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אל : תפוצת תקשורת

מאת : תקשורת וושינגטון

הנדון : הודעת הנשיא קלינטון ומזכיר המדינה כריסטופר אודות פגישה  
 רבין - חוסיין

ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETING BETWEEN JORDAN'S KING HUSSEIN AND ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER RABIN w/PRESIDENT CLINTON; SECY OF STATE WARREN CHRISTOPHER THE WHITE HOUSE 10:50 A.M. EDT FRIDAY, JULY 15, 1994

PRESIDENT CLINTON: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to announce today that King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Rabin of Israel have agreed to my invitation to meet at the White House on July the 25th. I'm also pleased that Speaker Foley, after discussions with Majority Leader Mitchell, has invited both leaders to address a joint session of Congress. And Hillary and I are delighted that both of them have agreed to join us at a dinner at the White House on that day.

This historic meeting is another step forward toward achievement of a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. The meeting will build on the dramatic progress made in the trilateral U.S.- Israel-Jordan meetings here in Washington last month and King Hussein's recent declaration in parliament that he was prepared to meet with Prime Minister Rabin. It reflects the courageous leadership and the bold vision which both King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin have displayed as they work together to create a new future for their people and for all the region.

On behalf of all Americans, I salute their commitment to peace.

I have pledged my personal dedication to the goal of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. Accordingly, Secretary Christopher will be traveling to the region next week. I want to compliment him on his tireless efforts to achieve peace in the region and the contribution he has made to the announcement today. He will continue our efforts to achieve progress in the Israel-Syria negotiations. That also is a very, very important thing for us. I am committed to working to achieve a breakthrough on those talks as soon as possible so that we can make the dream of a lasting peace of the brave a reality.

Secretary Christopher will follow up on the discussions that the president and King Hussein have had on this initiative, and he will proceed and participate in the U.S.-Jordan-Israel discussions. He'll also meet with Chairman Arafat to review progress in implementing the declaration of principles on Palestinian self-rule.

The Middle East is entering a new era. I'll do everything I can to make certain that all the peoples of the region realize the blessings of peace that have been denied too long to them. This meeting on July the 25th will be another important step on that long road.

Now, I have to go to Pennsylvania. I'm running a little bit late, and I want to turn the microphone over to Secretary Christopher.

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Good morning. As the president said, I'll be following up on his important announcement when I travel to the Middle East starting Monday. Our goal remains the achievement of a lasting, comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors. In this trip that starts on Sunday, I'll be focusing on three main areas.

First, on the Jordanian track. I'll be participating in a meeting, a trilateral meeting between the United States, Israel and Jordanian officials form the economic committee. For the first time, ministers from Jordan and Israel will be meeting publicly in Jordan where they will set the stage for the summit meeting here in Washington on July 25th. All of this, of course, is a powerful reminder that changes are taking place which are transforming the landscape in the Middle East. This promises to produce concrete results for the people so they can feel it and see it there on the ground.

The second part of my trip is on the Palestinian track. With Chairman Arafat's return to Gaza, the first stage of implementing the declaration of principles has been completed. Not unexpectedly, there have been problems along the way, but on the whole I would certainly agree with Prime Minister Rabin that the process has far exceeded expectations. Now the challenge for the Palestinians is to govern wisely and well. I plan to meet with Chairman Arafat and to review with him the steps that we and the international community are taking to ensure that the Palestinians have the support that they need. I do want to underscore that I'll also be pointing out to him the steps that I feel he must undertake to establish the accountability necessary to reassure the donor community.

Finally, on the Syrian track, I'll continue my talks with Prime Minister Rabin and President Assad.

The intense negotiations between the two of them, with our participation, have entered a new and important phase. Both sides have conveyed to us important ideas on the difficult

issues that they confront. It's now important, really it's essential that they move forward in these discussions, and I am prepared to engage intensively with them. In the end, peace must come from direct negotiations between the parties, but we're certainly prepared to do our part.

I want to add that just before coming in here, President Clinton called President Assad to tell him of the announcement that he was making today as a courtesy to make sure that he found out about it first from us.

Now I'll be glad to respond to questions you might have.

