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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
MARLIN FITZWATER

January 28, 1991  
The Briefing Room

11:10 A.M. EST

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MARLIN FITZWATER

January 28, 1991  
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11:10 A.M. EST

MR. FITZWATER: The President's schedule for today includes working at his desk the rest of the morning on the State of the Union message. The speech is scheduled for 9:00 p.m. tomorrow night. We'll have a background briefing here at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow evening. Hopefully we'll be able to release advance copies of the text and the fact sheet at that time. (Laughter.)

Q Let the record show widespread laughter.

MR. FITZWATER: Embargoed for release at 9:00 p.m. And we'll have a briefing here by several of our most distinguished citizens, but presumably, Chief of Staff, National Security Advisor, and perhaps others on the staff as well.

Q All at 7:00 p.m.?

MR. FITZWATER: All at 7:00 p.m. Not simultaneously, they'll be one after another.

Q Why don't we get the speech at 6:30 p.m. so we can know what's in it?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we'll have it at 7:00 p.m. Have to pick a time.

Q When they brief we'll have it.

MR. FITZWATER: The speech is about 25 minutes in length as it's written. Probably with applause and everything, two or three hours -- something like that. (Laughter.)

Q How much is everything?

MR. FITZWATER: The content is dominated by the discussion of the Persian Gulf conflict. I would say around half, but probably a little more by the time it's all finished. It will be more thematic in nature than it will be listing of initiatives and legislative proposals. We have the budget scheduled to go up on the 4th of February, and we've been talking about banking reform and some other initiatives that will go at a slightly later time. So the speech will reflect the President's thinking on the conflict, what it means for the country, what it means for the economy and our domestic agenda as well.

Q Marlin, just so I'm clear, did you just say that the banking reform was going shortly after the budget or shortly after the State of the Union?

MR. FITZWATER: Probably after the budget -- at this point. I said the budget is February 4. It hasn't been determined

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specific yet, but probably right after the budget.

Q Anything new on the Gulf that he will -- any new initiatives that he will -- any new proposals in it, or is it a review of what's happened?

MR. FITZWATER: It will be a review of the goals and objectives of the conflict, of our work with the coalition, a status report to the country on where we are in the progress of the war. But I don't expect anything new in terms of -- certainly nothing new militarily or operationally.

Q Well, it's been reported that he may indicate that he will go for a Middle East conference after the war to resolve a lot of the issues.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know whether that's addressed in the speech or not. I have not seen that, although I would be reluctant to suggest there will be anything different than the policy that we've enunciated in the past.

Q No surprises, foreign or domestic?

Q I've heard this before, too. If there were we'd know.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, it's going to be an extremely interesting speech, and there are always a few surprises, but nothing that's going to distract from the central thrust of the speech, which will be the Persian Gulf war.

Q It has been -- following Helen's question, though, is the President going to outline his thoughts on the postwar framework?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, let's wait and see. I don't think I want to go beyond this. We'll save the rest for the big night, as we say.

Q So, yes. (Laughter.)

Q Do you really expect anyone to listen to the domestic part of the speech? (Laughter.)

MR. FITZWATER: I think the country will be very interested in the domestic part of the speech. Life goes on. There are some very important national objectives that have to be dealt with in this country. We have the serious deficit problem that will have to be the subject of focus. I think people will be interested in that. We have a number of areas, including crime and education and others, that will be of interest to people. So, yes, I think there will be a high degree of interest. But there's no question that the military conflict dominates public attention at this point.

Q Marlin, would you expect him to directly address the recession and how and when he expects it to end?

MR. FITZWATER: He will address the subject, yes.

Q You didn't mention the national energy strategy. How long -- is that timetable still --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't believe that will be a part of the State of the Union, but it will come shortly thereafter as well.

Q What about the question of paying for the war? Will that come up in any way?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know how specifically that will be addressed, but it will be subject to some discussion, yes. I

think Secretary Baker's been fairly clear. The numbers are pretty much out there as to costs so far. I don't know if you want a refresher. We've talked about \$10 billion as the incremental costs for 1990, \$8 billion of which was covered by allied forces.

We were talking with Secretary Baker over the weekend. I believe it was disclosed \$36 billion in Fiscal 1991 commitments. There's a story in The Wall Street Journal -- has Director Darman talking about some \$45 billion that we expect to receive from coalition partners and others as opposed to a \$60 billion cost, leaving some \$15 billion to be accounted for in our budget. So the numbers are pretty much out there at this point.

