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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Geneva, Switzerland)

PRESS BRIEFINGS
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

November 17, 1985

Salle de Bal
Intercontinental Hotel
Geneva, Switzerland

11:03 A.M. (L)

MR. SPEAKES: Let me have your attention, please. I have a number of announcements and a number of statements on issues that are pending today.

First of all, briefing schedules. Regular White House press briefings will take place Monday at 9:00 a.m., Tuesday and Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. in this briefing room. Bud McFarlane is scheduled to brief at the International Press Center today at 12:00 noon and he will be here at 4:00 p.m. on Monday. Secretary Shultz will be here at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday and Wednesday. Briefing schedule for Thursday is not yet firm, but there is a possibility we may have an additional briefing here.

Television shows: four U.S. officials are appearing on U.S. television shows today. Secretary Shultz will be on ABC's "Brinkley" show, Don Regan will be on CBS "Face the Nation," Bud McFarlane will be on NBC "Meet the Press," and Paul Nitze will be on CNN "Newsmaker." We will have transcripts here in the briefing room of all of those shows once they air in the United States.

All releases from the White House press office will be posted in the -- on the large bulletin board in the back near the door that leads to the main lobby. We will announce from the podium all releases when they are being posted. We'd appreciate it if you'd keep the table clear so that releases can be there and your colleagues and you can get to them.

Also, the First Lady's press office has a bulletin board near the same door that we'll post all of the First Lady's press releases.

At 1:00 p.m. today, representatives of the First Lady's press office will be present here to receive your questions on that subject.

To -- this afternoon -- or this evening, Coca Cola Company, which has been our host on our European trips before will be sponsoring a party at the Pinta Hotel from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. There's bus service leaving this hotel at 6:45 p.m. So, we'd encourage you to attend that.

The President's schedule for the remainder of the day: the President, at 2:00 p.m. will meet with his foreign policy advisors, including Secretary Shultz, Don Regan, Bud McFarlane, and Ambassador Hartman. This will take place at the Pometta residence, which is adjacent to the President's residence. That takes place at 2:00 p.m., will run to about 2:30 p.m. There'll be an opportunity for a pool to cover the President as he goes over to the meeting and a brief photo op at the beginning of the meeting.

At 3:30 p.m., the President and Mrs. Reagan will leave

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their residence to go to Fleur D'Eau for an opportunity to look over tomorrow's meeting site and then they will come back to the residence. A travel pool will accompany.

Today at 2:30 p.m., Mrs. Reagan will attend a tea hosted by Mrs. Furgler, wife of President Furgler, and there will be tight pool coverage of this event.

Q Today?

MR. SPEAKES: I believe so today, is that correct?

MR. ROUSSEL: It is.

MR. SPEAKES: Today, yes. We'll double check.

Q Question -- tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKES: Question -- yes.

Q What was --

Q What was the question?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, what was the question? Today.

Q Tomorrow. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: The question is yes, we think today, but we'll doublecheck.

Q Who's up.

Q How can we go with the President and the other --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, that's true. Dale will doublecheck that.

The President this morning was up and had breakfast at the residence with Mrs. Reagan and has a private morning, at which time he will review a number of papers in regard to the meetings that take place here on Tuesday and Wednesday. In addition, he had his normal foreign policy briefing provided him in a written format this morning.

As the President approaches this meeting, these are his thoughts. He seeks to chart a course for the conduct of the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union that is fundamentally different from those sought by his predecessors. He has studied very carefully what has worked and what hasn't worked and he is attempting to fashion --

Q Slow down, Larry.

MR. SPEAKES: -- a more constructive arrangement and hopes to build upon past experience.

The meetings, as we see here, will not be judged from our standpoint, on the subject of the number of pieces of paper produced. But what we're seeking in the meetings on Tuesday and Wednesday is long-term progress to make a meeting -- to make a relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union more stable, more predictable, and perhaps, to provide a road map for pursuing negotiations in the key areas of our relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. This meeting is not a substitute for negotiations, but we believe that it will serve to provide the highest level of direction and impetus for negotiations in the key areas of our relationship. For our part, we will do whatever we can to find a reasonable common ground, but we look for a comparable effort on the part of the Soviets.

