

CBS Radio (9? a.m.)

Former President Richard Nixon is about to leave for Peking. A Boeing 707 of China's Civil Aviation Administration is standing ready on the apron at Los Angeles International Airport to take him and Mrs. Nixon to Peking at the invitation of the Chinese government. Betty Ann Bowser reports.

Bowser: The red, white and blue Boeing 707 is on the ground waiting for the Nixon party here at Los Angeles International Airport. It carries a crew of 17 Chinese, 7 stewardesses, 10 technicians. The plane has been specially outfitted for this flight, with two beds for Mr. and Mrs. Nixon put on board and a white lace tablecloth put on a dinner table. The senior ranking Chinese diplomat from Washington, a Mr. Han Hsu, is here to send the Nixons off. The Nixon party numbers about 20, most of them Secret Service agents.

It's not clear why, but the party of the former President and his wife has stopped at a hotel a few blocks from the airport, a Marriott hotel.* About the only explanation anyone can offer is that in his first run for the presidency, the Marriott hotel chain was his number one contributor, and for a time the former President's brother, Donald, served as the chain's executive vice-president.

Betty Ann Bowser, CBS News, Los Angeles

CBS Radio (9:15? a.m.)

[First part of broadcast missed.]

.... The Nixon party drove up from the San Clemente villa earlier in the morning, accompanied by two carloads of Secret Service agents. Mr. Nixon, wearing a blue suit, and Pat in a green coat with fur collar, declined to talk to a large contingent of news reporters and cameramen, instead chatted briefly with some Chinese officials at the boarding ramp, paused briefly for an official photographer, then disappeared inside the large white plane. It carries an official flag of the People's Republic of China on the tail, with Chinese lettering on the side. The Nixons will return from Peking on February 29th. The visit is in response to a long-standing official invitation from Chinese leaders.

Alex Sullivan, Los Angeles

CBS Radio (10 a.m.)

It was a silent former President Nixon who departed for China today in an Air China Boeing 707. I'm Douglas Edwards, reporting on the CBS Radio Network. On hand for the Nixon departure from Los Angeles was Betty Ann Bowser.

Bowser: Mr. and Mrs. Nixon arrived in a black limousine, accompanied by two Chinese diplomats. [Perhaps the reason for the stop at hotel? - see first item.] ~~There~~ There was some hand-shaking at the foot of the plane's ramp, then the Nixons looked over at a long line of television and still cameras several times, he almost expressionless, she with a smile. Mr. Nixon looked well, no trace of a limp, and he was suntanned.

With little ceremony, Mr. and Mrs. Nixon then boarded the Boeing 707 and joined the rest of their party, made up mostly of Secret Service men. The jet taxied down the runway and took off without having to wait, taking the former President to China for the second time, on the eve of the anniversary of his first trip four years ago.

Betty Ann Bowser, CBS News, Los Angeles

* See item below, CBS 10 a.m.; CBS Television, 5:30 p.m.

CBS Radio (10 a.m.)

Former President Richard Nixon is on his way to Peking. The Chinese jetliner sent to pick up Mr. Nixon took off at Los Angeles International Airport about forty minutes ago [9:20 a.m.]. As Mr. Nixon and his wife were welcomed aboard the jetliner, ABC's Dick Shoemaker [phon.] watched.

Shoemaker: Standing at the top of the steps now, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Nixon, private citizens, going to China - his return after four years. Mr. Nixon looks fit and relaxed. He shook hands with the Chinese officials. Now he's getting on board this Chinese American-made Boeing 707, getting ready to go to China. Dick Shoemaker, ABC News, at Los Angeles International Airport.

[New York announcer:] [Garble] ABC's Russell Spurrer [phon.] reports U.S. diplomats consider the Nixon visit to Peking an affront to the White House and the State Department.

~~(End of item.)~~ [Complete.]

CBS Radio (11 a.m.)

