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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

February 7, 1985  
The Briefing Room

9:17 A.M. EST

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9:27 A.M. EST

#1324-02/07

THE WHITE HOUSE  
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PRESS BRIEFING  
BY  
LARRY SPEAKES

February 7, 1985

The Briefing Room

9:17 A.M. EST

MR. SPEAKES: Today at 9:40 Ambassador Bosworth, our Ambassador to the Philippines is meeting with the President. He will be returning to the Philippines, I believe tomorrow; and it's an opportunity for him to acquaint and update the President on the current situation in the Philippines.

At 9:55 a.m. Mother Hale is coming in to meet the President. She was not here in time and he wanted an opportunity to visit with her in the Oval Office, so she will be in.

At 10:00 a.m. an addition to the schedule -- a swearing-in ceremony of the three new Cabinet officials. They include Secretaries-to-be Hodel, Herrington, and Bennett.

And then at 11:30 a.m., Prime Minister Hawke will be in the Oval Office for a 45 minute meeting with the President. There will be writing pool and photo opportunity there.

A luncheon in the Residence at 12:15 p.m., followed by departure statements from the Diplomatic Entrance, and there's open coverage for that event.

That takes care of all of the schedule items. We'll have the 12:00 noon briefing today, followed by a 1:45 p.m. background briefing by Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State, on the Hawke visit.

Speech telephone calls --

Q Larry, briefly on the schedule --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes?

Q Is there going to be any way -- any coverage on Mrs. Hale's visit? Or any way to get something on it afterwards?

MR. SPEAKES: I'll go in and try to report. It's going to be very brief, so --

Q Is she getting a tour around the whole --

MR. SPEAKES: I'll just see what she is doing this morning.

Q What about a picture, or a photo op of her and the President?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't really plan to.

Q Doesn't want to be seen with an American hero?

MORE

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MR. SPEAKES: She was well seen last night.

This morning the report from the telephone comments office from last night. They were open from 9:00 p.m. until 10:30 p.m., so that gave them, roughly what -- 45 minutes after the speech, I guess, is all. In that period, positive calls were 349, negatives were 35, which, if I calculate it properly, is about 91 percent favorable.

Q That's low for --

MR. SPEAKES: Which is a -- it's not an exceptionally heavy volume, but it's a pretty good turnout.

Birthday greetings, which were separate from those, totaled 100.

Q Dan Rather call again? (Laughter.)

Q Plus or minus?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the number -- Brokaw. (Laughter.) That's the number of phone calls last night. Yesterday there were a total of 433 birthday greetings.

I don't see anything in the newspapers this morning worthy of comment. (Laughter.) Do you have anything that's worthy of questions? (Laughter.) I just -- not a whole lot there -- the State of the Union was great, dominated --

Q We're not allowed to cover the swearings-in of three Cabinet --

MR. SPEAKES: Not really. I think it's going to be very informal.

Q Where does that take place?

MR. SPEAKES: In the Cabinet room.

Q Is Baker -- Baker and Regan will be sworn-in tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: Baker and Regan -- I don't know whether that's going to amount to a swearing-in ceremony. (noise interruption) It will be a --

Q The technician just died. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I thought that's -- (laughter) -- Tall man is back. Remember the time we lowered the podium about knee-high on the tall -- (Laughter.)

Q What are you going to do to Buchanan? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: He's about the same height. (Laughter.)

Q How did the President feel about his speech and the reaction?

MR. SPEAKES: I think the President was -- thought it was magnificent. No, he felt -- he was very pleased. He thought that the reception in the Chamber was -- he said unusually warm and he was, of course, touched by the birthday greetings and the -- even the Democrats sang.

Q Who will swear-in the Cabinet members? Can you --

MR. SPEAKES: The Attorney General will swear them in.

Q Do you know what Bush and O'Neill were talking about behind Reagan all night? They were having a hell of a conversation back there. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Remember when old man McCormick used to -- (laughter) -- nobody talked to him during --

Q What?

MR. SPEAKES: Speaker McCormick -- nobody talked to him during things -- (Laughter.)

I was about to say -- Baker and Regan are bringing their families to meet the President in separate meetings -- photos and so-forth. Whether there will be another swearing-in ceremony, I'm not sure about tomorrow.

