

Nixon Jet Was Command Post

PEKING (AP) — President Nixon transformed his big jet, The Spirit of '76, into an aerial foreign policy command post during his long, precedent-setting trip to China.

Nixon spent 23 hours and 20 minutes aboard the craft in making the 11,510-mile flight in four installments. With him were Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Henry A. Kissinger, the president's assistant for national security affairs.

During much of their time aloft, the three men worked together or alone on preparations for the first-ever summit talks on Chinese soil by a U.S. president.

THROUGH the plane's advanced communications equipment, Nixon and his foreign policy advisors kept in continual touch with the State Department and National Security Council staff in Washington to stay abreast of developments around the globe.

Rarely, if ever, have so many U.S. foreign policy shapers spent so much time aloft together. And each man had his own cadre of assistants aboard.

While numbers varied slightly from leg to leg of the journey, 50 men and four women flew into China with the president. Nine were Secret Service bodyguards and 15 were members of the plane's crew.

Although the crewmen are all Air Force men, they wore business suits into China—to underscore, said the White

House, the peaceful purposes of Nixon's journey.

Landfall in China, at Shanghai's Rainbow Bridge Airport, was officially listed as 8:55 a.m., China time, Monday. That was 7:55 p.m. Sunday in New York.

THE FIRST men off the plane were Air Force security police who mount a 24-hour guard around the presidential aircraft, an intercontinental model of the Boeing 707.

By coincidence, the temperature in Peking upon arrival was 34 degrees, the same as on the blustery Thursday morning Nixon left the U.S. capital. Here the sun was shining, however, whereas leaden skies in Washington had presaged a snowstorm.

Nine Chinese, several of them women, made the flight from Shanghai to Peking aboard The Spirit of '76. Most of them toured the craft from front to rear during the trip, shaking hands with the Americans aboard, grinning and bowing.