

A Shrewdness Of Kissingers: III

By C. L. Sulzberger

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PARIS—Henry, the proto-Kissinger, came to his job with an analytical brain, a brilliant reputation as a Harvard professor and considerable political experience. He worked for a while with President Kennedy but quit because he disagreed over General de Gaulle. Then he became Nelson Rockefeller's foreign policy expert. Rockefeller recommended him to President Nixon.

Mr. Kissinger arrived at the White House at an appropriate moment. Washington, which had experimented with Presidential agents before, was even more ready for the formula because the bureaucracy had become so swollen. Mr. Kissinger soon realized that one of his functions would be to drive this bureaucracy, above all the State Department, against its inclinations.

He saw that all around the world foreign policy was in the process of moving from foreign ministries to the office of the chief of government. What was occurring in the United States was part of a global process.

Mr. Kissinger originally regarded his primary function as that of eliciting opinions from various Government experts and presenting these for Mr. Nixon's choice. The job grew as these opinions dealt with increasingly important matters and Mr. Kissinger became a roving negotiator.

The growth of his influence inevitably produced friction with the State Department. He had no desire to quarrel with Secretary Rogers, an old friend of Mr. Nixon, whereas Mr. Kissinger was a German-Jewish immigrant with a foreign accent who had previously been linked to Mr. Nixon's rivals.

But conflict was inescapable. Cabinet Secretaries tend to be spokesmen for their own bureaucracies rather than Presidential spokesmen to their bureaucracies. Nor did the State Department like Mr. Kissinger dominating policy questions.

Mr. Kissinger contended he didn't formulate policy but only forced the President to come up with alternatives on a day-to-day basis as problems arose. Mr. Nixon had his own coherent philosophy on foreign affairs and didn't intend to be anyone's rubber stamp.

The White House developed a new kind of blueprint for long-term policy. This was featured in 1972 by the Presidential trip to Peking, which was regarded by Mr. Nixon as a bifurcation in the road, and to Moscow, which was regarded as a historical landmark. The Chinese option was held as essential to America's Soviet policy.

This conception heavily influenced the U.S. attitude during the India-Pakistan war. China supported Pakistan and felt that if the United States reacted against Soviet-backed India (as it did ineffectually), Peking could expect American reaction should China be attacked.

Washington also reckoned Moscow would get wrong ideas if it felt the U.S. was too weak to react at all for its ally, Pakistan. So the nuclear carrier Enterprise was sent to the Bay of Bengal as a token warning that India shouldn't attack West Pakistan. It was also believed this would discourage Egyptian President Sadat from carrying out his promise to start another round of Palestine war.

These calculations were part of a global concept of American policy. They did not seek Indian enmity nor did they reckon on sudden Chinese fidelity. Washington continued to regard Japan as its permanent ally in the Pacific and saw China continuing as an opponent.

These decisions, when taken together, may be regarded as a kind of climax in the Presidential method of policymaking and cannot yet be assessed. Notwithstanding, in many ways the Kissinger approach has proven its value—ultimately depending on whether it can wind down the Vietnam war.

It was the judgment of the Kissinger office—more than a year before the event—that Moscow would pull its immense military establishment out of Egypt. It was the Kissinger office that cooled a potential crisis with Moscow about a submarine base in Cienfuegos, Cuba. It now seeks to jar policymakers into reckoning what may happen to Yugoslavia when President Tito dies.

Mr. Kissinger has become an international figure. The Assembly of Western European Union recently discussed "the very particular manner in which United States foreign policy is conducted by Dr. Henry Kissinger," adding: "On more than one occasion there has been evidence that Dr. Kissinger's own conduct of foreign affairs has been independent of the State Department, which may not always have been kept informed."

The point is there is nothing unconstitutional about it. That is simply the way Mr. Nixon, who is charged with making policy, wants to work. Executive diplomacy is practiced increasingly in other countries. The grumbling heard in Foggy Bottom is by no means unfamiliar in other twentieth-century capitals.