

# Nixon Trip: Diplomatic-Political Gain Seen

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 12—President Nixon is the third President to schedule a visit to Moscow and he expects to be the first to make it.

Moreover, he is in a much better position than his predecessors on this course to reap both diplomatic and political

profit from the journey. The White House always deems it un-

sporting to raise political interests

in connection with big-power summitry. But it is not entirely accidental that American interest in these meetings accelerates in election years, when Presidents enjoy not only working for peace but also being seen working at it, for the inseparable good of country and party.

Dwight D. Eisenhower was booked into the Kremlin in June, 1960, but his plans were shot down along with the American U-2 spy plane. The Russians were suffering a massive case of nuclear inferiority at the time they refused to clink glasses with the man who rubbed it in by flying cameras freely through their airspace.

The missile gap has closed dramatically since then and Mr. Nixon has shown himself acutely aware of the Russians' desire to be recognized as strategic equals. In making his travel announcement today, the President again emphasized that neither side could hope for advantage in the arms race

and expressed optimism that at least a symbolic agreement to limit that race might be reached before he flies to Moscow next May.

Although John F. Kennedy had an invitation when he was assassinated, and was hoping to tour the Soviet Union in the spring of 1964, the trip was never actually scheduled. The test-ban treaty and other agreements had made it possible and continued calm in Berlin would have made it certain, his aide, Theodore C. Sorensen, recalls.

Lyndon B. Johnson had the announcement written and mimeographed in 1968 when the Russians invaded Czechoslovakia. Mr. Johnson's journey would have been a kind of last lunge, for the purpose of inaugurating arms control talks, to satisfy a long-standing personal ambition and to help the Democrats in the elections that November.

## Reversal of Luck Seen

Mr. Nixon, although working on the same quadrennial calendar, has been much more deliberate in working up to this moment. In what the White House regards as a reversal of Mr. Johnson's luck, Mr. Nixon believed he profited from Soviet troubles in Eastern Europe, specifically the Polish worker uprising last December.

From that moment on, the President detected a change of direction in Soviet policy, culminating in the invitation to visit Moscow.

Through 1969 and 1970, Mr. Nixon's first years in office,

the Russians were perceived here as hostile and unyielding on the major East-West issues. The President and his advisers thought the Soviet leaders were prepared to live with tense rivalry against both China and the United States while trying to improve relations with West Germany and reduce American influence in Europe and elsewhere.

Mr. Nixon's response was a stern display of displeasure. He reminded the Russians that agreements on arms, the relaxation of tensions in the Middle East and in Central Europe, readjustment in Southeast Asia, better trade relations and other beneficial accommodations, although not firmly "linked" to one another, all depended upon a climate of collaboration.

He let it be known that he regarded deployments of missiles in the Middle East and of nuclear submarines in Cuba and efforts to split the Western alliance as dangerous attempts to win small tactical advantages at the expense of long-term benefits.

It is thought here now that the Polish uprisings brought home to the Soviet leaders the need for East-West stability in all Europe if Communists were to retain secure control over Eastern Europe. They are thought to have concluded that such stability required a reduction of tensions with all Western countries, notably the United States.

The President's subsequent overtures to China probably intensified the Soviet interest in

calm on the western front. They pressed the East Germans to permit a new Berlin agreement, which Mr. Nixon hailed today as a particularly important step. They exchanged assurances with Mr. Nixon that both sides had reached the political decision to reach a limited arms control agreement. And they moved for marginal agreements on emergency communications, naval incidents and biological weapons.

Although the President contends that his forthcoming visits to Peking and Moscow are separate matters, there is little doubt among his advisers that the Soviet-Chinese rivalry has heightened the interest of each power in improving relations with the United States.

## Effect in Hanoi Expected

Moreover, the two trips are bound to become linked in the public's mind and in Mr. Nixon's election-year rhetoric as he dominates the domestic organs of publicity well into 1972 and seizes control of the issue of peace.

The two trips are also linked in the President's mind because he thinks they will help persuade the North Vietnamese that their major allies will not sacrifice their own interests to the Indochina war effort, thus reducing both the diplomatic and political significance of the withering conflict.

Mr. Nixon hopes, in addition, that his journeys to Peking and Moscow will help to becalm the international environment, well before he travels and for a good while afterward. And he hopes

to take the measure of men largely unknown to American leaders. Premier Chou En-lai of China and Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet party leader who is thought now to be clearly in command in Moscow.

And though the Communist leaders may have thought they knew Mr. Nixon — as an unreconstructed cold-warrior — they undoubtedly perceive a new and intriguing figure. Unlike the Russians' previously scheduled guests from the White House, he will not be coming as a lame duck. Indeed, they must know that they are doing their part to keep him very much alive.