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[9-21-74]

President and Mrs. Ford departed from the diplomatic entrance at 8:26 for the Kennedy Center and drove along Virginia Avenue past the Watergate, a route President Nixon used to avoid. The President was dressed in a pin striped blue suit and navy tie. Mrs. Ford wore a white silk kimono coat trimmed in gold and red at the neck and cuffs over a white silk dress. They entered the Kennedy Center at the Hall of nations and sporadic groups of people applauded warmly as they passed. They went directly to the Presidential box where they sat with the J. Willard Marriotts, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Kimball (President of Church of Latter Day Saints of Jesus Christ) Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Nielson^e (President of the Washington D.C. Mission of L.D.S.) Mr. and Mrs. Edward Drury (President of the D.C. Mormon Temple) Senator and Mrs. Wallace Bennett of Utah. It was S.R.O. crowd which rose to greet the Fords with enthusiastic applause. The President acknowledged with a wave. The choir stood in a semi-circle, the men in tuxedos, the women in white robes. The first half of the program was a combination of religious and classical music and the second half after intermission was patriotic songs including the Battle Hymn of the Republic. At intermission, the Fords attended a small reception in the Israeli Room near their box and stood in a receiving line with the J. Willard Marriotts and the Spencer Kimballs.

During the reception a member of a film team making a documentary for the Mormon Church asked the president whether he thought there was a spiritual renewal sweeping the country. The president replied, "I think there is. I see it across the board denominationally, I see it across the board nationally on a broad basis. I encourage it and welcome it."

After the concert the Fords went backstage and greeted the conductor Jay Welch and soloists. He and Mrs. Ford went out on the stage where the choir was still in place and 150 members of the audience were scattered throughout the hall. The choir applauded him. Said Ford: "Let me say Mrs. Ford and I have had the privilege ~~to~~ 2 times in a relatively short period to hear this magnificent choir. Back in June we heard it in the temple and then to hear another fine, fine superlative performance makes me feel close to the music as well as to all of you. I would like to shake hands with each and everyone of you, but we'll do it with words instead of handshakes. I'm proud of the wonderful job you do and the many performances you give for so many. As I said earlier we have two songs^S and 2 of our four children in Utah~~X~~ I'm beginning to think we're going to lose them and maybe more. They're in good hands out among fine people. Thank you for your hospitality and the great performance."

While the President and Mrs. Ford stood on the stage facing the choir, they were serenaded with the Navy Hymn. Ford mouthed some of the words. "God bless you" said Ford. As they left the

stage they were serenaded once again with "God be with you."
Large crowds gathered at the entrance to the Hall of Nations
and clamored after the Fords snapping pictures and asking
for autographs. They returned to the White House at 11:35.

Stroud
Weil
Nessen