Former President Nixon is on his way to China. He and Mrs. Nixon boarded a private jet sent from Peking to pick them up at Los Angeles International Airport about an hour and a half ago. Barry Kalb, in Peking, has a report now on what the Nixon party is likely to be doing once it arrives.

Kalb [voice]: The visit is only one day away but officials here in Peking say they still don't know Mr. Nixon's itinerary. The only thing they've told newsmen here today is that the Nixon party would be arriving after dark Saturday evening [21 Feb] from Tokyo.

One official indicated Mr. Nixon will be outside Peking for part of his week-long stay, and there has been some speculation about places he might visit. One possibility put forward is some area near the long Sino-Soviet border. Another is the scenic town of Kweilin, a spot Mr. Nixon's daughter and son-in-law visited when they were in China last month. One aspect of the trip seems to be a foregone conclusion. The former President will almost certainly meet again with the man responsible for his making this second trip, Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

Barry Kalb, CBS News, Peking

CBS Television (12 noon)

[First part of item, not taped, referred to Nixon's use of a diplomatic passport.] All that the State Department would say about it was that Mr. Nixon got it in 1953, when he was Vice President.

Four years ago to the day the former President made his historic visit to Peking. This time, though, Mr. Nixon and his wife, Pat, ignored the press, and the public was not invited for their take-off. Many people see the trip as a sore spot for President Ford's re-election [sic] campaign.

(End of item.)

ABC Television (5 p.m.)

Jim Dunbar (San Francisco): Nixon [took] off from Los Angeles International this morning aboard a Chinese 707 jetliner, which, incidentally, was the first People's Republic plane to land in the United States in 25 years. ABC's Chuck Henry was there this morning when the plane took off with the Nixons, and here's his report now for News Scene.

Henry: The Chinese plane that was sent to pick up the Nixons is an American-made Boeing 707 jetliner, one of ten such planes sold to the People's Republic of China in a deal consummated after Nixon's first trip to China four years ago. The former President and his wife, Pat, met the plane at a remote hangar across from the main passenger terminal at Los Angeles International Airport. He was greeted there by three Chinese diplomatic officials who flew out from Washington [no names]

CBS Television (5:30 p.m.)

[Walter Cronkite, after a few preliminary remarks on Nixon's trip, introduces Terry Drinkwater, speaking presumably from Los Angeles.]

Drinkwater: [Nixon's] Secret Service motorcade stopped at the Marriott Hotel on the way [to the airport]. There, he met privately with three ranking Chinese officials, including the chief of protocol who had come here to escort Mr. Nixon to the mainland. Fifteen to 20 U.S. Secret Service agents were assigned to accompany Mr. Nixon. An Air Force 707 pilot was also on the passenger list. The highest-ranking Chinese Communist official now in the United States came from Washington to bid the Nixons farewell. No representatives from the U.S. government were present for the ceremony. This flight is stopping at Anchorage and Tokyo for refueling, and then, four years to the day since Mr. Nixon first landed in Peking, he will again be in China.

Terry Drinkwater, CBS News, Los Angeles

Cronkite: It turns out that the Nixon trip will not be entirely cost-free to the American taxpayer. His Secret Service detail reportedly has been expanded considerably for the trip and the cost of the detail's travel and lodging presumably will be billed to the United States government. The Secret Service would not discuss the matter with CBS News but a West Coast newsman, Chuck Ashman of television station KTTV in Los Angeles, quotes Secret Service sources as saying the bill for the extra agents and communications equipment would come to almost a quarter of a million dollars.

[End of item.]

NBC Television (6:30 p.m.)

[John Chancellor, after a few preliminary remarks on Nixon's trip, introduces Frank Burkholzer, who "was at the airport when the Nixons left."]

Burkholzer: Chinese pilots came all the way from Peking to get [Nixon]. The only government officials travelling with him are Chinese, Hsien Tai-yung [phon.] from the Liaison Office in Washington, and Peking's protocol chief, Chu Hsuan-hsien [phon.]. The only officials waving goodbye to him were Chinese, from the office in Washington.

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