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POOL REPORT

Palm Springs to Las Vegas

The President and Mrs. Ford left the Wilson residence via motorcade about 10:50 a.m. Motorcade uneventful; crowds nonexistent except for a dozen-odd locals here and there.

Approximately 2,000 at airport to greet the Fords. The President worked the fence for about five minutes, uneventfully. Then the President took a portable mike to thank the crowd for coming and for Palm Springs' hospitality during his stay.

"Let me say on behalf of Betty and myself, we have had a most wonderful time in the Palm Springs area," the President said, adding that it had been a "super opportunity to get a little relaxation" as he carried on the responsibilities of the Presidency (his paraphrased words).

"Speaking for Betty, the sun has been great," he added. Ford ended with his now-familiar theme of unity: with the support of all its people, America will be able to solve its problems.

Directly in front of the President as he spoke was an Oriental woman, presumably Vietnamese, holding up a hand-lettered sign on a small piece of cardboard which said: "Please set up a free zone to save refugees. Time is running short in Vietnam." Unknown if President saw the sign. Then Ford worked the fence for a couple of minutes more, reaching above a high barbed-wire fence to shake hands.

At the ramp, there were hugs and kisses and handshakes all around. Among those on hand to say goodbye were golfing partner Earl (Red) Blaik and the Leon Parmas. Ford also kissed son Jack's girlfriend, Debbie Curry, 20, then shook hands with a dozen police before boarding 27000. Wheels up 11:27 a.m.

Nessen said in wire car, in response to British proposals for summit conference:

"these are among a number of diplomatic initiatives involving NATO which are under consideration, but no decision has been reached as yet."

Nessen added that the President has not settled on any European trip this year.

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Shortly before AFI landed, Nessen came back with cumulative figures on operation babylift. At the moment, a total of 1,208 Vietnamese orphans have been evacuated, broken down this way:

-- As of 9:00 a.m., EDT, Monday, two C-141 cargo planes with a total of 136 children had landed at Travis AFB, California. Two more C-141s carrying a total of 191 children have landed at Clark AFB, Philippines. In addition, one C-141 with 99 children was in Saigon preparing to depart for Clark. Also, two privately-chartered Pan Am 747 jets have reached the United States with a total of 728 children, as well as the World Airways charter of last week which brought 54 children.

Nessen added that three C-141s are airlifting supplies from Clark to Saigon today, and that if any children are available and prepared to leave, they will be flown to Clark.

Saul Kohler, Newhouse  
Tom DeFrank, Newsweek

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