

POOL REPORT

AUGUST 2, 1975

Ford-Brezhnev Meeting: Air Force One, Helsinki-Bucharest

The Ford-Brezhnev meeting broke up at 12:30, three hours and 25 minutes after they entered the Soviet Embassy. The first sign the meeting was ending came with the appearance of the Secret Service.

Suddenly an English sparrow flew across the entrance. Brezhnev came through the door buttoning the second button of his black jacket in the first buttonhole.

He and the President stood talking briefly before the entrance. Brezhnev broke into a simulated marching cadence, swinging his fists and looking jovial; Ford looked solemn. The President turned to Brezhnev and said, "Thank you very much... The best health." He slapped the chairman cordially on both biceps.

Asked how the talks went, the President responded, "Friendly and constructive. Yes, we made some progress," specifically with regard to SALT.

Sukhodrev, translating for Brezhnev, said, "Absolutely we made some progress." Then he added, "Can't you see what kind of mood we're in?" Both Ford and Brezhnev laughed.

Brezhnev said: "The only problem is too little time to decide it all, but we did on some matters. We didn't even have lunch."

Mr. Ford's party then departed quickly. Kissinger joined him in the Lincoln for the short ride back to the U. S. embassy residence, where he picked up Mrs. Ford. Kennerly said she had been shopping again this morning.

A substantial crowd lined the sidewalk as the motorcade ran through the heart of the city, past the Vaakuna, on the way to the airport. Wheels up 1:08 p. m., slightly over one hour late.

Kissinger passed by on the way to the men's room and said on a background basis the two leaders spent four-fifths of their time on SALT. He said some substantive SALT issues had been agreed upon and would now be sent to Geneva for detailed technical discussions by the delegation there.

There was very substantial progress on verification, he said. There was no time to prepare a communique, he said. They discussed the Soviet Backfire bomber but we cannot consider that settled, he said, neither are cruise missiles.

The other one-fifth of the time in discussion was devoted to MBFR and general bilateral matters, he reported. There still is a general plan for an autumn visit by Brezhnev, he said, but there is no point in setting a date and then pushing yourself against a deadline.

When asked about Brezhnev's health, the senior official said, you know as much about his health as we do, but I don't think he can run the mile in five minutes.

At about 2:15, the pool was called forward to the President's conference room for a press conference before the pool camera. With Mr. Ford were Dr. Kissinger, Bob Hartmann, and Nessen. Watching through the doorway were Helmut Sonnenfeldt and General Brent Scowcroft.

(MORE)

The Press conference began at 2:30 and lasted about 25 minutes. You have transcript.

Random notes: Air Force One's route took us over the territory of Sweden, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Over the Baltic, at 1:55, at least two Swedish Air Force fighters appeared briefly off each wing of Air Force One. The pool noted the one on the left waggle its wings, apparently in salute.

Omitted earlier: A member of Mr. Brezhnev's staff corrected the buttoning of his suit.

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