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Folder Title:

President's Trip to Camp David, Maryland for the Camp David Summit on the Middle East Peace Process (July 11-19, 2000) [2]

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 13, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
UPON DEPARTURE
ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF VIETNAM BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT

The South Lawn

4:10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Just a few moments ago, Ambassador Barshefsky and Minister Vu Khoan signed an agreement between the United States and Vietnam that will dramatically open Vietnam's economy, further integrate it into the international community and increase trade between our two nations. And so from the bitter past, we plant the seeds of a better future.

This is another historic step in the process of normalization, reconciliation and healing between our two nations. Improvements in the relationship between the United States and Vietnam have depended from the beginning upon progress in determining the fate of Americans who did not return from the war.

In 1994, with the support of the members of Congress standing with me here and others, I lifted the trade embargo on Vietnam in response to its cooperation on the POW/MIA issue. A year later, I normalized diplomatic relations between our two nations to further this goal. As further progress was made in 1996, I appointed former Congressman Pete Peterson -- himself, a former prisoner of war -- to be our United States Ambassador in Vietnam.

With the indispensable help of key congressional allies, especially Senator John Kerry and Senator John McCain, Senator Bob Kerrey and Senator Chuck Hagel and Senator Chuck Robb; Representative Rick Boucher, Representative Reyes, who is here, Representative Manzullo, Representatives Lane Evans, Kolbe, Bereuter and McDermott, this process has worked.

Since 1993, we have undertaken 39 joint recovery operations with Vietnam, and the number of 40 is underway as we speak. One hundred and thirty-five American families have received the remains of their loved ones, and we're in the process of identifying another 150 possible sets of remains. Time and

again, the Vietnamese people have shared their memories with Americans. And we, too, have sought to help Vietnam in its own search for answers.

Our nation has also felt a special sense of responsibility to those people in Vietnam whose families were torn apart during and after the war. In the last few years, we've made tremendous progress in resettling tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees in the United States, closing yet another painful chapter.

And Vietnam has done much to turn its face toward a changing world. It has worked to open its economy and move into the mainstream of Southeast Asia as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian nations and APEC. Our trading relations have also grown. When I took office our exports to Vietnam totaled just \$4 million. Today, they stand at \$291 million.

The agreement we signed today will dramatically open Vietnam's markets on everything from agriculture to industrial goods to telecommunications products, while creating jobs both in Vietnam and in the United States.

With this agreement, Vietnam has agreed to speed its opening to the world; to subject important decisions to the rule of law and the international trading system; to increase the flow of information to its people; by inviting competition in, to accelerate the rise of a free market economy and the private sector within Vietnam, itself. We hope expanded trade will go hand in hand with strength and respect for human rights and labor standards. For we live in an age where wealth is generated by the free exchange of ideas and stability depends on democratic choices. By signing this agreement, Vietnam takes an important step in the right direction.

We've been working on this agreement since 1996, and there are many people who deserve recognition. I want to say a special thanks to our Trade Representative, Ambassador Barshefsky; our Deputy USTR, Richard Fisher; Joe Damond, of USTR, for working so hard in the last four years to turn this agreement into reality.

I would also like to thank their Vietnamese counterparts: Trade Minister Vu Khoan; Chief Negotiator Nguyen Dinh Luong. And I want to say a special word of thanks also to Vietnamese Ambassador La Van Bang and to our Ambassador Pete Peterson, who have worked so hard to build ties among our nations and our people.

And let me say, again, it is my opinion that none of this would have been possible had it not been for the visionary and brave and reconciling leadership of the Americans in the United States Congress who served, many of whom suffered, in Vietnam; especially those who are here with me and the others whose names I mentioned earlier. Our debt to them as a nation is immense.

This agreement is one more reminder that former adversaries can come together to find common ground in a way that benefits all their people, to let go of the past and embrace the future, to forgive and to reconcile. As all of you know, that is what we are now trying to achieve at Camp David in what many believe is the most difficult of all historical circumstances.

This day is encouraging to me, and I will take the energy I feel here from all these people back to Camp David and make the argument that they should follow suit. Thank you very much.

Q Mr. President, you've talked about going to Vietnam. Are you planning to go to Vietnam after the APEC ministerial in November?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't made a decision yet.

Q Mr. President, have you seen the videotape of the beating that a suspect apparently took at the hands of the Philadelphia police yesterday, and are you concerned about it? Have you asked any of the authorities to look into it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't seen it, because I've been pretty isolated in the peace talks; but I've been briefed about it. The Justice Department is looking into it. And when I was in Baltimore on the way down here today, I spoke briefly with Mayor Street. And he assured me that he was going to go home and handle it in the appropriate way, and I trust him. He's a strong man and a good man, and I think he will do what is right.

Q Sir, is any substantial progress being made at Camp David? And there seems to be some confusion about whether you will allow the Palestinian opposition figures to come in to see Chairman Arafat.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I should say nothing about what's going on at Camp David; the less I say, the greater our chances of success.

Thank you very much.

END

4:16 P.M. EDT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
(Thurmont, Maryland)

For Immediate Release
2000/794

July 13, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING BY
SPOKESMAN RICHARD BOUCHER
ON
THE CAMP DAVID PEACE TALKS

Thurmont Elementary School

12:03 p.m.

MR. BOUCHER: I was going to say good morning, but I think the answer is good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the daily press blackout. (Laughter.)

If I can, I would like to run over events from yesterday evening into today and give you some idea of what's going on up the hill at Camp David. As I think we mentioned to you yesterday evening, the President spoke with Chairman Arafat last night. They walked together for a while and then met back at the President's cabin for some time after that. And then the President spent some additional time with some members of the Palestinian negotiating team.

There was another group dinner last night involving all three delegations. There were about 36 people at dinner and it went on until 10:00, 10:30 in the evening.

This morning, the President departed at 9:35. He will come back in the late afternoon or early evening today and resume his meetings at Camp David. In the absence of the President, the Secretary is leading the United States delegation. There is a very full day planned. The Secretary will continue the pattern of meetings that have been occurring over the last two days and continue to work on moving the ball forward.

Informal discussions have continued in a variety of configurations and settings. The Secretary during the course of the day expects to meet with leaders and with the negotiating teams. In addition, the Israeli and Palestinian sides have continued their meetings with each other. Negotiators have met and yesterday evening there was a meeting between Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat at Chairman Arafat's cabin before dinner.

The parties, the delegations, are grappling with the core issues of permanent status. These are tough issues for all of them. They involve their vital interests and, as Joe Lockhart mentioned yesterday, that's no surprise.

So with that review of events – oh, I forgot to mention, dinner was called a Mediterranean barbecue and I can go through the menu and get recipes for anybody that wants it.

Okay, with that recounting of events that have occurred, let me go to questions.

Q Apropos not hearing about the Arafat-Barak meeting until now, even though it occurred, you said, before dinner, there was some sort of readout, I believe, last night, a brief one, can we count from now on, for the American host spokesman to keep us as up to date on meetings that don't involve the President or the Secretary of State or Mr. Berger, as you keep us up to date on US-involved meetings?

MR. BOUCHER: There was a piece there that I need to add to what you said, and that is as up to date as possible. At the point at which we briefed you yesterday evening, we didn't have this information for you and so we give it to you at the next first opportunity.

Q But, by the way, just as part of the story, they did tell – the US was aware – was, indeed, the President aware that the two leaders would meet? Did he have a hand in getting them together?

MR. BOUCHER: They met with each other on their own initiative. But we were aware of the meeting, certainly.

Q Was that with delegations or without delegations?

MR. BOUCHER: There were some delegations there.

Q Richard, were you aware before or after the meeting happened?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't know precisely. We were aware that they were meeting.

I have to say that this is the kind of thing that we expect to go on. We expect meetings, as I said, in different configurations and settings, meetings at leaders' level, meetings at negotiator level, and you've seen some meetings of leaders with negotiators. So there were a variety of conversations going on and this is the kind of thing to happen.

Q But it all sounds very informal. Today will you have specific times for these meetings and then maybe something will happen in between or after?

MR. BOUCHER: There are specific meetings that get set at specific times. When people want to see each other, they make arrangements for specific meetings and then there are a variety of other conversations that occur more informally.

I have to say, as Joe Lockhart said yesterday, I don't want the informality of some of the arrangements and somewhat fluid nature of some of the meetings to distract you from the fact that these are serious discussions. They are grappling with some very tough issues that involve vital interests and I wouldn't draw any conclusions from the informality.

Q Can you confirm, since the beginning of the summit, if there have been any one-on-one meeting between Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak?

Q We just did that.

MR. BOUCHER: You mean one-on-one with nobody else present?

Q Yes.

MR. BOUCHER: I don't know if any of the meeting yesterday involved one on one. I do know that by and large there were other people there, members of their negotiating teams present.

Q Richard, three ranking Palestinians arrived today and we know – we understand that Chairman Arafat is keen to meet with them. Have you received a request for these three to join the delegation? Are you allowing such a meeting to take place?

MR. BOUCHER: No, we haven't received a request.

Q Would you entertain the idea of letting these three people join Arafat if Arafat wants to join them, wants to speak to them?

MR. BOUCHER: There are expectations from the beginning that provisions can be made to bring a limited number of people for a limited period of time as necessary, as we decide is necessary. So they would have to make the request to us and then, in conjunction with them, if we felt such a thing was necessary. So I am not trying to open the door very wide but at this point we don't have a request for that specific group.

Q Are we at the stage now where there is any kind of document that is being discussed?

MR. BOUCHER: That's not something we can talk about.

Q If Arafat wants to see those people, you would allow him to see them?

MR. BOUCHER: I'm sorry, we don't do questions that start with "if." That's a hypothetical question. If we get a request, we will deal with that appropriately.

Q You don't mention any names of the Palestinian negotiators who met with the President or people that are members who did not meet with the President yesterday?

MR. BOUCHER: No, that's the kind of detail of the conversations that we're not prepared to --

Q Even the people who --

MR. BOUCHER: I don't want to start saying who was at what meeting and the exact lineup because you will start drawing conclusions that are probably not justified.

Q Has the President offered to meet with Chairman Arafat and this delegation that has traveled in from the region?

MR. BOUCHER: We don't have a request for the delegation that traveled, so that's a moot question as well.

Q By my count, you've had one three-way meeting with the three leaders since this conference began. Did I miss one or two and do you expect more and when do you expect them?

MR. BOUCHER: Frankly, I would have to go back and count myself. Obviously at dinner, all three leaders have been present both nights. They sit at a large table with the President on one side and Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak at either end. They are close to each other. Everybody is talking to each other. So they have had a number of conversations between the three of them, in groups and in other settings.

And in terms of the second part of your question, yes, we would expect to have continued meetings of different varieties, bilateral meetings, three-way meetings, meetings between us and the parties at various level.

Q What is going on at the generic talks at Emmitsburg? I understand that the Palestinians refused to talk, sitting there and doing nothing.

MR. BOUCHER: We are still where we were yesterday when Mr. Lockhart addressed that and said meetings on noncore issues, on other issues are possible during the course of these events. But at this point, we have nothing to report.

Q Was President Clinton's meeting with the Palestinian delegation last night linked in any way with the arrival of the three Palestinian position leaders in Washington?

MR. BOUCHER: I have to say once again we're not going to discuss the substance or the topics that are discussed in any particular meeting, so I can't answer your question. But I have to repeat at this point that we have no request for that.

Q Because of schedule, can you confirm that the Palestinian delegation will not work tomorrow because of Israeli Saturday and the American Sunday? So will the next possible date of agreement breakthrough will be Monday?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not sure if that is a substantive question or a personal question. What I would say on this subject, we are aware of the religious days that are coming up. We are aware of the religious obligations of the parties as they make them known to us and we will make sure that the plan of activities takes those into account.

Q Richard, you mentioned the provisions prior to the summit. Is one of the provisions also entails that if a leader wants to meet a group of people outside Camp David for a few hours, for a limited time, is this possibility also included among the provisions?

MR. BOUCHER: Again, we don't have a request like that either, so it's another question beginning with "if." But I think I have to say that – go back to what we said right from the beginning. The intention was to get the parties up there, to have them stay and concentrate on the negotiations and on the difficult issues that they have to resolve.

Q Richard, is it a fact that by the time you came out here, Albright hadn't met with either Barak or Arafat? That she plans – and, by the way, there are only five more hours before the President is due. So has she had any of these meetings and will she have any of these meetings? I'm talking about the top two people, the two leaders.

MR. BOUCHER: Barry, I said, I think, at the beginning, we expect her during the course of the day to meet with leaders and negotiators during the course of the day. I left Camp David at about 11 o'clock. At that point, she was meeting with the American delegation.

Q Richard, I won't start my question with "if." I will start it with a statement made by Mr. * Levy, who is a member of the Knesset, an Arab member of the Knesset. He made a statement that he was also the spokesman for the Palestinians at Wye Plantation, so he is very informed. He said that there is an agreement that Israel will withdraw all the settlers from Gaza Strip. Now, can you comment on any of this?

