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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

October 11, 1984

The Briefing Room

12:44 P.M. EDT

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#1213 -10/11

1:13 P.M. EDT

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LARRY SPEAKES

October 11, 1984

The Briefing Room

12:44 P.M. EDT

MR. SPEAKES: The President will have lunch with the Vice President. In fact, he is at this very moment probably in the main course, leading into dessert.

Q What are they having?

Q Fileted Ferraro?

Q Cherries Jubilee?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Sam got it.

And tonight, the President attends the United Negro College Fund 40th Anniversary Dinner, Sheraton-Washington Hotel. Travel pool will accompany. He speaks at 8:30 p.m. and there's open press coverage. We plan to have an advance text of the President's remarks at about 5:00 p.m. He'll be back in the White House at 8:50 p.m.

Tonight at 10:30 p.m., the President will talk to the Vice President following his debate in Philadelphia. We will give the wires a call after that to confirm that the call was made and --

Q Why not a photo op?

MR. SPEAKES: A photo op of a phone call? We'll give you an old phone call photo op picture. (Laughter.)

Q What, of the astronauts?

Q That would have been in his pajamas. It will be appropriate. (Laughter.)

Q Pick me up and get my --

Q Are you just going to tell them he did it, or are you going to give them anything --

MR. SPEAKES: We may give them a quote or two.

Q How do we get it?

Q Then how do we get it?

MR. SPEAKES: Read the wires.

Q Why don't you give it to us now?

Q Oh, no, come on.

Q "You did great, George." You know, "You were terrific."

Q Who do we call? I mean, you're not going to do a call-out, but can we call in?

MR. SPEAKES: We have a phone duty person that's on duty. And he's not in the room to defend himself at this time.

Q We're all going to be filing then.

Q Is that Marlin?

Q We can't wait for the wires.

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q We really can't wait for the wires. We're all on deadline.

Q I can't wait for the wires.

MR. SPEAKES: Are your wires that slow nowadays?

MR. ROUSSEL: That's an insult to the wires.

MR. SPEAKES: It's instantaneous, isn't it?

Q Are you going to take that?

MR. SPEAKES: Deadline every minute.

Q No phone calls?

Q Seriously, what about the three networks that are on the air with specials?

Q Yes.

Q Is there any way to at least contact them with a quote?

MR. SPEAKES: Talk to Mr. Teeley, who will be present and can confirm the phone call and give you a briefing on it.

The detailed schedule for the trip to Ohio will be available this afternoon and the fact sheets will be ready later this afternoon. We plan to have advance texts for the trip at Andrews prior to check-in tomorrow.

Q Can I ask you a question on that, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Will he be making the same speech at every train stop or will they all be different?

MR. SPEAKES: We will give you the opening rally speech at -- what city is that?

MR. ROUSSEL: Dayton.

MR. SPEAKES: Dayton, at the courthouse, and then we will give you a first train stop speech. And, essentially, the speeches will be the same at the three or four more stops on the train route so you will get two advance texts.

Q Apparently, the --

MR. SPEAKES: Then you'll have to cover to see if he adlibs anything.

Q Apparently, the railroad is saying they're going to have to slow down the train for safety reasons and, therefore, for instance, we're going to get to Deshler an hour later than had been indicated in the summary schedule. In the detailed schedule, is it going to have the old figures or the new figures as to when we get to places?

MR. SPEAKES: We don't know of any plans to slow the train down from our detailed schedule. See if -- Mark, see if it's

changed from the summary. Has it changed from the summary schedule?

MR. WEINBERG: It has moved some from the summary, yes.

MR. SPEAKES: From the schedule --

Q About an hour.

MR. WEINBERG: It's impossible to be certain of the arrival time. It depends on crowds and how long the President --

Q The detailed schedule has the new times?

MR. WEINBERG: The detailed schedule represents our best guess at the arrival times, and our advance people have been in contact with all of your producers throughout the day on these aspects, as they have throughout the week.

MR. SPEAKES: And they will continue right up to train time.

MR. WEINBERG: Call Jim --

Q I think the helicopter's leaving now, Mark.

MR. SPEAKES: If you're talking with your producers, Chris, they will tell you the facts.

Q They're on the scene.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, have they got phones out there?

The President --

Q They're on the train.

