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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY MARLIN FITZWATER

The Briefing Room
November 14, 1991

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12:48 P.M. EST

#409-11/14

*189 Am died in
Pan Am 103
out of 259 passengers*

THE WHITE HOUSE
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PRESS BRIEFING
BY MARLIN FITZWATER

The Briefing Room

November 14, 1991

12:08 P.M. EST

MR. FITZWATER: A federal grand jury in Washington has returned indictments against two Libyan government intelligence agents for the bombing of Pan Am Flight #103. We commend Acting Attorney General Barr, his Scottish counterpart Lord Fraser, and all who worked to solve this terrible act of mass murder. All Americans are horrified by the monstrous nature of the Pan Am bombing. We call to judgment those responsible.

We are also aware, however, that the terrorist case against the Gadhafi regime does not begin or end with the destruction of Pan Am #103. This consistent pattern of Libyan-inspired terrorism dates from early in Gadhafi's leadership and cannot be ignored. That the investigation has come to this conclusion is not a surprise.

We are now actively considering what actions to take. In the coming days, the President will be consulting closely with Prime Minister Major and other world leaders to fashion together a cooperative international response to this latest terrorist atrocity by Gadhafi's government.

The international community must protect itself from this uncivilized terrorism. Our prayers go out to the families and friends of the victims of Pan Am #103. They have suffered much over the last three years. While nothing can bring back their loved ones who perished, we can and we do commit ourselves to work to ensure that justice is done and that everything possible is done to prevent these acts of terrorism in the future.

I'll take your questions.

Q Marlin, is military response under consideration?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we don't rule out any options. We are considering any number of international responses. The President has already raised this issue with some foreign leaders and will be raising it with others in the very near future.

Q You mean he's talked to some foreign leaders today?

MR. FITZWATER: Not today, but in the days previous.

Q Do you have a strong sense this was coming?

MR. FITZWATER: That the indictments --

Q Yes.

MR. FITZWATER: We've known that they were coming, yes.

Q When you say an international response, do you mean that you're not going to do anything unilaterally as the United States has done a number of times before?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, Great Britian, as I understand it, is also issuing indictments today. The French, of course, have a very strong interest in this matter by virtue of the downing of the French aircraft. So there are a number of countries who are involved directly or indirectly, but certainly who have an interest in dealing with the terrorism that we have seen against civilian aviation as well as other sources that's been associated with the Libyan government.

Q I meant beyond the indictments, though. The actions that you say we are now actively considering what actions to take. Beyond the indictments are you doing anything unilaterally or --

MR. FITZWATER: Well, that's what I said. Because all these countries are involved, we want to work with them to try to fashion a response with these other countries. That is the purpose of these discussions that are now underway.

Q Marlin, what will the Bush administration do about the federal agencies that Pan Am says on file in court in New York were largely responsible for this thing? In addition to the terrorism, they say that the Federal Aviation Agency and others failed to notify Pan Am and notify others that they expected this bomb threat in Frankfurt on that day. And also they say the Drug Enforcement Agency is at fault because it had a system for bringing in drugs from the Middle East to Detroit and Los Angeles and letting these go through without being inspected and apparently that bomb got into that package.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, Sarah, the Pan Am #103 Commission dealt with these matters quite extensively. I would refer you to their report which dealt with these issues. Today what we're dealing with is indictments against the individuals who carried out this terrorism act. And that, after all, is who the families are interested in seeing brought to justice and in who we are seeing brought to justice. Many of the problems that you raise, Sarah, have been dealt with --

Q No, they have not. Not at all, and this is on the charge that Pan Am says, don't sue us -- to the survivors -- sue the federal government.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, Sarah, I don't know that we need to argue about it. I refer you to the report. The record is quite clear of the changes that have taken place in various agencies, in civil aviation airports around the world and so forth to prevent this kind of thing. We've all seen upgrading of the various security devices and techniques for examining luggage and so forth that have taken place as a result of this. And that record is fairly clear. This is a new case and a far more pointed matter in terms of the survivors as well as the countries involved in trying to prevent terrorism.

