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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

July 18, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:50 P.M. EDT

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#1504-07/18

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July 18, 1985

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12:50 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: The President today is announcing the appointment of Philip A. Lacovara to be a member of the District of Columbia Judicial Nomination Commission.

Q Wait.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Remember him? Anne E. Stanley, Representative of the United States of America on the South Pacific Commission; Fernand Fernandez -- Ferdinand Fernandez to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California; and Brian Paul Joffrion to be United States Marshall for the Western District of Louisiana.

At 3:00 p.m. today we'll have a photo opportunity of the cards and letters that are coming into the President. Still photographers and camera crews that are interested, gather at the double doors on the north side of the briefing room at 3:00 p.m.

Q That's -- for what?

MR. SPEAKES: I have a number of --

Q What was that for, Larry?

Q Cards and letters.

Q Any other nominations, appointments -- anything else?

Q Cards and letters.

Q Cards and letters, okay.

MR. SPEAKES: I mean, these -- these are decided before -- you can't make a deal out of that. You can try, but you can't.

Q No, no. I'm asking if there were any other --

Q Can you repeat the 3:00 p.m. --

Q Cards and letters. You can go view the cards and letters from well-wishers wanting --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I see. I thought you were saying we were trying to put on a show.

I want to read the President's situation from the hospital and we have other announcements that I will read in sequence -- a letter to the chairman -- Majority Leader of the Senate regarding line-item veto which the President signed this morning, a statement on GNP and industrial production, a statement about the

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meeting with the Soviet Foreign Minister, and finally, a report on the fire.

Q Is there no OMB announcement to make?

MR. SPEAKES: You didn't hear that mentioned, did you?

Q No.

MR. SPEAKES: I'll address that, though.

Q Okay.

MR. SPEAKES: The President is totally back to normal.  
The proof is --

Q What?

MR. SPEAKES: -- that he recited the Cremation of Sam McGee and the Shooting of Dan McGrew in their totality yesterday. He did so for the assembled nurses who work in his suite. It was all prompted by a book that was brought in by Robert W. Service -- by the hospital staff. The nurses, as he recited it, followed him line for line, page for page, and he did it flawlessly.

Last night the President watched the news, read, watched Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall -- it's their week on Channel 5 isn't it? In the Big Sleep --

Q Channel 20 -- I watched it too.

MR. SPEAKES: Channel 20 -- and he was asleep by 11:00 p.m. At 7:00 a.m. this morning he awakened. His vitals -- pulse, blood pressure, temperature, respiratory functions -- are all so normal that they don't deserve mention. That's been true for a couple of days.

Clear liquid breakfast -- apple juice, hot tea, water and Jello.

Q Yuck.

MR. SPEAKES: The staples in the incision were removed and he's now -- they've been replaced by Stiri-Strips -- S-T-I-R-I, hyphen, S-T-R-I-P-S -- which I would bet's a Trade name. At 10:00 a.m. the I.V. was removed and the antibiotics also discontinued at that time. He is receiving no medication whatsoever now.

Lunch menu was scheduled to be soup, bread, crackers and pudding. And for dinner he has a feast of baked chicken and rice.

Q A little bulk coming in there, huh? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Chief of Staff Don Regan visited from 10:05 a.m. to 10:47 a.m.

He was joined by Bud McFarlane for the final twenty minutes of the meeting.

Don Regan briefed on the economic news, which is industrial production and GNP. On the budget, he briefed him on the remarks that Regan made before the U.S. Chamber of Commerce this morning, and the President -- the current situation -- legislative situation with the Conference.

The President said, and I quote --

Q Go slow.

MR. SPEAKES: "We want a sensible and sound budget. It is up to Congress to adopt a budget. The American people expect it."

In addition, he signed the letter on the line-item veto, which I will come to shortly. And he was briefed on the luncheon that Regan, Baker, and the Vice President are having with the Senate Finance Democrats today.

Bud McFarlane briefed on the conclusion of round two of the U.S.-Soviet arms control talks, and on terrorism status and next steps. Bud was following up on a previous directive the President had given him and giving him a status report on these that had taken place.

Q Any decisions on terrorism taken?

MR. SPEAKES: I said it was a status report and a follow-up on next steps. No, I wouldn't say there were any specific decisions. They are already in motion.

Q Did the President give additional direction on the ways he wanted to go?

