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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

October 17, 1984

The Briefing Room

12:35 P.M. EDT

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's schedule.....13-14
Housing Starts.....17

FOREIGN

Chernenko/Post interview1-13
CIA/Intelligence.....17-18
South Africa.....19

#1214-10/17

1:11 P.M. EDT

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October 17, 1984

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12:35 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: I'll begin the statement.

Q Whose statement is this, first?

MR. SPEAKES: This is my statement.

We agree with President Chernenko that there is no sound alternative to constructive development in relations between our two countries. We are pleased to see the emphasis he puts on positive possibilities for U.S.-Soviet relations. We will be studying his remarks carefully; and, as was agreed during Deputy Prime Minister Gromyko's recent meetings with the President, we will be pursuing our dialogue with the Soviet Union and exploring the possibilities for progress through diplomatic channels.

President Reagan has repeatedly demonstrated that we are ready for cooperation with the Soviet Union. In April 1981, he sent a hand-written letter to President Brezhnev describing his feelings about the issue of war and peace, and to ask President Brezhnev to join him in removing the obstacles to peace. Since then, the United States has made practical proposals for foreign movement in all areas of the relationship, including arms control.

Over the past year, for instance, the United States and its allies have put forward new proposals for limits on strategic weapons, on intermediate-range nuclear weapons, on chemical weapons and on conventional forces. On June 4th, in Dublin, President Reagan stated our willingness to discuss the Soviet proposal for a mutual non-use of force commitment, if this would lead to serious negotiation on the Western proposals for practical steps to enhance confidence and reduce the risk of surprise attack in Europe. This summer, we accepted a Soviet proposal to begin space arms control negotiations in Vienna, without preconditions. At the United Nations last month, President Reagan reiterated his desire to move forward in these fields and to put forward a number of concrete new proposals for U.S.-Soviet cooperation. In his subsequent meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Gromyko, the President emphasized our strong desire to move to a more productive dialogue across the board, and to put forward specific suggestions as to how we might do so.

We cannot agree with President Chernenko's version of recent history. It is the Soviet Union which has broken off negotiations on nuclear arms and backed away from its own proposal to begin space arms control talks. The United States stands ready to negotiate on these and other issues; but we cannot concur in the apparent Soviet view that it is incumbent on the United States to pay a price so the Soviet Union will come back to the nuclear negotiating table.

President Chernenko has stated that improvement in the U.S.-Soviet relationship depends on deeds, not words. We agree. When the Soviet Union is prepared to move from public exchanges to private negotiations and concrete agreements, they will find us ready.

End of statement. End of coverage.

MORE

#1214-10/17

Q Okay. Coverage is over. Can we just ask --

Q Can we have a copy of that statement? Excuse me,
Sam.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we have copies here.

Q Coverage is over.

Q Where?

MR. SPEAKES: I think we've got --

Q I agree.

Q How about one?

Q When you say, "We cannot agree -- it is incumbent on the U.S. to pay a price to come back to the negotiating table," is that your view of this suggestion that on one of four particular topics that Chernenko raises, if the U.S. would only do this, that or the other, we could resume negotiations?

MR. SPEAKES: Let me do this -- Let's decide what we want to do next. Do you want me to go through my announcements, or do you -- I can tick off a number of other things to add --

Q Well, why don't we stay with the subject while it's fresh in our minds.

Q Yes, let's exhaust this.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me go through -- and I think this answers your question.

Q Okay.

MR. SPEAKES: Chernenko in the interview proposed four areas for improvement, as you say. Let me state our position in each. On space weapons, the United States has accepted the Soviet proposal in June without preconditions. And we're prepared to initiate talks on this subject at any time. But we will, of course, not accept preconditions or make concessions in advance of negotiation.

Second area --

Q On that point, he said -- renewed the demand for a moratorium, did he not, in advance? So, we're still saying no to that.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. We don't think that they or us are obligated to make any major concessions in advance of negotiations. I don't think they would; and I don't think we would. But we are prepared to go without preconditions.

Q So you're still ruling out a moratorium in advance or on the date the talks start?

MR. SPEAKES: Right. A moratorium, so far, is not defined.

Q But the President said in his interview --

Q -- not what?

Q Not what?

MR. SPEAKES: Not defined. They have not defined what a moratorium is or means.