Q Can you talk about what are some of the other options that are under consideration in this coordinated response?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, no, we won't discuss the options. Obviously, we are talking about the full range of matters that are available to countries in terms of their authorities, the diplomatic, civilian, military, across the gamut. But we will not discuss any specific options.

Q Marlin, the last international response was involved in both the Gulf -- first you had sanctions put on by the United Nations and then armed retaliation. Is that any model for this?

MR. FITZWATER: Once again, I'm just not going to speculate on options.

Q What does the U.S. government want from Libya?

MR. FITZWATER: First of all, we want these indictments to serve their purpose. We want the people that they indicate carried out this act of terrorism to be brought to justice. And that is a very precise and clear objective and one we will be pursuing through all of the legal channels available to us.

Q Are you ruling out Syria or Iran now as having had anything to do with #103?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, that's a somewhat difficult issue. It's difficult because we have enormous sympathy for the families of the #103 victims who have operated under an assumption, as many of the rest of us have as well, that there was involvement from the PFLP, which receives Syrian and Iranian support. But in pursuing this investigation and pursuing all the leads, the investigators simply found that was not the source, that the source was the Libyans that are named in this indictment.

Now, the investigation continues, and we simply do not have any evidence to implicate Syria or Iran. It's still an open investigation. We don't rule out some involvement because of the way that the terrorist activities in that part of the world interact with each other. But there just is no evidence to implicate them at this time.

Q When I asked you about Libya, the last time this government found concrete evidence of Libyan-inspired terrorism, Ronald Reagan didn't consult very much with allies, he just went in and clobbered them. Is this a departure from the Reagan precedent of having these extensive consultations?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't see any need to compare situations in the sense that the situation has changed somewhat since then, we've had more experience with terrorist acts. Most importantly, we've had this, as I said, not only the #103 shootdown, we had the UTA plane shot down, the French plane, and other examples of terrorism that all these countries are dealing with. Certainly Great Britain has been a leader in forcing this investigation of #103 and in helping, as well as the Scottish authorities. So this is just a situation in which any number of countries are involved and want to be involved and rightly should be involved in any kind of response.

Q Marlin, does the President hold Gadhafi personally responsible for this?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, as we say here, that we find it very hard to believe that this could have been carried out without the active involvement of higher-ups within the government. We aren't willing at this point to identify individuals, but it is impossible for us to believe that the government was not involved and that this is not a case of state-sponsored terrorism.

Q Marlin, when does Bush plan to act?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, again, there's no timetable.

Q Are you talking about days, hours? What are you talking about here?

MR. FITZWATER: No timetable. We would not want to signal whatever action we're going to take, nor when we're going to take it.

Q And also, realistically speaking, the options that are under consideration are pretty much all military options, aren't they?

MR. FITZWATER: I won't comment on any options, but there's a full range of options that --

Q There aren't many diplomatic actions left to take, are there, Marlin?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, there are a lot of actions that could be taken, and I'm not going to rule any out. I appreciate the intensity of your questioning, but I'm simply not going to speculate.

Q Marlin, after the disco bombing in Germany, the U.S. had intercepts as proof that -- radio intercepts as proof that the Gadhafi regime was, in fact, at the root of the bombing. And you said this is a call to judgment against the Gadhafi regime, but you're only saying it's impossible to believe that Gadhafi wasn't involved. Does the U.S., do the investigators have any other evidence that directly links the Gadhafi government with this Pan Am #103 bombing?

MR. FITZWATER: I wouldn't want to go into the evidence beyond what the Justice Department laid out this morning. They had a real extensive briefing this morning that went into the evidence and all the information that we have. And again, I would not try to point to any individual, but it is clear that the support that was necessary to carry this out had to come from those higher up in the government of Gadhafi.

Q Marlin, when asked a couple minutes ago what we want of Libya, you said we want to bring these people to justice. If Libya turns these people over to the United States and Great Britain, is that enough? Does that negate the need for international action, or is there a further purpose such as punishment that you're looking at?

MR. FITZWATER: Our purposes are as we have said; that this is an outrage against humanity that must be dealt with. But to try to define it in terms of how much more than one act over another would not serve our purposes. So we pursue these people through the judicial process. We will pursue government-to-government actions through our allies and friends around the world. But once again, I would not want to give any hints as to where we might go.

