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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFING

ON

AFGHANISTAN: EIGHT YEARS OF SOVIET OCCUPATION FG011

by

UNDER SECRETARY MICHAEL H. ARMACOST
MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1987, 2:30 P.M.

FG006-12

MRS. OAKLEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It's my privilege to present to you the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, Mr. Armacost, who will talk about the situation in Afghanistan and the release of our new publication, Eight Years of Soviet Occupation.

He's going to begin with a brief statement, and then we'll be happy to take your questions.

MR. MICHAEL ARMACOST: Thanks, Phyllis. I'm glad to see that some of your colleagues, at least, honor the Christmas vacation and take a few days off.

Let me make a brief statement. I see that you've got the report. We're pleased to meet with you today in conjunction with the release of the Department's Annual Report. Our people have worked very hard to make this an objective and comprehensive assessment of the facts and trends that surround the political, military and human rights developments in Afghanistan over the past year.

The war is now entering its ninth year. It grinds on and the suffering of the Afghan people continues. The military, political and diplomatic trends, however, have changed in significant ways which generally compound Soviet policy dilemmas in Afghanistan.

On the military side, there's been a dramatic improvement in the capacity of the Resistance to counter Soviet forces. Better cooperation among Resistance groups on the battlefield and improved air defenses have led to Mujahidin successes against Soviet and regime ground forces and have blunted Soviet air power.

NSC # 8700010

The Soviet forces have, as a consequence, adopted a more reactive and somewhat more defensive posture. They've even pulled back from several isolated bases. Kabul's army, meanwhile, continues to suffer from high desertion rates and low morale.

The Afghan Resistance, conversely, has high morale. Cooperation among various factions has improved and they continue to challenge Soviet regime control in every corner of the country.

The Kabul Government, with Soviet support, announced last January a policy of so-called national reconciliation and a cease-fire. They called on the Mujahidin to join a government dominated by Najibullah and his people, the Democratic Party of Afghanistan. The invitation was also extended to former King Zahir Shah as well as to a variety of other permanent Afghan exiles. They all rejected these offers and refused to be reconciled to Soviet domination.

Najibullah has continued to talk about national reconciliation. He's offered the opposition some posts in the coalition government. Yet all such offers leave the real instruments of power in the hands of the ruling party.

Meanwhile, the constitution was amended to locate decision-making power in the presidency, an office which Najibullah claimed for himself. It's not surprising, under the circumstances, that the proposals they have offered have failed to evince interest from the Resistance or from Afghan refugees in Pakistan or elsewhere abroad.

The PDPA Party remains weak and internally divided. Endemic factionalism within the Party has been exacerbated by Najibullah's efforts to grab more power for himself and through purges and the imposition of an illegitimate constitution which concentrates power in his hands.

By contrast, the Afghan Resistance has made progress in the political arena. The political cooperation has improved within the seven-party Alliance. Its members have recently selected one of their leaders, Yunis Khalis, as leader, and the Alliance has plans to increase political cooperation further, perhaps in the form of an elected council which would increase a consensus in decision-making.

The U.N. General Assembly vote on Afghanistan in November was a striking victory for the Afghan cause. Two resolutions -- one on the situation in general, the other on human rights -- each passed by record margins, despite heavy Soviet promotion of national reconciliation and vigorous diplomatic efforts over the previous 11 months aimed at eroding support in the U.N.

All of these developments raise the costs to Moscow of its adventure in Afghanistan. The longer the Soviets stay, the higher these costs become. Moscow has stated repeatedly that a firm political decision to withdraw has been made. Mr. Gorbachev reiterated this statement during the Summit meetings.

The key to a solution in Afghanistan, however, is not the profession of intentions but a firm commitment to a short withdrawal timetable.

President Reagan urged General Secretary Gorbachev to announce such a timetable along with specific dates when the withdrawal would begin and end. The General Secretary has not yet done so, though he did endorse Najib's proposal for a withdrawal in not more than 12 months which could be reduced under certain circumstances.

He insisted that Soviet withdrawal should be linked to an end to outside support for the Afghan Resistance. We pointed out this question is dealt with in the Geneva Accords, and we will live up to our obligations under the Accords if we're fully satisfied the agreement will assure a prompt Soviet withdrawal and self-determination for the Afghan people.

We made clear U.S. support for the Afghan Resistance will continue in the absence of a settlement at Geneva.

The next Geneva round could perhaps be decisive in determining Moscow's seriousness in reaching an acceptable settlement of the war. We would like this to be the final round, but that depends on the Soviets. We will be watching in Geneva to see if the Soviets produce a satisfactory timetable for withdrawing their troops in 1988.

Let us hope, by this time next year, we could release a report which describes how the Soviets withdrew promptly and completely from Afghanistan and how the Afghan people went about freely choosing their own political course and began to rebuild their shattered country.

That's my statement. I'll be happy to take a shot at your questions.

QUESTION: Just before in one of those pre-Summit briefings, a couple of briefers at the White House evidently put their foot in their mouth and had a little conflict with the Administration on when U.S. aid for the rebels would cease. So with that warning that they apparently were not in "sync" with what the President had said only a few days earlier, could you tell me now what is the U.S. policy -- and if the Geneva Accords apply, fine -- what is the U.S. policy for when aid to the rebels ends?

Does it end when the Soviets begin withdrawing, when they announce they're going to withdraw, when they complete their withdrawal, or is there a scale-down? Or has that been thought out?

MR. ARMACOST: We have pledged support to an Afghan agreement which provides for rapid and complete withdrawal of Soviet troops for self-determination by the Afghans, return of the refugees, and a neutral, nonaligned Afghanistan. The Soviet Union has yet to commit itself to withdrawal by a date certain. Absent such a Soviet agreement, we're going to continue -- as the President indicated to Yunis Khalis -- providing support to the Mujahidin.

In the event the Geneva agreements come into play, then the obligations are reciprocal and they commence at the same time. But we will have to look at the full agreement, the balance of commitments undertaken, before we are prepared to assume our obligations.

QUESTION: Does that mean that aid stops, or slows down, when the Red Army moves out? I mean is it a -- does it happen all at once, or is it a sequential thing depending on the pace of withdrawal?

MR. ARMACOST: Those are details we're not prepared to comment on yet because they are judgments that have to be made in the light of the overall agreement. We are not, in the first instance, as you know, a party to the negotiations. The Paks and the Afghans are. Many of the details have to be discussed between the parties. The devil is often in the details in these matters, and we'll obviously want to look at that full range of details before we make our judgment that we're prepared to honor obligations that are embodied in the Geneva understanding.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary, to that point, there is a recent article in the Christian Science Monitor that suggested as much as 75 percent of U.S. aid to the Mujahidin was being diverted, that Pakistani and Afghani middlemen were profiteering at U.S. expense and, of course, at the expense to the Mujahidin. Is this true? Do you have a handle on how much of the aid is getting through?

MR. ARMACOST: I think the proof of these matters is in the performance in the field, and the evidence of this report, I think you will see, is that the level of combat is at an unprecedentedly intensive level, and contrary to past years, more and more action has been initiated by the Mujahidin. They are exacting a very heavy price on Soviet and DRA units because the level of supply apparently has increased substantially.

I don't wish to comment in detail, but I think it's a disservice to the Pakistanis and to the Mujahidin to constantly circulate rumors of diversion. These are people who are fighting a national cause -- it's a very noble cause -- and I think the idea that somehow or another they're simply engaged in profiteering rather than using the equipment for the national liberation struggle, to which they are committed, is a disservice to them and their cause.

QUESTION: I'd like to go back to the withdrawal issue for the moment. Is the only question, as far as we're concerned, the length of time that the Soviets place on their withdrawal? Or is it the kind of units they withdraw first versus last? Is it what the units do during the withdrawal period, or do not do? Can you elaborate on the issues for us a little bit?

MR. ARMACOST: It obviously entails more than simply a length of time. It involves phasing. It involves, as you suggest, what is permissible for units to undertake during the time of their withdrawal. And one would want these details precisely, in order to have some confidence the Soviets would carry out what they say they will carry out, and that it will lead to the result that we all intend, and the result is an opportunity for the Afghan people to determine their own political future.

QUESTION: Just to follow up on that: Did Mr. Gorbachev suggest during the talks in Washington that the Soviet troops would not be engaging in military actions during the withdrawal period?

MR. ARMACOST: He did say that. He said they would not engage in military operations other than self-defense. It's the latter, of course, that needs to be defined fairly carefully, since we all know there is a very high level of military activity generally in Afghan society, and therefore, if one is looking for an excuse, then there's always an incident to which one can refer. But what one is looking for, as I say, is a detailed understanding of what is involved on their side on which to base a judgment that we're prepared to carry out our obligations under the understandings.

QUESTION: But did you see that statement as an advance in the Soviet position in some way, or a hopeful, positive --?

MR. ARMACOST: Yes, I would regard it as positive in that it was something that, as far as I'm aware, they had never said before. It stands to reason that only a withdrawal of that kind would have any appeal. And others that is, one couldn't stand by and simply observe a withdrawal during which the Soviets attempted to use their residual power to go after the Resistance. That's not what would be intended by withdrawal.

QUESTION: Mike, I'm confused about the U.S. policy on the Geneva agreement. On the one hand, you say the Soviets have linked this to a stop of outside aid, and you've referred them to the Geneva agreement saying you intend to uphold it. On the other hand, just now, you basically said the Geneva agreement seemed somewhat fluid, depending on what the Soviets do ---

MR. ARMACOST: That's not --.

QUESTION: --- so is there a Geneva agreement or not?

MR. ARMACOST: Well, what exists are instruments that have been negotiated, but whose validity can be confirmed only when the missing element is filled in, and the missing element has always been the central element, that is, the timetable for withdrawal. And therefore, the willingness of other parties to implement the understandings -- which include understandings about the return of refugees, understandings between the Pakistanis and the Afghans regarding their future relations, and the willingness of outside powers, like ourselves, to guarantee the agreement. And by guaranteeing, one means simply we conduct ourselves in accordance with the provisions which the parties have undertaken between themselves on non-interference, non-intervention.

Those obligations you can only take up in the light of the final agreement, because heretofore, the Soviet troop timetable -- withdrawal timetable -- has not been specified. So, you have to look at those others -- the willingness to implement the other obligations depends upon a satisfactory resolution of that issue. And that, as we said in response to an earlier question, depends on the length of time and the details of about how it will be carried out.

QUESTION: So you're backing off from, at this point, committing yourself absolutely to withdrawing aid at any given point until you know what the Soviets agree to?

MR. ARMACOST: We're saying one has always reserved the commitment to this agreement until the final details of the Soviet withdrawal timetable were filled in. That has been the objective of the negotiation. That's the whole point of the struggle -- it's a struggle of national liberation -- and it's been our belief the problem can be solved only by the withdrawal, and therefore it's the details about that withdrawal that are central to the willingness not only of ourselves, but to the Pakistanis, to come to an agreement.

QUESTION: In these instruments, is there anything that prevents the Soviets, once this process has begun, from supplying the Afghan Government with weapons and so on, and funds?

MR. ARMACOST: In the agreement itself, the obligation is a non-intervention commitment, by which we mean no further intervention by Soviet forces.

We have been interested ourselves, as have others -- indeed, the Soviets say they are interested -- in arrangements which would establish a neutral, non-aligned Afghanistan. And we have been prepared to discuss those arrangements, as have others. That is not currently a part of the negotiations which has been conducted heretofore in Geneva, but it's in the context of those kinds of understandings that one would seek, it seems to us -- to the benefit of all parties -- understandings about the activities of a military character which could be conducted by outside parties with Afghanistan.

QUESTION: But there's nothing in the agreement now?

MR. ARMACOST: Nothing currently in the agreement.

QUESTION: There seems to be some confusion about the conditions under which the Soviets would be willing to withdraw. You stated after the Summit that withdrawal was not linked to an interim solution, but members of the Soviet negotiating committee who participated say an interim solution -- interim government -- is very much linked to their willingness to withdraw. Could you clear this up?