Q The President said in his interview --

Q I think -- didn't they say a moratorium on testing development of anti-satellite weapons on the day the talks begin?

MR. SPEAKES: A moratorium would be difficult to verify in our position.

Q Are there copies of the statement there?

Q Can you pass those down? No?

Q The short answer is you'll talk about it; but not going to agree to anything before you talk about it. Right?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q He didn't give it to us. Robin.

Q Robin, where are the statements?

MR. SPEAKES: Now, I think --

Q -- what is going on?

Q We need the statement, please.

MR. SPEAKES: What seems to be the problem?

Q Oh, no -- Mr. Schieffer hasn't been here for a while, and --

MR. SCHIEFFER: My apologies.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, he hasn't been here in a while.

Q -- share these things with his colleagues.

Q Didn't the President say that --

MR. SPEAKES: Let me do this. Let me give you a number of other things on our position. It may answer a lot of your questions.

Q Okay. What's number two, then?

MR. SPEAKES: A nuclear freeze would preserve, in our opinion, an unstable balance and seriously handicap efforts to achieve real reductions in nuclear weapons.

We believe that verification of a freeze that involves production and testing is probably impossible and at best would require lengthy negotiations on counting rules, on verification measures, and these efforts could be better spent on discussions to reduce arms.

On the threshold --

Q "Probably impossible" --

Q You said, "probably impossible," right?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

On the --

Q Well, then why do you keep proposing it, if it's impossible?

Q No, he says a freeze, verification of a freeze.

MR. SPEAKES: Freeze. This is a --

Q Well, verification it says is the --

MR. SPEAKES: -- freeze. This is the verification of a freeze. Verification of a freeze at present levels.

Threshold test ban treaty on peaceful nuclear energy: We've proposed to Moscow a number of a times that we discuss improving the verification provisions of these treaties to assure compliance. Although, the Soviets have not taken us up on that offer, acceptance of the President's proposal at the United Nations that we exchange observers to monitor nuclear tests would be a positive step in that direction.

On the no-first-use of nuclear weapons, which is the --

Q Larry, could you slow down a bit?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Sure. Everybody caught up here?

Q You said acceptance of what the President proposed at the UN would be a positive step?

MR. SPEAKES: It would be a positive step in that direction, on the threshold test ban and peaceful nuclear --

On the no-first-use of nuclear weapons, the United States and its NATO allies have stated that we will not use any weapons except in response to aggression.

Q Can we just have that again?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, on first use of nuclear weapons?

Q Right.

MR. SPEAKES: We've stated that we will not use any weapons, except in response to aggression.

Q Meaning that we would continue our first-use prerogative?

MR. SPEAKES: As we've stated, we will not use weapons in response to aggression.

Q What about -- wasn't this Irish --

MR. SPEAKES: Hey. Shhhhh.

Q Steve --

Q I was asking -- in Ireland, the President talked about --

MR. SPEAKES: Shhhh.

Q I think it was in Ireland -- talked about a possible discussion of no-first-use of force or something like that --

MR. SPEAKES: That's right. That was --

Q Question?

MR. SPEAKES: -- the Irish speech. But we raised that in terms, as I said, in this statement of serious negotiations on practical steps to enhance confidence, reduce surprise of attack in Europe.

Ben.

Q So, Larry, you're -- Number four, then, you're leaving open the possibility of first use of nuclear weapons in the case of -- prevent aggression with conventional forces, is that right?

MR. SPEAKES: As we've said many times, and this is no change in policy, the United States will not use any weapons except in response to aggression, period.

Helen?

Q We did in Grenada.

Q It seems to me that you have rejected every one of the four proposals.

MR. SPEAKES: No, we haven't rejected any of them. You didn't listen.

Q -- listening.

MR. SPEAKES: Okay. Space, did we reject that? No, we said we'd go to Vienna.

Q Yes, yes, you have. You said you have --

Q But that's not what they were asking.

Q You have always said you had discussions on the other ongoing -- on the other arms negotiations, that you would not discuss face alone.

MR. SPEAKES: No, no, no. You've way over-simplified.

Q Well, our position is consistent, that we will not accept a moratorium on testing in space in advance of negotiations.

MR. SPEAKES: That's right. And I --

Q But that's what Chernenko seemed to be saying, on that point, if we gave a little bit, we'd come back to the table. So we're rejecting his renewed request that we accept a moratorium in advance.

