

Washington Drama

Diplomacy Behind Peking

By Vera Glaser and Malvina Stephenson

Washington

WHILE the drama of Peking monopolized the world stage last week, a human drama of pride and ambition quietly unfolded on the home front.

Involved were the two top officials who traveled to China with President Nixon and the women they left behind.

One of the women is famous and has been concerned for some time about her husband's dwindling im-



ADELE ROGERS
Explaining protocol

age in foreign policy. She is Mrs. William P. Rogers, the brainy, low-key wife of the secretary of state.

The other woman prefers to remain obscure. She is Ann Fleisher Kissinger, who divorced Henry Kissinger in 1964, long before he became national security affairs adviser to the President.

Kissinger's influence at the White House versus that of Rogers has been a hot behind-the-scenes topic for three years. It burst into the headlines when television clearly showed Kissinger with Nixon and Mao Tse-Tung in Peking.

Rogers, meanwhile, met with Foreign Minister Chi Peng-Fei, who carries less weight.

Realizing the situation would draw notice in Washington, Mrs. Rogers tried to counter it. She told a congressional women's club how such conferences are "categorized." Protocol, she said, usually requires officials to confer with counterparts of equal rank.

Later Mrs. Rogers was asked if her husband's exclusion from the meeting with Mao had surprised her.

"Oh no! I didn't expect it!" she exclaimed. "He was with the foreign minister. I explained that in my talk."

A few days later, when published accounts played



HENRY KISSINGER
No rancor



WILLIAM ROGERS
Secondary role

up Rogers' secondary role, Mrs. Rogers became unavailable for interviews.

Mrs. Kissinger is a soft-spoken brunette who, like her husband of 15 years, fled Nazi oppression in her native Germany. She lives quietly and shuns publicity, not wishing to capitalize on her former husband's fame.

"Mr. Kissinger did a fine job," she said from her home near Boston. "His expertise is international affairs."

She said that Kissinger telephoned Elizabeth, 12, and David, 10, from Peking and she emphasized the children's pride in their father. She termed the children "my biggest joy."

Mrs. Kissinger laughed about her former husband's reputation as a swinger.

"The newspapers print what people want to read," she said. "I would be the last one to cut through such nice stories."

She is working on an un-

dergraduate degree, and has a circle of friends whom she entertains at small dinners.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the wife of an assistant secretary of state who knows the Rogerses well, snapped "Disgraceful!" when queried about his role in Peking.

"Morale in the State Department is terrible. The President is running his own foreign policy with Kissinger," she said.

Throughout the trip protocol was observed. After the "Spirit of '76" had landed at Andrews Air Force Base, Rogers stepped off the plane behind President and Mrs. Nixon. Kissinger followed them.

Rogers and Kissinger themselves have displayed no rancor.

What their women do or say — and how uptight the State Department may be about usurpations of its role — has been kept out of public view.