

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library  
Digital Library Collections

---

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

---

**Collection:** Press Secretary, Office of the: Press Releases and  
Briefings: Records

**Folder Title:** 07/20/1985 (#1506)

**Box:** 37-Press Briefings

---

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digitized-textual-material>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/white-house-inventories>

Contact a reference archivist at: **reagan.library@nara.gov**

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/research-support/citation-guide>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

---

PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

July 20, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:55 P.M. EDT

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

DOMESTIC

President's Return from Bethesda Naval Hospital...1-8  
Update on President Health.....1-8

1:07 P.M. EDT

#1506-7/20

THE WHITE HOUSE

-- Office of the Press Secretary

---

PRESS BRIEFING

BY

LARRY SPEAKES

July 20, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:55 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: Just to give you a little concluding conclusion, mostly menus and quips: up at 7:00 a.m. this morning -- spent the morning doing newspaper and paperwork; showered and shaved.

Breakfast was a banana and granola and skim milk and whole wheat toast with honey and coffee.

Lunch, while we're at it, was scheduled to be and will be chicken and rice salad. I've never had that. And there'll be tea and odds and ends.

One of the nurses this morning said, "He doesn't need us anymore. He's operating under his own steam." Dr. Oller visited with him and went into the room for the radio address. Dr. Oller pronounced him in good health and "fit to go home." That's a quote.

The President made the radio address at -- went into his room at noon, looked over his radio address, did a brief voice check, 12:06 p.m. radio address. During the reference to Mrs. Reagan in the radio broadcast, he looked at her and winked. He edited his prepared script pretty heavily last night, added in a few things. And he ad-libbed the part about, by the way, are you doing anything tonight.

The room and the background where the President made the address: small table in front of a large table that had all the flowers that had come in or some of them that had been kept in the room. He said all the flowers that were there, he asked that they would send them to the cancer facility there at Bethesda.

At the conclusion of the radio broadcast, before he got up from the microphone, she hugged and kissed. And he repeated, "What are you doing tonight?"

Q Did he ever get an answer? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I bet it was unspoken. When he was -- left the room she asked him did he want to stop by the room for a moment, and he said, "No. I'm ready now."

He shook hands with the nurses and Dr. Oller walked with him down the hallway from the room to the rotunda there under the tower. On the elevator going down, he said, "I'll always remember the smiling faces here at Bethesda."

Just before going out where you saw him first, Admiral Shaffer, who is the Regional Medical Director with jurisdiction over Bethesda, gave him a Navy cap, which you saw as he went out.

There were some remarks made that none of us could hear there as he -- after he finished posing for the picture with the group and we're getting our transcript man back here, our WHCA shotgun man, so we'll try to put out a transcript of that. I don't have any idea what it was.

MORE

#1506-7/20

And on the balcony up here as they were waving, he said to Mrs. Reagan, "Would you like to dance?" And then on the elevator just before he went from the State Floor up to the Residence he said, "Things are going to seem dull now."

Magnetometer count was 2,000.

Tomorrow's a day of rest and on Monday he begins, at 9:30 a.m., with the Vice President and Don Regan, and at 9:50 a.m., with the National Security briefing. That's only 30 minutes later than his usual start time.

He plans to get a haircut and spend the rest of the day in the Residence.

Q Oval Office on -- the meeting on Monday?

Q His office or upstairs?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't know where that's going to be. Upstairs. Haven't worked -- haven't decided. I would imagine it would be, more than likely, in the Residence.

Q Is the haircut today or Tuesday? What are you talking about?

MR. SPEAKES: Monday. That's Monday's schedule.

Q Larry, why did they change the plans about the helicopter? Was it at first thought that he -- a helicopter was not a good medical indication?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it was just the thought that it might be a little easier to ride in the car and then the decision was made, why not? Helicopter's faster, let's go.

Q So was that his decision? Did you say he wanted it?

MR. SPEAKES: He was aware of it, yes. I don't think he really said do it. I mean, he just -- they just said, "Is it all right with you?" And he said, "Great."

Q He's limping and he's hoarse.

MR. SPEAKES: I think he's just a tad raspy from having a tube down his throat for five days.

Q Will he have any nurse's help here?

MR. SPEAKES: No, he won't have any -- well, I guess there could be a nurse that will stay here. I think the doctors will be here a good bit of the time in case he needs anything.

