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White House blocks members of media from briefing

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By Matt Quillen CONNECT

WASHINGTON, DC (RNN) - Despite excluding news outlets from a briefing Friday, a White House spokesperson said the claim that outlets were excluded was "not factual."

Spokesperson Stephanie Grisham told The Hill that, "The pool was there, so various media mediums were represented."

Among the media outlets Press Secretary Sean Spicer barred from the White House media gathering were CNN and *The New York Times*. Politico and the *Los Angeles Times* also were not allowed into the off-camera briefing.

The "gaggle" was held instead of the traditional daily briefing.

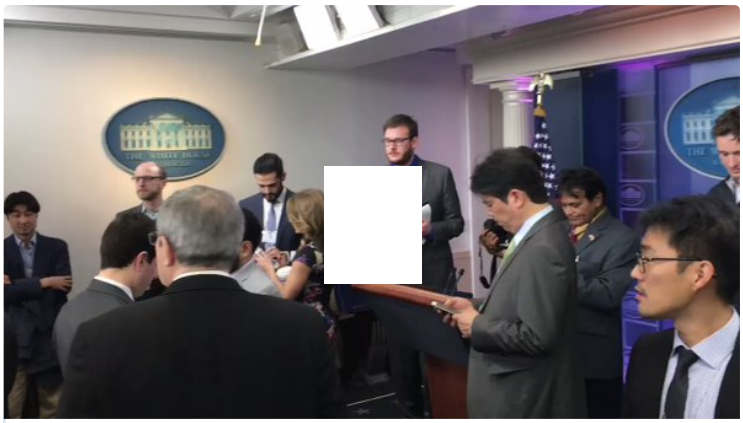
CNN and *NY Times* said Spicer required reporters to sign up for an "expanded pool gaggle" then excluded several of them. Reporter Glenn Thrush said the press secretary berated a smaller pool of reporters earlier in the day.

Thrush, who listened to an audio recording afterward, tweeted that Spicer then told reporters who got in the meeting that the Trump Administration "is more accessible than probably any prior administration."

Conservative-friendly media outlets, like Fox News, Breitbart, Washington Times and One America News, were among those that could attend, as well as *The Wall Street Journal*, NBC, ABC and CBS. The Associated Press and *Time* representatives were allowed as well but declined in protest.

"Nothing like this has ever happened at the White House in our long history of covering multiple administrations of different parties," said Dean Baquet, the executive editor of *NY Times*.

The White House Correspondents' Association released a statement that it is "protesting strongly against how (Friday's) gaggle is being handled by the White House."
"We encourage the organizations that that were allowed in to share the material with others in the press corps who were not," the group stated. "The board will be discussing this further with White House staff."



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Scene in the WH briefing room as reporters try to sort out who gained entry into private Sean Spicer gaggle.
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@peterbakernyt
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Congratulations to @AP and @TIME for boycotting today's White House gaggle in protest of exclusion of other media.
9:02 AM - 24 Feb 2017
4,105 9,644

The action follows threats from President Donald Trump that he would select which members of the media would have access. Trump blacklisted multiple outlets from events during the campaign, including *Washington Post*, Buzzfeed and Univision.

In a Feb. 17 tweet, Trump called NY Times, CNN, ABC, CBS and NBC the "fake news media" and "the enemy of the American people." He repeated the claim Friday in his speech at CPAC.

"The fake news doesn't tell the truth," he said Friday. "So just in finishing I say it doesn't represent the people. It never will represent the people. We're going to do something about it because we have to go out and we have to speak our minds and be honest."

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump
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The FAKE NEWS media (failing @nytimes, @NBCNews, @ABC, @CBS, @CNN) is not my enemy, it is the enemy of the American People!
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