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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

July 22, 1985

The Briefing Room

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9:58 A.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

July 22, 1985

The Briefing Room

9:58 A.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: This morning the President got up before 8:00 a.m., had a good night. The physicians say he looks good, and I can attest to that because I went over and spent a little time with him this morning.

He says he feels good and he is on course on his recovery.

This morning at 9:30 a.m. the Vice President and Don Regan went over for a twenty-minute meeting, and Bud was to join about ten until 9:00 a.m. The rest of the day he will rest and --

Q Ten until 9:00 or ten until 10:00?

MR. SPEAKES: Ten until 10:00 a.m. I am sorry. -- rest and spend some time on paperwork.

Yesterday afternoon, as you may have seen, the President saw Bob Dole on television saying that we needed three more votes to invoke cloture, and he called Don Regan and asked for some names, and he made some calls yesterday afternoon. He will make some more today. Chances are he will be making budget calls this week -- today or tomorrow.

The calls were those to who were undecided and would be helpful in bringing this bill to a vote.

Q Which bill are you talking about?

MR. SPEAKES: The line-item veto, subject to a filibuster in the Senate.

Q I see.

Q Can you tell us how many calls he did make?

MR. SPEAKES: He made three yesterday and will make one more today, and if the legislative staff picks up the need for -- where he can step in and be helpful, and in any other case, he will.

Q Only to Republicans?

MR. SPEAKES: No, to bipartisan --

The White House --

Q Excuse me, the budget calls will come later this week?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Were the three calls yesterday all Republicans, though, and was the one that he is thinking of today a Democrat?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no. They were bipartisan yesterday and

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will be unipartisan today.

Q There had to be two and one? Which one was the Republican yesterday?

Q Unipartisan? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Unipartisan today, because there ain't but one.

Q No, Larry.

MR. SPEAKES: The White House Comments Office reports the heaviest mail response ever in the administration. They called this morning to say they were literally clogged, and estimated that between 30,00 and 50,000 pieces of mail are there unopened and awaiting processing. The flow of mail continues unabated, and --

Q Just get well?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, for the most part.

Q More than in '81?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think that they have a count. You cannot tell now because it is not over.

Q Well, you said, "the heaviest mail ever."

MR. SPEAKES: One of the heaviest mails.

Q One of the heaviest mails.

Q Maybe you are talking about the rate of flow, as opposed to --

MR. SPEAKES: China's President Li Xiannian is making his visit -- State Visit to the White House tomorrow. The President's first official meeting with a foreign visitor since his surgery.

President Li and Madame Lin will arrive at 10:00 a.m. for the White House Lawn Ceremony. The President and Mrs. Reagan will greet them and both leaders will make remarks. The ceremony will be abbreviated. It won't be reduced quite in half, but it will be abbreviated.

Following the ceremony, the President will meet President Li and his party in the Blue Room of the White House where they'll discuss bilateral and global strategic issues.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Reagan will host the state banquet for President Li and Madame Lin at which the two Presidents will deliver toasts. The President will greet the President, then attend the dinner and make the toast, and then leave before the entertainment.

The President looks forward to his meeting with President Li and to the further expansion of the high-level dialogue on major substantive issues which he began with Premier Zhao and continued in Beijing during his visit to China last year.

This afternoon at --

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes..

Q -- will there be a signing of that nuclear thing and will we --

MR. SPEAKES: Coming to that.

Q Oh.

MR. SPEAKES: This afternoon we'll have a background briefing on the visit of President Li Xiannian of China, and it will take place at 2:30 p.m. in the Briefing Room. It is on background. The briefer will be Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, Paul Wolfowitz.

On the stories over the weekend regarding the nuclear agreement, essentially there's been no change from a detailed status report the State Department gave last week. The matter is still under review on an interagency basis within the government. The concerned U.S. agencies are concluding their paperwork that is called for by law.

Although some recommendations are in the White House for review, it would be presumptuous to predict, first, what the President's position is and, second, the timing of the agreement's signing. I can say at this point we are proceeding expeditiously with the requirements of the law.

