

Bush Hints New China Ties

By Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writer

U.S. envoy George H. W. Bush returned to Peking yesterday looking forward to resumption of his "Double Happiness" Ping-Pong game and to eventual upgrading of his liaison post to a full ambassadorship.

Bush departed after hinting that the United States might be ready to move ahead in its long-promised efforts to strengthen its relationship with the People's Republic of China.

Chinese leaders have become increasingly critical of what they regard as a two-China policy by the United States, which maintains military establishment on Taiwan and normal diplomatic relationships with the Chiang Kai-shek government.

Without giving details, he said that the United States will improve its relationships with the People's Republic.

"We have reiterated our support of the Shanghai communique," Bush said. "We want to strive to its fulfillment."

When the communique was signed on Feb. 27, 1972, following the Nixon administration's establishment of relations with the Chinese mainland government, the Chinese said that Taiwan was the crucial issue "obstructing the normalization of relations between China and the United States."

The United States in signing the communique acknowledged that all Chinese regarded Taiwan as part of China. It affirmed the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from Taiwan as an ultimate objective.

Bush's general statement of U.S. willingness to improve its

relations with Peking was cast in similar words to those used earlier in the week by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

Kissinger, who conferred with Bush yesterday before the latter departed for China, reportedly had previously told the U.S. envoy not to discuss the China situation during his recent two weeks in Washington. As a result, Bush declined most interviews. This decision was reinforced by a severe intestinal disorder that hospitalized Bush during part of his home stay and caused him to lose 20 pounds.

However, the former Republican national chairman is believed privately to have advocated further accommodations with the People's Republic on the Taiwan issue in hopes of moving toward full recognition by the Chinese government.

In an interview yesterday,

"Recent two weeks," in specific terms, would cover period of 23 Jan to 6 Feb 75. Since the phrase is not precise, the starting point could be slightly earlier or later than 23 Jan.

Bush discussed life in China, his own political plans and a recent remark by former President Nixon that he, Nixon, might one day become ambassador to China.

"I'm very happy in my job," Bush said with a smile in response to the Nixon suggestion.

Bush, an avid and accomplished tennis player, has improved his game during his three months in Peking. He also has taken up Ping-Pong and purchased "Double Happiness" rackets for himself and his wife, Barbara. "Double Happiness" is the brand name of China's high-quality Ping-Pong racket.

Bush admits to being "disappointed" last September when President Ford declined to nominate him for the vice presidency after the field of prospective nominees had narrowed to himself and Nelson A. Rockefeller. But he said in

the interview that it was "good to get out of the political crossfire" and that he regards his China post as "a fascinating and valuable assignment."

The former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations has shuttled between a political and a diplomatic career. After two terms in the House and an unsuccessful race for the Senate in Texas he was named by Nixon as ambassador to the United Nations. He then served a difficult period as Republican National chairman during the year that the Watergate scandal led to Nixon's impeachment and ultimately to his resignation.

Bush retains a desire to re-enter politics, although he says he has no specific blueprint for the future. If he serves the expected two-years of duty in Peking, he would not return to the United States until late in 1976.