

17 March 1983

UNITED NATIONS DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

At the United Nations daily noon briefing, François Giuliani stated that the Secretary-General had met at 10:30 a.m. today with Ambassador Umberto La Rocca of Italy, who wished to discuss with the Secretary-General a number of questions on the agenda of the non-aligned nations' summit meeting in New Delhi. At 11 a.m., the Secretary-General met with Foreign Minister Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, and had a wide-ranging review of the situations in Latin America, Central America, the question of the Falkland-Malvinas, as well as economic questions.

At the time of the noon briefing, the Secretary-General was with Fernando Salazar Paredes, the new Permanent Representative of Bolivia, who was presenting his credentials. Immediately following that appointment, the Secretary-General would meet with Foreign Minister Mario Velarde Dorado of Bolivia. Mr. Giuliani recalled in this connection that the Bolivian President had asked the Secretary-General for assistance to his country during the last session of the General Assembly, and the Secretary-General had subsequently dispatched to Bolivia, Margaret Anstee, Assistant Secretary-General for Technical Co-operation for Development, to Bolivia. Ms. Anstee would be present at today's meeting, Mr. Giuliani added.

Continuing with the appointments, Mr. Giuliani said that at 12:30 p.m., the Secretary-General would address the special session of the Commission on Transnational Corporations. At 3:30 p.m., the Secretary-General would meet with Foreign Minister Miguel Schweitzer of Chile, at the Minister's request.

Later this afternoon, the Secretary-General would attend the informal consultations of the Security Council on the situation in Chad (document S/15643). There was no information at this time on whether the Council would hold a formal meeting. The Foreign Minister of Chad, Idris Miskine, was arriving in New York later today, and it was possible that the Foreign Minister might meet with United Kingdom Ambassador Sir John Thomson, who was this month's Council President.

Asked why there were a number of appointments today with the Foreign Ministers from Latin America, Mr. Giuliani said it was pure coincidence.

Mr. Giuliani then announced the resumption, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, of the talks on Afghanistan from 11 to possibly 22 April. He recalled that a Press Release (SG/1824 of 9 February) had been issued after Under-Secretary-General Diego Cordovez had returned from his consultations in the area. The release stated that in the light of progress made during those consultations, it had been agreed to hold another round of discussions through the intermediary of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, on the same procedural basis as that held in June 1982. Therefore, the talks would be attended by the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan and by the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, and Iran would be kept informed through its representative in Geneva.

Mr. Giuliani said he had already conveyed a number of times the request of the press that Mr. Cordovez meet with reporters. However, Mr. Cordovez had declined to do so at this time.

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In response to a question asked yesterday on the reported summary execution of Baha'is in Iran, Mr. Giuliani said the United Nations had received reports on the matter but not a confirmation of the reported execution, and that the United Nations was seeking further information.

Mr. Giuliani recalled that the United Nations had previously received reports of executions of the Baha'is. This was a matter of long-standing concern to the Organization, and had been discussed with the Iranian authorities on several occasions.

Mr. Giuliani said, in reply to a question, that the organization in question was a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, and that it was a religious group.

Asked what was discussed at the meeting yesterday between the Secretary-General and the Ambassador of Czechoslovakia, Mr. Giuliani said the Ambassador had raised the question of the fate of some Czech citizens who had been captured in southern Angola by guerrillas, and asked the Secretary-General for his help. Acting on humanitarian grounds, the Secretary-General's office was in touch with the Permanent Mission of South Africa and with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

In response to further questions, Mr. Giuliani said the United Nations did not have information on how many Czech citizens had been captured, and he did not know whether the Czech Ambassador had given the figure either. He suggested that the question be directed to the International Committee of the Red Cross, which had been approached on the matter.

On other matters, Mr. Giuliani announced that the posting of the Secretary-General's appointments on the third floor notice board had resumed.

Asked if the Secretary-General was aware of the harassment of reporters in South Africa, Mr. Giuliani said that he would have to check.

Mr. Giuliani then announced that there would be a joint press conference at 3 p.m. on 21 March, in Room 226, by the Chairman of the Special Committee against Apartheid, Yusuff Maitama-Sule (Nigeria), and Bernard Halston, President of the City College of New York. The press conference would deal with the campaign for the release of political prisoners in South Africa, and Mr. Halston would discuss the award that the City College had given to Nelson Mandela, leader of the African National Congress, who remained imprisoned in South Africa.

A reporter asked if the Secretariat was aware of charges recently made by Australian and British scientists that the "leaves and pebbles which had been presented as having been contaminated by yellow rain were a fake, as the Soviet Union had contended from the very beginning". Mr. Giuliani said he would check.

In reply to another question, Mr. Giuliani said there was no official information at this time on when the General Assembly would meet in resumed session.

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