

November 23, 1974

POOL REPORT
SEOUL TO TOKYO

Secretary Kissinger came back and spent about 15 minutes with your poolers. His only statement for the record was that the Ford-Tanaka and other meetings in Japan exceeded his expectations. "It went even better than I expected," he said.

Your poolers were told the following on background -- REPEAT, on background for use without attribution:

Re Vladivostok: There is no fixed agenda. The President, Brezhnev, Kissinger and their parties will be doing in 24 hours what normally would occupy three days. It's assumed this meeting will begin as all such meetings have with a review of the whole situation -- meaning, the state of U.S.-Soviet relations in view and in terms of the overall world situation -- that is to say, as relations are affected by the overall situation.

In that context, the Russians may raise the Jackson thing (Trade act vs Jewish emigration, of course). That is possible. But the U.S. government and Secretary Kissinger specifically have not repeat not been told that it will be raised.

After the general discussion is completed -- probably enroute from the airport to the meeting place -- each side will say (if the normal pattern is followed) that we have certain subjects we wish to raise. It will be natural if the Russians put SALT first on their list of priority items. Brezhnev, of course, could say no, let it wait until tomorrow, but that is not expected. SALT and the Middle East will certainly be raised and discussed at the meetings.

The European Security Conference issue is expected to be raised and discussed. It is such an esoteric issue, so fraught with variables and indefinable factors, that it would be a mistake to try to anticipate the way the discussion of ESC may go. But the American side will certainly make the point that restraint in both the Middle East and Southeast Asia (correct) are very important. Your poolers didn't have or take the time to get elaboration of the reference to Southeast Asia.

The poolers were told once again that senior American officials do not believe there is going to be an acute Middle East crisis in the near future. Certainly, we were told, there is no acute crisis now in the Middle East. An acute crisis is not repeat not in the interest of anyone involved. It therefore is unlikely to develop unless somebody makes a mistake. Nobody involved has an interest in escalating the situation to a military level unless somebody makes a mistake.

US officials expect that the most that can come of the SALT discussion at this meeting is that the progress claimed after Kissinger's Moscow visit in late October will be continued and equalled. This "progress" was not repeat defined for your poolers; it has never been officially defined.

Your poolers were advised to expect Ford and Brezhnev to get along very well. Ford was said -- surprise! -- to be steady, confident, ready for the meeting.

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The Korean meeting and the Habib briefing were raised by your poolers and very briefly discussed. It was said specifically that the President raised the issue of Koreak internal politics and that it was discussed, presumably by Ford and Park. The poolers also were told that Habib was right and following instructions when he refused to go into any detail.

Just before landing, Kissinger appeared again after he had been meeting with the President and said, this time for the record, much of what had been said before on background. On SALT, no agreement is possible at this time because the technical information needed is not in place and that is not the idea; however, substantive progress toward agreement can be made and that could be something that might or might not be announced. Dangerous areas will be reviewed, including the Middle East and Southeast Asia. European Security, which the Russians are interested in, also will be discussed "plus odds and ends." He does not know what the Russians plan to pursue, other than some of what may be in a joint communique, the groundwork for which has been underway for some time, which is to be issued at the end of the talks tomorrow. He expects progress. "I expect it to be all business. The Russians didn't come all the way here to have a confrontation. I don't expect a confrontation." He will brief about midnight, or later, on today's talks.

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