

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secret

PRESS BRIEFING
BY
LARRY SPEAKES

October 28, 1985
The Briefing Room

5

9:25 A.M. EST

INDEX

SUBJECT

PAGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

President's Schedule.....1-3
 Domestic Policy Council/Grace Commission
 Year of Liberty Signing Ceremony
 Meeting with Hostage Families
 Week Ahead.....16-17, 18
 Tuesday/Tax Reform Meeting with Church Leaders
 Tuesday/Senator Abdnor Reception
 Wednesday/Meeting with Economists
 Wednesday/Meeting with Secretary Shultz
 Wednesday/British Exhibit at National Gallery

DOMESTIC

Affirmative Action.....10
 Fiscal Crisis.....15-16
 President's Phone Call to Kansas City Royals.....16
 President's Press Interviews.....17
 Tax Reform.....17

FOREIGN

Hostages/Hostage Families/Assad.....2-5
 Duarte/Daughter's Release.....5, 8, 9-10
 Soviet Seaman/INS.....5-9, 15
 Summit/Arms Control Offer/Communique/
 Press Perceptions.....8,10-13
 Italian-American Troops/Airliner.....10
 Gramm-Rudman/Defense Cuts/Secretary Weinberger/Aspin...14, 15
 Brussels Trip.....14
 Soviet Television/President Reagan.....14
 Abbas.....14-15
 Tass Interview/President Reagan.....15
 Middle East/Hussein/Arafat.....18

9:54 A.M. EST

#1592-10/28

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MR. SPEAKES: The President today has a meeting of the Domestic Policy Council at 10:45 a.m. That meeting is to receive the Final Report of the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control -- the Grace Commission.

At 11:45 a.m., at the conclusion of that meeting, the President will go into the Rose Garden at which time he will receive formally the report and have some remarks. Present will be the Grace Congressional Caucus, which is a group of members of Congress who have supported the Grace Commission recommendations, as well as a group called Associations United to Cut Federal Spending. We will have copies of the report for you after the President signs it.

Q Will affirmative action come up at all in that Domestic Policy Council?

MR. SPEAKES: No. There is open coverage in the Rose Garden.

At 2:00 p.m. the President will have a signing ceremony for the Year of Liberty in the Rose Garden, and that, too, is open coverage. The Year of Liberty -- and we'll have this piece of paper for you -- the proclamation designates the Year of Liberty beginning October 28th of '85 to October 28th of '86. And the Rose Garden ceremony will formally launch a series of events leading up to the hundredth birthday of the Statue of Liberty next October.

The President, as you know, will be participating in unveiling ceremonies there in July of next year. The restoration is one of the largest private sector initiatives in history. Over \$170 million of the \$240 million needed for this project has already been raised.

Three young contributors will be with the President at the signing ceremony. They are Michael Haverly of Indianapolis, who is a multi-handicapped foster child who raised over \$5,000 for the statue.

Amy Nessler and her parents from West Deptford Township, New Jersey brings a special jar of 365 pennies. They were collected fifteen years earlier by Amy's mother a day at a time to reflect each day that her fiance was in Vietnam. The family felt this was an appropriate place for this donation.

And Donna Daly of Ridgeland, South Carolina, who made the earliest contribution. And when her hometown learned that she was losing her sight to an incurable eye disease -- they raised money to send her and her family to see the statue.

The French Ambassador to the United States and members of the administration and Congress will also be present for the signing ceremony.

On the signing ceremony table will be a replica of the

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 2 -

statue that was made from the last miniature mold produced by the statue's architect.

Q Lee Iacocca?

Q Won't Iacocca be there?

Q Modigliani?

MR. SPEAKES: This afternoon at 4:45 p.m. the President will meet with the families of hostages abducted in Lebanon.

Q What time did you say?

MR. SPEAKES: At 4:45 p.m. This meeting will -- the President will talk to them for about fifteen minutes, and then Bud McFarlane will brief them.

At 1:15 p.m. today we'll have our regular briefing due to the fact that we are having our regular lunch.

Q Did you say Bud would brief after that?

MR. SPEAKES: No, Bud will brief the hostage families, but will not brief here.

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 3 -

Q Do you know how long they will be here?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q How many -- the relatives of how many of the hostages will be here?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have it now. I'm just now getting that information.

The participants indicate the Anderson family, which includes Peggy Say and Glen Anderson, the Jacobsen family, which includes Paul Jacobsen, the son, Father Jenco's family, which includes a sister -- or two sisters, Peter Kilburn family, which includes his wife and a niece, and that's it. The Thomas Sutherland family, which is the other one, is in London, and we have not made contact with them.

Q How about Reverend Weir?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Not invited?

Q What about Buckley's?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't know whether he is or not -- certainly would be welcome.

Q What made the President finally decide to see these families?

MR. SPEAKES: He learned that they were back in town for one of their regular State Department briefings, and his -- they wrote a letter and he decided that it would be timely for him to see them.

Q Would you --

Q Does the President have any progress to report, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, we are continuing to work with all parties in the region in order to be -- bring about some resolution to this matter, and it remains a priority with the administration. I don't have anything to report to you.

Norm?

Q The families indicated yesterday that they'd press for, I think what they called "an urgent re-evaluation of U.S. policy" because of the events of the last few weeks that the incident where Buckley was reported to have been killed, the Soviet kidnappings, the Achille Lauro affair -- do you see a need for any kind of reassessment, or has there been any reassessment of your -- the steps you are taking?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, we're continually assessing; reassessing is a different term. We're continually assessing U.S. policy and the effectiveness of it and will continue to do so, but there has been no change in U.S. policy.

Q Larry, the families have been asking to meet with the President for months. Can you tell us why he chose now? Did it have anything to do with these other incidents you were just mentioning?

MR. SPEAKES: No -- not related. The President just thought it would be timely to do so, since they were going to be in town for the State Department, and had personally requested a

MORE

#1592-10/28

meeting.

Andrea?

Q Well, they had been in town several times, and they had requested meetings several times, and each time they were shunted off to Vice President Bush. So what is it that made -- I mean, it -- was there nothing that he finally -- did --

MR. SPEAKES: Presidential decision.

Q A Presidential decision based on what?

MR. SPEAKES: Based on the President's mind and his decision to do so.

Q So he had decided not to see them before that?

MR. SPEAKES: No -- decided to see him this time.

Andrea?

Q Can you say whether the Achille Lauro and the other incidents in the Middle East have upset whatever behind-the-scene negotiations were going on?

MR. SPEAKES: Wouldn't comment on that at all.

Lou?

Q What's the evaluation of the administration now and the likelihood of success or the progress as far as releasing the other hostages are concerned?

MR. SPEAKES: Well, I can't rate it on a scale of one to ten. I can simply say that it remains a priority and we're continuing to work with all parties and can't be much more specific than that.

Drake?

Q Does the length of time that's passed since the call about Buckley occurred give the administration any more confidence that that claim was false so that he may --

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't think we're in a position to pass judgment either way, and the length of time has not altered it one way or the other.

Q The Buckley family isn't represented, is it? Can you tell us why?

MR. SPEAKES: I do not know why. I'm sure they'll be welcome.

I don't know whether they're coming to town with this group or not. I think this is a briefing for those still held there, and of course, he is not held.

Owen?

Q Are you going to have anything to say after the meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Frank?

Q What did he say?

Q Did you say Buckley is not held?

Q Did you say Buckley is no longer held?

MR. SPEAKES: Oh, I'm sorry. Weir. I thought you meant Weir. I thought you were talking about Weir.

Q Well, the Buckley family is not represented in this group today either.

MR. SPEAKES: Yes --

Q Why not?

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

Q Buckley doesn't have any family --

Q There's no family, I don't think.

MR. SPEAKES: That's true.

MR. SPEAKES: Are you open to general questions, or just -- do you have other announcements?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm trying to finish all this tail-end stuff here.

Q Do you have anything further on the reports, I think last week or the week before, that the Syrians were formally washing their hands of any role?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q What is your assessment of what President Assad's role is in release -- winning the freedom of the remaining hostages?

MR. SPEAKES: Same as Ambassador to the U.N. said yesterday on television, that we won't comment on it.

Q You were commenting on it several weeks back, that you felt he was a key player. Is he no longer a key player?

MR. SPEAKES: Just don't have anything to say.

Q Does the President approve of Duarte's solution for the kidnapping of his daughter?

MR. SPEAKES: Wait a minute. Wait a minute.

Q Do you have any announcements?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, I was coming to the Soviet seaman. You have seen the reports over the weekend of the Soviet seaman. We

*Sands
like Harry
just got
confused
and stumbled
over his own
feet.*

have sent representatives of the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service there. We're still in discussions with the Soviets both here in Washington and in New Orleans regarding the seaman. Our goal is, according to established practice, is we wish to interview him in appropriate surroundings to determine his true intentions. And that's the matter as it stands at the moment.

Q Well, now, there are reports that the last time he was taken back to his ship we turned him over to the Soviets and he was taken back kicking and screaming. What is the President's attitude toward the way Immigration Service and our enforcement officers acted in that occasion?

MR. SPEAKES: The President has received a rather detailed report to indicate that there was difficulty in determining his intentions because of the interpretation problems there, and once the matter was examined closely, then State Department officials were alerted by the INS and they stepped in to make an effort to determine what his true intentions are.

Q Does that report coincide with news reports which say that he jumped from the ship in the first instance and was apprehended on shore and put in a launch to be taken back. He jumped from the launch, swam to shore again, and it was at that point that he was turned over to the Soviets.

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have that much detail, Sam.

Q Because it appeared from news reports that there was some indication that people with some sense should have determined that he didn't want to go back to that ship. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have that much information.

Q What is the President's attitude? Sam's first question was, you know, what does he think of the way this was handled?

MR. SPEAKES: I didn't have any comment on it.

Q Well, it's the President's determination, though, that we want to -- not only we want to interview him, but we intend to interview him before we release that ship.

MR. SPEAKES: That's our established practice to do so, that's what we intend to do.

Yes.

Q Has the President ordered that the ship not leave U.S. waters until this is taken care of?

MR. SPEAKES: There are discussions that are taking place

- 7 -

the ship is located at Belle Chasse, about 15 -- 10 to 15 miles north of -- or south of New Orleans and it is under jurisdiction of the Coast Guard -- or the Port of New Orleans.

Q But if we interview him and determine that he wants to defect, will we grant him asylum?

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, we don't specifically comment on those type of matters. If you want to check with the INS, they will be glad to --

Q Well, I suppose I'm asking that if we interview him and he says he doesn't want to return home, will we take him off the ship or will we let him go?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't think it's helpful that I comment any further right now.

Q Larry, could I restate --

Q Are there any U.S. --

Q If I restate my question, Larry -- has the President ordered that that ship not leave U.S. waters until this is resolved?

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, as I said, it's under jurisdiction -- in waters under jurisdiction of the Port of New Orleans, and I don't have anything further.

Q What does that mean, "Port of New Orleans"?

Q Does that mean it's out of his authority?

MR. SPEAKES: No, no.

Q No, no.

MR. SPEAKES: New Orleans kind of comes under the President.

Q Well, that's what I -- that's what I would assume.

MR. SPEAKES: Although -- (laughter) -- local area. It's not still French. (Laughter.)

Q Are you suggesting it's a local jurisdiction or Coast Guard jurisdiction? I don't understand --

MR. SPEAKES: No, I'm just telling you what waters it's in.

Q Can that ship leave without the President's go-ahead?

MR. SPEAKES: Once again, I'm just not commenting any further because this matter is under discussion at the scene and it would not be helpful for me to comment.

Norm.

Q Any American officials boarded the ship yet?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q Are they on there now?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Pat.