Q So if these people are turned over that's not necessarily the end of it in terms of actions against Libya?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I said, we have -- we're pursuing this on any number of fronts. One, of course, is the individuals; the other, of course, is the government involvement. And that could take any number of directions.

Q Do we know with absolute certainty that these two people are in Libya?

MR. FITZWATER: We believe they are.

Q And have we started any sort of -- has there been any contact officially with the Libyan government and any response thus far?

MR. FITZWATER: Those contacts are being planned at the moment. I don't have anything for you on exactly how that's going to take place, but there will be appropriate efforts to make contacts with the Libyan government.

Q As a result of this, could Syria be taken off the list of countries that sponsor terrorism?

MR. FITZWATER: No, because Syria is on the list through a pattern of terrorist activities involving other issues and other matters.

Q Also, just informationally, do we have any trade with Libya or do we have any diplomatic relations at this time?

MR. FITZWATER: We don't have diplomatic relations, we don't have trade, we don't have airline flights. I saw someone on television this morning that suggested canceling those. And we do not provide U.S. visas to go to Libya.

Q Beyond Great Britain and France, which are the countries involved in those consultations and who did the President talk to -- is that on the phone?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, again, we don't want to specify who all we'll be talking to because a number of countries may want to become involved in this or may want to talk to us about it. And so we'll reserve some effort not to identify who that's going to be.

Q He was personally on the phone with some leaders -- Major, Kohl, Mitterrand?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, suffice to say he's talked to other leaders.

Q I was just going to ask, did he discuss any of these issues personally with those leaders when he was in Europe for the NATO Summit last week?

MR. FITZWATER: He's talked to other leaders.

Okay, let's take a couple more and move on to another subject.

Q Does that mean he didn't talk at NATO or he did talk at NATO in these bilaterals?

MR. FITZWATER: It means I'm not saying. It means I'm saying he talked to other leaders.

Q Marlin, the spokesmen for the families this morning on television made it very clear that they are going to be satisfied with nothing less than a military type revenge. Is this the way Bush is also thinking?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we certainly have great sympathy for the emotional feelings of the families in this matter. They have been with this for a long time and have pressed this case. The President has met with them. We certainly share their belief that justice should be taken and an action should be taken. But the specific nature of it is one that we just can't respond to at this time.

Q But did he tell those family members that he would take -- if it could be shown that there was a link between a state-sponsored terrorism and this Pan Am #103 bombing -- that he would take the same action that the U.S. took against Gadhafi in '86? That's what the family members are contending the President said.

MR. FITZWATER: The family members that I have seen and seen the stories quoted on saying that the President told him that he would consider action in this case. That is exactly what we are doing. We are considering action, and I'll leave it at that.

Q But he didn't promise them that he would take the same kind of military action that was taken in '86.

MR. FITZWATER: There's been no reference to specific measures, no.

Q Marlin, is there anything that the Gadhafi government could do at this point to avoid some kind of action by the allies?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, it's impossible for me to comment on what they might do and so forth. First of all, we have these indictments. We have a legal process to fulfill, and we would like them do that. Beyond that, that's a matter for our government to consider with other governments and then make those decisions.

Q So there's no kind of, if you do this, then we won't act?

MR. FITZWATER: We're not laying down any yardsticks today. These are all issues that we need to discuss.

Q Was the decision to indict referred to the White House first, or was it strictly undertaken at Justice?

MR. FITZWATER: Strictly undertaken at Justice, but we obviously were informed.

Q The theory about an Iranian connection was based on the premise that the Iranians wanted to wreak vengeance for the their airliner that we shot down accidentally over the Gulf. What do we think was the motive for Libya to do this?

MR. FITZWATER: It's always difficult to try to suggest what the motives for terrorism are. It could have been any number of things, and it just doesn't -- there's no way to speculate. The fact is that it's murder that is not justified under any circumstances or by any murder.

