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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

November 14, 1984

The Briefing Room

9:17 A.M. EST

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#1222-11/14

9:34 A.M. EST

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MR. SPEAKES: Welcome to the new 9:15 a.m. format. This is the way I would like to do it. And the only way I will do it is that I will come down each morning in the Briefing Room here where you will be more comfortable. I will review the President's schedule. Then, I will tick off the major stories that I see in the papers and that I have comments on and others that I anticipate getting comments on later and then take the questions that you have.

I wish that these sessions would not be -- and they will not be -- argumentative or debate societies. They should be more conversational and lend themselves to being helpful to both you and the press corps and to us in the White House. If they don't work that way, I'm just not going to be inclined to do them.

The President's schedule today: The President has lunch with Dr. Richard Leakey and the Board of Directors of the National Geographic Society at 12:00 noon. And that takes place in the Family Dining Room on the ground floor of the Residence. The President invited the editors of National Geographic to a working lunch with the anthropologist, Dr. Richard Leakey, who is the Director of the National Museum of Kenya, to discuss the upcoming special story on his discovery of a 1.6 million-year-old skeleton.

They will be joined by Dr. Alan Walker, professor of anatomy of Johns Hopkins University, who shared in the discovery. In addition, there are a number of other editors from the National Geographic. A list will be made available if you like..

At 1:30 p.m. this afternoon -- and this is in addition to the schedule that we did not announce last night, although it was previously scheduled -- the President will meet with Secretary Shultz and Bud McFarlane, the President's National Security Advisor. This is to discuss a product of the National Security Council and the State Department, which is a paper on the global agenda and foreign policy for the 1985 year and the subsequent years of the President's second term.

At that meeting, the Secretary of State and Foreign Policy Advisor will review with the President the agenda as they see it. This is a sample of the type of things they will be talking about but not necessarily all inclusive: U.S.-Soviet relations with specific emphasis on arms control and the desire to reach some sort of a meaningful arms control agreement with the Soviets, the means and methods that they suggest to do it; the Middle East -- the desire of the United States to be helpful in the Middle East when the time is right; Central America -- the desire of the United States to continue to aid democracies in Central America in their pursuit of a peaceful existence; trade with particular emphasis on trade with the Pacific nations of Japan and China and others that we're developing free trade policy with; and, finally, Europe -- the recovery of the European economies and the assistance the United States can lend to that in working with them.

MORE

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At 2:30 p.m., the President --

Q Will we get any readout --

MR. SPEAKES: Readout? Possibly. If we do, I should know by noon. And we will brief at 12:00 noon today.

Q -- photo op of the meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: No. No photo op there. I will always --

Q What about a photo release?

MR. SPEAKES: -- tell you if there's a photo op.

The President will meet at 2:30 p.m. in the Cabinet Room with the Task Force for Legal Equity for Women. This is to receive a report on the activities of the Task Force on Legal Equity and to review a videotape that outlines the Reagan administration's accomplishments on behalf of women. Dorcas Hardy, who is the Chairman of the Task Force, has directed the Task Force toward implementing changes in federal regulations, practices and procedures that have been identified by the Department of Justice.

The administration -- the 10 minute tape will highlight the survey of the 21 departments and agencies that serve on the Task Force for Legal Equity. We will have the current report from the Task Force that can be made available to you following the meeting. That --

Q How about the tape, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q How about the tape?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: That --

Q Will we get a list of the members of this task force --

MR. SPEAKES: You may. That --

Q What's to be done with that tape? I mean, was it made for general showing or --

MR. FITZWATER: We can provide a text of the tape which you can all look at. And then if you want to see a screening or something, why, we'll talk about it later. But it's just a fairly straightforward kind of a slideshow presentation. So, take a look at the text first. I think that'll probably take care of --

Q Was it made for him or was it made for general showing to show what the administration's doing on --

MR. FITZWATER: It was made for general showing, but it's been primarily used in private briefings Dorcas has given in the government.

Q Is it a videotape? Is that it?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm not sure of the technical. It's a tape or a film or a slideshow or something like that.

MR. SPEAKES: Videotape is what this says.

MR. FITZWATER: Videotape --

Q Where exactly? Old Barbara Honneger's room? Is that --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Okay.

MR. SPEAKES: So, there's no photo coverage of any of the meetings today. We have the 12:00 noon meeting -- luncheon, the 1:30 p.m. meeting with the

Secretary of State and Foreign Policy Advisor and a 2:30 p.m. meeting with the President's Task Force on Legal Equity.

