

First Family Baring Foreign

By Maxine Cheshire

The Ford Administration is preparing to announce a new record-keeping system that would provide for full public disclosure of all gifts to the First Family from heads of state and other foreign officials. But it is still uncertain what policy the White House intends to adopt toward gifts that do not fall under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966. These are private gifts from U.S. citizens and citizens of other countries who have no connection with foreign governments.

By far the largest number of gifts received by Presidents and their families in the past have come from these unofficial sources.

A White House spokesman confirmed that President Ford has given his "tentative approval" to a procedure that would open up the records of official foreign gifts to public scrutiny. He is planning to announce details later this week, the aide said, after "a few minor points are ironed out with the State Department."

In the meantime, the press office has released a list of "everything" President Ford and his family received from foreign "kings, princes and foreign states" during his first months in office. The list excludes

only those gifts received on his recent trip to Japan and Vladivostok which have not yet been cataloged.

Under the Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act of 1966, all gifts from foreign officials worth more than \$50 are deemed to belong to the U.S. government and are supposed to be turned over "as quickly as possible" to the Chief of Protocol for disposition as public property.

During the Nixon Administration, all records of gifts from foreign officials and others were maintained in the White House Gifts Unit. The Chief of Protocol was given "access" to the records, but they were closed to reporters and anyone else seeking to examine them.

Under the new system proposed by President Ford's advisers, the White House Gifts Unit will continue to maintain original records for use by the correspondence section in writing acknowledgments and thank-you notes and for use by archivists in presidential libraries.

But duplicates, along with photographs, will be maintained in the Protocol Office and will be available for public scrutiny.

State Gifts to Public View

VIP

It is the Chief of Protocol who is charged, under the federal rules and regulations implementing the 1966 gift act, with keeping records of such gifts to either civilian or military personnel in all three branches of government.

He has done so in the past for everyone except for former President Richard M. Nixon and his family.

Nixon's advisers, deciding in 1969 that the First Family was "probably exempt" from the law, decided to keep their records in the White House Gifts Unit. In order to be in compliance, should Congress ever raise the issue, the Nixon administration officials gave the Chief of Protocol "access." That "access" apparently was never used, however.

The Nixons' records, and the gifts themselves, are currently in a legal limbo that may not be resolved for months, or even years.

The Ford administration has impounded all records and gifts left behind in Washington when the Nixons left for San Clemente after his resignation. But many gifts and records are scattered elsewhere, including San Clemente.

Both the records and the gifts are caught up in the legal battle currently being argued in U.S. District Court here over Nixon's contention that all "presidential materials" generated during his presidency belong by tradition to him.

President Ford is making no such claim to his official foreign gifts.

A member of his legal staff, William E. Casselman II, said this week that President Ford intends to "tighten" the rules and regulations pertaining to First Families and "leave no loopholes."

"We want to assure that each gift is strictly accounted for," Casselman said, "and leave no opportunity in the future for such gifts being misused, misplaced, lost, strayed or stolen."

Both the quantity and the quality of gifts received thus far by the Fords seem modest in comparison to the largesse bestowed on the Nixons by foreign leaders.

Of 74 gifts the Fords received prior to his recent travels, 24 were bouquets of flowers.

There are no valuable jewels on the list. The most expensive item of jewelry appears to be a hand-wrought gold scarab pendant, inset with an antique

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First Family Baring State Gifts

rose-cut diamond, made by a contemporary Israeli artist and presented to Mrs. Ford by Prime Minister Rabin. The Fords appear to have taken a detached attitude toward such gifts, which can never be theirs under the law and can only be displayed someday in a presidential library or some other "public repository."

First Lady Betty Ford has told her staff she doesn't even want to see most of the gifts.

When Italian President Giovanni Leone brought her a very expensive Gucci handbag and luggage, she told her assistant, Nancy Howe, to "have someone stamp 'Property of the U.S. Government' all over the lining and send it to storage."

The Fords' gifts include paintings, pieces of sculpture, a silver box, a silver tray, and several albums of stamps.

Few are probably worth as much as the \$1,500 wolf-skin parka President Ford received from a furrier in Anchorage, Alaska, as he passed through on his way to meet with Soviet party boss Leonid Brezhnev. Since the 1966 law does not apply to gifts from either

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U.S. citizens or private foreign citizens, President Ford was legally entitled to keep that parka, which he later gave to Brezhnev. There was nothing to prohibit him from accepting another just like it which is being delivered this week as a replacement from the same manufacturer, The Anchorage Fur Factory.

