

WHITE HOUSE REPORT, MONDAY, MARCH 27 (03/27/95)

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Text: *EPF101 03/27/95 **WHITE HOUSE** REPORT, MONDAY, MARCH 27 (**New Zealand** PM, U.S./Iraq, Greek Archbishop, **Clinton**/health, Bosnia) (770) **PRESIDENT CLINTON MEETS NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTER BOLGER** Statement by the Press Secretary, March 27 President **Clinton** met with **New Zealand** Prime Minister **James Bolger** for 45 minutes today in the **White House**. The two leaders had a wide-ranging discussion concerning bilateral and regional issues.

President **Clinton** and Prime Minister **Bolger** agreed that the overall relationship had been considerable strengthened since the Administration's February 1994 policy review, which resulted in the resumption of high-level contacts between the two governments. President **Clinton** stressed to the Prime Minister, however, that **New Zealand's** anti-nuclear legislation remains a serious issue and, until resolved, it will not be possible for the United States to have the same type of security relationship that it had with **New Zealand** prior to the legislation's passage.

President **Clinton** appreciates **New Zealand's** recent, welcome decision to contribute financially to KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization). The President praised the many other areas where the two countries have cooperated closely, including in promoting trade and investment liberalization in APEC, in numerous peacekeeping endeavors and in the United Nations Security Council, where **New Zealand** recently completed a two year term.

White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry discussed the following topics at the **White House** news briefing and during comments to reporters earlier in the day:

U.S. PRESSES FOR RELEASE OF AMERICANS SENTENCED BY IRAQ "We are pressing the government of Iraq diligently and persistently for the release of these two Americans who we believe are only in Iraq as a result of an honest mistake," McCurry said when he was asked about the possible use of a military option to free the two men who were sentenced to eight years in prison in Iraq after they inadvertently entered that country.

"We call upon the government of Iraq" for humanitarian reasons to release them and "we are now pressing through a variety of diplomatic channels" for their release, McCurry said.

He said it would be "irresponsible for me to speculate on options that the president might...or might not wish to consider....In dealing with matters of diplomacy, it's never wise for those of us on the staff or those of us who work for the commander-in-chief to rule options in or...out. That's up to the president."

Senator Richard Lugar and Republican presidential contender Patrick Buchanan reportedly have said the United States should consider a military option to free William Barloon and David Daliberti, who were working as civilian employees when they were captured by Iraqi authorities March 13 after they strayed across the Kuwait border. A Baghdad court March 25 sentenced them to prison after they were charged with illegally entering Iraq.

It is "very clear that there was no intent at sabotage or anything else involved here other than an innocent mistake by two American citizens who crossed over a border that they should not have crossed over," McCurry said.

The United States has "had success in the past using quiet diplomacy to secure the release of an American who was similarly held captive," McCurry said earlier in the day in reference to an American oil worker who had been held by Iraq in 1993.

Asked if Iraq has been warned about protecting the safety of Barloon and Daliberti, McCurry said Iraq "has been approached through diplomatic measures that we will think will be effective in trying to secure" their release. He would not give details of the steps the United States is undertaking.

Asked if there is a possibility the Iraqis could use the situation to their advantage in their effort to get U.N. sanctions lifted, McCurry replied, "No. These are unrelated matters."

Asked if President **Clinton** had talked personally with any foreign leaders about the situation, McCurry said, "He is following these developments closely....We are pursuing exactly the diplomacy that we think is most effective....We are pursuing it in a variety of diplomatic channels. I am not going to detail all the efforts that we have underway."

CLINTON MEETS WITH ARCHBISHOP OF GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH **Clinton** met with Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Orthodox Church and presented him with a copy of a presidential proclamation on Greek Independence Day which was observed March 25.

CLINTON HOLDS PRIVATE TALKS WITH KING HUSSEIN **Clinton** conferred privately March 27 with Jordanian King Hussein. McCurry characterized the meeting as a "combination social call and a chance to check in on the Middle East peace process."

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