

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: 07/24/1985 (#1510)

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 24, 1985

The Briefing Room

9:18 A.M. EDT

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's Schedule.....1

DOMESTIC

Budget/Meeting with Leadership.....1-2, 7, 8
President's Health.....5
Ellingwood Appointment.....5
Presser/Justice.....5-6

FOREIGN

Middle East Arms Sales.....2-3
Nicaragua.....3-5, 6-7
Kitty Hawk.....7-8
Terrorism/El Salvador.....8

9:31 A.M. EDT

#1510-07/24

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

July 24, 1985

The Briefing Room

9:18 A.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: This morning, the President is seeing Don Regan and Bud McFarlane to get his foreign policy briefing.

At 11:00 a.m., he's bringing in the key Congressional leadership. That includes -- attending that meeting will be the Vice President and Dave Stockman as well as our Congressional liaison team. Members of Congress will be Senator Dole, Senator Byrd and Senator Thurmond, Speaker O'Neill, Congressman Wright and Congressman Michel.

Q That's with the President or just with Regan?

MR. SPEAKES: With the President. 30 minutes. The President will talk about the agenda remaining before the recess and urge them to move on a budget resolution during that time frame.

Q Will the budget committee chairmen be there?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Where's this going to be?

MR. SPEAKES: In the Residence.

Q What other issues will he bring up in addition to the budget?

MR. SPEAKES: I would just think, hear from them about specifically what they feel is on the agenda. It will be, from his part, almost budget exclusively.

Q And there's nothing else that the administration is going to push to have passed by recess time?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, there are a lot of things we'd like to have done, Norm, but I think the budget is the main item on the agenda and the main item for these folks.

Q What are the prospects?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q What are the prospects now? Anything new in the --

MR. SPEAKES: No. We had that meeting yesterday with the Republican House and Senate leadership. Good meeting, solid discussion. The Republicans are interested in having a budget resolution. We're at least keeping abreast of what they're developing to present back to the conference. Nothing is scheduled at the moment. We'll probably have more meetings with them.

Q Well, given the House's determination to pass appropriation bills within a budget ceiling, has this budget fight become symbolic in the President's eyes?

MORE

#1510-07/24

MR. SPEAKES: No, it has not. Far from it. It's very real terms -- dollars and cents.

Q Well, as you know --

MR. SPEAKES: Future of the American Republic.

Q As you know, if they don't pass a resolution, the Republic doesn't come to an end and they go on passing bills with whatever --

MR. SPEAKES: I understand, but we'd like to have them that meet the budget guidelines and will lead to real deficit reduction. Without a reconciliation process in the Congress, there has not been great success in meeting budget goals, budgetary goals.

Q You don't think much of the House idea?

MR. SPEAKES: We'd much better proceed with a budget with a reconciliation provision in it, sure.

Q What are the chances of a photo?

MR. SPEAKES: Photo? None.

Q Not even a still?

MR. SPEAKES: No -- Oh, I don't know. We might do a White House release, if you want to, but I'm not going to carry a gang of folks up there.

Q Well, what about a White House photo release?

Q But do -- it would be good, yes.

MR. SPEAKES: We'll see. We probably will. Okay.

Q Did anything come out of the meeting yesterday that can be presented today or is this just a general discussion?

MR. SPEAKES: No. No, still general discussion, that kind of thing.

A couple of statements --

Q Can we go back over yesterday's meeting for a sec? Are you saying that Domenici and that group did not present a plan?

MR. SPEAKES: I think there was some discussion of specifics, but it's still being finalized on the part of the Republicans.

Q Does that mean that the White House didn't like the plan and want them to go back and revise it?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Very good meeting, very positive, continuing discussions.

Okay. A couple of statements on things that are in the newspapers this morning. A Washington Post story talking about the completion of the Middle East

arms survey within the administration that was started in the spring. As you know, the President decided early in the year to assess military balance in the Middle East. And the directions he gave was to look on a regional basis at the ability of individual states in the Middle East to react to several levels of threat. Those include direct, regional and terrorist threat from within.

The survey has now been completed. It serves as a solid basis to make appropriate judgments on U.S. regional security policy. The President has reviewed it and has directed that the administration share it with appropriate members of Congress. That will take place in sessions with foreign relations committees.