MR. SPEAKES: But we have agreed to go to Vienna. We have agreed to talk space. And we've indicated that we would certainly raise other arms talks --

Q Larry --

Q Larry --

Q -- to clarify -- to clarify --

MR. SPEAKES: I'm going to be here until the cows come home --

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: -- so let's don't get excited.

Q To clarify this reject issue that has been --

Q I think we better get down to some serious --

Q -- would it be fair to say you have rejected Chernenko's apparent call for changes in

U.S. positions on these four items, to change them in line with what he has been proposing?

Q Question?

MR. SPEAKES: Would it be fair to say that we've rejected change in position on these four items that Chernenko has listed? Ralph, I would leave the interpretation to you. We have laid out what we believe is a strong record of desire on the part of the President and the part of the United States government to proceed with arms reduction in a number of areas.

We have made a number of concrete moves in order to indicate to the Soviet Union that we are flexible and we're ready to talk.

Q I'm not challenging that at all, I'm simply asking you, and I repeat -- do you object to Chernenko's apparent call for change in U.S. policy in one of these four areas as condition for resuming talks, better relations, etcetera?

MR. SPEAKES: I would leave that interpretation to you.

David?

Q But, Larry, do you see in this whole -- in the whole sweep of his interview, do you detect any change on his part?

MR. SPEAKES: On -- on --

Q Substantively. Not tone, but -- could you see any substantive change in Soviet positions, or in their approach, or anything on any of these issues that are raised?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Not in substance, but -- to proceed though, we do welcome the constructive tone.

Q Larry, didn't the President say in the U.S. News interview that he would consider restraints on going ahead on the space weapons?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't recall. I'd have to look at the words. We would certainly be willing to discuss that. I think that's what the President said, we were willing to discuss it.

Q -- referred to in the U.N. speech --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we'll be willing to discuss it, yes --

Q Larry, would you comment on the --

Q What was that question?

MR. SPEAKES: Would or did the President say in the U.S. News interview that we would -- what -- be willing to discuss restraint in space. Yes, we'd be willing to discuss it.

Q What is your comment on the timing of this announcement?

MR. SPEAKES: Nothing except to say we find it interesting?

Q I couldn't hear the question.

Q What do you mean, "interesting"?

MR. SPEAKES: Just what I mean --

Q The timing of the announcement.

MR. SPEAKES: The timing of the announcement we find interesting.

Q Well, what do you mean?

Q Well, what makes it interesting?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think I'll go beyond that -- (laughter) -- except to point out --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- ON BACKGROUND -- if you'll accept it, that it is three weeks before the election, and a few days before a debate --

Q I won't accept that --

MR. SPEAKES: Go with it. (Laughter.) Back ON THE RECORD.

Mike, I've been holding him up, then I'll go to Dave --

Q Larry --

Q -- calendar -- on background at the White House -- (Laughter.)

Q -- in your statements of U.S. positions on the four issues, I don't detect any change in the U.S. position. Is there meant to be any change there?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I think this is -- these statements on positions on these four issues are exactly as we enunciated them over the last several months, and -- but, I maintain that these certainly are fair and honest proposals that certainly could lead to discussions with the Soviets in a number of areas. The space weapons -- certainly -- that's fair and honest and open, that we could go and talk, without preconditions.

Q Give the President a copy of your briefing papers -- so he'll know what it is on Sunday -- okay? (Laughter.)

Q Larry, on the question of the nuclear testing -- you talk about a positive step would be their acceptance of Reagan's suggestion at the U.N. about exchange -- but, is the administration prepared to press the Congress for ratification of these things? My recollection is that you have, in the past, been reluctant to press for ratification because of verification problems.

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q Are you now prepared to press for ratification, or is -- are your verification concerns the same?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I think our concerns are basically the same about these two treaties. Agreed? Experts?

MR. COBB: This is not a different position for the administration than previously --

Q Excuse me, I didn't hear that.

MR. COBB: This is not a change of administration -- the problem of verification has existed for some time --

Q Are you still --

MR. COBB: If we can be satisfied that the verification problem can be solved, we're certainly willing to move forward on this.

Q Well, my question is -- is there anything since your last statement of this position that's changed your view of

verification -- do you still hold the same concerns about it as you did previously?

MR. COBB: We do.

Q Okay..

Q Larry --

Q But, Senator Percy --

MR. SPEAKES: Let me go way to the back here, because I'm ignoring the back -- yes?

