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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

July 16, 1985

The Briefing Room

1:26 P.M. EDT

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#1502-07/16

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PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

July 16, 1985

The Briefing Room

1:26 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: I have a statement, before we get to the President, on the conclusion of the current round of talks at Geneva between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The United States and the Soviet Union today completed the second round of nuclear and space talks in Geneva. The primary U.S. goal remains significant, equitable and verifiable reductions in the size of existing nuclear arsenals.

The United States entered the second round of nuclear and space talks with specific, detailed proposals on the table to achieve this goal. And we were prepared to make progress with the Soviet Union in each of these three negotiating areas.

In the area of strategic nuclear offensive arms, the United States delegation has flexibility in pursuing the significant reductions that we seek. And we are prepared to negotiate a number of specific alternative paths that could lead to such reductions.

With respect to the intermediate-range nuclear forces, our ultimate goal remains the elimination of the entire class of nuclear weapons carried on land-based INF missiles.

Towards this end, the United States delegation has flexibility and is authorized to pursue an interim agreement resulting in equal U.S. and Soviet global limits at the lowest possible level. We're equally prepared, and remain prepared, for detailed exchanges in the area of defense and space.

During the second round, regrettably, the Soviet position has remained entrenched with no movement in their formal positions. The Soviet delegation repeated their moratoria proposals while continuing to precondition progress, or even detailed discussion of offensive nuclear reductions, on acceptance of their demands for unilateral U.S. concessions involving unrealistic and unverifiable constraints on research in the space and defense area.

Late in this round, the Soviets surfaced some concepts which could involve possible reductions in existing strategic offensive nuclear arsenals. However, the method of aggregation proposed in these concepts seems designed to favor preservation of the Soviet Union's primary advantage,

that is, in prompt, hard-target kill capability, the most worrisome element in the current Soviet -- in the current strategic equation.

Efforts by the U.S. delegation to elicit Soviet answers to our questions about these concepts with regard to issues such as numbers ceilings and rates of possible reduction have thus far essentially gone unanswered.

In this regard, we are disappointed that the Soviet Union has been unable to deal in concrete terms with hard numbers, even framed as overall negotiating goals. And while the U.S. immediately probed the Soviet concepts, the Soviets unfortunately have refused to engage in discussion of the U.S. proposals.

In some, we are about where we expected to be, given that we are ending only the second round of negotiations of such complexity and importance. We hope the Soviet Union will be more forthcoming during the next round of negotiations.

There is a copy of this statement that will be put in the bins so we won't have a traffic jam in front.

I would like to, if you would like, to go into the President's report, then answer questions on either, in that case.

President Reagan had a restful night, slept well at the hospital. He was asleep just after 11:00 p.m., awakened a couple of times in the night, and was up at 8:15 a.m. this morning. His temperature, pulse rate, respiratory functions and blood pressure are all in the normal range. The slightly elevated temperature has subsided.

After the President awoke today, he shaved, took a longer walk in his suite, and watched morning television news, and saw his brother Neil's interview on television this morning. He has completed the Calvin Coolidge book --

Q Gosh!

MR. SPEAKES: -- and has asked for more reading materials.

The antibiotics through the I.V. continue and will do so for a couple of more days. The nasogastric tube is still in place. There are no complications on the President's road to recovery. His postoperative route continues to be virtually trouble-free.

This morning, the doctors visited him at 8:30 a.m. Don Regan, the Chief of Staff, spent about 25 minutes with the President from 10:55 a.m. until 11:20 a.m. Don Regan brought best wishes from Prime Minister Thatcher, who had called Don Regan last night to express her concern and to offer the President her hopes for an early recovery.

For those who have asked, a message this morning arrived from the Soviet Union. Chairman Gorbachev has sent a message to the President at the hospital.

In addition, Don Regan reported on the Cabinet breakfast, the regularly scheduled one that was held this morning at the White House. He also reported on the meeting with the Hill GOP leadership, and in that meeting, Regan, Stockman, Max Friedersdorf and B. Oglesby met with the leadership of

the House and Senate from the Republican side. Regan stayed about 40 minutes. The others remained behind.

The President had had his staff answer -- or underscore the questions concerning GOP and the budget. He urged that the Republicans work together to produce a budget, hopefully this week. He emphasized that we are not walking away from deficit reduction; instead, we're willing to meet the deficit head-on.

We hope that today's conference will be approached in a spirit of bipartisan cooperation. Too much is at stake, and the clock is ticking.

Mrs. Reagan arrived at the hospital at about 12:30 p.m. She's been with the President at his suite since that time. She plans this afternoon to visit the pediatric area where there are about 20 patients 14 years of age and under. She'll meet with them and thank them for the cards that they sent the President a couple of days ago. She's not decided yet when she will be able to come back to the White House.

Tomorrow, Mrs. Reagan will visit the USS America, an aircraft carrier at sea off the coast at Norfolk. Mrs. Reagan will be accompanied by her brother, Dr. Richard Davis, and will tour the ship and attend a briefing of the Navy's Drug and Alcohol Abuse Program. She will return to the White House later in the evening. She's -- her press office has posted a list and will give a more detailed schedule later in the day. If you have questions, you can call the First Lady's Press Office.

