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PRESS GUIDANCE -- 12:00 PM
Thursday, February 4, 1993

Boucher

Djerjian

3:00

NSC Meeting

If asked only:

Q: Was a NSC Principals' Committee held yesterday on Bosnia?

A: -- The President's senior foreign policy advisors met yesterday as they do on a regular basis.

-- We do not comment on the nature of these discussions.

Middle East Peace Process

Q: Are the multilateral negotiations scheduled for this month to go on as scheduled?

A: -- After contacts with the parties in the region, the United States and Russia as co-sponsors of the Madrid process, have decided to reschedule the next round of multilateral negotiations in mid-April.

-- This decision was based on a number of factors, including the President's decision to send Secretary Christopher to the region in February and the importance of getting a first-hand assessment of the situation and appropriate next steps in the peace process.

-- It was the judgment of the co-sponsors that rescheduling the multilaterals would enhance the prospects for a productive and meaningful round of talks.

-- It is essential that all parties to this process understand the importance the co-sponsors attach to the multilateral negotiations.

-- The multilaterals represent an essential component of this process which complement the bilaterals and offer a basis on which to address key issues like arms control, water, refugees, economic development, and the environment. Such issues are basic to promoting regional peace, security, and development.

-- The co-sponsors will be consulting soon with the parties on specific dates for the next rounds.

Q: What about the resumption of the bilaterals?

A: -- The co-sponsors will be consulting with the parties about resumption of the ninth round of negotiations.

-- The United States for its part is convinced that there are real opportunities for movement in these negotiations and is prepared to work with the parties to make them succeed.

Military Budget Cuts

Q: Does the President support Secretary Aspin's directive to reduce the FY94 defense budget by \$10.8 billion?

A: -- Yes. During the campaign, the President said that he would seek to reduce the defense budget by \$60 billion over the next six years. Secretary Aspin's directive represents the first installment in meeting this goal.

-- The end of the Cold war requires that we restructure our armed forces to reflect the new international security environment. We plan to do this by prudently reducing our personnel and forces, while maintaining a credible military capability.

Q: Is Aspin's outlay of \$4.1 billion for SDI consistent with President Clinton's pledge to reduce this program?

A: -- Throughout the campaign, President Clinton supported the deployment of a Theater Ballistic Defense system to counter the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

-- Of the \$6.6 billion originally proposed by the Bush Administration for SDI, \$3.0 billion was meant for theater missile defense.

-- In any discussion of SDI, it is important to differentiate between money spent on theater defenses -- for which there is a growing need -- and strategic defenses -- for which the threat has diminished.

Q: Do you think Bush "cooked the book" on the Defense budget?

A: -- During Secretary Aspin's confirmation hearing, Senator Nunn and others questioned whether former Secretary Cheney's proposed six-year budget reflected realistic assumptions.

- Doubts were raised as to whether many of the weapons programs were fully funded and as to whether it's reasonable to assume that \$70 billion in savings could be identified through management improvements.
- We are now reviewing the Defense budget to determine an objective baseline

Palestinian Deportees

BACKGROUND: Decision will allow 100 deportees to return immediately; will halve the sentences for the rest (all will be returned by Dec); establishes a review process that may allow additional deportees to return sooner; and provides for the delivery of humanitarian relief.

Q: Do we consider the deportation issue resolved?

A: -- We are pleased that Israel is taking significant action towards resolving this issue. As a result, a process has now begun that furthers the objectives of UNSC resolution 799. We believe this process addresses the return of the deportees and their humanitarian needs.

-- We believe that further action in the UNSC is unnecessary and could undercut this process.

Q: What is your reaction to Palestinian rejection of the steps taken by Prime Minister Rabin and endorsed by Secretary Christopher?

A: -- We believe we now have a process that is consistent with the objectives of UNSC resolution 799 and allows us to move forward on the Middle East peace process.

Clinton Letter Carried by Mr. Pettit

Q: Why did then President-Elect Clinton send a letter to officials within the Vietnamese Government? Was the Pettit letter a secret overture?

A: -- The letter was simply a general letter of introduction for an Arkansas like those he has done for many others in the past as Governor.

-- Mr. Pettit was not acting in any way as an emissary of Governor Clinton or the transition team.

Q: What is their relationship?

A: -- I believe they were colleagues in Senator Fulbright's office and remain acquaintances.

-- President Clinton believes we should not move forward on normalizing relations with Vietnam until there is a full accounting of all Americans listed as missing.

Iraq

Q: Was there an incident yesterday involving coalition aircraft in Northern Iraq?


A: -- Coalition aircraft were the target of an Iraqi air defense site yesterday. I refer you to the Pentagon for details.

Q: Does this suggest a return to greater open hostility?

A: -- The policy of the US remains constant -- Iraq must comply with all resolutions.

National Prayer Breakfast

Q: Why did the President meet with Prime Ministers from the Caribbean when we have no announcement of a meeting with Mitterrand, Kohl, and Yeltsin?

A: -- The President is the guest of honor at the National Prayer Breakfast and at the request of the sponsors, he and Mrs. Clinton ~~are being~~  introduced to all of the overseas visitors attending.

Major Visit -- Announcement

The President has invited British Prime Minister John Major to Washington February 24. Prime Minister Major has accepted the invitation. The visit will be an opportunity for the President to consult with Prime Minister Major on key regional and bilateral issues.

Q: Will this be a private visit or a working visit?

A: -- This is a working visit.

Q: Will they discuss Bosnia and Iraq?

A: -- No agenda has been set, but those topics are likely to be brought up.

Q: Who else will be attending these meetings? Vice President Gore?

A: -- The other participants have not been determined.