Q Same point -- do we -- have we given to the Soviets proposed verification measures? Do we have a piece of paper on the table?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the answer to that except that the President's specific U.N. proposal -- and, of course -- I would say --

MR. COBB: The President delineated a very positive, forward step there, with the exchange of observers, so I think -- yes, that's on the table.

Q Who's this --

MR. SPEAKES: This is Ty Cobb of the NSC staff. Ty says that the President has laid out a very specific proposal in his U.N. speech, and we've certainly conveyed that to the Soviets over the past several weeks.

Let me finish the back. Leo, Bob, and then --

Q Larry, on the issue of advance concessions -- my recollection of the President's speech at the U.N. was that he offered more than to just discuss a moratorium on ASAT -- that you would seriously consider restraints in American activity in that field if the Soviets returned to the bargaining table. Your words today almost seem to back away from that sentence, which was a very key sentence in the President's speech.

MR. SPEAKES: The President is willing to talk without preconditions. We will go

MORE

#1214-10/17

to the space talks, we would certainly consider that, but we're willing to talk that --

Q -- but, interpreted by your own people at the time as an advance into the Soviets. You come back to the table, and you can expect a concession from us that we would have a moratorium unspecified --

MR. SPEAKES: I think I'll leave it right where that was.

Q But, whatever that interpretation was at the time, is that still --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q No change then?

MR. SPEAKES: Bob?

Q Your use of the term "aggression" -- would you be a little bit more specific? What kind of aggression and where?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I don't think you can define it in advance. I think we wouldn't use it anywhere anytime except in the face of aggression.

Q Would an Afghanistan situation be met with nuclear retaliation?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think that we had a -- any similar type agreements with the Afghanistan people about it -- I don't know whether there were any treaties enforced there or anything like that.

Q Well, how does Grenada fit into all that?

MR. SPEAKES: Grenada fits right in nicely. (Laughter.)

Q Larry --

Q Where was the aggression against us there?

MR. SPEAKES: Rescued them.

Q Larry -- the Soviets did not mention the Pershing -- anything about the Pershings, about us continuing, or telling us to stop deploying the Pershings, nor did they mention anything about any kind of treaty on chemical warfare. Now, they've brought those subjects up before. Do you see any significance in the fact that they didn't mention either one of those today?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me comment ON BACKGROUND again. That the -- the interview by Chernenko was absent a lot of the usual Soviet rhetoric that we have seen over the past several months, prior to the Gromyko meeting. And that's what we're referring to as positive tone. And they did not raise some of these issues that they have raised in the past that they call stumbling blocks.

Q Which were the other ones besides the chemical --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Chemical treaty and the deployment of the Pershings.

MR. SPEAKES: Back ON THE RECORD.

Q I wanted to follow up Hoffman on the test ban treaties. Isn't it true that Senator Percy, you know -- no stranger to this administration on policy, has been recommending and urging and begging the White House to go ahead with ratification on these treaties, despite the verification problems that you people allege?

MR. SPEAKES: I know, but -- what's the point?

Q What was the question?

Q Well, you're standing on the test ban treaty problems of verification as your reason for not responding affirmatively on that. Percy doesn't seem to have a problem with verification. Is the administration being too rigid on its posture on the test ban treaty?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Candy?

Q Well, are you -- would you be reconsidering it at all, or do you --

MR. SPEAKES: As Ty has indicated to you, that on the test ban treaty, we do have problems with the verification procedure. The President's offer of exchanging observers would certainly go some way toward alleviating that, but we still do have those problems for the moment, and until we come to some sort of agreement --

Q Larry, on that same point, may I follow up? Does the President's offer to exchange these observers, is that -- would that -- if the Soviets accepted that, would you then press the Congress for ratification? I'm confused about which would come first. Would you press Congress for ratification and then go forward with negotiating with the Soviets, or are you going to try to improve the verification procedures via bilateral relations, and then --

MR. SPEAKES: The latter. The latter. Candy?

Q Is there any change in tone -- any difference in tone or substance in what Chernenko said and in what Gromyko said in his meetings with Reagan and Shultz and etcetera?

MR. SPEAKES: I really think it's hard to compare the two, and I don't think it would --

Q Were you stunned by anything that Chernenko said. You know, I mean, you must --

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q It seems to me we're treading water; although you're on tape now, which I commend you for -- it's an improvement, but we haven't moved anywhere -- they haven't moved, and you haven't moved. Is that correct?

