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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

October 31, 1984

The Briefing Room

12:33 P.M. EST

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#1218-10/31

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LARRY SPEAKES

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MR. SPEAKES: The President today is announcing the appointment of John Douglas Scanlan to be accorded the rank of Personal Ambassador in his capacity as Chairman of the United States Delegation to the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, CSCE, Cultural Forum Preparatory Conference in Budapest, Hungary, which will be November 21 through December 5, 1984. I'd like to see them get that on a letterhead.

The detailed schedule for the President's first portion of the trip beginning tomorrow will be released this afternoon. That schedule will include Boston, Rochester, Detroit the first day.

Saginaw, Cleveland, Springfield for the second day, which actually ends in Little Rock.

Fact sheets will be available later this afternoon. Press check-in time for the press charter is 8:30 a.m. at Andrews tomorrow. Those on Air Force One, check-in is 10:00 a.m.

Q All right.

Q Are you going to put out anything at Andrews tomorrow in the way of texts?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Maureen. I'll have to check.

Make a call to Darman and see if we might do something tomorrow morning.

Q Why does the press plane have to leave an hour and a half before the President?

MR. SPEAKES: To get there.

Q To get where?

MR. SPEAKES: To get to where you're going, yes.

Q Excuse me. What was the question? What is it about tomorrow and when?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q What is the question about whether there's a text?

MR. SPEAKES: I directed Mr. Roussel to telephone Mr. Darman to see if he would like anything released in the morning prior to the trip as far as speech texts are concerned.

Q Do you know what time we actually depart --

Q Darman handles speech texts release?

MR. SPEAKES: Darman is over the speech writers, yes.

Q But it's your office that releases the speech texts.

MR. SPEAKES: I understand, but I have to get it from him to do it.

Excuse me. Q I didn't realize you took orders from Darman.

Q Is it a half hour or 45 minutes?

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q Do you know whether we're leaving at 9:00 a.m. or 9:15 a.m.?

MR. SPEAKES: Whether we're -- I don't have the schedule here. Produce Mark.

Q Mark?

MR. SPEAKES: Mark, what's the press plane departure time?

Q He's not there.

MR. SPEAKES: Where is he? I thought --

Q And also, what time does Reagan leave?

MR. SPEAKES: Where's Mark?

Q It will be later this afternoon before we know.

MR. SPEAKES: We'll let you know. We'll post at 3:00 p.m. what we're doing on the thing.

Q Will he have the new speech?

MR. SPEAKES: Is Mark back there?

MR. WEINBERG: 9:40 a.m., 9:55 a.m.

MR. SPEAKES: What? 9:30 a.m., 9:55 a.m.?

MR. WEINBERG: 9:40 a.m. and 9:55 a.m.

Q What is 9:40 a.m.?

Q What?

MR. SPEAKES: Departure times for press plane one and press plane two.

Q So let me correct -- let's start from the beginning. Could you walk back in?

Q Bring your bags in.

MR. SPEAKES: At 8:30 a.m., the press plane check-in time. It leaves at 9:40 a.m. and 9:55 a.m. The reason for the long check-in period time, I would assume, is that we have a large number of people traveling with us and we're going on a long trip which requires a large number of bags, provided you plan to change clothes.

Q Are you coming, Naomi?

Q Who are you suggesting --

Q It would be a novelty. (Laughter.)

Q I'll bring my bag. Come, Naomi.

Q Sam.

MR. SPEAKES: Proceeding with the announcements. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of Algeria's independence, the President has asked the Honorable Donald P. Hodel, Secretary of Energy, to lead the delegation to Algiers to represent the United States at ceremonies there on November 1, 1984.

Included in the delegation to accompany Secretary Hodel are Mr. Sandford McCormick, President and Chairman of the Board of McCormack Oil and Gas Partnership; Mr. Carlos Perez, President of Banana Services, Incorporated -- (laughter) -- and Mr. Charles Tyson, Vice President of Upbrook International, and our Ambassador to Algeria, the Honorable Michael Newlan, who will also participate.

Q Are you putting that out?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Bananas for Reagan. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: The White House Outreach Working Group on Central America will hold a meeting today at 2:30 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. The speakers this afternoon will be John Norton Moore, Professor of Law and head of the Center for Law and National Security, University of Virginia. The topic is, "Legal Issues In Central America." And Paul Seabury, Professor of Political Science, University of California at Berkeley. The topic, "An Overview of the Grenada Documents."

Those wishing to cover, contact Media Relations at 456-6623.

Mrs. Reagan will be traveling this weekend on Friday and Saturday, November 2nd and 3rd. She will travel to Lexington, Kentucky; Macon, Georgia; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Jackson, Mississippi.

In Jackson, Mrs. Reagan will pay a mid-morning visit to the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children and the Reagan-Bush '84 headquarters.

