



## Nixon's China Visit

**Joseph Kraft**

Longer version, China file

**R**ICHARD NIXON'S decision to visit China next week is a sleazy act typical of the qualities which earned him the sobriquet Tricky Dick. It expresses again his lifelong vendetta against the American people and their government.

For the visit could have no foreign policy effect, besides perhaps fortifying Chinese misconceptions about relations between Russia and the Western countries. But the domestic political impact is bound to weaken President Ford.

The starting point is the Chinese misconception. Ever since the military skirmishing with Russia on the Sino-Soviet border, Peking has been trying to embroil the United States and its European allies in the kind of global hostility with Moscow which marked the 1950s.

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**T**HE CHINESE have consistently showered maximum honors upon Western opposition leaders whom they believe to represent the spirit of confrontation with Moscow, supposedly abandoned by governments now in power. For example, Franz-Josef Strauss, the Christian Democratic leader, was invited to Peking and treated to a visit with Mao Tse-tung in order to underline the view that the German government under the Socialist regime of Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt was too soft on the Russians.

The Chinese, almost totally ignorant of the details of Watergate, have

put Nixon in the Strauss class. Ever since his impeachment and resignation in August 1974, they have been making it known that they would like him to visit Peking and to meet again with Chairman Mao.

In matters of serious foreign policy, Nixon can do absolutely nothing. What his visit can do, however, is to give added currency to a mistaken notion that under President Ford the U.S. has suddenly gone soft on the Russians.

In fact, President Ford has pried from the Russians concessions Nixon never could have wrested. If there's a flagging in the American effort, it is mainly due to the suspicions of executive discretion in foreign policy engendered in the Congress by Nixon's lies about Vietnam and Watergate.

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**B**UT THESE truths do not serve the demagogues now opposing Mr. Ford. Ronald Reagan and former Texas Governor John Connally argue a failure of leadership. Nixon's China visit will have as its chief and only consequence the fortifying of their argument against detente.

So just as he betrayed all his colleagues in office, Nixon is now betraying the man who pardoned him. His actions can only foster a deadlock in the Republican party between Reagan and Mr. Ford, which will serve to promote the candidacy of the man he really wanted to succeed him as President, his old hero John Connally.