

June 3, 1975

## POOL REPORT #6

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT AND POPE PAUL VI,  
VISIT TO NORTH AMERICAN COLLEGE  
MARINE ONE DEPARTURE ENROUTE AIRPORT

First I would like to say that I think we owe a lot of something or other to Eric Rosenberger for if it was not for Eric the Vatican would have screwed us. We would not have gotten anything at all -- not that I speak very good English, but Eric got physically slammed up against the wall and double-crossed and really got bad treatment. He really went in and argued and fought and battled for almost an hour.

Anyway, the times on the Presidential Vatican schedule held up pretty well. The President arrived at six o'clock with the First Lady. She was wearing a mantilla that was presented to her in Madrid by Princess Sophie and Juan Carlos. She had on a Navy blue dress, long sleeves, below the knee. Her mantilla was not drawn over her face. The President was wearing a charcoal gray suit with white pin stripes about a half an inch apart and a dark Navy blue tie with white stripes.

The Fords, followed by their aide, which I will name later, went inside. The President went from the Damascus courtyard into the papal apartments. These are four-story Renaissance type buildings behind St. Peters. They went into an Otis elevator 2 by 2 and it is pine lined and it is dark. They went up to the Pontiff's floor where they were escorted by various Vatican officials through a series of rooms. The rooms all have marble floors and were recently reconditioned by Pope Paul in a program started by Pope John XXIII. Over the entrance doorway, as the papal custom, were the names of popes who inaugurated the work on the first floor and had Pope John XXIII on them.

There are no more gendarmerie in the Vatican. Besides the Swiss Guard were there in their orange and red and blue and yellow striped costumes and their belvedere helmets that dated back to the 15th Century and spears. Part of the time in the Vatican the security force is a civilian group known as the Vigilant Corps and it was these who tried to stop us as well as the photographers, and Eric got through them. There will be more of that from Frank.

Anyway, upstairs the President walked at a quick pace through various halls, the more remarkable of which included the Clementine built by Pope Clements XIII.

MORE

It has a mural in the style of Michelangelo but not of the quality; it is quite well known but done about 1700. The President did pause and look up at the ceiling murals which depict in allegorical form Justice, Charity, Religion and the baptism of Constantine of the Eastern religion.

They passed into another major room, the Throne Room, and then ten more rooms before they reached the doorway of the papal library. The Pope was just inside the doorway. He was wearing white vestments, red shoes and a white hat. He had his arms outstretched like this and Ford extended his hand and the Pope put out both hands and grasped Ford's both hands and they shook hands.

Kissinger and Mrs. Ford remained outside the library while the President went inside. Inside the papal apartments -- I will describe that later -- the Pope sat down at a table and then the President and his translator from the American Embassy sat down and they began their talks. The Pope later came out and they ushered in Mrs. Ford and Kissinger.

Waiting in the Room of the Ambassadors were all the other Presidential aides, including Rumsfeld, Nessen, Hartmann, Scowcroft, O'Daniel, Shiela Weidenfeld, personal secretary to the First Lady, Dr. Lukash, Dave Kennerly, Lt. Colonel Bob Merritt. That room is quite spectacular, though small, and the President did pause to look at a couple of the pictures on the way through. In there is one of the priceless masterpieces of the Vatican, the Face of Christ by El Greco.

In the library after the President and the Pontiff completed their talks, all the Presidential aides were ushered in and that is where we saw the library. The library is surprisingly modern -- it has light damask cloth walls, it has large bookcases carved in the post-Renaissance Italian style -- various styles, I might say -- it has four windows, all heavily curtained though with light materials and the light does shine through.

Chairs were arranged around an oriental carpet. The Pope sat on a white upholstered chair with arms. To his right sat the President. To the President's right in another similar chair sat Kissinger. To the Pontiff's left and a little distance away, sort of almost in two lines, were the aides who sat on either side of Mrs. Ford.

In front of the Pontiff was a goosenecked microphone, and when we came in the Pontiff began to speak. I think we have copies now of the Pontiff's speech -- at least I have some quotes here of what he said and I think we do have some copies. He spoke sitting down. When he finished he half rose and aides pushed the microphone in front of the President. The President had sat with his legs crossed throughout the entire papal speech.

MORE

President Ford, still sitting, said -- I do not have complete notes -- "Your Holiness, you truly have given us inspiration." Then Ford said, I continue the quote, "We have had a most beneficial discussion of subjects on the many problems where we can work together for the progress of peace."

Then the President cited some areas where he said the inspriation of the Pope would be useful. He said that the United States would engage in the diplomacy of peace. He said, "We can maximize our diplomacy."

