

# Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**Collection:** Press Secretary, Office of the:  
Press Releases and Press Briefings: Records, 1981-1989

**Series:** II: PRESS BRIEFINGS

**Folder Title:** 01/28/1985 (#1310)

**Box:** 33

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Inventories, visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

*Last Updated: 01/17/2025*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

---

PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

January 28, 1985

The Briefing Room

9:18 A.M. EST

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Presidential schedule.....1-3  
Trade Association Leaders  
Secretary Regan/David Stockman  
Congressional Leaders  
Economic Summit Trip

DOMESTIC

Beirut Kidnapping.....4-6  
Washington Post/Nicaragua.....7-8  
Chernenko.....13-14  
South Africa/Apartheid.....14

FOREIGN

Reorganization Authority.....9-10  
Edwin Meese/Ethics.....10-11,13  
Michael Deaver.....11-12  
State of the Union/Tax Reform.....10-12

#1310-01/28

9:45 A.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

---

PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

January 28, 1985

The Briefing Room

9:18 A.M. EST

MR. SPEAKES: This morning, the President's meeting with a group of trade association leaders from the housing industry and financial institutions community. They include U.S. -- and we'll put out a list of these -- U.S. Savings -- U.S. League of Savings Institution, American Banks Association, National Association of Homebuilders, National Association of Realtors, and National Council of Savings Institutions.

His visit with them will be preceded by a briefing from Secretary Regan and Director Stockman and perhaps some others from the administration on the deficit reduction package that we'll be submitting to Congress next Monday.

Today, we'll be having our regular lunch with the President and we'll brief at 1:15 p.m. Put on a lid at noon.

In the afternoon, at 2:00 p.m., the President meets with members of the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committee. This is an opportunity for these money committees of Congress to hear some ideas on the tax reform package that will be considered shortly by the White House. And we'll have an opportunity to let them give their input on tax reform as we head toward a consideration of it at the White House.

And finally, at 4:30 p.m., the President is meeting with the House Republican Whip Organization, and that is Trent Lott's group who will be coming in to hear the President talk about their need -- his need for their support on the legislative schedule that's coming up in the House Ways and Means.

I'm sure he will specifically mention Central America, MX, spending reduction, and tax reform.

Photo op at 11:30 a.m. with the trade association leaders in the Cabinet Room.

I've got statements on foreign travel by the President, reaction to the television showing of one of the U.S. officials in Lebanon, new reaction to The Washington Post story on new ideas for aid in Nicaragua, and finally, a Washington Post story on reorganization authority.

I haven't read The Times yet, Bernie.

Chancellor Kohl has invited the President to extend his stay in the Federal Republic of Germany following the May 2nd through 4th Bonn economic summit. The President has accepted and will make a state visit to Germany on May 5th through 8th.

The President's itinerary is still being discussed with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany.

Q He announced that Saturday, didn't he?

Q Yes.

MORE

#1310-01/28

MR. SPEAKES: He did.

At the invitation of the government of Spain, the President will pay a visit to Spain on May 8th through 10th. The President's program during Spain is under discussion between the two governments and will be completed shortly.

Q Is that also a state visit?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR OFFICIAL: If I may go on BACKGROUND to complete your story here -- anybody got any objections?

We will shortly be announcing the President's visit to Portugal which will follow the visit to Spain. There is no other travel, at the moment, planned. There's speculation on Austria, and that is not planned at present. I don't anticipate it. And there's been speculation on some Eastern European countries, and none of those are scheduled at the moment.

Q Well, just background on Portugal -- 10 to 12, roughly, do you think?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would guess. Do you have a feel for the dates --

Q 10 to 11?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: 10 and 11, yes.

Q 10 to 11 or 10 to 12?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Probably 10 to 11.

Q So how many --

Q So you expect that Portugal then will wrap up the trip?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: At the moment, yes. There's nothing else planned.

