

Call of Urgency to Man of Calm

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ABOARD AIR FORCE 86971, over the Atlantic, May 7—The mood aboard Secretary of State William P. Rogers's plane was surprisingly relaxed today despite the sense of drama caused by President Nixon's decision this morning to summon him home from Bonn. Mr. Rogers sipped lemonade, joked with the crew, told the four newsmen aboard about his college boxing days, joined his wife, Adele, at bridge, and remarked how glad he was to hear that Bobby Fischer had agreed to play against Boris Spassky in Iceland for the chess championship.

But he could only speculate along with the other passengers on what was on Mr. Nixon's mind.

Mr. Rogers has been one of Mr. Nixon's closest friends and advisers, and all signs suggested that the President was again at a crucial moment in his career and wanted Mr. Rogers's advice along with that of his other aides.

The brief message that ordered Mr. Rogers to interrupt his eight-country, eight-day trip, during which he was briefing allies before Mr. Nixon's Moscow visit, did not say more than that the President wanted to discuss the situation in Southeast Asia.

Suggests Nixon Action

Mr. Rogers, who has kept abreast of the situation in Vietnam and more important, of Mr. Nixon's mood, had suggested strongly during the first five days of the trip—to Iceland, Britain, Belgium, Luxembourg and West Germany—that Mr. Nixon was ready to risk his career and his reputation to stem the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam, and was ready to use everything short of nuclear weapons to do so.

After reading the latest intelligence reports in Bonn this morning, Mr. Rogers said there was nothing "startling" happening in Vietnam to warrant

Rogers, on the Trip Home, Is Relaxed Despite Drama

a crisis reaction. But he said that the North Vietnamese were clearly regrouping and preparing for an all-out attack on Hue and other cities. The purpose of the attacks, he believes, is to bring down the South Vietnamese Government and Mr. Nixon has said he would not tolerate this passively.

A major step-up of American air attacks against North Vietnam — such as renewed bombing of Hanoi or Haiphong — could imperil the Moscow trip. Not only would such actions cause polemics with Moscow, but might so tie up Mr. Nixon and his aides that there might not be enough time to prepare adequately for the visit. Mr. Rogers said that he did not know what would happen in coming days.

Most Stay in Bonn

Mr. Rogers took only Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department's spokesman who is also a friend and confidant, back with him to Washington. He left the other members of the official party in Bonn directing them to wait there for instructions.

At one point in the flight, Mr. Rogers said that the odds were 65 to 35 that he would return to Europe tomorrow night or Tuesday to resume the tour, which was broken off before visiting Paris, Rome and Madrid. The purpose of the trip, to brief Western leaders on the Moscow visit, has been increasingly clouded by the events in Vietnam.

Some aides have expressed concern in private about what one of them called the "malignancy" of Vietnam, which was again threatening to dominate American foreign policy considerations and that the carefully worked out efforts to improve relations with Moscow and Peking might be set back drastically.

But Mr. Rogers has not shared their disquiet, and instead, has echoed Mr. Nixon's

contention that Vietnam marked a critical point at which the United States must take a decisive stand.

He told the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Brussels Friday that the United States commitments to Western Europe would be called into question if the Americans gave up on South Vietnam. And he said that the Russians had to bear a responsibility for the war because of their failure to restrain the North Vietnamese.

There has been little European response but Mr. Rogers believes the allies of the U. S. sympathize in general and will not oppose any further American action in Vietnam.

Mr. Rogers, who has been overshadowed in foreign policy matters by Henry A. Kissinger, the President's National Security advisor, even though he seemed aware of the attention brought by the sudden return to Washington. He at one point juggled some oranges and apples in front of his wife who photographed him with a home movie camera. He joked about the "relaxing" boat trip down the Rhine River that he had looked forward to all week but had to cancel this morning when he left Bonn with only two hours' notice. The Air Force crewmen, who had planned their first day off today, complained of lack of sleep and they were teased by Mr. Rogers. To kill a few hours, Mr. Rogers and his wife played bridge against Mr. McCloskey and a correspondent for the Voice of America, Mrs. Philomena Jurey.

Throughout the trip Mr. Rogers has had to face newsmen at every arrival point, something he did not look forward to. He was clearly not looking forward to meeting newsmen at Andrews Air Force Base here. He told Mr. McCloskey that he wanted to say nothing at arrival. Charles W. Bray 3d, a State Department spokesman, called Mr. McCloskey over the airplane's radiophone and told him that newsmen might be expected. Mr. Rogers had the aircraft land at a distant part of the airfield to avoid the cameramen and reporters.