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WITHDRAWAL SHEET

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DOCUMENT NO. & TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
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1. transcript	Meese off the record comment (1 pg partial)	2/18/82	C
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From: sjf

Summary:

[illegible]

* Reagan's Caribbean policy speech, tentatively scheduled for next week, will focus on economic and social issues--giving only "light treatment" to security issues.

* The White House is still planning to nominate Sam Hart to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission. "His views are not dissimilar from the President's views," says Meese.

Our interview with Meese got underway about 45 minutes late because he and other top White House officials were up in the residence helping Reagan to prepare for the news conference. Stockman's testimony was reviewed too. According to Craig Fuller, Reagan is devoting more time

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than usual to toning up for this news conference. Meese denied this, of course.

Central America. "This administration has no plans to send combat troops to El Salvador," says Meese. Nor are there any plans to put Americans into combat zones. But by saying that no one "in a responsible position" is recommending combat involvement, he confirms in a backhanded way the reports that the White House has received such recommendations from CIA and State.

He suggests that the U.S. still plans some action against Cuba--but it will not be discussed in the speech.

Middle East. Meese claims the differences between Haig and Weinberger have been magnified. "In talking with Al and Cap, they didn't feel that they had differences," says Meese. He says "the wrong words" may have been used, thus giving a greater opportunity to reporters to find differences between them. "There is a basic agreement on our continuing commitment to Israel and a very careful approach to Jordan. But this kind of highlights the problem we have in going ahead in maintaining our commitment to Israel and having them understand that what we're doing with Jordan is important to them too." Referring to Weinberger, Meese says: "He did what he had to do--he was dealing with the Jordan problem." He says the letter to Begin was meant to reassure Israel, but "it was in no way meant to repudiate Weinberger's statements."

Reagan-Voelker. Reagan and Voelker met informally in the

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residence on Monday over drinks. The administration is trying very hard not to be critical of Voelker. Meese tries to minimize Voelker's criticism of the deficits, saying that the Fed chairman was "more worried about the deficits as they would be if we didn't get the spending controls that we are seeking in Congress." Reagan tried to convince Voelker that he is serious about keeping the deficit down; Voelker tried to convince Reagan there is no way precise way to control every fluctuation in the money supply. The meeting lasted 45 minutes to an hour. No reason was given why Voelker didn't finish his second drink.

Derise of Cabinet Government. Meese is toying with ways to beef up policy development at the White House. He was vague on details, but indicated he plans to expand a daily meeting of his aides into a larger policy oversight group. "This is more of a management meeting to know where the policy issues are along the trail--whether they are in legislative strategy, whether they've gone past the Cabinet councils, whether they are in the development phase--to make sure nothing falls between the cracks." Asked whether policy making is shifting into the White House and away from the Cabinet, Meese said, "I asked that question too." He nevertheless insists his new structure would not detract from Cabinet government.

Civil Rights. Under Clarence Pendelton, the Civil Rights Commission is going to be more active, acting as "hub" of government activity on civil rights. "We'd like them to

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look at the civil rights activities in various departments and make sure they're being carried out properly and see if we need legislation."

Asked about Sam Hart, Meese replied: "Ah yes, boy evangelist." Then he chuckled. He noted that Hart will not be nominated until the usual clearance has been completed.

Pen James, whom we encountered on our way into Meese's office, says that Senators Specter and Heinz lied when they said the nomination of Hart had not been checked with them.

Meese says it's "too early" for the administration to accept a resolution--instead of legislation--on the issue of tax exemptions for schools that discriminate. Meanwhile, the two schools in question continue to get their exemption.

Budget. No one on Capitol Hill has yet come up with a proposal that could provide the basis for compromise on the 1983 budget. The White House rejects Hollings' proposed freeze because it would cut some programs too much (even non-defense programs), and others not enough. Meese, as defensive as ever, tried to deny that President Reagan used the term "put up or shut up." Said Meese: "I think he said it more gently than that."

