

Katzenbach Told of Interests

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One evening in January, 1965, President and Mrs. Johnson had as their dinner guests the then Acting Attorney General and Mrs. Nicholas deB. Katzenbach. It would be another month before Mr. Johnson lifted the "acting" from the Katzenbach title.

At the White House dinner for four, the President suggested that he might name Katzenbach head of the Central Intelligence Agency. Katzenbach replied that he would be happy to serve in any post the President wished him to take. Then Mr. Johnson asked where his real interests lay.

"In international affairs," said Katzenbach, recalling that he once had taught international law.

That conversation must have popped back into the President's head recently as he was pondering a successor to George W. Ball as Under Secretary of State.

To official Washington and the country at large, however, the appointment was another of the famous Johnson rabbit-from-the-hat tricks. Few knew until Ball revealed it yesterday that he had tried in early 1961 to recruit Katzenbach for an assistant secretaryship at State. But Katzenbach then preferred an equivalent rank at Justice, where he became a close associate of Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

It was at Kennedy's request, when he resigned, that the President named Katzenbach Acting Attorney General. Yet the old Kennedy connection, a black mark in many a man's book of late, has made no difference in this case. It appears that Katzenbach has transformed himself with ease from a Kennedy man to a Johnson man, so great is his sense of loyalty to his present boss.

Since he is now giving up a place at the Cabinet table to take a No. 2 job, even though in the senior department, there was speculation yesterday that Mr. Johnson might be grooming him to take over eventually from Secretary of State Dean Rusk.

If so, Mr. Johnson gave no hint of it. And the President's confidence in Rusk, as stated both publicly and privately, remains undiminished.

However, it is often noted that Rusk has been on the job a long time—five years and eight months yesterday, a period exceeded by only eight of his 52 predecessors. Of late the Secretary has often seemed visibly tired and he recently was hospitalized for grippe. Furthermore, he

was quoted in Look magazine earlier this month as saying that his savings were gone and he would have two youngsters in college this fall.

"When the balance gets zero-zero," said Rusk, "I'll have to quit. It's as simple as that." Ball said yesterday he was quitting chiefly for financial reasons. Yet money alone is not the decisive factor in Rusk's case.

Many believe that Rusk will quit in another year. This is based on the thesis that he feels he is so much involved in the Vietnam war he must carry on until, as one person recently put it, "he can see some light at the end of the tunnel." Rusk has not said he can yet see even a glimmer but there are those in high places who think there may be light in the next 12 months.

Katzenbach's appointment

thus gives the President the option of moving him up, if Rusk does quit, and if he turns out to be an able No. 2 meanwhile.

Katzenbach's views on Vietnam, Europe and a host of other problems are generally unknown. Perhaps the Senate Foreign Relations Committee can find out at his confirmation hearing. More likely he will stick close to what he said yesterday, that "I will do what the President and the Secretary want me to do."

For those who have felt that the State Department has been suffering from tired blood, the Katzenbach appointment represents at best a modest infusion.

For those who think it also suffers from tired policies, the appointment is unlikely to produce any real change. The President has picked a loyal lieutenant to carry out present policies, it appeared yesterday.