I believe that takes care of all I had. Do you want to talk about the President first?

Q What does Gorbachev and that message say?

MR. SPEAKES: Won't go into details on it, but it was a message of expressions sent to the President concerning the President's surgery.

Q Can we assume it doesn't reflect the sentiments and the attack in Cuban press which were fairly negative? I mean, can we assume it was a sympathetic message?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, you can.

Q -- was delivered?

MR. SPEAKES: Through diplomatic channels.

Q Does the President -- are tests still going on on the biopsy?

MR. SPEAKES: Helen, I don't believe so. I think that --

Q It's all done?

MR. SPEAKES: As I understand it -- I can check that for you -- but I believe that was conclusive yesterday.

Q Has the process of consulting other doctors or getting other opinions about whether therapy of some sort is required underway now --

MR. SPEAKES: I'm sure there will be. There doesn't seem to be any immediate urgency to do this consultation or to make a decision. I don't think any doctor would recommend any type of chemotherapy or so forth at this time; not this early after surgery. I want to emphasize that Dr. Rosenberg's recommendation pending other consultations was that no chemotherapy or other therapy whatsoever is necessary. And if I was betting, I would be that would be the

recommendation given to the President and Mrs. Reagan.

Q But he said he would suggest that other opinions be solicited or they would be solicited.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, that's only the wise and prudent thing to do. So --

Dick?

Q Is he still feeling any pain or discomfort?

MR. SPEAKES: A little discomfort when he does his sit-ups.

Q What?

Q What? (Laughter.)

Q -- wrong.

MR. SPEAKES: No. A little discomfort when he gets up in bed or rises to get in a chair. So --

Q Is he taking any pain medication or --

MR. SPEAKES: He's had no further pain medication.

Lou?

Q When do you expect him to come home now?

MR. SPEAKES: Still seven to ten days, Lou. We take it day by day, and the doctors will make a decision. We're not in any hurry to leave the hospital.

Q Any indication when his liquid diet begins?

MR. SPEAKES: No, as you know that -- certain things have to happen before they start upgrading the diet.

Q Have those things happened yet?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think that'll be for two or three more days.

Q Can you -- I hate to ask but --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q -- doctors say that that's the next important stage.

MR. SPEAKES: That's true. And where -- there have been at least some signs of a resumption of normal digestive activity. It is not yet conclusive. So --

Q Uh, what does that mean? (Laughter.)

Q Larry --

Q There have --

Q Is Vice President Bush going --

Q Wait.

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q -- no follow-up.

Q Is Vice President Bush going to visit --

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not sure if the Vice President will be going out this afternoon, but I'm sure he will in the next day or so.

Q Larry, could you share with us, if there is anything more to share, what the President has said to you or perhaps to Mrs. Reagan regarding the findings yesterday, the prognosis?

MR. SPEAKES: The President is not one to dwell on anything of that type. The President has a very optimistic and enthusiastic outlook and that is not only the expression to me by the doctors, but by Don Regan and my observing the President, himself. He has an optimistic and enthusiastic outlook. I think you could say the President is beginning to question some of the restrictions that are on him at the moment. He's chomping at the bits. He's already talking about his schedule and return to work. So I think the President is, in his own mind, ready to be up and at 'em.

Q How much work is he doing?

MR. SPEAKES: He read his National Security briefing this morning and has had paperwork before him this morning. And that discussion with Don Regan was fairly extensive and fairly wide-ranging.

Q Larry, when he's walking around the room, is someone with him, helping him?

MR. SPEAKES: I think someone steadies him at the elbow.

Q Because he has IVs -- does he have to carry his own IVs or the nurse does it for him?

MR. SPEAKES: Weinberg does that. (Laughter.)

Jerry?

Q Finally found a job for him. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: That's why I had him out there for 24 hours. (Laughter.)

Q It's not clear -- before the surgery came up, you indicated there probably would be a press conference -- (laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Where's the IV?

MR. WEINBERG: I didn't know he had an IV.

Q Hi, Mark.

Q Well, you got a reaction anyway.

MR. SPEAKES: Who's carrying the President's IV?
(Laughter.)

Q Is that now out of the question or is his recovery so rapid you think he still might --

MR. SPEAKES: I doubt if we'll have a press conference right off the bat. Sam says we'd do anything to keep from having a press conference.

Q That's right. Beats all.

Q Larry, is he going to deliver his Saturday radio address or is that --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. I don't know. We'll see.

Q I have two questions. One, the statement you read earlier, who drafted that and did the President see it and okay it?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, the President has been briefed on this statement. And it was drafted by everybody from the White House press office to -- from here to Geneva.

Q This morning or --

MR. SPEAKES: This morning, yes.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Absolutely.

Q The other question I had, Larry, was about the President's brother. The President's brother's doctor said last night that he thought the President's doctor should have had -- should have given him a colonoscopy --

MR. SPEAKES: He did.

MR. SPEAKES: He did.

Q -- some 14 months ago. Has the President talked to his brother about this? And --

MR. SPEAKES: No, they haven't talked, that I know of. He didn't --

MR. ROUSSEL: No.

