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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

February 7, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:04 P.M. EST

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's Schedule.....	1
Meeting with Prime Minister Hawke	
Presidential Announcement.....	1

DOMESTIC

Social Security.....	1
Tax Reform/Deficit Reduction.....	1-2/3
David Stockman.....	3
Mother Clara Hale.....	10-11/13
Buchanan.....	12

FOREIGN

Chernenko's Health.....	3
Philippines.....	5
Korea.....	8/13
Nicaragua/South Africa.....	8-9
New Zealand/Australia.....	12

12:25 P.M. EST

#1325-02/07

THE WHITE HOUSE
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PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

February 7, 1985

The Briefing Room

12:04 P.M. EST

MR. SPEAKES: The President today is announcing the appointment of Robert H. Tuttle to be Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Personnel.

Mr. Tuttle is on duty and will be practicing his profession here very shortly in the White House.

At 12:15 p.m., the President will conclude his meeting with Prime Minister Hawke and go to the State Dining Room for lunch.

We look for the departure statements at 1:30 p.m. from the Diplomatic Entrance where we will welcome all of you to cover these statements.

Following that, at 1:45 p.m. approximately, we'll have a background briefing on the President's meeting with Prime Minister Hawke. The background briefer will be Paul Wolfowitz, Assistant Secretary of State.

Tomorrow at 10:00 a.m., we will have a background briefing on the upcoming visit of King Fahd. He will be in Washington on Monday for a state visit. And for your information, not for publication, the briefer will be James Placke, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

Q What was his name?

MR. SPEAKES: P-L-A-C-K-E.

Q As in teeth.

MR. SPEAKES: That's right. I don't have any further announcements. Do you have any questions?

Q Yes. Bob Dole, this morning at that breakfast --

MR. SPEAKES: I saw it.

Q Well --

MR. SPEAKES: Our position has not changed on Social Security.

Q Well, what does that mean? You are dead-set opposed to that or you might consider that or --

MR. SPEAKES: The President stated it very articulately in one of his most recent press conferences. We'll be glad to provide you with a text of that.

Q Well, Dole also said that the President may have put tax reform on the front burner, but the burner is turned off on Capital Hill. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Vintage Dole?

MORE

#1325-02/07

Q I suppose so, but many, many --

Q Pretty good line.

MR. SPEAKES: I can definitely tell you that the President regards tax reform with equal priority to budget reduction -- deficit reduction, and that we will be advocating it and pushing it and we will let it move as fast as the legislative track will let it go.

Q That was Dole's point, the track's blocked. I mean, use any metaphor you want.

Q But use a metaphor.

MR. SPEAKES: He's the Leader and we will continue to work with him to see that our tax bill -- in fact, I understand that there'll be hearings sometime shortly in the House of Representatives already.

Q -- the Tempkin Village hearings in the Wage and Means Committee, that's correct.

Q Larry, why didn't the President put more emphasis on deficit reduction in the State of the Union address?

MR. SPEAKES: The President issued about three Sears Roebuck catalogs which put a great deal of emphasis on deficit reduction. (Laughter.) Just on Monday. How soon do you forget.

Q It's one thing to issue a Sears Roebuck catalog. It's another thing to go on national television in front of the 80 million people, or whatever, and put his own kind of personal stamp on pushing for deficit reduction.

MR. SPEAKES: If you wish a personal stamp on it, I'll get you a 24 cent stamp, give it to you, and you can go with it. We still favor deficit reduction.

Q He didn't mention any of the cuts, though. The only cut he mentioned was Amtrak.

Q Amtrak. Elizabeth Dole's specialty.

MR. SPEAKES: It was only an example.

David?

Q On taxes, even though it's an equal priority, is it still your -- the administration's view that the legislative strategy is to get the spending cuts first and then turn to tax simplification later?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't want to telegraph the legislative strategy. We will be working with the Congress and watching how the -- whether the legislative track is clogged or unclogged and try to move as quickly as possible. Of course, we're going to be wary and protect our own flanks as far as not letting our deficit reduction package get Christmas-treed up with anything other than what we would like on there.