MR. BOUCHER: If we have to knock down every story that appears, I think we would be here all day long. The point I would make, I think, is the one Mr. Lockhart made to you in previous briefings. We're going to hear a lot of stories. Some of them could turn out to be true, some of them may not be true. But statements that are made half way around the world, we can't spend all our time dealing with it. The people on

Camp David are dealing with the substance of the issue. We are not going to deal it down here or at any other location in the world.

Q Richard, do you expect the pace to intensify tonight and tomorrow, given that there is this break coming up? Do you expect the President might sort of pick up the pace with the number and duration of meetings and how late they go into the evening and so forth?

MR. BOUCHER: I would have to say two things about your question. There are many false premises involved. The first is, I haven't said anything about a break coming up. I said we are aware of the religious obligations of the parties and we take those into account, as we plan the activities over the next few days. Second of all, that the pace continues the way it has, meetings continue to take place in a variety of settings, in a variety of times during the course of the day. And that has been the pattern for the last two days and remains the pattern today.

Q Richard, are people keeping pretty reasonable hours or are these sessions going late into the night?

MR. BOUCHER: The – I can't speak for each of the particular leaders. The dinners have gone until 10:00, 10:30, 11:00. I assume that the leaders are having meetings with their delegations later in the evening and then some of the delegations are having meetings after that. So things go fairly late out there.

Q How does it work? Discussing the five issues, did they meeting in committees and do Arafat and Barak join in and out of those committees? How many people per committee?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't have a formalized structure like that. The way this operates is a bit more informally with a variety of meetings in different configurations to make sure that the people who need to be there are there. And they have, as I think Mr. Lockhart mentioned yesterday, some of the meetings involved the whole scope of all the issues; some of the meetings are more focused on individual issues.

Q Any discussion on the time table? Do you think that the deadline of – is going to be met? Is this going to go on after he comes back?

MR. BOUCHER: Nothing at all has changed in that regard. The schedule remains the same, as the President's schedule remains the same.

Q How long was the Arafat-Barak meeting last night and do they have any plans, that you're aware of, to meet again today?

MR. BOUCHER: Our understanding is it lasted about one hour, maybe a little bit more. And as far as plans to meet during the day, I would just go back to what we've said

before. We would expect different meetings to occur at different levels. This may occur again. If it does, we will try to report it to you.

Q Richard, I know you all are tired of the question of the President's trip to Japan. But the Israelis have said that they would very much like to continue the talks when he leaves under Albright if there is progress being made and so far the United States has not signaled any similar willingness. Is there a willingness on the side of the US to continue the talks?

MR. BOUCHER: I know you all are tired of hearing me say that the President's schedule has not changed. And you're probably tired of hearing me say that there are going to be a lot of different reports out there. Some of them may turn out to be true and some of them may not.

We have made quite clear that the intention was to bring the parties to Camp David to deal with all the core issues of permanent status and to try to do that seriously, intensively and quickly. And as we've noted to you over the past few days, the parties are struggling with those issues, they're grappling with the issues and we're dealing with them. And we remain on the same schedule that we started with.

Q Can I ask about the Secretary's schedule for next week? Does she have anything scheduled next week beyond these talks after Tuesday?

MR. BOUCHER: At this point, she does have things on her schedule, yes.

Q Actually, I have four questions. First of all, is there any more on the senior delegations to join today? And the second, the State Department has reminded Mr. Nabil Amr, the Palestinian cabinet minister, that only State Department and White House are to be making statements about talks. Have the State Department done the same thing with Mr. Nabil Amr?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't quite know exactly what you're referring to and some of the specific discussions that you're referring to. We have made clear to both the parties all along and at various occasions during the past few days the expectation, what Mr. Lockhart said right at the beginning, that the United States would report on what was going on at Camp David and we expected that there would be no other people discussing it.

Q And the other delegation members?

MR. BOUCHER: And in terms of additional delegation members -- I'm not aware that we've had any requests like that.

Q But that applies to off the premises as well? You expect what? Do you expect that the delegations be silent here --

MR. BOUCHER: Well --

Q -- and then they get on, you know, talk shows and babble on endlessly? Is that within the rules of the game?

MR. BOUCHER: At this stage --

Q I mean, there is spinning going on outside Camp David and presumably they get their instructions from inside Camp David. Is that playing by the rules?

MR. BOUCHER: Let me quite clear what I said before. We have made quite clear from the outset of these talks and we have made clear to the delegations that the expectation is that the United States will report on the talks at Camp David, on the discussions there to the extent we decide it's appropriate and that no other party will discuss the events taking place at Camp David.

Now, there is obviously a whole world of commentators and issues and there's a whole world of newspapers, magazines, wire service and television time that's being filled up by other people. But in terms of reporting on the talks at Camp David, that is something that we have agreed with the parties, that the President agreed with the parties at his first meeting with them, would be in the hands of the United States.

Q Can you give us a sense, without going into the substance, of how you think it's going? Are you pleased? Is it meeting your expectations so far? You know, fill in the blank with the adjectives that you think are most appropriate. Are you satisfied?

MR. BOUCHER: I think that's another way of trying to get us to give a progress meter every day and I'm really afraid I can't do that for you. We have tried to describe the discussions objectively and as accurately as we can and I just have to stick with that.

Q Given the complexity of all the issues, these core issues, how could you have such a discussion, formal discussions of all the issues together? Wouldn't that make it --

MR. BOUCHER: I think that in fact the complexity of the issues, the fact that these are difficult issues that have different relationships with each other is one of the reasons why you see this playing itself out in a variety of ways. You have different kinds of meetings. You have meetings between leaders, between negotiators, between leaders and negotiators, two-way meetings, three-way meetings because, as you approach the different issues, sometimes you need to use a different configuration of people to do that and the atmosphere and process that we've set up at Camp David is flexible enough, fluid enough and informal enough that we are able to address each of the issues or the whole basket of issues together as appropriate as we proceed through the meetings.

Q May I ask, Richard, before the President left this morning, did he by chance leave any sort of pep talk for either Ms. Albright or the other negotiators or any sort of suggestions he would like to see them achieve today?

MR. BOUCHER: I am not sure if "pep talk" or "instructions" is quite the way. He has met certainly with Secretary Albright and National Security Advisor Berger and talked to them about how things are proceeding and how we, the US side, intended to proceed and now the Secretary is leading the delegation for the United States.

Q Can the President stay in contact with them from Washington during this time he's --

MR. BOUCHER: The President can stay in contact with anybody in the world any time he wants, so yes.

Q Has he called in?

MR. BOUCHER: I'm not aware that he has.

Q Can you tell us a little bit about the mood between the two sides? Are they joking at all, are they serious, grim?

MR. BOUCHER: I'll come back to I think the kinds of descriptions we've used before. The parties are comfortable with each other, there's an informal atmosphere in Camp David. These are people who have talked with each other before in a variety of settings and they're comfortable with each other. But, at the same time, they are all very, very aware of the seriousness of the issues that face them, the toughness of the issues, the fact that these do involve the vital interests of both sides, and trying to understand the interests and reconcile them is a very difficult process that we are going through now.

Q Richard, you said that the intention is to bring the parties to Camp David to deal with all the core issues. Is there a reason why you didn't say "to resolve the core issues"? It sounds like --

MR. BOUCHER: The only reason is that's the phrase we've been using for about a week and I didn't want to change it today.

Q Yesterday, Joe had said that every day you make a list of things you want to accomplish. At the end of two days, two-and-a-half, have you accomplished everything on your list so far?

MR. BOUCHER: I don't remember Joe saying that yesterday, first of all. And I don't think we can give you a daily scorecard anyway.

Q I would like to try and clarify something. Is it true that none of the experts who are off site have come to Camp David in order to join in the discussions on any given issue?

MR. BOUCHER: No, I wouldn't say that was true. But I'm not going to give you a daily report on when an expert might have appeared.

Q But if he did, he had US approval?

MR. BOUCHER: That's right. As we decide it was necessary.

Q To follow up on the Emmitsburg question, are there Palestinian negotiators in Emmitsburg right now or have they declined to go there?

MR. BOUCHER: That's not an issue that I can fill you in on, the location of people and bodies at Emmitsburg is not something I can go into.

Q You said earlier that the President's program so far hasn't changed, his schedule for next week. But that doesn't mean that all the leaders have to go home when he's abroad. Can't they hang around for a few days until he gets back?

MR. BOUCHER: Again, that's very speculative. The schedule of talks remains the same. Nothing has changed. The intention to bring people here to deal with all the issues remains.

Q -- on Sunday and, if so --

MR. BOUCHER: I don't know. That's a question we will have to ask the White House at the appropriate time.

Thank you.

(The briefing concluded at 12:25 p.m.)

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 14, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

5:20 P.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Okay. Let me bring you up to date since we last spoke, just a few hours ago. This won't take long.

Since I was here last, the President has had two bilateral meetings; first with Prime Minister Barak, at the President's cabin, on the back patio. When that was complete, the President took a short walk over to the cabin where Chairman Arafat has been staying for a bilateral meeting there.

The President then met with his team briefly. He's now currently preparing to record his radio address, which is on a domestic subject. Then he'll, no doubt, have more activity tonight, but I don't have any of that confirmed yet.

Q -- bilaterals, anyone else sitting there?

MR. LOCKHART: Translator with -- interpreter with Arafat. I think the Barak meeting today was one-on-one.

Q How long?

MR. LOCKHART: We'll double-check. I don't have the times on it. Some of the Barak meetings have had note-takers. But this one, we can double-check.

Q -- the expert group, if I can call it that, groups -- did they keep meeting? Do you know how long they went?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know if each and every one is still meeting now, but I understand that they were all meeting today. I expect that sometime in the next hour or two they will all

break, report back to their own delegations, report to us on any progress they may have made today.

Q Joe, what's the reaction to the report that the Palestinian officials or sources are saying that Dennis presented a proposal last night that they believe was too much -- too similar to what the Israelis were proposing, and they didn't like it, threatened to walk out and then the President then -- -- proposal had been given to them by --

MR. LOCKHART: I think commenting on that would break the basic tenets of the news blackout. Those of you who have to report, even in a news blackout, will just have to take your chances.

Q Joe, wait a minute -- say anything you don't want to confirm or deny --

MR. LOCKHART: I think that's what I said.

Q -- Arafat has not met again --

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware of.

Q Joe, can you provide a little more information about this meeting with the Palestinian leaders and Secretary Albright? I mean, this -- or did they provide specific information that the Secretary wants to take --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think the information, in their point of view, they've made quite clear, because I think they've been available to the media this afternoon. But I think the Secretary wanted a chance to go and talk to them. She had a good meeting, she listened carefully to their point of view. I think Chairman Arafat thought it was important, thought that this was a good idea for her to take this time to listen to their point of view.

I think they laid out their concerns at how -- on why it was necessary to bring about a genuine peace. Again, I think they are quite able to articulate their own point of view. I think Secretary Albright spent some time explaining why we have the arrangements we do here at Camp David, talked a little bit about the task at hand in terms that I think you've probably heard from her before the negotiations started -- talking about neither side getting 100 percent; how these are the most difficult issues that the parties face, which makes this very difficult, very hard.

And as they work through these issues, this process is bound to get harder as they move along. I think she also made the point that this is a very important process for all parties involved, and we believe it's important that people do what they can to support the process. Yes.

Q To divert for one second. Is the administration pleased with the tobacco verdict in Florida, \$145 --

MR. LOCKHART: The administration doesn't take a view on private lawsuits, but our view about the tobacco industry and their behavior is quite clear, based on the actions the Justice Department is preparing to recoup money based on our cooperation with states, as far as trying to change their marketing practices and their targeting of children. So without commenting specifically on this particular case, we have always believed that the tobacco industry is responsible for the way they have marketed and produced their products.

Q -- the verdict, such a substantial sum, gives you a little bit more of a moral boost or a little bit of a --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know this is about how we feel or a boost in spirits, it's about a very serious, probably the most serious public health issue we have in this country, with more than 3,000 kids starting to smoke every day; a third of them will die early from it. And we think we need to continue to address this issue. In many ways, we're doing it on a number of fronts, as are some people who are private litigants.

Q Joe, on that subject -- talk that if this type of punitive damage goes through, that it will cost the industry jobs and families could lose primary sources of income. What do you say about the concerns of working families who may have their livelihoods just taken?

MR. LOCKHART: I think we worked in good faith with the tobacco industry to try to reach a settlement and they walked away.

Q Do you still believe that the news blackout is expected by both parties in the negotiations?

MR. LOCKHART: I think -- there are certainly some people who are writing things that may or may not be sourced from people who know what they're talking about. But I think, by and large, the substance of what's going on there is remaining in Camp David.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. LOCKHART: Let me do this one. I was not able to nail down -- I know that there will be a shabbat dinner. I was not able to nail down the details and all of the different attendants. I hope to get something and I'll let the pool know this evening.