MR. ARMACOST: They have -- well, let me take it in two steps.

With respect to the proposals that Najibullah has indicated in public that he favors or he supports -- presumably after some consultation with the Russians -- he has talked about a withdrawal of up to 12 months, which was, at least as we read it, not linked to internal understandings but which could be accelerated in the event there was progress toward a national reconciliation or a coalition government or progress toward establishment of cease-fires.

So in his proposal, the linkage appeared to be not tightly drawn to withdrawal per se, but a suggestion that the timing -- the length of withdrawal -- could be affected by progress toward interim government arrangements.

The Soviets, in their discussions with us, did not insist upon a direct linkage between national reconciliation and withdrawal. I think there's no doubt they would like to see interim government arrangements that from their vantage point would provide greater stability for political arrangements in Afghanistan during, and presumably after, their withdrawal. But I assume from that discussion that the kind of linkage which they have in mind is more along the lines of Najibullah's, rather than insisting that this be worked out prior to negotiating the withdrawal timetable in Geneva.

QUESTION: Can you clarify, though -- what is the nature of the interim government you think the Soviets now insist on having, or are they still insisting on a specified nature of an interim government?

MR. ARMACOST: I think they profess that this is an issue that should be resolved by Afghans. I think there's no doubt what they have in mind is a government in which the PDPA party plays a very substantial role. They have invariably emphasized the importance of Najibullah. They've portrayed him as a more accommodating figure than any of his countrymen seem -- that is, his resistance and refugee countrymen -- seem to regard him. And I have no doubt, from their standpoint, having PDPA party people in key positions is important to them in assuring what they say is their bottom line as a non-hostile Afghanistan.

In practice, of course, the fact that Najib, as head of the government -- which most Afghans outside the immediate party entourage regard as unlikely to survive a Soviet withdrawal, and as not very representative of Afghan society -- it makes it difficult to envisage how he and his colleagues can play a central role in any government that's formed by Afghans. And, our view is the whole objective of this is to permit conditions in which the Afghans themselves decide on the future policy of the country.

QUESTION: What is the U.S. position with regard to the make-up of this interim government?

MR. ARMACOST: Our view is it should be determined by Afghans. That is, we're -- it's not for us Americans any more than it's for the Russians or any other outside party to try and dictate these arrangements. It ought to be determined by Afghans, and we find it difficult to imagine how you get genuine national reconciliation in the shadow of foreign troops, particularly under the auspices of a government which, as I said, has been associated with the presence of Soviet forces and whom many Afghans doubt could survive their departure. No.

QUESTION: Do you have any details you could share with us on the battle now going on around Khowst? How many --?

MR. ARMACOST: Well, I've got some of our colleagues here that may -- the objective of this from a Soviet standpoint has been to relieve the siege at Khowst. I'm told they -- their forces -- have gotten through some of the mountain passes en route to Khowst. They haven't completed the sojourn there. They face very difficult passage, because mines -- the roads have been mined and there are a number of tricky areas where people on high ground can impede their progress, but they have made some headway I think in the last couple of days. But maybe you want to add a word or two.

MR. CRAIG KARP (INR analyst on Afghanistan): (Indicating on chart) Well, the Soviets appear to be moving from Gardeyz, the capital of Paktia Province, towards Khowst. And they appear to be making some form of progress. They have amassed a rather enormous force with very heavy artillery support in order to back up this campaign, and they're moving in the direction of Khowst, and they could very well be reaching there in the near period of time -- in the next few days -- in order to bring the supplies in there.

This is not a decisive effort by them. Certainly the resistance is active all over the country -- so the ability of the Soviets to reach Khowst does not represent anything like a defeat.

QUESTION: Is it the Soviets or the Afghans pushing through, and how big is the force trying to get through to Khowst?

MR. KARP: The force is probably close close to 10,000, and it's mostly Soviet.

QUESTION: Without regard to the questions about front-loading the withdrawal and so forth, is the 12-month number acceptable too, or does that have to come down in order for there to be an acceptable settlement?

MR. ARMACOST: We have never understood why the Soviets, once they've decided to get out, would want to prolong the withdrawal over such a lengthy period. We've always felt that withdrawals should prompt and should be conducted with an eye to logistics requirements. So, as I say, I don't know why they would want such a lengthy withdrawal -- once they've taken the hard decision to get out -- because inevitably there's a high level of uncertainty in that country during a period of this kind.

QUESTION: The 12 months is not something you're ruling out. You just don't understand --

MR. ARMACOST: I'm not going to make a comment on it because, as I say, in the first instance, the negotiations occur between the Pakistanis and the Afghans. But we think the withdrawal should be conducted very promptly and can be carried out much more promptly than that. We would hope it's done by a date certain well before the end of next year.

QUESTION: Is it fair to conclude that Gorbachev told Reagan nothing new from what had been stated publicly on the record before, or were there some new wrinkles in his presentation?

MR. ARMACOST: Your question is, have -- are there any secrets left that we haven't yet revealed? (laughter)

I think, in general, his comments were compatible with what has been in the record before and which we have talked about here and elsewhere.

As I indicated earlier, I don't think we had ever encountered this formulation about not engaging in any military operations from Day One of withdrawal. But, by and large, it was what we had come to expect as a result of fairly intensive discussions on this and other regional issues over the last few months.

QUESTION: Well, I was wondering: Have you had these, or seen any hints before, during or since Gorbachev -- let's say, on the public record -- of exactly how they intend to move from the present situation, which is still a bit boggy to a --?

MR. ARMACOST: No, it had been assumed the next move would come in Geneva. And there has been no date as yet set for the next round in Geneva, although people surmise it will likely occur sometime in the early part of 1988. That's up to the U.N. to announce after securing the agreement of the parties. Diego Cordovez was in Moscow last week, and he presumably was discussing, among other things, the timing of another round. But I don't know whether any conclusions have been drawn. But the hope would be -- people have spoken about the next round as though it would be the last. That's certainly the hope. Whether it will be the reality, one can't say, but --

QUESTION: No hint of someone going to Pakistan, like Vorontsov, and clearing the way?

MR. ARMACOST: I've heard nothing that indicates any firm plans that exist along that line. But that, I assume, would be a possibility. The closer one gets to what people assume will be a final round, the more intensive the consultations between the two parties should become. And, therefore, I suppose any test of whether or not Geneva is likely to be the decisive moment will be whether or not, indeed, there is that kind of intensive, serious discussion among the key parties in the run-up to such a meeting.

MRS. OAKLEY: Are there any more questions?

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. ARMACOST: Thanks.

QUESTION: Thanks very much.

(The ON-THE-RECORD briefing concluded at 2:58 p.m.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

I N D E X

Monday, December 28, 1987

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPC #223

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1987, 12:53 A.M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MS. OAKLEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have one brief announcement. Under Secretary Armacost will be traveling to Islamabad, Pakistan, in early January for consultations on a variety of subjects with Government of Pakistan officials.

Now, I will be happy to answer your questions.

Q Have you got anything on an American having been killed in Afghanistan?

A We have seen the TASS report alleging that an American advisor was killed in the battle of Khost in Afghanistan. We have no specific information beyond that.

Let me point out there are no American advisors in Afghanistan. The only official presence in that country is limited to our staff of 20 people at the Embassy in Kabul. They are restricted to the capital city.

Our travel advisory for Afghanistan, which is still in effect, urges American citizens to avoid traveling to Afghanistan. However, there have been a few private Americans who have not heeded our advice and who have travelled in. I am sure you're aware of the reports in October about the deaths of two American journalists who were killed in Afghanistan.

Q Have those bodies been returned, or is there any

--

A No. We have -- we've not had that, and we have sought to have concrete confirmation of the deaths. We have several reports of people who were with them but that's all.

Q Phyllis, if there were, in fact, Department of Defense officials or CIA officers inside Afghanistan, you couldn't tell us that anyway, could you?

A I simply stick by my statement. There are no American advisors in Afghanistan.

Q Along the same lines, you used the word "advisor," but are there any American officials of any type who were traveling with the Mujahidin or connected with them in Afghanistan?

A There are no American advisors or officials traveling with the Mujahidin. We have said there are official Americans -- 20 -- limited to 20. They're in Kabul.

Q Phyllis, on December 24, you actually accused TASS New Agency of inaccurately reporting on the visit by U.S. expert teams to the Soviet Union to the radar area in Moscow and Gomel --

A I'll be happy to take that question. Let me now stick with Afghanistan and let me finish with this.

Q Can you tell us how the Mujahidin is trained on the use of weapons that they're getting from us?

A I have no comment on anything having to do with intelligence questions.

Q In connection with Under Secretary Armacost's trip, you say it's on a variety of subjects. It's generally anticipated it will be largely about the Afghanistan diplomacy. Can you tell us anything more about what he hopes to do there?

A I think he has had a series of visits to Pakistan to discuss the full range of our relationships there. Certainly, there will be a large emphasis on Afghanistan, but I don't have any further details on what he will be discussing.

Q Is he going any place else besides there?

A Not that I'm --

Q Besides Pakistan.

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q Will he meet with the Mujahidin representatives?

A I don't have any details on his agenda. All I know is he'll be discussing various topics with the Government of Pakistan officials.

Q Phyllis, the U.S. citizens who you know have not paid attention to your travel advisory, besides the two journalists you mentioned, do you know what the other -- had there been other Americans, and what has been their function? Have they been journalists? Have they been mercenaries? Can you tell us anything about them?

A We are aware of various American journalists who have travelled in by the reports and stories they have filed. I think you all are aware of those as well. Sometimes I think there have been other European journalists who have gone in, as well. We don't know of them all. But I just really have no other information beyond that.

Q What about American mercenaries? Do you have any knowledge of that?

A I don't have any knowledge of that. There have been some reports sometimes of people going in, but we just have no confirmation on that.

Q Are there any American journalists there at this time?

A I don't have any details on that.

Q How about mercenaries?

A Mercenaries? I have nothing on that either.

Q Other than the statement from Moscow, has the Afghan Government in Kabul, or anyone else, contacted the United States about this question of someone killed who they've described as an "advisor," or are we doing anything to try to find out about it?

A I'm not aware that there has been any reports or statements out of the Government of Kabul.

Q Has the Soviet Government communicated any message to the United States about this reported incident?

A No. As I said, the only thing that we're aware of is a TASS report on this.

Q There's no communication with the Americans in Moscow?

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q And what is the U.S. trying to do to find out about it, if anything?

A I think we try and follow-up on any question of a report like this. I'm just not sure what specific steps have been taken.

Q Do you have a status report on the fighting around Khost? I mean, there are conflicting reports about whether they've actually managed to -- the Afghan forces have managed to reach there.

A I don't have any specifics on the status of the fighting there. We've seen these conflicting reports that the fighting is still going on. But I just have no way to confirm that.

Q Some of us aren't here all the time. Is it on the record that the United States is helping the Afghan rebels with military weaponry?

A Various American officials have addressed this subject for some time. We have certainly talked about our support for the cause of the Mujahidin, and we have said what we're doing -- what we do is what is necessary and what is appropriate.

Q Do you have anything on the current level of funding for the Mujahidin?

A I don't ever discuss intelligence questions.

Are we through with Afghanistan?

Q On December 24, Phyllis, you've been asked a question about the visit of U.S. experts to Soviet radar area in Moscow and Gomel. You accused the TASS News Agency of inaccurately reporting on this visit, and I quote you. You said: "The TASS report is simply not accurate. The only thing (inaudible) in any way for the authenticity."

Actually, the TASS report didn't say anything of this sort; and my question is, did you really read the TASS report before making this accusation?

A We had simply seen the report, a wire service report on the TASS article. I would certainly be happy to go back and look at that and look at the whole report if you think that what we said was not completely correct.

Q Are you saying that you accuse TASS without actually reading the report?

A I had said we had seen a report of a TASS statement, and that's what we had seen. If it's incorrect on that, I'll be happy to go back and check on it.

