposal from the Nicaraguans. They gave us a draft treaty along these lines last year. We've consistently rejected a piecemeal approach to resolving the crisis in Central America. We favor a comprehensive settlement that covers the entire agenda -- democracy, arms and troop levels, external aid to insurgents, foreign bases and advisers, adequate verification and control agreements.

In short, we continue our support of the Contradora process. And Ambassador Shlaudeman has been in the region -- in discussions in the area.

Andrea?

Q But they didn't accept --

Q Larry, you're --

Q -- it piecemeal. They accepted --

Q Where's Shlaudeman?

Q -- the draft plans.

MR. SPEAKES: Did you listen to what I said?

Q Yes, I did.

MR. SPEAKES: At the same time, they refused to allow full participation in their elections. We believe they're trying to cut it off -- cut off the debate on it. The Sandinistas talk about open elections, but their actions belie their promises.

According to press reports, opposition leader Arturo Cruz was attacked twice last week by Sandinista-organized mobs. Our embassy in Managua reports that, contrary to Sandinista claims, the police did little if anything to prevent these attacks.

Furthermore, the opposition has insisted that they would need sufficient time to campaign, among other guarantees. The Sandinistas apparently are not willing to accept but much less guarantee the conditions of free elections.

Q Larry, is there any truth to a report in The New York Times yesterday that the reason we were so critical of the Nicaraguan statement is that we are worried about the public relations aspects of it, rather than the substance -- statements?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Absolutely not.

Honduras? Q -- worried about -- break up our little party in

Q -- meeting the reason the President was so late leaving New York yesterday or was it something else?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't have anything for you on that.

Q Did he meet with any other --

Q Ohhh.

Q -- did he meet with any --

Q Wait a second.

Q Ahhh.

Q Did he meet with someone else?

Q -- can we put those together?

Q -- with Nixon, Larry?

Q Nixon.

MR. SPEAKES: I have nothing for you.

Q Did he meet with anyone else?

Q Wasn't Nixon --

Q Was that the Nixon meeting, Larry?

Q Blink if it was Nixon.

MR. SPEAKES: Got nothing to say.

know about? Q Larry, did he meet with anyone else that we don't

Q What was the question?

MR. SPEAKES: -- sorry --

Q What is -- what's Sam's question?

operation. Q He did. He saw the Trick or else he had a little

Q He definitely saw the Trick yesterday --

Q Why wouldn't you tell us that if it were true?

MR. SPEAKES: I just have nothing for you --

Q Are you ashamed of it?

MR. SPEAKES: I have nothing for you --

Q Well --

Q Ha-ha-ha.

Q Can we have a White House photo release --

Q -- can we go now? (Laughter.)

Q Were there tapes made --

Q Why --

Q Can we have a filing break?

Q Okay. On this question, you are not commenting?

Q No, he has nothing for us.

Q No, he hasn't anything for us.

Q Is there a connection between our comments about Nixon and your refusal to --

MR. SPEAKES: Got nothing to say. (Laughter.)

Q It's true, isn't it?

Q What did Nixon tell him?

MR. SPEAKES: Nothing to say --

Q Our guts tell us it's true.

Q Well, hang up the phone and --

MR. SPEAKES: -- put my Gromyko face on. (Laughter.)

Q Larry --

Q -- okay.

MR. SPEAKES: Had enough?

Q All right.

Q Larry, you're leaving us with the impression that he did see him, you realize.

Q You're leaving a lot of people with that impression.

Q You're leaving us with that impression.

MR. SPEAKES: I have said nothing. I have not nodded. I've got nothing --

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

#1206-09/25

12:44 P.M. EDT