In all areas of our relationship, the meeting in Geneva represents an important phase in the process of our relationship. Our policies have been steady and consistent and our efforts to reach new goals will continue.

Now, I have additional statements on the Soviet release of divided American-Soviet spouses, the Weinberger letter to the President, Soviet policy in Afghanistan, and the statements made this morning in Beirut by Terry Waite on the hostages.

Q -- are you going to go --

MR. SPEAKES: I can proceed through them and then we can back up and take questions on various subjects.

The Soviets have informed the United States of the issuance of Soviet exit visas to several persons that were on various U.S. lists of divided families which we submitted this fall. There are nine divided spouses on this list provided by the Soviets. As much as we welcome this development, we remain concerned over the fate of those still divided from their spouses. To the extent that this reflects a change in Soviet policy, we have yet to determine if this is so. We would, of course, welcome any such new direction in Soviet policy on spouses that are divided.

On the Weinberger letter from the President, the President will review the report of the Defense Department and this report, as a total package, will be presented to the President upon his return from Washington. This package will include the views of the National Security Council, the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Agency for -- ACTA. The Secretary of Defense views, as expressed in his cover letter which was printed in the newspapers of yesterday and today, are not new. He has expressed these both privately to the President and publicly in other forums. The administration's -- the points raised in the letter -- the administration's position on interim restraint under SALT II. This was decided by the President in June and this policy of not undercutting SALT II limitations stands. It is dependent, as the President stressed in June, and as I stressed last week, dependent on Soviet compliance, on the rate of the Soviet buildup, and on the status of arms control negotiations in Geneva. At the same time, the President will take into consideration Soviet attitudes in his discussion with General Secretary Gorbachev in his meetings here this week.

On the ABM Treaty, the President's position has been clearly stated and we will proceed with the present program, with the present configuration of SDI, which we believe falls under the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty. We have outlined our rationale which justifies going to a broader interpretation of that treaty.

Insofar as a statement concerning a supplemental budget request -- of course, this would be decided in the normal budgetary process within the administration where the Defense Department would make recommendations and they would be reviewed by the Office of Management and Budget, by the White House staff, and, finally, by the President, before any decision had been made to submit additional budget request to the Congress.

On statements by the Soviet group yesterday regarding Afghanistan, we have seen the statements and reports on Soviet willingness to reach a political settlement in Afghanistan. It is difficult for us at this moment to determine exactly what the Soviet attitude and positions will be on Afghanistan. This is an agenda item on the Reagan-Gorbachev talks here in Geneva and we will be better able to ascertain what the Soviet position is once the talks are completed.

The United States position on Afghanistan and a

agreement as far as the United States in East-West relations, vis-a-vis its allies.

Q Larry --

Q I don't want to argue with that, but I think that the NATO allies have gone along with all the other treaties -- SALT, they wanted it very much, and so forth.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I'm not talking about treaties, specifically, Helen. I'm talking about the solidarity on the economic front, the solidarity on the security front as far as the allies are concerned.

I'll come -- I haven't been to the back very much, so speak quickly.

Q You haven't worked the front row either.

Q To follow up on that, I understand why you're saying that the situation is fundamentally different than it has been in the past, but the opening statement you made said that he wants to chart a relationship that is --

Q Course.

Q -- fundamentally different. In what way would the President's relationship with the U.S. and Soviets be fundamentally different than his predecessors?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it is the ability to sit down with the Soviets, recognizing, first of all, that we do have fundamental differences with the Soviets, that we do have a difference of opinion in many areas. But we also have way that we can work in a serious but peaceful economic competition. And that's what the President wants to lay out -- a better understanding, a better way to work together.

Andrea.