(END)

STORY:SPEAKES
MA:60 FMT:

QUEUE:RAKX-RAK
HJ:

MSG:
INI:

OPR:RAK ;02/18,11:06

TC: MLS, LT, JF, DR, BFP, JG, GP, DXB, DCB, LH, JWM, SJF,
PA, FGH, SXM, TG, SNW

FROM: RAK

RE: Background-only_ivu_with_Larry_Speakes

Cuba. The doves appear to be winning the debate over what the President should or should not do to counter Cuban activities in Central America. As of today, the speech Reagan plans to make in the next week or so to the Organization of American States centers on the administration's Caribbean Basin plan and does not include an attack on Castro, Speakes says. There are no ``immediate plans`` to take harsh action against Castro.

Clark-Haig-Weinberger. Clark's role in shaping policy is expanding slowly. His influence comes about this way, according to Speakes: ``He goes to the President and says something like, `This is not the way you've always looked at this, not the way you've always thought.'`` Speakes did not offer any specific examples of when Clark has used this line of reasoning with Reagan, but this week's letter to Begin may be a case in point. Speakes does not know whether the Begin letter was generated by Clark.

Speakes maintains that the Haig-Weinberger dispute over Middle East policy has been blown out of proportion by reporters. ``It's not nearly what you're seeing in the press. It's a lot of smoke and no fire.``

Volcker. Speakes knows very little about the Reagan-

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Volcker meeting. (In fact, on Tuesday morning he mistakenly told reporters that the Monday meeting had not occurred. He simply hadn't been told about it yet.)

"The President said it was a good meeting and that he felt very good about it...We're seeing a lot more eye to eye with the Fed now," says Speakes. He believes that Volcker agreed with Reagan's view that the money supply this year should be kept in the upper part of the Fed's target range to allow for the recovery. Reagan believes that the "spikes" on the graph charting changes in the money supply is a prime reason for nervousness in the financial markets. Volcker argued that the spikes are not significant, because over the long term the money supply has grown at the rate the Fed wants it to.

Budget. "We've softened out rhetoric a bit but we're still a long way from talking compromise."

Presidential swearing. Reagan in private does not tell off-color stories that he would not tell in public. In other words, they are only slightly off color. Speakes adds:

"I've never heard him use any profanity. He uses an occasional damn or damnit in telling a story or in saying 'Damnit, this is how I want it done.'" Nor do cabinet officials or White House aides use profanity in meetings with Reagan. "It would sound out of place," says Speakes.

William French Smith. Smith is fairly quiet in cabinet meetings. "He doesn't volunteer much except when it pertains to his area. His presentations are quiet and

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straightforward, very conservative." Speakes notes that Smith "has not always been a winner" in his arguments to the President. Smith has little if any social contact with the Reagans.

(END)

STORY:WEU11 CUEUE:SJF-SJF MSG: MA:60 FMT: HJ: INI: OPR:SJF ;02/19,16:54

To: mls lt jf dr bfp jg gp dcb dxb lh jwm rak pa pgh sxm
rsd

From: sjf

The following comes from a backrounder on the Caribbean Basin Initiative with Bud McFarlane, deputy assistant to the President for National Security Affairs:

Summary:

* President Reagan will speak out soon to counter fears that U.S. aid to El Salvador will escalate into military involvement. This ``Vietnam hangover`` is pervasive, even at the Pentagon. Reagan will argue that Central America, unlike Vietnam, poses a direct threat to U.S. security.

* The Caribbean basin plan to be unveiled by Reagan on Wednesday would: (1) Virtually eliminate tariffs on such goods as sugar, cocoa and coffee, (2) increase economic aid by 250-million dollars a year and (3) step up military aid. (The White House is talking about a total of 75 to 90 billion dollars additional aid to Central America in fiscal 1982, most of it to El Salvador.)

* Mexico, Canada and Venezuela generally approve of the Caribbean economic plan, which would require them together to match the 250 million dollar annual investment of the United States. Although these countries were not asked to help out with military aid, talks have produced a more ``mature understanding`` of Reagan's view of the situation.

Vietnam hangover. Increased military aid will be even harder to sell on Capitol Hill than the lower tariffs.

