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Behind the Spying: Foreign Policy

It would be a mistake, it seems to me, to make dire and doleful predictions about the state of the union on the basis of the latest revelations about spying in the White House.

That a low-level secret agent tried to keep the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed about what Henry Kissinger and President Nixon were up to with the Chinese and the Russians does not suggest "Seven Days in May" or a military takeover.

But it does suggest something more realistic and almost as important: It suggests that, for the first time since World War II, we have been making foreign policy without the generals and the admirals. That fact must have come as a terrible shock to the generals and the admirals, and now that the secret is out, we can expect that there will be a battle to recapture lost ground.

If the Pentagon is to be deprived of its foreign policy role, the Pentagon

will lose power; not only that, generals and admirals will lose jobs. As the spy incident reveals, they are not going to take this lying down.

It seems clear, in retrospect, that the famous leak of the National Security Council minutes in which Kissinger quoted the President as having ordered him to "tilt toward Pakistan" was part of the Pentagon's counterattack. The reasoning of the generals and admirals cannot have been ideological. India has few friends among the military, and Pakistan has many. So the generals and admirals must have agreed with the President's foreign policy. What maddened them was that they were not making it.

In retrospect, too, the President and Dr. Kissinger were probably right in their fear that the Pentagon might learn of their initiatives—particularly of their initiative toward China. Kissinger was convinced that the generals and the admirals would warn the

right wing in Congress of his approach to the world's second Communist power and that the resultant furor might defeat him. For the same reason he feared telling the Japanese, whose ties with Taiwan gave them access to the American right.

So the battle lines are now clearly drawn.

On the one side are career officers long-accustomed to making foreign policy. The way to promotion in the services is by serving on staff, and preferably on staff Washington.

Young men who graduate from West Point or Annapolis, and who want to get ahead, look for appointments on the staffs of the secretary of defense or of the army or of the navy or of the Vice President; and failing these, they look for jobs on the staffs of some interagency planning and operating mechanism.

That was the route of the Marine

Without the Pentagon

Corps' Gen. Robert Cushman and of his successor as deputy director of CIA, Gen. Vernon Walters. The President's assistant, Gen. Alexander Haig, rose the same way. Service in the field, particularly on the battlefield, is still essential, but it is no longer the only essential. Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara set down the rule that no man could rise above the rank of colonel without staff service. McNamara may have had the soldier-statesman in mind. The soldier-politician was one result.

On the other side is Henry Kissinger, who, from the moment he came to the White House, was determined to cut the Pentagon's power over the making of foreign policy. Now that he has become institutionalized in the State Department, he will be even more determined.

The battle will be tough. I hope Kissinger wins.



Henry Kissinger