Looking ahead tomorrow, the President will call the shuttle astronauts some time between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. tomorrow from the Residence. So we will have some difficulty in covering that. We will not cover that in the morning.

The briefing will be at 12:00 noon today.

I see the following stories that you may be interested in. The Nicaragua story I think is prominent on television and on radio this morning and in the newspapers. I have nothing specifically to add to what the State Department and the Defense Department and the White House said yesterday. Any specific question on Nicaragua this morning?

Q If I may, do you now have confirmation of whether Nicaragua received those MI-24 helicopters and whether this represents a significant escalation for the --

MR. SPEAKES: On the MI-24s, I believe the Sandinista leadership confirmed that. I do not know whether we have independent confirmation of it or not. I assume we do.

Q Do you believe that this is possibly a significant escalation of the arms build-up there?

MR. SPEAKES: Not only the shipment of the MI-24 helicopters, but as I said yesterday, the two-month unprecedented build-up of armaments in the region is of concern to us.

Q Larry, if these helicopters are used in saturation attacks, as the Soviets are doing on the people in Afghanistan, what will be the response of the United States?

MR. SPEAKES: I think we would wait to see if something like that happened.

Q Is the United States warning them against doing that sort of thing?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know if we warned specifically. We've warned them to behave themselves.

Q You had mentioned an emphasis by the U.S. on diplomacy in resolving the problem there. Are there any plans for Shultz or anyone else from the administration to meet with Ortega and try to work out some kind of --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether there have been any specific meetings scheduled with Ortega. There have been previous meetings held with the Nicaraguans by -- Shlaudeman?

MR. SIMS: Ambassador Shlaudeman and our Ambassador.

Q Anything on a higher level is what I'm concerned about.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know of any specific plans this morning.

Helen?

Q Are seven separate maneuvers in Honduras designed to intimidate Nicaragua?

MR. SPEAKES: No. These were exercises that were announced in June. They do not -- they're not large exercises. They're ongoing training exercises.



Q Why are they being held there?

MR. SPEAKES: We've held them there for a number of years and continue to do so.

Q Larry, do you have any additional information on the Soviet ships possibly going down there and what might be aboard them?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't. The Sandinistas yesterday announced that there were three Soviet ships that were landing, I believe, yesterday, that were docking yesterday that had food-stuff on them. But I don't have anything else on it.

Q Larry, in comparison with the build-up to the Cuban Missile Crisis, what is actually the basis of it? I mean, were the Cubans getting this kind of equipment in, specifically, or --

MR. SPEAKES: No. I spoke on that on background. I will speak on it again on background, if that's okay.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: To explain exactly what I said yesterday is that in the pre-1960 -- the months preceding the Cuban Missile Crisis in '62, there was an unprecedented build-up of armaments in Cuba. They withdrew the missiles at President Kennedy's insistence, and everybody knows the history of that.

However, there remained a substantial Soviet presence there that has been an intimidating force to Central and South America for the decades that followed.

The comparison to the situation in Nicaragua was that there has been an unprecedented build-up of armaments supplied by the Soviet Union and other communist-bloc countries in Nicaragua. Perhaps the Nicaraguans would be willing to give something slightly that would still allow this massive force of armaments to remain in the area. They would serve as an intimidating force for their neighbors, particularly critical at the time when their neighbors are considering the Contadora treaty drafts. That's the basis for the comparison.

Q Do you expect there to be a Soviet presence being installed and staying there, starting now?

MR. SPEAKES: There has been a -- some Soviet presence from time to time. There's been a heavy Cuban presence there. So that's the comparison.

Q You expect missiles to be installed if the Nicaraguans wanted them?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. I can't tell what to expect.

Q Larry, is the U.S. considering any kind of diplomatic or economic sanctions against Nicaragua because of what it sees as a build-up?

MR. SPEAKES: I have not heard of any economic sanctions.

All right. Moving on, former

Prime Minister Trudeau is critical of the Economic Summits. Maybe we'll have something on that at noon. I don't have anything on it -- to say on it now.

Q Wasn't that critical of the NATO Summits?

MR. SPEAKES: Of -- I thought it was the Economic Summits.

Q I thought it was NATO.

Q I thought it was NATO.

Q Critical of everything.

MR. SPEAKES: Could be.

Q Or everything, yes.

MR. SPEAKES: In either case, perhaps at noon, but not now.

I don't see anything else in the foreign policy area.