Q How would that be different from the way Presidents Nixon and Ford, for instance, negotiated in 1972 and --

MR. SPEAKES: We're not talking about negotiations, we're talking about the foundation of the relationship.

Q Well, how would it be --

MR. SPEAKES: The foundation of the relationship is a basic understanding that we -- both superpowers -- can exist in this world together but they can exist peacefully and in peaceful competition.

Q Just to explain -- how is that different from Richard Nixon's approach to the Soviets? Did he not recognize that there were fundamental differences and that we could exist -- co-exist peacefully through competition?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's a changing world that we face, a situation where it's a quite different world from the one that was in 1972.

Q Sounds like detente to me.

Q Administration officials have said that during the course of this weekend, there would be intense activities to work out nettlesome details on a number of different issues in advance of the meetings between the two leaders. Can you tell us what issues they have been working on, what progress has been made?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think I would be in a position to describe the progress because whatever's done in these sessions will certainly have to be ratified by the two leaders when they meet. But in all of the areas that we've talked about, we have had discussions with the Soviets in regional matters, in cultural matters and in arms control. All of those have been taking place over the past several weeks.

I think there will be meetings here in which we will discuss those. But, nevertheless, the two leaders will sit down and discuss them, and any formal decisions or agreements will have to be made there.

Q During this weekend's intensive preparation, has progress been made?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't want to characterize it in either way. I think it will be -- the progress that will be made would have to be made when the two leaders meet.

Q I want to go back to the --

Q Can you describe anything about how those discussions are taking place? Is Shultz involved in that, or at what level are those intensive discussions taking place?

MR. SPEAKES: I really don't have anything on that, Ralph.

Q I want to go back to charting a course for the conduct of the relationship that is fundamentally different than those of his predecessors. Then you just mean, I take it from your answers previously, you're talking about the predecessors in the '70s. You aren't talking about Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson -- those people?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm talking about the entire range of historical relations with the Soviet Union, which has been examined in detail by the President and by his advisors, and the President feels like he is prepared to sit down with the Soviets and to chart a new course in the relationship.

There's no doubt about it, that the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union has not been a good relationship. It has been a competition that has been fraught with ups and downs on a roller coaster course for the entire term of U.S.-Soviet relations. But once you examine it in the light of what worked and what didn't work -- when the roller coaster was going downhill, when the euphoria was going uphill -- all of that, once you examine it in the light of those, then the President has chosen a course that he believes can put it on an even keel where the United States and Soviets can work together --

Q Well, now, the bedrock of U.S. policy since the late '40s has been the containment of communism. Is that still the bedrock of our policy or is a new course something other than that?

MR. SPEAKES: I think that we feel very strongly that the Soviet Union should stay within some borders as far as the --

Q I'm talking about communism -- Mr. X, Kennan -- the containment of communism has been the bedrock of our policy toward

the Soviet Union.

MR. SPEAKES: I think the United States is prepared in this day and age to compete ideologically with the Soviet Union anywhere at any time.

Q So we no longer wish to contain communism?

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, we think if the people -- example, Nicaragua -- are given a fair opportunity -- Afghanistan -- to decide the form of their government, then we're ready and willing and confident that we can compete on an even footing with the Soviet Union. So let's have at it.

Q And we're going to accept that judgment? We'll accept the judgment?

MR. SPEAKES: Sure, we'll accept the judgment. We believe in a free elections, in a free approach and the right of people to decide their own destiny and their own form of government. Certainly.

More debate? Let's go.

Q No, I want to back to Weinberger's letter, if I may. You said his views are well-known and well-known to the President. Will the views expressed by Secretary Weinberger affect the President's presentation, and specifically, will he, indeed, resist any joint statement with the Soviets to continue observance of SALT II, as Weinberger recommended?

MR. SPEAKES: The President's decision on the continued observance of SALT II has not been made. He would not make that judgment until he has the input of the report prepared by the Defense Department plus his key national security agencies. And that will not take place until he returns to Washington. So as far as any change in his policy, our policy is open-ended. We do observe our pronouncement of not undercutting SALT II and we will continue to observe that until the President changes his mind based on the criteria he's laid out.

