

POOL REPORT

JULY 24, 1976

THE PRESIDENT PUT IN A BRIEF APPEARANCE BEFORE THE LEAGUE OF FAMILIES OF MIAs AND POWs, HOLDING THEIR SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION IN WASHINGTON AT THE STATLER HILTON.

MR. FORD SPOKE AT A DINNER MEETING OF THE GROUP, TELLING THEM THEY "MUST BE ASSURED OF A CONTINUING COMMITMENT FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT TO ~~RETAIN~~ A FULL ACCOUNTING OF THOSE MISSING IN ACTION OR STILL LISTED AS PRISONERS OF WAR." THIS, MR. FORD SAID, IS A "FIRM, UNEQUIVOCAL COMMITMENT" FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND A "LONG STANDING, STILL ACTIVE, VERY PERSONAL COMMITMENT FROM ME."

MR. FORD SAID EVERY EFFECTIVE MEANS ~~IS~~ IS BEING EMPLOYED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE MISSING. HE PROMISED THAT HE WOULD "NOT REST" UNTIL THE FULLEST POSSIBLE ACCOUNTING OF THE MISSING IS MADE.

ON THE DAIS WAS G.V. MONTGOMERY, WHO YESTERDAY TOLD THE GROUP TO GIVE UP HOPE BECAUSE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY MIAs ARE STILL ALIVE. MONTGOMERY HEADS THE HOUSE SELECT COMM. ON MIAs.

MOTOCADES TO AND FROM THE STATLER HILTON WERE UNEVENTFUL. SPEECH LASTED LESS THAN TEN MINUTES. AFTERWARDS, IN THE CORRIDOR, THE PRESIDENT ~~HELD~~ ^{HELD} A FEW BABIES. ONE WOMAN BROKE THROUGH THE CROWD TO SAY SHE THOUGHT THE PRESIDENT COULD DO MORE. HE TOLD HER HE WAS WORKING AT IT.

LEE THORNTON

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