

August 2, 1975

POOL REPORT(on the picture session at the start of the
Ford-Ceausescu meeting)

This is a pool report on the picture session at the start of the Ford-Ceausescu meeting in a room inside the Council of State at the Palace of the Republic.

The palace is a neo-Roman building about a ten-minute walk from the press hotel.

The Presidential motorcade drove into the courtyard an hour late; no explanation for the delay.

The meeting room is on the second floor. It measures about 45 by 40 feet, 18 foot ceiling with wooden paneling in three different shades of beige or natural color.

There were three sets of overstuffed copper-colored wooden-armed chairs against three walls of the room. The section where the two Presidents sat had a low rectangular table in the center and two smaller round tables to the side. Each table had an ash tray.

The center of the room was dominated by a huge six tiered circular chandelier of small glass tubes, scores in all. Bouquets of carnations, roses and gladiolas were scattered about the room. An oriental rug virtually covered the white marble floor.

The overall impression of the room was that it was rather sparsely furnished, but elegant.

The two Presidents, both looking rather solemn, walked in together, crossed room. President Ford sat in center right chair; President Ceausescu to his left, Kissinger next left, then an unidentified Romanian. The interpreters stood to the rear.

They sat for several long seconds looking straight ahead without talking as the photographers worked. Finally Ceausescu said to Kissinger: "I hope to get good advice from you." Mr. Ford: "I'll have to watch him." Ceausescu laughed a bit.

Then there was another long pause. Mr. Ford leaned forward a couple of times as if to start the conversation again, but neither he nor anyone else said anything.

Finally Kissinger said to Ceausescu: "You left last night," meaning from Helsinki. Ceausescu nodded and the interpreter said yes.

President Ford wore a crescent shaped pin, blue with a red spot, in his lapel.

Finally, Ford said to Ceausescu: "I hope you'll come to the United States on another occasion... enjoy yourself." Ceausescu's reply was unheard. Then Mr. Ford said, in obvious reference to the MFN votes, "now that you're so persuasive with the Congress, I should have you come. I wish I were the same."

Kissinger laughed mightily at this.

The pool whereupon left.

BOB PIERPOINT & LARRY O'ROURKE

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