MR. SPEAKES: He asked a number of questions and then he gave guidance to Bud as to how to proceed.

Q Did that status report include anything on the seven Americans still held hostage?

MR. SPEAKES: Discussion of that, yes.

Q Progress?

MR. SPEAKES: Won't characterize.

I will provide this text shortly. It is being run off now, but it is a letter to the Majority Leader.

Q We have it.

MR. SPEAKES: Do you? Okay.

And the President emphasized that he wanted -- this had been mentioned in his State of the Union, that the line-item veto would provide a powerful tool for eliminating waste and unnecessary spending. And he called on the Congress to act on this expeditiously and said that the American people have a right to expect all of us to make every effort in eliminating government spending.

Q Eliminating? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Eliminating or reducing?

MR. SPEAKES: Eliminating deficit spending.

In addition he sent a letter to Mack Mattingly -- Senator Mattingly -- and expressed commendation for Senator Mattingly's leadership in the area of the line-item veto, and assured him of his support of it.

Q Are these the first two letters that he has written from the hospital?

MR. SPEAKES: No, he wrote a letter to the Speaker --

Q The Vice President. (Laughter.)

Q Yes, of course.

MR. SPEAKES: -- the other night.

Q Give him that pen.

MR. SPEAKES: This is it. But he signed a couple of things yesterday that we announced -- Regan and so forth.

The GNP -- we will give you a text of this, too. I will emphasize a few things.

The second quarter GNP was revised downwards to 1.7 percent from last month's flash estimate, which had a two-month bracket of 3.1 percent. Downward revision is attributed to lower estimates for inventory accumulation and exports.

Inflation, however, is well under control. The GNP Deflator increased only 2.8 percent during the second quarter. This is down from 4.3 percent in the first quarter.

Inventory accumulations are sort of a key factor in the GNP. They showed a particularly steep drop, \$13.3 billion, running in the annualized rate of only \$5.8 billion, which is low. They normally accumulate around \$20 billion.

Had we not seen the drop in inventory, the GNP would have been about 5 percent for the second quarter. So what this indicates is that there was an extensive draw-down on inventories and we would look toward the prospects of renewed acceleration and production which would replenish inventories next time.

Q But this is not good news in itself, is it? This report?

MR. SPEAKES: I think I'd leave it -- don't you have a man that does that? Cordtz?

Q Well, we all need a little help.

Q Bad news --

Q Well, how does it affect revenue estimates in terms of the deficit?

MR. SPEAKES: How does it affect revenue estimates? We'll have to see. We're going to make our re-estimate in mid-August.

Personal expenditures increased 5.2 percent, which is solid. Business fixed investments were up. Residential investments were up. Government purchases were up. So what you've got is everything in the GNP showing good except the inventories and exports.

We think this should be an incentive for the House of Representatives to redouble their efforts to make substantial cuts in non-defense spending in order to help Congress come up with a budget resolution that results in a genuine \$50 billion cut in the deficit.

Q Why isn't it also a good argument for the trade bill, the surcharge since it's clearly the trade deficit that's propelling a lot of this?

MR. SPEAKES: The trade deficit -- I can comment on that legislation. I'll be glad to give you our viewpoint on that. We've not had a chance to study the complete bill, but initial review indicates there's some important aspects of the bill which we have serious problems.

We doubt that the measures proposed could do much to correct the problems they seek to address. They would be a major departure from the fundamentals of our trade policy, including most favored nation provisions of international trade agreements. Such a departure would invite retaliation which could prove destructive to the international trading system, a system to which we owe so much of our post-war prosperity.

They would, among other things, undermine the ability of developing countries to service their debt. The administration's been making progress in its major effort to open the Japanese market wider. Adequate legislation now exists for us to go after unfair trade practices. The proposed legislation would very likely penalize fair trade policies as well as objectionable ones.

The only way to proceed is to reduce trade barriers, not to create new ones.

The fire, and then I'll do the Soviet thing. You may have most of this fire stuff this morning.

A small fire outside of the White House where the family briefing room -- family theater is, along the Colonnade. At about 11:15 a.m., paint crew was stripping paint with torches and one of the wooden windowsills caught fire. Secret Service Uniform Division extinguished the blaze quickly. The fire departments followed up to make sure there are no further problems. Mrs. Reagan had already left for Bethesda.

