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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

November 16, 1984

The Briefing Room

12:00 P.M. EST

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#1228-11/16
12:12 P.M. EST

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MR. SPEAKES: The President has invited Prime Minister Wilfried Martens of the Kingdom of Belgium to make a working visit to the United States. Prime Minister Martens has accepted the invitation and will meet with the President at the White House on January 14, 1985.

I spent my entire time between when I last saw you -- Mr. Roussel and I -- researching the turkey. And we're here to correct any misinformation you may have been given by others.

The turkeys -- two turkeys will be present at the 1:15 p.m. ceremony.

Q Yes.

Q We know. (Laughter.)

Q And they're here at the briefing.

Q One's accepting and one's giving.

MR. SPEAKES: There's a whole roomful of turkeys here. The primary turkey is named RJ. There will be a backup turkey who has no name.

Q We'll call it Mandate.

MR. SPEAKES: After their appearance here today, the turkeys will retire to a farm in McClean where they will reside the rest of their natural lives.

The President and Mrs. Reagan will be presented with two dressed turkeys, which also may be called prepared turkeys, for shipment to Santa Barbara.

Q Is it RJ's brother?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know what that thing is.

Q CJ.

MR. SPEAKES: I thought RJ was on "Dallas."

Q JR.

Q JR.

MR. SPEAKES: At 2:00 p.m., the President will meet with Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan of Pakistan in the Oval Office. We will have a White House photo release available around 6:00 p.m.

The President will be traveling to Santa Barbara tomorrow. He will depart the White House at noon and return to the White House on Sunday, November 25th.

MORE

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Press check-in is at 10:45 a.m. The press charter will depart at 11:30 a.m.

Air Force One check-in for the pool is 11:45 a.m.

Detailed schedule will be available along with a fact sheet at the conclusion of the briefing.

On Sunday afternoon -- Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Reagan will travel to Phoenix, Arizona to visit her mother. And Sunday afternoon, she will continue to Los Angeles where she'll stay overnight. And on Monday, November 19th, she'll rejoin the President at the Ranch for the Thanksgiving holiday. Oh, she will join the President. She will be traveling separately.

I think, with the detail of the briefing this morning, there's not much --

Q Larry, could you tell us about the Pakistani. I mean, is he bearing a letter, or what's the purpose of the visit?

MR. SPEAKES: The Pakistani -- I don't know whether he is bringing a specific letter, but, as you know, Secretary Shultz visited with him at the Gandhi funeral --

MR. SIMS: He saw President Zia --

MR. SPEAKES: Saw President Zia, that's right.

MR. SIMS: -- at the Gandhi funeral and this is a follow-up on that.

MR. SPEAKES: Follow-up on that meeting. So I don't know whether he has a communication or not.

Ben?

Q Is the Budget Working Group continuing its meetings today?

MR. SPEAKES: They're not meeting today, but they will continue next week and develop some broad options which will be presented to the President when he returns.

Q He has not given them an overall -- aside from no new taxes and the stuff you gave us yesterday, there's no overall target that he's given?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Q So they have to develop their own options --

MR. SPEAKES: Their own options for him, and then he will give them -- pick one and give them guidance.

Q What's the status of the joint U.S.-Soviet space mission idea? There's supposed to be some meeting down in Houston coming up.

MR. SPEAKES: I had that question this morning and I don't know that we have anything on it, do we, Bob?

MR. SIMS: I didn't get to the bottom of it.

MR. SPEAKES: We'll check it further. If we get something we'll let you know at 3:00 p.m., but I don't have anything on it.

Charles?

Q Larry, is there any reason why they're not meeting today? I was under the impression they were having two-a-day sessions.

MR. SPEAKES: We have all week, but there's no meeting scheduled today. Maybe all -- I don't know of any weekend meetings, either. Perhaps all those involved could not get together. Maybe it was a scheduling situation. But -- and perhaps, too, that Stockman is spending time developing figures on these options in order to have something for the group to work with next week.

Ben?

Q The options will not be presented to the President until he gets back here?

MR. SPEAKES: That's right.

Well, had enough?

Q But don't they need to have the approval of the options for -- if Stockman is going to go through the review of the departments next week?

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think the departments can proceed along a track where they can begin to work on their various budgets and then, once the President approves a level of increase or lack thereof, then he can -- then they can refine them further. It will work out. Don't worry. Have no fear. It will all come out in the end.

Q How soon after the President's return will he get these options?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think there's been any specific timetable, Ralph, established, but I would assume fairly quickly. But I don't know whether it will be Monday morning or Wednesday or whatever.

Q The question?

MR. SPEAKES: How soon will he get the options after he gets back.

Q AP is also reporting now that the czar idea is dead and has been -- isn't selling. Is it?

MR. SPEAKES: He picked it up out of The Post.

Q No, he's saying that -- he's quoting his own sources. Are you still saying that that's a live option?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I'm quoting one source, and that's the man up there in the Oval Office, and he's the man going to make the decision, and all those that are talking don't know.