Q Well, you leave yourself a little open. But does that mean because something's in the pipeline or because you just want an abundance of caution?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. You often have -- abundance of caution is the word. You often have, whenever the President's traveling in a given area of the world, many countries extend invitations and we consider them. Right now, I don't look for any plans.

Q When does he leave Washington, do you think? On the 1st?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'd have to get my calendar. I think we're due in Bonn on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, I believe, or Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I can't remember the departure.

Q In the President's trip to -- in his decision not to visit a concentration camp, was that the result of West Germany's request not to visit a concentration camp?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, it's the President's own personal decision and desires.

Q Does the President have any concerns in planning to

visit Spain about the hardening of Gonzalez's position regarding Nicaragua and our aid?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Is that one of the issues that would come up there?

MR. SPEAKES: We don't have an agenda yet. But you can assume that wherever the President is, he will certainly make the heads of state that he visits with aware of his Central American policy.

Q Is it clear where the VE Day ceremony will be now?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: No. I have nothing new on the VE Day ceremony.

Q Doesn't it almost certainly have to be in Germany if he's going to be --

Q No, it looks like Spain, if you say the 8th to the 10th.

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Isn't VE the 8th?

MR. SIMS: He'll be in Germany on the 8th --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we know where he will be, but we don't know what the form of the observance will be.

Q Where will he be?

Q What did you just say, Bob?

MR. SIMS: In Germany.

Q He'll be in Germany and --

MR. SPEAKES: Let's see. We've got two briefings going on here.

Q -- and Spain on the 8th.

MR. SPEAKES: Let's --

Q He'll be in Germany.

MR. SPEAKES: The President will be in Germany on the 8th -- May 5th through 8th. He arrives in Spain on the 8th. So, essentially, it's a travel day between Germany and Japan.  
(Laughter.) I mean Germany and Spain. That was World War II.  
(Laughter.)

How long would it take --

Q Freudian slip, right?

MR. SPEAKES: How long would it take?

Q From Germany to Japan?

Q So he does the thing in Germany and gets out of town real fast. Yes?

MR. SPEAKES: True.

John, do you have something?

Q Guess who he leaves behind.

Q Sam, Lesley, and Chris.

Q No, I just wanted to ask if Spain is a state visit,  
right?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

The story that broke overnight on Lebanon -- as you know, that some of the television tape of William Buckley of the Embassy staff has been shown on television. We've seen the reports including the tape of Mr. Buckley. We are pleased that he is alive and appears to be well.

We are, and have been, will continue to seek information from a number of sources on the Middle East on the five people that are held by terrorists there. We will actively seek the release on the -- of these individuals on the basis of quiet contacts.

Any more questions on that?

Q Well, have you had any success with quiet contacts  
so far?

MR. SPEAKES: As the President said --

Q How long have the quiet contacts been going on? One  
year?

MR. SPEAKES: As the President said on Saturday, we -- it does not serve the purpose of obtaining the freedom of these people to talk publicly about it. We'll continue to actively work. We have been actively involved from the start and will continue to do so.

Q Well, have you been successful?

MR. SPEAKES: Helen, I'll let you be the judge.

Charles?

Q Well, you haven't.

Q Larry, have you identified --

Q My judgment is you have not.

Q -- who is holding them specifically?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Have you specifically identified who is holding them  
and whether all five are being held by the same group?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't think we want to go really  
much further than that.

Q Do you know they're alive?

MR. SPEAKES: Pat?

Q Would a visit by Jesse Jackson help or hurt that  
quiet contact?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think I can pass judgment on it. It is clearly a sensitive situation and one that we are handling in, obviously, a very delicate manner and will continue to do so.

Lesley, do we know all of them are alive?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, I don't want to comment on it. I have no reason to suspect they aren't all alive.

Q Well, you speak about them as though they are and --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, that's our belief.

Q -- Mr. Bush said last week that you don't have any evidence that they are alive.

MR. SPEAKES: Our belief is that they are.