The Soviet Foreign Minister -- Shevardnadze --

Q Shevardnadze.

MR. SPEAKES: -- as a part of the U.S.-Soviet dialogue and preparations for the meeting between President Reagan and the General Secretary Gorbachev, and in expectation of the new Soviet Foreign Minister's travel to the U.N. General Assembly meeting, an invitation was extended for a meeting in New York with Secretary Shultz.

An invitation was also extended to the Soviet Foreign Minister to meet with President Reagan in Washington during his time in the United States. It is our understanding that this will likely be accepted -- not been formally done so yet.

Q This has not been formally done --

MR. SPEAKES: Formally been accepted yet.

Q And I suppose you would -- would you announce it if it were going to be turned down? In other words, how sure are you it's going to be accepted?

MR. SPEAKES: We're fairly certain it will be. We've received some diplomatic notification, we just haven't received a piece of paper yet.

Q Probable dates?

MR. SPEAKES: Late September, right, Ed?

MR. DJEREJIAN: That's correct, yes.

Q Late September?

MR. SPEAKES: The OMB Director -- AP story, Hill source is saying that it's Jim Miller. The current situation is that the Chief of Staff is still interviewing people for the job and that he has not made any recommendations to the President and, of course, the President has not decided. So, I think that he will be making recommendations to the President by the end of the week and we probably should have a decision then.

Q But isn't that very often the way these things --

Q You mean Friday? You mean like --

Q -- are done around here -- that the Chief of Staff makes a decision and it's a decision and you don't tell the President.

MR. SPEAKES: No, it's not. Contrary to what Mr. Donaldson put in his close, not so.

Q -- I would like to amend my question. Contrary to what Mr. Donaldson puts in his close --

Q Which close?



MR. SPEAKES: -- do it in every one, don't you?

Q What's that?

Q No, but seriously, isn't it very often done this way, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q And then you notify the Hill and all of that before the President makes a formal decision?

MR. SPEAKES: No. What happens is that the Chief of Staff looks at the -- at a list of candidates which may come from any sources -- Congressional, outside, applicants, etc. -- people themselves -- and he talks to the people that are involved. As you know, it was announced earlier in the week that two people had taken themselves out of the running. So, he would continue his interviews, make --

Q Did you say a third took himself out of the running also? That was our understanding.

MR. SPEAKES: I've heard that, but I don't know.

Q Joe Wright, yes.

Q Joe Wright --

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't know whether he'd made a formal announcement or not.

Q Well, when you say end of the week, does that mean like tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: He may very well -- I'm sure he'll talk to the President about it tomorrow, but whether the President will be prepared to make our have us announce a decision -- depends.

Q Well, did he --

Q -- was Joe Wright --

Q -- he did not talk about it today?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q He did not talk about it today with the President?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so, no.

Q And you're flat out --

Q Was Joe Wright offered the job?

Q And you're flat-out denying that Miller has been offered the job?

MR. SPEAKES: What I am saying is that the interview process continues and no recommendations have been made to the President and no decision has been made by the President.

Q Was Joe Wright offered the job yesterday, or offered the job and then turned it down?

MR. SPEAKES: No. No one has been offered the job.

Q So if Joe Wright did anything, your view is he took himself out of the running?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Just as Secretary Baldrige did and Drew Lewis.

Q So is Regan actually interviewing people today?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Candidates for the job?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Are you -- again, are you denying that it's Miller? That Miller has been offered the job?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. No one has been offered the job including Miller and the President has not made a decision, nor have there been any recommendations gone. So there are two or three steps that remain.

Q But would you guide us away from Miller being at the

top of the list under consideration?

MR. SPEAKES: There is a list and the list has been narrowed, but it includes a number of names.

Q Has the White House told some on the Hill that Miller is likely to get it?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so. We do always a consultation about a number of people that are there because they have to interact with committee chairmen and that is part of our decision-making process.

Q Would you rule out today as being the decision -- the decision would be made later today?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it will not.

Q Can you -- if I may move on to something else -- if I can -- looking to the weekend, do you have any better idea of when the President is coming out of the hospital and how that might work?

MR. SPEAKES: Doctors would, as they do with any patient, tell him when he can come home. They're still talking seven to ten days. The way it would work is he'd come home. (Laughter.)

Q Well, by helicopter or --

Q -- a South Lawn ceremony? I mean, you said you'll see him again when he comes home.

MR. SPEAKES: That hasn't been decided, how he would -- what the mode of transportation is. But whatever it is, I'm sure that there will be some staff people that would certainly want to go out and greet him and --

Q Well, tomorrow would be the seventh day.

MR. SPEAKES: -- and also we'd have the press, sure.

Q -- coverage?

Q Tomorrow would be the seventh day.

Q Saturday would be --

Q I mean, could we sort of think it probably wouldn't be tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: I can't really say, Sam, until the doctors say. They said seven to ten days --

Q But he's trying to get --

MR. SPEAKES: Tomorrow's the seventh day. Well, really, the sixth day --

Q If you count Saturday, it is.

MR. SPEAKES: -- if you count 24 hours from 12:00 noon on Saturday or 3:00 p.m. on Saturday. So Saturday would be the seventh.

Q Given --

Q So you say Saturday would be the first likely time?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm not saying. I'm saying the doctors have said seven to ten days and --

Q Well, when is seven days?

MR. SPEAKES: Seven days would, in reality, be Saturday at 3:00 p.m. if you count the time that the last stitch was put in.

Q So we can all assume that that's the earliest -- would be Saturday afternoon would be the earliest?

MR. SPEAKES: They said seven to ten days and --

Q You don't expect him tomorrow, do you?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, well, I -- that answer's a little better. No, I don't think he's coming tomorrow.

Q How about the radio address?

MR. SPEAKES: The radio address? It hasn't been determined whether he will do it -- whether he will do it at all or whether from the hospital or wherever.

Q What do the doctors say about his recovery in terms of on or ahead of schedule, given that the I.V. and antibiotics are out now -- his return to the diet?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it is about normal for anybody having done this surgery. The antibiotics go out in about five days, the resumption of a liquid diet, and all that.

Q There is a report --

MR. SPEAKES: I think they are most impressed with the stamina -- I mean, everything else seems to be on target the way they have pictured it to me, but, you know, the stamina, the attitude -- that kind of thing.

Q One of the things they said that would be crucial in all of this was the restarting of the digestive tract and all of that. Now the fact that he is going back essentially on solid foods tonight --

MR. SPEAKES: Should be a stronger indicator to you that everything is moving along as -- (laughter) -- as planned.

Q There is a report in The New York Times --

MR. SPEAKES: When we give facts, we try to give it with taste.

Q With taste? There is a report in The New York Times that the medical team in fact last March urged the President to have a full bowel examination, but it was delayed. Is that report correct?

MR. SPEAKES: There is a statement by the White House spokesman in there that answers that. Read on over on the jump and you will find it, and that is where I will leave it. That answer is there.

Q Which answer?

Q I have been after it all day. Where is it?

Q Remind us what you are talking about.

Q You mean, in the newspaper itself?

Q What is the gist of it?

Q But you confirm your quotes in The New York Times?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I do confirm it.

Q You do?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I do confirm them. I confirm the --

Q Just for those of us, so we can go on with the briefing, generally what is the point of what you said? That it is not true, or --

MR. SPEAKES: You know, I --

Q Are you the one who says that in May -- that in April you had Europe and then in you had something in May?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no, my quotes are attributed to me by name?

Q Well, I don't know -- did you specifically answer that, because I don't --

Q The sense of it. You said it is not true?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the sense of it, I think you can get from the paper. Yes, the sense of it is --

Q Was the sense of it that the report is not true?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, that is the sense of it.

Q Oh, then it's not true.

Q Then you are in fact saying that that report that he was strongly urged last March to have a speedy examination -- or an examination -- is not true?

MR. SPEAKES: I think what I would do is leave it with -- it is very well stated in The Times, if I may say so myself, and I would like to leave it there.

Q What about the senior official on Sunday saying that there were logical reasons, that he had the economic summit, and then in June --

MR. SPEAKES: A senior official did say that, yes.

Q -- in June there was the hostage crisis, and so --

MR. SPEAKES: A senior official did say that.

Q Did say that?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't, but a senior official did.

Q Well, then is Karney wrong? Or is he now Chief Petty Officer? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I am not going to debate that. I am just going to leave it the way I left it.

Q When you denied it, had you spoken to the other doctors on the case who -- can we say that the other doctors on the case denied it?

MR. SPEAKES: It says in the article what my research was.

Q Correct me if I am wrong, but it seems to be a conflict between the two things you have just confirmed. You have confirmed your denials that Karney recommended that in March.

MR. SPEAKES: No, no. Look at my denials.

Q Are you trying to separate --

MR. SPEAKES: You haven't read the story very well.

Q All right then, let's deny it again.

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q It might be best to deny it again.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think I have to.

Q But you are confirming that a senior official said despite the recommendation, there were logical scheduling reasons not to do it in April. And --

Q Would you read it out loud?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't get off the potato wagon yesterday in this town.

Q Where is it?

MR. SPEAKES: Ira, you want to go ahead while Chris tries to find it.

Q He has to read the whole article. None of us remember --

Q He said that Mr. Speakes said that he had been told by all three White House doctors today that, while Dr. Cattau had recommended a colonoscopic examination, the recommendation did not stress a sense of urgency. In fact, he said, the White House was more aggressive in pursuing a colonoscopy than the recommendation from the Bethesda examining team suggested. Mr. Speakes said that the White House had a letter from Dr. Cattau recommending that if the polyp detected in March was confirmed not to be an adenoma or potentially cancerous polyp, then six more blood stool tests should be performed. If only one or more of those tests were positive, Mr. Speakes said, did Dr. Cattau recommend that a colonoscopy be performed. As it turned out, the polyp was confirmed not to be an adenoma and the six additional blood tests were performed, none of which turned out to be positive.

Q Keep going.

Q So, if we had followed the advice, no colonoscopic examination would have been recommended, Speakes said, but our doctors felt it was prudent to be aggressive and proceed and we did so.

Q Keep going.

Q That's it.

MR. SPEAKES: Ties it up. Ties it up. Well said. Well read.

Q Yes, it was nicely --

Q If I could move to the Soviet --

Q No, no, no.

MR. SPEAKES: Go ahead.

Q Can you tell us -- are there any plans to -- you said yesterday that we could only interview the doctors en masse in briefing format. Are there any plans to bring them in shortly?

MR. SPEAKES: No plans, but do you have questions?

Q Yes.

Q Could we request --

MR. SPEAKES: -- do you have a question?

Q I have a request from my medical writer --

MR. SPEAKES: Why don't you have your medical writer give me a call and I'll answer her questions.

Q The questions -- are in the record yesterday and, so as not to provoke acrimonious debate, I press the same questions that I asked yesterday.

MR. SPEAKES: I appreciate it, but, you had only one question and that was concerning what Dr. Ruge recommended following --

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: What was your other question?

Q The question was basically, what were the recommendations from the doctors 14 months ago and who made them?

MR. SPEAKES: The -- I -- it was evident -- we announced exactly in the briefing what the recommendations were and we announced what the findings of the -- pathology was, which was confirmed that it was an inflammatory fibroid polyp and there was no recommendation that he have any further examination at the time.

Q There was no recommendation --

MR. SPEAKES: No recommendation from Bethesda.

Q Well who made -- I mean, the fundamental question is who were the doctors and on what basis did they make that recommendation?

MR. SPEAKES: It was made on the basis of the entire medical team at Bethesda, and it was -- they -- when you find a polyp that has been -- undergone pathologic studies that indicate it is a fibroid -- inflammatory fibroid polyp,



then there is a large body of research, which is almost without contradiction in medical circles, that nothing further is necessary.

Q But wait. Wait a minute.

Q -- the American Cancer --

Q Right.

Q -- Association says that, in fact, their guidelines were misunderstood if they are being cited as --

MR. SPEAKES: No. No. You didn't read the story very well. What the American Cancer Society is saying is that there are some recommendations according to age, but it is left for the individual doctor to determine and the guidelines do not address that issue. Simple as that.

Q Well, they seem to be saying that you can't just cite their guidelines per se as something that was followed.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, that may be true.

Q And you seem to be agreeing.

MR. SPEAKES: They say it's not in the guidelines, and I say it doesn't address it either. But there is an extensive body of medical research papers that indicate that with that type of polyp and no negative in the absence of positive hemocult that you don't pursue that any further. So -- and there was no recommendation that we proceed any further in 1984.

Q So -- 14 months ago that -- if there was no recommendation that you proceed with a further examination, is it correct to say that the recommendation was that you not do anything more or is that unfair?