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``It is the Vietnam hangover,`` says McFarlane. Reagan must convince the nation that El Salvador is different from Vietnam. ``That is going to take time,`` he says. ``There isn't a broad understanding in the U.S. of why Central America is important. Nor is there any understanding of why a secure Central America is important.``

Reagan will argue that Central America is strategically important because much of our oil comes through the Caribbean and we rely on that area for other products.

``MIG23s in Cuba are not going to attack Chicago, but they can cover all trade routes in the Caribbean,`` he says.

``Americans don't understand that. We don't want to be alarmist, but we're going to have to enlighten the American public to that.``

He says the President has tried to calm Vietnam-related jitters at the Pentagon. In four National Security Council meetings, ``the President has been very explicit--that we are not getting them involved willy-nilly.``

Referring to El Salvador: ``They could use more military aid than we are giving them, but there is a limit.`` The El Salvador army has expanded from 12,000 to 20,000 in a year.

Caribbean Basin Plan. Congress also will balk at the lower trade barriers proposed in this plan. But White House officials have concluded that the potential damage to U.S. producers would be ``very, very modest``--nothing that can't be cured under provisions of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act. Most tariffs would be lifted with only a

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few minor exceptions. Sugar shipments would be held to historical levels to keep the Caribbean from becoming a ``single funnel`` of sugar from other parts of the world. Another exeption: On textiles, the government decided that lifting levies would not significantly stimulate imports.

The 250-million dollars a year in aid that is being proposed would begin with a supplemental appropriation in fiscal 1982. It would be sustained at that level for two or three years, and then begin to decline.

All Caribbean countries--including Cuba and Granada--would technically be eligible, but there will be pressure on the political leadership to adopt a ``pluralistic`` approach to government that includes land reform and elections.

Other Countries. Initially, Mexico, Canada and Venezuela were suspicious of this plan. He conceded, ``The solutions are rather like solutions that have been proposed in the past.`` They wanted a sign of ``political will and leadership`` from the United States. Because of the cost of the plan, he says, ``It couldn't succeed as simply a U.S. nction.`` Since the U.S. began discussion dollar figures, their reaction to the program has improved. ``We are confident that they do support it,`` he says.

(Note: This briefing for the three magazines was a breakthrough. It is the first time the White House has offered such a briefing with an NCS staffer. It was set up by David Gergen's office in response to complaints that none of the regular people we talk to at the White House

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were up to speed on Central America this week.)

(END)

STCFY:CARIBBE
MA:60 FMT:

QUEUE:RAKX-RAK

MSG:

HJ: INI:

OPR:RAK ;02/24,13:59

TO: MLS, LT, JF, DR, BFP, JG, GP, DCB, DXB, LH, JWM, SJF, ✓
FA, PGE, SXM

FECM: RAK

RE: Reagan's Caribbean plan

The following comes from an on-the-record briefing by
Thomas Enders, William Brock and Peter McPherson:

The officials sought to downplay the stepped-up military
aid that Reagan wants to provide to Central American
countries. The administration regards the Caribbean
initiative as having three chief components, all of which
are economic--increased U.S. imports of Caribbean products;
an additional 350 million dollars in direct U.S. economic
aid this year, for a total of 823.9 million, 403 million
more than in 1981; and steps to encourage investment.

Military aid. In his speech to the Organization of
American States, the President was quick to point out that
U.S. economic assistance to the region would be more than
five times the amount of U. S. military aid. The
administration, through supplemental requests to Congress,
wants to provide this year a total of 182.1 million in
military aid to Central American and the Caribbean,
including El Salvador. That compares to 50.5 million last
year.

Trade. The centerpiece of the Caribbean Basin Initiative
is what the White House terms "one-way free trade." This
amounts to making the U.S. a duty-free market for Caribbean

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products--with the exception of textiles, apparel and sugar--for 12 years. Congress would have to approve this step.

Some 87 percent of Caribbean exports already enter the U.S. duty free, but duty-free status is granted only on a year-by-year, country-by-country basis. Reagan's plan would encourage investment by guaranteeing investors that the products they produce in the Caribbean could enter the U.S. duty free for the next 12 years--enough time to make a profit on their investments.