I might just point out that we did investigate the possibility that PFLP -- that's the Syrian group -- was responsible for this particular act. And it is clear that in the fall of 1988 the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, the general command, planned a series of terrorist attacks targeted at civilian aviation. That organization has historically operated from Syria. In 1988 the PFLP began to receive significant operational support from Iran.

Nevertheless, our indictments fully reflect that all the evidence proves the culpability of Libyan officials for this specific act. The strongest evidence in that regard is the timer in the Pan Am #103 bomb. It was unquestionably a Libyan timer, a clear Libyan signature. Those details, of course, have been specified more by the Justice Department this morning.

Q Could you rule out, though, that the Libyans may just have been doing somebody else's handiwork in that?

MR. FITZWATER: This investigation continues, and all investigations continue, but there's no way to speculate beyond what we know.

Ready to go on to another subject?

Q Any concern that this indictment is going to raise the possibility of terrorist attacks from Libya or other countries?

MR. FITZWATER: The indictments and the principle that America will bring murderers to justice is one that will not be diminished by threats of any kind.

Q What happened yesterday at the meeting of the Economic Policy Council? We understand that a number of the President's advisors asked Jack Kemp to keep quiet about his ideas on tax cuts.

MR. FITZWATER: It was primarily an economic review meeting that went over the data of the economy, had a very good discussion about it. That's about all there is to say. I won't comment on what one person said to another, but suffice to say they discussed the status of the economy.

Q Can you confirm that people did ask Kemp not to broadcast his ideas on this issue?

MR. FITZWATER: No, no. I don't know that and, secondly, I wouldn't comment on what the people say to each other in meetings anyway.

Q Would the White House like Kemp to keep his ideas to himself? Keep from making them so public?

MR. FITZWATER: Jack's a dynamic leader. He speaks out on issues, he always has and I expect he always will.

Q Does the President think that he has now an economic package in place that will carry out his goals of putting the country back on its feet? Or are new things in the works, and when?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, first of all, as you all know, the economic situation is such that we have many people who are suffering from unemployment and uncertainty about the economy. While the figures tend to suggest that we are coming out of the recession -- today's figures on inflation were very good -- we are concerned about any efforts that we can take to stimulate growth in the economy. And the most encouraging thing, of course, is the passage last night -- not passage, but the agreement on the unemployment benefits extension bill, which can provide some immediate relief.

The President has ordered the Labor Department to be ready to issue the checks as soon as they pass the bill. So, hopefully, we can get them out before Thanksgiving.

On the other longer-range front, we have a growth package of measures before the Congress now which includes the IRAs, capital gains tax cuts, tax credits for research and development and other matters to stimulate long-term growth in the economy.

If your question is about tax cuts, the President's statement in Rome is the best description of where we stand, and that is that we always continue to look at these matters, but at the

moment don't intend to submit anything before the recess. And we continue to monitor the economy.

Let me, at this point before we get into another subject, go through the announcements. First of all -- and the schedule, and then we'll open it up.

The President met this morning at 7:45 a.m. with Mrs. Rose Elder in the Oval Office for her to collect her \$5 bet on the Redskins-Oiler game. When the President played golf with Lee Elder a couple of weeks ago, he bet with Rose. He lost. She is the wife and executive director of the Math Statistics Program at Fort Lincoln Elementary School in Northeast Washington. Her program introduces students to professional athletes and uses sports statistics to stimulate interest in math and reading programs. I promised her I'd give her that plug as a result of also winning the bet.

Q Did he write her a check or --

MR. FITZWATER: She got kind of a two for five bucks and a little free publicity here.

Secondly, the President will meet with Prime Minister Shamir of Israel next Friday morning, November 22. The Prime Minister is in the United States on a private visit. We expect their discussions to focus on the peace process as well as U.S.-Israel bilateral matters.

Q Is there anything on that? Any plan for more meetings?

MR. FITZWATER: Don't have any other details, no. It's just the single meeting.

Q Would you expect the date for the resumption of bilaterals to be held up pending that meeting, Marlin?

MR. FITZWATER: No, I would not. I don't think they'd hold it up for that meeting. They're still trying to determine the time and venue for bilaterals and the multilaterals, but I don't think they're contingent upon this meeting.