In the afternoon, she will travel to Macon to tour the Academy for the Blind. Afterwards, she will continue to go on to New Orleans for a late afternoon visit to Reagan-Bush headquarters and remain overnight in New Orleans.

On Saturday morning, Mrs. Reagan will tour the '84 Louisiana World's Fair Exposition, travel to Jackson, Mississippi for visits to the University Medical Center -- Children's Center, and to the Reagan-Bush headquarters. And in the afternoon on Saturday, she will fly to Milwaukee where she will join the President and remain with the President until the campaign ends in Los Angeles on Monday night.

This morning, we had two statements released. One by me on the leading economic indicators, and a second by the President on the death of Prime Minister Gandhi.

The President, this morning, has asked Secretary of State George Shultz to represent him and head the U.S. delegation to the funeral of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

As of now, we do not have the details of the funeral arrangements. The State Department, this afternoon, would be your source for the Secretary's travel plans. He may leave as early as

The President, this morning, has asked Secretary of State George Shultz to represent him and head the U.S. delegation to the funeral of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

As of now, we do not have the details of the funeral arrangements. The State Department, this afternoon, would be your source for the Secretary's travel plans. He may leave as early as today. We will be providing a list of other delegates, others that will be in the delegation, this afternoon, hopefully.

We've had a number of --

Q Was Bush ever considered to go?

MR. SPEAKES: Bush was involved in consultations and concurred with the President's decision to send George Shultz as the representative head of the delegation.

We had a number of statements this morning concerning -- or answered a number of questions concerning Mrs. Gandhi's death. The reports from the official press trust of India, we understand that Mrs. Gandhi died at 1330 local time, 1:30 p.m.

Is it 1:30 a.m.?

Q P.M.

Q P.M.

Q If it's local time --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, local time. I'm sorry.

Q P.M., there; a.m. here.

MR. SPEAKES: Which was approximately two hours after being shot by members of her body guard.

The President was called at 12:20 a.m. this morning when we had received some details on the assassination attempt, and then again at 3:00 a.m. -- both times by Bud McFarlane. At 3:00 a.m., he was informed that there had been an official government announcement on her death.

I think that brings you up to date. The President, of course, paid the visit to the Embassy, and I provided the pool with some quotes from the Embassy, his conversation with the Ambassador.

Q While we're on the subject of Gandhi and foreign affairs, I was going to ask you about Samuel Lewis and whether his replacement has been selected.

Q There's been no pool report on that. Could you just give us --

MR. SPEAKES: Leo? Go up there and get -- is there a pool report?

Q Yes. It's all in there.

Q Larry, can we have a White House still from inside?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we're going to provide a White House still. There also was and ITN crew in there.

Q Yes.

Q Yes, the Indians hired that, I think.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, there's the pool report. See if it's

MR. SPEAKES: It's got his quotes at the Reagan-Bush headquarters, too.

The questions on Ambassador Lewis, we have not seen the full text of the Ambassador's statement, and until we do, I don't think I can comment on it in any detail.

Q Well, it's clear enough, at least on one level, he was condemning the plan. Whether the timing or the substance, I suppose his statement would reveal. But he clearly was condemning something that appeared to be U.S. policy.

MR. SPEAKES: I would like to see the Ambassador's statement in full before I comment on it.

Q Has there been any contact with him to try to find out if the reporting is true?

MR. SPEAKES: I would assume there has been contact from the State Department. I'm not aware of any direct contact from the White House with the Ambassador.

Q Is the President aware of --

MR. SPEAKES: He is.

Q -- what the report is?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Did he have a reaction you can share with us?

MR. SPEAKES: He wished to see the full text.

Q The President said that Shultz is coming over today in answer to one of his questions. What's that all about?

MR. SPEAKES: Shultz comes over at least once a week,

if not twice a week, for a 30-minute private meeting with the President. The President indicated that they would probably discuss the current situation in Poland, among other things, so I would assume they would. And we very well may have something to say later in the day, pending their discussion.

Q You said it was a scheduled meeting -- it wasn't set up after the -- Gandhi assassination?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Regular scheduled meeting --

Q You say, you may have something to say later in the day -- you're anticipating an announcement?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, possibly we'll have some reaction or reflection on the current situation in Poland, but I would await the outcome of that meeting. I don't look for the President to say anything personally. If we do anything, it would be in written format.

Q Time?

Q Is Bush coming in for that meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: Deborah?

Q What time?

MR. SPEAKES: At 1:30 p.m.

Is Bush coming in for that meeting? I think Bush is traveling, so he would not be here for that.

Q Can you --

Q Well, Bush is coming back we were told.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't -- I'm not familiar --

Q -- Bush seeing -- is Bush seeing the President this afternoon?

MR. SPEAKES: Not that I'm aware of. Bob, do you know anything about Bush coming back?