A spokesman there says that the firm is also making six pairs of \$78 wolf-trimmed, mouton-lined "mukluk" boots for the entire family to wear in the snow in Vail during their Christmas vacation. These, too, will be a gift.

The records for private gifts of this kind—domestic and foreign—will continue to be kept only by the White House Gifts Unit.

Whether or not these records are to be made accessible to reporters is a question apparently still being debated by top Ford aides.

"But you can be sure we don't intend to try and keep them secret," one press office spokesman insisted.

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White House List of Gifts to Fords

The White House has made public a list of all gifts given to President Ford and his family by kings, princes and foreign states' during his first months in office. All such gifts are by law the property of the U.S. Government if they are worth more than \$50. The following gifts appear to be in that category.

Not listed are less valuable items, such as framed photographs. Also not listed are gifts from his recent trips to Japan and Vladivostok which are still being "processed."

- A black lacquered spice chest, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, the President from Kunming, Yunnan, China.
- A pair of carved ivory candlesticks mounted on a natural wooden base to the President from William R.

Talbert, President of the Republic of Liberia.

- An electric microscope to the President; a petit point embroidered evening bag to Mrs. Ford, a black wool short cape to Susan Ford from Dr. Bruno Kreisky, Federal Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, and his wife.
- A carved mahogany baby seal to the President and a blue-and-black velvet hood containing a pink fan to Mrs. Ford from Uliz Echeverria Alvarez, President of the United States of Mexico, and his wife.

- An oil painting of Father Kino (founder of missions in Sonora, Mexico and the United States) to the President from Carlos Armando Bleiblich, Governor of Sonora, Mexico.
- Two tan lamoskin jackets with white lambs wool lining seamed with rawhide strips—one each for the President and Mrs. Ford—from Alicia Tapia de Pavlovitch, Mayor of Magdalena de Kino, Sonora, Mexico.

- A silver tray with handles and filigree edges and a Mexican circle design to Mrs. Ford from the President from Mrs. Sara Redfearn, General Secretary, National Confederation of Vendors of National Lottery tickets, Mexico.
- A large presentation box of all-over

hand hammered silver decorated on top with a cut-out and applied silver. Petish Eagle to the President; a 46" long necklace of amber, cut and polished in irregular natural forms to Mrs. Ford; a floral design wood shawl printed with a floral design to Mrs. Ford; a decorative wooden chest with folk art design burned into the wood and outlined with inlaid copper and brass wires and 2.5 meters of silk to Susan Ford from Edward Gierak, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, and his wife.

- A bronze wall plaque with silver and brass etched designs to the President from Abdul Halim Khaddam, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic.
- A pakexh box to Mrs. Ford, and 10 bottles of vodka and to containers of Russian Anisychik fromyko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

- Four silver cabs struck to commemorate the 1970 Prince Georges to be held in Canada to the President from Marcel Cadieux, Ambassador of Canada. Traditionally a fabric woven for royalty.
- A large size Kente and a pair of black thong sandals for the President, and a Kente stole to Mrs. Ford from Col. Ignatius Kuru Achempong, Chairman of the National Redemption Council of the Republic of Ghana.
- A sculptured sterling silver figure of David slaying Goliath, mounted upon a base of rough-cut black marble and yellow granite inset with two silver polished and a handwrought 18-karat gold stylized scarab "beetle" pendant, inset pendant on antique rose-cut diamond, suspended from a 16-karat gold wire necklace to Mrs. Ford from Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel, and his wife.
- Four cans of caviar flown in from Iran to Mrs. Ford from Mr. Adeshir Zahedi, Ambassador of Iran.
- An Estruscan "Banchero" dating back to Feb. 19, 1962 at an excavation and a set of six handmade pipes and pipe rack from Cantu, Italy to the President; an ivory colored all leather handbag with brass fittings and a tiger eye handle to Mrs. Ford; a tiger eye in a brown grain leather pipe case and a Gucci tote bag to Mrs. Ford from the President of the Italian Republic, and his wife.
- A large abstract oil painting to the President from Professor Mauro Leone, son of President and Mrs. Leone.