

Nixon's Fence-Mending

*He Ends 'Minisummit' Preparations
For His Trips to Peking and Moscow*

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Special to The New York Times

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Jan. 7—Premier Eisaru Sato of Japan, with a smile, a bow and a handshake, boarded his helicopter and disappeared into the gray skies over the Western White House today.

President Nixon's month-long series of "minisummits" with five of America's most valued and powerful allies had come to an end.

News

Analysis

The summit meetings with the Communist powers are still to come, but Mr. Nixon has always viewed his conversations with the Canadians, French, British, West Germans and Japanese as necessary and important preliminaries to his trips to Peking and Moscow.

If there was one central theme on the five meetings, it was the recognition that the old cold-war balance of power, dominated by Washington and Moscow, was rapidly changing and that it was high time for Mr. Nixon and his friends to sit down and sort out their relationships in a world in which not just the Russians and Americans but also Western Europe, Japan and China were struggling for new patterns of accommodation and influence.

Something for Pompidou

But there were other important and related themes, not least Mr. Nixon's desire to patch up frayed relations with old allies before his visits to old enemies, and thus strengthen his credentials. In his later talks as a member in good standing of a unified Western alliance.

To that end, Mr. Nixon went carefully prepared to each meeting with something to give, a bagful of big and little symbols of America's eagerness to retain its old ties in a period of realignment and change.

To Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, who met with the President in Washington in early December, he gave assurances that the United States had no wish to reduce Canada to an economic colony and hinted that he would soon lift the 10 per cent surcharge that had hurt Canadian exports.

In the Azores, with President Pompidou, he announced his willingness to devalue the dollar, which the French had demanded as the price for the realignment of major currencies and the beginning of serious trade talks between the United States and the Common Market.

To Prime Minister Heath of

Britany who had been badly shaken in midsummer by Mr. Nixon's sudden announcement of his China visit and his tough new economic policies, he pledged to restore the habit of consultation between two old friends.

To West German Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany, he gave assurances that he would strike no separate deals with Moscow on troop reductions in Europe while giving Mr. Brandt's own efforts to normalize relations with the Communist world a friendly pat on the back.

And to Mr. Sato, he gave much the same assurances of no deals in his visit to Peking.

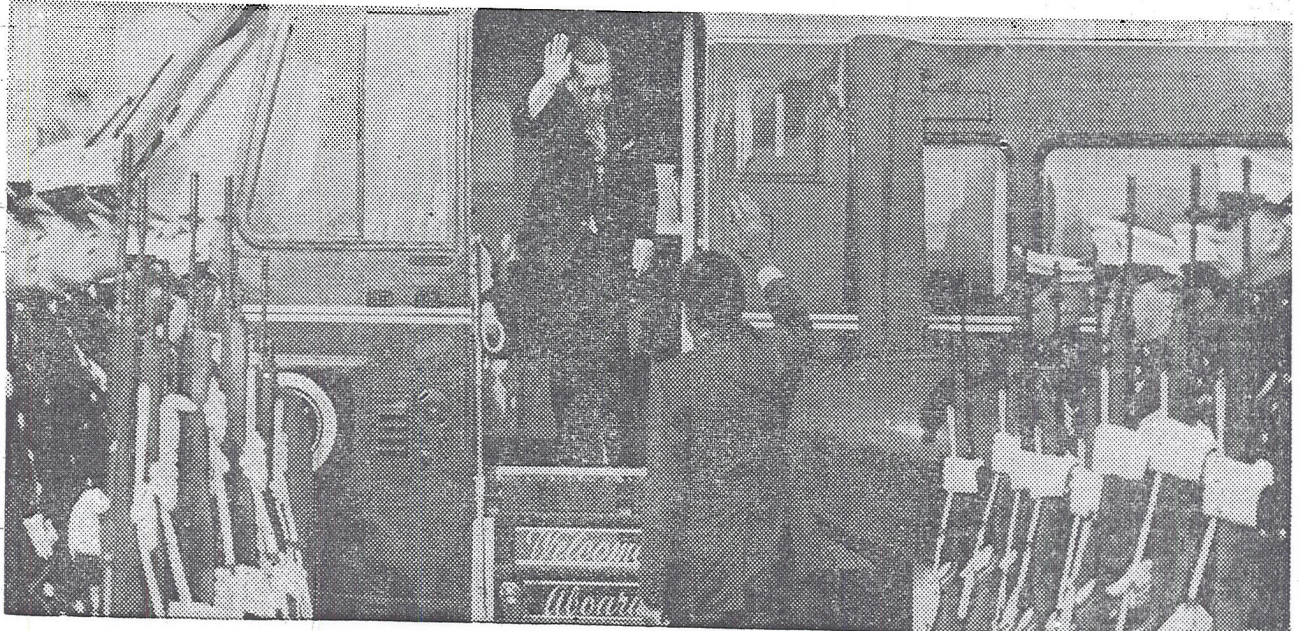
Some of this was obviously more for atmosphere than for substance, aimed more at flattery than at agreement on concrete issues. Mr. Nixon's formal announcement of the lifting of the surcharge, on the eve of his talks with Mr. Heath, was a foregone conclusion and could have been made by his press secretary: he did it merely to get the discussions off on a good footing.

Similarly, the announcement here today of a new hot line between Tokyo and the United States was symbolism. And, with the exception of the Azores session with Mr. Pompidou, the presence of John Connally at most of the meetings was plainly not required to discuss economic issues that might have been handled just as well at a lower level. But to a President anxious to please his allies, the presence of the Treasury Secretary was important window-dressing.

Nor, in retrospect, have these meetings solved the manifold problems confronting the allies. Mr. Nixon won an agreement from Mr. Pompidou to allow the Common Market to take serious new look at patterns of trade—a matter of prime importance to the American side—but much hard bargaining remains ahead.

Similarly, while Mr. Nixon and Mr. Sato agreed on a hot line and a firm date for the reversion of Okinawa to Japan, they did not, apart from bland assurances of continued "close cooperation," reach any firm agreement on the shape of future Japanese-American relations, Japan's political and military role in the Pacific, and the relationships of both countries with Peking.

Officials here are under no illusions. They know that these and other major problems remain, that Mr. Nixon's whirlwind consultations are only a



FAREWELL: Premier Eisaku Sato of Japan boarding copter in San Clemente, Calif., bids good-by to President Nixon

The New York Times/Mike Lien

beginning. But they think it has been a good beginning. Mr. Nixon had some serious fence-mending to do before going to Peking and Moscow, and his associates believe that he has done a more than adequate repair job. His diplomatic and economic initiatives last summer embarrassed some allies, genuinely frightened others, and created an impression that he was prepared to go it alone on the world stage; his asso-

ciates believe that he has successfully made the point that he has no such intention. "We have emphasized and re-emphasized, I think with considerable success, that we are not going to operate over the heads of our friends and allies on these visits," Secretary of State William P. Rogers said last night, adding later: "The summit hearings are part of a process of consulta-

tions that we intend to undertake in the months and years ahead." Mr. Nixon may have served himself in other, more lasting ways. As his foreign policy adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, is quick to concede, international power politics is not what it used to be. Others besides the United States and the Soviet Union are working to reshape those politics, and this country

may no longer be dominant in the the process. Yet, while recognizing the realities of change, Mr. Nixon clearly wants and believes that he deserves a major voice in the proceedings, and he appears to have sensed that he would have weakened that voice had he not matched his overtures to Peking and Moscow with some thoughtful, if less colorful, efforts to reopen a dialogue with his friends.