Mulroney Visit

Q: Why is the President meeting with Prime Minister Mulroney?

A: -- The President and Prime Minister Mulroney are expected to discuss bilateral and international economic issues, including the North American Free Trade Agreement, GATT and the Uruguay Round, and the G-7 Economic Summit process. In addition, both leaders will discuss pressing international issues affecting US and Canadian interests.

Belarus Parliament Approves START and NPT

The following statement is being used by Richard Boucher at State today:

-- The Supreme Soviet of Belarus today ratified the START Treaty and voted to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapons state.

-- The United States welcomes these actions which are another positive step in the growing relationship between our two countries. We will be talking to the Belarus Government about the details of ratification.

-- We look forward to working with Belarus in implementing the START agreement.

Q: How does this affect START II?

A: -- START II, by its own terms, cannot enter into force before the START Treaty does.

-- With today's action by Belarus, all parties to the START Treaty, with the exception of Ukraine, have ratified the Treaty.

-- ~~We look forward to Ukraine's prompt ratification of the START Treaty that will facilitate implementation of both START and START II.~~

Q: How does the Supreme Soviet's action affect the NPT?

A: -- The Supreme Soviet of Belarus voted to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty as a non-nuclear weapon state.

- Before Belarus can be considered an adherent to the NPT, however, the Government of Belarus should deposit an Instrument of Accession to the Treaty with one of the co-depositaries of the Treaty (U.S., UK, or Russia).
- Kazakhstan, which ratified the START Treaty in July 1992, has not yet taken any action to adhere to the NPT; we look forward to their prompt action in doing so.

Somalia

Q: Is it true that you have serious disagreements with the UN about Somalia?

A: -- We are working very closely with the UN on a smooth transition from the U.S.-led coalition force to a UN force that will have the capability and authority to maintain a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian relief.

-- Secretary Christopher and Ambassador Albright had a very good meeting with UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali on Monday, and they agreed on a common approach for this transition.

-- We anticipate that the Security Council will authorize the new UN force in the next few weeks, and we can then begin a phased transition on the ground in Somalia.

Q: When will all the U.S. troops be out?

A: -- The transition will be phased over time, and we really can't say specifically when it will be completed and all U.S. combat troops will have left Somalia.

-- The U.S. has agreed, in principle, to participate in the UN force in a non-combat role. We are still working with the UN to determine the nature and size of any U.S. components.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

04-Feb-1993 11:43 EDT

UNCLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE BELOW

FROM: Jane E. Holl
(HOLL)

Bosnia

SUBJECT: Press Guidance for Feb 4

Is it true that the US will not press the Bosnian government to accept the Vance/Owen plan?

-- We have neither embraced or rejected the Vance plan. We continue to support negotiations to achieve a fair settlement and have supported efforts to encourage the parties to negotiate seriously.

Will the United States be proposing an alternative formulation to the plan as it stands?

-- As Secretary Christopher said in New York on Monday, we support the process that has been underway in Geneva. We remain hopeful that the parties will come to an agreement.

How can the President remain neutral on the Vance/Owen peace plan?

-- The President has given no reaction to the Vance plan. We are in the midst of a policy review and we intend to play a constructive role in efforts to resolve the crisis.

-- For example, we have been in touch with the Bosnian government at the request of Vance and Owen, to encourage them to participate in the talks in New York at the Presidential level.

Use of US Ground troops?

-- We are reviewing all aspects of policy toward the situation in the former Yugoslavia and will not comment on any specifics until a decision is made.

When will a decision be made?

-- Relatively soon. But we do not have a date.

February 3, 1993

The Hon. William F. Clinger, Jr.
Committee on Government Operations
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6143

Dear Representative Clinger:

The President has asked me to respond to your letter, dated February 1, 1993, concerning the President's health care task force.

The President has selected the First Lady, Hillary Rodham Clinton, to chair the health care task force. In addition to the First Lady, the task force currently includes the Secretaries of the Treasury, Defense, Commerce, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs; the Director of the Office of Management and Budget; the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy; the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy; the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisors; and the Senior Advisor to the President for Policy Development.

The task force has not yet held a meeting, although members of the task force were present on January 25 when the President announced the formation of the task force and defined its mission. The task force is planning to hold some public meetings in the future. Those meetings have not yet been scheduled.

As the President announced on January 25, the Senior Advisor to the President for Policy Development will lead an interdepartmental working group which will gather information for, and provide information to, the task force. The working group will consist of government employees, and will consult with a wide range of citizens in the public and private sectors. The task force, in turn, will review information provided by the working group and make recommendations to the President.

It is our opinion that the Federal Advisory Committee Act ("FACA") does not, and was not intended by Congress to, apply to the health care task force. The participation of the First Lady on the task force does not trigger application of the Act.

Finally, we appreciate your intention to introduce legislation to amend FACA to provide that the Act is not triggered by the participation of the spouse of the President or the spouse of the Vice President on a committee or task force making recommendations to the President. We believe, however, that the existing statute already provides for such a result.

Please feel free to contact me, my deputy Vincent Foster or Stephen Neuwirth of this office, should you require further information in response to your inquiry.

Very truly yours,

Bernard W. Nussbaum
Counsel to the President

Press Guidance: Following are Q's and A's to supplement the announcement of Secretary Christopher's trip to the Middle East.

Q. When will the trip take place?

A. Secretary Christopher will travel to the Middle East around the middle of this month.

Q. Where will he go? Will he visit Lebanon?

A. The Secretary will be meeting with leaders of all the parties involved in the negotiations, including the Palestinians. Since this is a trip by the Secretary of State, I would refer you to the State Department for details.

Boucher

Djeréjan