Q Can you explain -- one meeting between Bark and Arafat. Why are they not talking to each other?

MR. LOCKHART: These negotiations go on at a number of levels, they have a logic unto themselves. And I think in order to reach an agreement, there has to be work done at all levels.

Q -- delegation said that they came basically to see Mr. Arafat. And he had the intention to come back and try to see him again. What do you think about that?

MR. LOCKHART: Depends when they come.

Q Not now?

MR. LOCKHART: I think we've been relatively clear on this. I think the meeting today was a good one. I think both sides expressed satisfaction with it. But our main focus is on what's going on at Camp David, for obvious reasons.

Q Joe, did all three of the -- the three leaders that we saw on CNN, like two days ago, the three leaders that were so-called opposition leaders, did they all three meet with Albright today or was it only two of them, as we --

MR. LOCKHART: I know the group was six or seven people. I don't know -- six? I think they came out and all talked to the press.

Q -- it there?

MR. LOCKHART: We'll check afterwards for you. I think Richard knows.

Q Has there been other -- you said he's going to be working on his radio address, delivering his radio address. Have there been other things that the President has had to attend to today, beyond the Middle East peace talks?

MR. LOCKHART: There's been a variety of subjects. The President's Chief of Staff is up here. For instance, as many of you know, the House took steps on the foreign operations bill, with decidedly mixed response from us as far as some of the things they did. There were some good things in there, there were some bad things. So there was a discussion this morning, separate and apart from what we're doing here about what we might do and what we can do. So that sort of work continues.

Q -- peace talks?

MR. LOCKHART: He's been in touch with a few people, but I'm not going to get into the substance of those, that are not Camp David and domestic.

Q Will the informal format extend possibly to the United States presenting proposals --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think I'm going to get into the format for any proposals that may or may not, because I think whether you write them down or you speak them orally, that gets to substance. The answer was not present -- your question.

Q Do you know why?

MR. LOCKHART: No.

Q Does the administration have any response to the flag issue that's going on in the schools right now?

MR. LOCKHART: The first I heard of this was at the briefing this morning. And without any editorial comment from me on some of the things that have happened here this afternoon, I looked into it. There is a no-flag policy, which makes some sense as far as the meeting rooms, for the talks which has served us well in the past. But in checking with protocol, that really only extends to rooms where there will be meetings or plenaries and clearly does not extend to meetings where press are being worked out of.

So having looked into it and having seen that the spirit and the letter of this agreement doesn't really apply here, we have put the flags back up. They are back up.

Q Did the negotiators observe any kind of religious service today at any time?

MR. LOCKHART: I didn't talk to them specifically about that, nor did they communicate that to me. I'm certain that they followed whatever the normal pattern is.

Q Joe, there's no change in the President's schedule in terms of staying here tonight and through the weekend?

MR. LOCKHART: No, he'll be here tonight, and we'll let you know as we move.

Q Joe, could you tell me more about -- you say you put the flags back up. Are you talking about at Camp David, because some people --

MR. LOCKHART: Now, let me provide you with the facts here, because there's been very little discussion about the facts, and a good bit of grandstanding based on rumors and fantasy. There are two rooms here, and I know this will be a big story in your paper tomorrow, so let me give you the facts.

There are two rooms here where the Palestinian press are working out of, where the Israeli press are working out of. There were two miniature flags that when they went around and were setting them up, someone saw the flags, took them down under the no-flag policy, which again has a solid and logical

foundation, diplomatically. Now, I know there was a lot of fuss made. There wasn't a lot of checking to see what the facts were, but fuss is a lot more interesting than facts. But once I checked on it, and checked that this clearly didn't extend to rooms where the press was working, we put the flags back up.

Q Joe -- ask a question. First of all, we haven't written anything on this, that's why I wanted to get the facts from you. But, secondly, I was going to ask you if the flags were taken down at Camp David and are now being put back up, as well as this building, in this room.

MR. LOCKHART: There's nothing that was -- there's nothing else that's happened here, except for those two rooms where the press is working. All the other flags that were in this building remain there. I understand that the flag out front doesn't fly when school is out, so --

Q -- taken down theirs --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know. I don't know that there was a flag in the room where the plenary was located, but we have a policy for these discussions, which I think does make sense, that in those meeting rooms, there are not flags. But whether things were taken down, I don't know.

Q This is the kind of detail that you apparently can offer us. Any more on the golf cart fiasco? (Laughter.) In terms of who was involved, and --

MR. LOCKHART: I think I'll stick right where I am --

Q Was there a movie shown last night up at Camp David --

MR. LOCKHART: There was some late-night bowling that -- I told some people -- that didn't involve any of the delegations, and just involved a lot of inept bowlers.

Q Any weekend activities planned? No off-campus -- there is no fun at Camp David?

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not sure anyone is describing this as fun.

Q Joe, I've got to try this again. You can say it's substance. The U.S. position traditionally has been in situations like this that at some point, if they feel it's the wise thing to do, they will present bridging proposals. Now, if you can't say whether the U.S. has begun to do this, does the U.S., at this event, which would not be unusual, reserve the prerogative, or the right, or whatever you want to call it, the tactic of presenting bridging proposals?

MR. LOCKHART: We certainly would not eliminate any diplomatic initiative or effort that might help move the process forward. I'm just not going to discuss any of those efforts or any of those options.

Q -- deteriorated between Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak since we're going more into talks, or is it still friendly? How would you characterize it?

MR. LOCKHART: To the extent that I have witnessed something, I have witnessed it firsthand, I haven't witnessed a deterioration.

Q Have you heard about any tensions between the parties? I mean, in the morning, you told me that --

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, these are very, very difficult issues, so I've heard about a lot of tensions between the parties. There are tensions every day when you're trying to work through these difficult issues. I just think it's better left up at Camp David and not detailed here.

Q Today, were there any tensions?

MR. LOCKHART: There are tensions every day, as I said, when you're working through these issues.

Q Is Chairman Arafat packing up his bags?

Q -- walk out of the summit?

MR. LOCKHART: I didn't see any luggage today. (Laughter.)

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

5:35 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 16, 2000

EXCERPT OF INTERVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT
BY MICHAEL KRAMER OF THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

MR. KRAMER: How's it going?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm more optimistic than I was when they got here. This is really important. We might make it. I don't know. God it's hard. It's like nothing I've ever dealt with. All the negotiations with the Irish, all the stuff I've done with the Palestinians before this and with the Israelis, the Balkans at Dayton. What's really troubling is that they know if they make a peace agreement half of their constituencies will have to be angry at them for a while. But I would be totally misleading if I said I had an inkling that a deal is at hand. That's just not true. But we're slogging.

MR. KRAMER: Will you leave for Japan on Wednesday:

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so. I'm gonna do my best to finish here. There's been some progress, but I can't say I know we'll succeed. They're trying. It's so hard. My heart goes out to them. It's really hard. It's the hardest thing I've ever seen.

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 16, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

10:55 A.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Good morning, everybody. For those of you who were lucky enough to get home yesterday, welcome back. For those of you who weren't, I share your pain. Let me briefly run through the schedule up until the point where I think we briefed you yesterday informally. And then I'll tell you what little I know about today.

I think as we told you yesterday, yesterday was a day of informal discussions. The President spent a little bit of time in these discussions with the groups that were working on the issues. He had a session with Prime Minister Barak and with Chairman Arafat. They all dined together last night. Last night's seating arrangement allowed for the President to sit between the two leaders, so they had a discussion through the dinner. The President met with his team after that dinner, and then retired for the evening.

The discussions between the groups, between the parties, have gone on sort of at their own schedule, so I don't have a sort of point-by-point, meeting-by-meeting readout of that.

As for today, the President is at the Evergreen Chapel now for services. They began at 10:30 a.m. This is a weekly custom for the President when he's up here. Generally, services are attended by about 60 or so people from the base, mostly military personnel who are stationed there. When that meeting is over, the President will have a session with his team as they go over the schedule for the rest of the day and make some decisions on what they do today.

Let me give you a little bit more, though, on a question that has come up a few times -- the delegates who are in

Emmitsburg. They met last night in an informal session. The Americans and the Palestinians talked from about 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to work out how they would proceed. The American group and the Israelis met at about 9:30 p.m. for an hour. They met this morning in an trilateral meeting at about 8:45 a.m., agreed almost immediately to break into smaller groups. They've proceeded to do that and are meeting now in smaller groups. As I get more on that, I will let you know.

That's what I have.

Q Joe, you mentioned dinner last night. When he sits between the two of them, does he talk to one and then the other? Does this become a three-way conversation?

MR. LOCKHART: I think it's a combination of, because obviously each of the other leaders has someone to their other side. So it's a combination of the three of them talking to each other with some one-on-one conversation, and some as the other person is, in a polite way, speaking to the person to their left, I guess.

Q Joe, there is a lot of pessimism coming out of Jerusalem today. Precisely, the Israeli Foreign Minister told reporters that after talking to people here at Camp David that they are not very close at all and that he's not very optimistic. Any comment on that appraisal? Is that justified?

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not going to get into handicapping the comments of those who aren't here. They're free to make them. You are free to report them. But their existential meaning on these talks are debatable.

Q Well, Joe, what about the people who are here? Are they making progress?

MR. LOCKHART: I think as I've said throughout the week, I'm not going to try to provide a progress report. I'll give you the bear minimum of what the schedule is and let those who are in these sessions at Camp David concentrate on the difficult issues that face them, and spending a minimum amount of time worrying about what's getting written in the paper.

Q Joe, can you confirm that a second Israeli has joined the Israeli team in negotiating --

MR. LOCKHART: I'll check on that. I don't know. I know that they're still not at the number that --

Q -- Israeli sources have said a second so-called expert --

MR. LOCKHART: That's easy to check.

Q On the Emmitsburg talks, you said they broke into smaller groups this morning. Are those three-way smaller groups, or is it --

MR. LOCKHART: I think so, but we'll double-check whether there's an American assigned to each of these groups. I don't know that, but, again, that's easy to check.

Q I know who the Palestinians are down in Emmitsburg, but I don't know who the Israelis are in Emmitsburg. Can you give me an idea of who they are?

MR. LOCKHART: We'll get State to take a look and see if we can come up with that list.

Q -- issue by issue of the groups?

MR. LOCKHART: They literally broke I think at 9:00 a.m. this morning to get into the groups, so I don't know how they are defining their groups. But we should be able to come up with that. There's less of a veil of secrecy on what they're doing, as opposed to what I am charged to talk about.

Q Joe, have you heard from the parties whether they would be willing to stay after the President leaves?

MR. LOCKHART: As far as I'm aware, there hasn't been any discussion of that.

Q Joe, is the President still planning to leave on Wednesday, and, if so, what time on Wednesday?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't have a time, but the President has a schedule in Tokyo and Okinawa of important G-8 responsibility.

Q Joe, back to the dinner meeting last night. Would you say the atmosphere was positive and that the atmosphere in the talks remained as positive as they were in the beginning?

MR. LOCKHART: I think they dinners have always had a positive feel to them because of the inherent atmosphere and, you know, people coming together for a meal. I think in any negotiation that has now entered it's fifth or sixth day, as you get to the hard issues -- I mentioned the other day that these issues are difficult -- the atmosphere can be tense. That's certainly the case in any number of conversations and discussions as they try to work through these. So I don't want to create the false impression that because they come together each evening for a meal in a positive atmosphere that that permeates all the discussions.

Q -- or some progress up until the day they go, or do they work separately on different issues, unconnected --

MR. LOCKHART: My sense is that there is not a lot of linkage between what's going on at Camp David and the beginning of these discussions.

Q Joe, do you have any -- China and Pakistan, Iran.

MR. LOCKHART: I don't have very much on that. I don't have any -- no one has informed me that it came up in the context of the Camp David discussions. But it obviously underscores our concern about proliferation in the region and proliferation overall, and demonstrates why we do so much work in that field.

Q Can you explain what -- meaning of the talks taking place in Emmitsburg? Do you see that as an intensification? Is it going to help make things go faster back at Camp David? And how do they supplement what's going on --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, there are obviously issues that -- non-core issues that the delegates at Emmitsburg are working on that are important to get worked through. But I think the difficult issues that those that are at Camp David are trying to work through are, in the sense of these discussions, separate and apart. I mean, eventually, these will all have to be decided. So I would warn against trying to read too much into what's going on in Emmitsburg.

Q Are the delegates satisfied with -- some of these reports out of -- some are a violation of that?

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, there has been -- I think the substance of what's been going on has generally been kept in Camp David. There's a lot of people talking; a lot of them don't know what they're talking about. Only time will tell who does and who doesn't.