He said that the United States would develop its military policies in such a way as to benefit the cause of peace and the cause of defense. It is interesting to note that in the quoted speech he makes a reference to military defense and gives a justification for it. Later on I was talking to Secretary Kissinger and I asked him about this and he said it was very unusual to be mentioned by the Pope. Anyway, the President in his speech said that they would do that.

Then the President also said that the United States would continue its program of supplying food and other necessities to those less fortunate than ourselves. The President spoke without a text and then he said, "I can assure you the United States will do as I told you in our meeting that it would do -- maintain the progress with the emphasis and dedication to peace."

He said, "Your spiritual influence is what gives us inspiration."

He repeatedly recited the "spiritual and inspirational help" to both him personally and to the United States and to the cause of peace.

At the end of the President's speech, the Pope rose and said that he would like to have a photograph taken of himself with the President. The President said, "Yes, may I have one with Mrs. Ford?" So the Pope posed in the middle with the President on his right and Mrs. Ford on his left and then came the gift giving.

On the table at the other end of the oriental rug were several objects. First was a 12 inch high metal sculptured eagle from the President to the Pope. The Pope said, "Oh, eagle." He said it in English, "Oh, eagle."

The President said, "You are one of the great leaders of all time," and that is an exact quote. "You are one of the great leaders of all time."

MORE

They moved to the left around the table and came to a large wooden box which the Pope opened with both hands, and inside was what seemed to be gold or bronze, I could not tell, bas-relief metal plate on which was a sculptured surface showing the Vatican, Rome. This was the Pope's major present to the President. The Pope said in halting but very understandable English, "It is not so clear" -- meaning that the surface of the metal object was not clear -- "it is the work of an artist."

The President said, "It is beautiful."

The President then said, "We thank you for your present."

The Pope picked up a red box and opened it and there were five medallion type medals inside. He said they were the work of a Hungarian artist.

The President said, "I thank you so much for the medals."

The Pope presented Mrs. Ford in a smaller box a medal with a Madonna and Mrs. Ford said, "It means a great deal to me because I happen to collect Madonnas."

Then the Pope picked up some of these small green boxes containing commemorative medals. On one side is a portrait of himself and on the other side is a depiction of the Last Supper. The Pope presented these to the aides to the President. The first one he turned to was Kissinger and he said, "May I offer you a sweet? Sweet, sweet, sweet?" He said it four times. An aide whispered in his ear and he said, "A medal." Kissinger took the medal and grinning from ear to ear said, "Oh, thank you very much."

The Pope said, "Eagle."

And the President said, "This is the symbol of liberty."

All during the time it was done with a great deal of deference by the President to the aides and obvious effort by the President to the aide and the spiritual office of the Pontiff.

The Pope looked in fine shape. I don't think he will do the 500 but he did look well. He talked in a low but firm voice.

After the medal presentation we were kicked out nicely. One thing. I had never heard of it before but one of the world's great paintings, at least now, hangs in the Pope's library right behind where he sits and had apparently been rearranged. There was an open Bible on the stand in front of the well-known Renaissance painting of the Ascension and -- but I don't think anybody cares.

MORE

As to photographs, we had Wally McNamee in there and AP was in there -- no film, just still.

Let me continue without going into a lot of detail about the incident. After about 50 minutes of negotiation in which Eric painstakingly told these people how many of us there were, how many had proper credentials to get in, he was told by the Vatican police that they had a list of four people that were going in, and that four included Kennerly, the other three being AP, UPI Italian and an unnamed American journalist. He said of course this would not do and it went on and on and on and then we thought we finally had it resolved where we would get at least two of us in and then it looked like that was going to collapse. Eric, who was right at the door going into the papal apartment residence, started to rush in and two of the Vatican police grabbed him and one said, "Take it easy," and Eric backed off but it was pretty tense there for a few minutes.

I think we have films of that.

Then we all said, "Well, then nobody goes in." It was about 15, 20 minutes after the Presidential party was up there that they came down and got Dick and Parody and then later Walt McNamee so that is it on the incident.

In talking to the Vatican police, Eric said, "We went to Russia and it is much easier than working with you." That is not a direct quote but that upset the Italians a little, too.

Now I was just looking at my notes and I saw some other things that might be of interest.

The Vatican vigilantes upstairs while we were waiting outside the Ambassador's room began making jokes about what they called the FBI man. Another Secret Service man who was guiding us up there, coming up there with us, was stopped in the Ambassador Salon and we progressed further. One of the papal officials said to another, "We have had FBI men in here," and I asked him what he meant by that and he said that before the President arrived there was what he called an FBI man that dared come into the papal apartments -- that is, the public rooms, the bachelor rooms, the reception rooms -- and was looking around, and he said, "We had difficulty removing him." Then they also said they had trouble with the press on the last Presidential visit. He didn't explain that.