MR. SPEAKES: -- will travel to Illinois Tuesday, October 16th. He will travel first to Will County, Illinois, which is South Chicago, and he will visit the Will County Career Education Center.

Q Now, what was that?

Q Will?

MR. SPEAKES: Will. W-I-L-L.

Q As in, "Can do."

Q Is this political or official?

Q Are you going to put out a paper on that?

Q As in "George."

MR. SPEAKES: The President will then have a tour of the facilities and make remarks to the students and faculty there. The facility has 1,000 registered students, many of whom are juniors and seniors at area high schools. The others in the center are adults. The center teaches job skills such as data processing, electronics and auto mechanics.

The President then will visit Bolingbrook -- one word -- High School, which was one of the recipients of the Presidential Academic Fitness Award in 1983. The President will address students and faculty and members of the community.

And from there, the President goes to DuPage County, where he addresses a Reagan-Bush rally at the College of DuPage. After the rally, the President comes back to Washington. We will have the summary schedule later this afternoon, and you have a schedule posted.

Today we have with us eleven students from various journalism schools --

Q Is it three stops in Illinois? In the one -- that that particular --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Nothing in Missouri?

Q -- no Missouri?

MR. SPEAKES: We would welcome our journalism students today. There are eleven who are from around the country for a semester of study at the American University as part of the Washington Journalism Program.

Questions?

Q Larry, what's the President's response to Mondale's challenge yesterday that he foreswear any changes or cuts in the Medicare program?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know -- Mondale ought to look at his own tax program that he proposed.

Q Well, what about Medicare? Is the President willing to take the same pledge he took on Social Security?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not fooling with Mondale today -- kind of like Lester --

Q What about Medicare, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q You addressed Medicare the other day. That's not just -- is the President willing to say, are you willing to say on his behalf that you won't touch Medicare?

MR. SPEAKES: The response to Mondale was made on Social Security, and we will -- I will stand right where I am.

Q But that was on Social Security -- this is a new issue. What about Medicare?

MR. SPEAKES: I have nothing to say to Mondale's charges.

Q Larry --

Q It's not a change -- it's --

Q What about -- apart from Mondale's charges -- what does the President plan to do about Medicare? Medicare came up as an issue in the --

MR. SPEAKES: And what did I say on Monday when I talked to Mr. Mondale --

Q This isn't a quiz -- we're just asking you what your view is on this.

MR. SPEAKES: I understand, Lou. And I've addressed that very issue Monday, in a question to your colleague, who now sits at your left -- and you may refer back to that answer.

Q I'm asking you, Larry. What do you have to say on Medicare? If you don't have anything to say, why don't you just say that, and not --

MR. SPEAKES: I just said, Lou, you may refer back to my answer of earlier in the week. It is there on the paper.

Andrea?

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Q What is the President's position --

Q Larry, do you have any -- do you have any --

Q Can we just stay on that -- oh, you go ahead.

Q Oh, I'm sorry --

Q Stay with it --

Q What is the President's position on Medicare?

MR. SPEAKES: You having trouble articulating yourself here?

Q Sometimes.

Q He's getting old -- (Laughter.)

Q I have a good teacher in the White House. He has stated his position on Medicare, I presume --

MR. SPEAKES: He ought to stand at your elbow when you do your third take out there -- go ahead. (Laughter.)

Q Well, I'm not Mr. Rather, and I'm not running for anything --

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

Q -- he is. (Laughter.) Now. What is his position on Medicare?

MR. SPEAKES: All in good humor.

Q Of course. I'm not asking you to do it off the top of your head. Can you refer us to something that he has said recently which represents his position on Medicare, and whether he will cut or not cut?

MR. SPEAKES: Marlin, when he's addressed that, in a couple of things previously -- we'll look it up with our research operation, and I will produce it for you.

Q If you don't want to articulate it, give us something which you say is his position.

MR. SPEAKES: I'll be glad to. While you're working on us on Medicare, work on Mondale on indexing, which you didn't do yesterday.

Q We don't cover Mondale, Larry --

Q We cover you --

Q -- we cover Reagan.

MR. SPEAKES: I know, but you've got people that do cover him --

Q Let's talk about indexing for a second --

Q Well, wait a second -- (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: You must be in a debating mood today. I'm ready. Go ahead, Andrea.

Q What is your reaction to Laxalt saying that the President was --

MR. SPEAKES: The President reacted in the photo-op and  
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you can present -- you can look at that --

Q Let her finish the question.