Q I think you're also saying then that Weinberger's letter will have no particular impact on his presentation here.

MR. SPEAKES: On the presentation here? Well, as I indicated, these views have been expressed to the President many times and the President's views, for instance, on undercutting SALT II have been enunciated in the past. His views on the other subjects have been enunciated in the past. So I think the Weinberger viewpoint has been taken into consideration over the past five years.

Q Larry, is he opposed to any formal extension of the SALT II Treaty? In other words, is he wedded unalterably, regardless of what --

MR. SPEAKES: -- to not resubmitting -- not submitting to the Senate?

Q No, no, no. I'm talking about right now, your no-undercut policy, is it more or less day-to-day affair, so long as the Soviets continue to comply. If they no longer comply --

MR. SPEAKES: So we're talking about a no-criteria extension of the policy? In other words --

Q The Soviets proposed a one-year extension. Is the President opposed to that, regardless of what the Soviets say or do here at this summit on compliance?

MR. SPEAKES: The President has not made a decision as

to whether -- our review, as you indicated, has been taking place from day-to-day, from periodic reviews of it. The President's policy on that remains the same as far as that. He has not taken a policy position as far as any -- laying out a plan for a period of time that would have no review mechanism in it.

Q You mentioned in your criteria a moment ago, you said he'd make his decision when he gets back to Washington. You mentioned the report that he was going to get on Soviet violations. Is one of the criteria in his making up his mind, whether to either continue the present no-undercut policy or extend for some period of time the SALT II Treaty, what the Soviets say here at the summit to him about compliance?

MR. SPEAKES: That's part of it. That's a factor in it. What is said here is a factor in it. But as to whether the President would continue it without any review for a number of months has not been determined. At present, the policy is in place that we would continue to review it on periodic reviews, this being one of them.

Owen.

Q Is the President's position concerning the ABM Treaty as open-ended as it is with SALT II?

MR. SPEAKES: Give me that again.

Q In other words, is the President, well, saying now he will abide by the restricted interpretation, planning to make it clear during the meetings that he reserves the right to use the broader interpretation at a later date?

MR. SPEAKES: I think the President has indicated that as far as the SDI development, that our program is laid out -- it's entirely possible and feasible under the narrow interpretation of it. So we don't anticipate having to do that.

The ABM Treaty, as you know, provides when you take certain steps in certain areas that you sit down with the other party and discuss them. And that, certainly, we would do.

Q Is he -- on the question of, at some point in the future, adopting the wider interpretation, does he plan to change that position during his discussions with Gorbachev?

MR. SPEAKES: No, the President has stated the legal basis for the wider interpretation, but at the moment, he's indicated that he would abide by it. The President sees no specific need immediately to shift his interpretation of it. Everything that we're doing is in compliance with the treaty and in compliance with the narrow interpretation of it.

Lou.

Q Larry, you emphasized the familiarity of the Weinberger view. But does the President think that the timing of the release, however it was -- of this letter is damaging to the his discussions with Mr. Gorbachev?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't think so, Lou. The President feels that the agenda for the meeting is set, that the President -- that these views are, as I say, not new to him, nor new to the Soviets as far as the Defense Department views on this subject.

The President will emphasize the decisions he has made in the area, which I've outlined here, in his meetings with the Soviets.

Q What I have in mind, if I -- Secretary Shultz, in reporting after the Moscow meeting, talked about how Mr. Gorbachev

had this view of the military industrial complex and things in the United States. Does this letter have a way of reinforcing Soviet fears and suspicions of us at this time?

MR. SPEAKES: I think they would understand that the President will make decisions in this area and that the President will speak straight from the shoulder to the General Secretary -- Gorbachev. And in that instance, the President will, first of all, present a realistic view of the United States and would also seek to set aside Soviet misapprehensions about United States policy. So --

David?