The --

Q Questions?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Are we -- do we have enough information to make a judgment at this point on whether the Chinese have, in fact, helped Pakistan?

MR. SPEAKES: All those matters are under review in the interagency group.

Q Are you saying you don't think that there'll be a -- the possibility of an agreement by tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: I can't predict, Helen. It's under review. And as to whether it'll be signed -- remains to be seen.

Q Can you be a little more specific about how the state dinner will be different? For instance, will there be the walk down the stairs or not?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that yet. I'll try to get those details by noon.

Q How about the arrival ceremony? Can you add any more detail there on what's been cut out? Will the President sit as opposed to stand?

MR. SPEAKES: I'll check all that by noon and see.

Q Is there any -- the Vice President will stand in for him in receiving or what will be the --

MR. SPEAKES: -- Mrs. Reagan will do that.

Yes. Sue?

Q You remember --

Q Will she stay, then, later --

Q When Bourguiba came, they sat.

MR. SPEAKES: I believe so. Yes.

Q Remember? Was it Bourguiba?

MR. SPEAKES: South Africa?

Q -- Bourguiba is an old man.

MR. SPEAKES: We are very disturbed by the violence that is occurring in South Africa. It is counterproductive and --

Q Can you go slow, please?

MR. SPEAKES: -- and advances no one's interests. The South African government bears a considerable responsibility at this time. It says it seeks to restore law and order, and that is understandable. But we look to the South African government

to exercise its responsibilities in a scrupulous manner. The period of violence must be ended and put behind all South Africans so that South Africa can proceed into a meaningful political dialogue which would lead to basic reforms, moving away from apartheid, which system we consider to be repugnant and largely responsible for the current violence.

Q Larry, does this -- are you finished?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Does this mean -- is this a move away from constructive engagement?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q This statement?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it's not. The United States policy is still to remain in close touch and work closely with the South Africans and make our views known to them on a continuing basis.

Q Usually, under constructive engagement, you usually don't make your views publicly known. It's a private thing. Now you're --

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q -- coming out and --

MR. SPEAKES: In many cases, we've made our views known publicly.

Q But are you moving away from your policy and not admitting you're moving away from your policy?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Do you want the government there to lift the state of emergency procedures?

MR. SPEAKES: I think we would fall back, David, on exercise its responsibilities in a scrupulous manner, and leave it at that.

Tom.

Q I'm sorry. What did you say? That you want to --

MR. SPEAKES: What were you doing?

Q I was --

MR. SPEAKES: I see.

Q Who's Tom?

MR. SPEAKES: We were asked by The Washington Post, did we want them to lift their emergency restrictions, and I said we would -- I would underscore my answer, saying that the South African government, we look to them to exercise their responsibilities in a scrupulous manner.

Q Thank you.

Q How can that possibly answer the question?

Q Are you saying that apartheid is --

Q That didn't answer the question.

Q No, it doesn't.

Q Are you saying that the emergency rule over there is not exercising in a scrupulous manner?

MR. SPEAKES: My statement stands on its own.

Q The last part of your statement, were you saying that apartheid contributes to the violence? Did I get that --

MR. SPEAKES: Largely responsible for the current violence.

Jerry?

Q Larry, what is the administration doing to voice its displeasure with this?

MR. SPEAKES: We have -- the statement is certainly a straightforward statement that expresses the administration's viewpoint on it. And, certainly, we will keep our diplomatic contacts and make our views known through diplomatic circles.

Andrea?

Q Has our position changed at all on the Senate version of the sanctions bill?

MR. SPEAKES: Our position has not changed on the sanctions bill.

Q And are we specifically raising with the South Africans objections to the affect of the emergency procedures which --

MR. SPEAKES: Won't go into details of our diplomatic discussions.

Q -- for instance, give the right to shoot to kill and --

MR. SPEAKES: Won't go into details of our diplomatic discussions.

Q Is Nichols still here?

MR. SPEAKES: Nichols?

Q Isn't that the name of the Ambassador? Our Ambassador was recalled. Is he --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the answer. When Ed comes back, we'll ask. I'm not sure whether he's still here or not.

