

By **BERNARD GWERTZMAN**  
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WASHINGTON, Nov. 27—Joseph J. Sisco, the State Department's top official on Middle East affairs, is expected to leave the Government soon to accept a college presidency, a well-placed Administration official said today.

The word of the departure of Mr. Sisco, who has been actively involved in the intensive Middle East diplomacy of the last two months, has come as a surprise since it had been assumed by many officials that he would remain working for Secretary of State Kissinger either in his present job or in a new one.

But it was understood that Mr. Sisco, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, had made up his mind to accept the college post some time ago, before the current Middle East crisis.

The source declined to name the college pending a formal announcement in the next few weeks.

Mr. Sisco's expected departure is one of the more significant State Department changes expected in the wake of Mr. Kissinger's taking over as Secretary of State in late September.

A department official said that a long list of Mr. Kissinger's choices to fill vacant ambassadorships and State Department posts had recently been sent to the White House for final approval and announcement.

**Stoessel Appointment Seen**

The most significant ambassadorial appointment expected to be made known in coming days is that of Walter J. Stoessel Jr., the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, as the new envoy to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Stoessel, who is 53 years old, has had extensive experience in the Soviet Union, and speaks Russian. His name has been long rumored to be that likely to be put forward to fill the vacancy existing since Jacob D. Bean retired in January.

Authoritative sources said that Mr. Stoessel's replacement as the department's top official on European affairs would be Arthur A. Hartman, who is the No. 2 man in the American mission in Brussels that deals with the Common Market countries.

Mr. Hartman, who is 47, is relatively young to hold the Assistant Secretaryship, but he has been strongly recommended by former Under Secretaries of State George W. Ball, Nicholas deB. Katzenbach and John N. Irwin 2d, for whom he worked.

Mr. Kissinger, when he replaced William P. Rogers as Secretary of State, ordered a delay on most high-level appointments so that he could have a chance to review them and make his own recommendations.

During his confirmation hearings, he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he expected to fill all vacant spots by the middle of November, but about 30 key jobs are still unfilled.

Aides to Mr. Kissinger said that the delay had been caused in part by the Secretary's involvement with the Middle East crisis.

**Sisco To Aid Transition**

Mr. Sisco has agreed to remain in his post as long as necessary to maintain continuity in the Middle East diplomacy. He has also told friends that he had no personal problems in working with Mr. Kissinger or any political dissatisfaction with the Nixon Administration.

On Mr. Kissinger's recent trip to the Middle East, Mr. Sisco played a major role in persuading the Israeli Government to accept the six-point cease fire agreement worked out by Mr. Kissinger in Cairo.

The assignment of Mr. Stoessel to Moscow would end a major and embarrassing vacancy, but is not expected to end Mr. Kissinger's preference for dealing with the Soviet leaders through the Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin.

A high department official who recently resigned is Ray S. Cline, Assistant Secretary

for Intelligence and Research, who joined the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies.