

Telegram

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 OVER NIGHT TELEGRAM

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Pool Report--After Bar Association speech, back to Washington.

After speech, President Ford stopped to shake hands with a young girl, Shari Lynn Umlas, who had written him a letter asking him to come to her school's social studies fair. He worked his way through two groups of well-wishers, many of them Cubans, on the way out of the Everglades Hotel.

Instead of going the two blocks to the Howard Johnson's to greet PFC workers, as on schedule, he made a 25-mile detour to Miami Beach to appear briefly at the 17th annual fundraising dinner of the National Parkinson Institute, with Bob Hope as MC. Nessen said Hope phoned President during flight from Fort Myers to Miami, talked to Terry O'Donnell and asked President to come. Nessen said staff discussed it, decided against stop but that when they brought the matter to the President, he overruled them and decided to go.

On the way across the 36th Street Causeway to Miami Beach, a car on the other side of the median strip slowed, apparently to see what was going on, and crashed into the median strip. A van behind the car braked suddenly to avoid the car. En route back to Miami later, pool noticed that 4 or 5 other cars had crashed. An agent said that was the result of the original crash. There were two ambulances, ~~and~~ two wreckers and approximately 4 or 5 police cars also on the scene. No information available on injuries and extent of damage.

Motorcade proceeded to Fountainebleau Hotel, where President's procession through lobbies produced squeals, shoving and shouts of support. President entered ballroom from behind stage, as MC Hope announced "Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a little surprise, the President of the United States," loud applause from approximately 1000 who had paid \$50 each. Band struck up "Hail to the Chief." Ford said "I just thought I would drop in to indicate in person my total support for the major national effort that is being made in Parkinson's Disease." Those who joined him on the red-carpeted runway that extended out from the stage included Hope; Mrs. Jeanne Levey, ~~xxxxxxx~~ chairman, National Board of Directors, National Parkinson Institute; and Rep. and Mrs. ~~xxxxxxx~~ Claude Pepper, D-Fla., who represents a Miami Beach district. Ford engaged in some banter with Hope, about golf and a recent defeat to the comedian, declaring "I'm going get that money back next time."

Hope said "You're the best finale we ever had."

Mrs. Pepper then spoke, saying "You know, Claude and I are good Democrats" and praising Ford and Betty as "one of the loveliest ladies I've ever known." She then added:

"The President is a wonderful man. He deserves a better party."

That prompted the President to say "May I have the last word." He



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added that when he called Betty Friday night, she said Mildred Pepper had called and suggested he drop in on the dinner. "And like a good husband, here I am," he said.

As Ford made his way out of the hotel, through the same squeals and shouts he encountered on the way in, he turned to photographers and said "We've got a couple more hours to go, fellows."

The motorcade then returned to the downtown Howard Johnson's where the President went into a crowded room with 200-300 PFC workers. One sign read "Vote for a Ford and Get a Lincoln." President spoke briefly, saying he had heard how bad his organization was in Florida. "I've been here 36 hours and I don't believe any of it." "I think I've got a lot of friends, I think we've got a good organization and I think we're going to win." Rest pretty much the same as before except he noted there were many Cuban-Americans on hand and added: "Let me say categorisally and emphatically --the United States will have nothing to do with Castro's Cuba." Big applause.

On flight back to Washington, Nessen gave pool an upbeat assessment of the trip and of the pace of the Ford campaign.

"It was a good two days. A couple of things were accomplished. I think it energized the campaign workers. ~~Everybody's~~ I think everybody's spirits went up. Everybody's outlook began to turn around last weekend in New Hampshire," specifically at the Univ of NH appearance. "The feeling is that the momentum turned around at the University of New Hampshire and this trip really is a continuation of what began at the Univ of New Hampshire."

"It allowed a large number of people to see him and hear him, both in person and through newspapers and on televisipn." "They listened to his policies, his ideas and how he presents them.

"Something has happened in terms of mood and feeling and momentum. Some of it was planned." Listed phone banks, direct mail and other things, commercials, storefront operations.--"There was a timetable for setting these things up and they're coming along and there is now steam behind this momentum. Just because last weekend and this weekend have gone well he's not going to step up his campaigning." He stressed the energizing effect on state campaign organizations. Asked if he thought Ford would win in Fla, he said "he thinks he's going to win. But it's tough, Reagan's been in there eight times. It's not going to be easy." He said organization has come together but denied there had been a shakeup but rather a beef-up. He said "I think there is really a basic and widespread affection for the President. He tapped that in New Hampshire and again today." Another thing he did was to make clear his differences with Reagan. Asked if he meant to label Reagan an extremist, Nessen said "I don't think he would have said it



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if he hadn't meant it. He did mean to say it." He said he was sure that Ford would have said it at some point but that the q-and-a at Fort Lauderdale gave him the opportunity.

Nessen noted that Ford had drawn differences with Reagan on Social Security, foreign policy et al.

Asked if he had made his Cuban statement because of the large number of Cubans in the room, he said "he knew it was of tremendous interest in Miami." Nessen said the matter had ~~not~~ not come up earlier on Florida trip so he just took opportunity to say it..

He noted that anybody who has traveled around with Ford has noticed he "relishes a good day's campaigning." Nessen said "he was hanging around the bottom of the ramp almost as if he wished there was something else he could do." In fact, Nessen was heard to ask Ford at the foot of the ramp "Are you looking for something else to do?" Ford replied: "Let's go to another party."

Re Ford travel plans, Nessen said "I would think he would go to Illinois before the primary" on March 16 but that there were not any firm plans. Calif trip is on March 10 and 11.

Yr faithful and thorough pooler's--Leubsdorf, Fischer, McLeod,
Growald 2/14-15