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Carrier Makes Detour

To Join Nixon at Fete

NORFOLK, Va., May 18 (AP)—“Why not? He’s the President” was how a Navy official explained why the aircraft carrier Independence made a 1,000-mile detour to be here when President Nixon arrives Saturday.

The Independence left here a few days ago to participate in Armed Forces Day observances at Mayport, Fla., Saturday. But when the White House announced Wednesday that President Nixon would make an Armed Forces Day speech here Saturday, the Navy ordered the carrier’s return to serve as a backdrop for Mr. Nixon’s appearance.

The ship dropped anchor here yesterday after steaming full power on the return trip.

Under full power, a carrier uses thousands of gallons of fuel for a trip such as the Independence undertook. Navy officials said the cost was not a factor since the Independence was on a training cruise and she was “still in training and was training all the way back.” The officials said it costs the same amount, whether the training is conducted off Florida’s east coast or off the Virginia capes.