Q Larry, aren't you really saying that the President has accepted Weinberger's advice not to agree to any decision on SALT II at the Geneva summit and to make the decision later?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, if the advice only came in the letter, which was delivered on last Wednesday, it was something that the President had already made decisions on in these areas. So, the SALT II decision made last June -- the ABM narrow interpretation view, which, of course, does not specifically follow the Weinberger letter -- was made three or four weeks ago. So --

Q The President then does not disagree to any of the -- he is in agreement with the advice in that letter --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the --

Q -- that was enunciated even previously? He does disagree?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the Weinberger letter, for instance, talks about the narrow interpretation of the ABM Treaty. The President has laid out his views. In other words, what's in the letter basically you've seen in Presidential statements prior to that. So, whether the --

Q Larry --

Q Larry --

Q The part that was key, Larry, was the timing of the summit.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I'm working right that way.

Q I guess my question goes to the part -- Weinberger's advice for the summit: Do not yield to certain pressures at the summit. And you're telling us that Reagan has decided to put those decisions over until after the summit --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, in the case of the report on compliance violations that was filed, the President had not intended to make decisions until December on it, even before the report was submitted. So, we appreciate the views, but the President had made decisions on a number of these areas. So --

Leo?

Q Yes, Larry, aren't you downgrading Cap's role, though, going back to the June decision by the President? The President didn't ask all these other agencies for a report. He asked the Defense Department for a report by a certain day. Cap complied with that deadline. Now, you're saying that the President, a, is not even willing to read the thing upon receipt immediately and when he does read it, he's not going to read it separately from the views of other agencies?

MR. SPEAKES: No, Leo. The way it will --

Q Isn't Cap being deluded --

MR. SPEAKES: The way it will come to him with a book like this, and then there will be attachments of views of others who clearly have views on this. The President does not deal with a sole agency of the United States government. The President takes a broad spectrum of views; and many times you will call that to attention as dissenting views and disarray. Not so. The President will receive all those views and take them into consideration.

Larry?

Q When you say that the President thinks that the leak was not damaging, are you now backing away or contradicting the interpretation that was given on the plane yesterday, that the leak was an attempt to sabotage the summit?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I've seen that view on there, and that's certainly a view held by one individual in the administration. What the motives were, I cannot say -- on the leak of the letter. But for our part, as we view it, we will certainly proceed with our meetings and we are not changing our policy, we are not changing our views. It has not changed one whit the way the President planned to approach the summit.

So, Bob.

Q On SALT II, Larry, in the event that General Secretary Gorbachev pushes at the meetings for a formal commitment from the President to extend or to formally comply with SALT II, has the President decided already to resist that request or is it, in fact, a possibility that he might go along with it?

MR. SPEAKES: The President has indicated he would not make decisions until he has an opportunity to review the report and the advice of the members of the national security community.

Q So that issue is a dead issue as far as the summit is concerned?

MR. SPEAKES: I would prefer to use my own words on it, and I have.

So, Colonel?

Q Is there only one individual in the administration who considers the leak of the letter sabotage?

MR. SPEAKES: Only one individual has expressed it to the press. I can't speak for all others.

Q In regard to your opening statement about the President seeking accords fundamentally different from his predecessors, would you say it's also correct that they are fundamentally different from the accords of the first couple of years of his administration when he suggested that the Soviets would lie and cheat to achieve their purposes?

MR. SPEAKES: No, a basic tenet of the President's policy has been a realistic approach. The President did not suggest that. The President was referring -- and if you've seen it replayed on television many times in the last two weeks -- was referring to statements made by Soviet leaders in the past.

Q Which Soviet leaders stated that they would lie and cheat?

Q On bilateral conflicts, are you going to tell us who, at least, is involved in --

MR. SPEAKES: With a -- in the bilateral discussions with the Soviets on a lesser level? I really don't know. Ed, do you know anybody specifically?

MR. DJEREJIAN: No.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I don't know at what level or what contacts are being made here. Maybe we can find out that for you.