MR. SPEAKES: No. Have not talked, no.

Q And does he have an opinion himself, the President, about whether he should have had that exam earlier?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think he's expressed it, no. It wouldn't be a type thing that the President would talk about with us.

Q Have you reconsidered putting out the pathology report?

MR. SPEAKES: No, haven't.

Q I mean, I think that -- I mean, certainly -- I'd like to request that that officially be put out --

MR. SPEAKES: Noted. But this was a decision made before the pathology report was ever drafted or the pathologists completed their studies, that whatever the results, we considered it the same as the President's chart and other items that are purely doctor-patient privileged.

Pat.

Q Is there any consideration given to moving up the President's vacation, particularly in light of the fact he'd already cancelled his earlier vacation?

MR. SPEAKES: There has been some thought that he might go out a couple of days early, but not very much early.

Q I want to do arms control --

MR. SPEAKES: Let's --

Q Can I ask you --

MR. SPEAKES: -- get the President well and then we'll do it.

Q -- said earlier he's beginning to question some of the restrictions --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q He's beginning to question some of the restrictions --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I just think he'd like to spring out of bed and run down the hallway and jump in the car, but --

Q Never mind. I'm sorry I -- (laughter.)

Q Can't Mark give him a hall pass?

MR. SPEAKES: Sure he can. Mark.

Q Can you give us any more details on the discussion with Don Regan? What were the subjects --

MR. SPEAKES: That was pretty well it. I went into pretty good detail on the Hill and what Don told him.

Q Were you there, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q You sat in for that?

MR. SPEAKES: Bernie.

Q Is he making any phone calls to anybody?

MR. SPEAKES: Hasn't, I don't believe, no.

Q He hasn't talked to Michel?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe the President has --

Q There was a report that he had talked to Michel.

Q -- a report he'd talked to Michel.

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

Bob.

Q Last night -- after Mrs. Reagan left yesterday, did anybody visit the President the rest of --

MR. SPEAKES: No, but the President left out of bed and walked around the suite for a while. Then he sat in the chair and read and watched a little television.

Q Did he talk to anybody on the phone?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q So, in other words, after this five-minute meeting with his doctors, in which they told him he had cancer --

MR. SPEAKES: Mrs. Reagan went back for a few minutes.

Q She went back for a few minutes, and then he was essentially left to his own devices, stewing in his juices --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, you know --

Q I mean, did he -- I mean, obviously, the President could have said, "I'd like some people to come over and shoot the breeze with me." But he didn't. Did he give any indication that he wanted to be alone --

MR. SPEAKES: I --

Q -- didn't want to be alone --

MR. SPEAKES: I think what we need to do for you is get you to know the President a little better.

Q What?

Q Well, explain it to us.

MR. SPEAKES: Get you to know the President a little better.

Q Did he watch that television --

Q Does he like to be alone?

Q We'd welcome that, Larry.

Q -- show last night, the doctors performing, Larry?
Did he watch the Press Conference?

MR. SPEAKES: No, he did not watch the late -- the afternoon Press Conference, but he did watch the news last night.

Q Well, explain --

Q What did he think of it?

Q -- elaborate on what you meant when everybody was wanting to know why he was alone last night --

MR. SPEAKES: Mrs. Reagan had duties to attend to and we went to the Press Room and Don Regan came back here and went to work and went out on the lawn with Mrs. Reagan. So, the President --

Q But no calls? No friends? No visits? No nothing?

Q Yes, but what'd you mean we should know him a little better? What do you mean?

MR. SPEAKES: The President has no problem with walking down the hallway and sitting and reading a book and watching the news and so forth.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: It's not troublesome for him.

Yes, ma'am.

Q Has the President made any comment about the composure shown by Mrs. Reagan? Like, "I'm proud of her," or anything like that?

MR. SPEAKES: He didn't to us, but I'm sure -- even if it's unexpressed, he is proud of her.

Q Larry, have you confirmed yet whether there was a message from Daniel Ortega to President Reagan?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. We haven't found -- has the mail gotten in from Nicaragua yet? (Laughter.)

Q Was there a get well card?

MR. DJEREJIAN: We have it.

MR. SPEAKES: Do we have it? We do have it. It got in, yes.

Q What sort of a statement -- can you characterize it?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have it with me. I don't want to go into the -- some --

Q Well I mean, can we assume it, too, was sympathetic to some extent?

MR. SPEAKES: They announced it down there, and I think it -- I don't beg to differ from what the Nicaraguans said in this case.

Q Okay, fine.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me go over to Sheila, and then I'll start back on the front row -- over.

Q Larry, I believe Senator Dole made some reference today to the President sending a message about the budget. Was that through Don Regan?

MR. SPEAKES: That was through Don Regan.

Chris?

Q A couple of questions. One, you talked about his being positive in terms of the cancer thing. Has he said anything? The only quote we've got from him on the cancer thing is, "I'm glad that's all out." Either -- anytime else yesterday or anytime today, was there any mention at all of the fact that -- that he -- I mean, in your presence, had he ever mentioned the fact that he had a cancer finding?

MR. SPEAKES: No -- really didn't.

