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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

February 6, 1985  
The Briefing Room

9:19 A.M. EST

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#1322-02/06

9:28 A.M. EST

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PRESS BRIEFING  
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LARRY SPEAKES

February 6, 1985

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9:19 A.M. EST

MR. SPEAKES: The GOP Congressional leadership is coming in. They're going to hear about the State of the Union. In that meeting today, "Brother Stockman" -- (laughter) -- is going to talk about the budget, and Secretary Baker will talk about taxes, and Secretary Shultz will talk about foreign policy, and Secretary Weinberger will talk about defense.

You will notice that Stockman is first, and Weinberger is last. Dole will make remarks and Bob Michel will make remarks -- all on the State of the Union.

In the afternoon --

Q Question?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes?

Q Can you bring Mr. Dole and others in here? It's usual.

MR. SPEAKES: If they wish to.

Q Would you ask them?

MR. SPEAKES: I'll be glad to.

Q Thank you.

Q How long is that scheduled for?

MR. SPEAKES: Scheduled for sixty minutes.

Q Sixty?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Starting what time?

MR. SPEAKES: At 10:00 a.m.

Q Photo?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

The afternoon is -- with one or two appointments on the staff -- is fairly well free.

The President goes at 8:35 p.m. to the Capitol and he's back at 10:00 after State of the Union. Riding with the President, other than Mrs. Reagan, will be daughter Maureen, who has arrived in town, or will arrive today.

MORE

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Other than that there is nothing extraordinary about the people that are going to the Hill.

Q Michael couldn't make it?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Today, this morning, we'll have Paul Wolfowitz on background about the Hawke visit. No noon briefing today due to the fact the President is the star for the day.

At 4:00 p.m. today we'll have, oh, four or five quotes for a 6:30 p.m. release for you.

And at 7:00 p.m. we'll have a briefing with Regan, McFarlane; fact sheet and text at that hour -- they're all embargoed for 9:00 p.m.

Marlin, did you get a word count and a length for the State of the Union?

MR. FITZWATER: Twenty-five, thirty minutes -- approximately 1,300 words.

Q How many?

Q Thirteen hundred?

MR. SPEAKES: Twenty-five to thirty minutes; 1,300 words.

Q Thirteen hundred words? Is that all?

Q More than that --

MR. SPEAKES: It does seem short --

MR. FITZWATER: I'm sorry, I'm sorry -- 3,500 words.

Q Ha. Ha.

MR. FITZWATER: I knew there was a three in there.

Q Thirty-five hundred.

Q That's from loitering at the Treasury. (Laughter.)

Q He's good with numbers --

MR. SPEAKES: White House outreach working group on Central America has its Wednesday meeting today, 2:30 p.m., Room 450 -- I feel like a preacher announcing the ladies' social group meeting on Wednesday afternoon -- (laughter) -- each Wednesday afternoon.

Q Which ladies will show up today?

MR. SPEAKES: John Norton Moore, who's evidently a Professor of Law, University of Virginia, International Law and U.S. Action in Central America; and Colonel Earl J. Young, United States Army Reserve, Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in the '80s.

You can get the -- gain admission by 456-6623. There's no charge.

Q These things don't continue after Faith goes to Switzerland?

MR. SPEAKES: Depends on who succeeds Faith, if she does leave, and somebody succeeds --

Q For years we've had these meetings. Why? I mean, is there no other subject that -- (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: No, this is a special subject on this. Done a lot of good; a lot of people --

Q But have you made any gains in terms of public opinion, or --

MR. SPEAKES: Dramatic. (Laughter.)

Q -- I mean, is that your drive?

MR. SPEAKES: Dramatic.

Q Dramatic.

Q Dramatic.

MR. SPEAKES: You're probably interested in "Brother Stockman."

Q Oh, no.

MR. SPEAKES: The President is sympathetic to the difficulties farmers face in obtaining credit for the new planting season.

Q A little slower, please --

MR. SPEAKES: The Department of Agriculture, this morning, will be making an announcement on administrative initiative in farm credit. You may contact them for that.

Also, the President is deeply appreciative of the sacrifice and contribution of the men and women --

Q Wait a minute, please --

MR. SPEAKES: -- sacrifice and contribution of the men and women in uniform. I point out to you that Stockman, in his testimony yesterday, said he was expressing a personal opinion, probably not shared by the President.

Q Men and women in uniform, or just men?

MR. SPEAKES: And women.

Q Thanks.

MR. SPEAKES: Stockman -- personal opinion -- probably not shared by the President. Other than that, I will have no comment. Try as you might, you shan't get a comment.

Q Was he correct in saying that he was expressing a personal opinion, as probably not shared by the President?

MR. SPEAKES: You have to express the President's view --

Q What?

Q What?

MR. SPEAKES: I've expressed the President's view.

Q Well, is Mr. Stockman going to remain as Budget Director?

MR. SPEAKES: I will have no comment, period.

Q As Stockman said, he's probably going to get in hot water --

Q Wait a moment --

Q -- is he in hot water?

MR. SPEAKES: Would have no comment.

