

Korff Says State Dept. Encouraged Nixon Trip

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By Harry F. Rosenthal
Associated Press

Rabbi Baruch Korff said yesterday that former President Nixon went to China reluctantly but "at the encouragement of the State Department."

The rabbi who has headed a drive that raised \$280,000 for Nixon's legal fight to retain control of his presidential tapes and papers, said, "I don't think he really wanted to go now."

But Korff said the Chinese wanted Nixon's visit to coincide with the four-year anniversary of his door-opening trip to Peking as President and that the State Department viewed their invitation as a unique opportunity to learn about the political ferment in China.

The State Department has said assertions that it encouraged Nixon's present trip are "untrue."

At his news conference last week, President Ford said Nixon was given no special briefings for his trip. The President has said in an interview since that he will decide when Nixon returns whether to discuss the journey with him.

However, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger has said Nixon will report to the government and that "we will, of course, wish to learn of the nature of his discussions, and impressions."

At a news conference, Korff said Nixon's health still is precarious and that "I don't think he can stand 30 minutes on his feet." Korff said the former President's blood pressure fluctuates and that he still is taking anticoagulant drugs to fight off a recurrence of phlebitis.

A medical corpsman with Nixon in Peking has said the former President must be on his feet no longer than two hours at a time.

"The State Department urged him, encouraged him to make the trip at this time," Korff said. He would not say where he got his information, but said he talked with Nixon the day before the China trip was announced.*

Asked why the State Department urged Nixon to go, he said the United States and other nations were

caught off guard by internal developments in China, where Hua Kuo-feng was made acting premier to succeed the late Chou En-lai.

"Here is an opportunity to get the most intimate picture of what is going on there," Korff added. "You do not believe that the man who opened the door to China will be useful in making an assessment?"

Korff called the news conference in his hotel room to announce that he is resigning from the President Nixon Justice Fund because "I can no longer carry the burdens." Korff, 61, said he will return to his home in Rehoboth, Mass.

[Assistant Secretary of the Treasury David McDonald said the Secret Service paid for the commercial air transportation of its advance team that went to Peking ahead of Nixon.

[The Secret Service does the cost of sending the detail that accompanied Nixon to China, McDonald said. But he said the agency might be billed for "out-of-pocket expenses" incurred

by the agents during Nixon's eight-day stay.

[He noted that Secret Service protection for former presidents is required by law. The agency does not publicly disclose how many agents are used, or what it costs.]

* Announcement was made 6 Feb 76.