Q If I could ask another question. You talked yesterday a little bit about the political impact, but I'd like to explore it a little bit more. I mean, he's got a lot of stuff on the Hill -- the budget and taxes and other things. How does this play? Does it engender sympathy? Does it make it harder for Democrats to attack him? Does it weaken his position? What role do you think that has in terms of getting his programs through?

MR. SPEAKES: I would think that's up to the members of Congress as to how they vote. As I said the other day, and not nearly as facetiously as it may sound, that we believe that his budget and tax proposal will stand on their own merit and deserve to be approved on their own merit.

Q Do you think it makes it harder for people to criticize them because of the fact that he's had this --

MR. SPEAKES: Chris, you'll just have to -- you'll have to look at the people and measure the volume of hot air that's directed at the President.

Q For those of us who don't know the President as well as you do, I wish you would elaborate, because I think most people, if they are told they have cancer --

Q -- let me finish my question.

MR. SPEAKES: All right.

Q -- when they're told they have cancer, probably would want to spend more than five minutes asking questions about it and wanted to know about it.

MR. SPEAKES: Well --

Q -- now, he does not seem to be curious. There must be a reason.

MR. SPEAKES: No. The President received a very adequate explanation for the findings yesterday. The President is basically a very solid, very courageous, very optimistic individual, and this is perfectly within his nature to address problems like this.

I've seen him address it not only personally, but in the realm of foreign policy with that same sort of approach. It's a solid, straightforward --you know, let's get about the business at hand-type approach, and that's exactly the way he approached this.

Q Well, if I may just press it, in other words, you're saying that the details were not important to him, but his own optimistic view of the fact that the --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, Sam, he's -- he did not attend the same Journalism 101 you did to ask the type of questions that you've asked.

Q Wait a moment. Let's not descend into a pejorative discussion here.

MR. SPEAKES: It's not a pejorative discussion. The President did not -- was presented the facts and he was presented them in considerable detail, and one can do so in five minutes if one -- if you'll sit and listen instead of questioning. He had the facts, he had it top to bottom, he had the same facts you did. If he needed any further amplification, he watched all your doctors on television last night, and they provided it to him.

Q But he didn't ask any questions, and that is really strange.

Q That's amazing.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, no it's not. Not at all.

Q Did he not ask any questions?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether he did.

Q -- that's the same way he conducts foreign policy discussions, too.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I didn't.

Q One more -- was the President --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I didn't.

Q I thought you said it's the same thing as making other decisions the way he is.

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think you have leapt to another of your erroneous conclusions, as you did twice in your piece -- once in the opening and once in the close yesterday.

Q What did I do in the opening? I simply pointed out you held a briefing shortly after the Stock Market closed.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, but --

Q Is that not a fact?

MR. SPEAKES: It's a fact, but the implications are not fact.

Q You draw your own implications.

MR. SPEAKES: I know. But why was it necessary to mention it?

Q Why don't we --

MR. SPEAKES: No. I would --

Q Let's move on --

Q -- not going to debate it --

Q Right.

MR. SPEAKES: I would like to settle this.

And the second point was that you implied that Don Regan had instructed the press office to put out a volume of paper in order to indicate the President was at work. I think I was --

Q I did imply that. You're right.

MR. SPEAKES: I think I was asked in the briefing, did -- were these ambassadorships approved before or after the surgery. They were approved well before the surgery, came through the normal process, without further Presidential action required.

Q I didn't -- point of approval.

MR. SPEAKES: The only thing that he did was to sign the Executive Order creating the commission, which he did and I announced in the briefing. So there was no contrived effort to put out a number of announcements yesterday.

Dennis Thomas was reporting for work today so we thought it best that we put him in the public domain before he showed at the White House.

Q Can you tell us what he's going to do?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Dennis? He's going to be an assistant to Don Regan and work on a number of areas as Regan assigns as they come up. It will be mainly handling details that the Chief of Staff does

not have an opportunity to deal with in a 13 or 14-hour day and that Dennis will be there to follow up on certain details, take phone calls, filter up what needs to go to the Chief of Staff, pass his instructions down -- those type things.

But he is one of seven or eight Presidential assistants and each one -- it does not change the status of those assistants to the President.

Q How do you see the role of Bush now? Has it changed in any way?

MR. SPEAKES: The Vice President addressed that in a photo op this morning when he indicated that the working relationship that he has with the President is a solid one and the working relationship that he has with Don Regan and the White House staff is a solid one. The VP will stand in when it's appropriate for the President and Don Regan will operate the White House staff. It will all be done in a close working relationship between the Vice President, Chief of Staff, and the President.

Q Well --

MR. SPEAKES: Not much different from when the President in the hospital as he is in the Oval Office as far as consultation, keeping Bush posted.

Q Who decides when it's appropriate?

MR. SPEAKES: When what's appropriate?

Q When it's appropriate for him to substitute for the President.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I would judge it would be a collective decision.

Q Has Bush talked to the President yet?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Has Bush talked to the President yet?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Why is that, Larry, because you keep saying that they're such good friends and have such a close relationship? Here's the President and Vice President who have not yet spoken since the operation. Why is that?

