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Ford's Choice for New U.S. Envoy to China

Washington

President Ford is expected to name Thomas S. Gates Jr., a prominent banker and a former defense secretary, as the next chief of the United States Liaison Mission in China.

Congressional and administration sources said yesterday that formalities remain to be completed with the Chinese before an announcement can be made, but that barring an unexpected development, Gates will replace George Bush as head of the Peking mission.

Bush recently assumed his new duties as director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Hugh Scott, the Senate Republican leader from Pennsylvania, had long been rumored for the Peking assignment because of his long interest in Chinese art and culture. But Scott, who had announced he would not run for reelection this year, agreed not to leave the Senate now since that

would give Democrats an extra seat.

Gates was said by congressional sources to be "suitable" to Scott because of the political ties through the years between the fellow Pennsylvanians.

Gates is also said to be close ideologically to William Scranton, the former governor of Pennsylvania, whom President Ford named Wednesday to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Gates, who will be 70 on April 10, would be the third head of the Peking mission. David K. E. Bruce opened it in 1973 and was replaced by Bush in September, 1974.

Like his predecessors, Gates has had no experience in Chinese affairs, but he is regarded by his friends in Washington as an able administrator and one of the most competent officials to have headed the vast Pentagon. He was defense secretary from 1959 to 1961.

New York Times

Longer version, China file.