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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
(Dallas, Texas)

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

August 23, 1984

Metropolitan Ballroom
Loew's Anatole Hotel
Dallas, Texas

10:38 A.M. CDT

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#1183-08/23

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MR. SPEAKES: Good morning. The President today is announcing the appointment of Rita R. Colwell to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation. He's appointing Pauline Naftzger to be a member of the National Museum Services Board.

Q: Who's that?

Q: What's the name, again?

MR. SPEAKES: N-a-f-t-z-g-e-r. No relation. If she is any relation, she can't spell. Lily Balian, B. L. Chain, Mae Duggan, and Julia Fernald will be members of the National Advisory Council on Adult Education.

The President this morning has signed H.R. 4280, the Retirement Equity Act of 1984, which is sponsored by Representative Clay, Democrat of Missouri, and 36 others.

Q: Ferraro.

MR. SPEAKES: As you know, this immense --

Q: Why was there no signing ceremony?

MR. SPEAKES: The President signed it here and couldn't arrange a ceremony here.

The bill, as you know, amends the Employment Income Security Act, ERISA, and the Internal Revenue Code, to provide greater equity, especially for women, and the provision of retirement income under private sector pension plans.

The President's schedule for the remainder of the day: At 12:30 p.m. he addresses the Republican National Hispanic Assembly, Khmer Pavilion, Anatole Hotel. Open press coverage there.

At 1:10 p.m. he addresses the President's and Vice President's Republican National Committee fundraising luncheon, Chantilly Ballroom, Anatole Hotel -- open press coverage -- \$1,000 per person. The doors to both rooms are open for members of the press wishing to preposition at 11:00 a.m. It may not be possible for members of the press not in the press pool No. 5 to cover both events. It's recommended that members of the press be in position at Khmer Pavilion not later than 12:15 and in the Chantilly Ballroom not later than 12:45 p.m.

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The President finishes his remarks and goes to the suite at 1:20 p.m. and spends the afternoon in the suite.

At 8:30 p.m. tonight, he will depart the hotel enroute to Dallas Convention Center by motorcade. Press pool No. 6 will accompany. At 8:40 p.m. the President arrives at the holding area beneath the podium at the Dallas Convention Center, and at 9:00 p.m. he will deliver the address accepting the nomination of the Republican Party for the office of the President of the United States. Open press coverage, of course.

He's expected to conclude some time thereafter. I don't have a running time on the speech-- I would --it's clearly over 30 --

Q: Do you have a wordage, an approximate wordage, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't. Yes, Ralph, we can probably try to get it for you this afternoon. Robin would be your man on that.

The President concludes the address and he's joined on the podium by Mrs. Reagan, the Vice President and Mrs. Bush -- open press coverage -- and then, following brother Ray's rendition of "America, The Beautiful," the President leaves the podium. He will attend a brief reception for 1984 Convention officials and guests there in the hall, and he's back to the hotel with press pool No. 6 accompanying, if everything goes right -- which I'm sure it won't. We'll be back here at 11:00 p.m., they go to the suite. Or they leave at 11:00 p.m., arrive here at 11:15 p.m.

Now, tonight, we'll have at 7:00 p.m., in the Filing Center, the following advance texts: The President's acceptance speech tonight, which I will come back to shortly; the President's speech to the Republican National Committee and Reagan-Bush staff tomorrow morning; and the President's speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention in Chicago, which takes place on Friday.

Baggage call tomorrow for members of the press traveling to Chicago will be 7:00 p.m. in the lobby of the Atrium Building --

Q: 7:00 p.m.?

MR. SPEAKES: 7:00 a.m.

Q: Where in the Atrium? I mean, is there a more specific site?

MR. SPEAKES: It's where you see the bags. You put your bag there with the rest of them.

Q: But there are two Atrium Buildings.

MR. SPEAKES: All right, let me get my clarifying people. I haven't found the way from my office to this room yet. Can somebody produce which Atrium Building for me? Kim will get it, come up shortly with it.

The press buses depart the hotel enroute to Dallas Naval Air Station at 8:45 a.m. The press charter will depart for Chicago at 9:30 a.m.

Tomorrow on the schedule, the President will address the RNC and the Reagen-Bush staff at 10:40 a.m. He and Mrs. Reagan will depart at 11:00 a.m. from the hotel. They will leave the Air Station enroute to Chicago at 11:30 a.m., arriving at 1:20 p.m. Central. The President will make remarks at the 85th Convention of the national -- of the VFW at the International Ballroom of the Conrad Hilton Hotel.

