



The Kissinger Era and After

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HENRY KISSINGER has returned from his latest trip bearing an agenda for diplomatic action that could lead to a triumphant retirement at the end of the year.

The Israelis are now making the kind of internal political noises which suggest readiness to withdraw from the oil fields and passes of the Sinai desert. It looks as though they can get in exchange demilitarization of the abandoned territory with a strengthened United Nations presence plus some easing of the economic blockade and a further acceptance by Egypt.

For the Russians, it became clear in Kissinger's meeting with Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko last week, are keenly interested in pursuing the diplomacy of detente. That means primarily fleshing out the general lines of agreement for another strategic arms limitation treaty reached between President Ford and General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev at Vladivostok last year.

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IT COULD also mean progress in mutual reduction of the troop contingents maintained by the two superpowers in Europe and, possibly, an agreement on a European Security and Cooperation Treaty formalizing the present territorial arrangements on the continent. What would presumably issue from those understandings would be a series of summit

meetings, probably culminating in a visit by Brezhnev to the United States in early or late summer. The balance among the superpowers would then be stabilized anew by a Ford visit to China.

At that point — though many grave international problems remained — the legacy of President Nixon's diplomacy would have been run out. Kissinger's service as Secretary of State would have reached a natural term.

The more so, given the political climate. In the wake of Watergate and Vietnam, the Congress has moved strongly to reassert privileges and prerogatives which were allowed to lapse in the post-war era. Inevitably congress is now playing a far less passive role in foreign policy.

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IF HE WANTED to Kissinger could probably reestablish his standing in the Congress. But several signs show that Kissinger isn't likely to change his ways. Even as he was calling for a new partnership with the Congress early in the month, he went, as if it were perfectly appropriate, to visit the symbol of lying and defying the Congress — Richard Nixon.

So when the political season hots up early next year, it is not unlikely that Kissinger might step down as Secretary of State.