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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

February 20, 1985
The Briefing Room

12:15 P.M. EST

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12:33 P.M. EST
#1336-02/20

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LARRY SPEAKES

February 20, 1985

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12:15 P.M. EST

MR. SPEAKES: This morning the President is announcing the nomination of James A. Baker, III as Secretary of the Treasury to be United States Governor, International Monetary Fund, in addition to a number of other development funds in his capacity as Secretary of Treasury.

We're also announcing the appointment of Elizabeth Anne Brunsdale -- Anne Elizabeth Brunsdale, Joseph Francis Glennon, Jose Luis Rodriguez, and Danford L. Sawyer to be members of the Advisory Board for radio broadcasting to Cuba, which is the Radio Marti operation. These are new appointments.

The meeting with Prime Minister Thatcher in the Oval Office is now taking place. It's a private meeting between the two. At about 12:15 p.m. or 12:20 p.m. they will adjourn to the Blue Room for lunch, followed by a meeting in the State Dining Room at 1:15 p.m.

At 2:30 p.m., departure statements at the diplomatic entrance. These are open for press coverage.

And at 7:50 p.m. tonight the dinner at the British Embassy with a travel pool accompanying, assembling at 7:30 p.m. and covering the greeting and the toasts, with the toasts piped to the White House. We will also have a release of the toasts at 5:00 p.m. this afternoon. At 10:15 p.m. the President is due to return to the White House.

At 2:45 p.m. today, following the statements, we will have a background briefing. Assistant Secretary Richard Burt will be the briefer, and we also have put in the bins in the back two forms for those who will be traveling with the President to Canada. One form is a press credential application which much be filled and returned with two passport-size photos by Friday, March 1st -- that's a week from Friday -- return to Jeanne Winnick in our office.

As always we are processing credential applications only for those traveling with us. Others who need credentials and are joining the trip should contact the Prime Minister's press office in Ottawa. The press secretary is Bill Fox. His deputy is Michelle Graton. Also in the bins is the equipment inventory form. You must fill these out by March 8th.

Visas of those of you from NATO countries will not be required. Those from non-NATO countries may need visas and we'll let you know.

Finally, the sign-up list for the trip is posted and the deadline is the 8th of March.

This morning, as you know, Prime Minister Thatcher spoke

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to Congress. We have now had an opportunity to review her advanced text and the news coverage of that advanced text. We welcome the Prime Minister's support for the President's Strategic Defense Initiative for the Western Alliance and for our effort to achieve security with far fewer nuclear weapons than we have today.

We agree completely with her that it is vital that we pursue research on defensive systems and not fall behind the Soviets if we are to maintain deterrence.

Q Can you repeat that last sentence? "We agree -- "

MR. SPEAKES: We agree completely with her that it is vital that we pursue research on defensive systems and not fall behind the Soviets if we are to maintain deterrence.

Q Do you also agree with her that before deployment of any such system it should be negotiated with the Soviet Union?

MR. SPEAKES: The President's said that endlessly.

Q All right. Just want to check the pulse today.

MR. SPEAKES: All right. Yes, never change --

This morning we had questions about a diplomatic note from the government of Mexico in regard to the border measures that are taking place. We have not yet received any diplomatic inquiry from the Mexican government on this issue. We've checked it with the State Department, and they have not received that at this time.

U.S. authorities on the border have taken increased inspection measures in an effort to discover individuals or property that may be involved in criminal activity.

Q Will there be a note? You said, "yet."

MR. SPEAKES: That's something you'd have to ask the Mexican government. We won't know until we get it -- until we open the mail.

And that's the two things that seem to be hanging over from this morning. Anything else?

Q Did you check on what the policy is that Shultz tried to announce yesterday about the --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I'm sorry.

Q -- Contras?

MR. SPEAKES: We do have that. The Secretary's words and the President's radio address Saturday are clear statements of our policy. Our objectives toward Nicaragua remain as we've repeatedly stated; that is, reduction of Nicaragua's military apparatus, removal of Soviet and Cuban military and security personnel --

Q Of Soviet what, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: And Cuban military and security personnel, termination of Nicaraguan support for subversion in neighboring countries, and implementation of the Sandinistas' democratic promises to the OAS.

