

August 4, 1975

## POOL REPORT #8

The President at City Hall

A very brief description of this City Hall room. It is like City Hall rooms everywhere, about 60 by 50, 40-foot high ceiling, the usual collection of marble and lights and red drapes and 100 chairs or so. This is the usual stuff.

After the speech, the President and Kissinger, members of the official U.S. and Yugoslavian parties, went to a room beside the big chamber, and when the pool was admitted, they were seated in a circle. As the pool was admitted, we heard the President saying something about the Mayor of New York City. Then the President said -- and this is quotes -- "They don't know how to handle money."

You have to understand that the only person heard in this dialogue was the President. We could not hear the translation from the Yugoslav to the English. Continuing, the President, in indirect quotes, "All they know how to do is spend it." This is to the City Fathers of Belgrade, headed by Zivorad Kovacevic, President of the City Assembly of Belgrade.

I have a request to start all over again. After the President delivered his formal speech, which I understand you heard, he and other members of the official parties went into a rear room, seated themselves in a circle, mineral water and other drinks were brought in. The President took a glass of mineral water. The pool was admitted as the President was saying something about the Mayor of New York City, and then the President said, in a dialogue, "They don't know how to handle money."

Continuing direct quotes from the President, but in this broken conversation, "All they know how to do is spend it. I am sure Belgrade" -- and then he kind of laughed a little bit, and he said -- "I can't say that about New York City." Continuing the quotes, "It has been building up for ten or 12 years. Finally the banks and others just would not finance them. They have been pressing me to give them money, but everybody says no until they get their management straightened out."

One of the Yugoslavian people then said something about how tough it is being the Mayor of a big city, and the President said, "It is a hard, hard job." Then the dialogue kind of lapsed. Among other things he said was, "Do you have a subway system here," and "Are you hemmed in in Belgrade by geographical boundaries?"

I think this is an interesting bit. Laurence Silberman, the U.S. Ambassador, said, "Mr. President, they have a technique for raising money in Belgrade -- overcharging Embassies for purchases." That tactful remark was greeted by the President with kind of a small laugh.

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Then the Yugoslavian people started to talk about their own problems, and the President said such things as, "Blame all your troubles on them." At this point they brought champagne in and nobody really seemed to drink it, but they all got up, they walked out the door to a bus.

The President, instead of getting into his limousine, worked the driveway for about three or four minutes. He got in his car, drove three or four minutes to a square, Terazije Square, a major shopping area. He got out of the car and worked the crowd there for three or four minutes. Then they got into the limousine and in fairly quick speed went to the old palace, where they were when the pool left, awaiting the arrival of Tito.

My information is based upon an English language copy of his speech, which says the address of Mr. Zivorad Kovacevic, President of the City Assembly of Belgrade, and it was given to us there by the Yugoslavians. That ends this pool report.

Larry O'Rourke-Philadelphia Bulletin

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