There was one -- what was that? Oh, limping. Oh, I think he's just a bit tender but he's pretty spry. He did a jig in the hall last night. A little tap dance.

Q Are you kidding? You are kidding.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm not kidding. The nurse told me that. A little jig as he was walking, doing his walking back and forth.

Q Did he make the radio address from a room in the suite or was there some other --

MR. SPEAKES: It's a room in the suite. It's actually a conference room that's -- there's a bedroom, a sitting room, and a conference room. And he did it from there.

Q -Were there any pictures during the radio address?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, there were, and we're going to try to do a release. Hopefully, we'll get it out between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. There are pictures of him reading the script and then there are pictures of the hug and kiss at the end.

Q Is there any special medical equipment in the Residence?

MR. SPEAKES: Nothing has been added, Bernie, that I'm aware of. I just don't believe there's anything. Like I said, the doctors will probably stick close for a few days, but nothing I'm aware of.

Q Let me follow that up, Larry.

Q Two questions --

Q Are you saying that there's nothing beyond Tuesday you're planning here?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, no, no. No -- well, I don't have a schedule for anything beyond Tuesday, but chances are there will be a Congressional meeting and that kind of stuff.

Lou?

Q How -- what's the drill now, if you know, on -- with Li Xiannian? Is he going to just meet him or is he going to be at the state dinner or --

MR. SPEAKES: I think there will be an abbreviated arrival ceremony outside and then a meeting -- I don't know whether it will be in the Residence -- more than likely in the Residence. And then a -- he will participate in the state dinner. Exactly how it will work hasn't been firmed up.

Don.

Q Is there -- who wrote the script, and what is the breed of Lucky?

MR. SPEAKES: Lucky is a what? Dog? (Laughter.)

MR. BRASHEAR: Bouvier sheepdog.

MS. BRISLEY: Bouvier.

MR. SPEAKES: Bouvier sheepdog.

Q Republican sheepdog.

Q Two questions --

MR. SPEAKES: And what -- who wrote the script? The President.

Q Is it his work?

MR. SPEAKES: It's heavily his work.

Q Two questions. Is he under any medication now?

MR. SPEAKES: No medication.

Q And how much weight did he lose?

MR. SPEAKES: No medication. He just lost a few pounds, surprisingly few pounds.

Q - Less than five?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, less than five. Sure did, and for a man that hasn't been eating in a week, he did pretty good.

Helen?

Q What's he doing tomorrow? And when you say the doctors will be around for a while, do you mean the regular White House doctors?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, regular White House doctors. Dr. Oller will be on call to come visit, but right now, there are no specific plans for him to come down. He might come down one day next week and talk to the President.

You had -- what was your --

Q Tomorrow is rest?

MR. SPEAKES: Tomorrow is a day of rest.

Did I answer -- Emory?

Q Ah, Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. (Laughter.)

Q When's the President's first call to -- when do you expect him to first call some Congressmen and see --

MR. SPEAKES: If he talked like that, he'd get over the air more, you know. (Laughter.) What was the first question? What?

Q When do you expect his first call to Congressmen and to really get back into --

MR. SPEAKES: Sometime next week.

Q But not Monday, you don't think. Do you think, maybe, up to him?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Emory. Yes -- say early week. Early in the week.

Terry?

Q When he said in the radio address, he told Americans if you feel something wrong, go see your doctor, did he feel something wrong?

MR. SPEAKES: No, he didn't.

Q Larry, just to follow up on that, it did sound like the President was suggesting that he, himself, might have ignored some danger signal or something. You're saying --

MR. SPEAKES: He's just telling the folks out there, if you feel something wrong, call them up, tell them Dr. Reagan sent you.

Tom.

Q Larry, somebody asked him about the bill and he made a joke in that part -- I guess we're going to get a transcription. "I didn't ask for one," he said. Do you know what the cost of this whole experience has been?

MR. SPEAKES: The cost is -- what? \$452 or \$425. I

can't -- it's one or the other.

MR. BRASHEAR: We have heard both but as far as I know, it's \$452.

MR. ROUSSEL: \$452.

MR. SPEAKES: \$452, I think, per day.

Q Does he have to pay for that? Does anybody have to pay --

MR. SPEAKES: I think -- I don't know how it works. Somehow, the military sends the bill. It's \$452, flat charge, across the board for whoever shows there at Bethesda for whatever work.

Q That includes all the operation, everything that went on there?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right. You can go there for a cold and you get \$452 or you can go there for open heart surgery and you get \$452.

