

Ford to Visit China During New Year

Foreign Policy Echoes Nixon's

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President Ford's decision to visit mainland China next year firmly signifies his intention to follow in Richard M. Nixon's foreign policy footsteps while attempting to establish his own credentials as presidential leader.

Despite frequent criticism that he should spend more time in Washington attending to domestic business, President Ford is demonstrating that he is as fully infatuated with foreign policy as his predecessors.

Last week Mr. Ford returned from a trip to Japan, Korea and the Soviet Union, where he worked out a missile-limitation agreement with Leonid I. Brezhnev that White House spokesmen have since described as the

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culmination of President Nixon's efforts to obtain arms-limitation agreements with the Russians.

Unconfirmed reports filtering out of the Middle East indicate that the President and Brezhnev also agreed on a still-unannounced solution to deadlocked Middle East negotiations, his reported agreement would call for the Soviet Union to put pressure on the Palestine Liberation Organization to recognize Israel as an independent state

in return for the United States' urging Israel to negotiate with the PLO.

Whether or not these reports are true, it is known that the President regards a successful Middle East foreign policy as an important key to domestic policy.

If the negotiations remain deadlocked, Mr. Ford has been told, a new war between Israel and the Arab This in turn would precipitate a new energy crisis in the United States and contribute to the nation's worsening recession.

In addition to recognizing that foreign and domestic policy are closely linked in state will be inevitable substance, the President also was described as perceiving long-term political benefit from his summit negotiations.

Within a White House wearily accustomed to repeated bad news about burgeoning inflation and unemployment, the generally favorable editorial and congressional reaction to Mr. Ford's Soviet trip was more than welcome.

One White House aide observed that, for all the criticism that the President spends too much time away from Washington, his negotiations with Brezhnev re-

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ceived more favorable comment than at any time since the Nixon pardon.

Mr. Ford's own estimate of the political capital contained in the agreement was reflected in his decision to personally brief AFL-CIO President George Meany last Wednesday on the context of the missile agreement. Like President Nixon before him, Mr. Ford places major political emphasis on winning the support—or at least the neutrality—of the AFL-CIO leadership.

For all his differences in personal style, Mr. Ford's White House is in fact beginning to resemble his predecessor's in many ways. Like Nixon, for example, the President is now demonstrating his willingness to use Congress as a foil by presenting it with politically unacceptable budget cuts that he knows Congress is unwilling to make.

This week Mr. Ford vetoed a veterans' educational bill—and promptly predicted that Congress will override his veto. The following day, in an unheralded move, he gave new authority to the Office of Management and Budget to determine whether the budget proposals of federal departments had inflationary impact. While the White House insists that this is only a mechanism for better management, it seemed on the surface to be concentrating power in the budget office much as Nixon had done.

But it is in his frequent travels within the United States and abroad that Mr. Ford most resembles the President he replaced.

In his first 15 weeks in office Mr. Ford has been anything but a stay-at-home President. During the midterm election campaign he traveled 16,685 miles and visited 20 states.

He spent eight days out of the country on the grueling trip to Japan, Korea and the Soviet Union. On Dec. 14 he will leave the country for three more days when he meets with French President Giscard d'Estaing in Martinique. And next year, possibly in midsummer, he will travel to China to balance Brezhnev's scheduled June visit to Washington.