Textiles and apparels would continue to be regulated under existing international trade agreements. "But even there we intend to be extremely liberal," Brock said. Sugar imports will receive duty-free treatment, but only to the extent that they do not disrupt the U.S. domestic sugar-price support program. Brock estimated that the U.S. might limit sugar imports from the three largest Caribbean producers to 110 percent of their current levels. For the Dominican Republic, for example, that might mean an extra 50 million a year in sugar exports to the U.S.

Direct economic assistance. Of the 350 million in economic aid, about 100 million or more would go to El Salvador. Jamaica and Costa Rica (which is on the verge of financial collapse) would also be major recipients. Enders refused to be more specific about how the 350 million will be distributed, stressing that final decisions have not been made. The aid would be mostly in the form of short-term credits to provide hard currency to help countries stave

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off bankruptcy and promote private investment. Use of the money by governments to create jobs outside the private sector will be discouraged as contrary to Reagan's free-market policy.

Participation. In his speech Reagan responded this way to pressure from Mexico's Jose Lopez Portillo that Cuba, Nicaragua, Grenada or any other leftists governments not be excluded from the program: "We seek to exclude no one. Some, however, have turned from their American neighbors and their heritage. Let them return to the traditions and common values of this hemisphere and we all will welcome them. The choice is theirs." Earlier in his remarks, Reagan characterized those countries this way: "The positive opportunity is illustrated by the two-thirds of the nations in the area which have democratic governments. The dark future is foreshadowed by the poverty and repression of Castro's Cuba, the tightening grip of the totalitarian left in Grenada and Nicaragua, and the expansion of Soviet-backed, Cuban-managed support for violent revolution in Central America."

Enders made clear that Cuba and other communists governments will not find themselves on the receiving end of U.S. aid. "We're not excluding anyone...[but] I would assume...that there would be no assistance offered to countries that are communist."

Cuba. As expected, the President did not make any harsh, explicit threats to Castro. He did, however, cite the 1947

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fic Treaty providing for a common defense of the Western Hemisphere. He added: "Let our friends and our adversaries understand that we will do whatever is prudent and necessary to ensure the peace and security of the Caribbean area."

(END)

STORY:GERGEN
MA:60 FMT:

QUEUE:BEQ-BEQ
HJ:

MSG:
INI:

OPR:AIC ;02/24,18:24

TO: MLS, LT, JF, DR, BFP, JG, GP, ECB, DXB, LH, JWM, SJF,
PA, PGH, SXM, GY

FROM: RAK

RE: Background-only_ivu_with_David_Gergen

Caribbean_plan. While I was in Gergen's office, Bill Clark called him to report that the initial reponse in Latin America to Reagan's speech to the OAS is very favorable. In addition, "there is some sign" that the Japanese will initiate a Caribbean aid program of their own. But Gergen was quick to admit that the administration's plan to provide more military aid will not be well received by Mexico and other governments in the Caribbean. "The economic side of it will be well received by Mexico and Venezuela but they won't be so happy with the military aspects." Gergen noted that the Caribbean Basin Initiative (At the White House it is referred to as the CBI.) is strictly economic, and that the administration does not regard the increased military assistance as part of the package, even though the military aid and the economic aid are directed at the same end--to keep leftist governments out of the Western Hemisphere. "We deliberately separated the military aspects in the speech to try to de-emphasize them."

Lopez-Portillo. Upon returning from Managua this week, the Mexican president wrote Reagan a long personal letter explaining his views on El Salvador. Gergen had a one-page

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summary of the letter. He declined to let me read it, showing me instead that the document was labeled SECRET on the top. The letter, said Gergen, ``is consistent with what he said in Nicaragua. He wants to play a mediating role.'' Gergen sees no way that Reagan would go along with the idea. Reagan is not yet ready to accept a negotiated settlement in El Salvador. ``We want to keep the election foremost.'' The White House has not responded publicly to the Lopez Portillo letter but Gergen was not certain that Reagan has not replied privately.

He does not believe the strains between Reagan and Lopez Portillo will get out of hand. The two men have always recognized that they have differences of view on Central America, says Gergen, forgetting about all the times that administration officials have stressed how much Reagan and his Mexican ``friend'' see eye to eye.

