

CAPITOL STUFF

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By STAN CARTER

Washington, April 26—The Watergate scandal has cast a threatening shadow on President Nixon's grand design for making this a more peaceful world.

It may be just a passing cloud that will soon go away—but Henry A. Kissinger admitted this week that the mushrooming scandal could adversely affect the President's strategy for building a new world balance of power.

Watergate Even Threatens Foreign Policy

"With respect to foreign policy," the presidential adviser said in New York Monday, "a great deal will depend on how foreign countries will assess the degree of authority in this country, and the degree of dedication of the public to the objectives of its foreign policy."

Another senior official said here today: "Anything that diminishes the President's prestige is going to have implications on foreign policy. You can't measure it—but you can't get away from it, either."

After starting an improvement of relations during the past year with the country's old adversaries in Moscow and Peking, the next step in Nixon's grand foreign policy design is to strengthen the links that have become frayed with America's allies.

The goal for the "year of Europe"—spelled out by Kissinger in the New York speech—is a "new Atlantic Charter . . . a blueprint setting the goals for the future," and bringing in Japan as well as this country and Western Europe.

Kissinger warned the European allies and Japan that they must compromise on economic and trade battles with this country in order to avoid endangering political—and even military—unity.

"We can no longer afford to pursue national or regional self-interest without a unifying framework," he said. "We cannot hold together if each country or region asserts its autonomy whenever it is to its benefit and invokes unity to curtail the independence of others. . . ."

"The Atlantic nations must join in a fresh act of creation. . . ."



Henry A. Kissinger
Outlines Nixon's plan

If we permit the Atlantic partnership to atrophy or to erode through neglect, carelessness or mistrust, we risk what has been achieved and we shall miss our historic opportunity for even greater achievement."

It was a tough speech but with many things to appeal to the Europeans, such as a promise that the United States would maintain sizable military forces in Western Europe if other problems were solved.

Calling for the allies to make concessions on monetary and trade differences with this country, Kissinger warned: "It is the responsibility of national leaders to ensure that economic negotiations serve larger purposes. They must recognize that economic rivalry, if carried on without restraint, will in the end damage other relationships."

Nixon's hope, it was reported, is to sign a document of principles governing future allied relations this fall, when he is scheduled to make what he has called "a grand tour" of Europe. It would be a new building block in the over-all pattern of worldwide relationships that Nixon is trying to build.

The Watergate scandal is not likely to have any lasting effect on this grand design if it blows away soon—but it could have an adverse effect if it goes on and on.

The Communists Stay Silent

The scandal has been getting big headlines in most of the world—but not, interestingly, in the major Communist capitals, where a few years ago it would have been seized upon as proof of the deterioration of American capitalist society. Not a word about Watergate has been reported this year by Pravda or Izvestia in Moscow or by the People's Daily in Peking, presumably because of the Soviet and Chinese leaders' new friendship with Nixon.

A diplomat from an allied country where the scandal is on the front pages of all the newspapers said that he did not believe it had yet reached the stage of undermining Nixon's international credibility. He doubted it would reach that stage.

Another diplomat agreed that the scandal was unlikely to affect Nixon's personal standing abroad, but worried that its effect on the U.S. Congress might make it impossible for the President to carry through on foreign policy initiatives—or to keep his promise not to unilaterally withdraw American troops from Europe.

Indochina Fails to Fade

Meanwhile, the Indochina problem still has not gone away, despite the peace agreement that was signed three months ago—and it could turn into a much bigger and darker cloud on the grand design.

Nixon originally planned to make his grand tour of Europe this spring, but delayed it until autumn because of the hostility in allied capitals caused by the bombing of North Vietnam before and after last Christmas.

As Nixon intended, the bombing brought about Hanoi's signature on a peace agreement—but not the compliance with all its terms that he expected. Kissinger is going back to Paris for more talks with North Vietnamese Politburo member Le Duc Tho next month in an effort to save the crumbling agreement, but no one here is taking bets that he will succeed.

With two threatening clouds, officials involved in foreign policy are keeping their fingers crossed.