He and Mrs. Reagan will arrive at Andrews at 6:15 p.m. and go directly to Camp David. We'll have additional copies of the detailed schedule, should you need them.

On Sunday, President and Mrs. Reagan will host women executives of the administration, about 700 of them, at a picnic Sunday afternoon on the South Grounds of the White House.

Q: How many, again?

MR. SPEAKES: No, about 1,000 -- I'm sorry -- about 1,000 women appointees. The occasion marks Women's Equality Day. The event begins at 5:45 p.m. The President will have remarks at the Diplomatic Entrance -- it's open press coverage. President and Mrs. Reagan will have dinner and entertainment will follow, and on stage will be Juice Newton. There will be open coverage of the entertainment and the final remarks by the President on stage at 7:15 p.m.

Q: What did you say, "equality" or "quality"?

Q: Juice --

MR. SPEAKES: The colonel does not know who Juice Newton is. Sam, it falls on you to educate him.

Q: I'll brief on Juice after the --

Q: What time are the remarks at the Diplomatic Entrance?

MR. SPEAKES: Shortly after -- I don't know. Check with Robin. He's got the details.

Yes?

Q: Larry, he has remarks twice on Sunday?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. He speaks when he comes out and then he speaks at the conclusion of the entertainment.

Q: What time will the first one be?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm going to get that checked here. Kim, if you could check that item for me, what time the first remarks --

Q: Larry, did you say it marks "equality" day or "quality" day?

MR. SPEAKES: Both. It's actually called "Equality Day," but I'm sure there's a lot of quality there.

Q: Would you say this is a birthday party for Geraldine Ferraro?

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q: That second set of remarks, is that -- is he just going to thank everybody for being there? So the substantive remarks are the first ones?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q: Where's the Atrium --

Q: What's at 5:45?

MR. SPEAKES: At 5:45 p.m. he makes remarks. The baggage call is at the front of Atrium II.

Q: Which one is that?

MR. SPEAKES: It's the one after I.

Q: No, but I mean is it that one over there or this one over here?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't figured out this place at all.

Q: The first one you came to, Sam.

MR. SPEAKES: That way -- to my left and to your --

Q: The rally was in Atrium I, so it's the first one you come to.

Q: So Atrium II is the baggage, is that what you're saying?

MR. SPEAKES: That's exactly what I said.

Q: You said the point of Atrium II?

Q: The front.

MS. HOGGARD: By the front desk in the lobby.

Q: That's Atrium I.

Q: Atrium I is where the lobby desk is.

Q: -- check that, please.

MS. HOGGARD: Atrium II is the first one you come to.

Q: No, it isn't.

Q: The rally was in Atrium I.

Q: Larry, I haven't heard of anybody since John Phillip Souza. Would you give me one word that describes Juice Newton?

Q: Terrific.

MR. SPEAKES: Singer. (Laughter.) Female singer.

Q: How about two words? What kind of singer?

Q: Country.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I wouldn't describe her as completely country, Sam. A mixture of rock.

Q: Well, I think she's mainly country.

Q: -- she's rock.

MR. SPEAKES: Okay, tonight's speech, tonight's speech, please. This is what I would guess you would have to term as a characterization of it. It is partisan on the past, clear about the choice, and confident for the future. It contrasts dramatically 1980 with 1984.

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It looks to the future with optimism, frames the basic choice Americans face in the 1984 election.

Q What is that basic choice?

MR. SPEAKES: Between progress and -- however the President would like tonight to refer to the other choice -- choice number two.

Q What's that?

Q Could you say that again?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q What is your answer to Sam?

MR. SPEAKES: Progress, continuation of the progress --

Q The choice is between progress and what else or what other?

MR. SPEAKES: Let's wait to let the President come out in his own words tonight with it.

Q No, but you've mentioned a choice, so there has to be two.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we're having an election, Ralph.

Q You mean the choice between Mondale and Reagan, is that it?

MR. SPEAKES: You know, that's kind of obvious, but -- (Laughter.) Anything else? (Laughter.)

Q Between progress and Republicans? Is that what you're talking about?

Q An echo, not a choice.

Q Is there any chance at all of getting the --

Q Well, is it between progress and going back to --

Q Is there any chance at all of getting a text earlier?

MR. SPEAKES: Bob, I'm sorry. I know it puts a cramp, but --

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Owen.