Q Larry, when did the President read the Weinberger letter? Did he read it in the privacy of the Oval Office?

MR. SPEAKES: He did read it in the privacy of the Oval Office, not in The New York Times. But I guess he read it in both.

Q And did he have a response?

MR. SPEAKES: Did he have a response? I have given it to you.

Am I neglecting back here? Go.

Q Larry, has the President spoken to Mr. Weinberger since the publication of the letter?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether the President has. Don Regan did. Secretary Weinberger called Don Regan before we left Washington.

Q Larry, what was that response --

Q Can you help us on --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Can you help us on the content of that?

MR. SPEAKES: The content of it? Secretary Weinberger indicated that as far as he knew, the letter was not leaked from his people at the Defense Department and that he was looking into the matter to see if he could make any determination of it. And as Bob Sims stated yesterday, that is not Cap's policy to provide that. He provides his advice to the President in private, and he has done so.

Q Can I follow on that?

Q What did you say the President's response was to the leaking of the letter?

MR. SPEAKES: I've stated it, that the President will be reviewing the Defense Department report.

Q I know about the view on that, but what was his personal response to the fact that he read it in The New York Times?

MR. SPEAKES: I indicated that on the airplane. Refer to yesterday's pool report.

Q Well, I don't think you did indicate, except that he would rather have read it. Except for that, Larry, was he terribly upset about it?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the extent.

Q Did he think it was an act of sabotage?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the extent of it.

Q Has he ordered an investigation to find the leak?

MR. SPEAKES: The extent of it was stated in the report.

Q You all do not seem to be as upset about this leak as some others as far as trying to investigate and found where it came from.

MR. SPEAKES: The view is in the eye of the beholder. You can be the beholder, Jack.

Q Larry, was there some signal that was trying to be sent? I mean, do you think that this was -- at this time?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't really have a viewpoint. As I say, there was nothing new in it as far as the United States was concerned. The President was concerned. I think the Soviets are fully aware of the Secretary's views, and so should you have been.

Q But if the President doesn't think it's damaging, does he think it --

MR. SPEAKES: Did I say that?

Q I think in --

Q Yes, you said that.

Q Yes --

Q -- answer to --

Q " -- the President does not think -- "

MR. SPEAKES: The President, or I?

Q -- the President --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think I used that term. I said that the President is determined to proceed with the meetings. And as far as any assessment as far as this specific meeting, I think the President is prepared to go ahead with the meetings without any change in his policy.

Q But the question was does the President think it's damaging? I think the answer was, "No, I don't think so. The President feels the agenda is set."

MR. SPEAKES: True.

Q Well, but the President thinks that the leak was in some way helpful?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think the President has expressed a view nor rated it on a scale of plus or minus.

Q Has he ask for an investigation?

MR. SPEAKES: He has not, no.

Q Has the administration official who thought it was perhaps an act of sabotage expressed that view to the President?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm sure he has, yes.

Q -- your response?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have any response for you.

Q Larry, since the Soviets made this proposal for the extension of SALT II, I understand there's been quite a lot of

discussion on compliance and the violations that we allege -- the United States alleges has taken place. And before I come back again to the question, if the Soviets are willing to do something about compliance, is the question of extending SALT II still open in a formal way? Extending observance --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. The President has not made a decision on whether we would extend it or not. At the moment, it is open-ended. And I think that we are -- our policy is to continue to abide by it so long as the Soviets continue to follow the same criteria. But we have to make judgments on what the Soviet actions are. That's where we stand.

Q You're saying that there's not going to be any decision here coming out of the summit to extend the treaty formally?

MR. SPEAKES: At the moment, the President plans to review the report of the Defense Department and the advice of his National Security Committee before proceeding.

Dick.

Q If the release of the letter, Larry, was considered to be an act of sabotage, what will we done about the person who leaked it? Is there an investigation about --

MR. SPEAKES: I think the Secretary of Defense is looking into the matter and -- as to what will be done if some individual who provided the letter is identified, I think that would remain to be seen after that takes place.