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: If he is, he is.

Q Do you have a report from the Joint Chiefs of Staff or is it in the White House yet recommending rejection --

MR. SPEAKES: We're --

Q -- revisions of the Geneva Convention?

MR. SPEAKES: That story -- that's a fairly complex



issue, and I am still in consultation with our friends at State and in NSC to come up with a statement for you on that.

Q Larry, how much time total will the President spend in meetings today?

MR. SPEAKES: Spend about -- oh, about an hour.

Q Hour or so? Will we get any kind of a White House photo or any --

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q When you say an hour -- because there was about a half an hour, we were told, between Bush and McFarlane and Regan.

MR. SPEAKES: Be 40 --

Q Where's the other half hour?

MR. SPEAKES: Be 40 minutes. Bud is 20 and Regan is -- and the VP are 20. And I would bet they both run over a little bit on either end, so that's the basis for an hour.

Q Where is he meeting with them in the Family Quarters?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, in the living room of the Family Quarters, which is this end of the Great Hall that runs down through the manor, where you did the interview on the couch.

Q It's on the second floor?

MR. SPEAKES: One of the many couch interviews you did.

Q That's up on the second floor?

MR. SPEAKES: Second floor.

Q Going back to Dole --

Q What are they talking about?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that we will be in -- I just don't want to continue to go into the subject matter of all these meetings. There's nothing different today. I'm sure it's budget and other items that you see on your platter. But the President's back on the mend. Things are going right -- going headlong toward normalcy here and I think we'll fall back in our --

Q I love that one.

Q Going back to Dole, he said the other day he thought he needed Ronald Reagan's help to get a new budget, but he wasn't certainly about Don T. Regan's.

Q Right.

Q Is Regan now going to take a back seat and subside or what?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think the Chief of Staff will assist the President in working with the Senate and the House in getting a budget.

Q But is he going to pound podiums and tell the Congress how ridiculous it's been and all this?

MR. SPEAKES: That remains to be seen.

David.

Q Well, what do you think about that? I mean, what is the President's reaction to his Chief of Staff's outburst?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't call it an outburst. I call it a statement of facts.

Q The President agrees with his words at the Chamber of Commerce?

MR. SPEAKES: The President certainly agrees that Congress should produce a budget.

Q How did the President react to Dole's appeal yesterday that he get somehow more involved in this process?

MR. SPEAKES: We've been involved from the day we spent six months drafting the budget. And we've gone every step of the way with them. The President's been personally involved. We've compromised. Now it's up to the Senate and the House to work out their differences and produce a budget.

Q What kind of Presidential involvement do you expect on the budget? And, specifically, is there any thought being given to him going to Congress before it recesses and making a speech?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q No?

MR. SPEAKES: No. The budget matter, specifically, is in the hands of the Conferees, and that's where the ability to work out a resolution of this matter rests is with the House and Senate Conferees. But I think the President will be on the phone, if necessary. And he will probably have a gathering of Congressional leaders sometime later in the week.

Q Larry, has Dole presented his new strategy for the President? He said when he was here Saturday that he had a new strategy. And he currently is going to make some compromise to the House. Do you know what it is and will it be acceptable?

MR. SPEAKES: No. We don't have anything on what the Senate -- unless Stockman does -- on what the Senate has discussed

over the weekend as far as some kind of an alternative proposal to the Democrats' last offer. I understand the Senate did work on it over the weekend and they will be -- I believe the Congress -- did I say Congress resumes tomorrow? Yes. The Conference will meet again tomorrow, it's our understanding.

But, once again, this is a matter for Congress. The White House has been with them every step of the way and it's up to them.

Q Well, you're saying that the Senate Republicans are going to come up with a plan all on their own and they're not consulting with the White House. This is a separate --

MR. SPEAKES: Well --

Q Or are you with them?

MR. SPEAKES: No. When you say a plan, what you mean is that there is a Senate budget proposed; there is a House counter-offer which the Senate appeared to reject. The Senate is in the process of preparing an additional counter-offer. I don't know what it is and I don't know that the White House has been briefed on it. But, once again, this is a matter for the Congress.