MR. SPEAKES: I would judge that the Vice President has been very concerned. He's talked to Mrs. Reagan several times each day and he's kept in close touch with Don Regan. In fact, I think they've spoken a couple of times already this morning so -- and the Vice President, I'm sure, will be among the first official visitors to see the President.

Q This evening --

Q Larry, if you could tell us, did the President, during the time you were in this morning with Regan, did he refer to the operation or the removal of the tumor in any way?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so, Lou. Let me check with Regan to be sure that it wasn't referred to. He didn't with the doctors this morning, but I mean -- you know him better than I and that's just the way he is.

Q When will the President start seeing visitors? Did you --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, he saw Regan and Mrs. Reagan today --

Q No, you said --

Q This evening?

Q -- Bush would be among the first official --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh.

Q When will that start?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right. I would judge in the next day or so.

Q What about McFarlane? When is he going to start seeing --

MR. SPEAKES: The next day or so.

Q What about the Don Regan role? Do you think that the characterizations of his -- him being so much in charge that he's running the country are accurate or overdrawn or how would you --

MR. SPEAKES: I think Don would be the first one to tell you he's not running the country, that the President is. And they're keeping in

close touch. And as I said yesterday, the Chief of Staff is not making any decisions that the President does not wish him to make. And he -- I think the Chief of Staff would not make a decision that he thought was at all questionable without talking to the President.

Q But there was a senior official who was quoted as saying that noncontroversial decisions would be made at the staff level now; more of those decisions would be made rather than being taken --

MR. SPEAKES: Perhaps a few more but not that many, no. So --

Q Larry, the dollar reacted very badly after the announcement, particularly in Tokyo. Does it concern the administration the President's health has now become a factor on the international --

MR. SPEAKES: No, not particularly. On the other hand, the stock market was doing quite well today at noon. So --

Q The administration's not going to do anything to intervene in terms of the dollar?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't ever talk about intervention, but I don't think the President's health would have any relationship to an intervention. So, the same folks that were yelling about the high dollar six weeks ago are now yelling about the dollar falling off. So, you can't have it both ways.

Q Just when I'm going on vacation!

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: I'm ready.

Q -- two things --

MR. SPEAKES: -- about the Russians.

Q -- two things, one quickly: Has the President talked to McFarlane at all by phone in the last couple of days?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q And, secondly, you had said earlier that the President would be prepared from his bedside regarding the budget to twist whatever arms might be twisted, implying phone calls or anything else. Any Presidential arm-twisting coming up?

MR. SPEAKES: Hasn't been necessary yet. The message was sent loud and clear by Don Regan in person today, so I think he'll leave it at that. If necessary, he's ready to intervene.

Q Larry --

Q Was he aware of the subcommittee --

Q -- how about those Russians, huh? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, how about them?

Q -- was he aware of the subcommittee action on Medicare -- whether you call it a tax or not?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, the business of putting it on new hires?

Q Yes, was Regan --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, Don mentioned that to him this morning.

Q And did he have a reaction? Is that an acceptable option?

MR. SPEAKES: -- he didn't have a specific reaction, but as far as the administration is concerned, that's a step. But it doesn't raise a whole lot of money, although Ways and Means did, I think, come out with about \$10 billion that they looked at.

Q Why isn't that a tax?

MR. SPEAKES: Why is that a tax? Ask Owen. Owen's not here.

Q It's collected by the IRS.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Ask Owen; he'll tell you.

Bob and then Leo.

Q On decisions, staff versus the President -- or whatever way you want to phrase that -- would the decision to pursue a recess appointment for Brad Reynolds be handled at the staff level or would that be something that the President would decide on?

MR. SPEAKES: The decision would be that the President would decide on it. And that decision has not been made yet.

Q Are you considering giving him a recess appointment?

MR. SPEAKES: No, we haven't really -- we haven't decided either way. We're just simply looking into all possibilities as to what we might do.

Q So you are considering doing it but haven't made a decision?

MR. SPEAKES: That's always kind of fine-tuning it a bit. All options are there. We haven't really decided on it. So --

Q Larry --

Q Do you have a problem with the story today on that?

Q -- did you get --

Q What happened to arms control?

Q Did you get a --

MR. SPEAKES: -- hot here.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: Frank?

Q -- do you have any plans -- or does Bush have any plans to preside over Cabinet meetings, NSC meetings or anything like that over the next couple of days?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so. He will certainly attend. There's no Cabinet meeting scheduled, except the Cabinet breakfast this morning. The NSC might have sessions, but I don't think it'll be a full-fledged, statutory NSC session this week.

Miles?

Q Larry, when the President comes back to the White House, is he going to bring part of a hospital with him or will any of those doctors move into the White House?

MR. SPEAKES: No. No, I think when the --

Q What about equipment or a bed --

MR. SPEAKES: No. No, I don't think so. I think when the President walks out of the hospital he'll be in pretty good shape and everything here at the White House will be satisfactory. I promised Leo --

Q Larry, can you give us an example of a decision that Regan has made today that he otherwise might have just gone to the President with?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, he decided what he'd have for breakfast --

Q Regan?

Q Was the President with him?

MR. SPEAKES: No -- what Regan would have for breakfast and --

Q That's a legitimate question, Larry.

