

MAY 28, 1975

AIR FORCE COLLECTOR REPORT
Andrews Air Force Base to Brussels, Belgium

The President read his departure statement to television cameras planeside at Andrews with Rockefeller standing a few feet behind him. At the conclusion of the brief remarks, Rocky stepped forward with a big smile, shook the President's hand and said, "Great statement."

On board, only one brief glimpse of the President who was dressed in a light blue two piece leisure suit. Nessen said Ford spent most of the trip working on papers.

About an hour before touchdown in Brussels Nessen brought Rumsfeld back. Rumsfeld insisted on background basis for remarks. He can be identified as a "Senior American official very familiar with NATO who was traveling with the President."

The senior official opened with an academic description of NATO, including the observation that these meetings are useful because the members can better understand each other's intentions and directions. But he warned not to expect a SALT-like resolution from this session since the members must return to their capitals and various political systems to resolve issues raised.

Urged us to look at issues Schlesinger raised during NATO defense ministers' meeting. Specifically, economic conditions putting pressure on defense budgets and a diminished fear of the Soviet threat argue for a more efficient use of NATO defense dollar through such techniques as weapons standardization.

According to this senior official, NATO members are more worried about the state of the American Congress and its commitment to treaty arrangements than anything arising out of our S. E. Asia experience. He said the failure of American policies in Indochina "is not a source of great apprehension among the Europeans."

He described questions about reports that Kissinger's role could be diminished as "mischievous questions," and added that Ford is getting foreign policy advice from the same sources as he has since becoming President. Asked if the relationship between Ford and Kissinger had changed, he said, "Of course not."

Asked about tomorrow's bilateral meetings, the official said, "I don't want to get into that."

Tom Brokaw
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