Our policy toward Nicaragua is to achieve these objectives. We seek Congressional approval for our request for funds in support of our entire Central American program.

Q Wouldn't it be much easier for a new government to do all this? Get rid of the old one and --

MR. SPEAKES: To do what?

Q To implement all these objectives.

MR. SPEAKES: You mean the Sandinista government?

Q Was Shultz saying yesterday that one means to achieve these objectives was to remove the --

MR. SPEAKES: I think that was the press reporting -- but if -- I think if you look at his testimony, it doesn't say that.

Q In other words, he did not seem -- he did not intend to state that one -- out loud, at least -- that one means of achieving these objectives was to remove the Nicaraguan government? Or did he?

MR. SPEAKES: What Secretary Shultz said, I would refer you to what -- his testimony. Our policy is this, and we -- our objectives are obtaining these goals. We would think that a democratic process there is the first step, including free elections and it would be interesting to see how the Sandinista government fares in a free election process that allows full opposition to flourish plus a fully democratic process.

Q So you contend that his testimony is entirely consistent with that policy?

MR. SPEAKES: These goals? Yes.

Q But wouldn't it just be simpler if the existing government was overthrown or somehow gotten rid of? You could start fresh.

MR. SPEAKES: I thought you said the other way a minute ago. (Laughter.)

Q No, I'm just asking. I mean it sounds like, with all of these things that we want from them down there, that it would be simpler if they started over.

MR. SPEAKES: That's up to them.

Q Well, U.S. law forbids the United States government attempting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, does it not? the Boland Amendment states it --

MR. SPEAKES: I would assume it would, yes.

Q Well, are we obeying the law?

MR. SPEAKES: We are.

Q And our policy goals would always fit within that law?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, they would.

David?

Q One of the original rationales for supporting the Contras was that they were interdicting arms supplies. Now, one of your objectives you said was to stop subversion, but I haven't heard that interdiction being offered as the justification for this recently. Has the administration shifted its objectives and broadened them?

MR. SPEAKES: I would say, broadened them. I covered that in Santa Barbara, indicating that that is still a benefit of our policies there and the progress that has been made in El Salvador is an indication that there has been some favorable result of that interdiction policy there.

Q So you've gotten favorable results, but you've also broadened the objectives in --

MR. SPEAKES: You can say that in a way, David, but certainly, initially, our funding for the freedom fighters there was for the interdiction policy. But we also think that we want the Nicaraguans to come around to the democratic process.

Q Do you have any evidence thus far that the Sandinista government would, in fact, respond to this pressure and change the way they operate?

MR. SPEAKES: As I indicated to you last week in California that the ebb and flow of the Nicaraguans' willingness to enter into serious negotiation has corresponded to the ebb and flow of the success of the Contras there. So we do feel like -- that getting them to negotiate with their neighbors is our primary objective there. And it seems to have worked.

Anything else here?

Q What work?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q What work?

MR. SPEAKES: What work? The success of the freedom fighter movement there and the influence they would have on the Contras to negotiate.

Frank?

Q What is the success?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q What -- you mean because the Contras were negotiating with the -- I mean -- you mean because Sandinistas were negotiating with us?

MR. SPEAKES: Not necessarily us, but the 21 -- 21 points -- the Contadora process -- the success of it has been directly related to the efforts of the freedom fighters there.

Q What success?

Q Well, what success? I mean, you guys keep saying that they're building up their military machine and they're getting, you know, more advanced weapons from the Soviet Union. So what success has there been?

MR. SPEAKES: The success has been that from time to time, they've talked and seemed somewhat willing -- other times they haven't. There has not been funding for the past several months and you notice a digging in of the heels down there.

Q Well, we broke off the talks we've been having with them, did we not?

MR. SPEAKES: We broke off the direct talks, Sam, but we still wish to see the Contadora process proceed. And that's been it. Our direct talks have always been in direct relation to the Contadora process. And it's an effort to achieve advancement in the Contadora process is the reason we were having some bilateral discussions with them.

