

POOL REPORT

Arrival at Dacha after train ride
Sat. November 23

This is a pool report on the arrival of President Ford and General Secretary Brezhnev at Mr. Ford's dacha after their train ride from Vozduizhenka.

Mr. Ford's dacha is a cream stucco and frame building set in a compound of similar houses behind a high green wall in a thinly-forested area of evergreen and deciduous trees.

Entrance for the pool, which consisted of one U.S. reporter, three U.S. photographers and a half dozen Soviet cameramen, was through a gate attended by security agents of both sides.

The driveway and pathways had been cleared of snow. It appeared that three to four inches of snow covered the ground. It was higher, of course, along the edges of the cleared passageways.

On one side is a twenty-five foot trellis with grape vines creeping up from roots on each side. Clumps of snow rested on some trees. There were a few hardy brown leaves, but the general impression was one of bareness relieved by the pastels on walls, fences and houses.

The Ford dacha has thin curtains like the kind you see in this hotel. The entrance room on the first floor has a high ceiling with a sparkling chandelier that had clear, green and yellow lobes.

There was the traditional confusion over where newsmen should stand and what they should do in the 45 minutes the pool awaited the Ford-Brezhnev arrival.

Then they came -- and went -- swiftly.

Brezhnev's black limousine, waving Soviet Union and United States flags, turned the corner onto the black paving by the Ford dacha's main entrance.

The President got out the house side, wearing his long blue overcoat and Russian hat.

He immediately climbed the three steps to a seven by ten foot stone porch. Thereupon waited a young woman in maid's garb, black dress and white apron. She handed the President a three red tea rose bouquet, the base wrapped in paper. He took it, smiled, said "Thank you." Then he walked into the dacha.

Brezhnev, who had climbed out the other side, caught up with Ford so that they entered the dacha approximately together.

The entire arrival had gone so quickly that U.S. photographers said they had barely had time to take any decent pictures. They asked White House photographer David Kennerly if they could get another chance. After a few minutes' pause, it was announced that the pool could move forward to stand by Brezhnev's car which by then had been turned out to face the driveway for a quick exit.

The door opened once. What could be seen was a crowd of men milling about, several, including Ford, with long-stemmed glasses containing a yellow liquid, in their hands. Overhead was the afore-mentioned chandelier.

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The President had taken off his overcoat and hat.

But two minutes later he had it on as the double doors were opened and out stepped Ford and Brezhnev. They shook hands twice, talked with the assistance of Victor Sukhodrev.

Ford said something about the photographers. Brezhnev pointed to one and said, "That's my personal photographer."

Ford said that Kennerly was his personal photographer. He said he is "in charge of him during the day. At night I'm not sure." Kennerly and Brezhnev laughed at that.

Then Ford, shaking Brezhnev's hand again, said, "Thank you very much. I look forward to seeing you this evening."

"Six o'clock," said Brezhnev.

"Six o'clock," said Ford.

Brezhnev walked around the front of his car and climbed in the jump seat. A military man in gray uniform and lots of medals got in behind him. Two men in civilian clothes climbed into the back seat. Then Brezhnev was off.

Ford watched him leave, then turned to newsmen again, saying, "Throw a snowball at Kennerly."

I shouted out a question on how the talks had started on the train. The President paused and said, "Very helpful." Then he turned and walked back inside.

Larry O'Rourke

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