

March 31, 1975

AIR FORCE ONE POOL

Palm Springs - Bakersfield

The President departed the residence at 9:12 am for the airport where he was met by California Attorney General Evelle Younger, and Congressman Alfonso Bell and Bill Ketchum.

Nessen said the President was making the trip to Elk Hills "to demonstrate his interest in tapping Elk Hills to build a billion barrel strategic reserve."

He said the Parmas had dinner with the Fords Sunday evening and are staying with them at the residence. Mrs. Ford, Nessen said, was kidding when she said the house has three swimming pools. We're now told the place has only one pool.

Poolers were able to hear very little during the Elk Hills stops. The President's chief briefer and escort along the way was Cdr. Roger Martin, director of the Navy office at Elk Hills.

At the drilling site, Martin told the President the new well will produce about 2000 barrels per day. Drilling is now at the 6000 foot level and should be completed in about five days. The well is the 46th in the current drilling series. Five wells are currently being drilled. If orders were given to bring maximum production, Martin said, the field could be producing 160,000 barrels per day in two months.

At all of the Elk Hills stops, the President asked questions of his briefers on the time required to get various aspects of the operation ready for production of 400,000 barrels a day. As he prepared to board his helicopter, he said, "We'll be back when you are up to 400,000 barrels a day."

On the way back Nessen said the President had told Assistant Navy Secretary Jack Bowers, who was along on the tour, "Nothing beats seeing it first hand. I've look at all the charts in the world, but nothing beats seeing it for yourself."

On Vietnam, Nessen said the President "finds the reports very sobering." He said the President attributes the situation to two things: "North Vietnamese violations of the cease fire, and the failure of Congress to put up the money, which he feels affected the morale of the South Vietnamese army."

Nessen said David Kennerly called from Vietnam early Monday and spoke with both the President and Mrs. Ford, telling them he was "all right."

Rudy Abramson
L.A. Times

and

Forrest Boyd
Mutual

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