Q He knew the President would want him to make that decision.

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q You said that you think he's, perhaps, made a few more decisions than he otherwise would have and --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I didn't say -- I said that a senior -- I was quoted that a senior official had said that and I said perhaps a few more, but not that many.

Q But, to your knowledge, are there any decisions Don Regan has made since Friday, thinking the President would go along with them, but not having referred them to the President?

MR. SPEAKES: Leo, I don't know. I can't be specific on that.

Q This decision just in.

MR. SPEAKES: Those who would like to go see the Vice President and the Japanese Trade Minister, Shirley is here at the door and is prepared to escort you.

One more announcement. Can we -- are we --

Q Go to arms control -- David.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I have a little -- another Soviet announcement here.

Q Yes, I got one more -- I gotta --

Q We got a couple of real short health questions here.

Q I do too.

Q Hey, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Let me do the back --

Q Before I take off -- can you tell us what your schedule's going to be this week? Are you going to do this -- is this your plan for the week -- a noon?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I think so, since mornings are fairly well occupied. And what we'll do is get you a morning written statement that tells you that he's made it through the night again. And then we will get out here at midday as soon as I can get back from the hospital.

Q On camera?

Q -- the statement?

MR. SPEAKES: No, this -- I think today's enough of the camera stuff.

Q Larry, do you have something on the line item veto?

Q -- other statement, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q The other statement.

MR. SPEAKES: What other statement?

Q Do you have another statement?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm trying to get --

Q Let's do arms control.

Q No, wait a minute.

Q Larry, would you answer one or two questions that have been pending, one of which has been weight loss which you've been asked about several times.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. I asked the doctor about it --

Q What's the question?

MR. SPEAKES: Weight loss -- and, yes, surely, they anticipate him to lose a few pounds, but not an extraordinary number of pounds. It's hard to tell. The man hasn't eaten a hamburger since last Wednesday and no macaroni and cheese, so, he could lose a few pounds, but --

Q What does he weigh now?

Q -- a few feet of intestine gone.

MR. SPEAKES: He weighed about -- well, I don't give out figures, but he weighed his normal weight before he went in for surgery.

Q What is that?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Roughly.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't give out figures.

Q Larry --

MR. SPEAKES: It's about what it's been.

Q Was there a statement that Regan took to the Hill on the line item veto?

MR. SPEAKES: Are you going to give out your weight Helen? Would you give out your weight?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Was there a statement --

Q I'm not President of the United States.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, but you're a responsible public official that represents the public interest --

Q Am I?

MR. SPEAKES: -- the White House.

Q Thank you for saying those things. Get that down.

Q Did Regan take to the Hill -- or send to the Hill a statement on the line item veto as he did on the budget?

MR. SPEAKES: He favors it, but I don't think he sent anything to the Hill on it. They know where we stand.

Paula?

Q Larry, you said earlier that the administration is not walking away from the budget. Is this in direct response to Senator Dole's remark last Friday about surrendering to the deficit because budget framework --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I think those who see it and read it would know what it is in response to.

Let me get -- yes?

Q Have there been any changes in the state visit by China next week?

MR. SPEAKES: Hasn't been any change for the moment, but I would imagine since it could very easily be the day of the -- a day or so around the time the President gets out of the hospital that it will probably be not quite the full show, but we'll work with the Chinese on that.

Lou?

Q What did you mean when you said we're about where we expected to be on the arms control, and David Hoffman has a follow up.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, let me -- (laughter) -- let me tell you something else. Lou, you want to get something out --

Q Well, that's exactly what I was going to do. I --

Q Actually, that was my --

MR. SPEAKES: Let me tell you something.

Q -- got two questions on that.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me give you this that can -- it'll fit nicely in this story. A White House special mission will depart Washington for Geneva to begin the process of planning the President's November 19th through 21st meetings with General Secretary Gorbachev.

The purpose of this special mission is to develop all available options and recommendations for consideration by the senior staff and the opening by the President on how the trip should be structured. It will provide the President with insight to the various venues for his November meetings and help us develop the positions we wish to take in future discussions with Soviet and Swiss officials as we develop the schedule and places that we'll operate from.

The special mission will also begin to access the logistical needs of the trip, not the least of which are to handle the press that will be there. Bill Henkel, the Deputy Assistant to the President, will lead the group, and it includes the Advance Director Jim Hooley. We're sending along Mark Weinberg from our Press Office and Steve Hart from the Press Advance Office. In addition, there's Ty Cobb of the National Security Council staff, Mark Palmer, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs and a specialist in the Soviet field, as well as other representatives of the State Department, Secret Service and White House Military Office. A total of 10 persons are scheduled to make the trip, and they will return to Washington Monday.

Q They leave when?

MR. SPEAKES: Tomorrow.

Q Tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: Thursday. That's tomorrow, isn't it?

Q Will they be meeting with --

MR. SPEAKES: No, Thursday, I'm sorry. Thursday.

Q Are they meeting with Soviets there?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I don't know that there are any special meetings. The Soviets will be informed through routine diplomatic channels. No meeting is currently scheduled, but our team would be available if one is desired. Type of meeting like that is probably more likely to come in the summer.