MR. SPEAKES: No. It's correct to say that there was no recommendation that we have any further testing done in 1984.

Q So, the first recommendation came four months ago, and it was a recommendation that stressed no urgency? And, in fact, as your quotes seem to suggest, if you do -- did the President return all of the stool samples and were they all negative?

MR. SPEAKES: All the hemocults following the examination -- the March examination -- were negative.

Q So, your point then is, in that case, not only was there no sense of urgency, but having done that and having all of them be negative, you -- fulfilled the letter of what Cattau was recommending, which turned out to be he didn't have to have it?

Q So, why did he have it?

MR. SPEAKES: That's basically it.

Q -- they removed the polyp --

MR. SPEAKES: We thought it was -- well, yes, Lesley's right. You were going back in there to remove the polyp, so why not go ahead? And our doctors thought it was good, aggressive medicine to do it.

Q And --

Q But -- may I just --

Q Thought what was good, aggressive medicine?

Q -- your doctors, who was your --

MR. SPEAKES: To go ahead and do the colonoscopic exam.

Q Who was --

Q This time?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Who were your doctors who said, "Well, let's do it anyway. It's good" --

MR. SPEAKES: I think the entire medical team agreed; Cattau did. Cattau said, "Let's go ahead and do it." I think --

Q Well, he said to do it in March.

MR. SPEAKES: As I say, he might have said in March to do it, but he didn't say do it in March.

Q Well, all right. But, I mean, at the point he was saying to do it, so --

Q Did --

Q Well, that's why they did it.

Q Did Burton Smith weigh in on this or has he been leaving things up to the other team?

MR. SPEAKES: No, he has an opinion. Dr. Hutton has an opinion. Dr. Lee has an opinion.

And I can say that the recommendation by the medical team, both outside the White House and inside the White House was that the President go ahead and have the polyp removed and do the full examination, which he did.

Q Would it have happened sooner if not for that hostage crisis?

MR. SPEAKES: I can't say specifically. We were -- it was our -- the advice given to us that the President should work it in his schedule when he could and that's what we did.

Q Given all this information that's come out, is there any second-guessing at all by the President or Mrs. Reagan about that they didn't get the proper medical advice in terms of being more aggressive earlier on?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think the First Lady addressed that publicly yesterday and there's been no second-guessing by the President.

Q Larry, having dealt with recommendations and lack of sometimes from doctors, a lot of times what they do, at least in my experiences, they'll say, well, you could have an exam or you -- if you don't want to, you know, here the body of evidence might show something or it might not. It doesn't always take the form of a firm recommendation. Is that the case that in March, that it was presented as an option?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it was presented as a recommendation that it be done.

Bernie?

Q Is the White House content with Dr. Ruge's advice a year ago?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we are, definitely. And anyone who questions the advice given by Dr. Ruge is off-base because Dr. Ruge --

Q Well, what was his advice?

MR. SPEAKES: -- Dr. Ruge's advice was based on what is good medicine, solid, accepted medicine. Dr. Ruge's advice was the same as the Bethesda medical team -- that it was an inflammatory fibroid polyp and that it was tested pathologically and it was determined that it would -- that is exactly what it was, which is clearly a non-cancerous psuedo polpy. A psuedo polpy is not even a polyp. It's just a tissue -- inflammation of the tissue caused by some outside source rather than an inside source.

So there is, as I say -- I would say there's strong preponderance of medical research and medical papers that recommend the treatment as it was and that's what it was, that's what Ruge passed on, and that's what was done.

Q Are you back to 14 months ago there or March?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q When you say that it was presented in March as a recommendation that it be done, was there any time frame at all put on it?

MR. SPEAKES: What did I just say?

Q You said that there was no sense of urgency. But I wondered what the time frame was in the recommendation.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that there was a time frame.

Bob, and then Pat.

Q The President didn't have a physical in '83 and it seems like he went about a year and a half or two years without a physical. Do you remember why that was?

MR. SPEAKES: No specific reason. The President was in remarkably good health during that time period, as really has been the case with every physical. So I don't know of any specific reason.

Pat?

Q Has the President's work load in the hospital been gradually increased each day?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I think by necessity, not by -- that there are just more coming onto the platter now, rather than any reason to hold back and ship it in to him.

Q Would you say that he spent more time today dealing with government business?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he did. Yes.

