

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

POOL REPORT
AIRPORT COMMENTS BY GENERAL SECRETARY
AND FORD

- Question: What would you like to achieve from this conference?
- Brezhnev: Let me tell the President first, and then I'll tell you.
- Question: Is it important for leaders to meet to get to know one another personally?
- Brezhnev: Very important. I attach great significance to that.
- Question: We asked the chairman what he would like to achieve and he said, "Let me tell the President first, and then I'll tell you."

After Ford arrived, asked again what they hoped to achieve, Brezhnev told Ford what he had said and the President replied: "I think that's a very good answer."

- Ford: I understand you're quite an expert on soccer.
- Brezhnev: I haven't played for a long time.
- Ford: I haven't played football for a long time, either. I wasn't very fast, but I could hold the line.
- Ford: What's the score at half-time? (Michigan-Ohio State)

Dave Kraslow - Cox

NOVEMBER 23, 1974

POOL REPORT

RIDING THE RAILS WITH FORD AND BREZHNEV

The poolers were driven in three chartreuse Volga cars to a newly constructed concrete and asphalt railway platform one kilometer (a tenth of a mile) from the military air field where President Ford landed. The platform is 75 yards long. The five Soviet journalists joined the five American poolers.

The six foot high platform was equipped with a red wooden topped railing, and 8 double-lamp light poles. The train consisted of 12 cars plus a double electric engine. The first four cars were repainted, Russian built luxury wagons. Their outsides were painted forest green with yellow trim. Each car bore the shield of the Soviet railway system. The rear cars were factory-fresh from East Germany and inside were decorated with Formica-like walls colored a mottled gray. Each of these cars contained 7 compartments seating 6 each. The pool sat in one of these compartments. So did such U.S. notables as Larry Eagleburger, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, and Don Rumsfeld, who was observed violating the rules -- as relayed in our bible -- by taking tourist photos of the snowy landscape out the train window.

Ford and Brezhnev arrived at the platform in a black Zil limousine with an American and a Soviet flag on the front fenders. A Soviet general leaped from the front seat and opened the rear door. First to emerge was Secret Service Agent Richard Keiser.

Ford and Brezhnev then emerged from different sides of the limousine.

You all saw what Ford and Brezhnev were wearing and that the President wore the Russian hat given him last Sunday by Antoly Dobrynin.

The leaders walked up the stairs to the train platform, Ford walking at Brezhnev's right. They paused on the platform with Brezhnev turning his back on the photographers who were arranged in a straight line, effectively blocking their view of the President.

Ford and Brezhnev engaged in animated but inaudible conversation. Brezhnev waggled a cigarette in his left hand. Ford laughed several times. American photographers called out, "Mr. President, oh, Mr. President." But the Chief Executive turned and moved to enter car #3. But he was told he was going into the wrong car and was guided to car #4. This left Brezhnev to wave to the photographers by himself. Brezhnev then got into car #3.

The train left a minute later.

Poolers noticed through the windows of car #4 that Ford, upon boarding, doffed his fur car, removed his top coat, and began talking with an aide we did not recognize.

Along the route, small knots of people were occasionally seen beside the tracks in towns and villages. They responded to waves from train riders.

(MORE)

Malitia men stood in snowy fields near population centers and at points where trains crossed bridges or culverts.

The Soviet and American poolers were escorted to a conference room on the train within a half hour after departure. Ford and Brezhnev faced each other across a table with a white cloth. Between them was a bowl of pears, grapes, apples, oranges, and bananas. Six brands of cigarettes were laid out on the table. So were a variety of beverages -- mineral water, soft drinks... The President had a plate of meat-filled pasteries in front of him. One pastry was half-eaten.

Sitting with the President were Secretary Kissinger, Ambassador Stoessel and Viktor Sukhodrev. Beside Brezhnev were Gromyko, Dobrynin, Andrei M. Aleksandrov, and Korniyeko -- titles are in the bible. White House staffers Robert Mead and Zip Zimmerman sought to enter the room with the pool but a Soviet official told them, "Press only." They were kept out. As it was, the meeting room was so crowded with poolers and conferees that photographers stood on sofas to get pictures.

When the pool entered, Kissinger was talking about seeing the Soviet coastline from the plane.

Ford then asked Brezhnev, "How much snow do you get in Moscow?"

"It changes from year to year," Brezhnev said. "It changes a lot. Sometimes a half meter falls in one night."

Ford responded, "We have snow problems in Washington, D.C. We don't get much, but it is a problem when it comes. It really handicaps the city. We don't have the equipment and we don't have the people who know how to drive in the city in the snow."

