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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING

BY

LARRY SPEAKES

November 26, 1984

The Briefing Room

9:20 A.M. EST

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#1233-11/26

9:36 A.M. EST

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MR. SPEAKES: I'd like to, once again, underscore how we're doing 9:15s. I think most everybody was here, but maybe you've forgotten. We'd like to do them -- to make them as productive as we can for both the White House and the press corps and to also have them as orderly as we can in order that they might be productive, and as brief as we can so that they don't drag on and take your time and mine. The latter part of the first week, they were very good, I thought, and I think everybody was pleased with them.

What I will do is read the schedule each morning and then proceed to give you the few items that I may have comment on at this hour and then take your questions for later briefings.

So, with that said, welcome back after Thanksgiving. I'd like to pay tribute to my colleague, Mr. Fitzwater, for his brilliant handling of the press corps in Santa Barbara. I listened to the briefing on Monday and then retired to my vacation with confidence that Fitzwater had everything well in hand. (Laughter.)

Q But in addition to having that well in hand, what

else?

Q -- Bob's notes the most. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: This morning at 11:30 a.m., the President meets with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Tariq Aziz, of Iraq, in the Oval Office -- a 30 minute meeting. There will be a photo op at the beginning of that meeting.

At 12:00 noon, we will have Assistant Secretary Murphy who will talk on background as a result of the meeting and perhaps have an announcement to make at that hour.

Cabinet Affairs briefing today at 2:00 p.m. in the Cabinet Room. That is a meeting on the tax study that the Treasury Department is completing. I'll come back to that in a minute.

And finally, diplomatic credentials -- the President, at 4:30 p.m., is receiving diplomatic credentials from UN ambassadors of the Republic of Singapore, Nicaragua, the Socialist Republic of Burma, Norway, the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, and the Republic of Ecuador. There's no coverage of that.

In addition to the background briefing by Ambassador Wolfowitz who will brief you on the upcoming visit of the gentleman from Fiji -- Prime Minister?

MR. SIMS: Prime Minister.

MR. SPEAKES: Prime Minister from Fiji.

Q What's his name, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have it before me.

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MR. SIMS: Mara. M-A-R-A.

Q Oh, no coaching.

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't have it before me.

Then Murphy will be there at noon on background, and the regular briefing will follow Murphy as quickly as he's finished. And we'll try to wind up there.

Q Is there an issues lunch today?

MR. SPEAKES: There's no issues lunch today.

Let me bring you up to date -- and this is about all I have this morning -- as near as I can on tax and budget matters. The tax study, as you know, has been taking place at Treasury over the last several months. Secretary Regan will, in the presence of the regular budget working group, which is Meese, Baker, Deaver, Regan, himself, Baldrige, Stockman, Darman, Fuller, Niskanen, Oglesby, and Svahn, meet in the Cabinet Room at 2:00 p.m. for an hour today to present the President with the current status of the tax study that Treasury has been completing.

This will be the first of several meetings at which various aspects of it will be discussed and the President, I'm sure, will be making some decisions as time goes by. I don't know whether there will be any specific decisions made today or not.

The budgets group has worked at least some through the holidays. Later this week -- let me back up. The budget working group, which is that group I just announced, will meet at 10:00 a.m. this morning to look at the current status of what Stockman and others have done over the holiday period.

Q Where are they meeting, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Roosevelt Room, I would guess.

Q That is not with the President?

MR. SPEAKES: No. And then later this week, once this holiday work is refined, it will be presented to the President. As near as I can understand what's going on, the President will be able to provide, later this week or early next week, guidance to Stockman, to the OMB Director, about the marks that will go out to the agencies. That is, the various levels that the President wishes the agencies to work with OMB in order to achieve the budget he desires. So, that's as near as I can bring you up on the tax and budget process, and that's really all I have this morning.

Any questions on it?

Q Is the tax study complete?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's essentially complete, yes.

Q Is it -- I mean he is going to see a definite

proposal?

MR. SPEAKES: It's going to be a -- probably a result of their study more than it will be proposals. I think there will probably be some options and recommendations for the President.

Q May I ask one more question. Has the President stated specifically his attitude toward a flat tax?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't believe so. Marlin? I don't think in the current status --

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Q What has he said on the subject?

MR. SPEAKES: A couple of years ago, he may have thought

MR. FITZWATER: I don't think he has addressed any specific proposal. He has said Treasury was looking at all --

Q Well, I mean, has he indicated that he likes that route?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's come up in the budget process over the -- a couple of years ago, at which time we briefly looked at them, but I don't think he's expressed any preferences?

Q When are you going to make public this plan?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that there are any specific plans to make it public, Sam, until the President has an opportunity to review it and hash it around with his people. And, certainly, we'll begin discussing it with the Congress. So I don't -- I do not know whether there -- there has been no decision as to whether there will be a specific "here's the tax plan that Treasury worked out that the President is considering." There's been no decision --

Q Well, surely at some point, you'll do that.