Clark. Gergen insists that Clark is taking a stronger hand in coordinating foreign policy than most people realize. ``He's going to be very good...He played a very big role in the CBI.'' Gergen says there are no plans for Reagan to give a speech outlining the administration's Mideast policy. Nor are there plans for other speeches on foreign policy, except for the possibility of a ``general speech'' that would not be called a state-of-the-world speech. That idea is not quite yet dead, Gergen says.

Gergen leaving? When I questioned Gergen for our story on the ``pain and glory'' of serving in the White House, he

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surprised me by saying that he does not plan to spend four years there. "I would like to reassess my position in early 1983," he says. He claims that his reason for leaving is that he thinks the President is better served "by an infusion of new blood." He says he came to the White House in 1981 planning to stay for only six months. I frankly don't believe that Gergen will leave the administration next year, but perhaps it's worth a whisper to say that Gergen can be added to the growing list of senior White House aides who say they don't intend to stick with Reagan through his full term.

The press. Gergen is getting ready to unveil "some new rules" regarding the President's "availability" to reporters. Under consideration is a plan by which Reagan would invite reporters to gather around his desk in the Oval Office once a week for a "mini press conference" of not more than 10 minutes' duration. [Whisper?] Cameras would be allowed to record these sessions which would, of course, be on the record, unlike FDR's background sessions at his desk. It is clear that Gergen and other senior advisers are searching for a better way to present Reagan to the press wthan the formal press conference. The President's performances at press conferences have been deteriorating at an alarming rate. Gergen would like to restrict the mini press conferences to reporters who regularly cover the White House. If these sessions are done in the Oval Office, the number would have to be severely

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restricted from the 200 or so reporters who normally attend a press conference.

Marty Anderson. I also interviewed the outgoing domestic adviser today for the pain-and-glory story. For the record, Anderson--who has worked closely with Reagan for years--believes he will seek a second term in office. Anderson says Reagan rarely ``agonizes`` over decisions, because he has such a long-held view of what he wants the world to be and what he wants to accomplish. Anderson notes that Reagan has not aged since taking office. To the contrary, Anderson believes the job has made Reagan more vigorous.

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STORY:WEU4 QUEUE:SJF-SJF MSG: SJJF
MA:60 FMT: HJ: INI: OPR:SJF ;02/25,09:44

[1982]

To: mls lt jf dr bfp.jg gp dcb lh jwm dxt sxm rak pa pgh
nd

From: sjf

The following items come from a background interview with
Terry Speakes:

* The budget compromise that President Reagan is seeking with Congress this year will differ from Gramm-Latta and Conable-Hance in one important way: It will be a Republican plan, not a bipartisan deal. "That's good politics."

* Bill Clark has laid down the law with Haig and Weinberger about public bickering. "He now has an understanding that enough's enough." In addition, an NSC staff shakeup is underway. No details available yet.

* Cabinet meetings are now show-and-tell sessions. No policy has been debated at a Cabinet meeting at least since Jan. 1. John Flock is the least favorite Cabinet member at the White House. He's "a little bit icky."

* Off the Record. Photo opportunities with Reagan and foreign dignitaries soon will be restricted to photographers only--no reporters. If reporters object, the White House will cancel these photo ops altogether.

Budget-Taxes. Although the White House had kind words for the Domenici proposal, it is not viewed as a basis for compromise. "We're being nice to Domenici's proposal because he's our guy," says Speakes. The part the White House objects to most is the proposed freeze on spending. White House aides also were ruffled that Domenici unveiled

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it without warning. He sent a copy of his speech and a fact sheet to the White House the next day.

Speakes expects Republican leaders in the Senate to come up with a compromise and pass it before they begin to negotiate with Rostenkowski in the House. He strongly rejects the idea that Reagan has lost control of the process.

Speakes was no help on tax ideas. He says any shift in the dates of the income tax cut were ruled out entirely.

Why no Depression? Speakes (whose lack of understanding of the economy is legend) cites these items as proof that the recession is "close to the bottom."

- * Housing starts are up slightly.
- * Auto sales are up slightly.
- * Leading indicators are up slightly
- * Interest Rates have moderated slightly.

Forget unemployment, he says. "It's always the first to go up and the last to come down."