Brezhnev laughed, waved his cigarette and said, "And that will be our first deal. We send you Soviet snow plows."

Gromyko interjected, "At a good low price."

The room had akazakf carpet and red velvet drapes, the car was wood trimmed.

Available for the leaders were black and red caviar, smoked salmon and a delicate-tasting black fish.

At one point Brezhnev told Ford that in some countries people think they get their news from newspapers, television and radio. But the Soviet leader reminded Ford of an Egyptian saying, "Put on your fez and go down to the market place," with that Brezhnev held up his napkin and draped it over his head like a fez.

"In our country too," Ford replied, "It helps to get out and around the country to find out what is going on."

Kissinger said, "General Secretary, I think we definitely can say this is a first -- an American President and the General Secretary riding on a train through the snow in Far Eastern Russia."

(MORE)

Soviet officials on the train told the pool the community where the leaders were staying was Ussuresk.

Aboard the train was Valentin Zorin, noted Moscow television and radio commentator whose views are usually accepted as authoritative. He told the pool he had read American suggestions that Ford and Brezhnev were having simply a get acquainted meeting.

"I don't agree. I don't agree it is just to shake hands," he said. "I believe they meet for a discussion of fundamental problems existing between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. such as strategic weapons. There will be matters of substance. I believe both leaders have a chance to settle problems -- all problems. Asked if he expected the summit to be a success, Zorin said, "I hope so."

Asked what he thought the principal topic for discussion would be, he said, "Mainly about SALT, I think. I believe there are to be genuine discussions between the leaders -- not just a protocol meeting."

The pool was told not to hurry when the train reached its destination because another pool was pre-positioned at the platform. We could not get off the train until the two leaders had departed.

Frank Cormier - AP
Richard Growald - UPI

November 23, 1974

POOL REPORT
ARRIVAL AT SPECIAL DEPOT
(POOL NO. 3)

The green train bearing the official entourage pulled up at the 'special depot' at 4:10. It is an open platform beside the two tracks, with white bannisters to keep people from falling off.

The General Secretary and the President stepped off the train, Ford first. There was no official greeting party, only a cluster of 11 security men and aides. They walked together down eight steps to an asphalt plaza area which had been cleared of snow. It was cold, but no wind, not uncomfortable. Ford said, "It was a very nice train ride." Then he asked Brezhnev, "Is this a beautiful rest camp in summertime?" Since there was no interpreter with them, we'll never know.

Ford was wearing dark blue overcoat and mink hat given by Ambassador Dobrynin at White House; Brezhnev in gray overcoat and gray astrachan hat. They walked about 20 yards to Brezhnev's official limousine, a long black Zil-114, bearing the flags of both countries. Kissinger and his opposite number got into second limousine, followed by two security cars, and then at least 30 small cars bearing members of the two entourages who had been on the train. All roared up the hill to the compound.

The conference building in which talks will begin at 6:00 p.m. is quite modern, white stucco, with stained glass window featuring white doves and two buildings. The compound is enclosed by 10-foot tall green wooden fence, with military guards and border guards posted at close intervals. (Border guards wearing smashing uniforms--cossack-type coats of fur trimmed suede, double breasted with brass buckles, fur hat, boots. Wow!)

About 70 military officers of one kind and another were present at the train platform, but there was no ceremony of any kind.

Brezhnev's dacha is green frame, like a farmhouse, a few yards away from the conference center.

Everything snowy, bridges over icy stream, view of bay beyond.

BONNIE ANGELO

#

#

#

POOL REPORT

Arrival at Dacha after train ride
Sat. November 23

This is a pool report on the arrival of President Ford and General Secretary Brezhnev at Mr. Ford's dacha after their train ride from Vozduizhenka.

Mr. Ford's dacha is a cream stucco and frame building set in a compound of similar houses behind a high green wall in a thinly-forested area of evergreen and deciduous trees.

Entrance for the pool, which consisted of one U.S. reporter, three U.S. photographers and a half dozen Soviet cameramen, was through a gate attended by security agents of both sides.

The driveway and pathways had been cleared of snow. It appeared that three to four inches of snow covered the ground. It was higher, of course, along the edges of the cleared passageways.

One side is a twenty-five foot trellis with grape vines creeping up from roots on each side. Clumps of snow rested on some trees. There were a few hardy brown leaves, but the general impression was one of bareness relieved by the pastels on walls, fences and houses.

The Ford dacha has thin curtains like the kind you see in this hotel. The entrance room on the first floor has a high ceiling with a sparkling chandelier that had clear, green and yellow lobes.

There was the traditional confusion over where newsmen should stand and what they should do in the 45 minutes the pool awaited the Ford-Brezhnev arrival.

