

Ford Flies to Peking -- Big Welcome Planned

Peking

President Ford flew to China yesterday for a welcome that government officials here said would equal or exceed the greeting given to Richard Nixon on his 1972 visit.

First Vice Premier Teng Hsiad-ping, the effective head of the government since Chou En-lai became gravely ill, led the welcoming party.

Authorities said that a number of foreign diplomats from third world countries who were not permitted to attend the Nixon arrival in Peking are expected to greet Mr. Ford.

Government officials said this welcome would be a demonstration of the importance attached to

Mr. Ford's visit by China, which is anxious to nourish its relationship with the United States because of fears of Russian expansionism.

The President flew here from Anchorage, where he spent the night after inspecting the Alaskan pipeline and attending a birthday party for Senator Ted Stevens, 52, who heads the president's election campaign in Alaska.

American officials said even before the President left Washington that they do not anticipate major diplomatic developments as a result of Mr. Ford's visit.

But both the President and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger contend that the maintenance of a relationship between the

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United States and China is an important achievement in itself.

"I am traveling to the People's Republic of China to strengthen our new relationship with the great nation from whom we were isolated in mutual suspicion for almost a quarter century," Mr. Ford said before he left Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

"Stability in Asia and international security benefit from the new relationship of mutual respect that we are developing between the United States and China," the President added. "We will stand for our own views, as we always have. But we will seek — in the American tradition — to foster mutual understanding."

Mr. Ford was favored by relatively good weather both in Alaska, where the temperature rose from 30 below zero to ten degrees above shortly before his arrival, and Peking, where the climate is dry with unusually little wind. The temperature there was in the mid-30s.

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