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Pool Report, July 18, The Hague to Andrews

The President came back shortly after takeoff, wearing a cream V-neck sweater, a yellow golf shirt and his suit slacks. He and his team seemed euphoric, in a fatigued sort of a way, and Bush had a range of impressions about Eastern Europe, Paris and the Netherlands and other topics of current events.

He was in a good mood until he was asked about the new book by Jack Germond and Giles Milcover, "Lose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars? The Trivial Pursuit of the Presidency, 1988" in which Ed Rollins, Stu Spencer and Joe Conzani engage in some serious mayle-basking, saying he was childlike, and in the case of Rollins, that Bush received bad advice about selecting him since everyone in the Senate knew he was "a lightweight."

Mr. Bush seemed to jump at the chance to answer the question, giving a defense of his running mate.

"I saw a snub in the Post on it, but which offended me."

"I don't know what they've thought and but I know what I've thought all along," he said, referring to the handlers quoted in the book. "And I think my judgment early on is being vindicated all along. The man is serious and he's doing a first class job. But what troubled me about it, I found those quotations personally offensive because that's the ugly side of politics. I don't know whether they're true or not," referring to the veracity of the quotes, rather than their meaning, "But I've supported the Vice President when he was the nominee and I support him as Vice President, and he surely supported me. And so when somebody has seen the beautiful personal comments of that nature, I find it offensive. I don't like it. Strong letter follows."

Helen Thomas said: "There and now, can you explain why you picked him, because to this day..."

people are questioning the choice."

"Now the President got heated. "Yeah, be cause, take a look at the space council, take a look at the his trips to South America. Take a look at the contribution he makes at the deliberations of our Administration every morning at 8 o'clock in the and that will explain why I picked him. Because I knew he would handle those jobs well. Because I knew the man and I'd seen him in action before. As a Senator. And he advised me on defense before he was chosen. He's a good man and he deserves something better than a post-mortem kick in the... ankles."

Asked if anyone had ever defended him like that when he was VP, he said: "I would quote Barbara Bush in the Netherlands. What would we do without friends and I am blessed by many, many friends. So the answer to your question is yes, all the time, and probably for lots more reason they have to defend me than these attacks."

When President Bush first came back, John Sununu was talking to the pool about the President's globe-trotting style, but then ceded the floor to Bush, saying he had been one-upped.

"I certainly don't have that in mind, image-enhancement, at all," he said, asked if he was trying to polish his persona at home with showy trips. "I don't know how our travel abroad compares with previous presidents, but I haven't felt that it's been too intensive."

"This last stop was a good one," he said about the Netherlands. First place, no President has been there. And secondly, you get a good feel for big issues of East-West and environment by talking to the leaders of the Dutch government and their opposition. And also to Her Majesty, and was very interested, more so than some monarchs in the day to day problems the country is involved in. So I do find that it's very helpful to have a lively discussion with all these people, sometimes bordering on argument, but always stopping short of that, as we did at breakfast today with some of these leaders who were properly and frankly challenging our position on things and we go right back at 'em. So I learned from all of that." Asked what they had talked about, he said: "Anything. Arms. East-West, air to the South, economic development, environment was a big one."

He said it was not that such discussions get so touchy, but that "the discussion gets lively. There's a strong sentiment strong the liberty people there for the United States to pick up the check for everything. And please balance your budget at the same time so you don't draw our capital over there." But it was just a good, lively discussion. So I think some of what we were about on this trip was that -- certainly that was true in Hungary and Poland as well as the Netherlands. And then of course we had the business of the summit. It was substantive. And not a trip just to enhance international credentials, or something."

Asked if the trip shored that the U.S. power is diminished because we had to continually say we were sharing the leadership role with Western Europe, he replied: "I don't think it diminishes the power of the United States, nor the respect for the United States. I didn't sense that, as you know I've off and on been feeling with these matters since the early '70s. It's amazing. The respect for the United States around the world. I think it's still very, very strong. Very strong."

On the subject of our budget constraints, he continued: "I think people realize that for any year, we've been carrying very significant deficits. And for the first time in 10 years, we're going to see an enormous payoff in the next few years. And a lot of that is because they see that we're going to be able to pay off the decision that we made in 1981."

And I think they also see the prevalence of our economic system. And they understand that we are not rolling in money because of our federal deficit. So the pressures aren't enormous, at least at the meetings we've been in. Because I say, "Now wait a minute, you all want me to leave our deficit alone, and you want to keep our economy growing." There was an interesting discussion this morning on business cycle. But we can't do anything. We're stuck. We're stuck like to do. But our priorities. There are priorities that are going to enhance the freedom and the democracy of other countries that we can. And we need to preserve the peace and we're going to continue to do that and that costs money. And we're going to have to do it."

Asked about reports that the U.S. and Soviets had settled key issues on a chemical weapons ban treaty for 40 nations, Bush said: "Well, I'd like to see that in writing before I get euphoric about it. But I hope it's true." He said he hasn't seen the agreement, if there is one. "We haven't seen it here."

