



What the Future Holds for Kissinger

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AMONG the inner group in the Nixon administration, the future of Henry A. Kissinger is now a favorite subject for impassioned speculation. And no wonder, in view of the outlook at home and abroad.

At home, despite the Watergate and all the rest, the odds are heavy on the President's re-election. Abroad, the chances for an early settlement of the Vietnamese war appear to be reasonably good.

Kissinger has served the President remarkably well in many other ways, too. But there is speculation about his future for a simple reason. He is like one of the enormously grand pieces of old furniture that sometimes sells at a discount compared to an antique of proper quality because the dealers say "they are not easy to place."

There is therefore a real Kissinger problem, which has been made all the more vivid and intriguing by recent developments. But in order to understand the problem, one must begin at the beginning, with the curious relationship between Henry A. Kissinger and Mr. Nixon.

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CONCERNING this relationship, there are three important points to grasp. First, it is by no means so unprecedented as most people think. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry L. Hopkins deliberately chose Edward R. Stettinius as wartime Secretary of State because Stettinius could be counted on to do nothing whatever — except to be pleasant and look handsome. Foreign policy-making was the exclusive preserve of the White House at that time, as now.

Second, Richard M. Nixon is much

more Kissinger's master than Franklin D. Roosevelt was Hopkins' master. Harry Hopkins often used to work through others — General George C. Marshall or Prime Minister Winston Churchill or other personal allies — to get President Roosevelt to see things as Hopkins saw them.

Furthermore, all the major decisions in the foreign field have been Nixon decisions rather than Kissinger decisions.

Thus the foreign policy successes of the Nixon years have been primarily Mr. Nixon's successes. Third and finally, however, Henry Kissinger has also been the President's really indispensable technician.

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SO THERE you have the fundamentals, worth recording because they are all but universally misconceived. To these fundamentals it is only worth adding that Kissinger would unquestionably like to stay on for a while.

The only difficulty is that matter of Kissinger not being "easy to place."

There are only four possibilities. First (and least probable), the present decidedly messy situation will be continued — but then we shall just about cease to have a State Department. Or the President will find a new Secretary of State fully prepared to serve as Stettinius served, under the White House on a day-to-day basis.

Or Kissinger himself will be made Secretary of State, which he is eminently well qualified to be. Or the President will dispense with his indispensable technician, also losing all of Kissinger's vast, irreplaceable knowledge of the Nixon policies' background and complexities.