Q But you haven't talked to him lately about it, have you?

MR. SPEAKES: Sure have.

Q Did you?

MR. SPEAKES: We talked this morning on it --

Q Today?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q What did he say this morning?

MR. SPEAKES: He said exactly what I told you -- same thing he said the other day. I mean, somebody's spinning off here that doesn't know what they're talking about. The old line about those who are talking don't know, and those who know ain't talking.

Q Can we say that the President says it's a live option?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'd rather that you leave it in my words. The President has spoken on it, and as he said, he's exactly where he was. It has not been discussed in great detail, and until he does and fleshes it out and decides what he wants to do, there's where it stands.

Q Did you put it to him in terms of a super negotiator over Shultz versus somebody who just reports to Shultz?

MR. SPEAKES: None of this has been decided, so nothing's been ruled and nothing's been ruled out -- whether it's a super, or a minor league guy or whatever.

Q The options that he's going to get, maybe on Monday, what -- I'm sort of lost already -- how do those differ from what Stockman gave him yesterday. What options are they working on now?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I think these would be options of specifics about what will be included in the cuts, some areas where there would be potentials for cutting, and other areas where there wouldn't be, and let him make his mind up.

Q So what did he get yesterday?

MR. SPEAKES: He got a series of hypothetical options that showed what would have to be done to reduce the percentage of GNP, or deficit of the GNP to certain levels.

Q Well, did he agree to that level, or is that a general target at this point?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no. There was no agreement. It was simply an illustration of what it's going to take to reduce the budget to given levels of GNP.

Q But not specific spending cuts that would be --

MR. SPEAKES: Not yesterday, no.

Q But that's what he's going to get?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. You've got to have faith in this

budget process. You go through it every year, and it always comes out in the end just fine, but you can't --

Q -- except with a bigger deficit --

MR. SPEAKES: You don't need to worry about it while they're fiddling with it, it'll come out.

Q And Congress ignores it --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes?

Q Larry, I just --

Q I'll just -- you're right -- I'm going to let him do all the stories on it.

Q Larry -- people both inside and outside the White House -- how to take advantage quickly of the mandate -- hit the ground running both on budget decisions, Central America, arms control. Now we see him go to Santa Barbara for eight days. No budget decisions until after he returns -- the czar idea somewhere up in the air. Is there any concern by some in the White House that time is being frittered away?

Q Say "yes." (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: No. I think the way that we had always approached our preparation for the second term is that the major thrust of the President's policy pronouncements and the tone for his new administration, new term, second four years, will come in the inaugural address and the State of the Union. I think you're going to see a lot of batting back and forth of ideas and leaks and budget proposals and the usual December-January menu here in Washington. But I think you're going to see the major pronouncements of this administration from the President in the State of the Union and the inaugural address, both of which will take place, I guess, in late January.

Q Do you have dates on the State of the Union yet?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have dates on the State of the Union. We're of course looking at something after the inaugural, but we'll have to work it out with the Hill.

Pam?

Q Do any of the hypothetical options include cuts in Social Security or defense?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Not on Social Security. I think there are a number of people -- and these hypothetical options yesterday did not include defense -- but there are a number of people, every year we go through whether people want to cut defense or not. Ultimately it will be decided by the President.

Ann?

Q Larry, Ed Dale said yesterday that the options yesterday did include limiting the growth in defense spending from what -- adjusting it down to different levels --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think that was in the option paper by -- that the hypothetical approach Stockman had yesterday. I'd have to look back to see. Ed Dale was talking more than he should have been talking, I'll say that much.

Q Ohhhhh.

Q No, no, no --

MR. SPEAKES: No, no, no --

Q Oh, Larry -- your numbers are all mushy --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, no, no, no -- (Laughter.)

But, I don't know, you may be right on that. I just don't recall the specific --

Q Tell us more, Larry -- (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Get Ed Dale out here, huh? (Laughter.)

Anything else? Luck. Thank you.

MR. SIMS: -- announce --

MR. SPEAKES: Is this it then?

MR. SIMS: That's it --

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, okay.

Q Wait. Wait.

Q Back. Down.

MR. SPEAKES: Let me clear up this NASA thing -- let me clear up this NASA thing for you. Reading from the AP, NASA said today it had proposed a space rescue demonstration involving U.S. and Soviet astronauts and cosmonauts earlier this year. But the Soviet Union did not give a substantive response, and nothing further came of the idea. This is the truth.

Q Amen. Is it going to be pursued any further?

MR. SIMS: If we get a positive response from the Soviets, we would. But all of the stuff in that story about planning for a certain mission and so forth is, I'm told by NASA, poppycock. I quote my source.

Q What -- NASA said it's poppycock?

MR. SIMS: Yes.

Q Preposterous?

MR. SIMS: I always give you my source. NASA thinks -- tells me it's poppycock.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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