As you know, Secretary Shultz will meet with his counterpart in the Soviet Union in Helsinki on the 28th.* And it was good to have this information in hand.

Q So what are they doing really? Just examining the physical location or -- I mean, how can you explore agendas for options for discussions if there are no Soviets to talk with?

MR. SPEAKES: Did I say agendas for options?

Q You said "develop all available options."

MR. SPEAKES: That's true.

Q -- options for logistics --

MR. SPEAKES: That's true.

Q Well, it's just logistical?

Q Larry, would you --

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* The press office later corrected this to in late July.

MR. SPEAKES: Mainly logistical, but --

Q -- we go back to the arms control --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I mean -- golly, quick.

Q Yes, go ahead. Do it. Let's get on --

Q They going to be looking for any assets --

Q What's the answer to the --

MR. SPEAKES: No. Waldman went on vacation to Bitburg.
(Laughter.)

Q Tell us what you mean by saying, "We're about where we expected to be after the second round."

MR. SPEAKES: The reason we're about where we expected to be is that, in our judgment, when we entered in these talks and finally got the Soviet Union to agree to come back to talk arms control, that we knew it was an exceedingly complex issue, and we knew at the time and shortly thereafter that the Soviets were experiencing a change in leadership that might take some time.

So there were a number of factors that went into our judgment that this is a process that will take time. While we hope for serious discussions with the Soviets, we realize it is going to take time to bore into the complexities of these type of issues.

Q Do you expect greater progress the next time -- in the next round? You do have that difference in the Soviet leadership now. That was --

MR. SPEAKES: That's true. Lou, we're

hopeful, but we do not have anything but hope and the wish that it would be and to restate that we are fully prepared and will approach these talks in all seriousness and with a great deal of flexibility. But it's important that the Soviets come back with that same type of attitude.

So, Helen? You were --

Q Larry --

Q Are you saying --

Q -- you criticized the -- what you described as proposals that they put on the table near the end of this round. Did we reject as a proposal or is it still an open offer?

MR. SPEAKES: I would not say rejected. It was -- when it was laid on the table, we looked at it in a certain tone that it seemed to, in our opinion, to be weighted in favor of a current Soviet advantage in certain areas. However, we did ask for clarification and we have not yet gotten that clarification in any detail. So --

Q So will that be the matter of business when round three begins?

MR. SPEAKES: Among other things. I don't think that is necessarily the -- I mean it's something that's more or less in an exploratory stage, as I understand it.

Q One other thing. When the President goes to Geneva in November, we'll be into round three by that time? What will be the status --

MR. SPEAKES: What's the timetable, Ed, for resumption?

MR. DJEREJIAN: Mid-September.

MR. SPEAKES: Mid-September. So you will be into it or probably through with it.

MR. DJEREJIAN: We'll be into it.

Q Well, will it still be underway or will it have ended? Round 3.

Q Mid-September it starts or it ends?

MR. DJEREJIAN: It starts in mid-September.

Q Do you know when it ends or does it have an ending date?

MR. DJEREJIAN: Well, they usually last three to six weeks.

MR. SPEAKES: So it could very well -- round three could be over by then.

Q It will be over.

Q Well, don't you expect the summit -- that nothing will really happen until you break the log-jam at the summit?

MR. SPEAKES: We can't say that, Helen.

MR. DJEREJIAN: Can't say that.

MR. SPEAKES: There's no reason for us to have to wait for a summit until this happens. I think there's plenty of

opportunity to move forward in the third round.

Q Well, did the Russians actually put -- after you said if they have anything to say, they ought to put it on the table, is that the thing you're referring to or they were getting --

MR. SPEAKES: No. No, this is something else regarding strategic offensive nuclear arsenals. There were some discussions about give and take on Star Wars.

Q Right. Was that ever put on the table?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q It was never put on --

MR. SPEAKES: No, it was not.

Q Larry, are you saying that the --

MR. SPEAKES: Pat?

Q Are you saying that the failure to make any progress this far is because the Soviets have a new leader and they're not quite ready to --

MR. SPEAKES: No, no. You've missed the first half of my statement which was probably the heavier-weighted part of it.

Leo?

Q Well, could you enlighten me a little bit? What did I miss here?

MR. SPEAKES: Complexity -- one word, complexity.

Q Well, can I follow up on that?

MR. SPEAKES: You can.

Q For four years we've been told that a U.S. military buildup would lead to the Soviets to get serious at the arms control table. Now, it's been four years. We are -- there's been two sessions of the arms control talks. And now we have absolutely no progress. Does that, in some way, cast some doubt upon military strength as the --

MR. SPEAKES: No. The Soviets are talking and that is an improvement.

So, Norm and then Leo.

Q Let me clarify first what you said to Helen up there. When you referred to some concepts having been floated in Geneva that could have held some promise, I think, paraphrasing what you said, were you referring to --

MR. SPEAKES: Which could involve possible reductions.

Q Okay. Were you referring to some kind of hint of flexibility on SDI research?

MR. SPEAKES: No. These are Soviet concepts.

Q Right.

MR. SPEAKES: The U.S. position on SDI has not changed.