Q Phyllis, on the same general area -- the Soviet Union, on the 26th of December, the Soviet Foreign Ministry released a statement with respect to chemical weapons in which they leveled some charges against the United States for beginning binary production once more while negotiations are underway. They call it "unprovoked new twist in the chemical weapons race. It's militarist in its nature; taken just when meaningful progress [has been] reached at the current Geneva talks."

Do you have any response to their statements and choice of -

A We had prepared a response to that. I think if you'll check in the Press Office, we'll have something for you on that aspect of it.

Q On the same day, somebody put out the word in Moscow that Shevardnadze had called in the U.S. Ambassador to talk about further discussions with the United States after the summit; and I believe they said an agreement has been reached in principle, with respect to continued discussions with Secretary Shultz, and so on. Can you tell us anything about what was decided there -- what has been decided?

A I don't have any specific readout on that meeting. I'm a little confused whether it was in general or on specific aspects of chemical weapons.

Q No. It's separate from the chemical weapons, as I understand it. It happened to be the same day, which is the day after Christmas, that they did it.

Shevardnadze called in Ambassador Matlock to discuss relations with the United States. At the end of it, the Foreign Ministry, or maybe it was TASS, put out a statement to the effect that an agreement had been reached in principle with respect to future contacts between the two nations following on the summit. I presume they mean the kind of thing that's been anticipated, that Shultz and Shevardnadze will be getting together at some point.

A I don't have anything specific on that. Certainly, I think it was clear from the meetings and efforts that went into the summit here in Washington in December, there is a good deal of discussion and meetings that are required. I would assume the statement on that was given in that vein of continuing to work on it, but I don't have anything specific on it.

Q Could you find out if a specific date has been established for the next meeting between the two Foreign Ministers -- between the Foreign Minister and the Secretary of State?

A I'm not sure I will be able to provide an answer, but I'll be happy to look and see if I can.

Q Do you have anything on a report the Abu Nidal organization has been using Syrian intelligence officers in Beirut at a press conference? And, do you have any latest update on what the terrorist organizations are doing in Syria?

A No, to both those questions.

--MORE--

Monday, 12/28/87

Q Do you have anything on these photographs, satellite photographs, of Terry Waite being moved to what was described as a medieval prison in Beirut?

A Again on our standard line, we don't comment on intelligence matters. However, I think this speculative story about such information cannot be seen in any light that could be helpful to the hostages who are held, but I just don't have any comment on it.

Q But is that sort of technology available that can be as precise as their stories?

A Again, I just can't help you with that intelligence question.

Q Do you have anything new to say about the situation in the U.N. with regard to the Gulf? And I believe you have also been asked before, but you had nothing about the Soviet-inspired proposal for a multi-national naval force. So if you have anything now that you did not have earlier, I'd be grateful.

A I think some of you were aware on the 24th of December the President of the Security Council for December, the Soviet Ambassador, issued a statement on behalf of the Council which expressed grave concern over the slow pace and lack of real progress on implementation of Resolution 598. Most importantly, the statement expressed the Council's determination in accordance with operative Paragraph 10 of Resolution 598 to consider further steps to insure compliance with this resolution.

This declaration of intent to proceed with drafting and adoption of the second enforcement resolution is crucial. It means the entire Council now recognizes the necessity of further steps -- that is, an arms embargo against the non-compliant party or parties.

We do not yet know when the Council will actually begin drafting a second resolution, but we believe it should act promptly. Too much time has already elapsed since the adoption of Resolution 598, with no progress made toward ending the Gulf conflict.

We had earlier given our position on this question of the U.N. naval force. I think if you want to check in the Press Office for that, we'll be able to help.

Q But you no-commented it -- but am I wrong --

A Well, I think --

Q -- to the draft, if that's the same, fine.

A All right.

Our position on this remains the same. In our view, the most urgent business before the Security Council is to adopt a mandatory embargo on arms to Iran which would be binding on all members of the U.N. A discussion of tangential issues should not be permitted to distract attention from that central task.

In the context of discussing how an enforcement resolution can be effectively implemented, we would be prepared to examine without commitment a Soviet proposal for effective enforcement of an embargo. Our willingness to examine a proposal in no way implies any linkage to a wholly separate matter, the current U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf -- which is there to protect U.S. shipping.

The apparent Soviet proposal to revive the U.N.'s Military Staff Committee, which has never, to date, played a role in U.N. affairs, is clearly premature.

Q Phyllis --

Q Copy, please?

A What? Yes, O.K.

Q Phyllis, your statement mentions an embargo on arms to Iran only, do you mean for it to do that?

A Well, we've talked about, in the earlier statement that I've used too, to the party or to the parties that are non-compliant. Certainly in our view, we have indicated Iraq appears willing to comply and there is one party -- Iran -- that must be brought along to comply and to negotiate an end to the conflict.

Q Phyllis, on Israel, any comment from the State Department on allegations by Palestinian attorneys that Palestinians are being beaten in detention and not allowed fair trials?

A No, I don't have any specific comment on those charges. Clearly, Israel has the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. We expect that recognized international standards of due process will be followed.

Q Do you have any comment on the statements of King Fahd of Saudi Arabia calling on Iran and other countries to join in a battle against Israel rather than pursuing the war in the Persian Gulf?

A I don't have any specific comments about his statements. I think our views on a peace process are clearly and well known. We are committed to moving the peace process forward.

Q Any sign of the Secretary of State making a visit soon? Any meetings being scheduled with leaders in the region?

A No.

Q Any sign of momentum from our side toward the peace process at all?

A I don't have any specifics -- answers to questions like that. I repeat we remain committed toward working on the peace process. And that stands; that doesn't change. But I have no specifics.

Q But King Fahd has asked the Iranians to gear up for recovery -- I think he used the word -- or regain, according to the English translation -- of Jerusalem and Palestine. Isn't this a warlike message to Iran to join the Islamic world in war against Israel? Is there something to that?

A I'm not commenting on his comments. As I said before, I just have nothing on that.

Q Well, is this a considered Administration statement on King Fahd or is this a message, a statement, that you got from the Middle East Bureau?

A When I'm here I'm speaking for the State Department.

Q Thank you.

Q To go back on the hostages in Beirut, do you have any indications that a large number of hostages might be released soon? There have been several reports that Syrians were playing a major role to round up several hostages and insure their release.

A We have seen those press reports. I just can't help you with them in any way.

Q Phyllis, do you have anything on Senator -- or Ambassador -- Mansfield undergoing medical treatment?

A Ambassador Mansfield, accompanied by Mrs. Mansfield, departed Tokyo on the 26th of December for Tripler Army Medical Center in Hawaii to undergo a routine operation. The Ambassador will return to Tokyo in approximately two weeks and will resume his regular schedule soon thereafter.

Q Will he be coming here for the visit of the Japanese Prime Minister?

A I don't have any specifics on that. I just don't know what his plans will be.

Q Phyllis, there's been a report that the Palestinian camps are deprived of food and children are suffering and all this sort of thing. Have you got anything on that?

A No, I don't have anything on that.

Q Did you hear anything about that anywhere?

A I just can't help you with that.

Q Can you bring us up to date on meetings between U.S. and Israeli officials?

A Well, I really don't have any specific comments on meetings. As you know, we remain in constant, routine contact with Israeli officials.

Q On Haiti, do you have any comment on reports over the weekend that the U.S. is working with other countries to encourage a single opposition candidate? And does this reflect any change in U.S. attitudes toward the rescheduled elections January 17th?

A I don't have any specific reactions to those comments. We believe, certainly, that cooperation among these Haitian people is essential to getting Haiti back on the path toward the transition to a democratically-elected, civilian government. Our policy, in favor of free and fair elections, certainly remains in place. We are working with all elements in the Haiti -- government and opposition -- to try to encourage that goal.

In the end, however, it's up to the Haitians, how their political system develops.

Q Phyllis --

A Yes, George.

Go ahead.

Q On this report about the \$8 million appropriated for the Jewish schools, can you confirm that the State Department was opposed to this? And since the ultimate beneficiaries are not refugees according to UNHCR, does the State Department have any way to appeal that appropriation or does it have to spend the money now?

A Our position in principle on earmarks is clear. We oppose them. We opposed this particular earmark, among others, in a letter to the conferees.

I'm not going to speculate in any way about what we're likely to do on it. We had expressed ourselves before.

Q I believe, since we've last met here, Ambassador Viets decided to resign or retire from the Foreign Service, because due to various objections he could not get his nomination moved on Capitol Hill. As a Senior Member of the Foreign Service, do you have any comment on what --

A No.

Q -- happened to him or his decision?

A I don't have any specific comments on the status of Ambassador Viets. We did have some earlier guidance on the whole problem of moving ambassadors, and perhaps if you'll check in the Press Office afterwards I can get that for you.

Q Do you have the dates of Mr. Armacost's trip to

Islamabad?

A No. Our general practice is we don't give them out. We've simply said he's going in early January.

Q Anything on the restoration of diplomatic ties between Tunisia and Libya?

A No.

Q Anything new on Spain -- Barcelona and travel advisories -- or any comment?

A We don't have anything new on the situation in Barcelona, and we do not have confirmation of who was responsible for the attack of the USO bar which resulted in the death yesterday of a U.S. sailor. Two groups have claimed responsibility. The Spanish authorities are investigating, and we are keeping in touch and cooperating fully with them.

The two groups also claimed responsibility for a bombing of the U.S. Consulate in Barcelona in October, which caused some damage to the building but no casualties. We're not able to confirm either one of these two groups was responsible for that attack.

Let me repeat, we find reprehensible this terrorist attack which killed one young American sailor and wounded nine others. We are saddened and angered that unarmed and off-duty sailors celebrating the holidays were attacked by terrorists. We extend our deepest sympathy to the families, shipmates, and friends of Petty Officer Ronald Strong and the sailors who were wounded with him.

Q Nothing on a travel advisory --

A No.

Q -- or anything on travel to Spain now?

A No.

Q Excuse me if this is repetitious. I wasn't here last week. On the Spanish bases and F-16s, is there anything new to that now?

A No. We did cover that issue last week, and we said that we expect a new negotiating round in January.

Q Thank you.

A Thank you.

(The briefing concluded at 1:16 p.m.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

I N D E X

Thursday, December 24, 1987

BRIEFER: Phyllis Oakley

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPC #222

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1987, 12:22 P.M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MRS. OAKLEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have no announcements today so I will be happy to take your brief questions. (laughter)

Q Brief. (laughter)

Q There's a report from Madrid that the Spanish Government has ordered U.S. F-16 squadrons from Torrejon out. Is that true?

A With regard to the Spanish base talks, let me just begin by saying the negotiations have not been broken off. I understand the Spanish Government has also confirmed the negotiations are continuing.

As our Embassy in Madrid said earlier, the last round was postponed by mutual consent to permit more preparation. We are working on a firm date now for the next round.

The Spanish position on the withdrawal of the U.S. Air Force F-16 Wing based near Madrid has long been known. Our understanding remains that the Spanish Government seeks to reach a base agreement with the U.S. and to maintain a strong, long-term defense relationship. Spanish officials have repeatedly stated this position publicly and privately.

Despite differences in our views, we value Spain as an ally and think both sides would be well-served by a constructive, new defense agreement. We don't plan to comment on the details of the ongoing negotiations.

Q So you're saying that they haven't -- it's not true that the negotiations have broken off, but on the ordering of the planes out --?

A What we're saying is there's a difference of views on this. It's well known, and I'm not going to go into any of the details.

Q Have they done that?

A Have they --

Q Have they asked that --?

A Again, this is part of the negotiations. I'm just not in a position to confirm what those negotiations involve.

Q Phyllis, I'm sorry, I thought you said that the planes had been withdrawn, and that was --

A No. I said the Spanish position --

Q Oh, was that the planes should be withdrawn.

A -- on the withdrawal is well known.

Q Can I ask you about something else, if we're --

Q Did you receive an ultimatum from the Spanish Government to fill out the three years?