Q The question was not asked completely about Laxalt's statement, or the photo op after all, so let me ask you --

MR. SPEAKES: It was a press conference, not a photo op --

Q -- about Laxalt's --

MR. SPEAKES: -- there were more questions in that press -- in that photo op than there were in a 30 minute press conference.

Go ahead.

Q Laxalt said that the President --

Q I don't know, we haven't had one in so long --

Q That's cause his answers were shorter.

Q -- Laxalt's statement that the President was brutalized and smothered by his briefers?

MR. SPEAKES: He was asked that very question in the photo op.

Q No he wasn't. He was asked whether his briefers -- let me get the exact words --

MR. SPEAKES: Ms. Thomas used those very words -- that's the word --

Q Well, what's the answer?

MR. SPEAKES: The answer is from the President. And that's it.

Q Wait a second, Larry, we weren't all in there, and it's not all on video, and could you tell us what is the --

Q It would be really nice for those of us --

Q -- what is the general response?

Q -- for those of us who hadn't heard it to have what version --

Q What's your answer?

MR. SPEAKES: Where's your pooler? I mean, if I interfered in the pool process, I would be criticized. As Weinberg says, it's an internal matter, a press matter, consult your colleagues.

Go ahead.

Q Was that Weinberger, or Mark Weinberg? (Laughter.)

Q Does Baker consider it a personal attack by Laxalt?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q He did run the operation, and brutalized and was --

MR. SPEAKES: No, Baker doesn't.

Q Huh?

MR. SPEAKES: Baker doesn't, no.

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Q How about Darman?

Q Will the President sign the Continuing Resolution, including the suspension of aid to the Nicaraguan rebels?

MR. SPEAKES: The Continuing Resolution is still under consideration in the Senate. We're working with the Senate leadership. We are pleased the water projects have been taken out.

Q Passed.

MR. SPEAKES: Has it passed the Senate now? We're generally -- I have not seen if the Senate's done anything different from the House version to it, but we're generally pleased with the water projects being removed. And we're generally pleased with it in full. I wouldn't yet say whether the President will sign it, until we see the language and so forth.

Q In general terms, about the suspension of aid for the Nicaraguan rebels, how does the White House, or the President feel about that?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, the President believes that vital national security interests are at stake, and we will continue to seek approval for all requests for funds in support of programs which will contribute to the economic, the social and political development in Central America.

Q Larry, the President said that --

Q What -- wait --

Q Well, does that mean that the President will ask for a supplemental right away, or will wait until the 5-month period is over?

MR. SPEAKES: I think we're going to stand right at that point. Without Congress in session -- which, they adjourn today -- it would be difficult to get a supplemental.

Q Is he referring to the covert aid, in your statement here -- are you referring to the covert aid?

MR. SPEAKES: He asked about funding for Nicaragua, and I indicated that we would seek approval of all requests, which is the way we've addressed that subject in the past.

Q The President said he wasn't going to do anything differently, but Laxalt said that the preparation for the next debate would be very different -- that we would see a new Ronald Reagan -- can you explain --

MR. SPEAKES: The President's not going to do anything different.

Q His campaign managers won't --

Q Well, he's going to present a coherent summation this time, is he not? (Laughter.)

Q He's going to talk about foreign affairs instead of domestic -- (Laughter.)

Q Is that a concession? I mean -- (Laughter.)

Q He will try to do that, won't he?

Q Will he get more rest -- he said that --

Q I mean, if he doesn't --

Q -- he'd done too much homework and maybe not gotten enough rest, do you think he'll get more rest?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think he said "rest" --

Q -- relaxing, or something like that --

Q Relaxing, yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Relaxing.

Q And the other thing Laxalt said was a little strange, because he apparently said that the President had had to prepare for Gromyko at the same time as preparing for the debate. It strikes some of us that those were different weeks.

MR. SPEAKES: I understand, but -- the President spent -- he spent more time on him, he was studying the material much earlier than --

Q I would like to ask about something he said on the South Lawn leaving yesterday. Helen asked him about -- to explain some of his prepared remarks about Mondale and weakening the armed forces. He said something to the effect that he had been told that in the last two years of the Carter administration, when Jimmy Carter had wanted to beef up -- Mondale had advised against it. Can you give us any more specifics? Can you tell us --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't know --

Q If not who told him, at least what specific beefing up did Mondale object to?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the answer to this.