MR. SPEAKES: As we indicated going into the Gromyko meeting, this is the beginning of a process. It is an opportunity to discuss issues -- to bring them into the open. We considered the tone positive. The fact that -- when was the last time Dusko Doder had an interview with a Soviet leader? I mean, there's something there --

Q When was the last time he had an interview with an American leader? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: You had a walkin'-talkin' interview all day yesterday.

Q I have a three-part question which can be dismissed very quickly.

Q It will be --

Q Did the President read this statement? Does he know about this statement?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes he does, definitely.

Q When was he briefed on this?

MR. SPEAKES: He was briefed, beginning at 9 o'clock this morning, and this statement was certainly discussed and agreed by him within the hour.

Q The President discussed arms control in an interview with a weekly magazine this week. What is your objection, the administration's objection, with Chernenko giving an interview and showing some positive signs and reacting? I mean, why do you dispute that, or deride it? Isn't it good that he has spoken publicly? I'm talking about your last paragraph here.

MR. SPEAKES: I just -- pointed to the fact that it was unusual for The Washington Post or anybody else --

Q When the Soviet Union is willing -- is prepared to move from public exchanges --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q You always seem to resent it when they come out publicly.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, no -- we're not resenting it -- that's fine. But the next step is to do it privately where we can make progress in negotiations.

Q Is Shultz coming over here today, and is this what he's going to talk about -- someone's --

MR. COBB: Shultz has been over --

MR. SPEAKES: -- has been here this morning.

Q Is this what they talked about?

MR. SPEAKES: Not specifically, no. They did discuss it, but --

Q Is he coming over for debate practice?

MR. SPEAKES: We don't discuss debate preps.

David?

Q What?

Q He said, "I don't discuss debate preps" --

Q Well, is he coming over to discuss this any further with the President?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think there are any plans for any detail -- the President's discussed it with his NSC staff in detail.

Joe?

Q -- there are not more points --

MR. SPEAKES: No -- that's --

Q You had more announcements or something?

MR. SPEAKES: I've got more announcements.

Joe?

Q You've commended the positive tone, and said this is the beginning of a process -- what's the next step?

MR. SPEAKES: No, what I was indicating is that the Gromyko discussions were the beginning of a process. The next step is, as the President proposed, is to keep in touch and try to

continue to have discussions on various levels, reaching up to Cabinet level. So --

Q Isn't there a -- there's a Wall Street Journal article today talking about a follow-up meeting out of the Gromyko -- can you confirm that?

MR. SPEAKES: That follow-up -- that meeting that was raised was on the specifics of a nuclear nonproliferation. We have had these meetings in the past with the Soviets. We are working, but we've not agreed. We're working toward another meeting, but we've not agreed on a time or place.

Q At what level?

MR. SPEAKES: At what level? They take place at the Ambassadorial level.

Ben?

Q Back on the timing of the interview itself. Is it your feeling that Chernenko is trying to help the Mondale campaign, or is he trying to force the President's hand in getting some movement on some of these questions?

MR. SPEAKES: I would think you would have to ask the Soviets -- or Mondale people --

Q But you do find it interesting, you're the one that brought up the timing and so-forth --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I didn't --

Q Well, you're the one who thinks it's interesting, and on background said that you've noted the timing in relation to the debate and the election. Is it your feeling that it's trying to force the President to answer some questions about this in the debate, or that --

MR. SPEAKES: The President's been answering questions about it for four years, and he's ready and willing, he's, in fact, ready to answer them to the Soviets.

Equal time, here.

Q I want to talk to the same question which has been raised already a couple of times. Do you, or do you not, accept any of the four points which was raised by Chernenko in his interview?

MR. SPEAKES: I would leave that into the -- to the judgment of you and to the Soviets --

Q Can you give me a clear-cut answer to that question?

MR. SPEAKES: -- which is one and the same in your case.

Q Can you give me a clear-cut answer to that question -- you say you can leave an interpretation to me -- to interpret it -- but anyway, I'd like to get a clear-cut answer from you. (Laughter.)

Q So would we --

MR. SPEAKES: You've got my answer.

Q Which is what?

Q No. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: The answer is: I'll leave the interpretation to you.

Q All right.

