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SFC/Chron. file

A Candid Look At Kissinger

Washington

Marvin and Bernie Kalb will consider Henry Kissinger "an extravaganza."

That's the way they described him in the opening sentence of "Kissinger," their biography of the secretary of state. And that's what they still think he is.

The revelations about U.S. intervention in the internal affairs of Chile have not substantially altered their assessment of the man, and they believe anyone who would condemn Kissinger for approving the \$11 million that underwrote covert activity in Chile is "naive."

"Eleven million dollars is crap," said Marvin Kalb, 41, while sipping coffee with his brother Bernie, 52, in the State Department cafeteria recently.

"Look at the money we've poured into Laos or Cambodia. If you found out how much money we've spent in Italy under Eisenhower, Kennedy and LBJ, it would make \$11 million look like petty cash."

"I'm disgusted with the emotional swings," continued Marvin. "Chile is nothing new. I've been reporting it for five years. So have other reporters, but all of a sudden everyone gets all riled up. But what about the Vietnam War, the Cambodian bombings. Wasn't that worse?"

Not that the Kalbs endorse U.S. policy in Chile. "It isn't nice that we're interfering with other governments," said Marvin, but they move quickly to shift the ultimate blame from Kissinger's shoulders to Richard Nixon's.

"Kissinger," said Bernie

Kalb, "merely chairs the 40 Committee. All the decisions are unanimous, made by five men. Kissinger would make a unanimous decision to Nixon, who in turn would say yes or no. And Chile was no exception."

Chile, they insisted, must be considered as only one piece in the complex jigsaw puzzle that is Kissinger's foreign policy.

"The idea," said Marvin, "is if the Russians are interfering, we can too. And today, Kissinger's thinking is that the U.S. is locked into a struggle with the USSR in critical parts of the world."

Marvin pointed to his forehead and drew a circle with his index finger. "The bomb," he said, "controlling the bomb. That preoccupies him totally."

"He puts more of his ener-

gy into that than anything else," said Bernie. He is driven by the pursuit of the bomb, occupied by it 90 per cent of the time. That's why Addis Ababa or Cyprus or Bangladesh or Chile are small potatoes.

Kissinger, said the Kalbs, was protecting U.S. interests in Chile, attempting to halt a left-wing movement that might influence other South American countries.

"He gets along better with right-wing dictators than with democratically elected leaders," said Marvin. "He feels that when you make a deal with one man, you've made a deal with the country."

Marvin has known Kissinger for 22 years, since his days as a student of Russian studies at Harvard. He calls Kissinger "a Chekhovian character, smiling on the outside, crying on the inside."

He says he was never affected because the Nazis beat him, but he remembers being beaten up once in this country and not because he was Jewish, and it left a permanent scar.

"But Kissinger was beaten up on his way home from school every day. He was brought up in a society that absolutely disintegrated, and moral values themselves had no value. . . he believes that nations can die, that people, if left on their own, will fight — and nations are nothing more than collections of people."

His idea of foreign policy, continued Marvin, "is always to step in ahead and provide distractions from the fighting that will inevitably go on."

What about the veiled



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suggestion in President Ford's recent Detroit speech that the U.S. might go to war over oil. In their book, the Kalbs say Kissinger has always believed in tactical nuclear weapons for short-range goals.

"No," said Marvin, "he's no longer interested in the use of limited nuclear weapons. It's just that the administration wants to raise the temperature. It's typical Kissinger.

"As people get agitated about the problem, they get frightened and then they're more aware. If he can work up a big head of steam, he can solve the problem faster. But he's not concerned with sending Marines into Kuwait. He's concerned about petrodollars, alterna-

for and about people

tive supplies to energy and hoarding oil."

Some people say Kissinger is devoid of scruples.

"I don't buy that amoral stuff," said Bernie. "It's naive. What Kissinger has done is to push aside the piety of foreign policy. Maybe he should be tougher. What he's been trying to do is get rid of the illusions of piety that existed.

"He's sought to deal with realities that exist on the face of the globe. He put aside perfect idealism for deals between isolationism and intervention and to deal with realities as he found them. He is a pragmatist, not a moralist.

The two brothers agreed, however, that Kissinger's public image has suffered — more, said Bernie, because

perceptions have changed more than anything else."

"Kissinger," he continued, "made a splash, because in an administration of gray, he was a red-blooded human being — look at his competition — Martha Mitchell. But if Watergate broke in 1968, it would have removed the thrust and the sense of confidence that were required for Kissinger to accomplish deals and the open door to China."

He is, said Marvin, clearly the most controversial secretary of state we have had. My own sense is that in the world in which we live, his efforts to hold off thermonuclear confrontation are worthy objectives."

"We never said he was a

hero," said Bernie. "But we won't denounce him just because people find his hands are not pristine pure."

"All our leaders have feet of clay," said Marvin. "Both John and Robert Kennedy were leading exponents of the use of the Central Intelligence Agency and of covert operations all over Southeast Asia and Indonesia.

Kissinger told me one reason he quit working for Kennedy after one year is because Kennedy was totally naive about the way in which the world was going. Kissinger says if Kennedy had lived, his administration would have been destined for greatness or catastrophe."

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