Q But they can present it -- you're saying it's possible they will go into conference and present it without seeing whether the White House will --

MR. SPEAKES: Sure. I don't -- it's a Congressional matter. Certainly, we have a viewpoint on it -- on the entire conference.

Andrea, and then Mike.

Q What's the view, White House view of Dole saying that Regan and the White House pulled the rug out from under the Republican Senators?

MR. SPEAKES: I've addressed that for the last two weeks.

Mike?

Q Well, I mean, he was much more explicit yesterday.

MR. SPEAKES: Refer him back to my briefings here.

Mike?

Q Lingering medical question. Can you say whether or not there were occult blood studies done a year ago during the previous exam or any --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q During early --

MR. SPEAKES: The '83 -- '84 exam? Yes.

Q Right. And they had always been negative, is that correct?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Right.

Sarah?

Q On the budget, you say you'll be making calls later in the week. Are those calls only to conferees, are they only to Democrats? And what will he be saying to these people?

MR. SPEAKES: Probably to -- well, it really hasn't been decided. It would be my judgment, the subject to -- that the Congressional people, our Congressional people would come up with recommended phone calls to key conferees that -- but I don't know.

Q What's the message to be conveyed?

MR. SPEAKES: It's "get me a budget."

Jerry?

Q Is Regan meeting with Dole or anybody else on the budget today?

MR. SPEAKES: Regan may have a session with the -- on the agriculture bill today. I don't know the timing on it but --

Q Here or there?

MR. SPEAKES: Probably there.

So, Owen?

Q When Stockman leaves August 1st, who is going to fill in for him dealing with the budget negotiations?

MR. SPEAKES: I would guess the Deputy there, who's Joe Wright --

Q Joe Wright?

MR. SPEAKES: -- would step in.

Q Do you expect Miller will play a role --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know how quickly Miller can move in. I guess there'll be some transition period while he's waiting confirmation, which I read didn't look like it would -- they'd get to it until after the recess.

Q Also, did you say -- has the President talked to Miller at all?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Bob?

Q You say that the White House has been with them every step of the way on the budget. But it sounds like, at this point, the White House is saying it's your ball game now, that -- isn't that -- what you're trying to say?

MR. SPEAKES: They know our views and it's -- there is a dispute

between two houses of Congress -- one has said we'll go this far and the other says you need to go farther. So, they got to work it out.

Q Larry,

Q But, I mean, in effect, aren't you saying that in response to Dole's call for the President to reassert himself in this process that --

MR. SPEAKES: No -- indicated that Dole -- that the President would be making some phone calls if -- our Congressional people indicated it was --

Q But that's a much less forceful assertion into the process than the President often made.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know what else you or the Senator would suggest. I don't think he's going to ride a white horse to Capitol Hill on this one -- (laughter) -- but, he'll be there and his presence will be forceful.

Q Hirohito wanted to ride the white horse.

MR. SPEAKES: He said he'd send his surgeon.

Q -- did ride the white horse.

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: George Washington?

Q Hirohito wanted to ride a white horse and make peace here in the White House.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, is that right?

Leo?

Q On the nuclear agreement you mentioned that some recommendations are at the White House but that there's still -- to review. Can you tell us whether most of the recommendations are already here or whether most --

MR. SPEAKES: Most.

Q Are already in the White House?

John?

Q When this week do you expect the President to meet with Congressional leaders?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have a time on it yet.

Bob?

Q Do you expect that --

MR. SPEAKES: This week.

Bob?

Q Urban League President John Jacob has called for a new relationship with this administration. What is your response to that?

MR. SPEAKES: We would certainly welcome an opportunity to make our views on minority matters known to blacks. We try to do that all the time and we would certainly be willing to do so.

Q But, how does that --

MR. SPEAKES: You were right. The Ambassador's still here.

Q Always right.