Q -- do you expect the President to be any more specific than he has thus far about how he plans to reduce or eliminate the budget deficit?

MR. SPEAKES: I'd wait and see.

Q What was the question?

MR. SPEAKES: Reduce the deficit, specifics on the deficit reduction.

Q Well, now --

Q Expect that to be in the speech?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't say that. I said wait and see.

Q Well, now, Paul West says it's not --

Q Why do you say wait and see?

MR. SPEAKES: I think he -- Paul is right.

Q Okay.

Q Can you give us a --

Q He's not.

Q -- quote or two?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Can you give us a quote or two?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no quotes.

Q No quotes?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Will there be any quote this afternoon?

MR. SPEAKES: Let it be a dramatic surprise to you.

Candy?

Q This first thing you said was partisan on the
past?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q I don't -- on the past? Sorry, I don't get that.

MR. SPEAKES: Pre-1980 -- how bad things were.

Q Ah.

Q During the Nixon-Ford administrations?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it kind of went downhill after --
beginning of '77.

Q After the resignation of a Republican President?

Q Can we expect some of the same phrases that we heard yesterday -- America's party, that kind of thing? Is that a theme that he's --

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't seen his final draft. I'd just wait and see.

Q Larry, is the President still working on his speech or is it finished?

MR. SPEAKES: It's generally locked up. He'll take another look at it and then cross out a word here and there, but other than that, pretty firm.

Q Is he going to practice --

Q How about the platform, Larry? Any guidance on --

MR. SPEAKES: No, there's -- I don't know how much he goes into the platform, not having read it since yesterday.

Leo?

Q Larry, does the President agree with Senator Goldwater that extremism in the pursuit of liberty --

MR. SPEAKES: The President thought that Senator Goldwater made a good speech last night. He thought it was an excellent speech, thought Goldwater -- calls Goldwater "a true statesman."

Q -- couldn't hear you.

Q On what?

Q True statesman.

MR. SPEAKES: True statesman.

Q He's not dead yet.

Q But does he specifically agree with those two points in his speech?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have to be dead to be a statesman.

Q Yes.

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MR. SPEAKES: Well, Leo, I guess if the Senator was talking about the protection of personal liberties and civil rights, yes, he does.

Q Larry, could you tell us in more detail what the President and former President Ford discussed and how extensively --

MR. SPEAKES: They discussed the upcoming campaign --

Q -- Ford is going to campaign --

MR. SPEAKES: -- the issues there, the strengths of the Republican Party, the weakness of the Democratic Party.

Q Well, is Ford going to campaign as actively as he did last time?

MR. SPEAKES: I would assume, yes.

Q About the same extent?

MR. SPEAKES: Drake.

Q Was the President's speech this morning intended in any way as a response to Governor Cuomo's remarks about the President's use of religion in the campaign?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it was more of a definitive answer of -- a definitive outline of the way the President feels about government and religion and how they mix.

Q But did he want to respond to the points that Cuomo raised --

MR. SPEAKES: I'd let you draw your own conclusions.

Pat.

Q There were some stories a while back saying that the President might use the acceptance speech to announce some part of his tax reform plan. Are we going to get any news along that line?

MR. SPEAKES: I wouldn't look for it.

Q When the President said, "I'm not firing anybody," had he been briefed on the Teamsters proposition that he depose Dotson?

MR. SPEAKES: The story on that is that we have --

Q Larry, you've cut off.

MR. SPEAKES: Where's my WHCA man? How are we doing? Got me?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: The story on that is, as I've said yesterday, basically, when we have something to announce about any Presidential appointment, we will. But there has been no decision to make any changes in the National Labor Relations Board. There is no action planned. No recommendations have gone to the President. The President was not aware of this until we talked about the statements in the press -- We talked with him yesterday about it.

Q And you talked to him before he said, "I'm not firing anybody"?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Could we --

Q Is there any plan for the President to meet with Gromyko in the fall?

MR. SPEAKES: A plan for the President -- any plan for the President to meet with Gromyko in the fall? There's a suggestion that the President might attend the UN General Assembly, as he did last year. There's been no decision made on that and there are no plans at the moment for a meeting with Gromyko. Chances are Secretary Shultz will; but I don't think that has been firmed up yet. As to whether such a meeting would take place, it just hasn't come up yet.

Q Is that something that is being discussed, as was reported, that there's a thought being given to the possibility of a meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: There's really no decision to do it? Certainly it's been batted around in the press and maybe some people have talked about it. But it just hasn't come that far yet.

