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Ford Is Reconsidering His Plans for Extensive Travel

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 25 — President Ford is reconsidering tentative plans for extensive cross-country travel next month after two apparent attempts on his life, White House officials said today.

But the officials insisted that concern about the President's safety was only one of several factors prompting a reappraisal of the scope and nature of the planned journeys.

Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, acknowledged reluctantly after persistent questioning at a news briefing that "a few" of the trips that had been penciled tentatively onto the President's schedule may be dropped.

"He is probably not going to go to as many places as you had thought he would," Mr. Nessen said of the President.

Nessen Not Specific

The press secretary declined to specify which prospective visits might be scuttled or to affirm that security considerations were involved in the re-examination of the schedule.

"Frankly, I don't know, Mr. Nessen said. "I don't know all the reasons that went into it."

Other White House officials said privately, however, that even on a reduced schedule, Mr. Ford was likely to travel to at least 10 states, including California, before the end of next month. The officials also said security was one factor prompting the reappraisal.

"Obviously, we're not stupid," one aide remarked. "We're not going to ignore that aspect of it," he added, referring to the security problem.

'Stand Tall and Strong'

Twice on trips to California this month, Mr. Ford has encountered women wielding pistols. Last Monday, Sara Jane Moore was arrested and charged with attempted assassination after she allegedly fired a .38-caliber revolver at the President when he emerged from a hotel in San Francisco. On Sept. 5, Lynette Alice Fromme was charged with attempted assassination after witnesses said

she pointed a .45-caliber pistol at Mr. Ford from close range in Sacramento. The President escaped harm in both incidents.

Mr. Ford said emphatically late Monday that he would not "cower" in the Oval Office because of the two episodes.

Reaffirming his resolve to continue traveling around the country, Mr. Ford said six hours after the San Francisco episode, "We're going to stand tall and strong in this confrontation with a limited number of people."

As a result, Mr. Nessen and other White House aides appeared reluctant today to ascribe any changes in travel schedules to concern over Mr. Ford's safety.

Reminded that he had said yesterday that there were "no changes in prospective travel plans" because of the two apparent attempts on Mr. Ford's life, Mr. Nessen said this morning, "I know more today than I did yesterday."

He also announced that he and his staff would discontinue their custom of giving reporters informal guidance on tentative long-range Presidential travel plans. Mr. Nessen insisted the new policy had nothing to do with security considerations.

It was prompted, he said, by a desire to prevent "little bits and pieces" of White House travel plans from being "dribbled out" into print before they were given final approval by Mr. Ford.

Several White House officials who asked not to be identified said, nonetheless, that Mr. Ford's reappraisal of his schedule was based in part on pleas from members of his family, close friends and some aides that he limit the inherent risks of frequent public journeys.

'Stay Away From People'

Betty Ford told reporters yesterday that she thought her husband should "keep going, but stay away from people."

A senior official, echoing Mrs. Ford's view, said today that the nature of events the President would attend might change in an effort to limit his exposure to large crowds.

Secret Service agents customarily have a role in shaping the schedule, the official said, and "the impact of their recommendations will be greater in the next few weeks."

Accordingly, Mr. Ford was said to be unlikely to travel, as had been planned, to East Lansing, Mich., on Oct. 11 to attend a football game between his alma mater, the University of Michigan, and the school's traditional rival, Michigan State University.

But the officials contended that other, more mundane, considerations were also expected to change tentative schedules.

One senior Presidential aide said that he thought Mr. Ford had been "overscheduled" on recent trips, keeping to a schedule that was "too taxing, preventing him from doing other important things."

Another official said that the President had dropped a planned visit to North Carolina next

month because he would probably be in the same region later this year. Similarly, a side trip to Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill., was said to have been eliminated because of schedule conflicts on a trip Mr. Ford planned to make next Tuesday to Chicago.

Although Mr. Nessen and other officials had been describing prospective trips to a dozen states in recent conversations, the press secretary said today that the Chicago stop was the only one he would confirm.

Soon after he made the statement, Mr. Nessen was given a note by an assistant, and then began to laugh. The note informed him that William J. Baroody Jr., assistant to the President for public liaison, had just announced that Mr. Ford would attend White House regional conferences in Omaha next Wednesday and in Knoxville, Tenn., on Oct. 7.