Q For that particular suite?

MR. BRASHEAR: They call that an inner-agency fee.

MR. SPEAKES: Inner-agency fee.

Q It's for that suite, not just any room in the hospital?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's for any room, isn't it? Any room?

MR. BRASHEAR: What?

Q Well, does that include the surgery?

MR. SPEAKES: Any room?

MR. BRASHEAR: I think that applies to that suite.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, that suite.

MR. BRASHEAR: But I'm not positive.

MR. SPEAKES: And it does include the surgery -- lock, stock, and barrel.

Q Do you know whether he and Bob Dole exchanged -- I mean, we could see them exchanging words. Do you have any idea what they said to each other?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know what they said, no. I think Don Regan invited Dole. (Laughter.)

Q He was a spouse.

Q Where was Regan?

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q He was there as a spouse, wasn't he? The other Cabinet spouses were --

Q Where was Regan while he's still the White House --

Q Where was Cap Weinberger?

MR. SPEAKES: Where was Regan, what?

Q Where -- was he there?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he was there on the opposite side of the -- greeting them.

Pat?

Q Was Secretary Weinberger there?

Q Where was Weinberger -- yes.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. Some of them are out of town. No snubs present. (Laughter.)

Q Was the President greeted as he went into --



Q What did they do inside the Blue Room?

MR. SPEAKES: Shook hands down the line on the Cabinet side including -- who all did we see -- Baker and --

MR. ROUSSEL: Baker, Hodel, Heckler.

Q We saw them --

MR. SPEAKES: Then he went around the other side and got Regan and Bud and so forth.

Helen?

Q Inside the --

Q Does he have any kind of regiment -- I mean, when do the -- how long do they think a period of recuperation before he --

MR. SPEAKES: They haven't said, Helen. It'd be whatever's normal. I haven't even -- they haven't even given us a bracket, just a period.

Naomi? Blue Room?

Q Inside the Diplomatic Entrance, the photographers were taking pictures. What did they take pictures of?

MR. SPEAKES: They took pictures just of him walking in.

Q Was the staff there to greet him?

MR. SPEAKES: No staff. Dog -- he was there again.

Q Dog.

MR. SPEAKES: The dog is everywhere.

Q When's his first day back in the Oval Office?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't know.

Q You still don't know?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't know. He'll decide.

Q -- Friday.

Q I think this was asked up front -- we couldn't here it back here -- that the briefings on Monday are going to be in the Residence?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Everything's planned in the Residence Monday.

Miguel, where have you been? The President's been sick.

Q Larry, what --

Q I want to ask you a question.

MR. SPEAKES: Okay.

Q In wonder -- continued confidence about -- in respect to the performance of the President, the best days for America are yet to come and we ain't seen nothing yet? How do you feel?

MR. SPEAKES: Absolutely. (Laughter.) I like that fan.

Q That's a hard one.

Q Okay.

Q Larry, what's -- Larry, what is your briefing schedule? Are you back to normal on Monday?

MR. SPEAKES: The briefing schedule -- I'll tell you what. If you -- if it'll suit you tomorrow, sometime in the morning -- don't call us, we'll call you. I'll call over here tomorrow and see how the President's doing, and then -- Pete has the -- and he'll call the nets and the wires, please, if you'll go with that.

Q Don't call me before 10:00 in the morning. I'm sleeping in.

MR. SPEAKES: He's just going to give a standard statement to everybody just that he's great -- made it through the night and that kind of stuff. (Laughter.) Anything else?

Q Why don't you give a statement now, then we can pass --

MR. SPEAKES: (Laughter.) Well, I could. (Laughter.)

Q What is tomorrow's phrase going to be? We promise to consider it embargoed -- and you've used championship form. What's next?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we could give you an embargoed phrase and we could all sleep tomorrow.

Q Are you guys going to be here to hand out this picture between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., or do we have to make arrangements?

MR. SPEAKES: We will.

Q You will?

MR. SPEAKES: We will, yes.

Q And then on Monday are you back to your regular schedule?

Q Sounds like a job for Pete.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Gosh, I hate to start that 9:15 a.m. on Monday.

Q -- could we have week after next?

Q You'll have the 9:15 a.m. on Monday? -- skip the 9:15 a.m.?

MR. SPEAKES: I reckon so. Let's start. That's enough, Helen.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

#1506-07/20

1:07 P.M. EDT