Then they came -- and went -- swiftly.

Brezhnev's black limousine, waving Soviet Union and United States flags, turned the corner onto the black paving by the Ford dacha's main entrance.

The President got out the house side, wearing his long blue overcoat and Russian hat.

He immediately climbed the three steps to a seven by ten foot stone porch. Thereupon waited a young woman in maid's garb, black dress and white apron. She handed the President a three red tea rose bouquet, the base wrapped in paper. He took it, smiled, said "Thank you." Then he walked into the dacha.

Brezhnev, who had climbed out the other side, caught up with Ford so that they entered the dacha approximately together.

The entire arrival had gone so quickly that U.S. photographers said they had barely had time to take any decent pictures. They asked White House photographer David Kennerly if they could get another chance. After a few minutes' pause, it was announced that the pool could move forward to stand by Brezhnev's car which by then had been turned out to face the driveway for a quick exit.

The door opened once. What could be seen was a crowd of men milling about, several, including Ford, with long-stemmed glasses containing a yellow liquid, in their hands. Overhead was the afore-mentioned chandelier.

MORE

The President had taken off his overcoat and hat.

But two minutes later he had it on as the double doors were opened and out stepped Ford and Brezhnev. They shook hands twice, talked with the assistance of Victor Sukhodrev.

Ford said something about the photographers. Brezhnev pointed to one and said, "That's my personal photographer."

Ford said that Kennerly was his personal photographer. He said he is "in charge of him during the day. At night I'm not sure." Kennerly and Brezhnev laughed at that.

Then Ford, shaking Brezhnev's hand again, said, "Thank you very much. I look forward to seeing you this evening."

"Six o'clock," said Brezhnev.

"Six o'clock," said Ford.

Brezhnev walked around the front of his car and climbed in the jump seat. A military man in gray uniform and lots of metals got in behind him. Two men in civilian clothes climbed into the back seat. Then Brezhnev was off.

Ford watched him leave, then turned to newsmen again, saying, "Throw a snowball at Kennerly."

I shouted out a question on how the talks had started on the train. The President paused and said, "Very helpful." Then he turned and walked back inside.

Larry O'Rourke

#

November 23, 1974

POOL REPORT

Start of Formal Talks at White Stucco
Conference Hall

The formal talks between President Ford and General Secretary Brezhnev were underway at 6:10 p.m., a delay of an hour from the pre-scheduled time.

While waiting for Ford to arrive, Brezhnev leaned over the balcony of a stairway where photographers were waiting to take pictures of the first session. He kibitzed a while, posed and exercised his legs in a little jig.

Before the cameramen were summoned to the upper floor, loud laughter could be heard and Brezhnev greeted Ford with a "hello," "hello," "hello."

Ford himself was roaring with laughter at the excitement his attire caused. He was wearing the wolf skin parka and hood which had been presented to him during the AFl refueling stop in Anchorage, Alaska on the way to Japan.

"I'm a sheep in wolf's clothing," quipped Ford. "I told the first secretary I'm going to get him one and he already has it."

But then Brezhnev said he had a parka with a fur collar, but not like Ford's.

"I'll see that you get one from Alaska," said Ford.

"Maybe he will ask you to give him Alaska," joked a reporter.

Ford grinned and said "Maybe I shouldn't have mentioned it."

Then Brezhnev tried on the parka, and modeled it for photographers.

"See if it fits," said Ford.

"I had a swim in your swimming pool," said Ford. "It was delightful. I thank you very much. It gave me some good exercise."

During the banter, Brezhnev teased Kissinger apparently about the weather and said he was being "persecuted in the line of duty for the sake of detente."

HELEN THOMAS

#

NOVEMBER 24, 1974

POOL REPORT

Start of Second Day's Talks

President Ford came out of his dacha at 9:55 a.m. for the scheduled 10 o'clock meeting, walking briskly with Kissinger and leading a group of aides. Senior aides had preceded them by a few minutes.

The President was wearing his three-quarter length wolf-skin parka and mink hat. Kissinger had a plain Republican cloth parka, beige color, and fur hat.

The President greeted photographers, "Are you bright-eyed this morning?"

"Are we making progress?" he was asked.

"We're encouraged," he replied.

"We've all been writing glowing stories based on the Secretary's briefing," he was told.

"I hope we don't disappoint you," he said.

One last question, "Do you expect to see Vladivostok?"

"We'll take one step at a time," he said.

Except for the greeting, the President appeared thoughtful and entirely serious as he strode out the gate, turned right and headed down the 200-yard tree-lined roadway to the conference hall.

Richard Dudman - St. Louis Post -
Dispatch

Helen Thomas - UPI