Q What about the -- Did the White House have anything to do with the appointing of Carlin as Postmaster General?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm coming to all of that in a moment. Anything in foreign policy --

On the domestic side, the deficit -- the \$210 billion figure reported in The Washington Post, I'm just not going to comment on that. We're going to see a number of -- stories that will continue through the budget period.

There is one story that's talking about -- in The New York Times -- about the Medicare and doctors fees. As you recall, Congress passed a prospective reimbursement plan for hospitals that went into place on October 1st of '83. This was a phase-in program that's now being applied to most hospitals across the country.

At the same time, Congress directed Health and Human Services Department to study the feasibility of applying such a system for doctors that are treating in hospitals on Medicare. And Congress set a deadline for the study by the administration to report back on July 1st, 1985. HHS is conducting that study -- and that's the basis of The Times story -- expects to complete it in July, and it's unlikely that any decisions can be made on this program in time for inclusion in the FY '86 budget that we'll issue in January. So that's a Congressionally-mandated study that's going on. No conclusions have been reached. And I think The Times is speculating on where we may be going on it; but it's speculation at the moment.

Q Do I understand you to say then that Medicare would not be included in the upcoming budget --

MR. SPEAKES: This specific part about doctors -- a fee system for doctors similar to the hospital system.

Q But only that part --

MR. SPEAKES: The final thing -- Helen's question -- they have voted and they did vote on the --

Q I don't --

MR. SPEAKES: The White House did make its views known to the Postal Service Board of Governors that we would like Ed Rollins considered for the position of Postmaster General. But it is a decision that has obviously been made by the Board of Governors.

Q But they turned you down.



MR. SPEAKES: If you're right. I haven't seen the wire on it.

--  
And that's everything I see. Anybody got anything else

Q Do you think Rollins will get anything else --  
(laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I would think that -- (laughter) --

Q Secretary of Labor?

MR. SPEAKES: -- that Rollins will get something else.

Q In the government? Top echelon?

MR. SPEAKES: Probably so. He's an outstanding man.

Andrea?

Q Just housekeeping. Would you consider a White House photo release of the Shultz meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: We can look at that. Sure.

Q Chancellor Kohl said in an interview today that he was coming here in the next month to talk to Reagan to urge him to open a dialogue with the Soviets. Do you have any date for this --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I do not have a specific date. But there is a possibility that we can work out a mutually agreeable date with the Federal Republic for him to visit and -- there's a good possibility.

Pat.

Q What is the exact date -- or do you have one -- of Treasury Secretary Regan and the report on the tax --

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have an exact date. Sometime in early December, after the first; but I don't know when.

Helen.

Q Is Shultz going to Moscow in January?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think there's a trip scheduled. The Soviets alluded to that yesterday; but there's been no -- there's no trip scheduled and I don't want to put a -- rate it on one to ten; but at the moment we're talking to the State Department and it doesn't seem that it's in the works for that time period.

MR. SIMS: Well, they don't know anything about it.

Q Is the administration sending a representative to Daddy King's funeral?

MR. SPEAKES: Is the Vice President definitely going?

MR. ROUSSEL: There's some talk of the VP going. I'll just have to check and see. Might check with his office.

Q Go where?

Q What was the question?

Q Going where?

MR. SPEAKES: To Daddy King's funeral, is the Vice President -- is somebody going. That's his name, isn't it? Daddy

King.

Q Is someone going?

MR. SPEAKES: Frank.

Q There's been several calls about Drew Lewis coming back into the administration, either into the Cabinet or to a White House position. Is the President trying to get Drew Lewis to come back in here --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that there have been any specific conversations with Drew Lewis. Of course, he's welcome as a valuable member of the Cabinet -- or a valuable former Cabinet member who could render some service. But right now, there's only one vacancy, and that's in the Department of Education. I don't know whether --

Q What is being done about that now? Are you going to announce that pretty soon or what?

MR. SPEAKES: No, the President wants to take time to look over a number of candidates for the job. And I've not heard any specific names.

Q -- may be a couple of weeks then before you're ready to --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have a timetable.

Owen.

Q Speaking of vacancies, any plan by the President to pick a Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors anytime soon?

MR. SPEAKES: Sitting in a meeting with Bill Niskanen yesterday reminded me that it's probably time to do something about that. But I don't know when that's going to be done.

Q Be after the budget's done?

MR. SPEAKES: Could be. I really don't know what the timetable is.

Q Has the President involved himself yet in the Inaugural plans? Has he given any themes or guidelines or --

MR. SPEAKES: Unless he's had private conversations with Deaver, there have been no formal meetings.

Had enough?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

9:34 A.M. EST

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