

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

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

Collection: Press Secretary, Office of the: Press Releases and Briefings: Records

Folder Title: 07/03/1985 (#1483)

Box: 37-Press Briefings

To see more digitized collections visit:

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

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

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

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

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

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

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

July 3, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:01 P.M. EDT

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's Schedule.....1
National Convention of American Bar Association
Meeting with Gorbachev in November
Secretary Shultz Briefing
President's Fourth of July Message

FOREIGN

Gorbachev Meeting.....1-2
Terrorism/Islamic Jihad Threat/Reward/Beirut Airport...1-9

12:14 P.M. EDT

#1483-07/03

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFINGS
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

July 3, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:01 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: We'll be distributing the President's Fourth of July message shortly.

Q Is that embargoed?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't think so.

Q So we can show it on the third?

MR. SPEAKES: The President will address the National Convention of the American Bar Association at the opening assembly Monday, July 8th, 10:30 a.m., Constitution Hall. Open press coverage.

The big announcement by --

Q What time is it, by the way?

MR. SPEAKES: Monday, or now?

Q Did you say 10:30 a.m.?

MR. SPEAKES: 10:30 a.m.

Q Thank you.

MR. SPEAKES: By mutual agreement, the President of the United States Ronald Reagan, and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU Mikhail S. Gorbachev will meet in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 19th and 20th, 1985.

The President authorized me to give you his view of the meeting which is -- and I quote -- "an opportunity to chart a course for the future."

Q Yea.

Q Do you know where it will be held?

MR. SPEAKES: Geneva. What hall? No, I don't.

Q Will he go anywhere else?

MR. SPEAKES: As we announced earlier, Secretary Shultz will brief for sound and cameras, Room 450, Old EOB. Pre-positioning is 12:45 p.m. Others escorted from here at 1:15 p.m.

I don't know of any other travel plans at the moment. And I would prefer to refer -- to defer and refer all other questions to Secretary Shultz, who can expand on all this.

Q When you say -- you're talking -- when you say other travel plans, you're responding to Helen's question.

MR. SPEAKES: I am.

MORE

#1483-07/03

Q In Europe, I meant.

MR. SPEAKES: I am.

Q Why -- the course of the future -- is this going to be a meeting in which no agreements are contemplated? In other words, a get-acquainted meeting, or what?

MR. SPEAKES: Why don't you wait and ask that to Secretary Shultz, I think would be better because I prefer to have him outline it.

Q Well, what else do you have to talk to us about?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, not much of anything. Do you have anything?

Q What do you have up there?

Q Yes. It's always easier to --

MR. SPEAKES: Let's see if we've got anything good. Here, I've got -- yes, I've got a couple of good ones in here.

Any comment on threats by the Islamic Jihad? No.
(Laughter.)

Q We asked that this morning.

MR. SPEAKES: I answered it this morning before the State Department decided what to say.

Q Can you give a more certain answer on the kidnapping questions from this morning?

MR. SPEAKES: What kind of certain answer do you want?

Q Whether or not the United States --

Q Should we kidnap the kidnapers?

Q -- either would participate or accept these hijackers if they were kidnapped and brought to the United States.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I don't think we'll get into that.

Q Are we going to put a bounty on their heads? Is there going to be a reward?

MR. SPEAKES: As I said this morning, that is authorized under the law.

Q Well, are we going to take advantage of that authorization and offer it?

MR. SPEAKES: We'll see.

Q Is it under consideration?

Q Larry, do you refuse to answer --

MR. SPEAKES: You can say it's under consideration, yes.

Q Does it have to be offered or is it just out there? Does it have to be offered?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it's out there. It doesn't have to be offered, no. I guess if somebody produced them, we could decide to give them the money.

Q You mean the Congressional act specifically talks in a blanket way; it does not have to be triggered in the first instance by any action of the government?

MR. SPEAKES: Putting it in the post office? No, doesn't have to.

Q Don't most --

Q Larry, there doesn't have to be any announcement of this all?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q There doesn't have to be any announcement -- if somebody walked in and turned this guy over?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q What about the method in which they apprehended these people -- does that factor --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether that's covered in the law or not. I have one quote from the law. I think you're going to have to get the lawyers to --

Q Okay, what's the quote from the law?

Q What's the quote from the law?

Q What's the quote from the law?

MR. SPEAKES: This is under Title 1, 1984, Act To Combat International Terrorism. The Secretary of State is authorized to pay rewards of up to \$500,000 to any individual who furnishes information leading to the arrest or conviction, in any country, of a person committing or conspiring to commit an act of international terrorism.

Q Can you read that again, please, slowly?

MR. SPEAKES: Public Law 98533 signed by the President October 19, 1984, An Act To Combat International Terrorism. This is not an actual quote from the law. It's a --

Q -- can you read it slowly over?

Q What is it?

MR. SPEAKES: The Secretary of State is authorized to pay rewards up to \$500,000 -- if you note I will -- that's the same quote I read from UPI this morning -- to any individual who furnishes information --

Q To any individual --

MR. SPEAKES: Who furnishes information --

Q That's fine.

MR. SPEAKES: -- leading to the arrest or conviction -- comma - in any country -- comma -- of a person committing or conspiring to commit an act of international terrorism.

Q Larry, does that mean that the judicial process in that country has to work to get the conviction, or does that mean that the person has to be brought into the United States?

MR. SPEAKES: I do not know the answer. I think you're going to have to talk to a lawyer to find out.

Q Larry, I'm confused about something --

Q Do you have anybody you can recommend talking to on this? Is there any -- or what?

Q You say that --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know.

Q -- what you just said --

MR. SPEAKES: Congressional Committee staffer that wrote the legislation might --

Q What you just said had to do with any individual who furnishes information? Now why do we need an individual to furnish information, because the Secretary says we know who they are. What kind of information?