I'll give you one real-time example of the unfortunate person who had to field the phone calls last night, who, within 15 minutes received a phone call from one distinguished news organization saying a particular delegation had just reported that talks had broken down, or were breaking down and going very badly, and then got a phone call 15 minutes later from another distinguished news organization citing the same delegation sources as saying they were close to a breakthrough. So it's entertaining. (Laughter.)

Q Joe, could you give us a little bit on the President's other activity? For one thing, presumably, he still has Okinawa. Is he getting a chance to prepare, is he reading up on the economic issues? Is there anything you can tell about what he did after the talks last night -- did he watch the White Sox game, did he --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know after they broke. Obviously, the President's daughter is still here, so in the break times

he's getting a chance to spend some time with her. That is particularly when they break for the evening.

As far as Okinawa, the President is getting his daily foreign policy briefing every morning, he's spending time with his Chief of Staff every day. I suspect that given the pressure of these talks at Camp David that a lot of the preparation we'll do for Okinawa will be on that very long plane journey, as far as him getting caught up on his reading. And we'll probably do our trip briefing on the plane.

Q Joe, time is running short now. Is there any sense of greater intensity about these talks?

MR. LOCKHART: I think everyone understands the calendar. Everybody understands what the issues are and what the schedule is. So I think they understand that an intense effort is needed.

Q Joe, if the President leaves to Okinawa, is there a possibility of the negotiation going on under the auspices of Madeleine Albright or --

MR. LOCKHART: That is a question that would involve speculation, which I'm not going to engage in.

Q Joe, can you say that the Chairman -- over the last few days in part of the discussions that they've --

MR. LOCKHART: It's not been reported to me that that's been specifically mentioned, but obviously it underscores -- I would think all sides believe that an agreement needs to be reached, and an agreement is in the interest of all sides.

Q Are the negotiators still divided into certain groups, into different groups, each group working on a certain, on one different core issue?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q They are.

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q What happens -- if the President does go to Japan, what happens to the delegations? Will they stay?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, again, that's very similar to the speculative question that I got over here, which I didn't answer, so I won't answer that.

Q Would you confirm that the U.S. has already presented its bridging proposals?

MR. LOCKHART: I am not going to get into any discussion, as that goes to substance, but -- actually I think I'll stop there. (Laughter.)

Q You said the groups, they're divided up according to issues now. Are those issues then Jerusalem, borders, refugees?

MR. LOCKHART: Without giving you names of the groups or attendees to each group, they are roughly according to the well-known core issues.

Q So three, four, or --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not going to get into numbers.

Q If and when an agreement is reached here, or at a future date, does the White House want to have a signing ceremony at the White House? (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: What do you think, a signing ceremony? Well, listen, that is in the category of things, problems that people who work on that sort of thing would love to have, but no one is focused on that at this point.

Q Can you confirm the Post report today about the price tag for the deal from Congress?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I don't know that there is a specific price tag that anyone with an authoritative voice has used. Those with not authoritative voices are free to speculate. I have said all along that the U.S. government has traditionally tried to find a way to play a constructive role in these peace agreements. Should that be necessary here, we would look to do that. The President has consulted Congress throughout this process, and as appropriate, will consult more closely, should some sort of package need to be put together.

Q -- by both presidential candidates yesterday. Has the Vice President been speaking with President Clinton on -- is he being briefed about what's going on?

MR. LOCKHART: He's certainly, through his own national security team, can get briefed on the overall situation here. The only time that I know they spoke this week is, the President talked to him the night that the Vice President spoke at the NAACP, which was in preparation of the President speaking to the NAACP. The only thing that I talked to the President about, about that conversation was the speech. So whether they talked in general or specifically about what was going on up here, I don't really know.

Q Joe, can you confirm that United Nations resolutions, such as 242, 338 and 194 to secure the cornerstone for policy in the Middle East peace process?

MR. LOCKHART: Let's get an agreement first, P.J. says.

Q Joe, this week, about 400 presidential scholars from 35 countries are meeting on war and peace at Georgetown University.

MR. LOCKHART: Very good university.

Q -- and the President was going to meet them at the White House, but it was cancelled because of this, I believe. There are those in the peace process here because -- Palestine and Israel --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, on a personal note, the President was actually quite concerned and was trying to find some time to reach out to the people -- a number of groups that he had to cancel over the last week. But I think it's quite important in many different senses that a positive atmosphere and an atmosphere conducive to reach an agreement be reached, and I think all parties here are appreciative of those who endeavor in that vein.

That's a good last question.

Q What time this afternoon?

MR. LOCKHART: At 4:00 p.m. or 5:00 p.m.

END

11:10 A.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 16, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

5:30 P.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Good afternoon. Welcome to what I hope will be a very short briefing. Let me answer a couple of questions that got asked of me this morning which I didn't know the answer to, but there has been, as asked, one addition to the Israeli delegation -- Mr. Hassoun --

Q How many total now?

MR. LOCKHART: I think it's one short -- 11 to 12.

Q How do you spell his name, Joe?

MR. LOCKHART: Last name is Hassoun. Deputy Director of the General Security Services.

There was a second question that I didn't know the answer to which I now do, which is the U.S. team is involved at Emmitsburg. The three teams that have been formed have been meeting in a variety of formats, including directly one-on-one, and also in three-way sessions. That continues.

As far as the President's schedule, he had two meetings today with his team here. He had a meeting with senior negotiators from both the Israeli and Palestinian sides. That was one meeting, so that it was the two negotiating teams and the President and the U.S. team together. As I was leaving he was about to begin a bilateral meeting with Chairman Arafat. So I expect there to be more activity this evening. We'll let you know before we send you home for tonight.

Questions.

Q The activity is quite different from the conflicting reports coming out of surrogates for each side here, the Israelis saying -- some progress is being made. Is it fair to say that the U.S. take on this situation is somewhere in the middle?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, the U.S. view is, given there's a news blackout, we're not going to comment on any progress or lack of progress. Having looked through some of the stories of the last few days, though, I can say I think without breaking the ground rules that a majority of the stories citing sources not at the talks have been wrong. So I would take them as flyers that some of you have to take in order to try to report this story, but not having a lot to do with what's going on up there.

Q So it's your view then that both of those extremes are incorrect --

MR. LOCKHART: It is my view that I have taken the position, the U.S. has taken the position that we're not going to provide analysis of the talks. Both of those imply analysis, which I'm not going to either lend credence to or knock down.

Q If there is significant progress this week, but not an agreement by the time the President has to leave for Japan, any chance the President might delay that trip?

MR. LOCKHART: That's a speculative question. The President's schedule is the President's schedule.

Q When is the President scheduled to leave? When does his meeting start in Japan?

MR. LOCKHART: The President -- have we put the schedule out for Japan? The detailed schedule will go out tomorrow, but he plans to spend the day before the G-8 begins in Tokyo for a variety of events. And then he'll be at the G-8 for the weekend.

Q -- what the summit will --

MR. LOCKHART: An agreement.

Q -- still offering the view that the delegation here and any other people in the Middle East, ministers and officials of the Middle East --

MR. LOCKHART: I assume from what I read that there are contacts back to the region. But I don't know to what extent since I haven't queried them on it.

Q -- photo op having this statement from -- about the negotiations here, happened, reportedly, after his contact

with Prime Minister Barak. So do they have any credibility in your opinion?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, that's something that I think you'll have to assess.

Q Has the President called any foreign leaders in the last -- over the weekend?

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware of.

Q Joe, do you see enough progress being made to wrap up by Tuesday, before the President leaves?

MR. LOCKHART: Ask me Tuesday.

Q Joe, the Majority Leader said today that the Senate would not afford money for a Palestinian settlement. Is it constructive to be talking about that sort of thing while negotiations are in play, or is that something that is not a surprise to all of you?

MR. LOCKHART: I think we've done extensive consultations with the leaders on both sides of Congress, on both sides of the political aisle. We have kept them informed where the process is all along. I think at this point speculating about what may be done or may not be done is not the most useful pastime for a Sunday morning.

Q Joe, you mentioned that a lot of these reports are erroneous. There was a very specific AFP report that stated that Barak had phoned home and talked with ministers and said there were wide gaps. Can you comment at all on the veracity of that report?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know anything about it.

Q The BBC asked Mr. Boucher a question and he referred it back to you --

MR. LOCKHART: What was the question, Richard? Should I take it or should I bounce it back to you? (Laughter.)

MR. BOUCHER: If it's the one I'm thinking of --

MR. LOCKHART: Okay.

Q What activities are between Buddy and the members of the delegation? (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: Well, as a rule, Buddy generally keeps to himself. (Laughter.) But let's just say, without getting into the substance of what's happened at the talks, this has been a bonanza for Buddy because the amenities from a canine point of

view at Camp David are far superior to what is offered at the more urban center of the White House. (Laughter.)

Q -- (inaudible) --

MR. LOCKHART: Nothing gets past this guy.

Q Has anyone of the Palestinian delegation joined the President at the church today for the Sunday --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not sure who went. The only people I know who went to church, because I heard the President talking in a small group, were the President, the Secretary of State and Chelsea. They were having a discussion. I don't know who else went.

Q Is there going to be any announcement before the President leaves --

MR. LOCKHART: I mean, I expect that when the President goes to Japan, you all will have an opportunity to get an assessment of what happened at the talks.

Q Joe, can you verbalize why the President must meet with the senior negotiators? To weigh into this -- everybody knows the issues, the President knows the issues, everybody knows the issues. Why is he meeting with the negotiators? I mean, he's seeing the top, the two leaders.

MR. LOCKHART: I think we believe that what needs to be done to get to an agreement has to be done at a variety of levels. Ultimately, difficult decisions need to be done with the leaders, but there's also work that needs to be done with the negotiators. And I think we have found over the last few days that a useful mechanism for trying to move things forward is for the President to talk both in a bilateral way with the leaders, to talk in trilateral sessions with the negotiators. There's a number of different ways to do this, and we'll employ whichever ones we think are effective.

Q It sounds like he's pitching -- as a matter of persuasion instead of a matter of learning what the issues are. Because he knows the issues, right?

MR. LOCKHART: I am stretching now for a baseball metaphor answer and I'm stuck. So we'll do that later.

Q -- he's not acquiring information, he's trying to push the agreement along.

MR. LOCKHART: Well, listen, without getting into details, both sides are negotiating, and the President is trying to do what he can to help both sides reach an agreement.

Q Before the President called for the summit he said that the negotiators had reached an impasse -- and right now we are witnessing the President talking to the negotiators.

MR. LOCKHART: I think if you go back over your notes for the last few days, you'll find the President has spent an enormous amount of time with the two leaders. This is a process that is not done on one level, it takes a number of different ways to get it done. But I do think that if you go back and look at your notes you'll find that your question does not reflect accurately what you know.

Q -- discussions to be one of the important -- (inaudible) -- can you tell us which important --

MR. LOCKHART: Do I look that simple? (Laughter.) I mean, really, tell me. I think I'll take a pass on that.

Q Joe, is it true that President Clinton promised Chairman Arafat to agree and to recognize a Palestinian state if an agreement is reached in the coming weeks?

MR. LOCKHART: I'm just not going to get into any discussion of what's being discussed up there beyond what I've told you.

Q Joe, are delegations allowed to trade in a member of their negotiation if they feel that someone on the outside might be more useful --

MR. LOCKHART: I think the President made clear that should delegations need experts on specific issues, those requests would be honored. I'm not aware that any request like that has come.

Q -- aiming at an agreement at the summit. Does that also include a partial agreement or is there one specific kind of agreement --

MR. LOCKHART: I think I'll stick with an agreement for now, and we'll parse that later.

Q Joe, you talked about tension -- is that tension only between the Israelis and the Palestinians, or is some of that tension between the President and either of the two leaders, the President pressing one side or the other to move --

MR. LOCKHART: I think it is the issues and the intractability and difficulty of the issues that provides the impetus for the atmosphere to be tense at time, and I don't think that's solely something that's held by the parties. It's certainly our view, though, that it's our role to try to help the parties work through these things and see areas where we can find agreement.

Q -- information that -- (inaudible) -- is supposed to leave back to the West Bank to attend his son's wedding. Would he be able to go?

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not aware of that, I hadn't heard that report.

Q -- some conversations going on back at the White House about the possibility of Gore going instead of the President to Japan -- there are those conversations taking place -- cause some consternation on the part of the Japanese. Is there any concern --

MR. LOCKHART: Let me stop your question because it is speculation and I don't deal in speculation. But let me say secondly, if you have it from solid sources and those people are having conversations with each other, these are people who don't have enough to do because they're not here and things are quiet at the White House, and you should take it with a grain of salt.

Q Can I just ask you is there any concern should the President decide for whatever reason, to be at Camp David or whatever, that he needs to stay in the U.S. and send Vice President Gore to the summit, there may be consternation on the part of the allies?

MR. LOCKHART: That's sort of three levels into hypotheticals and speculation. I, unlike some of the people who don't have enough to do, do have some things to do, so I'll leave you now. Thank you.