A No. What I'm saying is the negotiations on this whole question are continuing and I'm not going into the details of the negotiating positions.

Q Do you have an ultimatum or not?

A I'm not aware there's been any sort of demand. The negotiations continue.

Q On Chile, does the State Department have a position on the suspension of trade privileges with Chile?

A Is that part of the authorization?

Q Yes.

A No, I really don't have anything on that yet. We will look at it next week.

Q Let me ask you something else on the same authorization, and we'll dispense with authorization. Does the State Department have a position on the appointment of a special negotiator for Cyprus with, of course, the expenditure of some funds to have him try to resolve the partition of the country?

A I don't have anything specific on that aspect of it. I would refer you to the President's statement -- signing statement released that has, I think, a reference to that whole problem in general. But I don't have anything specific on the Cyprus negotiator.

Q Phyllis, there has been another tape released of Terry Anderson. Do you have any statement about that?

A We have heard only excerpts of the taped message. We would remind you that all statements by hostages are made under the duress of their captivity. We continue to be deeply concerned for the health and the well-being of all the hostages. They are not forgotten.

We find it cynical that the captors have chosen to release this videotape on Christmas Eve, a time when families traditionally gather together.

Our position is clear. It is a violation of the hostages' human rights for the captors to continue holding them. They are innocent people and should be released immediately and without condition.

Q Have you verified the videotape in any way?

A Well, all we've --

Q Have you been able to?

A No. We said we've not seen the whole thing. We've heard parts of it. There have been others that have been released, but I just really have nothing further on it.

Q Do you have any comment on the anti-Israeli propaganda that Terry enunciated about --

A No, I don't have any comment.

Q -- the thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians killed in a bloody spree in Lebanon?

A No, I don't have any comment on that.

Q You don't -- do you have any ideas of why he may have said something like this while he's being held captive?

A I can't help you with that line of questioning.

Q That's all right. It's not me you're helping. I just wondered if you wanted to answer what Terry said.

A I don't have anything on that.

Q Phyllis, on Israel: A group of American Jewish leaders met with Whitehead this morning to complain about Administration statements. Can you give us an account of the meeting and tell us whether the State Department might modify its public statements about Israel as a result?

A There were some built-in qualifiers in your question about the meeting. I'm not in any way going to characterize it, about the purpose of it. Acting Secretary of State Whitehead did meet with the Conference of Presidents of American Jewish Organizations -- representatives of that group -- this morning at their request. It was a valuable exchange of viewpoints about the troubling situation in the West Bank and the Gaza. We're always happy to have their views. All agreed that there is a need for all parties to work for a restoration of order and to redouble efforts for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Q Well, when they came out, they said that they had complained about the statements that had been made publicly by the Administration, that particularly the equation -- as they saw it -- between the demonstrators and the Israelis, which they felt was unfair. Do you have any reaction to that complaint?

A No. They have just, I think, been out there speaking. There is no way I can comment on their comments. They gave their report of the meeting; this is ours.

Q Does the State Department intend to continue making such statements?

A We will do what we feel is appropriate and what is called for at -- regarding this situation. I'm not going to speculate in any way on what we're going to do in the future, or won't do.

Q Has anything happened to this point to change the State Department's view of the use of deadly force in riot situations?

A No.

Q Phyllis, on the statement of --

A Wait a minute, wait a minute. Children, it's Christmas Eve. We've got to -- switches.

(laughter)

Q Any reaction to the Israeli Government's comments or rejection of the State Department's position?

A No. I have nothing on that.

Yes.

Q I don't know if you've commented on this. You've commented on the use of force, but on the roundup -- there's a reported roundup of about 500 Palestinians.

A No. I don't have any further comment on that.

Q Phyllis, Mr. Abram, who is a lawyer and says that Israel has a right to try to maintain rule until some other system can be found for Gaza, says the State Department makes the mistake of confusing college campus demonstrators with violent people holding gasoline bombs and hurling Molotov cocktails.

I noticed yesterday you said, "Order should be maintained without the use of lethal force." How would the State Department prevent people from throwing Molotov cocktails and using other forms of violence against Israeli peacekeepers or authorities?

A Barry, we had said earlier we were not going to get into the details of this question. We gave some general views. Those are clear. I have nothing further on it.

Q Your statement yesterday said that "Order --

A Yes.

Q -- should be maintained without the use of lethal force. Techniques are available to accomplish this, and we urge they be employed." --

A Yes.

Q I wonder if you would share with us some of these techniques you know about that will defend against Molotov cocktails without using force?

A Let me repeat. I'm not going to get into the details of the question of this -- what we would recommend in riot control. Our statement stands.

Q Have you told the Israelis privately what they ought to do?

A We -- I will repeat, we remain in constant touch. We've talked about our normal communications on this subject. I have nothing further on it.

Yes.

Q It seemed that his major purpose -- Mr. Abram's major purpose -- was to receive assurances that close U.S.-Israeli relations would continue. He said that Deputy Secretary Whitehead said that the relationship -- the special relationship -- would continue and endure, and he seemed to be pleased that this was only, in his words, "a bump in the road" in the relationship. Is that the assessment at State as well?

A I will stick by what we said yesterday on this, that there is no change in our relationship. I've not seen those words of Mr. Whitehead, but they are certainly compatible with what I had said yesterday, and there is no change in that.

Q You said you didn't have anything to say about the roundup that's going on in Israel. Is that because it's a non-lethal technique that they're using?

A I'm sorry, I just can't help you with that one.

There was someone else. Yes.

Q In connection with the long-range future of the occupied territories, I believe you said this week that the United States continues to believe that this should all be handled within the context of a comprehensive peace process. How do we perceive this process at the current time -- as stalled, as not going anywhere? In other words, what are our -- when we talk about negotiations to try to move towards peace, where do we think they are?

A Well, we have talked about the peace process as an ongoing one -- just what it says. It's a process that does go on. We have talked about the commitment of this Administration going back to their proposals that were made in September of 1982. Those remain U.S. policies, and we're continuing to work on it. But I really have nothing further. I was asked this question yesterday. I just don't really have anything further on what steps, what specific steps we're going to be taking. But you may be assured this remains a high priority of the government, and we continue to work on it.

Q Was anything --?

Q Phyllis, sometimes it takes dramatic events to get a peace process off dead-center. Does the State Department feel that possibly these traumatic events which are going on now will provide that spur that's needed?

A I'm not going to be able to speculate in any way on what spurs, what doesn't spur. Our commitment is there; we're going to continue to work.

Q How about the Secretary? Has he been in contact with any of the Israeli leadership -- direct contact?

A To the best of my knowledge, the situation hasn't changed from yesterday. We talked about it then, and his being in touch with the Department.

Q How about diplomatic contacts between the United States and Israel? Have there been some in the last day or two on this question?

A Again, I go back to our statement that we remain in constant and normal contact with the Israeli Government on this and a host of other issues.

Q Is it fair to say that after the meeting this morning, that the State Department is not blinking and is not lowering its profile on expressing displeasure about the way the Israelis are handling the protests?

A Again, I go back to what we said. It was a valuable exchange. We're glad to have their views. We continue to work on these problems.

Q And you're going to maintain the same position you had yesterday and the day before?

A We stand by our statement.

Q The Times is awfully concerned about a plant in Libya that the Times thinks has the potential of producing ominous chemical weapons. Is there any new concern, or is this sort of a static situation that's been brought to light today?

A I don't have anything new or specific on those reports. We have consistently expressed concern over the proliferation of chemical weapons. We've also commented previously on our concern over allegations by Chad that Libya was using chemical weapons in its aggression against that country.

Q Do you remember -- and I only vaguely do -- some deal with the mines from Iran to Libya to use against -- you know? Has that thing been squelched with Soviet cooperation, do you know?

A I really can't help you with that. I vaguely remember it too, but I don't have any details.

Q Is there concern about a particular plant in Libya as -- in this account?

A Again, I don't have any specifics. Our concern has been voiced in generalities, basically.

Q The United States sent a group of experts to the Soviet Union to look into these two disputed radars -- or pieces of radars -- which were criticized just before the Summit. Tass said yesterday that these inspections have been done, and "the U.S. representatives who have just visited our country were able to convince themselves of this." That is to say, that the stations which the U.S. side erroneously took to be mobile radars do not exist, according to a foreign affairs -- U.S.S.R. foreign affairs spokesman quoted by Tass. I gather that the teams that have been sent have finished their job and have come home? What is the U.S. assessment of it?

A The team that did visit the Soviet radar area at Gomel and at Moscow has returned. I think they arrived back yesterday. They are in the process of submitting a report. They will be studying their data first and the photographs they took. We are going to await that report before making any sort of conclusions. Therefore, we would say that Tass report simply is not accurate on the team vouching in any way for the authenticity, and that we will hope to be able to share as much as we can of their report with you after it has been submitted.

Q How long is it anticipated that they're going to study whatever they're studying before they decide what they've seen in Moscow?

A I can't help you with that.

Q What about the SS-20 photo which was en route here the other day?

A Yes. We did say it was en route by pouch. I cannot report whether in the rush of Christmas mail it's been delivered, but we'll be able to tell you next week.

Q Phyllis, are you denying that these inspectors have reached any conclusions among themselves as to whether the ABM Treaty is being violated, or just that they haven't submitted -- finished their final report?

A No. Their procedure is that they went over there, they took a lot of pictures, they saw a lot of stuff, they've come back here, they're going to put it all together, and they're going to make a report. And that's the process; so I think it's fair to say any preliminary judgment they have reached a conclusion is simply not accurate.

Q Any judgment they've reached -- their judgment isn't accurate -- if they've reached one?

A No, no. The report they have reached a conclusion is not accurate.

Q Do you expect them to be finished and issue their report prior to the ratification of the INF Treaty?

A I just can't help you with that.

Q How about the negotiating record? Is that going to be made available, the whole thing in its entirety -- is some sort of --?

A That's a question being addressed at the White House, and I just don't have anything on it. Merry Christmas!

Wait a minute. One last one.

Q There was a report about the truck from Czechoslovakia which has been travelling around the United States, apparently transporting an ultra-light airplane, and the reports say that this ultra-light airplane flew over a U.S. base, and then the truck was allowed out of the U.S., apparently very easily. I wonder if you have any comment on that.

A The only comment that I have on that, is that visas were issued to this Czechoslovak group according to normal practices, and appropriate government authorities were fully aware of the Czechoslovakian presence in the U.S.

Merry Christmas.

Q Thank you.

Q Merry Christmas.

(The briefing concluded at 12:36 p.m.)

December 23, 1987

STATEMENT BY THE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN

PEO

- We have said for several days, the continuing violence in the West Bank and the Gaza strip is of great concern to the United States.

- It is important we and the international community not just be against unrest. We should be for a solution. Let me make three points in this regard:
 - Violence advances the interests of no one. There is a need to maintain law and order as the basis for any future progress;

 - Order should be maintained without the use of lethal force. Techniques are available to accomplish this and we urge they be employed;

 - We must continue to seek positive ways to resolve the underlying issues at stake. That is why the United States has been a consistent and energetic promoter of direct negotiation in the process of peace. While search for an overall resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict continues, the United States supports greater opportunities and a better life for people on the West Bank and the Gaza.

ESR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

I N D E X

Wednesday, December 23, 1987

BRIEFER: Phyllis Oakley

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPC #221

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1987, 1:02 P. M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MRS. OAKLEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have one brief announcement and then a statement.

For those of you who have been asking whether there will be a daily press briefing tomorrow, Christmas Eve, the answer is yes, and it will be at the usual time and place.

Q What's the usual time?

Q For the record, what is it?

A I now have a statement on Gaza and the West Bank. We have said for several days the continuing violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is of great concern to the United States. It is important we and the international community not just be against unrest. We should be for a solution.

Let me make three points in this regard.

-- Violence advances the interests of no one. There is a need to maintain law and order as the basis for any future progress.