Q And do you all have any reaction to the Sakharov video tapes?

MR. SPEAKES: The State Department will. It's basically that we have not examined the tapes closely enough to make a decision about the Sakharovs' well being and we would still like to have the Soviets -- have the Sakharovs appear or be seen by some third-party source that could attest publicly to it. So -- a little difficult to analyze.

Q It was suggested last night by former Secretary Kissinger that, first of all, this could not have been video taped by anyone other than the Soviet government and that this could be the prelude to a peace initiative, a fall peace initiative, to try to get the Sakharov issue out of the way, so that they could begin dealing with the President. Is there any --

MR. SPEAKES: I can't make that judgment.

Q Is it too early to talk about next week's schedule?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, David, I don't have it with me.

Ben.

Q One more question on the speech this morning. Is it accurate to say that the President doesn't believe in the separation of Church and State, as spelled out in the Constitution?

MR. SPEAKES: Were you there? Did you read it? Were you listening?

Q Yes, I was listening.

MR. SPEAKES: The President explains that very -- very -- it's the best explanation that I've heard him make of his feelings on that.

Q So he does believe in the separation of Church and State?

MR. SPEAKES: Sure he does.

Q Back on -- also on this speech, the President says, "Without God, there is no virtue." What does that mean with regard to, say, atheists? Does that mean atheists, because they don't believe in God, necessarily lack virtue?

MR. SPEAKES: I'll pass.

Bruce.

Q Larry, you may have been asked this yesterday; but in what sense was the -- when the President ad libed that remark in his -- the welcome rally yesterday about taxes, about sending the taxpayers a bill, was --

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's --

Q -- the other way around --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, it's an idea that the President has talked about for the last two or three years, I know, anyway, that is sort of -- the government runs the thing backwards, anybody else will send you a bill --

Q Well, how would the government know --

MR. SPEAKES: The Hecht Company will send you a bill every month. But --

Q Is that any indication that the Treasury Department is supposed to be considering this idea as a part of --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know what they're considering, so I can't pass judgment. This is something the President thought was kind of an unfair way to do it. How would they know? I don't know.

Q Well, how --

Q -- taken seriously as a proposal?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q And it's not to be taken seriously as any proposal under study by the administration?

MR. SPEAKES: I wouldn't call it a proposal under -- I don't know what's under study at Treasury.

Q Well, I mean, how would the government know what you owed, unless you yourself declared your income, much as we do now?

MR. SPEAKES: Great minds can figure it out.

Q Do you think he has any idea of how it would work?
(Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Helen. I haven't really discussed it with him.

Q -- the President has said he's not going to fire anybody; but does that leave room, possibly, for Dotson to voluntarily resign or take another position?

Q On the Board?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't --

Q In other words -- you didn't make it clear yesterday whether the President really has complete confidence in him. Is that a little vague or --

MR. SPEAKES: I just wasn't going to play that game again. We have no plans to do anything. No decision has been made and we've got no plans to do anything.

Q Can I follow up Ben's question?

MR. SPEAKES: Go.

Q You said that the President does believe in separation of Church and State. Can you reconcile that with the line, " -- our government needs the church because only those humble enough to admit they are sinners can bring to democracy the tolerance it requires in order to survive"? I mean, still from this speech. I'm not clear on --

MR. SPEAKES: I think he thinks religion breeds tolerance.

Q And that government needs religion?

MR. SPEAKES: The people who founded this nation founded -- with a strong religious background, and that religious background, the President thinks, is important to the people who are making decisions for this government, that religion certainly provides an excellent backdrop on which to make judgments in high office.

Q The statement says, if you don't have religion, you need not apply for government --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Seems to be saying that if you don't have a religious belief, you need not apply for government --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I think he just believes that religion will stand you in good stead as you seek to rule.

Q Have you admitted you're a sinner?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Have you admitted you're a sinner?

MR. SPEAKES: Many times, Helen, many times. Every day. (Laughter.)

Q Every day?

(Laughter.) Q You're doing better than we thought, Speakes.

Q -- testimonial? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q We'll hear your confession, Speakes.

MR. SPEAKES: I just confessed to Helen.

Q Larry, have you done a Playboy interview?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon? No.

I think that ought to wind us up, don't you?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

Q Thank you, Helen.

MR. SPEAKES: Confession is good for the soul, Helen.

Q Yes.

END

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