Q But aren't they close to -- isn't the speculation centering on November 22 in Washington?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, that's when the Prime Minister is here. But there's speculation all over the board on the venue. So we just have to leave it to them to decide.

The President meets with Armenian President Ter-Petrosian in the Oval Office at 1:00 p.m. this afternoon. We'll have a photo op at the top of that. And he was inaugurated on Monday. The President first met him at a Spaso House dinner in Moscow in July of this year. We expect their discussions to center political and economic reform underway in Armenia. And we'll have a written readout after the meeting.

Q Are we ready to recognize Armenia as a separate country?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, the republics are in the process of working out new arrangements among themselves. We believe it is premature to address the issue of recognizing the independence of the republics such as Armenia while this process is still continuing. Our relationships with the republics will be based on the five principles Secretary Baker enunciated September 4. Those are

peaceful self-determination, respect for borders, democratic practices, human rights, and commitment to international obligations.

The President meets with an Hispanic education group at 2:45 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room -- open photo-writing pool. And the President will have a brief statement at the top of that meeting for the pool on Hispanic education.

And he just finished the meeting with Republican congressional leaders on energy. The main purpose was to ask them to allow the national energy strategy bill to come to the floor for a vote. This is a group that had been holding it up for a variety of reasons.

Q There's been a lot of attention to the Louisiana governor's race on Saturday. Has the White House given any consideration to some of the ramifications if David Duke is elected? For instance, would the White House treat Duke just as it treats the other 49 governors?

MR. FITZWATER: We haven't given any detailed consideration of that. I am certain because of the President's position strongly held and strongly stated last week about David Duke, that should he win, there wouldn't be any relationship with the White House. But in a specific sense in terms of organizations and so forth, I don't think anybody's focused on that. The polls at this point are showing Edwards ahead, but we'll just have to wait and see.

Q Well, if you had, for instance, a dinner for governors as you do most every year, you would invite him, wouldn't you? I mean, you wouldn't --

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know. I don't -- I think that's a -- I don't have any idea.

Q What does Emily Post say about ex-Nazis?
(Laughter.)

Q What do your polls say on who's going to win in Louisiana?

MR. FITZWATER: I would just leave it that we don't see any relationship, period.

Q Who's going to win?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

Q Have you given any detailed consideration to Pat Buchanan running for President?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know. We already had one Buchanan. (Laughter.)

Q Last week, OMB Director Darman indicated that the administration and Republican congressional leaders had agreed to move forward with a growth package next year that includes middle-income tax cuts. Was he speaking for the --

MR. FITZWATER: I'm sorry, Paula, I missed the last sentences. Darman said what?

Q Darman speaking for the White House when he said that you have agreed to a growth package next year that includes middle-income tax cuts.

MR. FITZWATER: That he had agreed to one next year?

Q The White House and Republican congressional leaders had agreed to move forward with one next year that includes middle-income tax cuts.

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I'm not sure that's what he said. I think he said we're looking at a growth package next year and we've agreed with Republican leaders to pursue that. But I don't think he said what would be in it.

Q It was specifically reported --

MR. FITZWATER: You mean the Wall Street Journal article?

Q There were two separate interviews --

MR. FITZWATER: Another interview? Darman's slipping out things on the side again, is he? (Laughter.)

Q Well, was he speaking for the --

MR. FITZWATER: I didn't see that, but we're interested in pursuing a growth package. But other than the issues that are already in our growth package, we're not committing to any specific items.

Q So that was an inaccurate statement?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I don't know that he said it. I haven't seen that. What I saw him say was not the same as that.

Q The President asked for credit card rates to come down; the Senate responded with an amendment to put a cap on credit cards rates. Do you support that?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, the President suggested the range or the span between the prime and credit card rates was probably more than it needed to be and asked that companies consider lowering it. Several have. The AT&T card dropped a full percent. I think some others are on the verge of doing it as well.

But in terms of the legislative cap, that raises a slightly different problem in the sense that we do continue to believe that they have to be responsive to market conditions. And while we'd like to see them lower them on a voluntary or company-by-company basis, the imposition of a cap by statute causes a number of concerns both in the marketplace as well as with companies. There have been some pretty serious negative reactions in New York this morning, I'm told. So we don't support that approach.