-- Order should be maintained without the use of lethal force. Techniques are available to accomplish this, and we urge they be employed.

-- We must continue to seek positive ways to resolve the underlying issues at stake. That is why the United States has been a consistent and energetic promoter of direct negotiations in the process of peace. While search for an overall resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict continues, the United States supports greater opportunities and a better life for people on the West Bank and Gaza.

Q Can we have a copy of that, please?

A Yes. We'll make a copy available.

Q What does the Administration plan to do to try to get Israel to follow that advice on the use of force? The Israeli Foreign Ministry today just says, flat out, it rejects what was said yesterday. What -- where do you go from here?

A Well, Matt, as we said yesterday on this, I don't have any of the specifics or details to give you about our contacts and our efforts in this regard. Certainly, let me repeat, we're in touch with the Israeli Government on this issue, and we are continuing to urge, as we said yesterday, restraint and that the violence wind down.

Q This morning the Israeli Foreign Ministry suggested that the U.S. statements might encourage extremist elements and encourage violence at this stage.

A I don't have any comment on those statements.

Q Phyllis, is there any concern about the United States making statements like the one you made yesterday that are greeted by scorn and derision from the Israelis, and then we just have to issue another similar statement? How far can the United States be pushed in this sort of thing?

A I just can't help you with that question.

Q The Israelis maintain that the disturbances -- they continue to maintain that the disturbances are a result of outside agitation and outside provocation. Do you have evidence of that?

A I don't have any specific evidence or confirmation or information on the cause of the riots. We've just really not been able to address that question.

Q Well, Ambassador Okun, I noted, last night at the United Nations said the U.S. has no evidence. Is that correct?

A Where that stands, I just don't have anything further than the statements that have already been made.

Q Phyllis, could I just ask you: If we're so concerned about something -- clearly we're not in a position to cut off aid or anything like that to Israeli -- but why did we just abstain yesterday?

A That decision on the resolution and our action in abstaining was well covered in the statement by our representative, and I really don't have anything further to add on that.

Q In your statement, you spoke of positive measures -- of positive steps -- that should be taken, and then after that you spoke of direct negotiations. Does that mean that you're not advocating a peace conference?

A There is no change in our policy on that. Our goal has always been direct negotiations between the parties. We've said that we would consider a conference if it contributed to the goal of an international conference, so there's been no change on our policy on that.

Q Any thought to sending this high-level official over there?

A No. I was asked this yesterday. I have nothing further on that question.

Q Phyllis, how about the idea of having Secretary Shultz himself at least get involved in talking to the Israelis about the question? Apparently there is some sentiment for that at the lower levels in the State Department.

A No. I just don't have anything on that question.

Q Has he done anything -- has he been on the phone with anybody, for example --?

A Well, he's in constant touch with the Department.

Q In terms of -- in Israel.

A Not that I'm aware of.

Q How about the Israeli Ambassador? How often has he been here, and who has he been meeting with?

A Again, I don't have any specifics on numbers of times or contacts. We just, as I said before, are in constant and normal touch with the Israelis.

Q What does this obvious conflict in viewpoints do to the overall tone of Israeli-American relations?

A Again, we are not discussing the tone of our relationship. We are friends. There is obviously no change in the American position on the substance of the issues, and our relationship remains firm and as it was, but this is the situation which is of concern to us, and we're expressing our concern.

Q Phyllis, the first question that was asked -- What would the United States do to make its appeals to Israel stick? -- and you said, whatever you answered. My question is: Israel is a country that receives \$3.5 billion a year from this country, and it is considered probably the best ally outside of NATO.

If all United States can do is to appeal to them for two -- about two weeks now while the killing and the mass arrests and probably deportation now will start -- all U.S. can do? And what kind of a signal this may send to other states who may be contemplating something like this?

A I'm sorry. I just can't help you with that question.

Q Have we asked the Arab governments to quiet down their own agitation of the violence by the Palestinians in the occupied territories? What have we told the Arab governments?

A We have noted that we are in touch with several Arab governments on this question. Once again, we don't get into the substance of those exchanges.

Q When you talk about "several governments," can you name those governments?

A No. I'm not getting into the specifics of that.

Q What response did you get from these governments?

A Again, that goes into our private diplomatic communications.

Q We understand, as I heard it here, there is scorn and derision in Israel.

A Those were not my words.

Q Yes. I understand. But I -- is there any evidence of this? Who is saying this?

A No. I just don't have anything on that.

Q Phyllis, the question, of course, arises as this Administration, perhaps more than any other in memory, stands for law and order. The Israelis have tried to do this, I think, and yet there is an agitation -- "Don't use violent means," whatever that is -- the greater use -- what did you say in your statement about the --?

A Well, I think if you'll go back --

Q -- there about using order, public law and order with other techniques? Like what? I mean, they use water cannon, they use rubber bullets, but when soldiers are attacked, what do you expect the soldiers to do?

A I'm not going to go, again, into the specifics of those exchanges. I think the statements today and of yesterday and that we've consistently made speak for themselves on our views on that.

Q Phyllis --

A Yes. Behind you.

Q In the past you've said that the Israelis gave you assurances at the highest levels that they would be -- I don't know -- working on this problem. What can you tell us about your contacts with the Arabs within the territories themselves about your contacts? What have they responded to you?

A I really don't have anything further beyond what we've said on that before, that -- again, that our contacts there are -- cover a wide and broad range, but I don't have any specifics beyond that.

Q Phyllis, you said a couple of days ago that you -- the United States had been assured at the highest levels of the Israel Government that they were doing everything they could to prevent further violence. Do you think you were lied to, or are they unable to prevent further violence?

A I was asked that question the other day, and I -- there is no change in my answer.

Q Well, the situation is still --

A The situation goes on, which is why we're continuing to reiterate our concern about it, but -- and I really am not going to go any further than to say that we're in normal, constant contact with the Israeli Government on this issue.

Q Phyllis, just to clarify: Did I understand you to say that to your knowledge, the Secretary has not spoken by telephone to senior Israeli officials?

A To my knowledge, as you know, the Secretary's on vacation. He's in daily contact with the Department. I'm

simply not aware that he's spoken directly to any other government officials.

Q Is that true also of the Arab governments as well?

A I would assume that's true of them as well.

Q There was a report to the effect in a prominent paper -- newspaper-- that the Israelis have brushed aside, or Rabin has brushed aside, the American advice not to use live ammunition. Have, in fact, the Israelis brushed aside the suggestion of the United States or their own -- have they set aside their own policy not to use live ammunition except in the most dire circumstances?

A I can't help you with that question.

Q What is -- you got the assurance, what, two to three days ago you said you got this assurance from the highest level of these --

A Yes.

Q What have you got? What's the latest? What's their latest assurance?

A Again, beyond the fact that we're in contact, I just have nothing further on those contacts or the diplomatic exchanges.

Q Another subject?

Q Phyllis, it is reported -- actually this morning -- there were mass arrests and breaking into houses at night and arresting people, you know, without charging them with anything. Do you have a specific comment to that?

A No.

Q Are you -- I mean, does that --?

A And I won't have those specific kinds of comments.

Q Another subject?

Q One last thing, please. The U.N. Security Council resolution strongly deplores whatever Israel action has taken, and the U.S. abstained. Does the U.S. abstain from strongly deploring Israel?

A Let me go back to the statement that our representative made. He covered the reasons of why we voted the way we did, and I really have nothing beyond that.

Q Do you think that the situation is going to interfere with the hostage situation in Lebanon?

A There is simply no way I can answer that question.
New subject. Yes.

Q Do you have anything on the State authorization bill today?

A I don't have any comments in general on the State authorization bill. We had some general comments. I don't know whether you're referring to specific aspects of the bill or the bill -- CR in general.

Q The State authorization with the various legislation amendments that were attached to it that you all were opposing.

A With respect to funding levels of the Department's budget, the Continuing Resolution appears to be consistent with the budget summit agreement reached between the Administration and Congressional leadership. These funding levels will require tough choices to be made over the next several weeks regarding the allocation of scarce foreign aid funds and the operations of the Department.

Since those portions of the CR dealing with international affairs activities are well over 100 pages long, it is going to take us some time until we make a full evaluation of precisely how our programs and operations will be affected over the remainder of the fiscal year.

Q Does that alleviate significantly the projected shortfall that was going to require a bunch of cuts and closings?

A I don't have the exact figures, again, on how that works out. What we're saying is the funding levels appear to be consistent with these agreements that were reached. We're studying the whole thing -- the various earmarkings that are in the bill -- to see how this all will work out.

Q That's the CR you've been talking about?

A Yes.

Q On the authorization bill, the PLO office is supposed to be closed, I think, within two years, or what is your understanding of what the State Department now has to do to comply with that?

A In regard to that question, although the United States Government has no intention of establishing relations with the PLO, the right to decide the kind of relations, if any, which the United States will maintain with a foreign entity is a constitutional power of the President which cannot be impaired by Congress.

Because the provisions concerning the PLO Observer Mission may infringe on the President's constitutional authority, and, if implemented, would be contrary to our international legal obligations under the U.N. Headquarters Agreement, we intend, during the 90-day period before this provision takes effect, to engage in consultations with the Congress in an effort to resolve this matter.

Q May I ask a question about that?

A Yes.

Q Didn't we shut down the missions at the U.N., the permanent members of the U.N. under certain circumstances?

A Not that I -- I just don't have anything on --

Q What about Libya? What did we do about the mission in Libya? Didn't we close it down?

A I don't have any information on that.

Q Well, then, there is a conflict here in the thinking.

Q No, no.

A Thank you, colleagues. What we're --

Q I didn't hear the comment.

A I simply thanked -- the mission isn't closed.

Q The mission isn't closed. But there is a conflict in the logic that you can close down one mission like Libya's, but not close down one like this.

A No. Excuse me. I'm simply not aware of any conflict on that.

Matt.

Q On the lie-detector provision, what is the Department going to do now on this?

A Again, we've been studying those provisions. I think that there -- we're determining how we're going to react to that, but I really have nothing specific on that today.

Q Just one more, on the Mt. Alto, what about that? Is there something (inaudible)?

A Again, as I understand it, the President is given some leeway, but I don't have anything definitive on that, and we will try to develop positions that we can share with you on those specific aspects over the next few weeks.

Q Phyllis, can we have a copy of that statement you made on the PLO mission?

A Yes. Didn't you get it down?

Q No.

A Okay.

Q What do you make of Gerasimov's admission that the Soviets are involved in a major military offensive now in Afghanistan?

A We have just seen that press report. I really don't have any direct comment about it, or his figures in any way. I do note that it is unusual for them to mention such figures, but I have nothing beyond that.

Q Back on the legislative thing: Do you have anything on the last-minute amendment concerning South Africa and U.S. business ties with South Africa?

A The question involves what's known as the Rangel provision or amendment. We are deeply disappointed by the passage into law of this provision which denies the U.S. foreign tax credit to U.S. firms operating in South Africa. The inclusion of this provision in the budget package is the wrong way to determine U.S. policy. The ultimate intent of this provision is absolutely clear.

It's an attempt to use the U.S. tax code to drive American businesses out of South Africa. However, the most likely effect will be to accelerate the takeover of U.S. assets by South African firms at bargain prices. Many U.S. firms already in marginal economic circumstances will be forced to downgrade their participation in programs designed to advance the disadvantaged majority in South Africa or to pull out of South Africa altogether.

We have repeatedly stressed our commitment to a progressive U.S. business presence in South Africa. The Congress, too, in Section 203 (b) of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 applauded the positive contribution of U.S. nationals adhering to the code of conduct. This provision thus contradicts the stated bipartisan policy of the U. S. by indiscriminantly damaging the legitimate interests of American corporations in South Africa without regard to their standing vis-a-vis the Sullivan Principles or the Fair Labor Standards Program.

Q Again, Phyllis, we didn't suggest that you break the laws, but what can be done about it beyond this statement?