Q Do we have any notion as to why this tape was released? Is this a new stage in the negotiations that --

MR. SPEAKES: Don't know. You can -- one can only try to draw conclusions, but --

Q There are no demands in the tape, as I understand. Is that correct?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe so.

Frank?

Q Larry, as I understand it, there were -- some of the reports on this -- surrounding this tape out of London indicated that there were specific demands being made. Are there specific demands and can you give us any indication as to what they might concern?

MR. SPEAKES: In neither case would I comment.

Q All right. And you also said, "We have seen the tape." Has the President seen the tape?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Who's "we"?

MR. SPEAKES: Some of the officials at the State Department.

Q Saw that where?

Q On television?

MR. SPEAKES: Saw the tape?

Q In Beirut?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, on television.

Q Well, Larry, if you can't comment on the demands, can you confirm that there are demands?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Candy?

Q "We have seen the reports including the tape." Does that mean that what you know about this is what -- which reports? Press reports?

MR. SPEAKES: New reports, yes.

Q So, I don't know, it just doesn't seem to jive, when

you're talking about all these quiet contacts, that they would have a tape of Buckley holding up this paper and what you know about it is what you've read or seen on the TV. Weren't you contacted about it beforehand?

MR. SPEAKES: We've had continuing contacts on all of the individuals.

Q Well, I know, but why is it that you didn't know about this until you saw it on the tube?

MR. SPEAKES: You mean the tape or Buckley? We knew about Buckley.

Q You knew that Buckley was alive prior to seeing him fully on the tape?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the answer to that. But I don't really get where you're getting at. We didn't know they were going to make a tape and put it on television. They didn't tell us that, no.

Q Okay, well, I was just trying to get at how it appeared on television and how the reports came out before you all knew about it if there is this close -- presumably, you're working with the Lebanese government, a bunch of people over there, and how it -- what you're saying to me is that it came as a surprise when it showed up on the television.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. We didn't know they were going to make a tape.

Q You say you've had continuing contacts. Who have you had contact with?

MR. SPEAKES: Won't say. A number of individuals in the region.

Q Individuals?

Q As opposed to government?

MR. SPEAKES: Both. With individuals and government.

Q Well, do you feel you're making progress?

MR. SPEAKES: Helen, you've asked that question three times. I'm not going to pass judgment on it.

Q Well, it's very clear you have made no progress.

MR. SPEAKES: We would make less if I answered your questions.

Q Why do you say that? I mean, your approach is obviously wrong because nothing's happened.

MR. SPEAKES: Can you suggest a better one?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: All right. What would it be?

Q Well, I think that --

Q Nuke them.

Q -- probably should send Jackson. He's been successful in the past.



MR. SPEAKES: That's very helpful. Thank you.  
(Laughter.)

On --

Q "Thank you for your views." (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: -- Post story on Nicaragua, the story discusses new ideas on approach to Nicaragua. The U.S. will not break faith with those who seek freedom and democracy in Central America or elsewhere. Assistance to those in Nicaragua is essential in our opinion.

However, we are willing to work closely with members of Congress as we seek this assistance. The administration and many in Congress are seeking to achieve the same goals in the region.

Q So you're confirming the story that there are new approaches being now considered?

MR. SPEAKES: We're always willing to listen to Congress. We intend to seek aid, and Congress can -- in our discussions with Congress, if they can propose to us a better way to do it, we'll certainly be willing to listen.

Q Are you going to ask that the Boland Amendment be repealed?

MR. SPEAKES: Sam, I don't know. Do you want to address that, Bob?

MR. SIMS: I don't know of any plans --

Q It bars, of course, any -- that's why we've had to do it under the table -- it bars any overt activity that destabilize the government of Nicaragua.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I don't know.

Q Could you --

Q Yes. What I was trying to ask here is whether you have made any internal decisions as to how you are going to approach the Congress? Or you're waiting at this point to see how the Congress --

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's more in the form of a give-and-take with Congress, as we proceed with the legislative program there.