In the President's belief, it will be the foundation upon which U.S. decisions can be made on our security relationships with certain countries. No specific decisions have been made. We expect those to be made in the fall.

Q Does it have -- include recommendations for particular arms sales --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe it --

Q -- in terms of numbers or money?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think it does at the moment, no. It probably concludes some discussion on it. I haven't seen it. So --

Q What does it actually show, that something -- that arms should be sold or not sold to a particular country?

MR. SPEAKES: Being that we're having closed session with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the subject, I don't think it's something that I should discuss here in this room.

Q Well, it says that you were recommending arms sales to Jordan and Saudi Arabia in the paper. Is that wrong?

MR. SPEAKES: No decisions have been made. Those decisions will be made in the fall.

Q When is it going to be presented to Congress?

MR. SPEAKES: This afternoon, I believe. Isn't that correct?

MR. DJEREJIAN: Most probably this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKES: Most probably this afternoon.

Q But my question is: Is that the recommendation of the study? You say the President hasn't made --

MR. SPEAKES: Right.

Q -- a decision, but is the recommendation of the study that arms be sold to Jordan and Saudi Arabia?

MR. SPEAKES: If we're talking privately to Congress, I'm sure not talking publicly here.

Q They'll never tell us, don't worry.

MR. SPEAKES: I know that.

Another story that the U.S. considered surgical strikes against Nicaragua: We have outlined in firm tones our policy on attacking terrorist centers or those responsible for terrorist attacks. That policy remains.

Q What is the policy?

Q How does that answer the story?

MR. SPEAKES: The governments responsible understand that. We will take appropriate action. The level of our response will be proportionate to the loss incurred. Those who perpetrate such incidents or governments who support state-sponsored terrorism are on notice. The United States will not tolerate terrorist actions against our citizens, and we will be prepared to take steps.

Not commenting on the specifics of that story about what we considered and didn't consider.

Ira?

Q When you say you will not tolerate actions against our citizens, does that mean that any potential action against terrorists in Latin America would be only in response to attacks on Americans as opposed, say, to attacks on Nicaragua's own people?

MR. SPEAKES: There have been attacks already on Americans. As I say, the level

of response will be proportionate to the loss incurred.

Q What I'm getting at, and I may have missed this one day when I wasn't here a couple of weeks ago, is there a distinction that you're making between terrorism when you talk about terrorism and what is normally considered to be revolution -- counterrevolution, war and more standard forms?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Well, the problem with this -- may I just ask you about the problem with this -- seems to be summed up in your own cartoon -- in your own White House cartoon summary last Friday -- shows a couple of terrorists behind a desk laughing their heads off, holding something called "113th Notice" and on the floor is strewn "65th Notice," "78th Notice." I mean, if we were to count the times that this government -- this morning being the latest time -- has given this kind of notice, it probably would add up to 113. So the question is, when are you going to take any action?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, wait and see.

Q "Unfortunate response" means what, and eye for an eye -- a life for a life? How do you rank it?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we'll make those judgments at the time. It will be in proportion.

Frank?

Q Do you have evidence or proof of those who committed the terrorist attack in San Salvador now?

MR. SPEAKES: We're working with the Salvadoran government on that matter, and continue to do so.

Q If those individuals are identified, will the United States move against those individuals?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we'll have to wait and see. This is where we stand on our policy.

Anybody got anything else?

Q What is the President's health today, and do you have any kind of a report --

MR. SPEAKES: Haven't talked to the President or the doctor this morning, but I can assure you it's good.

Q How can you assure me that it's good?

MR. SPEAKES: Because I haven't heard to the contrary.

Q He talked to Rock Hudson's publicist. (Laughter.)

Q What about this --

Q Did he see his doctor today?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether Dr. Smith's been up yet or not.

Q What about the -- are you going -- is the White House going ahead with the appointment of Ellingwood to be --

MR. SPEAKES: When we have something to announce, we'll announce it.

Q What about Jackie Presser?

MR. SPEAKES: Check the Justice Department on that.

Q Anything else on the schedule today?

Q Don't you think -- doesn't the White House think it's outrageous?