Q Would you veto the banking bill if that was included?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we'll have to wait and see how the banking bill comes out. As you know, we have a threatened veto on the banking bill, but on the other hand, it changes every day. So it's hard to say exactly what it will look like when we get it and what our position will be.

Q How about a credit card bill that had that cap in it?

MR. FITZWATER: As I say, we'll just have to wait and see.

Q Does the administration think the Fed should lower interest rates once again, or are they finally at the level where you think they should be in order to stimulate the economy?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, we don't try to specify a specific interest rate, but we are always happy to see lower interest rates, more money flowing into the economy, people getting funds available for their own uses and for plant and investment expansion. So our policy or our attitude has not changed.

Q Marlin, the Buchanan -- potential Buchanan announcement would indicate and has indicated that the conservatives just don't consider George Bush one of them. Is that a concern? Do you think that you're too middle of the road for the conservatives to support you in '92?

MR. FITZWATER: No, we think the conservatives do support us. They have in the past. The President's policies have been in line with most conservative philosophies, and we think our support and strength is very strong in that area.

Q Marlin, at this point the President has no opposition in the primaries. Are you bothered by the fact that if he gets in, suddenly he'll have, if not strong opposition, at least pretty articulate opposition?

MR. FITZWATER: It's a free country. I know Pat.

Q Is it not troublesome? Does it not distract the President in some fashion from focusing on Democrats?

Q Why does the President think a conservative would find it necessary to run if he has so adequately addressed the conservative concerns?

MR. FITZWATER: The bug bites everybody once in a while.

Q Back to the Kemp situation, will the President allow Kemp to remain in the Cabinet if he continues publicly to challenge the administration's economic policies?

MR. FITZWATER: Jack Kemp's doing a fine job; great American; great leader, doing wonderful housing and urban development.

Q No jeopardy of losing his job?

MR. FITZWATER: No.

Q Marlin, you just said it's a free country; I know Pat. That begs the question, "and" --

MR. FITZWATER: And?

Q The bug bite somebody -- (laughter.)

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, that's good. I don't know. I don't have any other response.

Q Sounds like you guys have been thinking about this a lot.

MR. FITZWATER: No, I haven't had a chance. I'd have a better response if I had given it more thought.

Q Do you know when you're going to sign the civil rights bill?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know when we're going to get it.

Q Oh, you don't have it yet?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't think we have it yet, do we? No. I think I heard yesterday that we did not have it. And I don't know about this morning, but I don't believe we have it. But we'll sign it fairly soon after we get it. We always have to go through some analysis, but we'll sign it fairly rapidly.

Q There were also a couple of negative economic reports today of unemployment claims jumping again and retail sales down. The President himself has said consumers need to have a greater level of confidence. Yet, as you pointed out, his growth package today contains nothing that would provide short-term relief in terms of putting money into consumers' pockets. Why shouldn't the President be paying more attention to suggestions like those from Kemp of having an immediate tax cut that might stimulate demand?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, he is. He's listening to all of these suggestions and ideas. Right now, the most stimulative occurrence in the economy of a short-term nature is the drop in interest rates with the prime now down around 7.5 percent, and interest rates are falling in other responsive categories as well. So that's the most immediate kind of response. And then I outlined, of course, the longer-term ones.

But we continue to listen to everybody and the tax cut issue is one where there are feelings on both sides. There are just as many people who will tell you don't do that for love nor money, because it will drive up interest rates and ruin the recovery. There's a great body of responsible economists and business leaders who believe that.

Q Where is Bush on that? Because, as you pointed out in Rome, the President told us he was ruling out tax cuts, that they were bad, that they would increase interest rates and, therefore, do more damage than good. Is he now neutral on this and willing to consider --

MR. FITZWATER: He said he didn't plan to send up a package before the recess, that we continue to consider every option and the whole situation.

Q Yes, but he said more. He was denouncing tax cuts as a bad economic idea.

MR. FITZWATER: He said we've had very many advisors who have told us that, yes. But driving up interest rates is the worst thing that can happen to long-term prognosis for the economy.