MR. SIMS: No.

MR. SPEAKES: I have not been told that the Vice President's coming back.

Q What did the President say about Mrs. Ferraro -- I'm sorry -- Ms. Ferraro --

Q Scripps-Howard --

MR. SPEAKES: Ms. Ferraro? We'll release the text at 6:00 p.m., right? On the Hearst thing, so --

Q Well, yeah, but it's all over --

Q It's all over, can't you tell us whether he, in fact, said that her selection was because of her sex and not because of any qualifications she had?

MR. SPEAKES: The Indians have agreed to let the ITN film be made available to U.S. networks. The pool chairman has been notified. We'll go on with that still, since we've got it.

Okay -- I had a pending question here from Donaldson.

Q Yes. The question is on what he said about Ms. Ferraro. The press reports suggest that he said she was selected because she's a woman, and not because of qualifications.

MR. SPEAKES: I would encourage you to read his answer in its entirety when we do make it available at 6:00 p.m. The reason we're not is because we agreed with the Hearst people who have morning and afternoon papers to give them an opportunity to get it in all their papers prior to us releasing a full text.

I discussed that with the President following the interview, and the President said that the people, of course, will decide who are the best candidates and what ticket is the best candidate. As far as Mrs. Ferraro's qualifications, I think the President was indicating that George Bush, in his opinion, is more qualified to be Vice President.

Q Wasn't he also indicating, though, that she was selected because of her sex, not because of her qualifications?

MR. SPEAKES: I think you'll have to make your own judgments once you see the President's remarks.

Q Well, you say you discussed it with him. Can't you tell us more about what he says he meant by his remarks, because we probably won't be able to see you after 6:00 p.m., will we?

MR. SPEAKES: I will be here.

Q It may be a little tight on the deadlines -- we'd certainly appreciate a little help here --

Q Did he mean to imply that she's not qualified?

Q Is that his view?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Is it the President's view that she is not qualified?

MR. SPEAKES: The President was expressing a view that he believes George Bush is more qualified.

Q No, but -- that's not the question. Is it his view that she was only chosen because of -- because she's a woman?

MR. SPEAKES: As I indicated, I've said what I'm going to say on it, and I would encourage you to read the statement when it's done.

The Vice President is --

Q I just have one more question on that. Has he seen the press reports -- the Hearst reporting on it?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think he's seen it -- but he's certainly familiar with what he said yesterday.

Q And he's not unhappy with the interpretation that's been put on it?

MR. SPEAKES: As I indicated, I don't think he has seen the press reporting on it, so he's not expressed happiness or unhappiness on it. I've not discussed that specifically with him, since the wire story moved at mid-morning.

Q Why bring it up with him, then?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Why did you bring it up?

MR. SPEAKES: Because I often discuss various things he says in interviews to be sure that when you ask me to interpret the President that I can do so in his own viewpoint.

Q Then why won't you tell us?

Q Well, that's what we've done today, and you won't tell us.

MR. SPEAKES: I just told you that the President was expressing the view -- his opinion -- that, first, that the American people will decide who is best qualified; and, second, that his expression was intended to indicate that George Bush is more qualified to be President.

Q You don't want to answer the question of whether he thinks that Mrs. Ferraro is qualified to be Vice President?

MR. SPEAKES: I indicated to you that you should read in your -- in the news accounts -- when we release it -- you should read the President's remarks in its entirety.

Q Does it quarrel at all with the quotes that are printed?

MR. SPEAKES: As I indicated, I have said what I'm going to say on it.

Q Well, when she was selected, he hailed that selection -- I don't remember his exact words -- but he had something to say from the East Room -- what was --

Q Tokenism --

Q Tokenism -- right -- (Laughter.)

Q He hailed it as tokenism --

Q Oh, that's right. I forgot that.

Q Hailed, you said?

Q Well, he then tried to correct it in a public ceremony. So, I guess he is consistent with tokenism, isn't he?

MR. SPEAKES: You'll have to draw your own judgments, Sam.

The Vice President is not coming back, Andrea, for the 1:30 p.m. meeting with Bush. He's coming back to do some --

Q You mean with Shultz?

MR. SPEAKES: -- with Shultz. He's coming back to do some final TV tapings with the President this afternoon, and will be going back out as he had planned all along.

Q Is the President supporting all Republican candidates?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't run down the roster -- what did you have in mind? Generally he does, yes.

Q I mean -- because there are a few around who may not quite -- agree with him.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know who they are.

Q But generally --

MR. SPEAKES: They know who they are, huh? (Laughter.)

Q They know who they are. (Laughter.)

Q What about white supremists, for one thing --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon? A white supremacist? Where is one

--
(Laughter.)

Who you pointing to -- Anson?

Q I'm going through the wall.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I see -- (Laughter.)

