

AUGUST 3, 1975

POOL REPORT NO. 9

Bucharest to Sinaia

The Presidential motorcade arrived about 15 minutes late at a special railroad station in Bucharest that, the pool was advised, is reserved for President Ceausescu. Mrs. Ford did not make the trip. We were told that she was tired and at the President's suggestion was taking the time to rest.

The train pulled away from the station in a fairly heavy rain. It passed through a rather extensive railroad yard, with a few boxcars bearing the legends "San Francisco" and "Red Line." The roadbed was smooth, and the tracks rested on concrete railroad ties.

The train maintained a steady, moderate speed throughout the hour and 47 minutes trip, most of which was across a flat plain of farm country that resembled Iowa. The major crops seemed to be corn, sunflowers, and tomatoes, grapes, apples, hay and there was substantial evidence of the recent heavy rains that have caused the disastrous floods in Romania. Chickens, turkeys, pheasants, ducks and geese could be glimpsed from the train.

The train passed by the extensive petrochemical works, oil refineries, pipelines, storage facilities and a tire plant at Ploiesti, said to be the largest such complex in Europe. Gas was flaring off some towers.

In many of the villages there were small groups of people who waved at the train. People in peasant dress could be spotted in the field gathering grain. Several passenger trains, jammed with people, were sidetracked to permit the Ford train to pass.

After about an hour's travel the 16 car train reached the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. It climbed steadily, sometimes through narrow wooded valleys and along streambeds reminiscent of West Virginia.

A two-man pool of Growald and Lisagor was taken to the compartment occupied by the two Presidents. Most of the pool time was spent in a tight corridor lined with a mahogany-looking wood. At length the photographers were admitted two by two, and the writing pool got a brief glimpse of the principals sitting side-by-side at a small table against the wall. Cups of Turkish coffee were on the table. Secretary of State Kissinger sat across from Ford and Ceausescu, and two others, presumably Romanians, also occupied the compartment. Just outside where they sat was a bunk covered by a brocaded coverlet. There was no audible small talk overheard. (End of glimpse).

As the train pulled into Sinaia the top of the first ridge was made invisible by fog. A Romanian insisted that this was not Transylvania, that it is 35 kilometers away and that the people there do not pay much attention to the legend of Count Dracula, but he said there are bats.

O'ROURKE
RINGLE
LISAGOR
DUDMAN

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