Q In his speech this morning, the rhetoric in that -- was that sort of a preview of what we might expect?

MR. FITZWATER: There will be rhetoric like that, yes. The President has given two or three remarks or speeches and press conferences in the last two weeks, and his speech tomorrow night will reflect those comments.

Q Will civil rights be in the State of the Union?

MR. FITZWATER: You know, I don't know that. Steve, do you know whether -- we will have a comprehensive civil rights bill that we intend to send up, but I'm not sure whether that will be ready for unveiling tomorrow night or not. I don't think so. I think we'll do that at a later point as well. The President may well address it in terms of the text of the speech, but the legislation -- I don't believe we intend to send it up tomorrow.

Q There's some view that the deficit certainly increased during the Johnson era of guns and butter. Do you think of this as a guns and butter situation when they will go for no taxes, even if the war goes on?

MR. FITZWATER: The costs at this point are pretty difficult to calculate because it's still so early in the conflict -- although with the contributions of the coalition members and others, the costs are relatively small when you compare them to past wars. Newsweek was very helpful in pointing out a World War II cost of \$3.2 trillion; Vietnam, \$570 billion; World War I, \$380 billion; Korean war, \$265 billion. So the costs that we're incurring are significant in terms of having to deal with them in Fiscal 1991, but they're not so astronomical that they're forcing any extraordinary measures.

Q Marlin, is he going to ask for tax increases to pay for the Gulf war?

MR. FITZWATER: No.

Q Some weeks ago, the Saudis floated around something saying that they were going to be picking up 45 percent to 50 percent of the costs of the war. Now they're saying \$13.2 billion out of what Dick Darman is saying looks like \$60 billion at this point, which is far short of 45 percent to 50 percent. Whatever happened to that 45 percent to 50 percent?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, at this point we keep moving through time, and I'm sure there will be more to come later.

Q So are we expecting more than \$13.2 billion?

MR. FITZWATER: I think that was their intention, yes.

Q Marlin, the British apparently are going to the European Community today and demanding that some of their partners, in particular Germany, contribute more. Are we, one, satisfied with what Germany has contributed so far and, two, do we feel that Germany, having helped produce the nerve gas, the bunker and other

facilities that are available to Saddam Hussein have a special responsibility to contribute to the effort to defeat him?

MR. FITZWATER: We've discussed responsibility-sharing with Germany. They have provided money and they have provided support for the NATO forces, and they are considering increasing their share. We look forward to whatever their final judgments are.

Q Do we feel that because of their role in helping set up Iraq's military structure, modifying the Scuds and so on, that they bear a special responsibility?

MR. FITZWATER: We choose not to make any judgments about that -- their activities. We have spoken out at the time in terms of requesting them to deal with that problem. They assured us that they did deal with it. And we'll leave it at that.

Q On the Bessmertnykh criticisms -- or somewhat criticisms of the U.S. policy in the Gulf, do you think that this is intended to make the President be quiet on his criticisms of their actions in the Baltics?

MR. FITZWATER: No, we don't believe that. The President meets with Ambassador, now Foreign Minister, Bessmertnykh at 1:30 p.m. this afternoon. We'll have a photo op at the top of that. I'll have some kind of readout afterwards. But we don't attribute anything to that statement other than his general concern for the progress of the war.

Q Do you have concern then that Soviets are breaking away?

MR. FITZWATER: No, we feel the Soviets are strongly supportive of the U.N. resolutions and are solid in their support of the coalition.

Q Marlin, if major news comes out of the meeting, such as they postponement of the summit, will there still just be a piece of paper, or what?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm not sure. I'm not sure yet. It will either be a piece of paper or I might come back and brief.

Q What about the President?

Q Marlin, do you have any comment on the facts and conclusions in the Woodward piece today?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't have any specific comments in the sense I don't have any numbers or anything to offer. I don't have other -- any statistics that compare with his. I would say that his story reflects one way of looking at bomb damage and so forth in terms of percentages of buildings destroyed and runways hit and so forth. I would simply cast back to General Powell's press conference where he talked about measuring progress in terms of the enemy's capacity to conduct war. We think that that has been very significantly reduced. We have talked about the planes that have gone to Iran -- the 69 planes that were reported this morning that are now over there. And it's clear that they're trying to move them to keep from losing them. And so there are any number of indicators one can use. Basically, we still believe that we are making forward progress in the war; that we have air superiority; that the losses have been extremely low; and that the war is going according to plan. So there will be all kinds of numbers around, but I think they all show fairly successful progress at this point.