MR. SPEAKES: What did the next -- three words say -- four words -- five words?

Q Leading to the arrest or conviction, in any country.

Q You said or conviction, is that right? Arrest or conviction?

MR. SPEAKES: That's what I said.

Q Is this a wanted dead or alive type thing?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Dead --

Q No.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether -- I guess the Secretary could pay it if he wanted to.

Q Well, what do you consider people --

Q Would you convict a dead man?

Q -- if they produced a dead hijacker, the Secretary could pay if he wanted to?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Bob.

Q Only if he was convicted.

Q Or arrested.

Q When you consider -- when you speak this way, are you talking about the two hijackers or are you talking about the Amal militia who then --

MR. SPEAKES: Anybody who committed or conspired to commit.

Q Well, what -- where do you draw the line. I mean, there's been -- there have been reports in Israel that suggest --

MR. SPEAKES: I guess the judge could tell you when he had them in court.

Q Is that for -- Americans or for anybody?

Q Does the -- does the --

MR. SPEAKES: Anybody?

Q Anybody.

MR. SPEAKES: Anybody?

Q Does the administration have information similar to what is being reported in Israel that the Amal were connected --

directly connected to the original hijackers?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not going to discuss any information. You know I wouldn't talk about that.

Q What about Nabih Berri's role. Has it been evaluated yet?

Q Sorted out?

Q Sorted out?

Q Larry, when you say it's under consideration, how does something like this, if the law exists, how, if it's under consideration -- move to being implemented? I mean, in effect, it's in effect right now, then, isn't it?

MR. SPEAKES: It's in effect. Whether we would use it is under consideration.

Dave?

Q There was talk over the weekend that some kind of package could come out of this so the administration would pose a -- counterterrorism measures -- new ones or --

MR. SPEAKES: In actions, or laws?

Q -- and so on, you say this is one under consideration. Is this being considered as part of the larger package of things that can be done?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, yes, it would be.

Q Larry, you said what --

MR. SPEAKES: Number of legal steps.

Q What -- do you contemplate the President deciding on those in the next few days, waiting weeks, months?

MR. SPEAKES: They could very well be decided in increments step by step. As the Attorney General said, we're exploring legal avenues, so --

Q Larry, you've said whether we use it or not is under consideration. Does that mean that you have to take some action to put the law into effect?

MR. SPEAKES: Not the law, the dollars.

Q Well, what's the procedure for triggering this law?
I mean --

MR. SPEAKES: The Secretary of State decides.

Q Does he have to make -- but you said he doesn't have to make any announcement.

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q You mean, he decides after the fact.

MR. SPEAKES: Can.

Q He can decide after the fact?

MR. SPEAKES: I believe so.

Q So, some guy's over in Beirut ready to finger one of these guys and you just do it and just hope that it doesn't have to wait for anything?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't guess he does.

Q The government of Lebanon has complained bitterly about the plan to close the Beirut Airport, and says that in effect it -- you well know that it does not control that airport, on the other hand, it will hurt all Lebanese not to be able to have it there. What's your reply?

MR. SPEAKES: Reply is that we plan to proceed. We're in

consultation with other countries, the government of Lebanon, and other people in Lebanon who have control over the airport can certainly move to take steps to clean up their act.

Q Well, don't you punish a lot of innocent Lebanese by this action?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, if that is a consequence of the actions that take place in their country, then the Lebanese should bring about some change.

Q But the government's position seems to be that it's doing what it can, but you well know that it can't control all of these elements at the moment. So, isn't that sort of a "Kafka-like" situation that you put the rest of Lebanon in?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Secretary of State Shultz indicated in an answer to a question the other day --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know what a Kafka situation is. But it wouldn't be that.

Q -- being arrested. Secretary of State Shultz said the other day, indicated the other day in his briefing that we don't think there really is a government in Lebanon, that Gemayel is no longer what we're dealing with.

MR. SPEAKES: He didn't quite phrase it like that.

Q Well, he was talking about the various forces --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q In light of that, how can we even talk about bringing people to justice if they are in Lebanon -- since there is no law? How --

MR. SPEAKES: There's law.

Q -- how does one proceed with any kind of extradition --

Q The Justice Minister, huh?

MR. SPEAKES: There's law.

Q There's --

Q The Justice Minister is going to extradite them.

MR. SPEAKES: There's a framework.

Q Have we talked to Nabih Berri in the last few days, since they're out, about this?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether anybody's talked to Nabih.

Q Do we have an extradition treaty with Lebanon?

MR. SPEAKES: David Hartman

might get him before we do.

Q Do we have an extradition treaty with Lebanon? Do you know?

MR. SPEAKES: They subscribe to the Hague Treaty and -- Anti-hijacking, isn't it? -- Anti-hijacking Treaty. They do, and they do have obligations under that.

Q Larry, has there been any suggestion that the hijacking, because it occurred on an American airliner, violated U.S. law that could be prosecuted here?

MR. SPEAKES: It does violate U.S. law, under the Anti-terrorism Act -- absolutely.

Q So that they could be brought to the United States and tried?

MR. SPEAKES: I believe under the hijacking laws and their subscribing to the various conventions and treaties under this, I would think so.

Q Would it be legal under U.S. law to hire people, perhaps foreign nationals, to hunt them down? I mean, if the CIA doesn't do it?

MR. SPEAKES: I guess you have got to get a lawyer. I don't know.

Q Larry, has the President had any comment about the statements we have now gotten in the last twenty-four hours from some of the ex-hostages as to how terrible the ordeal really was?

MR. SPEAKES: No, he has not.

Q He has not commented?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Anybody have anything else?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:14 P.M. EDT