



On departure at Los Angeles were Chu Chuan Hsien (left), a protocol officer for China, former President and Mrs. Nixon, and Tsien Ta Yung, Chinese liaison officer

UPI Telephoto

Nixon, Pat Leave L.A. for China

Los Angeles

Former President Nixon flew out of Los Angeles yesterday on a private visit to China, his first venture out of the country since the Watergate scandal drove him from the presidency 18 months ago.

Accompanied by his wife, Pat, and a number of aides and Secret Service agents, Mr. Nixon left Los Angeles International Airport at 9:20 a.m. aboard a Boeing 707 jetliner sent for him and his party by Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

The trip got under way exactly four years after the former president's first visit to Peking, which led to the establishment of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China.

The Nixons arrived at a remote, restricted section of the airport at 9 a.m. in a four-car motorcade after a 90-minute drive from their San Clemente estate.

Mr. Nixon, wearing a blue suit, white shirt and a subdued red-and-blue tie, looked tanned and healthy

but walked stiffly.

Absent from the sendoff were any ranking U.S. government officials. The White House has repeatedly sought to disassociate itself from the Nixon trip.

The flight, with stopovers in Anchorage and Tokyo, is expected to take 20 hours' flying time.

The Nixons will return to the United States February 29.

Los Angeles Times