

AUGUST 19, 1974

POOL REPORTABOARD AIR FORCE 1 - ENROUTE CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

President and Mrs. Ford arrived at Andrews aboard Marine 1, helicopter at 8:36 a.m. With them on chopper were Alexander Haig, Robert Hartmann, Jerry terHorst, Dave Kennerly, Commander Howard Kerr, a naval aide, and Dick Kaiser, head of his Secret Service detail.

Wheels up at 8:43.

terHorst came back shortly after take-off with following statement:

"The President was shocked and deeply saddened by the death of Ambassador Davies in Nicosia today. The President has asked Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to speak to this tragic incident at the State Department briefing at noon. This tragic incident emphasizes the urgent need for an end to the violence on Cyprus and an immediate return to negotiations toward a peaceful settlement."

On background, terHorst said Kissinger will amplify the President's "very strong views on this tragedy and the Cyprus situation."

He said the President talked with Kissinger at the White House this morning shortly before boarding the helicopter.

The first time terHorst came back, he said the announcement of a Vice President Tuesday night was likely, but he was not certain of the format. He said he didn't expect it before early evening. This did not necessarily mean that a selection has been made, he said, suggesting that Tuesday night is a "target date." He said the President will spend time tonight on the Vice Presidential selection and when he makes up his mind, the President will move rapidly to announce it.

A few minutes later, terHorst returned to say that he could not rule out the possibility of the announcement coming as early as Tuesday afternoon. "We haven't nailed it down," he said.

It is expected Tuesday or Wednesday, probably Tuesday, he said, leaving a tiny crack in the door that "nothing is firm" as to timing.

terHorst was asked if the Presidential aircraft is still called the Spirit of 76, as named by President Nixon.

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He said, "we're calling it Air Force One. The Spirit of 76' is still on the plane. No decision has been made, but you can see we're calling it Air Force One." On the manifest, it was referred to as The Spirit of 76, but the travel schedule, issued by press office, refers to it as Air Force I.

terHorst said the President will accept diplomatic credentials upon his return to Washington, and announced one addition to the schedule.

From 6:30 to 8 p.m., President and Mrs. Ford will host a "very small and private reception" for members of his Vice Presidential secret service detail and wives.

terHorst announced that the pilot today was Air Force Lt. Col. Lester C. McClelland, 42, of Masontown, Pennsylvania. He has been designated as the President's official pilot.

He has been assigned to the 89th Military Airlift wing (special (special missions) at Andrews AFB for 5-1/2 years. He occasionally was co-pilot for Col. Ralph Albertazzie, Nixon's pilot, terHorst said.

McClelland has been in the AF 19-1/2 years. He and wife, . Nancy have three young daughters. Mrs. McClelland is an elementary principal of Glen Arden Woods school in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Hartmann came back and said the President has narrowed field of veeps to half a dozen. Expects to discuss job with several without necessarily offering it to them, before he picks the man. "This is an open Administration, but this is properly the President's secret until he makes up his mind." Hartmann said they are all Republicans and not all from one political institution -- such as Congress or Governors. Said the President said probably has talked to all six since he became President, but not about the Vice Presidency. Then he backed off, saying he wasn't sure.

Tom DeFrank, Newsweek
Tom Jarriel, ABC News
Aldo Beckman, Chicago Tribune