Q Brzezinski -- was Brzezinski --

Q Well, does the President have specifics, but you just don't know them?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't talked to him about it, no, I haven't.

Q Well, can you ask him if he will give us some specifics?

MR. SPEAKES: I'll be glad to.

Q To go back to Laxalt -- he also said that you're going to get out of the Ivory -- the President's going to get out of the Ivory Tower and go into the streets. Do you accept that characterization of where the campaign has been?

Q Or where it's going -- (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Was he talking about the campaign or the debate preparation?

Q -- in the gutter --

Q I think he was talking about the campaign.

MR. SPEAKES: No change in campaign planning at all -- steady as she goes.

Q The campaign manager's wrong --

Q Did Laxalt --

MR. SPEAKES: We've been able to develop roughly a 20 point lead in two months. It has been a lead that has been generally increasing over the past two months, and it is -- I think it

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indicates that the President is doing all the right things.

Q Larry, the reports --

Q -- the 14-point lead, and hasn't been decreasing over the past week?

MR. SPEAKES: The -- well, it depends on which poll you look at -- are you looking at the CNN, or the New York Times?

Q I'm looking at your campaign's figures.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think you're up to date on the campaign's figures --

Q How much weight --

Q What are the campaign's figures?

Q Bring us up to date --

Q How much weight do you think tonight's debate --

Q Wait a minute --

Q All right.

Q What about the campaign figures? What are they?

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

Q Well, if you're disputing other polls --

Q Yeah --

Q Why should you be different from anybody else?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no -- I'm not disputing other polls -- that's right -- I'm disputing these 14-point figures.

Q So yours is higher than 14 -- you didn't drop as much -- your polls don't show as much of a drop as the others?

MR. SPEAKES: Our polls are generally reflected in the polls -- in the polling that has been done in the -- by The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times, and by Washington Post/ABC.

Q What about CBS?

Q -- because he's lost sometimes --

Q How much weight does the President give to tonight's debate between the two Vice-Presidential candidates?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think the President has addressed it in those terms.

Q Well, does it bear, really, on the election of the President? Is it going to be a factor -- what happens tonight?

MR. SPEAKES: As a great man once said -- the people will tell you.

Q Who said that?

Q President Dewey. (Laughter.)

Q Albert Einstein. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Candy?

Q Has there been -- has the President sat down with

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any of his debate briefers to do any Monday morning quarterbacking -- yet?

MR. SPEAKES: We don't discuss debate preparation or post mortems. (Laughter.)

Q All right.

Q Larry, there was a man on CBS Morning News this morning who said he was Ronald Reagan's make-up man --

MR. SPEAKES: How long did it take you all to find that fellow? You ought to be ashamed. (Laughter.)

I mean, Good Morning America might do that -- but CBS Morning News? I don't know --

Q What about the President wearing make up after all?

MR. SPEAKES: The President said he didn't wear make up -- he sure didn't wear it the other night -- he wasn't dripping. (Laughter.)

Q The President said he never wears make up.

MR. SPEAKES: He does not want it as President, I can guarantee that -- I wasn't there --

Q Had he forgotten that he used it?

MR. SPEAKES: I wasn't there in Death Valley Days. (Laughter.)

Q Did he forget that he used to wear it?

MR. SPEAKES: Did he -- well why don't you give this fellow a lie-detecter test -- this little dig --

Q Does the President still say he doesn't?

Q And he never did?

Q Except for powder, right Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think -- no, he doesn't wear powder.

Q As the President once said --

Q Who does his hair, Larry? (Laughter.)

Q Wait -- there's a little bit of confusion here --

MR. SPEAKES: Who does his hair -- you want to find a barber?

Q -- confusion in here -- does the President challenge, or dispute what this man is saying?

MR. SPEAKES: He did say yesterday, yes.

Q Yes. Then you say you're sticking by that he has never worn make up in Hollywood, right?

MR. SPEAKES: That's what he said, yes. (Laughter.)

Q The President said that four years ago -- four years ago the President said that if he ever felt that he might be slipping, or words to that effect, he would agree to take

these tests for mental prowess, senility, whatever it is. Does he see any need now to take any of these tests?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Even though he forgot his makeup man? (Laughter.)

Q Well, he -- Now, wait a moment. Does that not -- would that not be a way to lay to rest all this age business that's now on the table?