- 8 -

Q What authority, if any, do we have to require an interview? Can they simply say, "No, we won't produce him for an interview"?

MR. SPEAKES: I think the Immigration Act does provide that authority.

Q What's the circumstance -- it provides the authority, why? Because he -- there is some indication he was trying to defect or what?

MR. SPEAKES: I think it's unlawful deportation -- or deportation of anyone against their will.

Q So we're going to determine whether he wants to go willingly.

MR. SPEAKES: We're going to determine what his intentions are.

Q And his intentions will control, is that --

MR. SPEAKES: That's the standard practice, yes.

Sheila.

Q Larry, has any kind of investigation been ordered in the way the Border Patrol --

MR. SPEAKES: Not that I'm aware of.

John.

Q Larry, to what degree is there concern that this -- about this -- the timing of this incident, coming shortly before the summit?

MR. SPEAKES: Bud was asked that question -- or a similar question yesterday and indicated that we don't see that it should effect the upcoming meetings with Gorbachev.

Q Can you tell us if it's U.S. policy that if a Soviet citizen reaches the United States he or she is entitled to political asylum?

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

Duarte's daughter, we don't have any comment on what the President Duarte did to gain the release of his daughter.

Q Can we get an answer --

MR. SPEAKES: Pardon?

Q Can we get an answer from Ed on that?

MR. SPEAKES: Ed, do you want to talk about policy of U.S. --

MR. DJEREJIAN: It's basically a judgment that's made after the person is interviewed, and then a judgment is made on the part of the U.S. authorities whether or not -- if the person asks for asylum, whether or not it's granted. But there's a judicial process that has to be followed.

Q Well, this does seem, does it not, to be a case with some similarities to the Kudirka case, where the U.S. took --

MR. SPEAKES: No, the other one -- that case took place on the high seas, as I recall --

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 9 -

Q Well, some similiarities --

MR. SPEAKES: -- not in U.S. territorial waters.

Q A U.S. Coast Guard Captain allowed the Soviets to beat up Kudirka and remove him back to the Soviet ship. I have seen no reports suggesting that this man was beaten up. But we did allow Soviet seamen, apparently, to remove him, kicking and screaming, back to his ship.

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not sure that the similarities are there.

Norm.

Q Is the President going to meet with Duarte later this week?

MR. SPEAKES: President Duarte is scheduled to be in the United States. I don't have anything

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 10 -

specifically about a meeting with him, but if --

Q You'd say something?

MR. SPEAKES: -- if one does take place we would announce it.

Bob?

Q When do you expect the President to make a decision on Affirmative Action?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have a time table for it. I don't think the completion of the option paper -- the drafting of the option paper has been completed.

Anything else? Lou?

Q Do you have any -- I'm sorry. Do you have any information on this Italian inquiry into the stand-off, which is being described as a very strong confrontation between U.S. and Italian troops at the airbase where the airliner --

MR. SPEAKES: I've been asked about that and declined comment on that.

Q Well, is it true at least that we're trying to take the alleged kidnapers and bring them back to the United States for trial?

MR. SPEAKES: I just don't want to comment on it.

Q Well, do you stand by what you told us on that Friday night when you first read the -- everything you've told us about the perfect cooperation between the American and the Italian troops on the --

MR. SPEAKES: I think you misquote me, but I certainly stand --

Q -- close coordination, close cooperation --

Q That was pretty close --

MR. SPEAKES: -- stand by what I said.

Q -- about to shoot each other?

Q You and other officials talked about this last week, but what is the present status of whether the President is going to reply to the Soviet arms control offer before the summit meeting?

MR. SPEAKES: That hasn't been determined. There's a snowball of press speculation as to what we're going to do in regard to a communique or statement of principle, all of which appears to be erroneous with very few exceptions. We don't have any agreement with the Soviets to develop a communique or a statement of principle. We do not oppose one, but we're not seeking one. And we certainly don't judge the success of the meeting with Mr. Gorbachev as to whether or not we have a communique, we're just simply not seeking one. If one is developed, then so be it. If it's not, then the meeting stands on its own. But it's once again the tendency of the press, including many of those in this room, to set up a criteria for success or failure or winners or losers. It's not true, it won't work, and I'm sorry. (Laughter.)

Q We'll see.

Q That wasn't my question.

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 11 -

Q It's all right, Larry.

Q My question was whether or not there's going to be a U.S. reply to the Soviet offer before the summit?

MR. SPEAKES: My initial statement, Lou, and I'll amplify on it, is that has not been determined. Essentially, the analytical work on the Soviet proposal has been completed and that we will -- we're now proceeding with discussions on a fairly regular basis within the administration. There's a second drumbeat in the --

Q Discussions on what, Larry?

MR. SPEAKES: Discussions on a response --

Q Can you tell us about a second drumbeat in the press?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q On what?

MR. SPEAKES: Discussions on a response to the Soviet proposal. There is a second drumbeat in the press that there is disarray which -- a crippling disarray in the administration which

MORE

#1592-10/28

is allowing us to -- is forcing us to delay in replying to the Soviet offer -- not so. The offer was -- our proposal was put on the table last spring. The Soviets spent months reviewing it before they came up with a counter-proposal. We now have that proposal before us which we've analyzed in less than a month and it has not been determined as to whether we would respond to it before, during, or after the meeting with Mr. Gorbachev.

Q Are you saying there's no difference of opinion. I mean, there's clearly --

MR. SPEAKES: The President, as always, invites discussions among -- but that -- among his advisors in regard to key issues that come before him and then he makes a decision. In this case, he will do so when he's heard all he wishes to hear. But this discussion, which is standard practice, is in no way delaying the United States' response. We're simply analyzing it closely.

There seems to be another erroneous opinion --

Q Can I --

Q Is there a third --

Q -- on --

Q Is there a third drum beat in the press --

MR. SPEAKES: There is a third drum beat --

Q Wait -- can we -- on the analyzing, you mean that the President has the analysis now?

MR. SPEAKES: The President will be presented the analysis shortly. It has been completed.

Q But it has been completed?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

The third area of misunderstanding in the press corps -- certainly not deliberate -- was that the United States attempted to shift the focus from arms control to some other issue at the summit. We have always pictured the four baskets, as you recall. (Laughter.)

There have been four areas that we will consult. Arms control is important and so are regional issues. If you would note that the most recent large arms control initiative -- SALT II -- failed on the part of a regional issue -- Afghanistan -- Carter withdrew it from the Senate because of Afghanistan.

The support of the President's position by the allies at the U.N. in New York was --

Q Is that a fourth issue, or is it a sub-issue of the third?

MR. SPEAKES: That's the same one -- was substantially -- well, the story was, as reported on Schuster's network -- not by Schuster, of course -- was that -- and rehammered again on the Sunday show -- was that the United States went to New York trying to shift focus. The allies told them and they had to -- we had to shift gears again. Not so.

Q Not so we shifted gears again, or not so we ever tried to shift focus in the first place?

MR. SPEAKES: Both. (Laughter.) That we went --

- 13 -

Q Well, I mean, if you deny the first, there can't be a second.

MR. SPEAKES: -- that we went to New York, the President presented his viewpoint and it was --

Q -- still deny --

MR. SPEAKES: -- it was well received by the allies. And the United States has always intended to pursue four major areas at Geneva and will continue to do so. And we go with a solid support of the allies. So, there are three stories that are, once again, thin air on the part of the writing press and --

Q And the talking press.

MR. SPEAKES: And the talking -- walking, talking press.

Q -- gave me the tips on background.

MR. SPEAKES: Mike?

Q Larry, do you sometimes wish that you had one state-controlled wire service, one state-controlled network and one state-controlled daily newspaper -- (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: No, I just simply wish that I had many voices who spoke with accuracy instead of none who speak with accuracy -- many who speak with inaccuracy.