END

5:48 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 17, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

11:45 A.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: -- a brief update of the schedule of events, since we last spoke. Since last night's briefing, the President in the evening, had dinner at the Laurel. The parties dined separately last night. The President met with his team and then before retiring for the evening, the President had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Barak.

For the second night in a row, the negotiating teams, though, worked very late in the night and I think are probably back at it now, as we speak.

The President, this morning, met with his team beginning at about 10:15 a.m. And as I was leaving, he was preparing to go over for a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Barak.

On other issues, in Emmitsburg, the teams there met late into the night; a variety of different formats, as we discussed yesterday. They started again early this morning, just after breakfast. Those meetings have been described to me as serious and intensive.

Questions.

Q Joe, we've got an alumnus with us from the '78 Camp David, especially for the second week -- Jim Anderson --

MR. LOCKHART: Does that indicate to me that, Barry, you're not an alumnus?

Q I am. (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: So we have alumni. Is it second alumnus or second alumni?

Q Second alumnus.

MR. LOCKHART: Okay. How would we get to alumni?

Q Well, I don't know if he's going to ask a question --

Q No.

MR. LOCKHART: Okay.

Q He can't think of anything, it's been years.
(Laughter.) How's Carter doing? (Laughter.) Go ahead.

Q Is the President also meeting with Arafat today?

MR. LOCKHART: I expect throughout the day the President will have a variety of meetings in a variety of different formats. I'll have more for you at our second session today.

Q At Emmitsburg, are all of the committees or the subgroups meeting again this morning?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q Do you know what time they began?

MR. LOCKHART: I was told it was just after breakfast, so I think within the last couple of hours.

Q -- the reports -- the time the committees actually had to breakdown last night and send issues back to their leaders because they reached some impasses?

MR. LOCKHART: That would go to the substance of the negotiations, so I won't have any comment on that.

Q I thought that the Emmitsburg talks were not covered --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm sorry, I thought you meant on --

Q -- on the three technical committees, that it's being reported that --

MR. LOCKHART: No, I have not heard that. And I would have no hesitation to tell you if that was the case, because these are outside, on the non-core issues. But that has not been reported to me.

Q Joe, are you displeased that President Clinton broke his own ground rules and discussed Camp David?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I think this was an extraordinary circumstance. You know, we live in a world where the National Enquirer mentality has hijacked journalism and that has become an issue in New York. And these are scurrilous and untrue charges and the President wanted to set that straight.

Q Joe, what can you tell us about the two most recent photographs that were released, that shows a very somber Israeli Prime Minister eating with President Clinton. I mean -- the earlier photograph.

MR. LOCKHART: I would not try to read too much into the photographs; as a matter of course, the photographer comes in at the top of the meeting and is quickly shooed out. So I wouldn't read too much.

But I will tell you, as the President indicated in his remarks yesterday, this is hard going. I think he indicated that he's never experienced something that's this tough -- both on the issues and the process that they're going through, this is very difficult. So I don't think you would all believe them as authentic if I brought down a bunch of pictures of everybody smiling, giving a thumbs-up.

Q Joe, I need to ask, I'm afraid, the President -- to New York --

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q Can you tell me if the President has given his wife words of encouragement in this --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think, obviously, the President probably has more experience than any living human being about how deep in the gutter some people can go. So I think they both understand that when you're out in public life, these sort of things happen. It doesn't make it right. It doesn't make it right that a bunch of people are out there trying to push this; but I think the important thing that he has always stuck to is the public always gets it right, and if you stick to the issues, and stick to the issues that they're concerned about, you'll come out okay.

Q Joe -- aside, did the President break his own ground rules by describing himself as optimistic and then saying --

MR. LOCKHART: I think given the way that we have described these, those were outside the rules that we've set down, but I think the circumstances warranted that.

Q Did Mike Kramer's request for an interview come through the --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know how the request came through.

Q Joe, -- after speaking with Prime Minister Barak, that he was hopeful that -- reach an agreement in the next few days. And -- ask about the statement. The day before yesterday, we had -- making a statement after speaking with Barak. Today, we have the --. Is this consistent with the spirit of the blackout, or what you call the --

MR. LOCKHART: I think it's consistent with the chatter that has continued outside the talks. I have cautioned you from the beginning to be careful not to read too much into the discussions that go on beyond the gates of Camp David. We were just talking before we came out here about the fact that there's now a report that one side is ready to leave at the end of the day, and yesterday there was a report that that same side was ready to stay two weeks. So I think I'll stay somewhere in the middle.

Q Joe, what does the New York political crisis have to do with comments on the peace talks? You said that the situation was extraordinary -- could he not have simply made his comments on setting the record straight and then stuck to his --

MR. LOCKHART: Sure, he could have. And I think if you look at -- but if you look at the answer, you'll find that the answer didn't give very much away.

Q Is the President still definitely planning to leave for Japan Wednesday? And the second question, does the White House still believe there's an opportunity to get an agreement before he departs?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I don't think we'd be here if we didn't think there was some chance of trying to get this done. And as far as the schedule, it hasn't changed.

Q Might the talks be extended beyond Wednesday? And will Mr. Clinton take Mr. Arafat and Mr. Barak with him to the G-8? (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: You know, I thought I had thought through all of the possibilities. (Laughter.) Thirteen and a half hours on a plane. (Laughter.) I don't think so.

Q But might the talks be extended beyond --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not going to get into speculative questions. The President has a schedule to keep concerning the G-8, which is a very important meeting. And that schedule hasn't changed.

Q -- talk to the President or the First Lady to assure both of them that she is not perceived as an --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm sorry, say the beginning again?

Q Has Prime Minister Barak commented on the charges against --

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware of. Listen, the issues that they are dealing with up there are so central to their own national interests that I can't imagine either leader being distracted by anything, especially something as unimportant as the sort of new politics of the U.S.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. LOCKHART: Well, if you define being distracted by taking 15 minutes to do an interview, then he's distracted. I wouldn't define it that way.

Q Joe, would you say the delegates are putting in longer hours now than there were at the beginning of --

MR. LOCKHART: Yes. I think the pace of the discussions has intensified. As I think I indicated at the beginning, there have been two straight, very long nights between the sides, working through the difficult issues here. So I think the simple answer to that is, yes.

Q Is there a plan to take a break when the President goes to Japan -- in the talks?

MR. LOCKHART: The plan is to complete this process before the President goes.

Q Joe, you mentioned that the President intends to keep his commitment to go to the G-8 summit. It's conceivable, isn't it, that he could still leave Thursday -- Wednesday night or Thursday to make the summit. Isn't that possible, that the talks could extend Wednesday, he could still attend the summit?

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, I don't have the schedule here in front of me. It's my understanding that we'll leave for Japan Wednesday morning.

Q The President has a schedule. Have the other leaders made any point about their own schedule, their own, maybe, obligations? Or are they at the service of the host and --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think both leaders and the delegations understand the time constraints we're under and are working toward -- working through these issues in a way that this can get done before the President has to leave.

Q Do you think the President wants to complete the process -- to complete the process -- is this going to be -- I

know it's substance, -- to complete the process, will this complete the process toward the framework agreement or for the signing agreement? And before the President goes, at what time will he be going?

MR. LOCKHART: I think that schedule will be released later today. I think there will be a briefing at the White House to look forward to the trip. I think it's some time Wednesday morning.

Q -- question -- complete the process. Will this be the completed state of the process or a final accord or an interest and framework? What do you mean, to complete the process?

MR. LOCKHART: I think I'll stand by the answer I've used throughout this, which is to complete a process where they reach an agreement.

Q What about the --

MR. LOCKHART: Only among reporters.

Q Joe, I know the moods are changing more than mood rings, and they're not very reliable, but --

MR. LOCKHART: If I were a tree -- (laughter.)

Q The Palestinians' mood has been described over the weekend as more optimistic. The Palestinians are now telling us that the talks are in major crisis, that things look very pessimistic. They must be at least trying to send some kind of a signal about where things stand, for them to be saying that publicly. So what do you read into that?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I haven't seen any of them stand up and say it, so I'm going to try not to read anything into it. These all, as far as I can tell, seem to be face-less and nameless people.

Q Joe, why didn't they have dinner together last night?

MR. LOCKHART: I think they just decided to work amongst themselves at the dinner hour last night. I wouldn't read anything into --

Q -- broken into committees, groups --

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, there's a variety of different -- I mean, the leaders are meeting. The President, as I indicated yesterday, is meeting with negotiators. Then there are separate groups that are dealing with particular issues. So there's a lot going on at a lot of different levels.

Q Joe, for the most part, the meeting for the leaders seems to be on a bilateral basis with the President. Is there any plan over the next two days for them to start increasing their --

MR. LOCKHART: If that happens, I'll let you know about that.

Q -- lawyers drafting be part of the many ways that things are progressing?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, there's certainly amongst the people, a number of lawyers. But what they're doing, I don't know.

Q No one -- (laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: Charging per hour, probably. (Laughter.)

Q Given the time frame, I wonder, is it a fair assessment the talks are now in a critical phase?

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, I think you can micro-analyze this at any different level. I would prefer to take a broader view, which is that the peace process is at a critical phase that started last week when these talks began.

Q -- Arafat in good health and he was seen yesterday as the holding hands with Secretary Albright. Was she helping him walk -- (laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: You know what, if I answer no, I open up a whole new area that I'm not going to venture in, so I'll take a pass. (Laughter.) Anybody got any questions on Buddy? (Laughter.)

Q The President did -- skip Tokyo and go directly to Okinawa?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't have any news on the schedule.

Q -- Assad was sworn in and made a statement about peace, wanting the President to continue his role, but also saying that Syria is not prepared to give up one inch of territory. Any reaction to that and anything that would go to when the U.S. might see a resumption of the Syria --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think obviously the primary focus right now is on the Israeli-Palestinian talks, as the President has been up there. I know certainly the U.S. is taking note of the swearing in today. The Secretary of State has sent a message to that extent. I don't have any new information or news on the Syrian track, except to repeat that we think it's important that we reach an overall and comprehensive agreement, because it's in the interest of all the parties in the region.

Q Joe, maybe I missed it, but could you name the three committees that are at Emmitsburg, and is one of them the interim issues, that they're --

MR. LOCKHART: No, it is water, civil affairs, and economics.

Q -- interim issues, like third redeployment being discussed?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know, let me check with these guys afterwards.

Q What's your impression about the big demonstration of the -- in Israel?

MR. LOCKHART: I think it's best that I not comment on the internal politics or demonstrations on either side.

Q Joe, among his phone calls, has the President talked to any foreign leaders in the last couple days?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I think the President has been concentrating solely on this, with the exception of a few domestic issues that have come up, and he hasn't made any calls that I know of.

Q Joe, on one of those domestic issues, perhaps, does the President still plan to veto the marriage penalty tax plan, which might pass today and, if so, isn't it true that he was recently willing to make a deal to accept that in exchange for a prescription drug --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, the President put forward a proposal that targets marriage penalty relief to those who actually pay the marriage penalty. However, the President has said that in return for cooperation on moving a prescription drug benefit within Medicare, he'd be willing to go along with a more expansive program that the Republicans have put forward.

So this is a question that's very much in the Republican leadership's hands. They can make political points, pass bills so they can talk about them at their convention. Or we can get marriage penalty relief and prescription drugs for seniors, as the President has offered. It's up to them, politics or substance.

Q Joe, how do you -- the people in Emmitsburg to -- about water, culture, civil affairs, economy, when the core issue hasn't been settled and the land hasn't been defined yet?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think, obviously, as evidenced by the fact that they're talking, they've got things to talk about.

There are obviously some issues that I think are somewhat dependent on the other discussions, but they certainly have found areas in which they have disagreements where they hope they can make progress.

Q Did the President speak with King Abdullah or --

MR. LOCKHART: Not in the last two days, no.

Q Thanks.

MR. LOCKHART: Thank you.

END

12:02 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 17, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

4:05 P.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Good afternoon. In lieu of a briefing book, this is what they gave me today, so don't expect much. (Laughter.) All right. Let me bring you up to date since we last spoke, which was just a few short hours ago.

The President completed his bilateral with Prime Minister Barak; met with his team for a short time. As we speak, right now he is meeting with his team in anticipation of a bilateral with Chairman Arafat. The report from Emmitsburg is the meetings continue in a serious and intensive way. Questions.

Q Can I get you a bigger piece of paper? (laughter.)

Q Joe, the teams continue to meet, the teams all continue to meet?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes. Both in Emmitsburg and Camp David, there are a variety of meetings going on, short of the leader level. They're still going through the issues.

Q Can you say how long the Barak meeting was?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't have an exact time. I know it began shortly after I was up here the last time, but I didn't get a time when it broke.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. LOCKHART: I'll let you know what happens.

Q Do you expect an all-nighter again tonight on the negotiator level?