Q Is it still your position you will not release the pathology report?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Leo?

Q Larry, I'm not quite clear on your answer about the March -- and the requisition of the doctors. In the New York Times answer you gave, the indication is that the doctor said if the hemocult had proved negative, don't have a further examination.

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q Okay, but you're now saying that the doctors, in March, said do have one, even before the hemocults were taken, and just work it into his schedule. Which was it? What did they say in March?

MR. SPEAKES: In March, they recommended that he have it, but as I say, that the standard medical practice is if you have six negative hemocults, that you don't pursue.

Q Did they say that because --

MR. SPEAKES: What they said is, you know, why not go ahead? So -- that's what we said, sure.

Q So they did not wait for the hemocults, but did not tell you to wait for the hemocults before giving the advice to have a full colonoscopy.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I think they waited. So --

Johanna?

Q Who is they? Who is the Bethesda medical team?

MR. SPEAKES: It was announced at the time of the physical.

David, where have you been? Getting the scoop? Okay, Pat?

Q Larry, in light of the disappointing GNP news, on the budget, if indeed you are not able to persuade the Congress to pass it, specifically, what economic impact -- immediate impact do you think it will have?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I don't think I can speculate on that, Pat. It's important that we have a deficit reduction. The President's determined to hold down government spending, and he thinks it's up to the Congress to provide a budget. He submitted one, it's a good budget, he compromised on it, they still haven't adopted a budget, and they ought to do it.

Q Larry --

Q Did he spend a lot of time today at the meeting with Regan discussing the budget, or was this just kind of a -- in a listening mode?

MR. SPEAKES: A lot of time.

Sheila, and then --

Q Larry, judging from the public comments of Regan and Stockman today, there's a fairly pessimistic outlook within the administration for the chances of coming up with a budget compromise. Isn't this a logical time for the President to make some of the phone calls that you said he might make, and is he going to?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think it's up to Congress. They're -- chances are they will have another opportunity to have a give-and-take between the House and the Senate, and we think they ought to get on it. I think Regan was not expressing as much pessimism as he was saying Congress ought to pass the budget.

Q Well, he specifically told the Chamber of Commerce to make their thoughts known within 48 hours, or it would be too late.

MR. SPEAKES: That's true.

Q -- wouldn't the same thing hold for the President?

MR. SPEAKES: No. The President's views are well-known. I just relayed a quote, and so -- I don't know what else we could tell them.

Lesley?

Q Larry, since you seem to be more willing to talk about these things today, can you tell us whether he's talked to his children -- phone --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so, Lesley, but I can check to see. I thought I saw a report that he talked to Mike.

Q There's a report he talked to Michael. Is that --

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't -- checked on that. No, I don't know.

Q Can you tell us why?

MR. SPEAKES: Why?

Q Yes. It seems unusual to a lot of people.

MR. SPEAKES: Mrs. Reagan talked about that the other day. I'd rather leave it in her words, because it's her family and that's the way they do it.

Q Have you -- given what you were saying yesterday, are you --

Q She didn't talk about that. She talked about seeing them. She didn't talk about why they haven't called her -- their father.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. She's talked to him continuously, so -- I'm sure they'll talk to their father.

Q Are you "plural" upset with Karney's having talked to The Times today, and has he been ordered not to talk anymore?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the answer to either. I mean, I --

Q Well, you know the answer to the -- I mean --

Q -- has White House ordered him not to talk anymore to people?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the President and Mrs. Reagan's views have been expressed; she expressed them herself yesterday, almost identically in the same words that I did here, and I mean, I just know that's her feeling, having been with her for the last four or five days, and that's the way they feel.

Q But I'm asking whether or not they're -- anybody has asked Karney not to speak that you're aware of.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the Reagans, out -- Lou's lead was a little hard today. The Reagan's haven't asked anybody; they just expect it from their medical team.

Q But have you guys asked someone?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't asked anybody, no. But they know my views, too, which are identical to the President and Mrs. Reagan --

Q Are you going to put out any more pictures today?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether we will or not. We'll let you know --

Q You have to --

Q Now that David is here.

Q -- wait, you have to follow that up. You haven't asked. Has anyone in the White House -- has asked him not to talk?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Helen. I think our views are well known to the physicians that are taking part on the President's case.