About Thursday's space announcement, he said he did not know if it would be a "big space announcement" or simply "a minor vent commemorating those years."

He said he had talked to Vice President Quayle, head of the Space Council -- "Incidentally, he's very interested, I'm very pleased with the work he's doing. He's very interested in it, and I think an invigorated Space Council can give very sound advice to a President." But he said "I'm not ready to say whether we're going to have a new space initiative. I want to be sure that what I propose passes any test of fiscal sanity, fiscal reasonableness."

Asked for a slight bit of his trip, Mr. Bush said: "I think when Remeta handed me that barbed wire gate pretty close to it. I love our country so much that when people express their love of America by their tears, which we saw among some of the older people in almost every place, that moved me a lot. Every time I come to Holland and I've been here a lot, long before I was in public life, I am reminded of what they went through. And I got a little emotional in the church there yesterday talking of the Dutch patriots that were just martyred by the Nazis. They still feel it. The green washing me at length the agony they had in releasing these two Nazi prisoners of war that had been there for 40 years, and the turmoil inside that they had on that. I don't know if I could single out one. Maybe standing in Gdansk there next to Lech Walesa in front of that monument with all the people around. There were so many wonderful things on that trip."

hated whatever we had gotten any sense that the people in Poland and Hungary hate the Communists and hate the Russians, the President replied: "You get some feeling that -- and in Hungary because of what happened in '56, but they aren't swelling in that. There's too much hope now. They're hoping to keep going. Political reform.

Economic

reform. So I don't think it was the kind of meeting where you'd sell on it. But I think, to a degree, it still is there clearly in the minds of some. But it's almost overpowered by the hopes that are going on now. (noe in a while I get a feeling that somebody might be talking, 'Well, I hope we're permitted to keep it going in. And that would relate to what's happening inside the Soviet Union. Or how the Soviet Union might view too rapid change in these countries. But I can't elaborate too much because I don't remember the specifics but it certainly didn't dominate."

Pressed on the point, which some pool reporters thought was more of an obsession in those countries, the President

recalled the brochure in the Ambassador's residence in Warsaw, where Solidarity leaders who had once been in jail were

"talking in a very friendly way with Jaruzelski about who was going to be the next President. We picked up a lot of that, from Helmsa himself, so without trying to predict what's going to happen, I would say there's quite an open-mindedness on both sides about what might happen."

Asked what he would say to Jesse Helms if Helms said "Myet" about money for Poland and Hungary, the President replied: "I'll say a word with him, we all will, and others who haven't benefited from the experience that all of us have had from this trip. Say, 'Look there were times when I felt exactly as you might have felt. I say might have because I don't want to assign any motives to Jesse Helms, with whom I have a very pleasant relationship. Any Senator who's interested in listening to the collective observations of all of us here -- our secretary of State, National Security Adviser, John -- we all came away we real genuine feelings of genuine change. I would think it's not just a Senator.

But I think the American people need to know now strongly we feel about this. But our eyes are wide open. Nobody's guaranteeing that everything's swimmingly rosy. And I will make that point clear, too."

Asked if Afghanistan was getting to be an irritant now, the President replied: "It's more of an irritant to the Soviets, I think. But we are not happy with the status quo either. We'd love to see reconciliation and peace in that country. And let me say we have no interest in seeing installed on the border of the Soviet Union a regime that's hostile to them." And that is a key point that they must understand and I hope they do. I don't know whether we think they do understand that, as said, turning around too look insistively at Brent Scowcroft, who was standing behind him.

"But it is very important that they do understand. I'll keep saying it. Haring said that, it's not something that we can leave a wand and solve that problem. But if we can be a catalyst somehow for that reconciliation, fine. We'd like to do that. But we're not trying to work against Soviet interests in helping the Araf. As long as the government which has been representative and is not representative is being funded to the levels they are, somebody has to help those who have been battling for."

Asked about reports today that China was angry at the Group of Seven's condemnation, he said: "I thought the collective statement there was about right."

Asked about further thoughts on China, he said, "we've got a good ambassador, " a d joked "we've got to go home. I'm going to get in trouble with you guys."

It was at this point, as he started to leave, he was asked about the Cuyale notes in the new political book.

When he was asked how he felt about his first six months in office ambivensary.

"Well, you're asking me on a good day. Ask me tomorrow after we go back and wrestle with some of these domestic problems. "
On schedules?

"Yeah, there's things that I'd like to have seen resolved, particularly on the legislative side of the house that are not resolved yet. So I can't claim any great legislative accomplishments. I don't measure it in winning or losing. I think generally we're on the right side of foreign policy and activities." Offine Jim Baker, he said, "I'm sure we're handling it with a certain purpose and direction. As I say at a time when we're all glad to be coming home and I think the visit from the standpoint of the United States has gone pretty well. But I reserve the right to change and change my mind if things don't go my way this week in the Congress."

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