Q Does the President think those 69 planes are purposely sent there by Saddam to protect them until the conflict is over, or does he think that they may be deserting?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we don't know for certain. We have talked to -- first of all, talked to Iran through third parties. The Swiss made an intervention on our behalf last week and have been assured once again that Iran intends to be neutral in this matter and intends to keep the planes until the war is over. Assuming that that is true and assuming Iraq knows that, it would appear that they sent them there in the hopes that they could keep them somehow after the conflict is over. But we don't have any way of knowing that for certain. General Schwarzkopf was quite clear yesterday in saying that we are monitoring these planes and know where they are and would, of course, move to interdict them should they make any effort to come back across the border and enjoin themselves in the war.

But that's about the extent of our knowledge. We obviously can't say exactly why he's done it, but that seems like the course of action that's most obvious.

Q Just to follow up on that, Marlin, are all our contacts with Iran at this point through third parties?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, they are.

Q What would our response to Iran be if they permitted these planes to take off and join the war? Would we consider them subject to retaliation?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, that's a hypothetical and I can't answer that.

Q In this morning's speech the President was talking about morality and justice, and he said the price of war is always high. And then he said it's only justified when victory can be achieved. It's the first time he's talked about victory and it's not very clear. Can you amplify on that?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, he has talked about victory in the sense that in every remark he's given he's said that we intend to win and that we will win.

Q But victory justifying the war -- I'm sorry, Marlin.

MR. FITZWATER: The point he was making there was that the justness of the cause is in the ability to deal with the problem that exists, to deal with Saddam Hussein and the effects that he has had on the region and on Kuwait, and the threat that he poses to the rest of the world. And only in succeeding, in final victory, do you achieve the original objectives, which is to say stop him from doing that.

Q Are you saying that the President was saying there's no use trying to do it if you can't do it? (Laughter.)

MR. FITZWATER: That's right.

Q Just to kind of cut through here and get this exchange over with.

MR. FITZWATER: That's right. If you go, go to win.

Q Just one other question on the planes in Iran. Have we seen any steps that the Iranians may have taken to make sure that the planes don't leave -- moving them further away from the border, mothballing them -- anything of that sort? Or are we at this point just relying on their word? Are there any concrete steps that they've taken?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm sorry -- that Iran has taken?

Q Yes, to make sure that the planes stay on the ground.

MR. FITZWATER: I'm not aware of any steps that they've taken.

Q This morning in Riyadh, the military briefers said that Iraq's leadership command and control is being targeted. It's the first time he's added the word "leadership." Are we willing to say now that we've got a bomb with Saddam's name on it?

MR. FITZWATER: No. I don't know exactly what he was referring to, but I assume that meant just military command and control centers where there are military leaders. But beyond that, it's --

Q So you're still not willing to say that we'd like Saddam to be under a smart bomb?

MR. FITZWATER: No.

Q Going into the Bessmertnykh meeting, has the President come to a final decision on a summit?

MR. FITZWATER: The President wants to talk to the Foreign Minister about this. Our main concern is just the Persian Gulf conflict. But he wants to be able to talk to the President about it, let him know the difficulties that we might have in the time away from home. But we'll have to wait until after this meeting to see what's finally decided.

Q Is it fair to say that he has not come to an irrevocable decision on trying to postpone?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I don't really know that. The President says he wants to talk to the Ambassador, so we'll have to wait and see. But what's in his own mind I don't know.

Q You said earlier that the President was not concerned about the Soviet criticism of the conduct of the war. But he did mention in his speech today the U.S. was not targeting civilian casualties. Can you tell us what concerns there are in the White House that lead to that line in the speech?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, two or three things. The one thing -- we have always been concerned about civilian casualties. We've always been concerned about the integrity of the country. We have made the point from the very beginning. The President has always said we'd have no quarrel with the Iraqi people and we're not trying to destroy the country of Iraq. And we've always felt that was important from a humanitarian reason and from the standpoint of letting the people of the Arab world know that our concern is with the behavior of Saddam Hussein and his government and not the Arab people.