A Well, we're disappointed about it. It's one of these provisions that we're going to have to live with as the force of law, but we will certainly be working to perhaps have the law changed over the period, a long period. But I don't have any specifics on how we're going to deal with it.

Q So the American firms starting now do have to pay the double taxing?

A I don't know when the effective date of that taxing begins.

Q Copy of that?

A Yes.

Q Phyllis, may I ask you once again on the first subject, please? There are reports this morning that the State Department is lagging behind the White House in both assessing and judging the situation in the territories. Do you care to reply to that?

A We have stated -- I've stated yesterday, I'll state today, that there is no difference between the White House and the State Department on this issue.

Q But it is -- no, I mean, forgive me -- the statement --

A But it's your interpretation that there is a difference. We don't see it as a difference.

Q It happened not to be mine, it happened to be others. So you don't think there is any difference between --?

A No, I don't.

Q Anything on the U.S. helping Israel build the Arrow missile?

A In regard to the question of joint development of Israel's Arrow anti-tactical, ballistic missile -- I think it's called an ATVOM, but I can't be sure -- an agreement has been reached, but I have no details on it. I refer you for those details to the Pentagon.

Q Okay. And also anything today on a change of U.S. orders in the Persian Gulf about rescuing friendly ships?

A Nothing on that today.

Q Do you have anything about the American woman held by Peruvian authorities?

A We don't have any further information on her case beyond the guidance that was provided before. Just nothing new on that.

Q Thank you.

(The briefing concluded at 1:23 p.m.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

I N D E X

Tuesday, December 22, 1987

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPC #220

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1987, 12:32 P. M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MRS. OAKLEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have one small correction. I would like to give you the correct telephone number for the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem. The area codes are 972 and then a 2, and the number is 234271. We'll also post this number if any of you are interested.

Now I'll be happy to take your questions.

Q Yesterday you said the U.S. Government had been assured at the highest levels of the Israeli Government that they were taking steps to restrain the violence or not to have violence, or whatever.

Does the very strong White House statement that was issued today indicate any change there? Are you satisfied with the Israeli assurances that you've gotten?

A I don't have really anything on questions of whether we're satisfied or not. We said we had gone to the highest levels of the Israeli Government on this issue. We remain in constant contact with them.

Let me add to this, as we have said, since this violence and counter-violence began, there is a need for restraint by all parties and a common commitment to deal with the underlying problems and frustrations which, in our view, need to be addressed.

The current situation, absence of progress in the peace process, is not viable. Time is not working in favor of a settlement. People must.

The United States has consistently and constantly worked to achieve negotiations between Israel and its neighbors, believing firmly that only through such negotiations can the basic needs of the parties be addressed. For Israelis this means security and freedom from threats of violence and terrorism. For Palestinians this means addressing legitimate rights and just requirements through negotiations that would resolve the conflict.

Internationally recognized and accepted bases exist on which to conduct negotiations. U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which enshrine the principle of land for peace, remain valid on all fronts and remain U.S. policy. The Reagan initiative of 1982 proposed specific ways to achieve the promise of these Security Council resolutions which is the promise of a peaceful settlement and security for all sides. It is, therefore, imperative for all the sides to adopt policies which calm, not exacerbate, tensions.

We have repeatedly urged restraint. Now more than ever, we believe neither further disorder nor harsh security measures can contribute to reconciliation, negotiation and peace, and it is time for all sides to look beyond narrow definitions of the causes of this violence and to commit themselves squarely to a process of negotiation. The United States stands ready to assist in this effort as we have in the past.

Q Copy of that?

A Yes.

Q Could I just ask a few quick questions on this?

One, the White House statement today also added the language about condemning an excessive use of force on the side of the Israelis. Is there some reason why you haven't reiterated that here?

A No. I think our statements really dovetail. We've talked about harsh security measures. That's the same thing.

Q But you have come to the conclusion after talking with Mr. Rabin, and has the President been directly involved in these talks or the Secretary as well?

A I think that was all addressed at the White House of the President's involvement.

Q The White House statement referred specifically to excessive use of live ammunition. Is that something in particular that you're taking up with the Israelis?

A Well, I think we had talked about this even last week about lethal weapons. Our position is that we're -- right now that the situation needs to be calmed. Harsh security measures need to be avoided, and people should step back and the violence should wind down.

I don't have any specifics about what we're saying to do, or what we're asking people to do. I think our general position on this is very clear.

Q Israeli officials in their public statements are showing no indication of going along with what you're suggesting. Where do you go from here? I can quote you a few statements.

A I'm not commenting at all on their statements.

Q Apparently they intend to ignore this kind of --

A I'm -- I can't --

Q Just for clarification, do these high-level talks continue? I mean, are they ongoing even today, or is it something that went on and --

A We are in constant normal contact with the Israeli officials on these issues.

Q You have no comment on what Rabin said today? He said any means at the army's disposal in compliance with orders is fit if it serves the purpose?

A I don't have any comment on his specific remarks. I think our policy from both what was said at the White House and from here is perfectly clear.

Q Did his statements trigger today's statement?

A I don't think you can attribute our position to statements by any one person. We've talked about our concern, our serious concern, over the continuing violence in the occupied territories. I think our statements grow out of this general concern and our views on it.

Q Why didn't you say this sooner?

A Well, I think that we've been addressing this issue clearly. We've had some other statements on it. This is our statement today.

Q Is there any legislation that might mean aid -- U.S. aid could be jeopardized by all this if human rights violations were determined?

A I don't have anything on that question.

Q Phyllis, in an interview with the --

A Excuse me. He was first. Then I'll get to you.

Q Phyllis, are you prepared, today, to go into any greater details as to U.S. contacts with Palestinians or Arab-Israelis in the West Bank and in --

A No. I addressed this question yesterday. I talked about our wide and broad contacts. I have nothing further on that.

Q These are ongoing?

A Yes.

Q What leverage is the U.S. considering using other than words to make an impression on the Israelis over this issue?

A We don't ever speculate on possible future courses of action. I just can't help you with that.

Q In an interview with the French newspaper Liberation, Mr. Arafat, of the PLO, is calling for (an) international force to go to the occupied land. Do you have any comment on this proposal?

A No.

Q There are contradictory estimates about the victims of the Israeli measures in the occupied territories. Do you have your own information about the casualties there?

A No. We don't have any independent numbers. We have noted the figures that have been used by both sides, but we have no way of confirming those.

Q Is your travel advisory the same as yesterday?

A It was a reiteration of a travel advisory that had existed. It was not a new one. That information still stands with the corrected telephone number.

Q Do you have any thoughts of upgrading that advisory?

A No thoughts of doing that.

Q Do you have any word on what's happening at the Security Council? The language that's now being considered unacceptable -- acceptable?

A As you all know, debate continued yesterday on the resolution before the Security Council and is expected to resume today. We think it possible there will be a vote at the Security Council. Regarding the text of the resolution, that's still under discussion, and I just have no further comment on how that's developing.

Q Do you have a draft for the Council to discuss -- a U.S. draft of the resolution?

A I don't think there's a U.S. draft. I think there's a draft or several drafts that are being worked on. I'm certainly not aware there will be a U.S. draft.

Q You mentioned in several points the peace process which we haven't heard a lot about, lately. Is there any thought -- well, first of all, could you bring us up to date on the peace process? Is there any plan to send anybody there or to somehow revive the peace process? It seems pretty dead right now.

A I don't have anything specific on steps that are being taken to reinvigorate it. We remain constantly in touch with these people. You can be assured it remains a serious item on our agenda, but I just don't have any specifics on it.

Q But don't you want to back up your own statements, because you say that both sides should get back to the peace process? I mean, they're not going to just do it on their own. It seems that they always have to have an intermediary and --

A Well -- but what I'm saying is we continually work on this, and our efforts will not flag.

Q There are no plans to send Mr. Murphy or anyone else?

A No. I don't know of any plans for anyone to go out on that.

Q Are you in contact with the Soviets with regard to the situation in the Occupied Territory?

A Not that I'm aware of. We're certainly in contact with them, generally on regional issues, but I know of no specifics on that.

Q Do you, by any chance, know the whereabouts of a Soviet scholar who is missing in New Delhi?

A I understand that there is concern about a Soviet research scholar named Babi, but we have no knowledge of his whereabouts.

Q Is that Robert?

Q Phyllis, the State authorization bill was apparently passed last night or early this morning with all kinds of legislation that the State Department has been opposing. Do you have any comment on that?

A As you know, the situation -- the discussions in Congress and action went very late last night. We still have not seen the final text of the CR. However, we have discussed, with the Congress, several problems with the authorization bill. I understand that there are several important issues that have not yet been resolved. We're carefully studying that authorization bill before we make a recommendation.

Q Anything on the Contra debate?

A Funding? Yes. In regard to funding for the Democratic Resistance, if signed, under the new budget, these bills that are passed, the resistance will receive \$8.1 million. That breaks down to \$3.6 million for food, clothing and medicine, and \$4.5 million for transporting that assistance and other previously approved assistance.

These funds will be available through February 29. However, funds for transportation of previously approved lethal assistance will not be available during the week of January 12 to January 18 while the Central American presidents meet to assess the success of the Guatemala accord.

Q The bill apparently includes some language that would force the closure of the PLO office in New York. What would the State Department -- what would they do if that were signed into law, follow the law or what?

A This is, I think, one of the problems that I referred to when we said that we're looking at it; that several important issues, from our viewpoint, were not solved and that we're looking at that bill now.

Q What are some of the other ones? Is lie detector one of them?

A Yes, the Secretary's position on that -- I think the PLO office. Post closings, I think, was another important issue, but I really don't have a definitive list on those.

Q Phyllis, on the CR, the Rangel legislation was passed. Will the Administration do anything to counteract that? That's on American businesses in South Africa?

A Well, I think, again, it depends on what happens in this whole situation. I don't know, by your question, whether you were suggesting that we disobey the law.

Q No. But is there anything that the U.S. will do to help out those American businesses, now?

A I think it's just premature. We really haven't studied that and really don't have an answer yet to that question.

Q Well, could you let us know or post it if --

A Well, we'll have to look at that. As we said, there are so many provisions. We'll be studying all of them, and when we do have views, we'll certainly let you know.

Q Thank you.

Q Do you have any characterization of the Contra funding levels which were approved?

A I really don't have any characterization of those levels. I think they are lower, clearly, than the Administration had hoped for.

Q Do you have any details on the military operation, over there in Nicaragua?

A I really don't have any definitive news on that. We're aware that the offensive is taking place. There are rumors coming out -- not rumors, but various reports that are coming out; but I really don't have anything definitive on it.

Q Do you have any confirmation whether a Nicaraguan civilian airliner, airplane, was shot down?

A No, I don't. I have nothing on that.

Q Are you aware of the reports?

A I have seen the press reports, but I just don't have anything on it.

Q Are you pursuing the issue?

A Well, we can see whether our Embassy has reported anything on that question.

Q Do you have a position on the issue of whether it's a good idea for the Contras, with U.S. equipment, to be shooting down civilian airliners?

A Well, I can't get -- I really can't help you with that question. I'm not going to get started down that slope. There are a lot of assumptions and things built in, and I just am not going to pursue that.

Yes.

Q There is a report in The New York Times indicating a change in the rules of engagement for the U.S. Navy in the Persian Gulf. Can you confirm that?

A We noted that report in the media. As you know, we have not gotten into the specifics of our rules of engagement, but I can assure you that they've not changed. If you have any further questions about specific questions, I would refer you to the Pentagon.

Q So you're denying that report?

A We're just saying that our rules of engagement have not changed.

Q Have not changed, as yet. Is there a change contemplated?

A I'm just not going to speculate.

Q Anything on the collapse of the cease-fire talks in the Dominican Republic?

A These cease-fire talks in the Dominican Republic were to have been held between the Government of Nicaragua and the democratic resistance. Our information, right now, is that the current status of the talks is uncertain. There seemed to have been a problem about who would represent the Sandinistas. Apparently, the Sandinistas intended to use foreign advisers, not as technical advisers, as originally announced, but as proxies for the Sandinista government.