Ralph.

Q Terry Waite's comment, are you -- when you said you were receptive to a meeting, would you be -- are you, in effect, inviting him to come to Geneva for some sort of a meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: Not necessarily.

Q Larry, what was the question?

MR. SPEAKES: I think -- Terry Waite's comments, would we be receptive to a meeting. I think we would certainly be able to provide someone here for him to relay the report to the government, or in Washington, or in London. So, in any case, we'd be prepared.

Mort.

Q Larry, does the fact that the only investigation going on in the Pentagon indicate that you suspect the leak came from here and not the White House --

MR. SPEAKES: No. This is an initiative by the Secretary of Defense and did not involve the White House. He moved before.

Mike.

Q But there's no investigation in the White House?

Q Was the individual who said it was sabotage reflecting -- as you seemed to indicate -- a minority view --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I didn't indicate either way.

Q What is your view on that? Do you think it's a minority view? Is it a view held by several advisors --

MR. SPEAKES: No. I've not really had the time, due to the early hour in the United States, to be able to conduct a full

poll of the 3,000 or 4,000 people in the administration --

Q Well, I understand that.

MR. SPEAKES: -- involved in policy, but I will do it before nightfall, Mike.

Q Well, no wait a minute. I understand that. But have more than one -- has more than one person in the administration expressed that view or --

MR. SPEAKES: More than one have expressed views, but I'm not going to be explicit on what their views were.

Q According to some of the wire reports off Air Force One, someone on the plane suggested that it was either Weinberger or someone at the Pentagon who had leaked the letter. Is that the view of the Presidential party?

MR. SPEAKES: I think what you would have to do is -- There are two of us that talk to the pool, one on background and one on the record. I talked on the record. My on the record comments were contained there. You can talk to your pool members for nuance. But --

Q Well, the wires had a different thing, as I'm sure you've read. And --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I think they were drawing conclusions that were not spoken.

Q I'm asking you the question, then. Does the President -- do you feel that the leak came from the Pentagon?

MR. SPEAKES: I have no idea, Chris.

Q Do you disagree with the wire reports that said that you implied it?

MR. SPEAKES: They'd have to make their own judgments about what I implied. I don't know where it came from, so it's difficult to indicate what I implied when I don't know.

Q Well, did you mean --

MR. SPEAKES: I have trouble implying what I don't know.

Q Did you mean to imply?

MR. SPEAKES: They make their own judgments and I leave it to the individuals in the wire service who are all astute observers of press secretaries over the years, and they can make their own judgments.

Q You've challenged them in the past. I mean, are you -- do you have any disagreement with the way they interpreted your views?

MR. SPEAKES: If I did, I would express it to them privately.

Q Larry, you were quoted as saying that you didn't think an investigation was needed because -- because he knew who was leaking -- That's what we were told yesterday on the plane.

MR. SPEAKES: Those were not my exact words.

Q What were your exact words? Did you say that you thought you knew?

MR. SPEAKES: The pool report's there? I don't remember what I said five minutes ago, much less 24 hours ago. (Laughter.) That's why I have all of you here to record it and call my attention to it 24 hours from now. (Laughter.)

Q You have no recollection --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q You have no recollection of what you might have said yesterday?

MR. SPEAKES: No recollection of what -- I certainly did. But if you have the pool report, you can -- your recollection should be there, too. Let me go here.

Q Larry, Arbatov just said this morning at a press briefing that the Weinberger letter is an attempt to torpedo an agreement. Given the Soviet reaction, does that make the leak an even more serious matter?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't usually comment on what Mr. Arbatov says.

Q Well, how about the Soviet General, then? At the same briefing, a Soviet General admitted -- this may be for the first time, but -- he claimed that the USSR is now using lasers just for the detection of missiles and not as a weapon and is accusing the U.S. of trying to gain an advantage over them.

MR. SPEAKES: I would make it a policy here not to comment on what the Soviets may be saying at the same hour that I'm talking, not seeing it in the full context of what they might say.