Q So no decision has been made on what kind of a program it would be?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q Could you restate the administration's position on overt aid. On just --

MR. SPEAKES: To where?

Q -- as Lugar has suggested. Transferring covert aid to overt aid assistance. Sort of ridiculous anyway to --

MR. SPEAKES: We really haven't stated a public position on --

Q We'd have to change the law --

MR. SPEAKES: -- changing overt to covert --

Q Well, didn't the President --

MR. SPEAKES: -- and covert to overt.

Q -- an act of war.

Q Didn't the President say it would be an act of war?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me finish. What?

Q Yes.

Q The whole issue is whether it would be an act of war. Can you do that?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, that specific issue. I thought you meant whether we're going to do it or not.

There are some legal ramifications of it that indicate that if you were supporting a group that was seeking active overthrow of another government that it would be illegal, either under U.S. law or international law.

Q What if it's done through third parties or other countries, though --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the specifics of that. But, once again, I think the State Department can probably give you a better -- and maybe even set you up with their lawyers on the specific on it.

Q Apparently, one of the things that's being considered is the idea of humanitarian aid for the families of the Contras. And, apparently, according to the story, that had been rejected in the past as kind of cute and not really fooling anybody. Would it be fair to say that that is under consideration now or not under consideration?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't want to go that far, Chris, because we will involve Congress as we proceed on it. And I think that's where we'll stay.

Q Families run off with the money. Fighters would never get it. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Head for the hills, huh?

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q I realize you haven't gotten to The New York Times yet; but The Times has a story today quoting Honduran sources as saying unless there is the continued U.S. support for the Contras, the Hondurans themselves may find it untenable to continue supporting the Contras. What is the U.S. position on that?

MR. SPEAKES: We'll work with all governments in the region who have an interest in halting the export of revolution from Nicaragua.

Q Have the Hondurans communicated, though, that concern to you? I mean, can you confirm that that's what the Hondurans --

MR. SPEAKES: I wouldn't go into any form of diplomatic

communications.

Finally, there is a story in the Federal page of The Washington Post that talks about sending to Congress a reorganization authority proposal with the budget. We will, several days after the budget, send to Congress a management report of the President. This, basically, includes a report on Reform '88, which is the President's Management Improvement Program, current status and plans for continuing reform.

It also includes a report on management improvements and the targeted savings, where we've been able to achieve savings and what we hope to do in the future. It will include a statement on the implementation of the Grace recommendations and show that -- how we plan to involve the '86 budget and beyond on the Grace Commission recommendations.

And, finally, it will include the Omnibus Efficiency in Government Act which is an effort

to approach the government reorganization. We've been without authority, as other Presidents have had. It was not renewed in what, '71, '81?

MR. FITZWATER: I think '81, but I don't know --

MR. SPEAKES: In '81, we'll have to check to be sure on the date. It was not renewed. The President will seek this authority.

He has a Cabinet meeting tomorrow afternoon that will discuss the subject of reorganization authority. Now, to be clear, reorganization authority would allow the President the authority that other Presidents have had to shift functions of government within various departments. It does not allow the President to abolish or close out a department. So, therefore, it would not include the Education or Energy Department -- abolition, in moving them.

Q Would it permit the Trade --

Q -- Trade reorganization, that sort of thing?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I think Trade reorganization will require separate legislation. It's mainly, I think, commissions and functions along those lines.

Q Why would Trade require legislation on whether it --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, you would be closing down a special trade representative and really shifting a lot of operations of Commerce, maybe even closing some down.

So, Ann -- you still here?

Q Yup.

MR. SPEAKES: (Laughter.) We gave you at the interview

Q -- both of them --

MR. SPEAKES: -- you told us when we gave you that interview -- (Laughter.)

Q Mother's luck --

Q You said that these -- the money we use from the Finance and House Ways and Means -- are going to hear about tax reform, as we head towards consideration of it in the White House.