Foreign policy. Invoking the President's name, Clark is getting tough with Haig and Weinberger. According to Speakes, Clark tells them: "The President wants it this way, Haig. The President wants it this way, Cap." An NSC staff shakeup will be announced "in the next few weeks."

Objective: To bring in stronger policy people. But the existing policy people, most of them right wingers, may only be shoved aside--not fired--in deference to the right.

Clark intends to keep a low profile for a while longer.

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He's still afraid he does not know enough about foreign policy. Bud McFarlane may brief reporters occasionally. But McFarlane is too cautious. "He's the kind of guy who when you ask him 'what time have you got?' replies, 'I don't know. What time have you got?'"

Cabinet. The Cabinet has not had a lively debate since it discussed immigration policy early last year. Every meeting since Jan. 1 has been a show-and-tell session by Stockman. The last one focused on the State of the Union address. "I can't remember anything very exciting in a long time," says Speakes. "But Cabinet councils are still lively."

No other Cabinet member is as unpopular with the White House staff as Block. Bell, Edwards and Donovan are virtual non-entities. Smith is somewhat unpopular among White House staffers for "making end runs" to the President.

The Monday issues lunch allows staff to review all pending policy matters with the President. Present are the Big Three, Clark, the domestic adviser, Speakes, Gergen, Luterstein, Lerman and Fuller. This week there was a discussion of the budget negotiations, El Salvador, the schedule, reaction to the press conference. The group usually kicks around "some creative ideas." For example, this week they discussed how to "hype" the private sector group that the President created last week. It was decided to appoint a chairman next week to call attention to it again. (This is a "creative" idea?)

Press Problems. The White House staff is determined to

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and questioning during photo opportunities with foreign dignitaries. Speakes says the issue is "going to come to a conclusion" soon. "We are going to prove that it's not a God-given, constitutional right to have a press conference every day of the year," says Speakes. He notes that questions were never asked at photo opportunities prior to the Carter administration. Why doesn't the President simply refuse to answer? "Because that's not his style," says Speakes. "He leaves press conferences feeling guilty about all those hands still raised." But Speakes adds: "He's doing more and more, answering less and less."

Speakes-Gergen--Off the Record. Recent rumors of a truce between Speakes and Gergen are false. Speakes says sarcastically that Gergen is currently "stressing cooperation" only because the Washington Post is preparing a Style section story on the subject. Speakes' beef with Gergen is that he's too disorganized. Their feud has polarized the press office for months.

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STORY:MEESE
NA:60 FMT:

QUEUE:BEQ-BEQ
HJ:

MSG:
INI:

OPR:RAK ;02/25,16:25

TC: MIS, IT, JF, LR, BFP, JG, GP, DCB, LXB, LH, JWM, SJF, ✓
FA, FGB, SXM

FROM: RAK

RE: Background-only-ivu-with-Ed-Meese

The budget. Meese made it clear that the President still is in no need to compromise with Congress and strike a quick deal on the budget. (We ran into Ken Duberstein in the corridor and he also stressed that the White House strategy is to wait things out in the hope that "they will come to us," as lawmakers did last year.) Is a deal in sight? "It's too early to tell, really" says Meese. "We're looking at the alternatives, now...[But] we're looking at it week to week." When pressed, Meese concedes that Reagan would compromise on defense spending before he would compromise on delaying the tax cut. [Whisper?] "He's pretty firm on both, though," Meese adds.

Foreign Policy. The President probably will deliver more speeches on foreign policy in the future but none is now scheduled. Meese speculates that it may be necessary for Reagan to speak out on the Middle East before the scheduled return of the Sinai to Egypt on April 25; other speeches could be made to lay the groundwork for the June meeting of NATO heads of state or the Paris economic summit, also scheduled for early June. Meese cautions, however, that "I'm not sure he's going to say anything at all" on foreign policy. He ruled out any broad state-of-the-world

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speech and, in fact, made fun of the idea.

Habib_mission. Special envoy Phillip Habib will leave for the Middle East soon, probably Friday. Meese did little to discourage reports that the White House has concluded that Prime Minister Begin is about to launch raids on PLO targets in Lebanon. He says there is no intelligence information to confirm that Begin is planning new attacks but he added: ``That's been a high concern for quite a while.''