MR. SPEAKES: Does what lay to rest?

Q If he took the tests and they showed that he had not any diminished --

Q 100.

Q -- sense of his faculties.

Q 93.

Q I mean, why not take the test and put all this to rest?

MR. SPEAKES: There's no need to.

Q Does the President approve of Cap Weinberger's decision to exclude newspapers from --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think we've been involved in that at all.

Q So, he was not consulted --

MR. SPEAKES: Thank goodness.

Q -- by Cap?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Did he approve of it?

Q He approved it? Did he approve of it?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't been called on to make approval.

Q Did the President approve of it?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think he's been asked about it --

Q What is the White House --

Q You're now being asked.

Q -- press spokesman. Do you approve it?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q You're a press spokesman for the administration. Do you approve --

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't been asked to approve or disapprove by the Defense Department, and -- I take no position in it. The Defense Department can do that. They can incur -- If your network knew you were sticking up for newspeople, you'd be in big trouble.

George.

Q They don't tell me what to think.

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Q Back on makeup, did you ask the President today about makeup or are you just basing your statement on what he said yesterday?

MR. SPEAKES: Basing his statement on what he said yesterday and said over the last few --

Q Let's go back to David talking about indexing. Contrary to what you've stated earlier, in fact, we --

MR. SPEAKES: You been talking to Chris Matthews again?

Q -- one news organization broadcast the President's charge that Mondale had said that he was going to repeal indexing and --

MR. SPEAKES: And we're deeply grateful for that.

Q And then Mondale was asked it. And he said -- and we also put this on the air -- that it was a slip of his tongue, that his position is well known and everyone understands, as I take it the position is that when economic times get good, he wants to implement indexing. Do you accept Mondale's explanation that it was one of these inadvertent slips of the tongue?

MR. SPEAKES: There's a long way between -- between -- What did he say? I'm getting so old --

Q I don't have his exact words.

MR. SPEAKES: -- I can't remember.

Q But the exact -- but --

MR. SPEAKES: There's a long way between repeal and between implementation. And Mondale ought to know the difference if he wants to be President of the United States.

Q But, Larry, your campaign has a big fat book of Mondale's positions. And in there -- you know, because you guys have, I'm sure, Mondale's September deficit plan, which calls for deferral of indexing for everybody who has over \$25,000 and implementation for everybody under. So, do you accept Mondale's point that it was a slip of the tongue --

MR. SPEAKES: Business Council, September 15th, 1983: "For more than a year, I have proposed deferring or repealing indexing." You've got his words. I don't know. Which Mondale do we have here?

Q Well, he gave --

MR. SPEAKES: Yesterday's Mondale or the one that's existed for -- what is it now? -- nearly two years? Over two years.

Q Well, he, at that point, had an alternative, repeal or deferring. He settled finally, apparently, on deferring it until he --

MR. SPEAKES: The debate.

Q -- says economic times justify full implementation.

MR. SPEAKES: I would ask Mondale. I don't know what he meant. I work for Reagan, not Mondale.

Q Let me ask something about Reagan said -- that Reagan said. He said that his Democratic predecessor had signed this bill --

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't -- Yes --

Q -- which he, in fact, signed.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes --

Q Does he know that now or does --

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't talked to him about that, Lou. I saw The Times used it yesterday, and The Post finally picked it up today. (Laughter.)

Q What's your --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't --

Q Is he aware that he -- Is he aware that --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q -- he made a mis-statement here?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't talked to him about it --

Q Did he forget that, too? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: No, I forgot it. I forgot to ask him, because I'm getting old.

Q He didn't make a mis-statement about it at all?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Helen. I haven't asked him about it.

Q What do you mean, you don't know?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the facts.

Q Well, it's been a couple of days.

Q You've been doing research on indexing.

Q You were asked about that --

MR. SPEAKES: No, we weren't. I wasn't.

Q He reads The Post, doesn't he?

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q He reads The Post.

Q He reads The Washington Times.

Q Oh. Was it in The Times?

Q Colonel, was it in The Times?

Q -- forget.

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I think we've deteriorated here. Go ahead, Charles.

Q Larry, Pete Teeley is quoted as saying Ferraro is bitchy. Is that now the consensus? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I thought the word was "witch."

Q No --

Q No, seriously.

Q It's a debate within the campaign.

