

NETWORK NEWS SUMMARY

(Wednesday Evening, July 24, 1985)

ABC's John McWethy: After six Americans were gunned down in El Salvador last month, U.S. officials say there was a heated debate within the Reagan Administration about whether the U.S. should retaliate and how. Intelligence sources say options included strikes at targets in both El Salvador and Nicaragua, military strikes at bases used by leftist guerrillas believed to have committed the killings. For reasons described as both political and military, none of the options was selected. Today at the White House, spokesman Larry Speakes, refusing comment on specific contingency plans, warned once again that the U.S. will "take appropriate action against terrorists." On Capitol Hill, Secretary Shultz echoed those sentiments.

(Secretary Shultz: "We're at a point where it doesn't make much difference what you say or what resolutions you pass. The question is, What are you going to do?")

Shultz, for the first time, warned Congress that he would soon ask for \$4B to rebuild nearly half of America's 262 embassies and consulates around the world to make them more secure against both terrorist attacks and espionage. Some committee members, however, argue that American instruction program was not enough.

(Rep. Lantos: "And we have been singularly reluctant as a people to engage either in preemptive action or in punitive action. The gap between rhetoric and response has been appalling.")

Shultz said if the right targets can be identified, he is prepared to act.

(Secretary Shultz: "I don't have any heartburn about trying to do something about it.")

But others in the Administration apparently do, because as yet, those arguing against military action have carried the day -- even when very specific targets have been identified. (ABC-8)

Brokaw: Embassy security -- or, more accurately, the lack of it -- prompted an urgent appeal to Congress today from Secretary Shultz. He called for funding of a massive building program to make American embassies less vulnerable to terrorists. Startling deficiencies have been found.

NBC's Bob Kur reports that even as Secretary Shultz asked Congress for \$4B to make U.S. embassies and consulates more secure, construction of barriers to prevent car bomb attacks was underway at the State Department where Shultz works. Four billion to improve security is more than the State Department's annual budget. The subject of today's hearing -- a report from a commission headed by former CIA official Adm. Bobby Inman. It warns that almost half the U.S. embassies and consulates around the world do not meet minimum technical and physical security standards. Both Inman and Secretary Shultz say the cost of providing adequate security could be so high it might be advisable to reduce the size of some embassy staffs. (NBC-8)

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