

December 4, 1975

POOL REPORT

Mrs. Ford and Susan at Carpet Factory

When Mrs. Ford and Susan arrived (in separate cars) at Peking No. 1 carpet factory, Sheila Weidenfeld said Susan had just come from an acupuncture demonstration, where she saw an ovarian cyst removed from a 17-year-old woman, a tooth removed from a 36-year-old man, and a tooth removed from an 8-year-old boy. She was there from roughly 8:45 am to about 10:25 am when she arrived at the carpet factory.

Mrs. Ford and Susan started off their tour of the carpet factory with tea and a briefing, seated at a long table covered with embroidered white cloth, with a picture of Chairman Mao looking down on them. They toured a design room, three loom rooms, a cutting room, and a display room where carpets for export (mainly to Europe) were shown. Mrs. Ford asked questions, Susan took pictures.

The cutting room is where the workers cut the wool pile to edge the intricate designs, and thus make the birds, fish, flowers and what-have-you stand out. At one point Mrs. Ford's head became tangled in strands of yarn from a loom and she said, "Maybe I'll get woven into the carpet." At another point she and Susan knelt and admired a carpet on the floor, and Mrs. Ford said, "Oh my, that would wear a long time."

According to hand-outs, the Peking No. 1 carpet factory has 1500 workers, 60% of them women. It takes seven people working five months to produce a rug 128-feet square. The factory produces tapestries as well as carpets. They're all lovely.

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