The Sandinistas' refusal to negotiate directly with the resistance and their attempt to use outsiders as negotiators is a step backward, in our view. We note that President Arias, President Duarte, and Cardinal Obando Y Bravo have all called on the Sandinistas to engage in direct negotiations.

Certainly, our position on that is clear. We've always believed the negotiations should be face-to-face, and this is the only way to achieve the national reconciliation central to the Guatemala Accord.

Q Why is it that a step backwards if the Sandinistas have consistently refused to talk directly to the Contras?

A Well, what we have called for, and hoped would come about, is direct, face-to-face negotiations or using the mediator that was accepted by both parties, and they have not come forward in this. They've sent in these foreign advisers, and so in our view, that's a step backward. It's moving away from the direct negotiations.

Q How about the photograph of the SS-20? Where is that? Do you have it?

A Yes. That was delivered to our Embassy yesterday, December 21. It's on its way back to Washington now.

Q Is it what you want?

A I just have no way of judging that. The photograph, as I say, has been turned over. It's on its way back. We'll have to look. I assume it is.

Yes, Connie.

Q I hope this isn't posted some place, but have you anything on the question I asked yesterday about the U.S. statement on the Sharpeville Seven?

A We did post an answer to that question. I thought I had it with me, but I don't; but you can check in the Press Office on that.

Q Thank you.

Q Phyllis, last week, Chuck mentioned the fact that an American woman was arrested in Peru -- Cynthia McNamara, I think -- but had no details. Do you have any more information about her?

A I don't have any further information, but I'll be happy to check on that one.

Q Okay. Thanks.

Q Do you have anything on a member of a Romanian tennis team who appears to have defected in Miami last night?

A I hate to give you the standard language, but it is a well-established policy of the Department neither to confirm nor deny the existence of individual asylum requests. This policy protects the applicants, their families, and the integrity of the asylum process.

You know INS has primary responsibility for the handling of asylum matters, although the Department of State has an advisory role. For questions about general procedures, I would refer you to the INS.

Q Phyllis, do you have anything on a statement by Soviet spokesmen, as quoted in TASS, that the U.S. ACDA team that was looking at the radar sites in Moscow and Gomel found nothing in violation of the ABM treaty?

A No, I don't have any report on that. I know that our team has been there looking at the Soviet radar facilities, but I really don't have any comment on their report or on the Soviet report.

Q When do they get back? Is that the 23rd?

A I think it is just before Christmas, and we'll see if we can have something to you on that report.

Q Back on Arab/Israeli question, I think the White House statement made a reference to U.S. contact with Palestinians outside the immediate area. Do you have any details on that?

A I don't have any details on that or on our contacts. We have certainly been in touch with other Arab governments about this situation as well as the Israeli Government and, as I said, with Palestinians.

Q Would you take the question?

A Oh, excuse me. He had a question in the back.

Q Any reaction to the announcement in Zimbabwe today by Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo that they are merging their parties, and in their own language, going to create a one-party, Marxist/Leninist state?

A I have not seen that report and I have nothing on that.

Q Is it possible to take the question about the proposal of Arafat to despatch an international force to the occupied territories?

A No, I'm not going to take that question.

Excuse me. One more. Yes.

Q Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica and, I think, the Prime Minister of St. Lucia, said, this morning, that they did not feel that the announced elections in Haiti next month will be fair because of the new electoral laws. Do we have any comment on that?

A No, I don't have any specific reaction to their statements. We did say something yesterday about this situation in Haiti; saying that we were looking at the new election law, but we're skeptical.

Q Going back to the Mideast one more time, can you give us a little more help as to why the tenor of the statement is changed today? Is it because of just the fact that it's gone on over a certain period now, and you sort of hoped it would go away, but it didn't go away, and you felt you had to speak out -- the Administration had to speak out? Or is it because, actually, the level of the Israeli response has now been stepped up?

A I really can't give you the kind of detailed explanation probably you're looking for. I think our statements speak for themselves; that this has been violence that has continued for a long period of time. It's the worst violence in this area over a period of years. We are concerned about it, and I think the statements, both at the White House and here today, explained our concerns and our hopes and what we hope will happen -- that this violence will wind down, and that serious work toward negotiations will begin.

Q Specifically, how is this message being given to the Israelis? Is the Ambassador being called in here? Who is talking to whom?

A Again, I refer you to what we said before, that we remain in constant and normal contact.

Q I know you said that, but I'm asking specifically.

A I don't have any specifics beyond what we had said that we have brought it to the highest level of the Israeli Government.

Q With so many Americans traveling to Israel and the territories this time of year, you again don't think there is any need for anything more than the advisory that was issued in 1982? I talked to a travel agent this morning, and they said it's no more dangerous there than in some parts of D.C.?

(Laughter)

A That's not really for me to judge. We do what we think is appropriate for the situation, and we reminded people to be cautious. If we felt there was need for something else, we'd do it. But we think that what we did yesterday is sufficient.

Q Being the husband of a travel agent, most of them wouldn't say anything like that. That's stupid.

(Laughter)

Q Thank you.

(The briefing concluded at 12:55 p.m.)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

MAY
CAP

I N D E X

Monday, December 21, 1987

BRIEFER: Phyllis Oakley

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

DPC #219

MONDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1987, 12:40 P.M.
(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

MRS. OAKLEY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I have one brief reminder: Under Secretary Armacost will give an ON-THE-RECORD briefing at 2:30 this afternoon in conjunction with the release of the annual special report entitled, Afghanistan: Eight Years of Soviet Occupation.

Now, I'll be happy to take your questions.

Q The annual report on eight years of what?

A No. The annual report, entitled, "Afghanistan."

Q Will you have it available in advance so we can read it and be prepared?

A No. It will be available at the briefing.

Q Three Palestinians -- three more Palestinians are reported killed today by Israeli troops. Do you have any comment on what's going on there?

A We continue to be deeply grieved by the violence that has resulted in loss of life and injury in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. We share the concern of people everywhere that this violence and the deaths and injuries resulting from it, magnify the divisions between Israelis and Palestinians.

We urge and hope that both sides will exercise restraint. The high level of frustration points out the need to maintain efforts to bring about a comprehensive peace that will satisfy the legitimate aspirations for peace and security by all the peoples of the region.

I would note there has been a travel advisory in effect for Jerusalem and the West Bank since March 29, 1982, which states, and I quote: "American citizens planning visits outside Jerusalem or to sites on the West Bank and Gaza should be aware conditions affecting the safety of travelers can change with little warning."

"Travelers to the West Bank, as well as to East Jerusalem, should contact the Consulate General in Jerusalem, telephone number 282-3231 or -3232 soon after arrival. Those traveling to or through the Gaza Strip should be in touch with the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, telephone number 654-3338."

This advisory remains in effect. There have been disturbances in these areas recently, and the situation is changing from day to day. American citizens wanting advice on travel to particular areas before they leave, may call the Department of State on telephone number 202-647-5225.

Q Mrs. Oakley, do you have anything to cool down the speculations with regard to the -- whether the United States is going to use veto or abstain in case the Security Council will condemn the Israeli actions in the occupied territory?

A In regard to action at the Security Council, we note they have been debating the situation in the occupied territories for more than a week. Debate resumes this afternoon and the vote is likely to occur today. Consultations on the draft resolution are continuing, and it would be premature to comment any further.

Q Have you received any Israeli requests to not use the veto -- I mean, to use the veto?

A I don't have any of the specifics on the diplomatic exchanges that are involved in the debate there.

Q Your travel advisory does not appear to get any stiffer as a result of what's going on over there. You just say, you know, "Things can change," and so on and so forth. You're saying here that you're sticking with the same old travel advisory and not urging Americans to avoid that area?

A No, we're not urging Americans to avoid the area. What we're trying to do is to note that the travel advisory that has been in effect since 1982 is still applicable, noting this situation can change, and urging travelers to exercise caution and to check with the American authorities.

Q Yes, but wait, Phyllis, this is the worst violence that's been in that area certainly since '82 when you initially issued that. It's gone a considerable distance further than anything we've seen in the past. And you still feel that Americans, under some circumstances of checking in with the Embassy, should just go there?

12/21/87

A Well, what we're saying is the situation changes daily, that you can't make judgments about what it's going to be or what it has been. We're obviously all aware of the violence. We've been talking about it. We're simply urging people pay attention to the travel advisory that's been in effect since '82.

Q Is that because underneath all of this, you have some kind of expectation that this is going to die down very soon, that there is some optimism that underlies this?

A I'm not speculating in any way on what we feel the outcome. I think our position on this is clear. We're concerned. We're asking people to be careful.

Q Since the situation changes daily, why doesn't the travel advisory change?

A Well, that's not really a very practical way of going about this. This is why we have given the telephone numbers of the Consulate in Jerusalem, the Embassy in Tel Aviv, and certainly the number that people may call in the State Department, so they can get the latest information that way.

Q Phyllis, is that sentence that, "There have been disturbances recently and changing day to day." Is that new language to the old advisory

A Yes. I ended with the quote when I gave the telephone number, and if you will recall, I said, "This advisory remains in effect. There have been disturbances in these areas recently, and the situation is changing from day to day."

Q So that is new language?

A Yes.

Q Phyllis, have the Israelis asked you not to issue a stronger travel advisory?

A I'm not going to speculate or talk about our diplomatic exchanges. We're concerned with the possible dangers to American citizens. That's why we're doing this.

Q Can you give us some guidance on what the United States is specifically asking the Israelis to do? I gather there has been more consultation over the last several days. What is it we want them to do?

A We have been in touch with the highest levels of the Israeli Government, and they assure us they are doing everything possible to avoid further casualties.

12/21/87

Q And do you believe them? This is a question.

A I'm not going to answer that kind of question.

Q Mrs. Oakley, do you have any account of American interests in the occupied Arab lands that could be threatened by the troubles there?

A No. I don't have anything specific on that question.

Q Phyllis, have the American officials simultaneously been in contact with Palestinian leaders in the West Bank and Gaza, trying to cool tensions?

A I don't, again, have any specifics on that. I think we've been asked that question before. We certainly have a range of contacts in the occupied territories. We're urging and hoping restraint will be exercised on all sides.

Q You have indicated that we have been in touch with the highest levels and they assure us that they're doing all they can to minimize casualties. What are we asking of them?

A I'm not going to get into the details of the specific exchanges on this. We've talked about it last week of being in touch with them. This is further to that.

Q Are we happy with their riot tactics --

A I'm not going to --

Q -- and their use of live ammunition against civilians in demonstrations?

A I'm not going to speculate or offer descriptions of our contacts with them. I think the statements speak for themselves.

Q Are they cooperating with the U.S. Administration with regard to attempts to cool down the situation?

A I go back to what I said before, that they have assured us that they are doing everything possible to avoid further casualties.

Q Have you seen any message or do you have any statement if Egypt withdraws its ambassador from Israel?

A I don't have anything on that.

12/21/87

Q Phyllis, I've seen some reports that there is a greater level of organization among these demonstrations. Does the U.S. have any information regarding outside agitation or greater organization regarding this?

A I can't help you with that question.

Q Phyllis, you wouldn't say if the Israelis had asked us to keep the travel advisory to what it was, but can you say whether this was discussed in these high-level discussions with the Israelis?

A Again, we don't get into the agendas, all the issues that were discussed. I think you were aware we brought this whole situation up with them.

Q When you say the "whole situation," do you mean including the revival of stipulates of the Camp David Accords with regard to the autonomy --

A No.

Q -- in the West Bank?

A I'm talking here about the situation in the occupied territories.

Q I have one.

A Are you finished?

Q Yes, certainly.

Q The thing that I find a little confusing in this: Throughout this issue, you've sort of stepped back from it, giving the impression that you think this is an internal Israeli matter and the Israelis are dealing with it, and yet you offer we've been in touch with the highest levels of the government and they've assured us. I don't understand what the U.S. interest here is -- if you could spell out what the U.S. is actually trying to do, what it wants the Israelis to do as they handle these demonstrations.

