

Instant Telecasts to U.S. Of Nixon's China Trip Set

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 19—When President Nixon sets foot in Peking on Feb. 21, his historic step will be televised instantly—via a \$1.6-million trailer in the Chinese capital, an Intelset satellite in the Pacific sky, a communications station in Jamesburg, Calif., and a transcontinental cable to New York—into millions of American living rooms.

United States television networks are preparing to transmit almost all of the President's steps in China during his eight days of meetings there. Most of the transmission will be live and in color.

As the technical details and procedures that will be used became known today, it was increasingly apparent that Mr. Nixon would dominate television screens within the weeks before the first Presidential primary of 1972.

But the White House, sensitive that it might be accused of seeking to exploit the China visit is trying to counter that impression.

At a meeting in New York yesterday, Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House Press Secretary, said that television representatives in China would be treated "on the same basis as all other media."

John A. Scali, a former diplomatic correspondent for the American Broadcasting Company who is now a special consultant to the President, said today: "It's the networks who have put pressure on the White House for this coverage. It's never been the other way around."

All the same, the point is proving difficult for the White House to make in the face of the diplomatic and technical efforts undertaken by the Administration and the networks to assure the possibility of live television coverage from Peking.

When Mr. Ziegler went to China earlier this month to make advance preparations for the President's journey, the only newsmen permitted to accompany the official party were officials of the three networks.

50 Tons of Equipment Going

On Jan. 28, three Hercules planes leased from Saturn Airways in Oakland, Calif., will fly more than 50 tons of communications equipment, most of it necessary for television, to Peking. A few days later, 60 or more technicians will follow to assist the Chinese in setting up the satellite ground station and television equipment aboard the cargo planes. The technicians will remain in China until March 1.

Of the 80 journalists who will be accredited to accompany the President to China, more than half will represent television and radio, including four correspondents from each major broadcast network.

By contrast, no working newsmen from a print medium has taken part in advance journeys to China. Major American publications have been dissuaded by the White House from making plans to send more than one correspondent each, and only about 25 newspapers are likely to be represented at all.

One columnist, Don Oberdorfer of The Washington Post, has recalled that Mr. Nixon wrote in his book "Six Crises" that "weher votes are concerned, a paraphrase of what Mr. Khrushchev claims in an 'ancient Russian proverb' could not be more controlling: 'One TV picture is worth 10,000 words.'"

Mr. Ziegler, aware of such skepticism about the accommodating White House attitude toward television coverage of the China trip, protested in an interview that the initiative for the live color coverage had come entirely from the networks.

"We are not giving emphasis or overemphasis to television—or to magazines, or to other print media," Mr. Ziegler asserted. "However, the realities of life are that it takes more people to transmit news on some news media categories than on others."

Robert Siegenthafer, chairman of the networks' arrangements committee and one of those who traveled to China with Mr. Ziegler, said that the network group had dealt "directly with the Chinese television people."

"Obviously," he added, "we had the cooperation of the White House or we wouldn't have been let in. But once we were in China we worked it out directly. I don't know who the Chinese TV people report to, but we don't report to the United States Government."

One network official familiar with the television negotiations in Peking between Jan. 3 and 7 said privately, however, that the White House had energetically endorsed network arguments for large numbers of personnel and extensive live telecasts.

Mr. Scali said that he and Mr. Ziegler had also worked hard to raise the number of

reporters for all media "from the very small number the People's Republic of China was originally willing to admit."

Furthermore, Mr. Ziegler contended that the \$1.6-million satellite communications station that will be flown to Peking and leased to the Chinese Government by Western Union International would assure swift reporting by print media as well.

The ground station, which weighs 25 tons, will be kept in Peking from Feb. 1 to March 1, along with two mobile television vans that will be used to tape Mr. Nixon's activities when he visits Shanghai and Hangchow.

A spokesman for the Hughes Aircraft Company of Culver City, Calif., which built the ground station, said that it would be the only direct communications link between China and the United States.

A representative of Western Union International here said that the ground station's single video channel and several of its 60 voice channels would be reserved for television personnel. The remainder of the voice channels will be divided among radio network representatives, magazine and newspaper reporters and photographers. An undisclosed number of channels will be reserved for the White House.

Mr. Ziegler, urging that such facilities be described in perspective, said, "Write it in a realistic way instead of writing it that there is going to be a television spectacular. What there is going to be is news coverage out of China on a major Presidential initiative."