Do you know when the President's going to consider this?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have a specific time table. I think it will be shortly -- don't know whether we'll get to it next week, but it will be in the next two or three weeks. As soon as we get the

Q So we can presume, then, he won't detail anything in his State-of-the-Union?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't seen the State-of-the-Union; he will refer to it and certainly endorse it, but whether he's -- he will not be in a position to provide explicit details.

Hunt?

Q Do you have anything on The Wall Street Journal story today about Meese and the Office of Government Ethics, saying

that. --

MR. SPEAKES: Seen the story. I don't have anything on it specifically, except Ed Meese will be testifying tomorrow as his hearings open, and I would presume that he will have an opportunity -- or the Senate will have an opportunity to ask any and all questions.

So, Andrea?

Q Will the President be doing any work on his vacation like -- on the tax reform proposals? Is any of that going to come up during that week, or that real vacation?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. That's a long way off. The California trip in mid-February? I don't know.

Q Do you have the dates for that yet?

MR. SPEAKES: It's like --

Q Thirteen through seventeen --

MR. SPEAKES: It's Thursday -- or Wednesday through Monday, whatever dates they are.

Q Monday?

Q Are there any -- any official business or events during that period, or is this --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe so.

Q Nothing on the way out or back?

MR. SPEAKES: Not at the moment, no. I think there was some speculation in one of the stories that he might make a stop to do with the budget, but right now that's not scheduled.

Q How's Deaver?

MR. SPEAKES: Deaver is much better -- over the weekend. He remains in the hospital. Hopefully will go home sometime later this week. I do not have any truly medical information. I can talk to the doctors in a couple of days, so --

Norman?

Q When you say the tax plan will be considered in the next two to three weeks, does that mean that -- to expect some kind of actual proposal to go to the Hill over the next -- say, in another month, or what's the time frame on that?

MR. SPEAKES: We really don't have a time table. Do you want to venture a time table on that?

MR. FITZWATER: I'd think sometime in March -- is where they're shooting at --

MR. SPEAKES: Okay. What we will be doing is, as you know, Regan has taken in the recommendations of a number of groups and heard the arguments pro and con, and has refined his proposal, or the Treasury proposal. And the President will sit down, much as he did with the budget, in a group, and go over it and decide.

Q But he will lay out the broad elements of this plan in the State-of-the-Union, is that the thinking right now?

MR. SPEAKES: I would think so, or at least strongly endorse the idea of tax reform once again, and indicate how he would

like to proceed on it.

Q Who is briefing today?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon? Who's briefing on it? Let's see -- the President will make remarks and then Secretary Regan will talk briefly to discuss the process and time table for finalizing and he will hear from Packwood, Representative John Duncan of the two committees, and then there'll be a general discussion.

Q Are these just Republican members, or --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Will Regan take over this week assuming Baker's confirm of the full Senate.

MR. SPEAKES: The last time I talked to Regan, which was just a few days ago, I think they were tentatively setting a target of next Monday provided Baker was confirmed.

Q Are there any photos --

Q Larry --

Q Could I go back to the Deaver thing for just a moment?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Obviously we have to respect their desire for privacy, but over the weekend there were a number of reports and rumors circulating that seem to be more alarming than anyone had led to believe. Could you suggest, perhaps to the Deavers that they could say something to give us some direction in --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I'll tell you what I'll try to do by noon is talk to Dr. Ken Lee who is our liaison with the Deaver doctor, Dr. Fitzgerald, I believe his name is, at Georgetown and try to get something of a medical nature. It could be that -- I'm certain that the tests that they were doing through the -- toward the end of the week we would certainly know the results and I can probably be a little more --

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: -- medically oriented.

Let me go back here to Bob.

Q Did you find out who the President was talking about Saturday?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I haven't talked to the President since we finished Saturday afternoon.

Q What was your answer about whether we'll see the President or not?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I announced a photo op at 11:30 a.m. with the Trade Association leaders.

Q Will we all see him?

Q What did he -- who the President was talking about on Saturday?