MR. SPEAKES: Check Justice and see what the facts are.

Q The White House doesn't have any comment at all?

MR. SPEAKES: I'd check Justice and see what the facts are first.

Q Anything else on the President's schedule today, besides the 11:00 a.m. --

MR. SPEAKES: No, that's it.

Q Well, the Grand Jury complained that the Justice Department was actually impeding the investigation.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, ask them.

Q Is the President, has it been determined the President will meet with the foreign leaders that have come for that -- the conference?

MR. SPEAKES: Has not, no. Nothing's on schedule at the moment.

Q No? Second, the Contadora Group has asked formally for the -- or publicly for the U.S. to resume -- talks with Nicaragua. Do you have anything?

MR. SPEAKES: I have a word or two on that. As you know, we have not ended those talks. We've made our willingness to resume the talks known --

Q Which talks?

Q Contadora.

MR. SPEAKES: -- that we will resume the talks under appropriate circumstances.

The President, in a letter on June 11, 1985, to several congressmen, the President said he would have his representatives meet again with representatives of Nicaragua when he determines that such a meeting

would promote a Church-mediated dialogue between the contending factions and the achievement of a workable Contadora agreement.

Q Well, does that mean for the time being, there is no resumption?

MR. SPEAKES: Until he makes that judgment that we won't meet with the Nicaraguans.

Q Larry, the --

Q You mean until they agree to have the Church mediate -- that's what you mean, isn't it?

Q Until they say Uncle, dear. Uncle.

MR. SPEAKES: When he sees that -- a prospect to leading toward that, yes.

Q Will the -- will Dole and company come and talk to us in here? No?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q When will you brief?

MR. SPEAKES: Twelve noon.

Q Larry, will --

Q -- given up on line-item veto?

MR. SPEAKES: We have not, no. We'd like to see the Senate have an opportunity to vote. We don't think it's right for people to block the Senate opportunity to vote on this when there is as clearly a majority that at least favors the opportunity to give the Senate the right to vote on it.

Q You didn't talk like that when you worked for Eastland.

Q Larry, did -- (laughter) -- did the President receive a telegram yesterday from --

MR. SPEAKES: You asked that last night.

Q -- the Navy auditor?

MR. SPEAKES: We've got the Defense Department looking into that.

Q But, I mean, did -- the telegram was supposedly sent to the President. Did -- do you know if --

MR. SPEAKES: We don't -- we haven't laid hands on it.

Q What telegram was this?

Q From who?

MR. SPEAKES: Telegram from some Navy guy off the Kitty Hawk --

Q An auditor on the Kitty Hawk who said he had discovered how weapons were being -- or parts and missile components were being smuggled to Iran off the Kitty Hawk and letting the Kitty Hawk sail would interfere with the investigations.

MR. SPEAKES: We've asked the Defense Department if they

know anything about it and we'll see if we can locate the telegram.

Q The President has not ordered the Kitty Hawk to remain in port?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q It's over in the comment office with the other 30,000 get well messages.

Q Where's Dole and Tip and those coming -- in the West -- the Exec Drive or out here?

MR. SPEAKES: Coming in a secret way -- through the tunnel from the Treasury Department. (Laughter.)

Q Tip wouldn't fit.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know which they're coming in. I don't know whether they'll -- last time they were supposed to come in the back door and they drove right up here in those big Cadillacs.

Q There is no tunnel from the Treasury Department --

MR. SPEAKES: -- it is.

Q I know.

Q Larry, there were reports this weekend that the U.S. might consider asking for more funds to fight terrorism in El Salvador -- I think it was a New York Times story -- and it talked about \$50 million, I think.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know --

Q Do you have anything on that?

MR. DJEREJIAN: I can't hear the question.

MR. SPEAKES: Fund -- additional funds for terrorism -- \$50 million dollars in El Salvador -- specific.

MR. DJEREJIAN: No.

Q It was a New York Times Story.

MR. SPEAKES: You don't know anything about it?

MR. DJEREJIAN: Additional funds? No.

Q No? You are not considering asking for more?

MR. DJEREJIAN: No.

MR. SPEAKES: Okay.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

9:31 A.M. EDT

#1510-07/24