

Insight and Outlook By Joseph Kraft

Fudge Factory

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PAST and prospective resignations afford the President a unique opportunity to remold the State Department. And one important clue to the remodeling job now emerges from the unfortunate case of the Department's chief administrative officer, Deputy Under Secretary William Crockett.



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Among other things Mr. Crockett has had responsibility for dealing with the Congress on State's budget and organization. To smooth the way he made a practice of subscribing to fund-raising dinners for Democratic legislators.

On one occasion, as Richard Harwood of *The Washington Post* has shown, Mr. Crockett arranged for a State Department cocktail party before a fund-raising dinner. Since the Department had no funds for the party, Mr. Crockett asked various friends and business interests in private life to contribute.

One who agreed was a New York real estate magnate, Norman K. Winston, who has been given several honorific jobs by the State Department. In the reckoning, Mr. Crockett, besides receiving about \$200 from Mr. Winston for the party, bought about \$600 worth of stock. The stock is in a company that sells homes to retired Government officials. Thus there is a conflict of interest that now puts Mr. Crockett in hot water.

BUT THE REAL issue in this case is not the conflict of interest which is miniscule. It is not even the greed of Democratic politicians—a fact too well known to require such elaborate documentation.

The real issue is the atmo-

sphere of the State Department, the way the Department has been run under Secretary Rusk. The fact is that the Department has not been run primarily as a decision-making instrument. It has been run as a fudge factory. The aim has been to make everybody happy, to conciliate interests, to avoid giving offense and rocking the boat.

Mr. Crockett is a pure child of that system. He was chosen precisely because he is a virtuoso at distributing small favors. The system made it seem normal to him, though it plainly was not, for State to give bribes to the Congress. And that atmosphere has affected far more serious matters of personnel and policy.

Under the present system at State, jobs are distributed mainly with a view to appeasing the most clamorous elements of the bureaucracy. For example, largely in order to satisfy the job needs of one potent group, the basic unit in the Department is now being upgraded from the country desk to the country office.

The country office will be headed by Class One Foreign Service Officers. As a result, some 50 or 60 officers who were not good enough to make the very top posts abroad now find jobs that are prestigious enough for their rank. The hitch is that the very bright Class Two and Three Foreign Service officers who might have come into their own heading country desks are going to be relegated to subordinate positions.

AS TO POLICY, because State is always looking over its shoulder and anticipating hostile congressional reactions, it almost never comes up with recommendations, however necessary, that are likely to encounter resistance on The Hill. And the technique of doing small favors and making all kinds of conciliatory accommodations has the effect of

making the most insatiable men in the Congress the arbiters of policy.

Thus the long drawn-out and predictably losing battle to enforce Soviet contributions for United Nations peace-keeping forces seems to have been waged largely at the behest of Congressman Wayne Hays of Ohio. Policy in the Congo seems to have been changed in order to mollify—of all

people—Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut.

The moral of all this is that there has to be a break with the present system of accommodating interests and fudging issues. The change can only be made by new men at State. And the new men that can make the change are men who have confidence in themselves and courage in their convictions, who do not feel that foreign policy is an intruder in the American atmosphere that can survive only if babes are thrown to the wolves.

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