Q Any more on Stockman?

MR. SPEAKES: No more on Stockman. He's back on the Hill before the House Appropriations today, or House Budget, one or the other.

Q Has anybody --

MR. SPEAKES: House Appropriations.

Q Was his testimony cleared?

Q Do you know if either the President or Regan has talked to him yet?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I don't. I don't think the President has. I'm sure Regan has talked to him; but I don't -- not privy -- I feel confident he has. I'm not privy to the conversation.

Q Well, he hadn't as of yesterday noon. Could you check?

MR. SPEAKES: Regan?

Q Yes.

MR. SPEAKES: Or the President?

Q Regan.

Q Regan.

Q The VFW wants his resignation. What is the President's reaction?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think the President has any reaction. He doesn't resign to the VFW. He resigns to the President.

Q What?

(Laughter.) MR. SPEAKES: He's not -- he doesn't resign to the VFW.

Q I'll rephrase that. The VFW has asked the President to --

Q What did you say, Larry? (Laughter.)

Q The VFW has asked to --

Q -- take turns -- (Laughter.)

Q Let the record show --

Q Let the record show that Speakes -- Sims turned away.

Q Has the President received the VFW wire?

MR. SPEAKES: No. Not that I know of. We can check and see if it's in the White House. The President hasn't seen it.

Charles?

Q Larry, what was the process through which the President singled out Clara Hale and Jean Nguyen?

MR. SPEAKES: We have, from time to time, received letters from other citizens who are commending their fellow citizens. We see clips in the newspapers, either people send to the President

or somebody clips them on the staff. How these two specific came, whether they came by the clip route or the letter route, I don't know. I couldn't get that last night. But the President thought these were two individuals that certainly spelled out the American dream.

Q Congressman Rangle, in whose district Mother Hale works, indicated that her program has suffered through budget cuts in previous years of this administration. Is the President aware of that?

MR. SPEAKES: Rangle would suggest that. The --

Q Are you saying that's not accurate?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think that at all detracts from the great and wonderful contribution that Mother Hale is making.

Q Larry --

Q But you're not saying that's not accurate?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, Charles.

Q Is any thought being given to ever rescheduling the Philippines trip which was cancelled in the crush of legislative --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know of any plan to. We're not going in that direction any time soon.

Q Will we see the Ambassador, the good Ambassador here, after he meets with the President so he can fill us in on the situation in the Philippines?

MR. SPEAKES: Bosworth has a briefing at the State Department tomorrow.

MR. SIMS: Larry, there is a State background briefing tomorrow.

Q Is the meeting today --

Q Where?

Q There's a what?

Q What was that?

MR. SPEAKES: Background briefing by Ambassador Bosworth at the State Department tomorrow.

Q Has the President decided that there is an alternative other than communism in the Philippines, or is Ambassador Bosworth going to tell him that?

MR. SPEAKES: Democracy is the alternative.

Q Yeah.

MR. SPEAKES: The better course -- the right direction on the forked road.

Q Yes, but does the President now acknowledge that? He didn't acknowledge it --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't recall.

Q -- in that news conference.

Q The debate --

Q Said the alternative was communism.

Q Larry, did you say --

MR. SPEAKES: Go ahead.

Q -- that the President is going to be brought up to date on the situation in the Philippines? Is there no means by which he's following events in the Philippines, anyway? I mean what is the specific purpose of this meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: The purpose of it is that we send an Ambassador out there to give us the personal, on-the-spot viewpoint. And when the Ambassador's in town, and it's a situation that the President would like to do, then he comes in to get the personal, on-the-spot, man-in-the-know, insider, viewpoint, man-on-the-scene there. And that's it. That's the reason we send Ambassadors out.

Q Is this to avoid the sort of thing that happened, for example, in Iran, where the Embassy there was issuing repeated warnings and the warnings were not making it back to the proper channels -- is this intended to avoid --

MR. SPEAKES: Different administration. I don't anticipate that in this administration.

Q Is the President going to Camp David tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, he is.

Q The time?

MR. SPEAKES: When he gets through.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

9:27 A.M. EST

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