There have been recent concerns expressed about this. As you said, Bessmertnykh mentioned it a day or two ago. Foreign Minister Meguid made mention of the destruction of Iraq and his concern, and Tariq Aziz, of course, made that charge in his now published letter to Perez de Cuellar. So there have been cases of people expressing that concern and, therefore, the President thought it was important to make the point that we want to maintain stability in the Middle East. We do not want to upset the balance of power, and that includes we're not trying to destroy the country.

Q Bush also said in that speech he was talking about the United States after this war is over having proven -- I'm sorry -- we established its reliability, I think --

Q Credibility.

Q -- credibility and reliability. With whom is he

referring to -- the Israelis, the Arabs? And what does he have in mind when he says that we would then be able to pursue the peace process? Again, I don't remember his exact words, but what --

MR. FITZWATER: In terms of Iraq, you mean?

Q No, I'm sorry. After the war is over, he said we will have restored our credibility and reliability and be in a position to pursue the peace process in the Middle East. Who was he addressing and what did he mean by that?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, he is addressing all the countries of the Middle East. And simply restating the premise that we have said before, and that is that when the war is over, we would hope to be able to help establish a new stability in the region, we would hope that all the countries of the region would have a role to play in a new world order that could bring peace to the region. We have talked about wanting to help all the countries deal with the Palestinian problem and other issues there. So the President was simply making that point in a slightly different context.

Q What did he mean by reliability and credibility?

MR. FITZWATER: I've always wanted to establish United States credibility and reliability, that we're a country that keeps its word, that has honest intentions and purposes in the region, and we believe those are international qualities, that they're worth preserving and demonstrating.

Q Does that mean that we would use our new and close relationship with Israel to try to bring them to the table and bring the Palestinians in some way to the table, too?

MR. FITZWATER: We've always tried to use our relationship with all of the countries to bring peace to the Middle East. The history of United States involvement in that regard is rather lengthy, whether it be Secretary Baker's efforts or Secretary Shultz's or Secretary Kissinger's or others. The United States and its Presidents have worked long and hard to this purpose.

Q How about Jimmy Carter?

MR. FITZWATER: And President Carter, certainly; Camp David Accords perhaps the prime example. And we would want to continue that in the future.

Q Marlin, just a point of clarification. On the figures you were citing and the cost of the war -- is that \$60 billion that Darman was referring to, is that not for the first three months of the war? That's not meant to be a Fiscal '91 projection.

MR. FITZWATER: No, I think they were the first three months figures, yes.

Q And another question. One of the central premises of the Woodward article today really was not necessarily that the war is going badly, though that could have been inferred, I suppose -- but also there has been a remarkable degree of redundancy and resiliency found within the Iraqi defenses. Can you say, in any of the briefings that the President has had, that, indeed, that has been something that has been shared with him? And what has been his reaction to that?

MR. FITZWATER: We've known from the beginning that, first of all, that Iraq has spent extraordinary amounts on military equipment and redundancy; that they have state of the art technology in terms of equipment, defenses, artillery, airplanes, weapons, training -- everything. So that has always been an element of this conflict that we knew we would have to deal with. Again -- and it also is a fact of the way war is conducted, and I'm not sure it's

very well understood -- Colin did a good job explaining how you knock out a runway at an airport, but it doesn't stay knocked out -- they run in overnight, pour in concrete and cement and they're back in business. So there's a certain continuation of the bombing effort that has to be continued to maintain losses of ability.

I would say we're surprised at some of the things they've done better than others. We were surprised that they did so poorly in terms of air response, in terms of artillery response, trying to shoot down planes and so forth. But they've done better than anticipated in terms of rebuilding some of their equipment. But the fact is, as Colin says, as long as we have diminished the enemy's ability to conduct the war, that's the best measure that we have.

Q What has been the President's response to these assessments? I mean, you say that on the one hand, that this was anticipated. I'm curious as to --

MR. FITZWATER: The President is very pleased that we were -- be able to anticipate as much as we have. One of the best and most gratifying aspects of the war so far has been how close it has gone in terms of the planning -- that there are always surprises in war as General Schwarzkopf is always eager to say, but in terms of the overall plan and the impact of the air war and so forth, it's gone very close to the way the military said it was going to go.

Q Marlin, can I follow the figures question that Frank asked? When Darman says it's \$45 billion out of \$60 billion, as you put it, is that cash? Cash from the U.S. Treasury?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know exactly how the money comes. That's always been a --

Q I thought a lot of this was solicited on behalf of other nations like Turkey.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't how it's all coming in.

