

AUGUST 1, 1975

Pool Report from Icebreaker

One unrelated piece of information from Kissinger: Ambassador Herman Eilts will join the traveling show in Belgrade on Sunday. He has been in Alexandria meeting with Sadat and Fahmy. He said the situation is 'hopeful.' 'It's getting into fine points now. I may take him back to Washington.' Again, in answer to a question-- "But at least it's not hopeless."

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President and Mrs. Ford arrived at the icebreaker about 15 minutes late. Mrs. Ford, in filmy flame red silk jersey pajama suit, apologized to President Kekkonen for being late. So did Ford. Ford looked over at the pool and said, "They look all tired--I wonder why?" He looked fine.

The reason for this visit is that Ambassador Mark Evans Austad is hoping that the United States will buy two of these Finnish icebreakers at \$50 million each. Says they are the best ever made. They must work; there was no ice.

The President was briefed about the ship on the foredeck. Kekkonen pointed out sights--beautiful vista, sunset over the city, boats in the harbor. They did the same on the afterdeck.

Kissinger, with son David, arrived very late. "I'm just a little battle weary," he said, and volunteered an opinion, "It's been my life's ambition to see an icebreaker."

The President took an elevator up four stories and then walked two more to reach the bridge. (For those who walked it it was 87 steps.) There was a huge model of the UHRO encased in a glass case. Bengt M. Johansson, chief designer of the ship, explained its chief features.

The President appeared genuinely interested in the explanation, interrupting frequently to ask questions. "Is that a helicopter pad?" he asked. It was. "How many screws does it have?" Four.

When told that each member of the 54 man crew had his own cabin. Ford, the ex-Navy man, laughed and commented: "One man to a cabin, that's not like the old days." Ford was told by Tankmar Horn, president of the firm that built the ship, that the Finns build an average of one icebreaker a year, which, he said, is more than the rest of the world put together. Horn told Ford that if the United States would buy the icebreakers, they could extend the shipping season in the Great Lakes. During further explanation of the ship, Ford was joined by Kissinger and son, David. "Henry, how are you," said the President.

The President wanted to know how the Finnish icebreakers differ from the American ones, such as the Mackinaw that is stationed in the Great Lakes. He was told that the hull is designed differently, a wider bow, and that it is faster, heavier and has more power.

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Ford then went downstairs (walking) to view other features of the ship, including the swimming pool, sauna, and conditioning room. Poolers were not allowed to follow.

On the aftdeck Ford received a plaque from the Finnish Board of Navigation and a framed picture of the URHO from Horn. He posed with the picture and President Kekkonen for photographers before disappearing into the ship's salon for a buffet dinner.

Some basic statistics on the ship for those who care. It is 22 meters high and 24 long. I don't know what that is in feet but one guy said it was roughly 67 and 72 feet. It weighs about 9,000 tons, has 2,200 shaft horsepower and has a maximum cruising speed of 19 knots in open water and about 10 in ice. It's most unique feature is that it has three water tanks on each side of the ship, containing a total of about 600 tons of water. The ship is able to pump the 600 tons of water from one side of the ship to the other in 40 seconds thus giving the ship a rocking motion of about 13 degrees on each side and prevents it from getting stuck in the ice.

This pool did not see Ford leave ship. That was up to another pool.

Bonnie Angelo/Time  
Dick Ryan/Detroit News

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