

DECEMBER 5, 1975

**AIR FORCE ONE POOL #29 GUEST HOUSE TO PEKING CAPITAL AIRPORT
PEKING TO DJAKARTA**

PART ONE

Outside Villa 18, Secretary Kissinger said Ford and Suharto would engage in "a review of our relationship and the future of Southeast Asia, in which Indonesia is a key country." Asked about the situation in Timor, he said, "it's a very unsettled situation."

Ford left the guest house at 8:36 a. m. on a swift and uneventful motorcade to the airport. The departure ceremony was a virtual replay of the arrival, except that it was bitter cold and Ford was red-checked and hatless as he reviewed the military honor guard and then shook the hand of each Chinese official, third-country diplomat and member of the American community.

As Ford prepared to go up the ramp, and as he and Teng shook hands, the Vice Premier said farewell in Chinese and Nancy Tang translated it as "bon voyage." Ford, pumping Teng's hand, said, "Give Chairman Mao my best." Air Force One wheels up--after a long takeoff run--at 9:33 a. m. Flight pattern was over Okinawa, the Philippines and Borneo.

Nessen came back soon after takeoff to say "there will be communiques in both Indonesia and the Philippines." Asked why, he replied: "They're important visits." He said American aid would be discussed with Suharto but would not be mentioned specifically in the communique.

An American official aboard the plane (note: NOT Kissinger; name available on request) said on background that Mao clearly had a detailed grasp of issues at the Ford meeting. The official also said Mao appeared ruddy and heartier than the official had expected. "He looked like he had just come back from Miami." The official said that the relationship with Peking arose in the official's judgment from the Chinese perception that Nixon--with a long public record of opposition to the Soviets--had "fire in his belly" when it came to Moscow. Asked if Ford had the same fire in his belly, the official replied, "He didn't have the same foreign affairs experience." The official also said that "the Chinese would love us to give up detente and attack the Russians frontally, to take the heat off them; that's what they want."

Note of incidental interest. As Air Force One left Peking the pool noticed that one of the photographs displayed in the rear cabin was of Ford and Brezhnev warmly clasping hands at Helsinki last August.

Susan Ford, in fine fettle, wandered back to snack on a breakfast cruller. She said she was in good health, that she had only been tired. Asked if she had bought a Christmas present yet for her father, she said, "Not yet. He's hard to buy for." Why? "He's got everything he needs." A pooler suggested he liked clothes. "Yes, but he doesn't know how to match them," Susan said. Then she screwed up her face in a grimace and said: "Striped ties and plaid suits!" She said her most enjoyable experiences had been visits to the Great Wall and to the hospital where she saw acupuncture performed. How did Susan like Mao? "Loved him," she said. Did Mao really have a glint in his eye when he shook her hand? "Yes... He was nice. You know. I don't think he expected (pause)...me."

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A senior American official came back for a long and, in the pool's estimation, remarkably expansive conversation. Much of what he said was on deep background--and therefore attributable only broadly to the American party--but the bulk of it was on background, and thus attributable to the senior American official. What follows is a virtually transcript of the conversation, with notations of which material is on deep background. The rest is on background.

The official said it was decided not to have a briefing daily in China because it was "in the nature of the conversations extremely difficult" to brief. "If we had briefed every day we would have said more or less" the same things that Secretary Kissinger said Thursday night at the Min Zu briefing. "It could only be done once."

"I know that for your reporting you need concrete, hard details," the official said. "It makes your reporting a lot easier. But I would think, seriously, that anybody who understands diplomatic language and understands the architecture of events could have derived from what was said yesterday at the briefing a number of very significant things. The fact they were said on Chinese soil with so much assurance had to mean something. When two major countries say that, that's not without significance. But you cannot put that sort of thing into a formal communique without having consequences all over the world. That was the problem with a communique."

"In foreign policy," the official continued, "there are two sorts of decisions-- those that lead to an immediate event; those lend themselves to reporting-- and those that lend themselves to the architecture. Those are harder to report, but they may be more significant sometimes."

Tell us about the aid Suharto is asking for.

"That's a minor problem," the senior official said. "It's being handled on the aid level. Because we're coming here we will discuss it."

What is the focus of the Ford trip to Indonesia?

"Indonesia," the senior official said, "is the most populous country and the richest country in that area. As the ASEAN countries are trying to organize themselves into a sort of political and economic and maybe security grouping the fate of Indonesia will be quite decisive. In fact, it is the central element. The country is extremely rich country and its orientation is of great consequence."

Is the United States anticipating a possible security grouping there?

"Well, as they cooperate politically and economically they're interested in mutual protection. But it doesn't have to mean military agreements in terms of their legal (word inaudible). There are some military agreements that are legally binding but are politically not terribly useful. There are others that don't exist in writing but are inherent in the situation. We are not part of this anyway. At this point, they are cooperating politically and economically."

How about the Philippines?

The senior official said: "Well, the Philippines is of course our traditional friend. We have military bases there that are very crucial from the aspect of security. If we don't have those the next one is Hawaii."

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Will the United States and Philippines talk about the bases?

"That will probably come up."

Will the base issue be resolved?

"I don't think we'll resolve it," the senior official said.

Do the Philippine leaders want to take control of the American bases?

"We don't object to Philippine sovereignty over the bases. It's what is meant in terms of the operation of them."

Owing to the problems involved in duplicating what will be, in sum, a long pool report, the poolers have provided above what is relevant to the Philippines and Indonesia stops. The second part of China, will be issued as soon as possible in Jakarta.

Naughton/N. Y. Times
Roderick/AP
Thomas/UPI

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