

The President's Reception

by Gerald Tannebaum *

"What kind of reception will Nixon receive in China?"

I have been asked this everywhere since I left there - in Europe, England, Canada and the United States.

From observing the Chinese mastery in doing the correct thing with infinite grace, I would say that President Nixon will get a reception befitting a head of state.

I visualize the ceremony as a solemn and polite affair. The low-profiled, functionally designed Peking airport building will serve as a backdrop, bedecked with the Stars and Stripes and the red five-starred flag of the People's Republic of China.

As the President steps from his plane the national anthems ... will be played by a military band and a 21-gun salute will ring out. Brief speeches will be made by host and guest and then Mr. Nixon will review a spit-and-polish guard of honor wearing the simple khaki tunic and long trousers of the People's Liberation Army.

Usually such a ceremony is witnessed by a welcoming crowd of from five to ten thousand, led by top officials. In this case that should include one or both present heads of the Government, Vice Chairman Tung Pi-wu, elder statesman and one of the twelve founders of the Communist party; or Soong Ching-line, widow of national hero Sun Yat-sen. If their health does not permit, it is possible they will be on hand to welcome the Nixons in the reception room of the state guest house.

Certainly Premier Chou En-lai will figure prominently, accompanying the President and his party as they walk around the huge square formed by the on-lookers, greeting them and being greeted in return by applause and shouted slogans.

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[After twenty-mile into the city the limousines] will turn right into the six-lane Chang An Chieh, Peking's main boulevard on which is located the largest square in the world facing the 500-year-old Tien An Men Several hundred thousand people will form an avenue through which the cars will slowly drive.

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