

Nixon to Give State Dept. Written Report on China Trip

By Edward Walsh

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Former President Nixon will provide a written report to the State Department on his recent trip to China, White House press secretary Ron Nessen said yesterday.

Nessen made the announcement in answer to a question and then spent most of the rest of his news briefing dodging other questions about the Nixon report.

He said the White House was informed of Nixon's intentions by a telephone call from San Clemente, Calif., where Nixon lives. But Nessen said he did not know whether the former President placed the call and he would not say who accepted the call at the White House, except to describe the person as "a functionary."

One White House source may have been Bill Gulley, a retired Air Force master sergeant who works in the White House military aide's office. Early in the Ford administration, according to another source, Gulley was named the White House liai-

son for former presidents and their families.

Nixon spent more than a week in China, returning at the end of February, and had several lengthy meetings with Hua Kuo-feng, China's new acting premier. Despite that unique opportunity for an American, Nessen has said the administration would leave it up to Nixon to decide whether he had anything "significant" to report.

Nessen's refusal to discuss any details of the call from San Clemente—a position decided on by President Ford's senior advisers at a meeting yesterday morning—was typical of the manner in which the White House has handled questions about Nixon's trip which has been a political embarrassment to the President.

Mr. Ford and his aides have said repeatedly that Nixon was "a private citizen" on a private journey, that the administration played no part in arranging the trip and that there were no plans for the President, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger or other top ad-

ministration officials to discuss it with Nixon.

In short, Mr. Ford and his advisers have attempted to put as much distance as possible between themselves and the former President.

Nixon's trip to China coincided with the Feb. 24 New Hampshire presidential primary and there was fear among Ford campaign strategists that it would remind voters of Mr. Ford's 1974 pardon of Nixon, damaging the President in the election.

The night of the New Hampshire primary, when the early returns showed Mr. Ford trailing Ronald Reagan, several Ford campaign aides and White House officials said that if Reagan won, Nixon would be to blame. When the final results showed a narrow victory for Mr. Ford, presidential aides quickly began to downplay any impact the Nixon trip had on the election.

The President himself, after some indecision, seems to have decided that the trip hurt him in New Hampshire.