Q Shhhhh.

Q -- says she is bitchy. Is that a consensus now in this administration?

MR. SPEAKES: We're the Presidential campaign. We'll leave the Vice Presidential viewpoints to the Vice Presidential Press Office and the Vice President's wife.

Q Well, have you inquired of Teeley --

MR. SPEAKES: I would characterize it as the Democratic candidate for Vice President.

Q Have you or anyone else inquired of Teeley whether he, in fact, said that? He's quoted in The Wall Street Journal as saying this.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I spoke to Teeley; but the subject didn't come up.

Q How come these unpleasant subjects never come up?

MR. SPEAKES: I haven't read The Wall Street Journal yet. I'm still trying to get through the -- Monday's story.

Q Well, what did you talk about?

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q What did you talk about?

MR. SPEAKES: We talked about a lot of things.

Q Oh, tell us everything.

MR. SPEAKES: About winning the election.

Lou.

Q Why is it that when you're asked about a Mondale slip-up, you'll refer people to the Mondale campaign, when



you're asked about something Teeley says, you refer to the Bush campaign; when you're asked something about a Reagan slip-up, since you are his press spokesman, why won't you comment on that -- I mean --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, Lou --

Q -- is he aware -- is he aware of that error?

MR. SPEAKES: How long have you been covering politics?

Q Longer than you've been a press spokesman.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, now -- you know how the game's played, though.

Q It's not usually played like this.

Q Is that a confession on your part?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm not confessing to anything -- I'm just stating the facts.

Q Game's suddenly gotten serious, hasn't it?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q It's probably suddenly gotten serious, now, hasn't it?

MR. SPEAKES: What has?

Q Well, what you refer to as the game?

MR. SPEAKES: Serious? It's always been serious -- electing the President of the United States has always been serious business -- we've never said it wasn't.

Q Was the Laxalt news conference a surprise, and what he had to say a surprise?

MR. SPEAKES: The Laxalt news conference was not a surprise.

Q -- what he had to say?

Q -- about brutalizing --

MR. SPEAKES: We didn't write a script for him, if that's what you're asking.

Q You didn't? That's a stunner --

Q Did you know he had those views?

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Did you know he had those views?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q You were a participant in those things -- what did you think of it -- did you think it was a good briefing process?

MR. SPEAKES: The briefing process is the same process that we used in 1980.

Q Wrong -- you said more numbers this time.

Q Without Gergen --

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Q Trouble maker -- (Laughter.)

Q I mean, was he being filled with lots of facts, and -- I mean, was it a statistic cram?

MR. SPEAKES: The President's commented on that -- how he felt about it.

Q But now what about the back-stabbing. I mean, now everybody's now trying to blame everybody else for this -- is this --

MR. SPEAKES: Not blaming anybody --

Q Is the campaign deteriorating into back-stabbing -- (Laughter.)

Q Does the President have full confidence in Darman?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q You said the -- you were saying earlier that he's not going to do anything differently for the next debate, but by the President's own admission, his preparation wasn't as he would have liked it to --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, the process is not going to be different.

Q But he will --

MR. SPEAKES: The way he wants to handle his personal preparation is certainly his choice.

Q What do you mean by process -- I mean --

Q Yeah, I don't understand that.

Q -- you mean the amount of time allotted, or --

MR. SPEAKES: The way we approach the whole process will not be changed.

Q So what do you mean -- the difference between that and personal preparation -- I don't -- I'm not -- you're saying what he does when he goes back to his, to the residence at night, or -- (Laughter.)

Q Is that what he meant? I mean, really, Larry -- he said he did a lot of homework on his own -- is that what he meant, that he took it beyond the briefing preparation, and just kept at it too much?

MR. SPEAKES: What would you think a lot of homework on his own meant?

Q I'm asking you -- homework could be -- could be doing -- he didn't say on his own?

Q Too much homework --

Q Too much homework. Now, does that mean he did too much --

Q Wait, wait --

Q Wait a minute -- excuse me, can I finish? The question is, did he continue the briefing -- the preparation process -- beyond the briefings and is he going to not do that this time?

MR. SPEAKES: What would you think homework was? I don't know what he's going to do personally.

MR. SPEAKES: I just really don't want to go into details, but the process will not be changed.

Q But the strategy will be changed?

