

Is Kissinger**On the Way Out?****Jack Anderson**

WITH THE collapse of his policies in Southeast Asia, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger may follow his friends Lon Nol and Nguyen Van Thieu into premature retirement.

White House sources tell us that President Ford hasn't lost confidence in Kissinger. But almost everyone else in the top policy-making councils has.

The ink was hardly dry on the Jan. 27, 1973, Paris peace accords before the Joint Chiefs warned, in effect, that Kissinger had delivered Vietnam to the Communists.

Under the terms Kissinger accepted in Paris, the North Vietnamese army was granted a foothold in the South.

★ ★ ★

THE JOINT CHIEFS predicted precisely what is now happening in Vietnam. Their secret estimate, as we reported on Feb. 1, 1973, was that President Thieu would not survive and that the Communists would win the final struggle for Vietnam.

While the Joint Chiefs looked upon this as a disaster, some policymakers have contended that a Communist triumph would actually benefit the United States.

Not only would this stop an enormous financial drain, they argued, but also the rival Communist powers would wind up squabbling among themselves over Indochina. The United States could enjoy the luxury of standing back and watching the developments.

The best available intelligence indicates that the Khmer Rouge, who are now taking over Cambodia, distrust the North Vietnamese and want to keep their country independent of Hanoi.

The Chinese are also reported to be wary of North Vietnam, which could develop into a rival Communist power on their southern flank.

The Russians, on the other hand, are trying to bolster Hanoi as a counterweight to Communist China.

★ ★ ★

THE UNITED STATES would have been better off all along, in the opinion of many experts, abandoning Indochina to the rivalries of the divided Communists.

But meanwhile, the opinion is almost unanimous in the backrooms that Kissinger has mishandled the Vietnam issue and that his policies have badly damaged the United States.

FOOTNOTE: Leading Democrats have quietly urged the White House to replace Kissinger with Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield. They believe Mansfield, out of patriotism, could be persuaded to serve as Secretary of State. He would have the prestige, they argue, to restore bipartisan unity to foreign affairs. Our White House sources insist, however, that the President is satisfied with Kissinger and would prefer to see Mansfield work in the Senate for a bipartisan foreign policy.