MR. SPEAKES: I think at some point, after the President refines it more and after we have discussions with Congress to understand where they stand and how they feel about it, then there will be -- at some time, you will see a plan. Or a bill.

Q What do you mean when you say that he's going to get the tax plan as -- the current status of the study? Is he not going to get a set of recommendations?

MR. SPEAKES: I think he will get the results of the study, together with some options, and perhaps some recommended options. But as far as it being a finalized program, no, it will not be until he has an opportunity and until we have Congressional input on it.

Q No, but is he not getting firm recommendations from Treasury, though, that then will be used to formulate some kind of administration proposal?

MR. SPEAKES: As I say, I think it will probably be -- and I haven't seen it and I can probably speak a little more precisely after I've had an opportunity to see it -- that it will be a series of results of what they looked into, and perhaps with some options and perhaps with some recommendations attached to those options.

Q So, in other words, he gets the results of the Treasury study today is what -- just a couple of weeks before we expected it, right?

MR. SPEAKES: I think you can say that, but it will be subject to the President refining it more and --

Q Is he sticking --

Q Do you anticipate his announcing his decisions on it before Congress comes back?

MR. SPEAKES: It's hard to say, Mike. I think what we will have to do is see what the plan looks like because no one has seen it here in the White House and we don't have a lot of feel for

it, to see what his reaction is and get enough guidance from him that he can -- that our people can begin discussing it with the Congress.

Q Does he insist still that it remain neutral -- revenue neutral?

MR. SPEAKES: That has been his direction --

Q Meaning no gains, no losses, in money?

MR. SPEAKES: Generally that, yes. That's been his

guidance.

Ann?

Q I understand you tentatively plan to have some consultations with at least the Senate Republican leaders on this on Thursday. Is that still --

MR. SPEAKES: I think there is a proposal on the schedule that we have a Senate -- I don't know whether it will be a Leadership, full leadership meeting or not -- a Congressional Republican leadership meeting. There's a proposal that they do so, but we have not decided as of this morning as to how we would proceed in our discussions with Congress.

Q Are you going to brief after this meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think so. I just don't think there would be enough for all of you to gather back here to hear me generalize.

Q Are there any more sessions this week on this study?

MR. SPEAKES: Chances are there will be. There will probably be one tomorrow. I can be a little more precise after everybody kind of gets together.

Q Secretary Regan said on Friday that he wanted -- he thought that -- should be released when it was presented to the President to dampen speculation on what is and what isn't in it, and all of that. Has that recommendation been made over here --

MR. SPEAKES: It hasn't been made. Chances are it will be made at today's meeting. I think the President will decide as to whether there will be any release of it. I wouldn't anticipate there would be today, though.

Yes, sir.

Q Larry, the OMB said last week that Stockman wanted to meet with Reagan one-on-one this week to see how tough Reagan will be on certain issues. Do you have anything on a meeting, one-on-one?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether there will be a one-on-one. This group will meet with the President later --

Q They said, one-on-one, Stockman and Reagan only.

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not aware of any plan for that, but if Stockman asked it, I'm sure the President would be glad to see him.

Candy, and then I'll come up here.

Q I'm not sure what the President is actually getting today. Are you talking about -- is he going to get a plan and Regan is going to say, "Here's what we think you ought to do to the Tax Code." Or is he going to get a series of options like the budget?

MR. SPEAKES: I think he's going to get detailed results

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of their study -- we looked into this, this, this and this. We think you ought to do -- priority considerations were given to A, B and C. We recommend A, but C does this and B does that.

Q Okay.

MR. SPEAKES: I think that's the way it's going to go; but I'm guessing.

Q So Regan has his own ideas as to what he thinks the President ought to do. And given that the President can always say yes or no, in fact, Regan has a plan he wants to present.

MR. SPEAKES: Some cases yes; but others, he may say, "Here are three options and it's up to you." So, I don't think it's going to be a -- what?

Q Will you be able to clarify that by a later briefing?

MR. SPEAKES: I think so, yes, after I see what Regan's got. Nobody's seen it here. Nobody could tell me this morning.

Andrea.

Q Is it likely that the President --

Q 35 percent rate?

Q Is it likely that he will choose an option and that the White House will then go to the Hill with an option? Or is it more likely that the White House will work with Dole and some of the others -- find out what is possible and --

MR. SPEAKES: I think the latter. The latter. What we will do is let the President -- there'll be a series of meetings on the tax study. The President will make some tentative decisions and, at the same time, I think we'll be going forward with some studies, with some discussions with the appropriate people on the Hill.

Q And speaking of the appropriate people on the Hill, is it still the position of this White House that you're completely neutral on the leadership --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely.

Q Well, don't you have any interest in some of the committee chairs that would result from some of the --

MR. SPEAKES: Interest, yes; but influence, no. In fact, I talked to B this morning and he was not venturing any predictions as to how it would come out. I don't think -- And I think they'd be few and far between on the Hill, as far as this leadership race. So we're -- Hands off. It's Senate business.