Q Ralph Nadar said today that the administration had plans after the election to cut back black loan benefits for coal miners. Do you have any comment on that? Do you know whether it's true or not?

MR. SPEAKES: No -- I don't -- I just don't know anything about that. Where has Ralph Nadar been? I haven't heard from him in a long time.

Q I think he's got an office up here -- where? On Connecticut Avenue, somewhere --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, but I haven't heard from him in a long time.

Q P Street --

Q Looking ahead --

Q All right, where are we -- what do we have here --

Q -- to tomorrow to the Truman campaign train, Mondale is saying that the President's practice of embracing dead Democrats amounts to political grave robbery -- (Laughter.)

Q Necrophilia --

Q That was a good set-up for tomorrow --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, my viewpoint is, these Democrats are a lot closer to President Reagan's philosophy of government than --

Q They're dead. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: -- than they are to Walter Mondale's. The Democratic party has gone so far from the principals of Roosevelt and Truman that guided those men that -- that's why they haven't won an election.

Q Why was he the head of Nixon's -- I mean, Democrats for Nixon?

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q Why did he campaign against JFK in 1960?

MR. SPEAKES: The President?

Q Yes, the President.

MR. SPEAKES: Because he was for Nixon.

Q Why is he for Kennedy now? (Laughter.)

Q You said that these Democrats were closer to the philosophy of Ronald Reagan --

MR. SPEAKES: Was that Kennedy's train?

Q Mondale's reference was to --

MR. SPEAKES: Was Mrs. Roosevelt related to the Kennedys?

Q He didn't vote for Harry Truman either -- yes he did, yes he did.

Q Nancy hasn't -- (Laughter.)

Q Well, I don't know -- we're trying to --

Q Homework is -- someone debating with him? I mean, we don't know whether he did his homework alone, or with a cast of thousands.

MR. SPEAKES: That's for me to know and you to try to figure out. Sorry.

Q Well, but -- Larry, we're trying -- you just made a distinction between a process which you said wouldn't change, and the preparation --

Q Personal preparation --

Q Personal --

Q -- personal -- which you said might --

MR. SPEAKES: Which I said --

Q -- which you said might --

MR. SPEAKES: No. Did I say that?

Q Yeah.

Q I thought so --

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Well, why don't you try to say what you mean?

Q Yeah, we're not playing a guessing game, here.

MR. SPEAKES: I said it once -- I know -- you persist in getting it wrong, like about 90 percent of the stuff you get. Now, I said the process will not change. Whether the President changes his personal preparation, I do not know whether he will.

Mike? You got it?

Q No.

Q The President --

MR. SPEAKES: Probably don't.

Q The President had indicated he spoke to Laxalt -- was that before or after the news conference?

MR. SPEAKES: Af -- before.

Q Before?

Q So he thinks Laxalt misinterpreted him, is that what he was trying to say?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know. He talked with Laxalt, I guess, here yesterday, wasn't it? Or day before yesterday, for a while, but he's not spoken with him since the press conference, no.

Q Do you know for a fact? Well, how did he hear about the Laxalt comments?

MR. SPEAKES: I told him.

Q You say the process won't be changed. Does that mean more practice debates?

MORE

Q Where have they gone astray -- where is the difference?

MR. SPEAKES: Look at the 1932 Democratic party platform

--

Q In every speech he's been making lately, he has accused the Democratic leadership of not being patriotic --

MR. SPEAKES: Has he?

Q And yesterday he said -- "good and decent Democrats" -- what does he mean by this?

MR. SPEAKES: Good and decent Democrats?

Q Yes -- will vote for him versus the opposition.

MR. SPEAKES: Well, where do we stand with Democrats -- we're making pretty good inroads --

Q Well, good and decent -- does that mean -- what does it mean?

Q -- slipping --

MR. SPEAKES: Same as wise Democrats --

Q Do you know if he voted for Harry Truman?

MR. SPEAKES: I think he did, yes.

Q He gave us -- I think Tip O'Neill put out a radio bite today -- from his endorsement of Harry Truman in 1948 in which he attacked the Republicans for cutting nutrition programs and -- (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Seen that tape --

Q And O'Neill said today that he's attacking the Republicans with the same thing that -- they're now being attacked for by the Democrats today, so the positions haven't changed, except that it's Reagan that's gone over to the other side. Do you have any comment on that?

MR. SPEAKES: He saw the light.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

1:13 P.M. EDT

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