Q Now that David's here --

MR. SPEAKES: Now that David's here, are you going to do it?

Q Yeah.

Q It is correct, is it not, that Regan has now virtually taken over all of the -- at least the transmission apparatus of the President's desires and wishes, and is carrying everything out?

Q It's Regan's disaster.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, he didn't take Bud on his back today, and Bud was sitting there reporting on things that the President told Bud personally to do. The VP reported to him yesterday. I carried a package of papers, including those two letters for him to sign this morning, so Regan didn't trouble that or cut that off, so --

Q I'll do a piece tomorrow, Larry, about how you've become the new power --

Q Paper carrier.

MR. SPEAKES: -- living because I carried two letters out there?

Q But -- Buchanan has had no contact -- he's the Communications Director?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, is that right?

Q What was that? (Laughter.)

Q It's going to be a fine day when I've got to front for Pat, then you know, come forward and try to maintain his position.

MR. SPEAKES: They've announced every visitor out there.

Q Who chooses the pictures? Does the Communications Director choose the pictures, or does Mr. Regan, or do you?

MR. SPEAKES: We all look at them.

Q Does the Press Secretary?

MR. SPEAKES: What's -- what's her name? Carol -- Carol Greenawald -- she makes the first choice, though.

Q Real simple, Larry --

Q The meetings between Shultz and the Russian guy --

Q -- which will come first?

MR. SPEAKES: -- which will come first? The Shultz meeting in New York.

Q And then this man will fly down --

Q What do you think, Helen?

Q No, no. I have one more, please --

MR. SPEAKES: Ed points out there's a Shultz meeting in Helsinki, and then in the UN, then the President.

Q Larry, one more on the budget. What -- is the White House put out with Domenici and the other Senate Republicans who seem to be going their own way now? This upsets the --

MR. SPEAKES: No. We've been working closely with them. Dave Stockman was --



had breakfast with Dole and Domenici, I believe, this morning to discuss next steps in budget process and --

Q You're not expressing any --

MR. SPEAKES: No, we're not. We think the Senate has gone the last mile, more than -- far more than the House. The House, in our estimation as said yesterday, falls short on the domestic spending cuts.

Q Then let me ask the other way -- are you somewhat apologetic toward them then for --

MR. SPEAKES: No. We've always -- they've known exactly where we've stood on the budget and how we wanted to proceed on it --

Q Depending on which day it is.

MR. SPEAKES: No. We've told them exactly what we want.

Q Well, yes, you used to back the Senate plan. And their contention is, they went out there with it and then when the going got tough, or rough, the tough fell off down here.

MR. SPEAKES: No. That was discussed in the meeting that the House -- that the Senate GOP leadership was present at, with the Speaker and so forth.

Q Did -- is Tip correct that at that session, the President said he'd only gone along with the COLA thing in the first place because he was pressured and he was out of town and he didn't really like it in the first place?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that he said pressured and out of town.

Q It's a trap.

Q Trapped.

MR. SPEAKES: I've stated how the President felt about COLAs many times and how he felt about the time he accepted the Senate compromise and then exactly what he did in the meeting with Tip.

Q Did he feel that -- did the President feel that he was pressured or misled on that and --

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q -- trapped into making a bad decision in Lisbon?

MR. SPEAKES: The President knew exactly what he was doing in accepting Social Security. All the ramifications were discussed. The various other proposals for compromise with the Senate -- with the original Senate plan were discussed and it ended up this way.

Q Larry, do you know how much lead time you might have for when he gets out of the hospital? I mean --

MR. SPEAKES: I would judge --

Q -- you know, would you know the day ahead of time?

MR. SPEAKES: I would guess it would probably be a day ahead of time, certainly the morning of.

Q Can we vote for Monday?

Q The morning of?

Q How about Monday?

MR. SPEAKES: We'll try to, but the doctors have got to tell us first. But we'll certainly give you quick notice. We'll make a big to-do over it. (Laughter.)

Sheilah?

Q Thanks, Helen.

Q Larry, one of the -- Mrs. Reagan made quite formally yesterday was that her husband should be given enough time to recuperate. Is she -- is there an argument -- is she making a point, are there any people arguing for a --

MR. SPEAKES: Is she arguing? No.

Q You don't argue with Mrs. Reagan.

MR. SPEAKES: No one's arguing.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

1:28 P.M. EDT

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