Q No, we're not asking you to comment on his statement. We're just asking for a progress report on his job status. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I see. I just don't have any comment.

Q Well, you're leaving open the possibility, then,

that he may not have that job long.

MR. SPEAKES: "Refusing to rule out," I don't answer refuse-to-rule-out questions --

Q I'm not asking you to rule out anything.

MR. SPEAKES: And I wouldn't read anything into that if I were you. Don't go dancing off --

Q Are you saying that the President does not agree with Stockman?

MR. SPEAKES: I have no comment. I have made my statement and --

Q Where does this statement come from? Does it come from the President?

MR. SPEAKES: It comes from the President. It comes from my heart. It comes from --

Q Well, I don't want it from your heart.

MR. SPEAKES: -- Bob Sims and --

Q Is this the President's view?

MR. SPEAKES: -- all the men and women in uniform and --

Q Larry, could you at least tell us if the President is concerned about this statement?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm just not going into any --

Q Will Stockman continue to brief --

MR. SPEAKES: -- nuances.

Q -- the people on the Hill? This morning, for instance, I guess is an example.

MR. SPEAKES: He'll be there.

Q Larry, is the President concerned about the cost of the military retirement system?

MR. SPEAKES: The cost? What our views on cost of all government retirement systems, government pay systems, are reflected in the budget.

Q What about Bob Hawke then?

MR. SPEAKES: Bob Hawke --

Q Is he, in fact, going -- Well, do you have a prepared statement?

MR. SPEAKES: About the same shape on that. We are -- As you know, he's been here since yesterday. He is meeting with a number of Cabinet officers. These topics, such as the MX testing, the New Zealand exercise -- the New Zealand port of call and the exercise all will be discussed with him.

Wolfowitz will be here at 10:00 a.m. Whether he would wish to expand on that, I haven't talked to him yet. So I'd like to leave that to him, if I might.

Q Wolfowitz will be in this room at 10:00 a.m.?

MR. SPEAKES: Be right here. On background.

Q What is the President doing to celebrate his birthday, both today here and is there going to be anything up at the State of the Union?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know of anything, other than a private dinner in the Residence, quiet observance of his birthday in the Residence.

Q With just Mrs. Reagan and Maureen? Or anyone else?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know the guest list. I'll check on that, Chris. And if we've got anything to add, I will.

Q What about up on the Hill?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't know of anything on the Hill, and don't know of anything in the White House specifically planned.

Q Why not? I mean, wouldn't he want to celebrate his birthday? He's the oldest man to occupy the office.

MR. SPEAKES: That's true. But --

Q By quite a lot.

MR. SPEAKES: But it is his birthday and other than that

Q Does the President approve of someone going to the Hill to present the administration's position and then speaking out on its own? Does he mind?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm just not commenting on that.

Q Why not? That's a very legitimate question.

Q Larry, you have often said, I think, that once a position has been taken by the President no one should speak out publicly against it. I gather Stockman is speaking out against decisions on military aspects of the budget. You've no comment on that now?

Q He's going to give back his shilling, is he?

Q Yes, is he --

Q That's right. The King's shilling --

MR. SPEAKES: Like the King's shilling?

Q I like that. That's good.

MR. SPEAKES: Anything else --

Q Well, let me ask one final question. Is Patrick J. Buchanan beginning his job tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: He is here today and I think phasing in or here some and closing out his affairs otherwise.

Q Did he come to the Senior Staff meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he was there.

Q Was the topic of news coverage today as -- I guess it's usually a topic at the Senior Staff meeting, is it not?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.



Q Was it again this morning?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Did Mr. Buchanan contribute his views?

MR. SPEAKES: He contributed some views; but he did not contribute any views, as you mentioned yesterday.

Q I didn't ask -- That was a threshold question.

MR. SPEAKES: I see. No, he didn't cross the threshold.

Q Larry, is the State of the Union --

Q And so it begins.

Q -- speech going to be upbeat? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Will there be a vision, Larry?

Q -- characterization?

MR. SPEAKES: Upbeat, visionary --

Q Will it be brilliant?

MR. SPEAKES: What? Poignant?

Q Will it be brilliant?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, brilliant, poignant.

Q Does he have any heroes stashed away in the Gallery?

Q Oh, yeah.

MR. SPEAKES: We'll wait and see. (Laughter.)

Let me go back here.

Q Does the President still believe the levels of military retirement in the budget are appropriate?

MR. SPEAKES: The President submitted his budget. And his budget is the budget, said a great man.

Q His budget is the what?

MR. SPEAKES: His budget. Got that?

Q Yes.

Q President at --

Q That's almost as good as --

Q President in his office now?

Q -- no photo --

MR. SPEAKES: -- yes. No photo op.

What?

Q Is he in his office now?

MR. SPEAKES: The President should be.

Q Larry, will the President see Stockman today and talk to him at all?

MR. SPEAKES: He'll see him at the Cabinet meeting this morning for sure.

Q Is Stockman in his counting house?

Q You mean the Congressional leadership --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes --

Q -- leadership.

MR. SPEAKES: -- Congressional leadership.

Q Is this woodshed time?

Q What do you think, Helen?

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

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