

April 5, 1975

POOL REPORT
ON THE PRESIDENT'S MEETING
WITH KISSINGER AND GENERAL WEYAND

The President came out of his house at 7:25 a.m. He was in a light blue sweater over a red polo shirt, gray slacks and white shoes. He had apparently been expecting Kissinger and Weyand's arrival because in a matter of seconds after he came out in front of the house, the usual long black limousine drove up with Kissinger and General Weyand arriving at 7:26.

We were told they were supposed to be there at 7:15, so apparently, they were 11 minutes late. They got out and went up and shook hands with the President and I heard the President say, "Good morning, Henry, how are you?" And he said, "Hi, Fred, how are you?" to Weyand.

The three of them stood there for about two minutes talking but we could not hear anything more that was said. Helen Thomas put in a request to Ford for us to see General Weyand later, but Ford's reply, if any, was not audible.

Also, as the President came out, before the other two, Helen asked, "Did you see General Weyand yesterday?" And the President shook his head "no". They stood there, the three of them, talking in front of the house for two minutes and then Ford said to the photographers, "Thank you," and the three of them turned and went inside.

Kissinger was carrying a brown manila folder stamped "Secret." Now, we had stood outside for quite awhile waiting for Kissinger and Weyand to arrive, and so we have some additional material on Presidential envoy David Kennerly, who arrived at 7:04 and went in the house to comment on the grave crises in Southeast Asia, saying, "I have not talked to anyone." But later, and still before Kissinger and Weyand arrived, Kennerly came out with his cameras and stood around talking to us, and when asked what the situation looked like in South Vietnam he said, "It is obviously not looking very good."

He said that when he got to South Vietnam he found that "all my friends were begging me to take their children." In other words, to take their children out. He said at another point, "It is the worst thing that has ever happened to me in my life." One of the first things he was asked by Helen was, "How are things out there?" And he said, "It is really shitty, and you can quote me."

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Then in response to other questions, he made the following observations: "They" -- meaning the South Vietnamese -- "feel they have been let down by the U.S. There is no doubt about that. I cannot even blame the people who shot at me."

At another point, he said "The leadership of South Vietnam has not been exactly premier... You cannot blame the soldiers. If you see your Colonel getting on a helicopter to leave, it would be pretty disheartening."

He said the South Vietnamese refugees were "terrified they are going to get killed. The North Vietnamese are really crummy people." That is all I have on Kennerly.

He said he had traveled pretty much on his own across the country. He had seen General Weyand once at the palace, or some point in Saigon. He said he cannot make any judgment on what is going to happen. "It is so terrible to see what is happening to my old friends," and he said, in effect, "Some additional aid would help, I guess," and then he sort of faded off, at least in theory.

Asked if it is all over, he said, "I don't know. It is not very good." He said, "All of my friends know they are going to get killed." Just a touch of additional color. Someone asked -- the General was in uniform. He was carrying a briefcase. Secretary Kissinger was wearing a dark blue blazer and gray slacks, holding a folder that was described to you.

He also was asked about why the South Vietnamese don't fight, and he said, "There are a lot of people who want to fight. They are wondering why it does not get organized," meaning the leadership.

-- Jim Deakin
Tom DeFrank
Tom Jarriel