MR. LOCKHART: If the last couple nights are any indication, I do expect them to go late into the evening.

Q Two days ago you said that they are working in groups by issues. Still the same thing, groups?

MR. LOCKHART: They're working in a variety of format, including in groups divided by issue, yes.

Q Can you say that delegations are going to continue here after the President leaves?

MR. LOCKHART: I expect that when the President leaves, the parties will have wrapped up their business.

Q Joe, is there any way that you can expand a little bit on your rather sparse description of the meetings today?

MR. LOCKHART: I can go through what I've gone through over the last couple of days, if that's helpful. They're discussing the core issues, the very difficult issues that go to their --

Q Is there anything different? Is there any change in the atmosphere or the tone, or are they exactly the same as --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think it's exactly the same. I mean, I think as you get -- I think that the parties understand the schedule here. They understand that they're working toward that. So as I said earlier today, I think the pace and the intensity have both quickened.

Q Joe, would you talk some more about experts that have come in. Have there been any experts coming in today?

MR. LOCKHART: Over the last few days there have been some experts, but I'm not going to detail who they are on each side, and what they were there for.

Q Okay, so short of getting into that side of it, how about any other color from what's going on in terms of dinners, golf carts, bowling --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, without mentioning his name, there is a senior American diplomat who wiped out on his bicycle earlier today. He is fine. But we don't want to embarrass him. But when the cameras are turned off, I'll tell you who he is.
(Laughter.)

Q Does he wear glasses, Joe? (Laughter.)

Q Joe, when you said, I expect when the President leaves the parties will have wrapped up their business, does that mean that you are now imposing a deadline -- the President's departure means end the talks?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I said, I expect. The plan was they would met, and the President would leave. I don't have anything more than if you'd asked me that question seven days ago.

Q Joe, have the Palestinians told you that they intend to break to go to a wedding of Abu Mazen's son, on Thursday in Ramallah?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I don't think -- my understanding is that I expect that he will attend. I didn't know it was Thursday, I just knew he had to leave by Wednesday, which is the day the President has to leave.

Q Can I ask you about Wednesday? You said this morning that sometime tomorrow the President will decide to stick to the schedule on Japan. When tomorrow will he make the final decision about traveling to Japan?

MR. LOCKHART: If I said that, I don't know what I was talking about, which is not new. But the President's schedule is the schedule, and he's not going to make a decision at some point tomorrow whether he sticks to the schedule or not.

Q -- but you did say this morning that the final decision of the schedule will be made sometime tomorrow.

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think so. The President -- you'll know that we're following through on the schedule when you see the President walk up to the top of the steps and wave and the door close.

Q Wednesday morning at 9:45 a.m.?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, tomorrow morning -- oh, sorry, Wednesday morning.

Q -- and if you keep insisting you're going to wrap up the talks -- the possibility --

MR. LOCKHART: If I was in the business of speculating about all the possibilities in the world, I would take that question. I'm not, so I won't.

Q Is there a possibility for another summit, if they don't wrap up?

MR. LOCKHART: I think that falls in the same category as the previous question.

Q Joe, can you cite a couple or three things about the Okinawa meeting that's of great significance that requires the President?

MR. LOCKHART: I think the work the G-8 does is extraordinarily important to keeping the economic expansion that the world has enjoyed, particularly in this country, going. There's a number of particular things that will be on the agenda this year, as far as debt relief, how the world is dealing with AIDS crisis and infectious diseases as a whole, and a number of well-known issues.

Q And he'll see Putin.

MR. LOCKHART: He'll have a number of bilaterals, yes, including the Russian President, the Japanese Premier, and the British Prime Minister.

Q Joe, there was a rally yesterday in Tel Aviv. Can you tell us how Prime Minister Barak kept apprised of that and what impact, if any, it's had on the atmosphere of the talks?

MR. LOCKHART: There's no one who reported to me any change in the atmospherics, and besides being able to read the paper, I don't know what other source of information he has from home.

Q Are they getting papers up there every morning?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, sure. I mean, there are the --

Q Are they getting the Israeli press --

MR. LOCKHART: That I don't know. I know that the U.S. papers are widely available at Camp.

Q What about television?

MR. LOCKHART: Television is on and there are 60 to 70 channels available.

Q Joe, on a different subject, but one you touched on about the G-8 summit -- AIDS is a national security issue, -- earlier with Ambassador Boucher, but Ambassador Holbrooke -- a resolution in the Security Council -- with AIDS and peacekeeping troops, trying to set it up so that peacekeeping troops would be better educated and informed about AIDS. Where is the administration going in terms of this policy, given that the Republicans have already criticized --

MR. LOCKHART: I think that's an important, but only one part, of an overall effort. I think there was some skepticism and some partisan comments made when a story was written recently about looking at AIDS as a national security issue. I think the

recent AIDS conference and the stories that have been done out of that validate the approach the U.S. is taking.

When you look at African countries and all the work we've done to try to promote stability and democracy on that continent, and you look at the staggering numbers involving their population as a whole -- their military, in particular -- you can't help but understand the destabilizing factors that may come into play.

So this is an important issue. And we have, I think in the last year, doubled our international AIDS budget. We need to do more; we're going to do more. And that's one of many important issues that we'll discuss at G-8.

Q When he goes to the G-8, will he be talking to any of the other nations about funding for --

MR. LOCKHART: You know, I think that it will be a good opportunity for the President to talk about the international community's ability and responsibility to help with this process. So, obviously, as we said before this started, having some sort of agreement in place, this is a perfect scheduling coincidence as far as the President being able to sit with world leaders and make the case for this.

Q Why is it more important the President goes to the G-8 than stays on here with the two leaders as they --

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think we look at this and try to rank things in terms of importance, one versus the other. The President has a number of international responsibilities, many of which are done in the context of G-8. I think we made clear at the beginning of this process what the schedule was. We knew that the issues were well-known. It's certainly our hope that the parties can come together and work through these difficult issues before the President needs to leave.

Q Saudi Arabia's -- today issued a statement -- supporting President Arafat's effort in regaining the Arab and Muslim rights in Jerusalem. How do you see that statement helping or hurting the talks, and has President Clinton solicited support from regional leaders?

MR. LOCKHART: I think the President, in the past, has talked extensively with regional leaders about their important role they can play, not only in creating a positive atmosphere, but also in helping to articulate the reasons that a peace agreement is good for everyone in the region. I expect he'll continue to do that in the future.

As far as that statement goes, I don't know that it has any particular impact on the talks, but I think it's important that regional leaders who have a stake in this work positively to create a positive atmosphere.

Q Can you give a statement whether the news blackout has served its purpose in enhancing the prospects of a deal being reached?

MR. LOCKHART: This is my personal assessment, but I think that it has worked, and I think it's worked because the leaders - the delegations have spent the vast majority of their time dealing with the issues in front of them, the core issues that separate them, and not dealing for three or four hours a day, with negative stories or positive stories, or stories they didn't like, or stories they thought were wrong, that were in the paper every morning. There has been very little discussion up there that has to do with how this is being covered, and with the vast majority of the discussions focused on the issues. That's what is was designed to do, and I think it's worked.

Q So you're not at all frustrated at the fact that you have to come and get up here twice a day and basically say nothing to us? (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: This isn't nothing. There's a lot on this little piece of paper. (Laughter.)

Q You said the other day that most -- a lot of these reports were not well-founded. Do they spend 15 minutes a day talking about reports in the press or --

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, my assessment of it is that -- I can't quantify it, but there's very little discussion of the, as compared to some other sessions that I've been involved in, where there's been a lot of discussion about this thing that was in the paper, or what this anonymous official said, or what that anonymous official said. I can't really quantify it, but it has not in any way functionally or qualitatively impacted the discussions.

Q Would you be prepared to alter the pre-summit warning that if these talks don't succeed, the area will slip into hostility -- given the fact that they have talked the issues out for seven days, do you suppose that will have a beneficial effect, whether or not there's an agreement?

MR. LOCKHART: I think it's hard to say. I think the words that the President used at the beginning of this process, the day before they talked and the morning, were chosen very carefully and I think still apply.

Q Are you ruling out the possibility of any talks at any level continuing at Camp David when the President --

MR. LOCKHART: What I'm ruling out is speculating on something that I have no way of knowing. What I know is that the

President intends to get on a plane Wednesday morning to go and fulfill his requirements as an important leader in the G-8.

Q Is it safe to say that the Okinawa summit would make a good justification to suspend the summit without calling it a failure if you don't reach an agreement?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't think I'd ever do that.

Q It's been a week now. How are they holding up physically? I assume they're -- you described their dinner, they're getting enough to eat, obviously. Are they getting enough sleep, recreation, so on?

MR. LOCKHART: I think there are a number of negotiators who have been awake for a long time over the last two or three days. I think it's difficult coming continually back to the same issues with the same people. That kind of environment is not always the best for the warm and fuzzies. But I think they all know the work they have to do and they all understand the opportunity that faces them right here, right now, and the results of not being able to reach an agreement. So I think they understand that and they're all willing to do the work.

Q I know you don't want to talk about hypotheticals, but has there been any discussion among the three leaders about what they will do if Wednesday arrives and there's no agreement?

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not aware of any discussions. The discussions that I'm aware of focus on getting the work done in the time that's allowed to them.

Q How would you describe, wrapping up the business? Is this business framework agreements or interim -- I'd like to know your definition of "the business."

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, I said at the beginning of this they were looking for an agreement. I'm going to stay there, and I'm not going to try to dissect what that word means.

Q Thank you.

MR. LOCKHART: Thank you.

END

4:15 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Camp David, Maryland)

For Immediate Release

July 18, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

12:20 P.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Good afternoon, everyone. Sorry I'm a little bit late. Let me bring you up to date on what's happened since Mr. Crowley briefed you late last night. The talks continued at a variety of levels very late into the evening last night. The President, for his part, had two separate sessions with Prime Minister Barak; met with the team several times. Mr. Berger and Secretary of State Albright met with Chairman Arafat. The President's night, or, more accurately morning, ended at about 5:00 a.m. This morning, the President began with a meeting with his team at about 10:00 a.m. And at about 10:30 a.m. or so, began a bilateral meeting with Chairman Arafat.

On a scheduling note, let me just, for the White House people here, let you know that, as the discussions are continuing -- and I expect them to continue into the evening tonight -- rather than send the press plane out this evening at 8:00 p.m., which was the much more convenient and hospitable way to do it, we'll wait until tomorrow morning, just so you guys aren't -- the White House people aren't in the air 10 hours from someplace when and if we come out and say something about what's going on.

And I think for those who cover the State Department, the Secretary of State will stay here tonight through the evening and will not be traveling to London.

Q She's not traveling?

MR. LOCKHART: To London.

Q Could you tell us when the President wound up with the Prime Minister? In fact, do you know how long he spent, how much time he spent in those two meetings?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know cumulatively how much time, but I think the last meeting, the second bilateral, ended

somewhere between 4:00 a.m. and 4:30 a.m., and the President spent some time with his team after that.

Q So, Joe, what you're in fact saying is that the schedule has -- that he's going to meet later than expected --

MR. LOCKHART: No, I haven't. No. In fact, we generally at the White House try to send the press plane out with enough time so people can get in and get checked in, and even sometimes get a night's sleep. I think, given the fact that we're going to be here this evening, it makes sense to put them on the same schedule as the President, so I expect them to leave roughly about the same time. We might send them out a little earlier, a little later, depending on how the airport wants to treat the two planes.

Q The President is still scheduled to leave tomorrow morning at 9:50 a.m.?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q Back in '78, President Carter instructed one of his aides to begin drafting a speech that he would deliver, instructing him to begin drafting at the beginning of the summit a speech that he could deliver in the event that it failed. Did President Clinton give any such instructions to any of his aides at the beginning or any time during the summit?

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware of.

Q Joe, while we're at a contingency, if I could slip in a quick one, are there any contingency, if that's the word, arrangements being made for a signing ceremony? It being a possibility, are you preparing the appropriate room at the White House for that contingency?

MR. LOCKHART: I think given the fact that we've been through this a number of times and a number of different issues, there doesn't need to be much preparing. I'm confident that the team at the White House can, on a moment's notice, put something together.

Q Joe, what should we read into the fact that the President worked so late into early in the morning? What is the significance of that?

MR. LOCKHART: I think the significance of that is that as the President said in his own voice, these issues are as difficult as any as he's any confronted in a negotiation. Both sides have clear views of what's in their interests, and it is very, very difficult to try to bridge the gaps.

Q Joe, can you give us any sense of whether the atmosphere inside Camp David has changed, with just the next day or so --

MR. LOCKHART: I think people understand that there is not an open-ended or unlimited amount of time, so people understand the pressure that they're under, because the stakes are high here, and the issues are important. And I think that people have been at this now for quite some time, and a variety of people have been up most of the night for the last three nights, so I think you can expect that they're tired, but they're staying at it.