Ira, were you waiting?

Q Yes. I'm just writing down Christmas-treed.

MR. SPEAKES: That's a very original phrase.

Q Like that big old menorah in the park, right?
(Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: While Ira's thinking, do you want to go ahead, George?

Q That's Passover, Sam.

Q He can't be knowledgeable on everything.

Q On Stockman, is there any reaction here as some of the Veterans groups are calling for either an apology or a resignation?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Does the President still have full faith and confidence in the Budget Director?

MR. SPEAKES: Confidence. (Laughter.)

Q Well, I mean --

Q What happened to full faith?

MR. SPEAKES: Faith. Whatever.

Q There are lots of --

MR. SPEAKES: George.

Q Go ahead. Sorry.

Q How sick is Chernenko as far as you know, and has there been any communication between the Soviets and the United States?

Q Where's Alexander?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. He's not here when we need him.

George, we traditionally do not comment on the health of foreign leaders, -- (coughing) -- and I won't in this case.

Q How sick are you? (Laughter.)

Q Was that a -- what does that mean?

MR. SPEAKES: The Freudian cough. (Laughter.) So, I really don't have anything.

Q -- Chernenko lately?

MR. SPEAKES: Gene?

Q Larry, back on what Dole said this morning. When the Republican leaders were down here a week or so ago, they said one of the reasons they wanted to move the tax reforms to the back burner was that there would be different coalitions involved and they didn't want to alienate someone who might be with them on the deficit package who would be against them on taxes. Does the White House disagree with that strategy or --

MR. SPEAKES: No. We don't want to alienate them or anyone that might be with us on the package. We realize -- I mean, that's an important part of it, Gene, and we'll be looking carefully at that. Clearly, there -- in the entire budget process, there are going to be different coalitions that form because the budget cuts are far-reaching and deep. And some will be with us on some and others won't be with us.

So that's part of the mix and part of our judgment that

will take place.

Q I guess the question is, who is making strategy in this case? Is it your lieutenants on the Hill or is the President?

MR. SPEAKES: Hopefully -- this is all somewhat the preliminary discussions, skirmishing on the subject. And we will -- we'll be working closely with them.

I think probably that our working relationship with both our House and Senate leaders is as thorough and detailed as it's ever been, and it's the President's desire it will continue.

You know, in past years, we've had complaints, particularly from House Republicans, that we have not consulted with them as we proceeded with different packages. And I think the consultation has been thorough, long, deep, extended and --

Q Hard. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: -- well received.

Q -- sort of on your mind.

MR. SPEAKES: David.

Q Anything on the Philippines?

Q "Thorough, long, deep."

Q Any readout or any comment on what the Ambassador said to the President?

MR. SPEAKES: No, I really don't, David. Sorry.

Let me go back here, and then I'll come to Sheila, and then I'll go to Lester.

Q Do you intend to issue a more detailed statement of your --

Q This row will never graduate from high school.

Q I hope not.

Q -- tax simplification principles before the end of the bipartisan process?

MR. SPEAKES: Do we intend to issue a more detailed statement on principles on tax reform -- the end of the bipartisan process? That's what threw me. What -- In --

- Q Do you intend to do that before you continue -- or before you end the bipartisan process that you asked Baker to get involved in?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we hope we don't end the bipartisan process. We hope it continues.

I think Baker will be consulting on the Hill, as he has -- I think he testifies this week, I believe, on tax reform.

It's still preliminary, as far as we're concerned, because we will continue to work with the Bradleys and the Gephardt's and the Kemps and -- what was the other one?

Q Kasten.

MR. SPEAKES: Kastens. And work together for one vehicle, if that's possible. The President will, of course, approve whatever steps we take.

Q Just a followup --

Q -- go into any more detail at the House hearing?

MR. SPEAKES: I presume that Baker will. But it will be not much more than you have heard or seen already.

David.

Q Just to follow that, some columnists were given the impression yesterday by -- at the briefing -- that Reagan would send a -- sort of a tax message, not the detailed bill, but just a more detailed description of his principles -- late this month or early next month. And then the legislation would follow. Is that kind of the expectation?