Q It is the understanding the ITN camera would have
this conversation with the Ambassador or not?

MR. SPEAKES: They were there -- I don't know how good their sound is -- but they were there; and they were close enough to get it.

Q Larry, Helen's question about the President supporting all candidates' races, a question about his visit to Boston tomorrow. Mr. Shamie was at one point a member of the John Birch Society and has had support in this campaign from their organization. Is the President concerned at all about, you know, getting too closely associated with that group?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I have not heard the President, or anyone in the White House, or the campaign, factor that in as a consideration for going or not going to Massachusetts.

Q When you said earlier that there might be something on Poland later, are you talking about something in the nature of a policy change, or just an expression?

MR. SPEAKES: Expression.

Q What do you mean, "factor that in"? You mean that it wasn't considered at all --

MR. SPEAKES: I have not heard it discussed as a reason for going or not going.

Q Well, does the President feel that association with that group --

MR. SPEAKES: That group hasn't come up in a long time around here. In fact, I don't ever recall it coming up around here. So, I don't --

Q I think Robert Welsh is still alive.

MR. SPEAKES: Who?

Q Robert Welsh. I think he's still alive.

Q San Diego Padres.

Q Yes, right.

Q No, no, no. He's the guy who founded the John Birch Society, the candymaker.

Q San Diego Padres --

Q That's right --

Q Is the President expected to get a briefing to hold a meeting of any kind on the famine in Ethiopia?

MR. SPEAKES: Not anything specific today. He has asked Peter McPherson to keep him up to date on the progress that we make. And there is a meeting today, I believe.

Q Tomorrow.

MR. SPEAKES: Tomorrow. At the State Department that --

Q Tip -- Excuse me.

MR. SPEAKES: He would get a report on it.

Q Tip O'Neill responded to the President's remark yesterday about blighted areas having Democrat machines controlling them, by saying that the President had helped make those blighted areas by signing racial-restricted covenants. Was that a fair

comment?

MR. SPEAKES: No, that was Chris Matthews that said that.

Q Well, he said it for Tip O'Neill, I think.

MR. SPEAKES: Or Tip said it for Chris, one or the other, huh?

Q Well, what is your -- is that a fair comment? What is your response, is what I'm asking.

MR. SPEAKES: My response is it is not a fair comment.

Q Anything else you want to say about that?

MR. SPEAKES: Thanks for the line.

Q Will we be able to find out when you do see the text on the Lewis remarks, or will it just fade away?

Q Um-hum.

MR. SPEAKES: It's up to you.

Q How long do you think it'll be before you see the text?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know.

Q Why did you not have a 9:15 a.m. briefing yesterday and today?

MR. SPEAKES: I just preferred not to.

Q Why?

MR. SPEAKES: I re-read the First Amendment and there was nothing in there about 9:15 a.m. briefings, and I decided I wouldn't do one.

Q Well, have you discontinued them as a practice?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I haven't made a decision on that. I may.

Q You may discontinue it --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q In other words, we may have seen the last 9:15 a.m. briefing?

MR. SPEAKES: You could have. I don't know.

Q Why?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I just think there probably may be more useful pursuits of mine and your time.

Q Well, is this -- some people accuse this White House now of arrogance because of the poll lead and the belief that you're heading for a smashing --

MR. SPEAKES: No, we come in here at 7:00 a.m. in the morning. And if you'll arrive at 7:00 a.m., our office doors are open and we're waiting. And Ms. Thomas is here every morning representing you, ably. And --

Q I'll second that.

MR. SPEAKES: -- we're there --

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

MR. SPEAKES: -- to gather what information and try to be responsive --

Q But, Larry, by 9:15 a.m., you know what the -- how the cast of the day and so forth. I think that you should not eliminate those briefings.

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't --

Q And -- I mean, are you getting lazy?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't know they were so popular.

Q Or do you think you're just -- you've blocked us out of a lot of things.

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't blocked you out of anything. I'm here. I'll stay here until sunset -- until suppertime.

Q You're not that accessible.

MR. SPEAKES: If I'm not, I've got a line-up of people here that are that can speak probably better than I on any given subject.

Q What do you think you can do better than to try to keep us informed as to the President's day?

MR. SPEAKES: We put out a schedule.

Q That's your job.

MR. SPEAKES: We put out a schedule and --

Q But there's more. In the mornings --

MR. SPEAKES: -- Ms. Hoggard over here can give --

Q -- you have many questions.

MR. SPEAKES: -- can tell you anything about that schedule you want to know, what the photo ops are, who's going to be in them, whatever.

Q Larry, is one of the reasons that there are no 9:15's that your time is being devoted to other items for the campaign?

Q Chipping away. Closing the door.

MR. SPEAKES: No, this has nothing to do with the campaign. Or the lead.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:52 P.M. EST