Mike.

Q On the Terry Waite announcement, he said that he is on his way to Washington to meet with --

MR. SPEAKES: No -- I don't think he said that. He indicated that he was returning to London to report to the Archbishop and that he might go to Washington tonight, or somewhere, he said. So, he has not indicated to us when or where he wishes to report to us, but we're receptive.

Q Would he be invited here?

Q Could you tell us --

MR. SPEAKES: He would certainly -- if he wished to come here, we certainly would -- But we have not had the contact to get his -- to determine what he wants to do.

Q Larry --

Q Larry, is McFarlane --

Q Larry, could I just --

MR. SPEAKES: Let me finish with Mike here.

Q Could I follow up for just a second? What he said was that he is going to London -- he's going to London and then on to Washington, and I wonder if you could tell us who he will see there when he gets there.

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, I'm in the same situation. He has not communicated directly with the United States. We've seen that wire report and as far as his wishes about when or where he wishes to report, we have not received any expression from him and

until we do, we can't say when or where or who or what time or whatever.

Q Follow up over here, Larry.

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q If you're receptive to seeing him, at what level would it be? Could you tell us that?

MR. SPEAKES: -- just have to be determined. We've been in contact with him previous to his trip and we'll remain in close contact. It just has to be determined.

Did I leave anybody out?

Q Murphy?

MR. SPEAKES: Okay.

Q Larry, Secretary Shultz said on Thursday that some formal way had been found to report on summit meetings. Can you give us some guidance about when they might be -- will the President be involved, any possibility of a joint -- with Gorbachev.

MR. SPEAKES: As we've said previously, the two leaders will talk. One of their subjects will be how did we report on the meeting. Once that is decided, we'll tell you.

Q Will it be Thursday morning?

MR. SPEAKES: If that's when they decide to do it it will be.

George.

Q Larry, back on the Weinberger letter. You suggest that it's not damaging to the summit, but the fact is you're spending the first day in Geneva with a worldwide audience, in effect, talking about an internal administration's problem. How can that help but be disruptive at the least, if not damaging?

MR. SPEAKES: If you have -- you have two leaders that are going to sit down on Tuesday morning and Wednesday morning and Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday afternoon and at dinner on Tuesday night and Wednesday night. I'd be willing to put five bucks right here that General Secretary Gorbachev will not say, "What about the Weinberger letter?"

Q Well, I understand that. Can you tell us --

Q Can you make a --

Q I understand that, but what I'm saying is you're spending the first day here not answering questions so much about that as you are about an internal administration --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have any problem with it. That's what I'm paid to do. You get high government salary to do this.

Q Hoffman wants your --

MR. SPEAKES: -- bucks.

Q You want some action?

MR. SPEAKES: Go ahead, Carl. Keep in mind what I said.

Q On the question of what you said on Air Force One yesterday, a pool member quoted you as saying, "I don't know that we

need an investigation on that one." Are you suggesting that that was not an attempt to suggest it was from the Pentagon?

MR. SPEAKES: You'd have to read my words and make your own determination.

Jerry?

Q Larry, does -- just so I can understand on the question of ABM -- does the President agree with Weinberger that he should not, at this meeting, bind himself to a restrictive interpretation --

MR. SPEAKES: I think we've been over that. The President made a decision some time ago that he would accept the report of the Defense Department and would consider it in December. So, until he reviews that report and that of his advisors, he will not make a decision on --

Q No filing.

Q -- SDI research --

Q No filing.

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q I was talking about SDI research --

Q -- all file.

MR. SPEAKES: SDI research? SDI research, in the President's opinion, falls within the -- in the narrow interpretation.

Q Larry?

Q Helen!

Q Just briefly on Afghanistan --

Q Do something.

Q -- did your statement on Afghanistan suggest that you think the Soviets, in their announcements, may be prepared to make some concession or some decision at this summit on Afghanistan?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

11:50 A.M. (L)