A I'm not going to get into a long discussion or a specific discussion today of our interests. I think those are basically known and certainly clear to all the people how we feel about the road to peace in the Middle East.

Let me repeat that we feel that the demonstrations, this level of frustration, points to the need for efforts to bring about the comprehensive peace. This remains the goal of the United States policy. This is what we feel is necessary.

12/21/87

Q You're still not answering that question, though, that has been asked twice --

A Well --

Q -- what is it that the United States Government would like Israel to do, in this case?

A We have stated before -- I've said it again today -- we're urging restraint on all the parties and we are hoping the violence will subside and the situation can return to its former condition, noting we've got to move to the comprehensive peace we've all talked about.

And I don't have any further details.

Q Can I ask you one thing now?

A Certainly.

Q I wasn't exactly sure. Did you say that you didn't know if we had been in contact with Palestinians --

A I said that --

Q -- or that we hadn't been?

A I said I didn't have any specifics on our contacts with Palestinians.

Q Could I ask you to take that: if we've been discussing with some of the Palestinians on the West Bank?

A Well, I've answered that question. I said through our Consulate in Jerusalem, we have wide and broad contacts among the population of the occupied territories.

Q Have you gained any new information with regard to who is directing, if any, the troubles in the West Bank and Gaza?

A I answered that question before when I was asked about specific organizers. I said I just had no information on that.

Q A new subject. What about Nicaragua?

A Well, she was first. Then I'll get to you. Are we through with this now?

Q Thank you.

12/21/87

A Yes.

Q I notice the American Embassy in Pretoria has issued a statement about the Sharpeville -- is it six or seven? Why is the U.S. choosing to get involved at this point? Is that not an internal matter?

A I'm sorry. I just don't have anything on that question.

Q Could you look into it? It's about --

A Yes.

Q -- South Africa. I saw it on Reuters, and the U.S. is asking that the execution be --

A I'll see if we have something on that.

Q Do you have any new information about Nicaragua and the offensive that was launched yesterday by the R.N.?

A The current offensive in Nicaragua, this planned major effort, is in keeping with the Resistance strategy to bring military pressure to bear on the Sandinistas while attempting to negotiate a political settlement. As the Sandinistas' signing of the Guatemala Accords showed, this works. The Resistance is currently in Santo Domingo attempting to negotiate a cease-fire. As they have made clear, they will not unilaterally suspend military operations. To do so would remove the incentive for the Sandinistas to negotiate.

Military pressure has been largely responsible for forcing the Sandinistas to come to the bargaining table. We believe military pressure, coupled with negotiations, will compel the Sandinistas to live up to their commitments under the Accord.

The last scheduled round of talks did not take place when the Sandinistas failed to send a delegation at the last minute. We hope this time the Sandinistas will come prepared to engage in serious discussions.

Q So, in effect, you support the timing of the attack?

A It's not the question that we support the timing of the attack, but we support the principle of keeping up the military pressure.

12/21/87

Q That seems to be an unusual statement in that it's almost like a seal of approval on an attack, where -- I mean, do you know the results of the attack?

A As I understand, it's still continuing. I don't have any reports on how it's doing or that it's over.

Q Was there advance knowledge by the Administration, by the Government, of the attack?

A The Administration was informed by the Nicaraguan Resistance on Sunday morning that a major offensive had been launched.

Q Well, can you say what else they told you because since you've given it this endorsement, I'm curious on what basis you've given it.

A Well, we have received the same information that was made public in the communique released by the Resistance Sunday afternoon in Miami. I don't have any specifics beyond what was said in that communique.

Q But there had been some previous --

Q Phyllis, were there any contacts on that subject prior to Sunday morning?

A Not that I'm aware of. As I said, we were informed by the Resistance on Sunday morning.

Q But they didn't say that the attack that we talked about yesterday had started or anything like that?

A I don't have any of the specifics on that.

Q Phyllis, could you say in what way we were informed? I mean whom to whom, what to what?

A I don't have the details of that. We stay in close touch with the Nicaraguan Resistance -- I mean we're in contact with them. It would not have been unusual for this --.

Q You can't say if it went to the White House or through State?

A No, I simply don't know the answer to that.

Q Let's see if I got this straight. We endorse this offensive because we think it's the road to peace. Is that it?

12/21/87

A No. You're putting words in my mouth. What I said was not endorsing it. I said that we have endorsed the concept of continued military pressure on the Sandinistas to bring them to negotiations. That has not changed.

Q Is there a parallel to Israel? (laughter)

Q So you're not endorsing it.

A I'm not commenting on endorsement one way or the other.

Q Well, you just said that you weren't endorsing it.

Q You may recall a few months ago that the Resistance announced that they had attacked Bocay and they had destroyed military installations, they'd overrun the town, and so on, and a spokesman came out and announced this. It turned out a few days later that didn't happen, that the statements were somewhat overstated.

I'm curious why you're so confident this time around that all this is happening when nobody so far as I know has been at the scene, nobody knows what's happening, unless you have some sources of your own. Surely, you wouldn't want to go out on a limb with the statement without intelligence to back it up.

A What I'm stating on this is that we were informed by the opposition -- by the Resistance -- that they were going to launch this offensive.

Q You said you're going to?

A That's correct.

Q I thought you said before they had?

A Well, let me check back my exact words on this. We were informed by the Nicaraguan Resistance on Sunday morning that a major offensive had been launched.

Q Had been launched. So that's after the fact?

A Yes.

Q But are you saying that the first thing the United States Government -- all of its organs and administrative appurtenances -- knew of this thing was when they told you on Sunday morning?

A I am simply commenting here on what the Sandinistas -- excuse me, what the Contras -- the Democratic Resistance told us on Sunday morning. I'm not commenting in any way on intelligence questions.

Q Do you have any confirmation that the attack took place?

A I'm not commenting on intelligence questions.

Q Then how can you make the statement?

A I made the statement that we were informed. That's a fact.

Q Well, I'm -- it's just that you've built a whole structure around information that's coming from the Contras. And ordinarily I think you'd want to be sure it's happened before you congratulate?

A I think, Roy, if you go back and check the transcript, you'll see that we're talking about here, an offensive is in keeping with their strategy on military pressure, and I have no comments or details on the operation itself. I think if you go back and look at that, you'll see that what we've repeated here is standard policy of how we view their military activities.

Q Phyllis, I asked you this Friday. I'm just wondering if you -- there is a State Department position on either a French-British cooperation developing a new cruise missile -- talks to that effect -- or the offer by the French to upgrade their Pluton missile in order to be able to defend or put a nuclear umbrella over West Germany?

A I know that you asked that question Friday. We didn't have an answer for it then. I don't, again, today.

Q Phyllis, do have -- can I come back to the Nicaragua subject?

A Yes.

Q How does our position supporting this offensive fit in with the idea of a cease-fire and the Guatemala Accords and the efforts to achieve a Christmas truce?

A Well, again, let me repeat, we believe the military pressure has been largely responsible for forcing the Sandinistas to come to the bargaining table. We believe military pressure, coupled with negotiations, will compel the Sandinistas to live up to their commitments.

12/21/87

This is a dual-track policy we've talked about for some time. What we're trying to do is to get the Nicaraguans themselves to talk to each other -- the Sandinistas and the Democratic Resistance -- with the assistance of their designated mediator. This, in our view, remains the best hope of Nicaraguan compliance with the Guatemala Accord.

Q Phyllis, could I just ask a quick one? Didn't Obando y Bravo say that both the Contras and the Sandinistas had agreed to a Christmas truce? Does that mean that unless this operation is quick and is wiped up soon, that that's the end of the truce?

A I have seen those calls for the truce, and I'm just not sure where that stands. I think that one does not exclude the other activity -- that certainly, one could have -- and hopefully, there would be -- a Christmas truce while the negotiations continue.

Q Well, wait a minute. Are we supporting the truce or supporting the offensive? I don't understand.

A We're supporting the concept of military pressure.

Q Yeah, but there's supposed to be a Christmas truce.

A Well, when is this to begin? I think it's not Christmas yet. I don't think -- again, I'll stick by what I said -- I don't think they're mutually exclusive.

Q Well, do you have some indication that the Contras -- have they informed you that they intend to desist by Christmas?

A I just have no information on that.

Q Do you still believe that the Arias Plan is alive and well?

A Yes, we do. There are obviously setbacks. Nobody ever said it would be easy, but I think people are continuing to work at it. And, obviously, in early January there will be an evaluation by the countries themselves of the success that it's had or the problems that remain or both.

Q Anatoliy Michelson is being reunited with his wife this afternoon. I think it's the longest-standing divided-spouse case. Do we have anything to say about that?

A I don't have anything specific on that case. We had just seen those press reports.

12/21/87

Q Phyllis do you have any comment on the trial and apparent conviction of Yang Wei, an American-educated Chinese in Shanghai?

A We understand that Yang Wei's trial was scheduled to begin December 21 in Shanghai. We have heard reports that the trial did, indeed, take place but cannot confirm this officially.

We further understand that the Chinese authorities have not allowed foreign observers to attend the trial. We deplore this decision. We again call on the Chinese to resolve Yang Wei's case in a fair and expeditious manner.

Q Can you say whether Secretary Shultz discussed at all with Prime Minister Thatcher this question of German-French cooperation?

A No, I can't say. I don't have the answer.

Q Can you take the question that I asked earlier?

A We'll see if we can get something on that.

Q Phyllis, just to check the record: Have we yet received a good photograph of an SS-20 missile?

A I believe that issue was discussed last week, and we talked about --.

Q It wasn't resolved then.

A Let me check on that question. I thought we had settled that.

Q Anything on the ground war between Iran and Iraq -- resumption of fighting near Basra?

A No, I really don't have anything new on those reports.

Q Do you have anything on the election of Milos Jakes as the new Communist party head in Czechoslovakia who's considered to be a part of the Ligachev faction?

A No, I can't help you with that.

Q Do you have anything on Silkworm missiles heading towards Iran from China?

Q Is there a story? Is there a story for that?

A I don't have any particular comment on any one story. I would repeat, however, that the Chinese are aware of our deep concern over the transfer of Silkworm missiles to Iran.

Chinese officials, in recent statements, have said that China has taken strict measures to prevent the diversion of Chinese-origin missiles to Iran. We continue to monitor this situation closely.

Q In monitoring it, have you found any evidence that Silkworms are getting through?

A I just don't have any more specifics on that question.

Q Could I change the subject on one thing? On Haiti, do you have any comment about the new election laws that have been put into effect? Specifically, the one that seems to prohibit a secret ballot?

A I'm not going to comment specifically on provisions of the Haitian election law. We are reviewing the whole question carefully.

As we have stated, we believe that the critical questions with respect to the upcoming elections in Haiti are whether the Haitian people accept them as legitimate and whether they are conducted in an atmosphere free from intimidation and violence.

Press reports of various provisions leave us skeptical that it will provide for credible elections.

Q Are you concerned that the introduction of food rationing in the People's Republic of China is a step backwards in their economic reform program?

A I don't have anything on such a general question like that.

Q Back on Nicaragua: Any comment on the Congressional action concerning aid to the Contras?

A Well, I understand the whole question of aid for the Contras is still in conference and not yet settled, so I really don't have any comment on that.

Q Thank you.

A Thank you.

(Press briefing concluded at 1:04 p.m.)

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DOS Armacost Paper re Afghanistan and Daily Press Briefings

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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Dec. 30

MB,

Attached are two items
for CLP's use in preparing
for the press breakfast:

- 1) Armacost briefing on
Afghanistan.
- 2) Dept. of State statements
on the occupied territories
(West Bank + Gaza).

RBO obtained these this
morning.

Assume Palm Springs
press office is getting copies
of WH statements on the
occupied territories for CLP.
You're missing great, cold
weather here! Wtk

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DOCDATE 21 DEC 87

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