Q Pardon me if you've answered this previously, but I think over the weekend the Soviets announced deployment of these Cruise missiles, and I wonder if you had any comment on that?

MR. SPEAKES: State responded to that. Bob, do you want to paraphrase State, or --

MR. SIMS: I'd rather leave it to them. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: They did issue a statement Saturday or Sunday morning.

Q Will the President be more clear on these answers on Sunday?

MR. SPEAKES: Than I have been?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: (Laughter.)

Ben? He's always clearer than I am.

Q Does the President still feel he never used the word -- said -- used the words "Evil Empire" as he suggested in his --

MR. SPEAKES: You've got to read that interview. AP screwed that -- I'm sorry. Read that first sentence in that interview, first answer in that interview. The President didn't say that.

Q What did he -- what was he trying to say?

MR. SPEAKES: The President said he didn't accuse him -- it was not his words that they were liars and cheats, but it was their words that he was citing to Mr. Donaldson.

Q They never called themselves liars and cheats -- that I know of.

Q It's their nature, isn't it? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Okay, want to go through the announcements? David?

Q Yes, what should we do?

Q Another subject --

Q Well, that's it -- should we go through the announcements, or do another subject?

Q Let's get on with the announcements.

MR. SPEAKES: Okay, tick through the announcements.

The President will be in the Rose Garden here at 1:30 p.m.. on the Young Astronauts Program.

You've got, or will get shortly a fact and detailed schedule for New York tomorrow. You leave at -- you check in at 11:45 a.m. at Andrews.

Q Why?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Why is he going so early?

Q To rest.

MR. SPEAKES: He's spending a couple of hours in the hotel, and it would also cause major problems for commuting voters in New York, if we -- (laughter) -- if we had traffic at 5:00 p.m.

The President will travel to Missouri, California, Oregon, Washington, and Ohio on Sunday the 21st through Wednesday, October 24th.

The President, of course, will be going to the debate in Kansas City. We're looking at around a 2:00 p.m. departure here --

Q For him?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, what -- it will put you roughly an hour earlier. And he will address the -- when he arrives in Kansas City, he will address a Reagan-Bush rally late afternoon prior to the debate. And then go to the debate. For those of you who haven't noted it, it is an hour earlier in time, and another hour earlier in that time zone. It's 7:00 p.m. local time.

After the debate he attends a post-debate reception sponsored by the League of Women Voters, and he remains overnight in Kansas City.

On Monday, the President travels to Palmdale, California. We'll leave Kansas City about 10:00 or 10:30 -- somewhere in that area. He visits Rockwell International's B-1-B assembly plant, and addresses Rockwell, Lockheed, and Northrup employees and their families.

From Palmdale, he goes to Medford, Oregon, speaking to a Reagan-Bush rally.

Then to Portland for an overnight.

On Tuesday morning, the President will then address a Reagan-Bush rally in Portland, and going from there to Seattle for another Reagan-Bush rally.

And then he goes to Columbus; remains overnight in Columbus, and then Wednesday addresses a Reagan-Bush rally there in Columbus.

Coming back to Washington -- I guess -- we don't have the time specifically. I guess it would be mid to late afternoon.

The tentative summary schedule you should have. The sign-up sheet is posted. The sign-up for this trip is a firm noon tomorrow because our advance people have to get the list to the League for your League credentials. So if you're going, better hook on.

And it will be the same as it was in Louisville. You'll get the standard Presidential trip pass, and then you'll get credentials -- we will get your credentials at the League's press center, and we'll give you -- we'll get as many as we can from the League. If you've already made arrangements for your credentials from the League, use those please, and we'll save ours for others. Still photographers will deal directly with the League as they have in the past.

One other announcement. The White House Outreach Working Group on Central America will hold a meeting today at 2:30 p.m., room 450, open to the press. His Excellency Roman Arietta who is Archbishop of San Jose and the President of the Secretariat of Catholic Bishops of Central America will speak. He will come out here on the lawn at 2:15 p.m. before going over there in order to answer any questions you might have. He met with the President this morning for about 10 minutes at 9:15 a.m.

In addition, Dr. Jose Antonio Tijerano, former Professor of International Law at the University of Central America in Managua will speak.

Q Larry, on the President going to --

Q What time do you think they'll be out here -- 3:30?

MR. SPEAKES: Around 2:15 p.m.

