

MAY 28, 1975

Pool Report
Airport to Palace

At 8:25, President Ford, in a gray Mercedes Benz, pulled out of the airport to great trumpets and band music. There were small knots of people along the roadside on his way to the King's palace, particularly at the intersections. They didn't seem like very excited crowds.

At one point, we passed two protest signs, the first one in French, which read, our driver said, something about "Belgium out of NATO." It was a white sheet with red printed letters on it.

About a block later, there was a sign in English that said, "Ford go home." There were some initials in the corner that said RAL and I didn't catch the other initials.

It was a very short drive. At 8:45, he arrived at what they regard as the palace in town, the working palace, where he has his office. There was a Navy band outside playing The Star Spangled Banner. They were taken inside. We didn't see the President when he actually went upstairs, but we waited outside at the salon that is listed on the schedule, waiting to take pictures.

Apparently, at the King's request, one of the two picture opportunities was canceled. We did not get pictures of Mrs. Ford and Queen Fabiola with the leaders. We were kept outside. David Kennerly was also kept outside until 9:06 when we were taken into the salon in kind of a roped-off area. President Ford stood with the King to his right and the Prime Minister to his left, and Henry Kissinger was also there.

They seemed relaxed. They chatted back and forth. There was a bit of laughter. The Prime Minister was in the same gray suit he was in earlier. Nobody changed clothes or anything.

We were ushered out of there at 9:16. We were in there for about five minutes, could not understand any of the conversation. We waited downstairs in the driveway until 10:06 when President Ford came out after meeting with what looked like a goodly number of Belgian officials, all of them in business suits. It took him two minutes to drive just kind of around the corner to the residence behind the U.S. Embassy, which is adjacent to the King's park and the President disappeared inside.

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The security along the route, lots of police officers at a couple of underpasses. They had rifles but mostly they seemed to be with sidearms, but there was not any trouble. They were very relaxed.

The only thing I would add is that some of you may know that the Prime Minister of Belgium was once a student of Henry Kissinger at summer classes at Harvard in 1962. While the King was meeting with the President, Kissinger and the Prime Minister of Belgium were reminiscing about their experiences when Kissinger was his teacher.

Nessen provided the information that the Fords and the Royal family had met for about 15 minutes, drinks were served, champagne, orange juice or tomato juice.

The Ambassador is not staying at the residence. He is moving to a hotel.

The Fords are staying at the residence and so are Mr. and Mrs. Rumsfeld, and Nessen can probably give you any more information on that.

As far as I know, that is the end of the President's schedule tonight.

Ann Compton, ABC
Dean Fischer, Time
Jim Wieghart, New York News

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