

Nixon to Make Mideast Tour in June

By Murrey Marder
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Nixon is now contemplating a tour of the Middle East starting the weekend of June 8, with a second major trip, to the Soviet Union, the week of June 24.

White House officials confirmed yesterday that there will be two separate presidential trips abroad and that the Middle East journey will precede the long-planned summit conference in the Soviet Union.

There is "no firm date yet for the President's Middle East travel," White House

sources said, "but it will be earlier rather than later." A tentative departure date of June 8 is being considered for the President, administration sources said. The prospective itinerary would take Mr. Nixon to Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and possibly Iran.

This schedule would include the three primary antagonists in the Arab-Israeli war last October—Israel, Egypt and Syria—now covered by the military disengagement plans negotiated by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, plus two major oil powers in the

region, Saudi Arabia and Iran, whose production and prices have great impact on world energy supplies.

Final decisions on the President's travel await discussions with Kissinger. The secretary is scheduled to meet with President Nixon at a 9 a.m. White House breakfast today, a few hours after Kissinger's return from an exhausting 33 days of Middle East shuttle diplomacy. Mr. Nixon has hailed Kissinger's Israeli-Syrian negotiations as "a major diplomatic achievement."

At 10:30 a.m. today Kissinger is scheduled to brief a

bipartisan meeting of Senate and House leaders at the White House on his Israeli-Syrian diplomacy and the prospects for further advances toward peace in the Middle East.

President Nixon, by planning a trip to the Middle East on the heels of Kissinger's diplomacy, will be dramatizing the accomplishments of his administration while an impeachment threat hangs over him.

The Middle East trip, combined with the American-Soviet

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summit conference at the end of the month, will provide the administration with almost daily displays of international activity throughout the month of June.

White House press spokesman Gerald L. Warren said yesterday that the specific dates for President Nixon's trip to the Soviet Union will be announced "very soon." Warren said President Nixon met for more than an hour yesterday afternoon with Vice President Ford primarily to discuss the new Middle East accord.

The White House and the State Department are both engaged in preparations for the President's Middle East travel. Officials expressed the hope, and belief, that the security hazards for such a trip, always rated very high, will be diminished by the agreement of Syria, one of the most embittered of the Arab nations, to

join in an American-sponsored disengagement accord.

Diplomats say this accomplishment, with Kissinger's 13 trips to Damascus, transcends

the lack of formal diplomatic relations between the United States and Syria, which were broken during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. Official sources

indicated, however, that the other potential stops on the President's Middle East itinerary have been dropped for security reasons.

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