Q Marlin, I just heard there's a law that says the President and his Cabinet and all those in line by law to succeed him cannot be in one room at any one time and, therefore, one of the Cabinet members probably will have to stay home tomorrow night. Which one is it?

MR. FITZWATER: There will be one that stays home, but we never say which one it was for the same security reasons that leads him to be at home in the first place.

Q Carla Hills and Dick Darman, are they considered part of the succession?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't believe so, no. (Laughter.)

Q Say no, please. (Laughter.)

MR. FITZWATER: Shame on you -- every one of you. (Laughter.)

Q Marlin, when the President talks about bringing peace to the rest of the Middle East after the war, does that suggest that he is either considering or the administration is now working on a new peace initiative of some kind?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I don't think we have one that we're working on at the moment, but it does suggest that after war we will want to get involved in developing new peace initiatives. And if we can be at all helpful, we certainly look forward to doing that.

Q In other words, something beyond anything that's been put on the table so far?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I think there is a feeling that after the war there could be some new relationships, some new trusts, new willingness established that would allow some initiatives to flourish that might not -- we might not have thought would be profitable before.

Q Marlin, the President is saying this is not going to be another Vietnam, he said we wouldn't fight with one hand tied behind our back. Well, just yesterday Schwarzkopf acknowledged that American pilots are taking extraordinary chances because they try to avoid civilian targets. Aren't we doing the same thing we did in Vietnam where we only went after strategic targets except for the December '72 bombing? Aren't we putting our people at risk --

MR. FITZWATER: No, he said the risk was somewhat greater in order to protect civilian targets, but we think that we are still able to prosecute the war with the best of our abilities, and we also think that that is an objective that's worth paying for. But I would not put that in the same category as Vietnam in a case where they basically weren't allowed to win the war.

Who's next? Anybody else?

Q Going back to The Post article, does the President still believe that the progress of this war is going as scheduled?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, we do.

Q Where are we with that schedule?

Q A trick question.

MR. FITZWATER: We're in the 10th day, or 11th day -- whatever.

Q Marlin, therefore, does the President believe that at this point in time we would not have all their in-place Scud launchers removed?

MR. FITZWATER: I'm not going to comment on operational aspects of the war, and obviously you can't be precise with exactly how many airplanes have been hit and how many bases. But in terms of the overall prosecution of the war, we feel it's pretty much on schedule. And that includes in terms of the amount of time and effort that's going to be necessary for aerial bombing and activity and that sort of thing, yes.

Q Has the President seen these figures? That article said that the senior government officials had gotten these figures.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know that.

Q How much is the oil cleanup going to add to the incremental costs of the war and who --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't have numbers on that. We have a team that has just arrived in Saudi Arabia today. They're working with Saudi Arabia who has the primary responsibility for the cleanup. But it's far too early at this point to estimate monetary costs. At this point, we're interested in estimating environmental costs and dealing with the problem.

Q Will it be added to the incremental costs?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know. It depends on how the cleanup is undertaken and so forth what the costs are.

Q Do you have any comment about Saturday's peace march?

MR. FITZWATER: No. There were peace marches of all kinds around the country for various purposes and causes. We think those are all entirely appropriate. It seems to us that a very reasonable debate has taken place around the country, and we still believe the support for the war is very high.

Q You do not agree -- the President does not agree, then, with the Vice President that the press is giving too much attention to these affairs?

MR. FITZWATER: No, I think -- I watched the reports over the weekend, and I thought the press was very fair in showing pro marches around the country and anti marches, and there are a lot of other causes that are being presented there. I think the coverage has been fine.

Q Well, then, why does the Vice President say what he says?

MR. FITZWATER: He only had one -- it was one small comment, and it just represented his reflection on the matter.

Q Are we going to outline the conditions for resuming aid from the Western world to the Soviets? Will we outline with them what they need to do with respect to the Baltics or what they don't need to do in order to resume Western aid?

MR. FITZWATER: We'll be discussing the Baltic situation with him. Certainly, the President --

Q But will you outline the conditions for what it takes to resume Western aid? Would we say, fine, it's on hold right now until you settle things, but if this, this, and this occurs, we'll resume --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know about specific conditions. That's not generally the way these things work. But I know that the President will state our concerns and issues and will make it clear what's at stake in terms of our relationship and the economic assistance that we have offered in the past.