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 14 -

Q Larry, speaking of alleged disarray, what is the President's view as to how binding Gramm-Rudman would be on defense cuts in the future? Does he agree with what Cap Weinberger said in "Human Events"?

MR. SPEAKES: Cap Weinberger's statement in "Human Events," they were talking about the 80 percent cut, was made sometime before the bill was completed and the final agreements had been made.

The OMB Director yesterday indicated that it was no higher than 45 percent or 50 percent, and that's our viewpoint.

Q So the President confirms or goes along with the agreement from conference and disagrees with the way Cap analyzed it --

MR. SPEAKES: There's not a conference agreement, there's a Senate-passed bill that we agreed to, yes.

Q So he views defense spending as being subject to cuts and wouldn't hold back because of national security?

MR. SPEAKES: That's true, but this in no way prevents the President from pursuing his 0-3-3 growth rate in defense which he intends to do so. If Gramm-Rudman should trigger, and of course, you know the criteria for triggering it, defense would certainly take part of the cross-the-board cuts as other programs would.

Q Larry --

Q Can you give us some guidance on when the President is going to give a speech on arms control before the summit, if he is?

MR. SPEAKES: Lou, that hasn't been determined specifically. He will be --

Q What was the question?

MR. SPEAKES: When the President will speak on arms control before the summit. The subject, nor the time has been decided. Chances are that any other major statement would take place during the week or ten days prior to departure. He will be speaking out virtually on a --

Q Daily basis?

MR. SPEAKES: -- three or four times a week in coming weeks through interviews and other criteria.

Owen.

Q What about this Brussels trip and whether that means --

MR. SPEAKES: I might have something for you at noon on that. I might have something for you at noon on that.

Q You still do not have a response from the Soviets on the request to have the President be shown on Soviet television?

MR. SPEAKES: No, we have not.

Q Can you --

Q Larry --

Q Larry, is Abbas in Iraq? Are we doing anything --

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 15 -

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have any information --

MR. DJEREJIAN: No information --

MR. SPEAKES: Don't have information on Abbas.

Q What about a possible interview with Tass? Has that been approved?

MR. SPEAKES: We have had discussions with the Soviets in regard to an interview in the Soviet media, both television and the Wick proposal which we've not responded to, and other media which, of course, would be Soviet print media. And we have not worked out the final details, nor have a specific schedule for an interview.

Q You say you have not responded to --

Q He meant they have not --

Q He meant they have not responded --

Q They have still not responded to the Wick?

MR. SPEAKES: To the TV, yes.

Q Let's go back to the seaman again, this one question about your approach to this. Would you be doing the same thing if this were a seaman from, say, a Swedish or --

MR. SPEAKES: Yes.

Q -- or a Brazilian ship? So it's not based on --

MR. SPEAKES: No, it's based on law, precedent.

Pat?

Q The week ahead?

MR. SPEAKES: I don't have the week ahead.

Sarah?

Q Did the President read Les Aspin's open letter to Weinberger Sunday, and how did the President, whether he read that letter or not -- he must know Gramm-Rudman provides ultimately, down the road that we send about a third of the troops home some day. Does the President go along with that?

MR. SPEAKES: That's not the judgment or the analysis of the OMB Director.

Q Well, now, wait a minute, now. That may -- but Les Aspin, he's been an analyst in the Defense Department, he's Chairman of House Armed Services Committee, and he ain't nobody's fool. He must know what he's talking about. He said that directly.

MR. SPEAKES: Nor is Jim Miller.

Q Oh, I think he knows a lot less about defense than Les Aspin.

MR. SPEAKES: Dave.

Q Larry, is the President preparing to impound funds to slow down the rate at which we reach the fiscal crisis and give us some more space beyond November 15th?

- 16 -

MR. SPEAKES: No, November 15th in the judgment of the Treasury. In fact, November 3rd and 4th -- or 3rd through the 5th, right? Third or fourth.

MR. BRASHEAR: No, the 1st to the 4th.