Q But wasn't the --

Q Larry, -- the U.S. funding of the Contras is directly tied to the Nicaraguans willingness to talk to the U.S., or other --

MR. SPEAKES: I said the success of the Contras, I guess, is the way I termed it. But, clearly, it is our belief that the full funding process down there is essential to the success of maintaining a democratic process throughout Central America as well as encouraging the Sandinista government to look at free elections, free opposition, free religion, free labor unions, free press, etc.

Andrea?

Q Well, so far they haven't been willing to look at those things. In the most recent round of Contadora talks broke down over the issue of asylum. Are you suggesting that because of the lack of funding and the lack of support in Congress that the Nicaraguans are digging in their heels and that the talks are not working?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, first of all, the last meeting -- the cancellation of the last meeting seemed to be as a result of somewhat of a side issue and not the 21 points. But the -- I simply noted that the ebb and flow of the willingness of the Sandinista government to bargain and deal with their neighbors in a serious manner has been directly related to the ebb and flow of the Contra operation.

Q Larry, is -- were the comments that Shultz made in any way a departure from the statement that was made in California -- if they -- the Sandinistas would mind their own business and stay put, maybe a Marxist-Leninist government would work there?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, you seemed to isolate a quote, Frank -- it's a really isolated quote out of a briefing that lasted about 30 minutes which also included a strong appeal on the part of the United States that they engage in the democratic process there. It

has to be coupled.

Q I realize that --

MR. SPEAKES: Shultz does not -- Shultz did not disagree with that, no.

Yes?

Q When we broke the Manzenilla talks, part of the rationale given was that we didn't want to interfere with with Contadora process. Now that the Contadora process is on stand-by, are we going back to the Manzenilla talks?

MR. SPEAKES: Which -- was that the most recent series of talks?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: No, we'll continue with the Contadora process. You mean the most -- was that a bilateral talks -- you stumped me with that word. I'm not familiar with it.

Q Right. The bilateral talks in Manzenilla.

MR. SPEAKES: No. As I say, the bilateral talks have always been supportive of the Contadora process and designed to encourage the Nicaraguans to engage in the full Contadora process. So, while we don't have any immediate plans to resume bilateral talks, it's not to say that if we feel like they could be productive at some time, we would be glad to do so.

Q Larry, attitude on the Hill is that in aiding funding to the Contras, the administration is really helping the Sandinistas to increasing world support for what the Sandinistas are doing. You seem to be rejecting that argument.

MR. SPEAKES: If you take our policy in totality, which would include the Soviet Bloc Cuban support ending for Nicaragua, then that refutes that argument -- if they would accept our policy in totality.

Q The United States government -- is it funding the Contras in any way at the moment? I know that the \$14 million is fenced.

MR. SPEAKES: It's my understanding no.,

Q So you're telling us there are no contingency funds or private accounts within the government?

MR. SPEAKES: Not that I know of, Sam. I don't think so.

Q -- accounts within the government.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe so. They told us the other day -- they announced they were running out of shoes.

Q Well, they seem to still have enough supplies.

MR. SPEAKES: The last fellow to run out of shoes, you know, was George Washington. Right?

Q Well, I don't know. I've been barefoot myself on occasion.

MR. SPEAKES: Not in a long time.

Anything else? Jerry wants something.

Q Larry, the British --

Q Are coming.

Q -- the British are also opposed to any testing of components of SDI without first negotiating with the Soviets. Given the Pentagon announcement yesterday that they expect some components to be tested in '87 on the shuttle, is it our position that we would go ahead with that test without consulting the Soviets or that we would?

MR. SPEAKES: Consulting the Soviets or consulting the British?

Q The Soviets.

MR. SPEAKES: Soviets? Yes. I wouldn't anticipate that we do any -- research does have to involve, I would judge, some testing. I'm not so sure that the British position zeroes in quite that heavily on testing. I think they would -- they're talking about testing a final product, in my opinion, and not a component. I may be wrong; but I think that's --

Q Any news about the President's trip to Spain?

MR. SPEAKES: No, nothing new.

That enough?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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