

Ford View of Vote: Nixon Trip to China 'Probably Harmful'

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By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26—President Ford said today that former President Richard M. Nixon's trip to China "probably was harmful" to Mr. Ford's campaign in the New Hampshire primary election.

The President said that returns in Tuesday's Presidential primary had not been fully analyzed yet. But when they are, he said, "I presume there will be evidence that it probably hurt."

Mr. Ford made his comments during a taped interview with Ralph Renick of radio station WTVJ in Miami.

Asked twice about the impact of Mr. Nixon's trip, the President said, "I think the weight of the evidence we have so far—we don't have all the evidence in—that it probably was harmful, but I wouldn't want to make that comment at this time."

Mr. Ford narrowly won the Republican Presidential primary in New Hampshire, receiving 51 percent of the vote. His challenger, former Gov. Ronald Reagan of California, got 49 percent.

During the interview, the President emphasized Mr. Nixon's role as a private citizen in Peking.

"President Nixon went to China as a private citizen on the invitation of the Chinese Government," Mr. Ford said. "He did not speak for this Administration in foreign policy."