Q This meeting today, you said was on taxes and budget. Are they related?

MR. SPEAKES: No, today's 2:00 p.m. meeting is on --

Q Today is strictly taxes?

MR. SPEAKES: -- taxes. Today's 10:00 a.m. --

Q But it is --

MR. SPEAKES: -- without the President --

Q -- with the budget working group also?

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MR. SPEAKES: -- is on budget.

Pardon?

Q He is with the budget working group?

MR. SPEAKES: It's the same group, yes.

Q What's the status on Mrs. Kirkpatrick? Is she

leaving?

MR. SPEAKES: The status on Mrs. Kirkpatrick, as far as I know, is her statement, which is -- a general way that she's made before, that she would like to leave after the current session, which, of course, has ended. But there have been no meetings with the President. As far as I know, no discussions. Anything to add to that?

Q Anything scheduled this week?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't --

MR. SIMS: I don't --

MR. SPEAKES: Do you know?

MR. SIMS: I think that -- I'm not even sure of the end date of the session; but there's nothing scheduled and --

Q Could you speak up, please?

MR. SIMS: -- they haven't discussed.

MR. SPEAKES: Nothing scheduled. Nothing discussed.

Q -- he has not asked for a meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know that she has.

Q She hasn't submitted --

Q Well, will you check on this for the --

Q -- resignation then --

MR. SPEAKES: No, not that I'm --

Q Larry, has the session ended -- or doesn't it end --

MR. SPEAKES: Sims says he's not clear that it has ended. I thought maybe it ended with --

Q Well, would you check --

MR. SPEAKES: Like the Congress does.

Q -- for the noon briefing? Because I'd like to renew a very strong line of questioning on whether she's going to be given another job or what the President's view is about her leaving.

MR. SPEAKES: I can state it now that the President's view is that he would like her to remain; but he certainly recognizes her desires, as far as leaving her present position, which she stated over the last couple of years anyway -- a year and a half -- in a general way that she would like to end her service at the UN. The President values her work and thinks that she is an asset to his administration.

As far as another position, there has been none discussed within the White House. And there's certainly been none discussed

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with her that I'm aware of.

Q The question really is what effort will be made to find her something?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know until the President has an opportunity to meet with her and get some expression of her desires and, perhaps, has some discussions --

Q This case has an eerie ring to me.

MR. SPEAKES: That's --

Q -- can't find another job for her. Wants her to stay where she is.

Q I wouldn't have brought it up. (Laughter.)

Q -- International Court decided that it does have jurisdiction on the conflict or the differences between Nicaragua and the United States.

MR. SPEAKES: Does what?

Q It has jurisdiction on the --

MR. SPEAKES: The United Nations?

Q -- differences -- No, the International Court.

MR. SPEAKES: International Court. Yes, on that case?

Q They decided that this morning.

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I see.

Q But a few months ago the U.S. said that it wouldn't recognize --

MR. SPEAKES: I have not seen the story about --

Q Yes, the Hague decided this morning that they do have jurisdiction and ruled against the United States.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have anything -- I'm learning of it from you.

Q Week ahead, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: The week ahead? Do you have it, Pete? Let's see what's going to happen this week.

Q Will there be a budget meeting tomorrow with the President? He's not having one today, right?

MR. SPEAKES: Tomorrow -- let me just go over it and let's see if we --

Prime Minister Ratu Mara of Fiji comes at 11:30 a.m. Lunch with Prime Minister Mara, and departure statements. Cabinet time tomorrow. Now, that could either be a presentation to the full Cabinet of the tax matter or it could be the smaller working group to discuss budget, one or the other.

Q What time is that?

MR. SPEAKES: That's at 2:00 p.m. That takes --

Q Full Cabinet?

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MR. SPEAKES: I say, it could be the full Cabinet hearing on taxes or it could be the smaller group hearing on budget. But that hasn't been determined yet.

Tomorrow -- I don't have anything on Wednesday except the President will go out in the evening to a dinner honoring Tower and Baker at the Library of Congress. Leaves at 7:40 p.m. Gets back at 10:15 p.m.

Q I'm sorry, which day was that?

MR. SPEAKES: Wednesday.

Thursday, lunch with the President, another tentative Cabinet time and that could be the budget working group with him. And Friday -- we've announced this visit on Friday, Kohl?

Q Yes.

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Kohl comes in at 11:00 a.m. -- I'm sorry -- at 11:30 a.m. -- for a meeting, a luncheon and departure statements. And there's a tentative Camp David.

Yes, sir.

Q Twelve noon, you said there may be an announcement by Ambassador Murphy. If there is would that be on camera?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it will be on background.

Q -- make an announcement on background?

Q Yes. "We're renewing diplomatic relations; but don't say where you got it."

MR. SPEAKES: No, we will probably put out a -- if we have it -- we'll probably have a written statement, of course, on the record and then a background briefing --

Q "An unidentified administration official said today we're renewing relations with Iraq."

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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