

A Shrewdness of Kissingers: II

[Do not have # I.]

By C. L. Sulzberger

PARIS—Not even the Kissingers of this world are entirely sure just who are full members of their club. Thus I have been told at various times by one or another of this select establishment that Frau Katharina Focke, charming expert on Western Europe, is really Chancellor Brandt's Kissinger or that Robert Temple Armstrong, principal private secretary to the Prime Minister, is really Mr. Heath's Kissinger. In neither case is this correct.

Dr. Focke, now a Cabinet member but who recently adorned the Chancellor's office, is the daughter of a famous German journalist and advised on European matters. Mr. Armstrong, a charming Old Etonian who works at the Prime Minister's right hand and is an expert on finance, is not the nearest British equivalent to Henry Kissinger. The original of the species considers Egon Bahr and Sir Burke Trend as his German and British peers.

Confusion arises because it is impossible to have a genuine Kissinger in a parliamentary system of government. Mr. Brandt explained to me he must always deal the Foreign Ministry into diplomatic games because the Min-

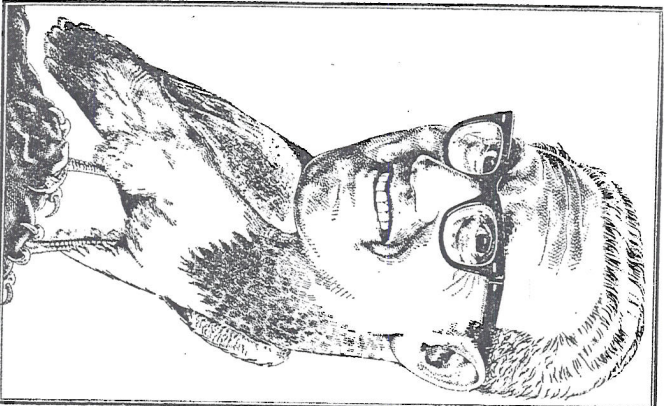
ister, Walter Scheel, also heads the Liberal (F.D.P.) party, whose minority coalition participation keeps Brandt Chancellor.

Therefore, Mr. Brandt says he can only use Mr. Bahr as a special agent on an *ad hoc* basis and not as a full-fledged Kissinger. That would risk splitting the coalition. Even with this limitation, there is irritation in the Foreign Ministry because of Bahr's role and a feeling that at times the ministry is insufficiently informed.

Mr. Brandt also emulates President Nixon's system of personal lieutenants apart from Bahr. Horst Ehmke, Minister without Portfolio, has been a trouble-shooter doing something like the White House jobs of Messrs. Halde-man and Ehrlichman. Herbert Wehner, Social Democratic floor leader in the Bundestag, serves as an idea man for the Chancellor.

A somewhat comparable situation exists in England. Sir Burke Trend is the closest thing to a Kissinger. When Henry Kissinger himself goes to London and wants to talk with an alter-ego he consults Sir Burke. Under the British governing system Mr. Kissinger knows that whatever he confides to Mr. Trend goes to the Prime Minister himself, not just the Foreign Secretary.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS



Oliver Williams

However, no genuine Kissinger would be tolerated by the English Cabinet, which would resign if there were one, or by Parliament, which would raise hell. On two occasions when a Prime Minister tried to use the Kissinger formula—during the 1938 appeasement of Hitler and during the 1956 Suez collaboration with France and Israel—there were explosions of wrath after the news eventually leaked.

As Cabinet secretary, Mr. Trend is in charge of assembling the views of all ministers concerned with any problem and, if possible, with compiling options for Prime Ministerial decisions. But Trend is a nonparty civil servant. He was just as loyal to Harold Wilson as he is to Edward Heath. When Mr. Nixon and Mr. Heath have a personal summit, Messrs. Trend and Kissinger first work out the approximate agenda.

In France, where the position of President is nearer to that of Mr. Nixon than the position of Prime Minister in England or Chancellor in Germany, Michel Jobert has an easier time and less inhibited authority than his equivalents in London and Bonn.

Mr. Jobert is immensely intelligent and hard working. He often looks tired, rarely emerges in Paris society, is

frequently called to the Elysée even on Sundays. He takes an annual one-month holiday but returns to Paris every week. Although he has one weak arm, he plays a determined game of tennis, likes to paddle a kayak and is a passionate gardener.

Mr. Jobert is in charge of everything that passes the President's desk; foreign policy only occupies about a third of his time. His job is to coordinate and to get the proper experts working on any problem that arises.

When U.S. Ambassador Watson (recently resigned) arranged Mr. Nixon's Azores meeting with Mr. Pompidou, the entire matter was handled between the White House and the Elysée, with Watson and Jobert discussing the details. Neither the State Department nor the Quai d'Orsay knew about it until the program had been settled.

Nobody in France's executive branch has any complexes about not dealing with the Foreign Ministry. President Pompidou, like General de Gaulle, considers diplomacy and defense "reserved domains" which the Elysée runs. Maurice Schumann, head of the Quai d'Orsay, has no more ultimate authority than William Rogers, Lord of Foggy Bottom. Each is hoist by his own Kissinger.