

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY

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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESS CONFERENCE  
OF  
HELMUT SONNENFELDT  
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE  
FOR EUROPEAN AFFAIRS  
AND  
RICHARD T. DAVIES  
AMBASSADOR TO WARSAW

THE FORUM HOTEL

7:05 P.M. (Warsaw Time)

MR. NESSEN: To talk to you about the joint statement and to answer your questions, we have Hel Sonnenfeldt, the Counsellor of the State Department, who will introduce to you our Ambassador to Warsaw, Mr. Davies.

I think maybe if we could take notes instead of typing, some of us could hear.

Q Some of us are still filing on the original.

MR. NESSEN: The problem is, Frank, that Hel and the Ambassador have to get to one other chore and to get to the other dinner, and they would really prefer to start now, if they could.

Let's try to keep this to 15 minutes, and then I do have a couple of things for you.

MR. SONNENFELDT: Thank you, Ron.

To make this very brief, the President and the First Secretary and the two delegations have just completed a meeting. The exact length of time I think will be given to you. It was just under two hours, and then they signed the statement that you have with you.

Altogether, I think the President has had a very full and varied and most gratifying day here in Warsaw, and has had very good and substantive talks with the First Secretary and also with the Prime Minister.

The statement you have before you is one of two that will come out of this visit. There will be another rather briefer one tomorrow, which will simply detail the various activities that the President engaged in while he visited Poland.

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That will not be signed. It will be issued, when the trip is complete.

This one deals with the substantive matters that have been discussed in the talks that have taken place.

All the talks were cordial and quite intensive. I think the statement, if you have had an opportunity to read it, speaks quite largely for itself. I think the references to the European Security Conference reflect the very considerable interests in that Conference and in its outcome that is manifest here in this country and which, as you know, we also share.

I think you will find in the references to the European Security Conference and to the Helsinki meeting reflected the thought that we emphasized in Washington; that is, to say that a great deal will now depend on the manner and the fidelity with which the provisions of the final act are going to be implemented in practice.

The Conference itself we do regard as a step forward, a step toward peace, as the President indicated the other day.

I believe the rest of Section 1 is quite straightforward. I will be glad to take a question or two on it later.

Let me turn this over now to Ambassador Dick Davies, whom many of you know from Washington, who will comment rather quickly on our two and/or specific matters of bilateral American-Polish relations.

Dick?

MR. DAVIES: Thank you, Hel.

As Hel said, I think the statement does speak for itself. On a background basis, as I believe Ron might say, we had a bit of a problem here because we concluded, as you know, a number of agreements when First Secretary Gierak visited Washington in October last year so that there was not an opportunity this time to break new ground, but rather we were confined to reviewing what had been accomplished, and a great deal has been accomplished even since October, and to reasserting the will of the two sides to continue to make progress along the lines that have already been laid down so that we are recording here some of the fields in which we are already working and expressing the desire of the two sides to move forward in that.

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I would be glad to answer any specific questions. There is an enormous amount of background that lies behind the short Section 2, which I am sure you can get from our people in the press and cultural sections of the Embassy.

Q If you were not able, sir, to break new ground today, what was so intensive about these talks?

MR. DAVIES: I was addressing myself solely to part 2; that is, the bilateral relations. I think the intensive part really concerned --

MR. SONNENFELDT: There was a review, first of all, of the manner in which this quite large and extensive series of bilateral agreements is being implemented, and that took quite a bit of time. There was likewise a good discussion of international questions and it was a fast pace, and that is what I mean by intensive.

Q Is there any significant progress on the coal gasification project?

MR. DAVIES: There is. I am afraid I have to confine myself to generalities on that. The Polish side has been talking about several American firms that are active in this field. No contracts have yet been concluded, but those conversations are proceeding now.

Q Can you tell us the firms?

MR. DAVIES: I am sorry. I don't think I should. I think the firms would regard that as a betrayal of confidence.

Q There is a question for Mr. Sonnenfeldt. There is a reference to the respective views on the two sides on the effectiveness of the nonproliferation treaty.

