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POOL REPORT WIR FORCE ONE NEW ORLEANS -WASHINGTON APRIL 23, 1975

Wheels up 9:14 EDT

The President came back soon after takeoff to talk to pool reporters, he wearing flight jacket, drinking bourbon and water, smoking pipe, obviously in happy mood.

he entered into a Q and A session on the Tulane speech:

Asked what he thought of the reception tonight, A--I think I'll go on college campuses every time. We couldn't do any better than we did at Notre Dame and Tulane.

The President said he doesn't like to sit in a hotel room and waste time and that is the reason for the full schedule in New Orleans/

He said the speech had been in the works ~~xxxxxxx~~ "about 10 days or so. we had a meeting of bob hartmann and the staff and speeches were assigned on the basis of some thoughts I gave to Milt Friedman. there was another meeting last thursday and we got it really down only yesterday. (friedman daid afterwards that the speech was finished being rewritten on the plane coming to new orleans).

he said "it was decided only yesterday" to say the Vietnam war is finished for the U.S.

Why did he do it on a college campus? "it seemed appropriate, if you're going to say it."

Did he have the sense he was ending an era? "I think so, yes. after all it's been a pretty long era." He said he first went to vietnam in 1953 with John Foster dulles at the time of the exchange of prisoners of war in Panmunjen, Korea. Following visit to korea he spent about a week in vietnam in august 1953 "almost 22 years ago."

How did he feel when he said the war was finished? "I had mixed emotions. that's not the way i wished it had ended. But you have to be realistic."

Would this tend to help relations with congress? "I don't think what I said tonight had any relation to congress." "It is far broader than congressional relations."

Crowd reaction? "when i walked in they didn't have any idea what i was going to say, but there was a tremendously ^{and others} warm, friendly feeling." he said congressman David C. Treen, r-la, had told him "tulane had been kind of a hotspot during the Vietnam war. They were kind a bit apprehensive. Boy, you sure didn't get that feeling."

(more)

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Peel Report AF One (take two)

Asked if it was the best reception he had had for a speech as president, he said "it's probably the best" but he added "Notre dame was good." He pointed out that it was a compact ~~arena~~ arena in the tulane fieldhouse. "you can't get a better audience than the two (colleges) I've had."

He was asked what was happening in vietnam tonight? ~~xxxxxxx~~ "we checked it out and it's very stable," he reported.

Did secretary kissinger play any part in the preparation of this speech? Ford answered "no," without hesitating. ~~Through the system, the NSC knew about it.~~
~~He then reminded the president that all such speeches are sent to the NSC for comment.~~
~~Then, the president said "it went through the system. the NSC knew about it."~~

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A question was asked about the phrase in the tulane speech: "Some tend to feel that if we don't succeed in everything, everywhere, then we have succeeded in nothing anywhere." ford was asked what he had in mind here. The president said that was just a "broad generalization and he wasn't referring to anyone in particular."

the president was reminded that secretary kissinger often speaks of the importance of linkage of events. The president responded "No, that was not an under-cutting" of the linkage principle. "we can't achieve perfection in the world".

(energy)
On energy, ford indicated he wants to go to visit other energy projects "i would like to go to every one of these things" and he said that would include a visit to a solar energy project. possibly in florida next winter.

Asked if he was still seeking to get congressional approval of \$722 Million in military aid for south vietnam, he said ~~xxxx~~ "well, it's still up there. It will depend on the circumstances when I get back." he pointed out that there is "a very fluid situation" and "if there is a significant change we'll have to reassess it." Having been away, ford said, he did not want to make any judgement now.

He was asked if the fact that america's role in the war has ended has lifted a burden off his administration as well as the country. Ford said "well, it's lifted some, but added others. we'll have to wait and see how it balances out." (PHOTOS: Nessen refused twice to permit filming or photographing of the president's session with the peel.)

Appointments for Thursday: 12 noon Rockefeller; 2 p.m. Labor-management committee; 5:10 p.m. -speech to Advertising Council (east room), 5:20 p.m. reception for same group.

Shieffer/norton,/barnes, lewine/ grewald.