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PRESIDENT REAGAN'S PRESS CONFERENCE : HAIG'S RESIGNATION

IN A NATIONALLY TELEVISED PRESS CONFERENCE ON 30 JUNE, PRESIDENT REAGAN WAS REPEATEDLY ASKED ABOUT SECRETARY HAIG'S RESIGNATION BUT REFUSED TO GO INTO THE REASONS BEHIND IT ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE WAS NO MORE THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE NEEDED TO KNOW. HE DENIED THAT HAIG HAD OFFERED TO RESIGN SEVERAL TIMES OVER THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS: HAIG HAD SUBMITTED HIS RESIGNATION ONCE AND HE, AS PRESIDENT, HAD ACCEPTED IT WITH GREAT SORROW. HE HAD PROFITED FROM HAIG'S WISDOM AND SUGGESTIONS BUT FOREIGN POLICY WAS MADE IN THE OVAL OFFICE AND THERE WOULD BE NO CHANGE OF DIRECTION. THE NATION WAS NOW FORTUNATE TO HAVE IN SHULTZ A MAN OF GREAT EXPERIENCE AND UNQUESTIONED INTEGRITY.

2. PRESIDENT REAGAN DENIED THAT AN ISSUE BEHIND THE RESIGNATION WAS MIXED SIGNALS OVER THE MIDDLE EAST OR THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAD BEEN BLINDSIDED BY THE DECISION ON THE SOVIET GAS PIPELINE. THERE HAD BEEN DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON THE PIPELINE AND HE HAD COME DOWN ON THE SIDE OF PRINCIPLE. IT WOULD REMAIN HIS PRACTICE TO ALLOW ALL SIDES OF AN ARGUMENT TO BE AIRED AND THEN TO TAKE HIS DECISION.

3. ASKED ABOUT CONFUSION IN FOREIGN POLICY, THE PRESIDENT SAID THAT, WHILE THERE HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTMENTS, HE HAD CORRECTED THE DISARRAY HE HAD INHERITED. HE LISTED AS U S FOREIGN POLICY ACHIEVEMENTS THE RETURN OF SINAI; THE MAINTENANCE FOR 11 MONTHS OF THE CEASEFIRE IN THE LEBANON; THE NAMIBIAN NEGOTIATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN DEAD IN THE WATER BUT NOW LOOKED VERY HOPEFUL, AND GREATER ALLIED CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES. HE ALSO REFERRED TO THE SUPERHUMAN JOB DONE BY HAIG IN TRYING TO PREVENT BLOODSHED IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC. THE U S HAD BEEN UNABLE TO PERSUADE THE AGGRESSIVE PARTY TO LEAVE THE FALKLANDS BUT IT HAD BEEN RIGHT TO MAKE THE EFFORT. LATER, REAGAN SAID IT WAS NOT AMERICAS PLACE TO INTERVENE IN THE FALKLANDS ISSUE BUT THE U S REMAINED READY TO HELP IF ASKED.

HENDERSON  
FCO/WH  
NAD

THIS TELEGRAM  
WAS NOT  
ADVANCED