Q Joe, if the President is still scheduled to leave tomorrow morning, is it fair to say that both President Arafat and Prime Minister Barak are going to leave tomorrow, probably?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't have any information one way or the other on their travel plans. I don't know whether they have other plans for further travel or other activities.

Q Joe, do you expect an announcement prior to the President's departure tomorrow morning?

MR. LOCKHART: I expect that when the President leaves, we'll let you know where things are, and my sense is that sometime before he leaves, you'll probably hear from him.

Q Joe, you categorized before the reports from people outside the talks as being -- the majority of them being inaccurate. Overnight, there have been a lot of similar reports saying that the issue of Jerusalem is now being discussed. Would you categorize those in the same way --

MR. LOCKHART: I would say, without getting into that particular report, that the batting average of reports coming out of people who are not here has not improved. And I guess getting it right four out of 10 times gets you into the hole; same for baseball, but I don't know if that's so good in what we're talking about now.

Q Joe, did the President say there's nothing that stops the holding of further rounds of talks between now and the 13th of September between the parties?

MR. LOCKHART: You know, right now the focus is on the talks that are going on right now, and there's not a lot of people worrying about a theoretical possibility of other discussions.

Q Have there been any meetings directly between Barak and Arafat, or with the President and Barak and Arafat in the last 24 hours? Are there any plans for such --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not aware of in the last 24 hours. If one happens, I'll let you know.

Q Have there been any requests for other people to join the delegation, perhaps from Emmitsburg, in the last 24 hours, since we last asked?

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware of, no.

Q And on Emmitsburg, are those talks still continuing?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know that they've begun -- done any discussions this morning; I haven't gotten a report. But my last report was they were continuing.

Q It could happen that the President will cancel or delay his travel to Japan; I mean, can you characterize this?

MR. LOCKHART: That involves both me speculating on a hypothetical question and I'll take neither.

Q Joe, what is this costing Uncle Sam, this process, every day here at Camp David? What's it costing?

MR. LOCKHART: In what sense?

Q Dollars.

MR. LOCKHART: Dollars. (Laughter.) Well, there's a limited amount of cost for having more guests than normal at Camp David, which is something that the State Department gladly foots the bill for. But I think I can't imagine there's an American who doesn't think that limited investment isn't worth the cost of it. As far as being able to detail it, I can't, and I'll say that it is a very small expenditure in relation to the expenditures that the U.S. government makes.

Q Joe, would the President be comfortable if the two parties came to an agreement on some of the issues; what you might consider a partial agreement if left unresolved -- some other issues for future discussions?

MR. LOCKHART: I think I'm going to not answer questions that start with "would" or "if" today.

Q Could I try -- maybe we can improve our batting average here. All right, the premise of the summit, right -- we all remember -- was it only the President -- reached the point where only the President could possibly bridge the gaps between the parties. So the issues are well-known. The issues are better-known, and there's been a lot of detail work.

Could only the President at this point finish the deal off, or if he has other engagements, can someone stand in his stead and at least keep the pot boiling long enough for him to come back or whatever?

MR. LOCKHART: Again, I just don't see the point in me speculating on things that I can't know at this point, and I'll tell you to the extent I can what I know, but I'm not going to speculate further.

Q Are there still 11 or are they 12 now -- the negotiators?

MR. LOCKHART: The number I saw was 12.

Q Twelve now?

MR. LOCKHART: I think they may be one short. But we'll check on the list.

Q Joe -- impact, and there's a lot of speculation on the Hill as to how much of a total -- and whether Israel may be pushing for too much in terms of what they need, their security needs -- the Israeli Cabinet members have gone to the Hill and met with members of Congress. Is the President sympathetic to the Israeli idea that they're going to need a significant infusion of cash in order to bolster their security?

MR. LOCKHART: Let me make two points on that. I think the President understands that the United States has a role to play as both the United States government and as an international leader as far as encouraging other countries to play a role in supporting the peace process.

The second point I'll make is that the President has committed to consulting closely with Congress; when and if this issue becomes relevant, he will do that. He, for instance, he spoke briefly with Speaker Hastert last night during one of the breaks between the meetings. He will continue to do that, and I think everyone should just hold their fire on what they think it should be, what they think it shouldn't be, until we've got something in place and we can actually look at what the real needs are.

Q What was the purpose of his call to Speaker Hastert?

MR. LOCKHART: To keep up the consultation process. He had made a round of calls at the beginning of this, and I'm not sure he hooked up with the Speaker as we were going out. But he just wanted to continue the process of keeping Congress informed.

Q On the summit itself?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q Did they talk about the estate tax or did they talk about Hastert's allegations about oil prices? Did any of those things come up?

MR. LOCKHART: What about oil prices? I didn't know --

Q The concerns last week that there may have been some things that Democrats weren't doing in order to help move that.

MR. LOCKHART: Well, they didn't talk about it, but let me take the opportunity to talk about it. There have been a number of missed opportunities by this Congress, as far as pursuing the President's alternative energy program. They haven't -- they cut funding on the next generation of automobiles, which the research for that, which can get cars soon on the road that get 80, 100 miles a gallon, all sorts of tax incentives for energy efficiency.

I think if you look at gas prices, there's an energy report out this morning that shows gas prices down another nickel nationwide. But that's no excuse for us to then take a pass one more time on a long-term energy policy. And I think if the Speaker is critical of the President, he needs to turn inward a little bit, look at his caucus and convince them that it's time to stop stonewalling on a very important energy issue.

Q Joe, what the Speaker was really critical about was this idea that the White House was aware of a memo that suggested that it was new EPA rules, its -- it's responsible for the hike in prices. Yet, still, went to the -- oil.

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, there were a number of elements and I think if you go back and look at everything I said, particularly in the Midwest, we discussed a number of factors that were involved in the price spike there -- but none of them added up to the .40 or .50 cent differential that was going on. And that's why the FTC is looking into it. And the FTC is satisfied.

Q Joe, if I could rephrase my previous question. Has the President ruled out accepting an agreement that falls short of dotting all of the i's and crossing the t's?

MR. LOCKHART: I think right now the President is focused on trying to get an agreement and we're not spending a lot of time speculating about what could be or might be.

Q Joe, can you give any explanation about the lack of meetings with Arafat? I mean, we have a summit where it appears that the one peak in the summit is not participating in

meetings. How can you say in the last 24 hours that the parties are working when one of the principals is not meeting?

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, you could make the case that -- you could turn that around and say, why hasn't the President met with Barak today. You've got to look at this as a whole. This is a negotiation where we make decisions based on what we think will help move the process forward. The President has spent an enormous amount of time with both of the leaders and will continue to meet with both of them as appropriate.

Q -- information -- situation where Arafat has declined meetings because of lack of readiness to deal, or has it just not arisen in the past 24 hours that there was a need for him to meet at the top level --

MR. LOCKHART: I think to give you a full explanation of the moment-to-moment meeting schedule would mean going into the substance of the talks, and I'm not willing to do that.

Q Since day one of this Summit, can you tell us how many times Barak and Arafat met one on one, if such a thing happened?

MR. LOCKHART: I think they probably had one formal and one informal.

Q Is the President planning to make a statement on legislative matters before he departs -- in other words, is there -- can we expect a departure statement on issues apart from the Summit tomorrow?

MR. LOCKHART: I wouldn't expect that at this point.

Q You would not.

MR. LOCKHART: No.

Q Joe, you said a couple days ago that there were no plans for the Vice President to come up here, and there were also no plans for the Vice President to replace the President in Japan. Has that changed at all?

MR. LOCKHART: No. But there seems to be a little less speculating among people who carry little notebooks around, so that's good.

Q Has the President considered the possibility that when he goes to Japan, Arafat and Barak will go to their countries, and come back in the beginning of next week?

MR. LOCKHART: If he has considered that, he hasn't discussed it with me. Yes. (Laughter.) If he's considered that, he hasn't discussed it with me.

Q I have three very short questions. Has the President spoken to Mubarak or any other leaders during this summit?

MR. LOCKHART: No.

Q The second question, in terms of reaching the G-8/G-7 plus Russia summit in time, when is the latest Clinton can postpone a trip from here?

MR. LOCKHART: I'd refer you to our schedule and the Internet that offers great flight times. I'm not going to do it up here.

Q But half an hour -- I mean, he doesn't have to go to Tokyo before Okinawa; technically speaking, to arrive at the summit, right? I mean, he has some leeway.

MR. LOCKHART: Should I tell him that? (Laughter.) Last question.

Q Now, you've gone on for sometime without substance about Emmitsburg and the other talks. Is there a possibility that the negotiators would stay here for the next couple of days while perhaps the leaders would return home for consultations and come back again? Do you know?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't, and no one has give me information that would lead me to believe that.

Q Joe, when is the next briefing?

MR. LOCKHART: Probably about 5:00 p.m.

Q In Camp David One, 1978, the relations between Begin and Sadat were so explosive that President Carter had to separate both of them for about 10 days. In only the last two days of talks they got together and they were able to -- an agreement. This time, having 24 hours, less than 24 hours, and they have not met, and definitely some deliberate attempt not to keep them together now because they are nowhere close to an agreement. So I would like your comment, I mean a comparison of that, and especially that President Clinton took one book on Camp David with him.

MR. LOCKHART: You know, the only part of that question that isn't steeped in your own assumptions is the fact that the President does have Bill Quandt's book. (Laughter.) So I will confirm that. I will confirm that he read the book, but on the first part, I'm just going to have to leave it.

Q Joe, do you have a response to President Putin's comments earlier today that the Russians and the Chinese will counter NMD if and when it is deployed?

MR. LOCKHART: I think President Putin has made his views well-known on this issue. He's discussed this with the President while we were in Russia. I expect we'll have a further discussion in the context of the G-7/G-8 meetings. I think for our part, the President is still awaiting a recommendation from the Secretary of Defense and will make his decision based on the four criteria that he's laid out.

Q How much information about the substance of a negotiation is being shared with you, and how are you getting that? (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: This is like a manhood question. (Laughter.)

Q The reason I ask is I'm curious -- it's one thing to say you're not going to go into the substance of the negotiations. But I'd like to know how much of the substance of the negotiations which you personally are privy.

MR. LOCKHART: I am privy to and an attendee of every meeting that goes on between the President's team that happens when I'm not standing here or trying to help you all. So you can assume that I know lots of stuff and I'm not telling you. (Laughter.)

Q Without going into detail, when or where, is there any dinner plan for Barak --

MR. LOCKHART: Oh, this evening?

Q No, tomorrow.

MR. LOCKHART: Oh, tomorrow. I don't know about tomorrow. Today is hard enough.

Q Can I ask you a question? Is the White House concerned that the GOP appears to be passing tax cuts that are very popular with voters in these --

MR. LOCKHART: Listen, it's very clear that the Republicans in Congress have decided to put aside their responsibilities and to play politics. They've made very clear that they want to get bills done, timed to their convention, so they'll have something to talk about at their convention. The Democrats, on the other hand, I think have a stronger candidate, so we don't need to do that. I understand their problem.

But as far as their bills, you have to look at them. And I think the Secretary of Treasury put out a very important

analysis yesterday. What the American public needs to know -- and it's a very simple thing -- is the Republicans are doing two things here. One is, they're abandoning the fiscal discipline that brought us this prosperity; and, two, they are putting together a series of tax bills that the top 1 percent of Americans get 84 times the tax cut as an average middle-class American citizen.

So if they think that that's politically persuasive, they'll continue to push that; we'll continue to push our program of targeted tax cuts and fiscal discipline, and the voters will decide.

Q -- you, in particular, when you look at the new CBO numbers to up the ante a little bit, as far as --

MR. LOCKHART: I think the President has put forward a very robust, but targeted, package of tax cuts. We've talked about a very important prescription drug benefit that the Republicans have walked away from, to date. And I think when it comes to -- if you want to compare CBO to OMB numbers, the past should give you some sense of who gets it right and whose projections are closer to reality.

Q Joe, if he pulled an all-nighter last night, is the President ready for an all-nighter tonight?

MR. LOCKHART: Sure.

Q Is there any sense of -- and the intensity of the negotiations might be picking up as we get closer to President Clinton's scheduled departure tomorrow? Has that, indeed, been the case? And what do you expect --

MR. LOCKHART: Yes, and more. Thanks.

END

12:40 P.M. EDT

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 18, 2000

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
JOE LOCKHART

Thurmont Elementary School
Thurmont, Maryland

5:08 P.M. EDT

MR. LOCKHART: Good afternoon, everyone. Before I get started, there are some people that I need to thank for their fine hospitality over the last few days here. So let me go through some people. (Laughter.)