Q Is the President going to speak at that post-debate reception?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe there are remarks there -- none there.

Bruce?

Q Is he -- is there a debate preparation while he's in New York as well?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q There is none?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Question?

MR. SPEAKES: Debate preparation -- no. Not as such. I don't know of any meetings specifically scheduled in the hotel. And I don't know whether there will be.

Q Larry, is the President satisfied with George Bush's response from various dictionaries on the issue of shame?

MR. SPEAKES: The President's satisfied with George Bush lock, stock and barrel, top to bottom, side-to-side --

Q Well, on the issue of shame --

MR. SPEAKES: The President thinks George Bush speaks with his usual eloquence.

Q What about saying that nuclear war is winnable, and then saying he didn't say it?

MR. SPEAKES: That was Mr. Scheer, in an October, 1980 interview, and I think Pete Teeley has addressed that.

Q Why? Was the President asking for any clarification, or --

MR. SPEAKES: No. It's clear to us what the Vice President --

Q Does the President still feel that there is no need to apologize for Bush's remark in that debate with Ms. Ferraro?

MR. SPEAKES: No. The President doesn't intend to apologize, no.

Q What?

MR. SPEAKES: The President does not intend to apologize, no.

Q Well how is he -- Mondale's going to bring it up. How is he going to answer Mondale at the debate?

MR. SPEAKES: Tune in.

Miles?

Q There was a network report last night that some of these President's senior campaign advisors had begun to travel with Vice President Bush. Is that true, and --

MR. SPEAKES: I saw Nofziger on television, but I do not know the answer to why Nofziger was with Bush -- maybe he wanted a ride to California --

Q To keep Bush --

Q -- writing his lines for him --

MR. SPEAKES: I really don't know.

Q Larry, what's the thinking behind his doing a rally before the debate? That's kind of unusual, isn't it?

MR. SPEAKES: No. It's just -- I presume it seemed to work out better, particularly with the post-debate --

MORE

#1214-10/17

Q -- warm him up --

MR. SPEAKES: -- thing.

Q -- get the adrenalin going?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, he's warm. He's warm.

Q You said Bush speaks with his usual eloquence. Is that for everything he's been saying?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q Including the remark?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't limit that.

Q Including 1980 when Reagan blew him away.

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't limit the eloquence.

Paul?

Q A new subject?

MR. SPEAKES: A new subject.

Q Housing starts statement?

MR. SPEAKES: Housing starts statements. Okay.

Q Housing starts statement --

MR. SPEAKES: We have --

Q Let's go to Lebanon.

MR. SPEAKES: Go to Lebanon? Been to Lebanon.

Q -- visit the graves.

MR. SPEAKES: I've got it here -- a moment -- The housing starts, as you know, were up 8.9 percent in September over August. This is -- the largest increase has occurred in the South and West. New home construction probably reflects recent declines in mortgage interest rates, which great profits/economists predicted some time ago when nobody else would get out on that limb.

Since early August, mortgage interest rates have dropped about a half percent. The recent announced drop in the prime interests should spur further declines. We have -- also note that building permits declined in September, and we hope they will rebound as interest rates decline.

We feel that the new home market is about where it should be in this point in the recovery.

Bruce?

Q Larry, on another subject -- you may have said something along the way that I missed -- but why hasn't the White House had any comment or disavowed this CIA document which came out of Central America which --

MR. SPEAKES: We don't customarily comment on the allegations involving intelligence or covert activities.

Q Well, since the content of that -- which has been widely reported and intelligence community sources have been quoted

as authenticating it -- since the content seems to fly directly in the face of the guidelines that you've stated here for CIA activity --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q -- why wouldn't you disavow either the authenticity or the content of it? Why do you just let it stand?

MR. SPEAKES: We just do.

Q Is it true that the Defense Department --

MR. SPEAKES: The program on the Young Astronauts begins at 1:10 p.m. Those who need to cover the beginning of it should head out to the South Lawn. We'll take a second escort just shortly before the President speaks.

Q Is it true that the Defense Department, five days before the Marines were blown up last October, recommended that Marines be withdrawn from Lebanon?

MR. SPEAKES: There -- we don't customarily talk about what goes on in NSC meetings, but I can say that the whole article is basically without foundation.

Q Well --

MR. SPEAKES: This is an old story that they've dragged out again. This ran in Newsday back in -- about six months ago, I think.

