



Numerous reports suggest Trump tunes into Spicer's briefings, critiquing them in real time and even dispatching a staffer to the briefing room to deliver notes to the podium.

Trump's obsession with media coverage and his annoyance at what he deems unfair is well documented.

Because Spicer is the president's front man with reporters, he bears the brunt of whatever criticism and anger spills from the Oval Office.

Presidential press secretary is an extraordinarily difficult position under any circumstances. It demands serving two masters – the president and the news media – while maintaining an even disposition and a calmness of spirit in the face of an often hostile, skeptical band of reporters.

Spicer has displayed a combative side periodically, particularly when peppered repeatedly by the same question posed in slightly different form or when interrupted in mid-answer by a reporter who feels a challenge is in order.

By all accounts, his first briefing following the president's inaugural was an unmitigated disaster. He laid into the media with a ferocity seldom seen, berating them for deliberately misrepresenting the size of the crowd at the swearing-in ceremony, turning his back on the assembled reporters and stalking off the stage without taking questions.

Subsequent briefings have been noticeably more mellow, but the tension is never far below the surface.

As long as his boss continues to tee up debates and controversy with 140 characters blasted out at 6 a.m., Spicer will remain in the eye of the storm, explaining and establishing context favorable to the administration.