MORE

Inside a little further on we talked to Ron Nessen and he said, among other things, if anybody cares, that Kissinger had been talking about having read in the newspapers that his wife was getting him a Labrador retriever dog and the joke had been going around the last couple of days -- Kissinger has been using it -- saying that, "I am told that a Labrador retriever grows up to weigh 120 pounds; my God, he will weigh more than Scowcroft," and he was joking amongst the staff and they were kidding him that he might call the dog Brent. They asked him if he really wanted the dog and he said it was about 200th on the list of priorities.

Bill has some full copies of the Pope's remarks.

One more thing. Seven lay members of the church led Ford up through into the rooms in the papal apartments. Both elevator operators in the Vatican, each had four Vatican medals to say where in front of their dress.

I can do this very quickly. They were running late. When the official party left the Vatican after about twelve minutes, the President came out walking with Bishop Marnin, Prefect of the Pontifical household identified in the bible. The President was saying to the Bishop at the time that they came to Rome this morning from Salzburg the weather was a little better here than there.

The President took off at 8:44 in Air Force I. They had these noblemen lined up along the red carpet. The President said the usual things to them -- "Goodbye," "Thank you very much," and so forth. Mrs. Ford was trailing him. They all had to bow a little as they shook hands. Kissinger trailed them. Mrs. Ford climbed into the car. Henry Cabot Lodge, who looked very rested, was standing to the side of the car. The President turned to him and said, "Are you going out, too?" Lodge mumbled something fairly inaudible and the President said, "Well, then, why don't you get in the car with me?" which Lodge did. They rode together for about five minutes through narrow streets, up and down hills. They were escorted past a few hundred people to this large sports field which I think Phil will give you a greater description on.

One anecdote. At the sports field they all worked the crowd -- that is, Kissinger did and the President did and to some extent Mrs. Ford did, also. Kissinger seemed to enjoy this. He plunged one way, plunged another way, did a lot of double hand shaking, seemed very enthusiastic about it. I went up to him at one point and said to him, "Are you running for anything?" And he said, "Of course; I want to be Mayor of Rome."

MORE

They met all sorts of soccer players who was a mixed crowd -- lots of Americans, few Italians. Phil will give you that; it is a variety of people.

One person that the President met in working the crowd was a Monsignor Carroll Darcy; he is rector of the North American College in Rome. He is the guy in charge of the seminary which trains the priests from the United States who come to Rome to study, and he identified himself to President Ford as a person with whom he had been acquainted in Washington.

The President made a little speech there over a hand-held loud speaker. I think Bill has mentioned that.

While we are at that speech I will tell you that we have only a couple sentences of substance and the White House will have the full remarks later, if I may tell you, so you go ahead and you don't have to wait. The President started out by thanking them and he said, "This is our last stop of a wonderful trip in Europe that I believe has brought good results in our long and hard work in the achievement of peace." That is the only thing of substance that he referred to at the athletic field.

He said once again that he was never able to play with the big athletes when he was a kid.

Let me tell you about this school. In the embassy information packet that you received earlier today they have quite a bit of information on it and it is in your schedule. It is a school that is supported by the Knights of Columbus. There are 1,000 students in the school and most of them were there today plus their parents. They waited for almost three hours. They had just gotten word today that the President might come and they were ready for him in case he did.

Two girls, two students, Gabrella Orfei, eight and a half, and Monica Russi, nine years old, presented the President with a plaque to give to all the sportsmen of America. The President in turn gave them a Presidential cup for use in the athletic competition here in Rome.

Mrs. Ford was given a scroll which said something to the effect that "We love you and best luck to the President for his efforts for peace."

Also there today were twelve students from Grand Rapids, a college called William James College, which is located just outside Grand Rapids and it is part of a cluster of colleges. There is an experimental college program going on there. They are here in Rome studying film-making. They have been here since April. They will leave in about two weeks. As I said, there are twelve of them.

MORE

Others there today included some people from the North American College which is a school for those studying the ministry. Others were from the American clergy community here, embassy people, and as I say, the Grand Rapids students.

The only other thing that I have to report is that Ron said he is going to be going over the West Point speech very early after take-off and he will call Bill Roberts back at the White House. The White House will release it there and Ron has told the press office it will take 150 copies of this speech out to Andrews Air Force Base, so when you all get there it will be there. Your office will also be notified or it will be on the wire that this speech is available. It is 4:00 p.m. release. He was not sure of the time.

He said the President would make some brief remarks tomorrow at West Point about his trip but he would not go into it.

He left about 30 minutes off schedule, shaking hands with all sorts of Air Force cops who had been taking him around the city throughout the day. This was the scene at the athletic field at the school right before he got on the helicopter to fly to Air Force I.

Richard Growald (UPI)

Phil Jones (CBS)

Larry O'Rourke (Philadelphia Bulletin)

John Mashek (U.S. NEWS & World Report)

#

#

#