Q Well, when you say basically, I mean, that's the word -- do you just mean that to cover there might be one or two things in there that are right but you're denying the central points?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm denying the central point that there was specific intelligence that there was going to be an attack on the Marine barracks. I'm not specifically addressing what the exchanges might have been in the NSC. But the entire --

Q So you're not denying or commenting on the report that there was a recommendation to withdraw the Marines?

MR. SPEAKES: In my opinion, there had been continuing discussions at the President's own instigation about the presence of the Marines. The President had done that over -- several months before. But specifically what went on in NSC, I'm not saying. But I think if you took my statement about the article, it's basically without foundation, that would lend you to believe that what was said in the NSC meeting and what was said in the article may not be the same thing.

Q Larry, how does the President plan to observe the anniversary of the Grenada invasion? Is he going there?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know of any specific plans for the President --

Q Is he going there?

MR. SPEAKES: No, there are no plans to go to Grenada. And I'm not saying there won't be something he will do, but right now there's nothing specific.

Bob?

Q In view of Desmond Tutu's Nobel Peace Prize and his belief that he -- and made conditions worse for the black majority of

South Africa, is the administration going to reassess its policy toward South Africa?

MR. SPEAKES: The administration has stated the policy that we believe is a policy that could lead to a peaceful resolution of the problems that South Africa's confronted over the last several years and that we believe -- that that policy is a good policy and that certainly it can lead the way toward that.

The State Department yesterday issued a statement that reflects the President's view -- offer of congratulations to the Bishop on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and indicated that the U.S. shares his goal and supports peaceful change away from apartheid.

Q Larry, can you clarify the President's remarks yesterday on student aid?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm sorry. I have not checked on that, and I'll -- Marlin will do so.

MR. FITZWATER: -- what the question was?

Q Well, yesterday the President indicated that he was going to increase grants to students without increasing the overall size of the program. And I was just curious whether he's -- and he said he had sympathy and saw what these students who wanted increased grants -- and given the fact what he's done with student aid before, I'm curious whether he's planning to increase student aid in this next budget.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me let Marlin check on that because I failed to do so yesterday, and I know you did ask me.

Q Will you clarify the President's remarks on unilateral disarmament?

MR. SPEAKES: Restate them for me.

Q Well, did he really --

MR. SPEAKES: I draw a blank here --

Q -- mean to say that he had inherited a country which had unilaterally disarmed?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he did say that --

Q Well, he said that. We understand that, but did he mean to say that? I mean, if on reflection --

MR. SPEAKES: He said what he meant and meant what he said.

Q -- was it not silly to say that?

MR. SPEAKES: Doesn't need any reflection or clarification. Just look at the situation -- in 1980, compare the one in '84.

Q Well, was he naming the Carter administration. He cited one example: the cancellation of the B-1 bomber. Certainly, that's not a total unilateral disarmament no matter what interpretation put on that event.

MR. SPEAKES: -- talking more in attitude than in specific reality --

Q Oh, here we go.

MR. SPEAKES: -- but then again, where were we headed, Sam? Where were we headed back then?

Q Well, in other words, was he blaming the Carter administration solely? Because he said during the past years, and it's not clear whether he meant four, eight --

MR. SPEAKES: Largely.

Q Largely?

Q Can you explain the President's comments when he was talking about Soviet aggression when he said it's --

MR. SPEAKES: What did we do? Reserve the last part of the briefing to say can you -- did the President mean what he said? Really, yes, he meant it.

Q -- he said some silly things, you know.

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q -- talking about Soviet aggression, he said, "Doesn't Mondale know it's in their nature?" What did that mean?

MR. SPEAKES: I'd leave it just like that.

Q They lie, they cheat, they steal -- murder, rape --

MR. SPEAKES: Candy?

Q I just want to -- it's more an attitude than a specific reality? Is that what you're -- about the --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, there are a number -- how many projects had they cancelled? How many did they want to cancel? How did they -- done to the military budget --

Q Nixon did that to the military budget. Come on.

MR. SPEAKES: Candy?

Q -- do you know if Donovan --

Q You guys have no shame.

Q -- his indictment?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think he has, but I'd have to run a check.

Q Has he spoken with him?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that he has.

Q I mean that Donovan called here?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that he has. I'd have to --

Q Will you check?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

#1214-10/17

1:11 P.M. EDT