Does that mean that one side thinks it is more effective than the other side?

MR. SONNENFELDT: No, I think that just indicates it was rather quick reference to the nonproliferation treaty.

Q There is an agreement on its effectiveness, then?

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MR. SONNENFELDT: Yes. I don't think there is any illusion about certain of the problems in the nonproliferation area that you are familiar with, but I think there is agreement on the general effectiveness of the treaty.

Q Last year's statement said something about trade next year -- 1976 getting up to \$1 billion. Does it still look like you are going to make that?

MR. DAVIES: I think it will be around \$900 million.

Q Next year?

MR. DAVIES: I think it will be around \$900 million in 1976, yes.

Q Why the shortfall?

MR. DAVIES: It may reach \$1 billion. We certainly hope it will. But, there has been a bit of a slow up in the investment plans of the Polish Government, so we are not quite sure it will reach \$1 billion.

Q What is the reason for the slow-up?

MR. DAVIES: You would really have to talk to people on the Polish side about that.

Miss Thomas?

Q Mr. Ambassador, in your talks with Polish leaders, do you find that they believe that this particular declaration at Helsinki will confirm the borders in Europe or do they have the same attitude as the United States does that it is a piece of paper that has no binding meaning?

MR. DAVIES: Miss Thomas, I think you really ought to get an interpretation of what the Polish leaders think about the agreement from them.

Q What do you think that they think on the subject?

MR. DAVIES: I really don't think I ought to speak for the Polish Government.

Q I don't know. You have negotiated a whole communique here on the question.

MR. SONNENFELDT: Question.

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Q Can we switch over to another subject, sir -- Turkey?

MR. SONNENFELDT: I am sorry. This is just on this statement.

Q Will we have an occasion this evening on that subject?

MR. NESSEN: I think the senior American official will be around.

Q When, Ron?

MR. NESSEN: At some point on this trip.

Q Does this paragraph on this troop reductions suggest any progress is being made?

MR. SONNENFELDT: I think it reflects what you have been told before; that is, we expect to pursue those negotiations with vigor and constructively.

Q What does it mean here?

MR. SONNENFELDT: Just what I told you.

Q If there was no breakthrough in Section 2, was there any breakthrough in Section 1?

MR. SONNENFELDT: I don't think we came here to make a breakthrough. I don't think there are any burning issues between ourselves and the Polish Government. We came to have discussions and consultations with them in addition to the other aspects of the visit, to which we attribute a good deal of importance, but this was not an occasion for a breakthrough.

Q Mr. Sonnenfeldt, can you give us an idea of why it was necessary to have the statement?

MR. SONNENFELDT: I think it is the customary thing that when such visits occur, that a statement is issued which seeks to outline the general tenor and the substance of the discussions.

Q Why was none issued in Bonn?

MR. SONNENFELDT: It really depends very much on the traditions of the countries that you visit.

Q Can you tell us when the statement was written?

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MR. SONNENFELDT: It has been under discussion for some days, and it was written up in the last minute.

Q Ambassador Davies, Section 2 concludes with the statement that both sides agree in the spirit of traditional friendship they will continue efforts to solve humanitarian problems affecting your citizens.

What are the humanitarian problems affecting Polish citizens?

MR. DAVIES: There are a number of problems. For example, there are a number of American citizens who have retired in Poland. There are problems involving their annuities, involving their relationship to the Polish retirement system.

For example, here in Poland retired people get free medical care. There has been a question as to whether these people who are American citizens, retired in Poland, should get free medical care. We have been working on that, as well as the problem of annuities.

There is also the problem of what we call reuniting divided families. A number of Americans have relatives here whom they would like to have join them. We have been working on these problems, both sides have been working on the problems, for a number of years.

We have confirmed that we are going to continue to work on them and continue to try to solve them in the spirit which characterizes the friendship between the two countries.

MR. SONNENFELDT: Can we take two more questions, if there are any? Otherwise, we will get you back to your work.

THE PRESS: Thank you, gentlemen.

END (AT 7:36 P.M. WARSAW TIME)