Q No, I'm talking about the Soviet position. There's a story a couple weeks ago about how they might now be willing to --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think we can interpret it that far. Perhaps the -- somebody that was in the negotiations could, but I don't think we're prepared to go any further on that.

Q One other thing, though. Paul Nitze, after the first round, said the Soviets not only did not show any sign of progress, but had backtracked. During the second round, did that take place? Would you characterize their position as intransigence during the second round?

MR. SPEAKES: Ed, do you want to take up on that?

MR. DJEREJIAN: The main thing is that they weren't willing to talk about hard numbers or any concrete -- to really make concrete the general concepts that were floating around. Beyond that, we don't want to get into too much of the details of what went back and forth.

And then in terms of your -- the ban on SDI research during the round, you know, the news articles, I think what you're referring to, in our view, that's more wishful thinking that the Soviets showed any flexibility on SDI research than actually reality.

Q Hmmm. So much for the --

MR. SPEAKES: Leo?

Q Larry, you mentioned -- was a special mission going to leave in a couple of days. Do they have any discussions with the President himself on how he would like the meeting with Gorbachev structured?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think they know his feelings. This is mainly a session to go and look and come back with -- and tell us what's there and what they would recommend, so --

Joe?

Q Larry, if there's no progress in a third round, does that put extra pressure on the President to get some results in this November meeting with Gorbachev?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I don't think so, Joe. I think our meeting in Geneva in November is designed to cover a full range of U.S./Soviet topics and not necessarily designed to produce any breakthroughs in arms control. Certainly we'll make our views known and so will they. But it is not a negotiating session on that subject. I think everybody else has given up.

Q There was a story in the paper this morning that the -- Regan and I believe with Mrs. Reagan's suggestion has cleared the President's schedule of all public events until he goes to California. Is that true?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we were not completely developed on our schedule that was leading up to August, and frankly we've not decided on events; I think the President will set his own course on that. But, you know, the schedule is open and flexible, and we expect the President to resume some activities.

Q You mean some public events?

MR. SPEAKES: When you talk about clearing, we had a couple of trips. We were going down to Richmond to a fundraiser -- when was it, this week?

MR. ROUSSEL: Friday.

MR. SPEAKES: Friday? I don't think we'll -- we won't do it this Friday.

Q What about --

Q But I mean --

MR. SPEAKES: -- and we were going out to Wyoming, and I don't think we'll do that.

Q But would you anticipate that he'd make any public appearances before he went away to California?

MR. SPEAKES: I would anticipate that he would. The first will be when he comes back home.

Q Well, I'm not --

Q What about that Chinese leader? You had said you expect him to see -- to greet the Chinese --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, absolutely. He will participate in discussions with President Li when he's here and all of -- the full extent of them hasn't been worked out, but I think the President will be very much a part of the United States meeting.

Q Larry, are you going to give us any more on the President's day today and how --

MR. SPEAKES: Nelson, why don't we figure on a 5:00 p.m. posting, which I don't think

will be able to contain much other than a little times about what went on this afternoon and --

Q Tell us which new book he's finished.

Q What about --

MR. SPEAKES: But I couldn't get the name of the new book.

Q No?

Q Can we have a photo of the President today?

MR. SPEAKES: There were a couple of photos made out there and we'll look at them and see the timing and so forth on them.

Q Could you let us --

Q The right side of his face?

Q -- know on that and whether we'll --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, we will.

Q Two questions. Did the President actually read that statement that you read about arms control today?

MR. SPEAKES: He didn't read it in its entirety. Don told him exactly what we were planning to do.

Q How did he sign off on it? Did he say, "That's okay."?

MR. SPEAKES: He said, "That's okay. That's fine. That's wonderful." Good, great.

Q The second one, what is the progress in the search for a successor to Stockman?

MR. SPEAKES: The progress is progressing.

Q Larry, I have a question. Since the President didn't read that statement in its entirety, and yet obviously, he has energy and interest in reading several books in his hospital room; he's in charge, he's running the government, why didn't he read that statement? How much --

MR. SPEAKES: Only from you, Frank.

Q No, no. Wrong. Good question.

Q Why, Larry? I think that's a legitimate question?

Q I join in my colleague's question.

MR. SPEAKES: We're about getting to the end here.

Q No, no, no. I --

Q Did the statement actually exist at that point on paper or was he just told about what was --

MR. SPEAKES: It was still in the draft stage. Thank you very much. (Laughter.)

Q He could have answered that, too.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I thought it was a catty question. I'm getting tired of catty questions. Here's someone who's never

asked a question --

Q When do you expect to release your mid-year economic figures?

MR. SPEAKES: Mid-August.

Q Mid-August?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Larry, has he spoken to anyone by phone?

Q And the President was supposed to meet with some dignitaries, heads of state -- the Chinese President.

MR. SPEAKES: The Chinese President?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: He'll do that.

Q Has this changed in any way?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Has not.

Q So everything is --

MR. SPEAKES: He'll meet with the Chinese President. Other things on his schedule will be worked out. But he'll be there with the Chinese President.

Q Larry, has he spoken to anybody by phone?

Q Thank you, Helen.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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2:10 p.M. EDT