Q Marlin, when you say the main concern as to whether or not to hold the summit is the Persian Gulf conflict, does that mean the status of the treaty and the issue of the Baltics are not decisive factors?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, they're important issues, but they're both issues where you could make a case that we ought to go. In other words, it would be good for the President to talk to President Gorbachev about the Baltic situation, and clearly, there are problems with the START talks. And it's sometimes always helpful for heads of state to talk and get those kinds of talks moving again. So that the Persian Gulf remains the principal factor to consider. It might well be that we will need some more time on the arms control talks. They're not going quite as smoothly as we had hoped. But I think in terms of summit meetings, usually when you've got problems it sometimes helps to discuss them. So the Gulf is the main factor here.

Q Is it now probable that the treaty won't be ready by February 11th?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I don't want to say that at this point because we're still hopeful, but it's not going as smoothly as we had anticipated.

Q Marlin, a follow to that. There have been stories quoting American intelligence that the Soviets are helping the Iraqis in their war effort. Is that a concern here and will that be

discussed at the Bessmertnykh meeting?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, the Soviets have assured us that that is not the case. Whether it will come up today or not, I don't know.

Q Marlin, in the discussion -- well, John had a question.

Q Do you believe them?

MR. FITZWATER: We asked them for an explanation. The explanation was given.

Q Do you believe them?

Q Do you believe them?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we take everybody at their word. We have no reason not to believe it -- let's put it that way. We have no reason not to believe it.

Q What's their explanation?

MR. FITZWATER: They said it was not the case, that their people are out.

Q They have 100 people there still.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, that's what they told us.

Q Okay, I'd like to reclaim my time. (Laughter.) In discussing the prospects for a peace conference, peace settlement in the Middle East, whatever, you said there's a new willingness that could be established. New willingness by whom to do what?

MR. FITZWATER: You mean after the war is over?

Q Yes.

MR. FITZWATER: I said we hoped there would be a new willingness by all parties to get involved in the peace process again.

Q The only reason I asked that because it appears over the past several weeks that the Israelis, for example, have struck an even harder line than ever on the occupied territories, using their continued occupation as justification for their security. Doesn't it appear that we're headed toward an even staler stalemate, if that's possible?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, this conflict is just beginning, it's not over yet. And once again, I've stated a hopefulness that when the conflict is over that we will find parties ready to consider these issues. But it's impossible to say at this point exactly what's going to happen when it's over. But nevertheless, we think that relations will be different and there will be some new opportunities for progress.

Q The only reason I ask -- was there anything in the Eagleburger discussions with Shamir or the discussions between the President and Shamir about a postwar peace conference? Any kind of deal struck there?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't have a readout on his specific conversations.

Q Marlin, as we've increased our numbers of troops there --

MR. FITZWATER: He said no deals, however, in his press conference.

Q As we've increased our numbers in the Gulf going along the -- this month, I wondered if the Arab coalition members have increased their numbers or if there are any plans to increase participation in terms of military personnel by Saudi Arabia --

MR. FITZWATER: Amounts of troops and so forth?

Q -- by Saudi Arabia, for example, by Kuwait?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes. I'll ask the Pentagon for an update on the forces. There have been additional forces go in, but I don't have those numbers here.

Q Especially in the air.

Q Just double-checking. Of the \$1 billion in aid made available to the Soviets, they had claimed about \$800 million. I just wanted to make sure that that is still correct and it's \$200 million.

MR. FITZWATER: That's the last report I had, yes.

Q Another quick question. Have you ruled out the possibility of a third country shortened summit?

MR. FITZWATER: We haven't dealt with this one yet, so let's wait and see.

Q What is the legal basis for sending American crews to man the Patriots in Israel? And has that changed the nature of our security relationship with Israel?

MR. FITZWATER: We do not feel it does change the nature of our relationship. The United States, of course, and Israel have a long relationship, and we currently provide some \$3 billion a year in assistance of one kind or another. We have trainers operating in countries around the world, whether it be Central America, Eastern Europe, whatever, working with assets that we have. I couldn't cite you the section out of the law books, but I don't think that's a matter that's in dispute.

Q How long will they stay?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know the duration.

Q The President expressed a concern about the damage to Iraq and civilian casualties, but I'm wondering if that might suggest the beginning of a thought process leading to a reallocation of our bombing targets and quasi-military facilities -- you know, water supplies, electricity, those kinds of things?