MR. SPEAKES: He did an interview in which he talked about a black leader --

Q Oh.

MR. SPEAKES: -- and I did not have the name.

Charles?

Q Yes, another question on Meese. Does the administration have a justification for granting him reimbursement at three times the standard? Does it have a position on that?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think the administration or the President is involved. It was simply a procedure that is authorized by law and the attorneys have submitted the bill, which has since been forwarded to the Justice Department. If there's some discussion over it, it's a matter now before the courts.

Q What procedure is authorized by law?

MR. SPEAKES: The procedure to pay attorneys for those who are required to have legal counsel once that they are involved in a -- an investigation by special counsel, law -- the law requires if there is no indictment, I believe, that their attorney's bills should be paid by the government.

Q But will the Justice Department file --

Q What about the question of the rates though, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q What about the questions of the rates since \$75 seems to be the government's standard and he's asking two and a quarter?

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, this matter is before the court and the court will --

Q But will the Justice Department file, in support of this motion by Meese's attorneys, any comment?

MR. SPEAKES: I do not know what the Justice Department will do.

Q Still on Meese?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Do you have -- Common Cause has got a full page ad today about Meese. Does the White House think that that's within the bounds of fair play for them to do that?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: I wouldn't pass judgment on what Common Cause does with their own money. I think on all Meese questions that are obvious subjects for senatorial questioning, I will leave that to the Senators and to the attorney general nominee.

Chris Wallace?

Q What about -- there were some reports over the weekend about Chernenko that he is seriously ill, that there's -- a succession has been arranged --

MR. SPEAKES: I saw all that. We'll just stay in the frame of not commenting on health of foreign leaders.

Q Can you tell us whether or not there have been any communications between this government and the Soviet government about his health and the succession situation there?

MR. SPEAKES: Wouldn't say, but it certainly wouldn't be our place to do that. I think that would be highly extraordinary for us to --

Q Would you expect to see --

Q To what?

MR. SPEAKES: Make inquiries of that type.

Q Would you expect to see --

Q What to -- for -- or for them to tell us anything about that situation?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't -- I don't think we would presume to ask.

Q Are you looking for a piece of videotape of Chernenko holding a local paper up -- (laughter) --

MR. SPEAKES: -- read the dates. Let's see, Alfreda's waiting. Did I get everybody else?

Q Yes. I guess I have several questions, but I just wanted this one. Several days ago, the President condemned the Apartheid in South Africa. This morning The Washington Post has a huge story on our support of the South African government -- in this administration.

MR. SPEAKES: I missed the word -- South African government support of?

Q Our support of South Africa. The Washington Post story. Have you all seen that? Has the President changed any of the things that he has done other than saying that Apartheid is bad? Is he going to do anything about it?

MR. SPEAKES: Continue to work with the South African government and make our views known.

Q Well he's been working with it all the time, but it has been --



MR. SPEAKES: We believe there's been some progress made. We hope for more.

Q Will you list the progress that has been made, please?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't want to debate this morning. I'm sorry.

Q Say what?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't want to debate this morning. If you have an interest, we'll be glad to set you up with Ambassador Crocker and --

Q Forget it, please. I don't want to see Crocker. I'm talking about the President. I've heard enough from him.

MR. SPEAKES: I thought you --

Q If the President has --

MR. SPEAKES: I thought you asked a question, Alfreda, about the --

Q Okay.

MR. SPEAKES: -- about the progress in the area. And we'll be glad to give you somebody that's intimately involved that can give you details, if you're interested in receiving the viewpoint of the administration.

Q I would love it.

Do you realize all the questions I ask in here, get no answer since. And I have to ask questions related to blacks. Can you get somebody who can answer questions for us?

MR. SPEAKES: I indicated to you that I will provide somebody at a very high level in this government, Assistant Secretary of State, to talk to you if you would like that. Would you like that?

Q No, thank you.

MR. SPEAKES: Okay.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

#1310-01/1310

9:45 A.M. EST