I wouldn't go anyplace if I were you. Listen, as this may be the last time I come up here, let me just thank some people here -- the Mayor of Thurmont, Eileen Waeschee; the Clerk Treasurer for Thurmont, Rick May; Chief of Police Neil Bechtol; the Lieutenant Frushour from the police department. The Frederick County Sheriff's Department, the Maryland State Police, the Principal of the school, Suzanne O'Toole, the entire staff of the Thurmont Elementary School; the Catoctin Cluster Maintenance Staff, the volunteers here at Thurmont. And I want to principally thank the very nice teacher out here who made the bold statement that she thought I was better-looking than John Roberts. (Laughter.) Whatever.

Let me go through --

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. LOCKHART: No, they're not. I always wait until the last minute. Let me go through a couple of logistical points, because I'm sure that's what you're interested in. As I've been saying all along, the President's schedule remains the same; he's scheduled to leave tomorrow morning for Japan.

For your purposes, any adjustment to the President's schedule later tonight or into the morning we'll deal with in the following way: We will all-call it through the White House all-call system, which will get to a number of people in a number of news organizations. We'll keep somebody here overnight in the

press office here in Thurmont, and we will keep the pool on overnight so that if there's anything that we need to get out, any news or information or any change, we can let them know.

The press plane will depart now, instead of at 8:00 p.m. tonight, at 8:30 a.m. tomorrow morning. Those of you who are traveling to Japan with us on the press plane need to be there by 6:30 a.m. And one scheduling note: If for some reason we do overnight announce any kind of change or alteration to the schedule, I'll come down here sometime around 7:00 a.m. to give you guys a sense of any news or developments overnight -- a.m., a.m. We will also do tonight's wrap-up like we've been doing each night, with PJ, probably around 9:00 p.m., 9:30 p.m.

Q How would you characterize the -- of the negotiations today?

MR. LOCKHART: Obviously, as I said earlier today, the pace has picked up over the last few days. There are intense discussions and negotiations going on now between the two parties. I think they understand what they're up against, as far as the issues and the timing, and we'll just have to wait and see.

Q But it's inaccurate to call the talks in crisis right now?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I wouldn't use that phrase. I would say there are obviously very difficult issues in front of them, but the parties are continuing to work at it.

Q Is Jerusalem the main sticking point?

MR. LOCKHART: They are continuing their discussions on the four core issues that we've identified for you before the talks began.

Q Are they still working toward reaching an agreement tomorrow morning?

MR. LOCKHART: Pardon?

Q Are they still working on reaching an agreement by tomorrow morning?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, we're working on reaching an agreement; if we could do it in the next hour, we would, we wouldn't wait until the morning.

Q Did Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat meet again? Have they met again?

MR. LOCKHART: No, there have been, as I described a few moments ago, intense discussions between negotiators throughout

the afternoon and the leaders have been meeting, internally, with their own delegations.

Q Does the White House consider it in any way helpful if Chairman Arafat were to be able to consult with other leaders, such as President Mubarak, on some of these issues that remain, somewhat intractable, in your words?

MR. LOCKHART: Oh, I think if Chairman Arafat wanted to consult with other world leaders, we would provide him with the facilities to do that, and certainly if that would help build an atmosphere and a construct for a peace agreement, that would be welcome.

Q What if he wanted to go there to meet with the other leaders?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, there's been no suggestion of any travel, so I don't want to speculate on that.

Q (Inaudible.)

MR. LOCKHART: The President met with his team for, I don't know, it was probably about an hour, an hour and a half, since I talked to you last. And there's been periodic reporting back from some of the discussions from people on our side. He stands ready to talk to either leaders separately, together, the negotiators -- whatever we think is peaceful and constructive. Yes.

Q You said that the talks have been intensified, but would you say that there has been any progress?

MR. LOCKHART: I think I've managed to avoid trying to characterize on that particular question for eight days now, and I won't start now.

Q Joe, back to logistics just for a second, if there is an announcement, or ceremony, or whatever you want to call it -- if it takes place in the morning, will it take place back at the White House or here?

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not sure I know the answer to that question, but we'll certainly give everyone ample time to be able to cover it -- ample notice to cover whatever happens, one way or the other.

Q When you say the President is ready to talk to the leaders, does that mean you have no plan, the talks between him and either of the leaders, or the two of them together for the rest of the day?

MR. LOCKHART: I'd say that right now, the discussions are ongoing, and I would anticipate further meetings involving the

President and the other leaders, but I can't tell you who, when or at what time.

Q Did they meet in small groups today?

MR. LOCKHART: They're meeting in a variety of settings, at different places in Camp David.

Q Joe, can you confirm that Rubin Merhab has joined the Israeli delegation?

MR. LOCKHART: I cannot. I have no information that he's joined the delegation.

Q Just three quick ones. One, how long was the meeting the President had with Arafat this morning?

MR. LOCKHART: I think it was just over an hour.

Q How much of the President's schedule, how much of the discussions today have revolved around the President's schedule?

MR. LOCKHART: How much of the discussions? Very little.

Q And third, how much can these guys get done without meeting face to face, without a face-to-face with Arafat and Barak in the same room?

MR. LOCKHART: I think there's many ways to get to an agreement, and I wouldn't try to put a minimum quantitative value on face-to-face discussions or of the President with the two leaders together. I think both sides are working in good faith to try to reach an agreement in a short time frame, and they're proceeding now in a way that all sides think is most constructive.

Q So the fact that they're not meeting doesn't imply a stalemate?

MR. LOCKHART: I wouldn't make a judgment based on that alone.

Q There were some reports that the President requested a second meeting with Arafat. Is that so? Has he met with him just once today?

MR. LOCKHART: He's met with him once.

Q How are you defining "an agreement"? Is that any agreement on the spectrum from --

MR. LOCKHART: I'm not defining it.

Q At this point in these negotiations, it is traditional for one side or the other to threaten to walk out. Has anybody threatened to walk yet?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, it would be a long walk. You've got to go all the way down the mountain. (Laughter.) Not that I know of.

Q If the President is not meeting with the leaders and not with his team at the moment, is he perhaps taking a nap to gather forces for tonight?

MR. LOCKHART: No, I don't think he's taking a nap.

Q Joe, any of the principal leaders placed any calls to anybody in the Middle East?

MR. LOCKHART: Not that I'm aware of.

Q You said that they had discussions -- does it mean that they're considering proposals that they got from the --

MR. LOCKHART: They're considering ways to deal with the core issues in order to reach an agreement.

Q What are their dinner plans tonight, Joe?

MR. LOCKHART: None that I know of at this point.

Q -- still continuing?

MR. LOCKHART: I didn't check on that. We'll check on that for you.

Q When was the last meeting between the President and Arafat, the last time the President directly got involved in negotiations with the two sides?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, it's the last bilateral meeting the President had, but I think it's safe to say that there are a number of people who are speaking to the President on the U.S. team who are speaking to the negotiators. So his involvement continues.

Q But not direct involvement from the President or with the two delegations?

MR. LOCKHART: That would be correct.

Q What are the chances, Joe, that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat stay behind while the President is gone and that negotiations, in some shape or form, continue?

MR. LOCKHART: Trying to figure out chances of that would involve me speculating and I'm trying not to do that.

Q -- Americans -- proposal that the parties -- you said earlier that this might be one of the ways the Americans would try to get --

MR. LOCKHART: I said that it might be; I also said that any sort of proposals that we put down or discussions of such proposals would get to the substance of the talks, and I wouldn't discuss that.

Q Would you confirm, will there be an agreement of some sort before President Clinton leaves for Japan?

MR. LOCKHART: That's a question I can't answer. If I could see that into the future, I wouldn't be standing here, I'd be on Wall Street. (Laughter.)

Q Joe, do you have some idea of the atmosphere -- appear to be a constructive environment, is it a rancorous environment? How would you characterize it?

MR. LOCKHART: I've tried to give you a sense over the last three or four days. I think both sides came here with a real sense that they wanted to reach an agreement. These are very difficult issues. They've spent a lot of time together; they've spent very little time sleeping; there are 52 years of debate behind them. So the atmosphere at times has been tense, but they are still working at it.

Q Is the President planning to leave to the White House?

MR. LOCKHART: Pardon?

Q Is the President planning to leave to the White House?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, the only thing I know on the schedule is he's planning to leave a little bit after 9:00 a.m. tomorrow, to Tokyo, for the G-8 meeting. I think at this point, we haven't made up -- it depends on how long the discussions go, if we get back to the White House or we go from here directly to the airport.

Q Any possibility of a delay in departure, if it helps with --

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I think I'll stick with the schedule as published.

Q Joe, can I ask you a domestic question?

MR. LOCKHART: Yes.

Q You had been asked before about the President holding the honorary post as head of the Boy Scouts, or the President's held, and at the time you said -- after the court ruling, that it didn't appear necessary that he would need to resign that post. Since that discussion, members of Congress led by Lynn Woolsey of California, have sent the President a letter asking that he resign that post. Is he giving his consideration to that?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, I haven't seen the letter, and given where I've been and where the President's been, I'm sure he hasn't had a chance to review it; we'll have to take a look at that.

Q Is he going to take a new look at that, given that the number of Members of Congress aren't happy?

MR. LOCKHART: I wouldn't speculate until he had a chance what the Members of Congress were unhappy with, and had a chance to review his letter.

Q -- coming or going, or have we passed that point?

MR. LOCKHART: I don't know that there's been any -- I'll check on that for you. I don't know the answer to that.

Q Yesterday, you characterized -- you said that when the President left, that things would just about be wrapped up -- the business would be wrapped up. Is that the same characterization?

MR. LOCKHART: Pardon? I said I'd -- it was my expectation on the schedule that was shown to me that when he leaves, we'll have -- we will have done our business here. If that changes, we'll let you know.

Q Is there any chance for the extension of the Summit, or actually a chance that the two leaders will stay behind, until Sunday when President Clinton comes back?

MR. LOCKHART: I think that's essentially the same question that was just asked, and has been asked previously. I don't have anything on those matters. To the extent that something is provided to me, I'll provide it to you.

Q You were saying -- can you please tell us what you mean by that?

MR. LOCKHART: No, because I'm not even sure what I meant. (Laughter.) Yes. I think I stopped them with that, are we ready? Yes, in the back. (Laughter.)

Q -- the last day -- (inaudible) --

MR. LOCKHART: I think -- describe the President's mood. You know, he has spent eight days -- with the exception of one

day out -- working nearly round the clock on this. So he -- I think the single word I'd use is determined. But I think, like all of them, you go through various emotions, ranging from moments where you see promise, to moments where the only thing you see is frustration. So I think not only the President, the leaders and all the delegations, have run the entire range over the last eight days.

Q And what mood is --

MR. LOCKHART: Determined.

Q It's well-known that these two sides will negotiate the amount of time that's been given to them. How does the President balance off the need to impose the tomorrow deadline with the promise that if you give them a little bit more time you may come closer to reaching an agreement?

MR. LOCKHART: I just think, you know, that is a judgment that has to be made and I'm not sure I could describe the balancing act there.

Q Are you worried at all that if the leaders go back to the Middle East without reaching an agreement there will be a leak out -- which will hurt any possibility for any negotiation in the future?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, listen, there certainly are a number of obvious advantages to getting this thing done before the President travels. One is which, I think we've had an atmosphere in Camp David -- although I've described it as tense, has certainly not been infected or poisoned by press coverage or leaks that went to the substance of what they were talking about. So I think -- we knew this going in that there were advantages to getting this done on this schedule and that still remains.

Q Joe, how has the tight deadline and the looming departure of the President impacted on the mood and -- just the general mood surrounding the two delegations -- has it been helpful at all?

MR. LOCKHART: I think people know that they've got a lot of work to do and they know that there is not an unlimited amount of time and there isn't time to push issues aside or not deal as directly as they can in the negotiations.

Q Joe, is there anything on what Albright, Berger, Ross, et cetera, has been doing today?

MR. LOCKHART: They've been meeting with various negotiators throughout the day. As I left to come up here, Mr. Ross was going down to a meeting with several negotiators -- Ambassador Ross -- with several negotiators. So this is something that's been ongoing throughout the day.

Q Joe, I'd like to take another run at the bridging proposals, realizing that it goes to substance. At this late hour, why can't you tell us whether or not the U.S. has put forward any bridging proposal or not?

MR. LOCKHART: I think that getting to substance is a slippery slope and I'll stay where I am on this.

Q Yes, but he's going to be leaving in a few hours from now -- unless he's going to change his schedule, and that's why you're not telling us -- (laughter.)

Q Joe, should we expect a State Department briefing here tomorrow, after tomorrow? And this is the end -- just for the White House?

MR. LOCKHART: Well, Richard was talking on the way down how much he's become attached to the lovely country roads here -- (laughter) -- so if he wants to work out of here from now on, I think I'll be thanking a lot more people than on this list.

Q Also we want to thank you for making our life so easy on -- past several days. (Laughter.)

MR. LOCKHART: The good news is that you're not all paid by the word. (Laughter.) Okay, I think we're done. Thank you.

END

5:25 P.M. EDT