MR. FITZWATER: The beginnings of a thought process leading to. Well, we have a military plan for the prosecution of the war. We have never commented on that, and we wouldn't start now. It strikes me that there's no way to answer your question without doing that.

Q The use of the word -- the phrase "right on schedule" is constant. Is there a schedule? Is there a light at the end of the tunnel? Does the President know --

Q Whoa!

Q Does the President know in his own mind this schedule which has not been revealed and may never be -- is there an end date for this war?

MR. FITZWATER: When we say that, what we mean is that the military had a general plan for the way they were prosecute the war and that that plan is being followed. Quite obviously, that's not something that can be measured in minutes or hours. But if you have a war plan with the great uncertainties that accompany war and you are generally within days of your overall targets, we think that's quite impressive. And there's no specific ending date. Obviously, no one can say when that's going to be. But at least in terms of our ability to achieve the objectives that we've set out, we think we're about where we plan to be.

Q Well, is that why -- but wasn't there a lot of cautioning a week ago on people thinking that the war was going to be over a lot sooner? And was that the fault of the administration for that impression?

MR. FITZWATER: No, we thought it was the fault of our successes in the first two days -- were so great and so graphic that the public was getting a little more optimistic than they should have been. But I think expectations are pretty realistic at this point.

Q Marlin, in his speech today the President said that his support for school prayer -- voluntary school prayer has not lessened. Does the President still support a school prayer amendment? Does he still support an antiabortion amendment? And if so, why halfway through his term has nothing been done on either of these?

MR. FITZWATER: The answer is, yes, to both questions. I'll have to get the specifics, however, on where they are legislatively.

Q Could you get that today?

Q What does the White House make of this growing antiwar sentiment in Germany and Chancellor Kohl's lack of support -- of public support -- strong public support for it?

MR. FITZWATER: We think Chancellor Kohl has been supportive. President Bush has talked to the Chancellor on several occasions, and he has indicated support. As was mentioned earlier, we do continue to talk to him about the burden-sharing equation, but we don't question his general support.

Q How long do you expect the Bessmertnykh meeting to last -- is that an hour?

MR. FITZWATER: Let's see, on the schedule it shows 30 minutes.

Q What's the phone call routine -- anybody but Major this weekend?

MR. FITZWATER: Phone call -- Major yesterday. Any others, Steve? Major is the only one.

Q -- senior ranks of the administration are on secret trips connected with this war that you know of?

MR. FITZWATER: Secret trips -- well, they wouldn't be secret if I told.

Q That you're about to make public right now.  
(Laughter.)

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know of anybody on secret trips. Everybody's is -- at least everybody that was here was supposed to be here. Other places, I don't know -- you never know.

Q Where's Ed Rogers? (Laughter.)

Q Why doesn't he return our phone calls? (Laughter.)

Q And why would we want him to? (Laughter.)

Q Oooh.

MR. FITZWATER: Must be something wrong with this microphone.

Q Marlin, you said that the Persian Gulf situation would be the principal reason why a Moscow summit would be out of the question. Does that imply no foreign travel at all, and what does it say about domestic travel?

MR. FITZWATER: We don't have any other foreign trips scheduled. Domestically, we have a couple in the next few weeks. I guess we haven't announced them yet. I think everybody knows, however, about the trip to -- off the record -- New York. And there are probably more coming.

Q But, Marlin, since the President says life goes on, why should he scrub the trip because of the war?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, a trip halfway around the world is a fairly extraordinary -- it's not like going to Cleveland. (Laughter.)

Q Not at all.

Q It may be a lot safer.

Q Will we see the President and the Foreign Minister outside this afternoon? It seems there's a willingness to be together, and so forth?

MR. FITZWATER: I doubt that. I don't know what the Foreign Minister's plans for afterwards are. Has he announced anything? No.

Q In terms of the oil in the Gulf, what is our reading of it now? Do we believe that the flow has actually stopped and what's burning is what the oil -- was the oil that was already pumped in? Or do we think there's a continuing flow going into the Gulf from some source?

MR. FITZWATER: We think the oil slick and the burning have diminished, but that's primarily from visual inspection. And we probably won't know for another day or so if we've cut off the flow entirely. But preliminary judgments are that we have certainly diminished the flow and hopefully cut it off. But, as of early this morning at least, our people in Saudi Arabia were unwilling to make a final judgment. We needed some more time.

Q The bombing of that complex, is that a decision the President would have been informed of before it took place?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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