Q Mr. Secretary, bold vision and courage aside, there have been reports that to engineer this meeting between King Hussein and Rabin, the U.S. is providing hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Jordan, also refurbishing the Jordanian army. Can you give us an idea what it will cost and what it took to induce King Hussein to do something that he has refused to do for decades?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Well, this particular meeting on the 25th of July here in Washington has its immediate origins in King Hussein's trip here to Washington where he met with the President, I believe it was on the 22nd of June. I had met with him a couple of days earlier. And at that time we discussed with him their interest in our assistance to them on their debt problems as well as their desire to have additional military equipment. We're working with them and intend to work with them on both of those problems. The United States has always been prepared to work with those in the Middle East who are committed to peace and help achieve a peace settlement.

Q Mr. Secretary, can we ask you about Rwanda?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Sure.

Q Now that the rebels have taken over, will we be breaking relations? Will we withdraw our ambassador from Rwanda? What can the United States do given the enormity of the tragedy?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Well, we'll be taking some steps here today to in effect indicate that the embassy here in Washington is no longer representative, and we're taking the appropriate diplomatic steps to end their representation here in Washington. That will give us an opportunity to work with the new government, hopefully to help assist in the creation of a coalition government there.

It is also important to indicate that just before coming over here I heard that a cease-fire has been agreed to by the Patriotic Front in intense negotiations with State Department representatives who urged them to step up their intentions to have a cease-fire, and I understand it's to take place at sundown today. So we are really taking steps to recognize that the government there is no longer representative of the people.

Q May I ask, one --

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Yes.

Q -- is that breaking of diplomatic relations? And two, on another trouble spot, will the White House, will the president seek the approval of Congress if he decides to use the military option in Haiti?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: On the first question, I think the technical term is de-recognize. We're going to de-recognize the Rwandan diplomatic establishment here. That leaves us in a situation where we have recognized no new government, we simply have de-recognized the government that's here.

On your other question, we continue to have intense consultations with the Congress of the kind that we had just the day before yesterday. We'll certainly comply with all the existing legislation in that field. But beyond that, I think it's important to preserve the president's constitutional prerogatives, not least of which because it may be necessary for him to act fairly promptly if United States citizens are placed in danger.

Q Well, that means that you would not have to have the approval of Congress.

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: That means exactly what I said, Helen, that we'll continue to consult with them and we will follow the existing statutes. But the constitutional prerogatives of the president I'm determined to preserve.

Q Mr. Secretary, yesterday in the occupied territories of Israel, at a ceremony presided over by Brian Atwood, a building was dedicated, and the cornerstone of the building said something to the effect of "In honor of the president of Palestine, Yasser Arafat." Is that something the United States endorsed beforehand?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: I do not -- I really -- I'm not familiar with that having happened. I knew that Brian Atwood had been there for the dedication of one of the first of the AID projects. We're very pleased to go forward with the AID project, but I did not know about the dedication aspect.

Q Mr. Secretary, if we can go back to Haiti for a second, I'd like to ask you to possibly clear up what exactly U.S. policy is there. We've had different interpretations of whether or not there is a deadline, whether or not the government down there has until the end of the year to resign or whether the United States will take action before then. There are also conflicting reports about whether or not there are either front-channel or back-channel diplomatic negotiations in progress or contemplated before any kind of invasion would take place.

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: That's a lot of questions all at once, isn't it?

First, we think that the illegal government should go right now. They do not have a license to stay until the end of the year. We think they should leave very promptly. On the other hand, the president has made no decision with respect to the use of military force, and there's no deadline. We're working to apply the maximum pressure on the illegal government to leave, and to leave promptly. Our contacts with the illegal government are, as they should be, through our ambassador there, who is able to be in contact with them on a regular basis.

Q Are we negotiating their departure?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: We are urging them to leave promptly. There are no negotiations for their departure as such. We're telling them we think they ought to leave.

Q Mr. Secretary?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Yes, Tom?

Q Mr. Secretary, as of this morning you were scheduled to be in Baghdad on July 25th. What accounts for the timing of this event in Washington?

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: The timing of this event was really decided upon between the two -- between the three leaders -- the president of the United States, King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin. It's turned out to be the date that was convenient to all three of them. We obviously wanted to have the event at the earliest time, when the parties ready to have it. It's an event that transforms the landscape. The Middle East is really entering a new era, and the opportunity to have that happen is one that we wanted to grasp as soon as possible. So I think the trilateral meeting between the United States, Jordan and Israel in the middle of the week next week in the region will set the stage for this meeting on Monday, the 25th, but that simply was the first convenient date for all three parties.