MR. SPEAKES: The 1st to the 4th are crucial dates in that area and we will have to make some decisions there about disinvestment.

Q Somebody must have a week ahead over here. You have nothing?

MR. SPEAKES: You have the week ahead? I've got next week over here. Is that --

Q That's all right. We'll take that, too.

Q Any week. Any week.

Q Emory wants it.

Q This week is good, but --

MR. ROUSSEL: He wants the week after next.

Q Is there any in-town that's lining up?

MR. SPEAKES: I'm not aware of any, Dave. Rusty?

Q Any what?

MR. SPEAKES: I have not heard that.

Q How does the President feel about having to talk to 83 people in the Royal's clubhouse last night? (Laughter.) They kept passing the phone from one guy to another.

MR. SPEAKES: He asked for the bat boy. -- the bat boy, too?

Q Finally poor old ABC cut it off while he was still being passed around the room.

MR. SPEAKES: Tell you what. I had a call -- after staying up through that thing I had a call about -- I don't know, a quarter to twelve or something that said George Brett is calling you. And I said okay.

Q Which secretary in the White House?

Q Yeah. Yeah.

MR. SPEAKES: And then this voice came on and then it went off and the operator said, "I don't believe that was an authentic phone call." (Laughter.)

Q Which secretary does George Brett know here in the White House?

MR. SPEAKES: We have a plumbers unit out checking that. (Laughter.)

Okay, tomorrow, Tuesday, the President goes to a tax reform meeting that includes church leaders and church men -- protestant lay leaders.

Q What time?

MR. SPEAKES: At 1:00 p.m.

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 17 -

Q Where is that?

Q That's in the White House?

Q EOB?

MR. SPEAKES: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q What yes, yes, yes, yes?

MR. SPEAKES: The EOB.

And then at 6:00 p.m. he goes over to the Sheraton Grand for a reception for Senator Abdnor.

On Wednesday he comes rolling into the White House and meets with a group of outside economists at 11:45 a.m., has his regular meeting with Secretary Shultz, goes over to the National Gallery to look at the British exhibit at 4:00 p.m.

And on Thursday -- don't have anything specific on Thursday or Friday either. All is tentative right now.

Q Larry, do you know what days, if any, this week we'll be getting the text of any of this series of interviews he has done?

MR. SPEAKES: Not yet, Bruce.

Q Are these all foreign interviews?

MR. SPEAKES: Don't look for them this week yet.

Q Does he -- he has three or four this week?

MR. SPEAKES: Two this week.

Q Do you have anything you want to say about Ways and Means over the weekend?

MR. SPEAKES: No, just direct you to the Chairman's statements, and --

Q Well, the Chairman said that he is going to have a bill by the first week in December.

MR. SPEAKES: He indicated, though, that his committee would finish with it -- he may not have to you, but to us -- around the 8th of November.

Q Well, that's not November 1st.

Q You mean the language won't be written but the committee work will be done? Still take a few weeks to write it?

MR. SPEAKES: The committee will report a bill, I believe is what he has told us, around the 8th.

Q That's what I heard.

Q Well, he said yesterday that he thought the House would complete action on the bill by the first week in December, which suggests that the Senate is not going to even look at it this week.

MR. SPEAKES: We would hope that the House could act quicker than that.

John.

MORE

#1592-10/28

- 18 -

Q Do you anticipate any remarks for coverage at the Sheraton tomorrow?

MR. SPEAKES: No.

Q Where is the Sheraton --

Q Do you have anything to say --

Q Where is the Sheraton Grand? Is that the one they fixed up that they renamed?

Q No, it's something -- it's on the Hill.

Q You don't know.

MR. SPEAKES: No, I've never been there.

Q Fourteenth.

Q You and I've got to get out more. (Laughter.)

MR. SPEAKES: Yes. They've built all these hotels in the last four years.

Q Do you have anything to say about Hussein and Arafat and whether or not non-PLO participation is going to --

MR. SPEAKES: No, our position hasn't changed on that.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

9:54 A.M. EST