Stockman_rumors. Is Stockman about to resign as reported? The reports are made ``out of hole cloth,''' Meese says emphatically. ``I don't know where these things come from...There's absolutely nothing to it.''' There is no indication that the President or senior White House advisers are trying to get rid of Stockman. (Meese would be the first to give Stockman a shove. He was very offended by the Atlantic Monthly article.)

(END)

STORY:WBUS
NA:62 FMT:

QUEUE:SJF-SJF
EJ:

MSG:
INI:

OPR:SJF ;22/25,17:09

To: mls lt jf dr bfp ja ep dcb lh jwm dxb rak pa pgh sxm
From: sjf

The following items come from a background interview with
Mike Deaver:

* William Clark is becoming more than a coordinator of policy. He is already setting policy.

* President Reagan approaches a national news conference no differently than he does a meeting of the Chamber of Commerce or the Rotary. This is why he gets into trouble.

* The President is very upset about criticism of his flubs at news conferences.

Cabinet government. Although Reagan once promised to make the Cabinet his "inner circle," Deaver says he never really intended to do that. "The Cabinet is what he wanted it to be. It functions as it did in Sacramento. He had a small circle of advisers even in Sacramento."

Deaver claims that Reagan relies more on the Cabinet than other presidents--at least going back to Eisenhower. He looks to cabinet councils to hash over issues.

Clark. At the same time, Deaver says that Clark is slowly beginning to set foreign-policy inside the White House, taking it out of the hands of Cabinet members. "Clark has really grabbed ahold of that," he said. "The President is finally happy with it. He's managing the NSC." Deaver says Clark already has let some of Allen's staff go. In his daily meeting with the President, Clark often brings in other members of the NSC--including members of the Cabinet.

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Asked if Clark will become a ``determiner`` of policy, Deaver replied that it already has begun to happen. ``I don't think that can help but happen,`` he said. ``Never be fooled by that quiet, gentle smile. He's tough and not afraid to make decisions.

Deaver is ``impressed with how that guy has grown since I've known him.`` When he expressed this view to the President recently while they were riding in a car, Reagan replied: ``We've got to remember that he's had a lot of experience--in the courts and so forth. We haven't seen him (ie. worked with him) for awhile.``

More on Clark: ``He's very much the President's style. He's quiet and not for himself and always wants the President's imprimatur on foreign policy.`` People automatically assume Clark speaks for the President. ``He has that in a way that Dick Allen never could.``

Reagan's Flubs. The President has always gotten ``very upset`` about criticism of his flubs. Now is no exception. ``He feels very strongly that if you really researched these things you'd find out he's right.``

But Deaver claims to be philosophical about it. He notes that Reagan carried Kansas in 1980, even though he could not define parity.

Here's Deaver's explanation of the flubs:

* Reagan has ``a computer-like mind. He absorbs everything and it gets lock in there. That's why we have to make sure it is right when we give it to him.`` (The

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suggestion here is that aides give Reagan bad information.)

* ``Walking into that East Room is the same to him as if he were walking into a room with the Chamber of Commerce. He would never say anything differently, (even if he went off the record.) ``That's what you see in the press conferences. He's totally honest.'' Reagan treats press conferences ``like the Rotary.''

Generally, Deaver thinks Reagan gets good press. ``I think the President by and large is treated fairly by the press and always has been throughout his political career. He is liked by reporters. They think he is a nice man. I think they believe he speaks the truth.''

Yet Deaver is critical of the way the press covers the White House. ``You guys are managed by the network news,'' he says. ``All of us are managed by the network news. They determine what's news.'' He also thinks the media pays ``far too much attention to procedures and personalities.''

Deaver also objects when reporters ask questions in photo opportunities that do not pertain to the meeting at hand. For example, he was angry that reporters asked about draft registration in a photo opportunity between Paul Nitze and Reagan. When the clip appeared on the evening news, Nitze was even cut out of the picture.

Why doesn't the President simply refuse to answer these questions? ``He's very open. He doesn't even want it to appear that he can't answer the question and is not straightforward.''

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