

POOL REPORT

AUGUST 3, 1975

Peles Castle Entertainment, Train Trip to Bucharest, Departure and Air Force One

Ford and Ceausescu dispensed with a toast after lunch in light of their having made remarks at the signing ceremony. They went to a small theater in Peles Castle, equipped with a stage and with seats on platforms rising to the rear. Ford and Ceausescu sat in front, sandwiched between Kissinger and Foreign Minister Macovescu. On stage, violinists played gypsy music while young men and women in native outfits --- men in white leotards, short skirts and bolero style embroidered jackets and women in embroidered-spangled skirts and blouses --- danced in a ring, stamped feet, shouted and smiled. Ford put on his glasses to see better. Entertainment was to have been on the lawn outside but it was raining hard. Pool ejected from theater after Ceausescu complained about television lights.

Along the streets and hill overlooking the train station, about 500 people stood in cold rain, most but not all under umbrellas, to shout "buna" -- it means "good" as Ford passed by. Another 200 or so were at the station and on the platform. Some of the latter were recognizable as same people who were there when he arrived this morning. Ford waved out of open right window of limousine, alighted and gave a two-armed wave to crowd, which cheered and applauded. Then Ford, under an umbrella, tramped across a flower bed to work the crowd briefly across the Plaza from the train station. Just before Ford and Ceausescu arrived, a functionary showed up with a fresh batch of paper U.S. and Romanian flags. People rushed up to get them. Girls in native folk costume squealed for them. As Ford was working the crowd, Dick Keiser of Secret Service overheard telling another agent, "he slipped out of there just like a wet olive." An enormous crowd ensued. Crowd seemed genuinely enthused.

Aboard the train to Bucharest, a member of the United States delegation (FYI -- it was not -- repeat -- not -- the familiar senior American official) provided some additional comments about the progress of SALT talks. He insisted they were on track and that progress was being made. The official said the clear preference was for a summit agreement this year. He would not discuss specific issues but said that the general upshot is that it is moving and moving pretty much on track. Explaining that SALT progress comes bit by bit, the official said that whenever you hear something fresh at the negotiating table you have to stop for air; that is, analyze its ramifications before responding. He said that you inch forward and eventually you put it together, not make a big breakthrough all at once. The official went on to say that it was likely there would have to be two more negotiating sessions between Kissinger and Gromyko before there would be a summit. He emphasized that the plan still was to have a summit meeting this year although nothing definite was decided.

The official explained that since 1972 the United States presumption has been that Brezhnev has an authorized position in negotiations on SALT, that there is not the sort of yielding on either side that the uninitiated might expect because Ford, while somewhat more flexible than Brezhnev, still has to answer to people. He said that there was little ad libbing on substantive matters at the summit, but that it was a negotiation where both sides had scope.

Asked the political purpose of the Romanian stop, the official said that since 1969 both sides had a special interest in the expansion of relations but this had been stymied because Romania was most interested in the most favored nation status and it took six years to achieve.

(MORE)

The official volunteered that an overlooked aspect of the President's participation in CSCE was that it afforded him a highly visible platform to talk to Eastern Europe, a platform he could not have got anywhere else. The purpose of this signal to East Europe was said to be not so much to suggest that the United States wanted to develop its own influence -- there are realistic spheres -- but to point out that East Europe is not limited to one power in seeking its relationships. The overture was described as an invitation to spread their wings.

The train slowed to accept waves from 200 or so people on the platform at Ploesti Vest.

Nessen had only one copy of the Joint Communiqué signed by Ford and Ceausescu. Extracts are as follows:

"The two countries gave a positive assessment to the evolution of economic links between the two countries...

"The two Presidents hailed with deep satisfaction the conclusion of the trade agreement between the Socialist Republic of Romania and the United States of America, which represents a major contribution to the expansion of economic relations between the two countries. The two sides expressed the conviction that the entry into force of the trade agreement on August 3, 1975, by exchange of notices of acceptance during the visit, will help Romanian-American trade to grow and diversify, thereby influencing favorably the entire range of relations between the two states."

According to the communiqué, both sides will begin as soon as possible negotiating a long term accord on economic, industrial and technical collaboration, as well as an agricultural agreement. It said that "President Ford expressed his concern over the recent disastrous floods which had afflicted Romania. He voiced admiration for the valiant efforts of the Romanian people to overcome the effects of this natural calamity. President Ceausescu thanked President Ford for his concern and the aid extended by the United States."

On CSCE, the statement said both "stressed the need for abiding by and implementing all the provisions of the final act adopted at Helsinki." It said they reaffirmed the need for "continued vigorous negotiations" on strategic arms, they "underlined the need to reach "a just and lasting peace" in Middle East, and they expressed concern over the Cyprus situation.

Modest crowds greeted Ford and Ceausescu at the train station in Bucharest and on route to the airport. There, the departure was a twin to the arrival -- same troops, same band, same size crowd (it is not inconceivable, if unlikely, they were there the whole time) and the same complimentary but not consequential speeches.

Naughton

P.S. - The pool believes that it may have sighted a butterfly near Ploesti, but cannot be sure. Pool not allowed to deboard train to check.

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