Q How would that figure into his call for a new relationship, whether it's a meeting with -- meeting with established Civil Rights leaders?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, you mean meetings with -- between administration people and Civil Rights leaders?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: I think we've had a continuing series of meetings in various departments with people who are involved in the issues that affect minorities. So --

Johanna?

Q Any word on a meeting with Thatcher --

MR. SPEAKES: No, sure don't. Ed, we ought to check on that. Nothing -- on it --

Q Do you know yet when the President's going to California?

MR. SPEAKES: Ed?

Q Will that -- will the Congressional meeting include members of the conference committee? Will they include the conferees?

MR. SPEAKES: I hasn't been worked out yet, Dave. I doubt it. I doubt it.

Norm?

Q Larry, last Sunday you gave us the quote from the President about the budget saying he wanted action that week. Now that he didn't get it -- there was the impasse -- does the White House realistically expect to get a budget worked out before --

MR. SPEAKES: We know it's possible, Mark, and these people have got to zero in on what's before them in order to arrive at some agreement there.

Q What day is the President going to California?

MR. SPEAKES: It'll just be a few days before the 14th. Do you have a speech or something?

Q No, but I just would like to know --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Off the record, we're looking at the 11th which is Sunday and is staying through the 2nd. But I don't want to be held to that in case --

Q Probably --

Q Larry, has --

Q Probably not the 10th?

MR. SPEAKES: Probably not the 10th.

Q Come home on the 2nd?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Fly home on the 2nd?

Q What time are you briefing today?

MR. SPEAKES: 12:00 p.m. noon.

Q Do you --

Q Did the President see his doctors --

MR. SPEAKES: If we get through here before 12:00 noon.

Q Did the President see his doctors?

Q Do we have a week ahead?

MR. SPEAKES: Dr. Smith went out.

Q What's the deal? Is Oller or anybody else from the hospital going to come see him, or is -- is Smith now in charge of --

MR. SPEAKES: Oller will probably pay a visit some time during the week, but he's just sort of on-call if we want him to.

Q On the trip, do you still expect the President to go to L.A.?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Yesterday the U.S. Trade Representative said that the decision by the President on shoe imports should come in two weeks. Do you have any firm date?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Whatever they -- they will probably take it right up to the period. When does the timetable run out?

Q September.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. You don't know anything about this shoe import decision timetable, do you?

MR. BRASHEAR: We had sixty days, and that sixty days doesn't run out until --

MR. SPEAKES: September, she said. So I imagine it would take up until then.

Q Do you have a schedule for the rest of the week, or are you playing it by ear?

MR. SPEAKES: We are -- you know, we have got some ideas about what he will do, one being a congressional meeting, another being a meeting with the Chinese leader.

Q Bipartisan congressional or Republican congressional?

MR. SPEAKES: We will wait and see how it works out.

Q What about the -- can you give us some guidance about the Thatcher group that is coming in on Thursday? Is there going to be any attempt to squeeze them in, or is that completely ruled out, or --

MR. SPEAKES: Do you know, Ed, or are we just --

MR. DJEREJIAN: We are looking at that now, but no final decision has been made.

Q Like a White House reception?

MR. SPEAKES: Something.

Q Squeeze in?

Q Would it be fair to say that there is nothing firmly on his schedule beyond the Chinese meeting in terms of official meetings outside of staff meetings?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, you know, if you said that between now and noon, it might be, but if you said it past noon, it might not be, because we will probably work out when we want to see these people. But, you know, once again, we will announce the schedule, as we generally do, on a day-by-day basis, and that is the way it is going to be.

Q Will you let us know in case he decides to go to the Oval, will you let us know if he has changed his plan and is not going to stay in the Residence today?

MR. SPEAKES: Sure. I don't know --

Q But as far as you know, he is going to stay in the Residence?

MR. SPEAKES: I am 99.9 percent sure he will.

Q Is he still getting his hair cut?



MR. SPEAKES: That is not the temperature. (Laughter.)

Q Hair cut?

MR. SPEAKES: I think so. That was marked as tentative, so I don't know. Maybe Milton has got a previous engagement.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

10:25 A.M. EDT