

WASHINGTON

Merry-Go-Round

Anderson



WASHINGTON — The White House has sought to reassure the American people that President Nixon won't go to Moscow next month in a position of weakness. But sources privy to the preparations for the summit meeting tell us a different story.

They say the Kremlin is fully aware that the President has been badly weakened by Watergate. The Soviets have hinted privately that they wouldn't mind postponing the summit meeting. The Soviets, apparently, don't think they would be able to take advantage of Nixon's weakness. For Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, a shrewd, diplomatic chess player will be at his side.

However, the Soviets would prefer to deal with someone who can commit the United States. The Kremlin leaders are disappointed with President Nixon's inability to gain promised trade concessions from Congress for Russia. They blame his failure on his Watergate troubles.

Largely because of Watergate, the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks have bogged down. Kissinger is still engaged in intense diplomacy with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. But our sources believe the Soviets won't sign any meaningful agreement until Nixon either has regained his political strength or has been replaced.

This means nothing worthwhile is likely to come from the Moscow meeting between Soviet leader Brezhnev and President Nixon. The President may as well stay home.

Fear Africa Race War: State Department insiders fear that the recent Portuguese coup could precipitate a black-vs.-white war in Africa. They believe the odds are against it. But they are quietly considering the foreign policy implications of such a war.

The coup in Lisbon was carried out by military

leaders who are opposed to Portugal's colonial wars in Africa. For over a decade, Portugal has been battling black guerrillas in Portugese Guinea, Angola and Mozambique.

Lisbon's new military junta favors "self determination" for the colonies. Eventually this would lead to independence which would threaten the remaining white governments in Rhodesia and South Africa.

The colonial regimes in both Angola and Mozambique serve as "buffer states" separating South Africa from the black nations. Even now, guerrillas attack South Africa from bases in the Portuguese colonies. With the colonial government gone, South Africa would be subjected to constant assault.

Rhodesia's situation is even more critical. It is a landlocked country, which is dependent on Mozambique's Indian Ocean ports. Should Mozambique gain independence, one State Department expert told us, "Rhodesia is a dead duck."

Thus, it is possible both South Africa and Rhodesia might move to prevent black governments from taking over these buffer states. Already, South African military leaders have quietly visited the United States in search of arms.

Call Him Irresponsible: Secretary intelligence reports warn that Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, the Libyan strongman, is the world's most irresponsible leader. The reports claim he has armed terrorist groups with sophisticated weapons, including shoulder-fired Soviet missiles.

He is also accused of stirring up plots to overthrow neighboring Arab leaders who don't agree with his calls for a "People's War" against Israel and the United States, using the oil embargo, terrorist attacks and other wild measures.

Qaddafi is now trying to bring pressure on the Arab oil ministers to restore the oil

embargo against the United States at their next scheduled meeting on June 12th.

These extremist tactics, however, could backfire. One secret report tells of a discussion between a CIA agent and an oil company official about putting up \$50 million for Qaddafi's assassination. High officials have assured us that the \$50 million assassination talk was nothing but barroom banter and has never been given serious consideration.

But a growing number of world leaders, mostly in the Middle East, would like to eliminate the fiery Qaddafi.

Street Strife: The White House has received secret warnings to prepare for violence in the ghettos this summer. Skyrocketing inflation has stripped the poor of money to buy necessities. Many will be forced to resort to crime in order to survive.

Rising unemployment has also hit unskilled workers the hardest. Hundreds of thousands of teen-agers will be turned into the streets this summer without jobs. This is the sort of situation that breeds crime and violence. The ghettos are growing restless and outbreaks of violence and vandalism have already been reported in big cities.

The federal government and the National Alliance of Businessmen will provide several thousand summer jobs. But past experience indicates these will be snapped up by better-educated, higher-income youths. The young people who need the jobs the most will be left jobless and moneyless as prices soar.

The moral atmosphere in the White House could also aggravate the situation. Many youngsters now have the attitude that the White House crowd are ripping off the people so why shouldn't they.

President Nixon's biggest trouble this year may turn out to be in the streets rather than in the Senate.

Probing That Gap: The Watergate grand jury hasn't forgotten about the famous

18 1/2-minute gap in one of President Nixon's key tapes. Tape experts have charged that the gap was caused by several deliberate erasures.

We can report that the grand jury has been hearing testimony from a number of Secret Service witnesses concerning the taping system. The grand jury's findings could have a major impact on future Watergate trials and even upon the impeachment inquiry.

According to our informants, the Secret Service has carefully briefed its witnesses for this session of the grand jury. But under telling questioning from the Watergate prosecutors, the agents have explained some of the specifics about the White House recording system.

Behind the closed doors of the grand jury room, they have revealed Secret Service technical experts rigged the system. It consisted, they have stated, of two tape recorders which were controlled by timers. Each was set to begin operating at 12-hour intervals.

The problem was that the machines did not have tape reels which could record a full 12 hours of conversation. This was the reason, they have told the grand jury, that the tape ran out on the busy April Sunday a year ago when the Watergate cover-up was unraveling. The missing conversations, therefore, may be dropped from investigation.