Q Mr. Secretary, could you also clear up the question about whether the U.S. has an agreement with countries to keep civil order in Haiti if Cedras and company leave, if there is an invasion? There seems to be a serious question about whether anybody has really agreed to participate in this.

SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER: Well, let me emphasize that these conversations have been taking place for contributions to a group of troops or a group of civilians who will go into Haiti after the illegal government has left.

We've been in contact with about a dozen countries. We've had indications of interest in joining us in that endeavor. There have been no final agreements on it, we're at an early stage, but the contacts we've had with, as I say, about a dozen

governments have been very positive that if the events transpire that result in the removal of that illegal government, these countries will join us in going into Haiti to assure that there are conditions that are tranquil and peaceful ones as that transformation takes place.

Q Have they agreed to participate if the removal is by invasion, or have they only agreed to participate if Cedras and the others leave voluntarily?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Well, the context was of their voluntary departure.

Q Mr. Secretary, has the president held a meeting with his top advisers, including yourself, about Haiti since his return from Europe? And has he made a decision in principle to pursue the restoration of democracy even if it requires (an invasion?)?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: The president has made no final decisions on that. We're in touch with him on a regular basis but there's been no formal meeting to take any decision of that character.

Q Mr. Secretary, I wonder if you could, sir, given the feeling that Americans are not targeted right now at Haiti, explain to us what would be the purpose of military action if Cedras does intend to step down at the end of the year?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Well, what I will do is to describe to you what are the United States interests in Haiti, and they are very strong ones. First, we have an interest in the restoration of democracy within this hemisphere. Second, we have a strong interest in stability in that part of the Caribbean. Third, we have a very strong interest in saying to military dictators in this hemisphere that they will not be permitted to overthrow -- to overthrow democratically-elected governments. And fourth, we have certainly an interest in the refugee flow that's created by the repressive acts of a military regime of the kind that there is in Haiti.

Now, in addition to that we have, of course, an overriding interest in and concern about the several thousand Americans who are there, which has given rise to some contingent plans in case those Americans are put at risk.

So I think you have to gather together all of those interests in determining why the United States is acting with determination in this field.

Q Back to the Middle East, could you say if the meeting on the 25th is designed, or do we hope that it will produce a concrete agreement of some sort, or do we see it merely as an important step on the way towards a future agreement?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: The meeting on the 25th will not result in the signing of a peace treaty, but what it will do is I think to confirm and give concrete form to the interest of the leaders in

moving toward a final rapprochement. It will be focused on economic projects. Starting with the meeting next week in the region, I think we'll be talking about cooperative economic projects in the border areas between the two countries, which will, I think, provide the foundation for further steps. What the meeting really means is a determination on the part of these two important leaders to accelerate the progress toward the normalization of relations between their two countries.

Q Mr. Secretary, Mr. Arafat is talking again about a Palestinian flag flying in Jerusalem. I guess he has the right to say what he wants. But does the U.S. have any opinion about these periodic assertions of Palestinian statehood, of taking over Jerusalem, of overthrowing -- you know, I mean, what is the U.S. view of this, that he's just a chatty guy, or what? (Laughter.)

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Barry, our position on Jerusalem has not changed. The parties themselves, including Mr. -- Chairman Arafat, have indicated that it is a final status matter and it will be negotiated between the parties as part of the final status, as they themselves said in the declaration of principles.

Q Thank you.

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Thank you.

Q Mr. Secretary, can we talk about North Korea briefly, what the situation is there?

STAFF: Do you want to take North Korea?

SEC. CHRISTOPHER: Well, with respect to North Korea, as you know, we are planning to be back in touch with the North Koreans through their New York facility the first of next week to fix the date for the resumption of the third round of talks in Geneva. When they left to return for the funeral, which, of course, was a natural hiatus, they indicated that we should be in touch the first of next week to fix a further date for the resumption of those talks, and so that's where that stands.

Now, with respect to the North-South talks, as you know, they were postponed, they were not cancelled. And I think the South Koreans are anticipating that there will be contact with them after this funeral mourning period has passed.

But our determination is to take advantage of the talks that have begun and to pursue them with determination, because that seems to us to be an opportunity the United States should not forego. We anticipate that the new regime there will be going forward with the talks. All the indications that we have up to this point are that they want to continue the talks with us in Geneva. And as I say, we'll be contacting them the first of the week to try to establish a date within weeks; I would hope it would be very soon.

Thank you very much.

STAFF: Thanks very much.

Q Bon voyage.

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