MR. SPEAKES: David, I don't know the answer to that.

Q Did Regan say anything last night?

Q I want to clarify --

MR. SPEAKES: I don't recall.

Q -- what Regan said, if you can help us here. I thought he said that the White House would let the Committees develop a bill and then sort of sign on to it, if you like it --

Q Yes.

Q -- without sending up an actual bill yourself.

Q That is what --

MR. SPEAKES: Well, there seems to be, then, at least a conflict in impressions. I don't know. Marlin, do you shed any light on the strategy on that?

MR. FITZWATER: Yes, he said that we would be sending up a message to Congress, probably February or March, that that would form the basis for Congressional consideration and a bill would be developed out of that.

Q By whom?

MR. FITZWATER: But I think you can expect that the message would have enough detail in it that it would clearly lay out our preferences for the major provisions of the bill.

Q But who would develop that bill? The Committees?

MR. FITZWATER: It would be developed in Committee, in conjunction with the administration, as always --

Q Is it fair to say that the President doesn't want to have his name on the first thing that they bat around?

MR. SPEAKES: No, we're not shying away from it, Ira.

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know what you're suggesting; but the President certainly is behind this. The State of the Union Message, I think, left no question. Certainly, whatever subsequent messages will be will be very strongly supportive and indicative of exactly what he wants us to do.

Q -- Bradley and Gephardt have seemed somewhat reluctant to have their bill folded in with the various Republican proposals. How important is a bipartisan bill to the President? What will he do if he can't get that?

MR. SPEAKES: I think bipartisanship in this is very important, and we regard it that way and we'll make every effort to do so. If we don't, we'll cross that bridge when we get there.

George.

Q Will this message take the place of an actual proposal?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the way Marlin describes it, I believe. That it will form the basis --

Q -- in a message.

MR. SPEAKES: What the message will --

MR. FITZWATER: Obviously, it hasn't -- you know, we don't know the exact shape of it. But I think it would constitute a proposal, in a layman's sense at least. The legislation, of course, is something that's very specific and would be long and, perhaps, complicated.

Q Hard, too.

Q Hard.

MR. FITZWATER: But I don't think you'll mistake this for not being a proposal.

Q Okay. But will there not be specific legislation sent up?

MR. FITZWATER: At this point, it's likely that there won't be. But, you know, anything can change.

Q Larry, when -- just following up on that -- when we say "a proposal," will it be specific enough so that we will know what his view is on ACRS, capital gains --

Q No.

Q -- major issues --

MR. SPEAKES: I think we'll have to wait until we get there. Do you want --

Q Well, Larry, will this be a --

Q -- Marlin will not be --

Q -- will this actually be a message --

MR. FITZWATER: We'll just have to wait and see.

Q -- from the President or from the White House?

MR. FITZWATER: I don't know.

MR. SPEAKES: President.

Q Well, Marlin, you just said, though, it'll be clear from the message what your preferences are, a major provision. So, isn't it fair to assume that the message would at least let us know how he feels about things like capital gains and ACRS, the major --

MR. FITZWATER: Well, I'm not willing to name specific provisions, as you said --

Q No, but in that level of detail you wouldn't disagree with --

MR. FITZWATER: I think the statement speaks for itself. I couldn't --

Q Can you explain any further how he hopes to achieve lower than a 35 percent rate and still keep it revenue neutral since that's not what the Treasury recommended?

MR. SPEAKES: He would be hopeful of doing that, if he could, or it may work with the others.

Q -- nuclear weapons from the face of the earth.

Q It seems to me -- it seems that that would involve --

Q So, we nuke the tax code. That'll do it.

MR. SPEAKES: It would not -- the number one criterion is revenue neutral. So, it'll remain that way.

Q Hopeful is the key word here.

MR. SPEAKES: Dale?

Q Did the President make any attempt to meet with Kim before he left Arlington to return to Korea?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't believe so.

Lester?

Q Larry, why is the President allowing the State Department to subsidize the Marxist dictatorship in Mozambique at the same time he wants to support freedom fighters trying to overthrow a Marxist dictatorship in Nicaragua?

