

The Nixon-Kissinger Team

WASHINGTON — You may have heard Dr. Henry Kissinger described as the greatest diplomatic impresario since Prince Metternich.

One speaker before a large public audience here recently pretended to make a mistake by referring to "President Kissinger."

THESE REMARKS are not made wholly in jest. They are partly serious. They rest on a central truth and that truth concerns the powerful and ubiquitous role which Kissinger plays at the President's elbow in crucial foreign policy initiatives.

He has been at the creative center of every major foreign policy move the President has made — new relationships with China and Russia, a considerable dissolving of the cold war, the first stride toward ending the nuclear arms race, new joint enterprises with the Soviet Union.

No wonder there is so much talk about Kissinger. Is President Nixon the instrument of Henry Kissinger, or is Henry Kissinger the instrument of President Nixon?

The answers I would give are these:

Each is indispensable to the other.

Each has different capacities and experience and the two have meshed to produce a remarkable team.

Nixon knew he needed a Kissinger, he

found him and gave his special talents full play.

Some might be ill at ease in working with a subordinate as intellectually brilliant as Kissinger. The President and Kissinger were at ease with each other from the start. No President has ever given a single assistant such range of function, such visibility, such latitude as Nixon has given to Kissinger. It is hard to overstate how much Kissinger has been free to do and directed to do.

Before Kissinger came on the scene, Nixon knew where he wanted to go: namely to move away from confrontation and to create with all nations a stake in productive negotiation. Kissinger designed the road map. Nixon decided what he wanted to do and Kissinger found the best ways to do it.

Kissinger is no ivory-tower intellectual. He can do — as well as think. When Hanoi wanted to try out secret negotiations, the President sent Kissinger. When the North Vietnamese want to try again, they will probably ask for Kissinger.

I DOUBT THAT EITHER could have succeeded without the other. Nixon made the tough decisions and politically, diplomatically and militarily they took a large supply of faith and fortitude.

It is harder to wage peace than war and that is what Nixon and Kissinger are waging.