Q He seemed to share that view. Does he still share that view today?

MR. FITZWATER: We're still open, Leo. We consider all options.

Q Marlin, there was a report yesterday that your office was going to stop compiling the President's travel records. Is that correct?

MR. FITZWATER: Well, it's not clear to me what that's all about. Our office doesn't compile travel records. There is another office that does that; we'll be glad to get you what information you want. Apparently, Lynn was putting together some

stuff for Tom and I don't know what that's all about, but we'll work that out. You tell us what you want and we'll get it for you.

The last book, by the way, the travel book lists every trip he's taken, so you can look right in there. Madrid, Rome -- all those trips.

Q Does the United States support the European idea from Britain and France and Belgium to send an international peacekeeping force into Yugoslavia?

MR. FITZWATER: What was your question?

Q Supposedly Britain, France and Belgium have suggested that the U.N. should send a peacekeeping force in Yugoslavia to stop the fighting.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

Do you know anything about that, Roman? Is there guidance in here on that?

I'm glad you asked that, Mary. (Laughter.) Yes, I have a very strong and forceful view on that, Mary. (Laughter.)

The President announced in The Hague on November 9 that the United States will apply sanctions on Yugoslavia comparable to those of the EC, and that the EC can depend on the U.S. to cosponsor a new U.N. Security Council resolution on Yugoslavia, looking toward a possible oil embargo, and that the U.S. will cooperate fully in efforts to strengthen the arms embargo to Yugoslavia. Our approach will be to take steps comparable to those taken by the European Community.

That's the extents of our position. That's it.

Q What has that got to do with troops? Roman?

Q So at this point, you're not endorsing the idea of a peacekeeping force?

MR. FITZWATER: This is our position, and I cannot go beyond it. Maybe Roman is going to go beyond it here.

Q Does the President have any reaction to Mario Cuomo's suggestion that he was shirking his responsibilities by not going to Japan?

MR. FITZWATER: Is Mario looking for a way to get out of New York, is he?

Q Seriously.

MR. FITZWATER: No.

Q He's got an op-ed piece in The New York Times today suggesting that the trip was too important to cancel.

MR. FITZWATER: Mario -- he's got so many problems up there, he ought to be looking for other places to go.

Q A shot across the bow.

Q A lot of the proposals circulating on the Hill would provide tax credits for low- and middle-income people and pay for it by creating a higher top rate for high income taxpayers. Is

the President opposed to any targeted tax credit that was financed by creating a higher top rate for high income --

MR. FITZWATER: We haven't taken a position on any of those specifics. There are any number of proposals out there -- the Rostenkowski plan and several other ones. And they're all in the mix. They're all on the table and we'll think about them and see if any of them have any attractive aspects to it. But we don't want to take a position on any specific provisions.

Q Is the President or perhaps Scowcroft going to meet with Alexander Yakovlev while he's here? And when can we expect a decision finally on a Soviet aid package?

MR. FITZWATER: General Scowcroft met with him yesterday, and we don't have a date for an aid package. We're still working on it, but relatively soon.

Q So the President won't be seeing him?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't believe so.

Q What's the President going to do for Thanksgiving, and what's your latest thinking on the Asia trip rescheduling?

MR. FITZWATER: Thanksgiving, the President's plans are to go to Camp David. And we are still talking to the countries involved about rescheduling the Asian trip, but no dates at this point.

Q Can we rule out an extension of the Pearl Harbor?

MR. FITZWATER: I wouldn't rule anything in or out. What happens is that each of the countries, they have different problems. And it's just hard to work out dates. It's like -- well, I won't say what it's like --

Q Is it likely to be just after Christmas, shortly after Christmas?

MR. FITZWATER: I just can't say.

Q Like the day after?

MR. FITZWATER: We'll let you know as soon as we can for planning purposes.

Q Is there any discussion that either President Bush or Mrs. Bush will go up to Kennebunk to look at the damage and do any further assessment on the house?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know whether Mrs. Bush is or not. You'll have to ask Anna Perez about it. The President doesn't have any plans to. Obviously, that's the kind of thing he could decide to do at any point. But there are no plans right now.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:48 P.M. EST

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