MR. SPEAKES: Has your tape recorder been repossessed again?

Q No. (Laughter.) No, Larry. Thank you for that very clever evasion. Now, could we get back to the question?

MR. SPEAKES: No, it was an observation.

Q No, I just didn't bring it. Could you give an answer to this, Larry, please?

Q -- Larry.

Q -- you're Les, he's Larry.

MR. SPEAKES: We have worked closely with our friends and allies in Southern Africa and others to develop a program that leads toward democracy. We've worked carefully with the Mozambique government despite the fact that they previously had close ties with the Soviet Union. And we think that there has been progress made in our relations with the government of Mozambique.

Now, as far as people who are striving for democracy worldwide, certainly we support their aspirations and we'll continue to do so.

Q Larry --

Q Is Mozambique in Southern Africa? (Laughter.)

Q They're so-called communists just like the Chinese.

MR. SPEAKES: Mozambique is --

Q I thought it was in East Africa. I didn't think it was --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Is it in Southern Africa?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, it's Southeastern Africa. It's next to Zimbabwe, between -- the corner -- due east of Zimbabwe, there it would be. If you went northeast of South Africa, there it would be.

Q -- east of --

MR. SPEAKES: On the Indian Ocean.

Q -- Zimbabwe?

Q What's the capital?

Q What progress are you talking about, Larry? The Washington Times reports that they have thousands, hundreds of thousands in concentration camps --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm discussing --

Q -- thousands have died. There's no freedom. There's secret police.

MR. SPEAKES: I'm discussing progress in our relationship with them and --

Q You mean, they'll speak to you now? I mean, Nicaragua will do that. What is the basic difference? Are Hispanic freedom fighters more deserving than black freedom fighters, Larry?

Q Say yes. We'll have a story -- (Laughter.)

Q Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Lester, I've given you far more answer than I usually do, and that should suffice for you. (Laughter.)

Dale?

Q Could you just tell us anything about the President's meeting with Mother Clara this morning?

Q Mother Hale.

Q Mother Hubbard.

Q Well, Clara is her first name.

MR. SPEAKES: The meeting was so -- five or six minutes long. She was accompanied by her daughter. It followed a tour of the White House which happened to end just outside the Oval Office where the three new Cabinet officers were being sworn in. She met each of them and particularly interested in her meeting with the incoming Secretary of Education

Bennett, and then she met with the President. The President was highly complimentary of her effort, saying she was an inspiration to the American people. Her daughter asked how did he come to select her, and he pointed out that he gets -- various ways -- many people are called to his attention, and he thought hers was one that was particularly deserving of the attention last night.

Q That's a good question. How did -- how was Mother Hale and the young lady from West Point -- how were they selected?

MR. SPEAKES: We covered that this morning, when you were late.

Q I was, that's true.

MR. SPEAKES: It was basically that from time to time we see newspaper stories of people. Other times people write in to point out to the President people that are --

Q I'm talking about in this -- these specific cases.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know this specific case. I have not been able to track that down, as to --

Q Are you working on it? Did they ask you this morning to?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, they didn't, but now that you asked, I will.

Q Well, would you please?

MR. SPEAKES: I will.

Q Is it possible that he saw the television profile on her?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know, he could have.

Q What network was that on, Andrea? (Laughter.)

Q It must have been Sam's.

Q Well, the President said that if we would go up to Harlem and walk down the street by her place, and -- we'll look through the pane of glass and see her walking back and forth with a child in her arms? Was he suggesting we all go up to Harlem to do that? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Only you.

Charles?

Q Did the President promise her any additional assistance or to look into anything of that sort?

MR. SPEAKES: No, she didn't ask, and he didn't promise. At least yours and Charles Wrangle's contention of budget cuts has been called into question. I don't have the full facts on it, but --

Q That was Mr. Wrangles; I repeated it.

MR. SPEAKES: (Laughter.) You don't vouch for Wrangle?

Q Well, I think Charlie Wrangle's good guy.

Q Would you elaborate when you say it's been called into question? What do you mean?

MR. SPEAKES: The news stories we've seen -- we haven't had an opportunity to run it down with the departments that -- they do not, they're funded by the city or state of New York and other private sources.

Q Larry, how is your mail running in -- mail and phone calls running in regard to the Pat Buchanan appointment? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I'll run a check on it. Have you written?

Q Apparently --

MR. SPEAKES: Have you written?

Q No, I've read -- I've been sick --

MR. SPEAKES: Sorry to hear that -- (Laughter.)

Q -- but I've read it created a great angst -- eruption here in this press room -- (laughter) -- and I wondered what's the story, Larry? How much is the general reaction to that Pat Buchanan appointment?

MR. SPEAKES: I've asked, have you written?

Q Beg your pardon?

MR. SPEAKES: I have asked, have you written?

Q Yes, I called him.

MR. SPEAKES: I mean, have you -- you haven't registered -- how can we count you?

Q Did you want me to write a letter? I'd be glad to.

MR. SPEAKES: Do what you like.

Q -- it'll be the first.

MR. SPEAKES: John?

Q Larry, do you know if she discussed what additional help her program might need with any other member of the staff?

MR. SPEAKES: I doubt it. I don't think so.

Frank?

Q Recognizing that we've got the background briefing coming up on the Hawke-Reagan meeting, I still would just like to ask you, when the President was asked if he was considering sanctions or any kind of retaliation against New Zealand, he said that this was not an appropriate time to discuss it. Is there a reason that he didn't dismiss the idea of sanctions outright?

MR. SPEAKES: No. The Secretary of State has said that he does not favor any type of economic sanctions against New Zealand.

Q What's Weinberger's view --

MR. SPEAKES: We do recognize that there are some people in Congress who have strong feelings on that. In fact, Senator Cohen has introduced, or will introduce a bill along those lines. I have heard no one advocating within the administration economic sanctions against New Zealand.

Q Is there a reason, though, that he didn't just say, "No, there will be no sanctions"? He's very supportful on the

subject of sanctions with South Africa, for example.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. No, there's no reason.

Dale?

Q Larry, do you have the name of Mother Hale's daughter?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't, but we can get that. Pete --

Q Daughter Hale.

Q Daughter Hale. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Pete will run it down for you.

Mike?

Q Lorraine.

Q Lorraine.

MR. SPEAKES: Lorraine, okay.

Q With two "r's."

MR. SPEAKES: Lorraine, with two r's, and "a" and "i" and an "e."

Q If I --

MR. SPEAKES: What?

Q If I could follow up a little bit on your statement about promoting democracy and also about Kim Dae Jung. He was, before he left for -- to return to Korea -- he was quite available here and there were some suggestions that a meeting might be set up with President Reagan or others in the White House to show the President's concern for promoting democracy in South Korea. That didn't come off. I wonder if you could tell us if there were such efforts and why the President didn't want to see him before he returned?

MR. SPEAKES: I never heard of any such efforts. Bob may want to --

MR. SIMS: He did meet with officials from the White House and high officials from the State Department, including your background briefer for this afternoon.

Q Can't hear you.

Q Can you tell us who he met with in the White House?

MR. SIMS: National Security Council staff people.

Q An Advisor or staff?

Q Wolfowitz.

MR. SIMS: Staff.

Q Bob, we can't hear you. Could you just repeat that?

Q And did he request a meeting with the President?

MR. SPEAKES: Speak up, Sims. Repeat it.

MR. SIMS: He met with White House and State Department

officials at the Assistant Secretary level at the State Department.

Q And Wolfowitz is -- our background briefer did you say?

Q Did he ask for a meeting with the President?

Q Weinberg. (Laughter.)

MR. SIMS: I don't know.

Q Mark Weinberg. (Laughter.)

Q How long ago before he left? How long before he left?

MR. SIMS: We'd been in touch with him. I don't know when the last meeting was.

Q Is Bush going to his funeral?

Q Is he flying home by way of Mozambique so he can meet all those North Koreans that are there in that progressive democracy, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: He's going by Manila.

Q Is he taking Korean Airlines? (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Let me out of here.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

12:25 P.M. EST

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