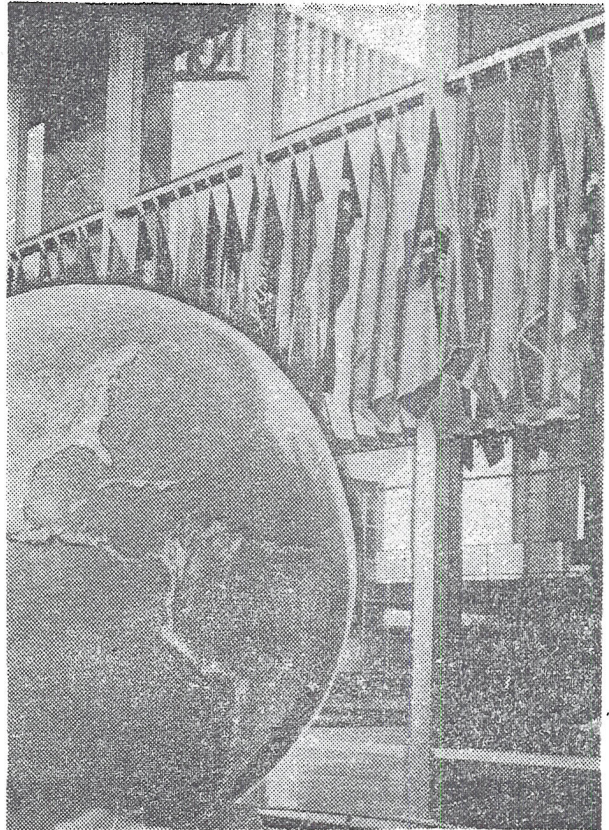


Changes at the State Department

It makes sense for Henry Kissinger, until now Mr. Nixon's assistant for national security affairs, to become Secretary of State, and not merely because he has dominated the diplomacy of the Nixon presidency anyway. A tight White House foreign-policy operation served the President's first-term focus on secret contacts with a few adversaries, but only the State Department apparatus can help Mr. Nixon pursue his second-term need for broader, more diverse exchanges with a much wider range of partners. While Mr. Nixon's prime first-term task of withdrawing the United States from Indochina was carried out amidst high congressional-executive tension, his necessary second-term emphasis on trade negotiations and defense spending require considerable congressional-executive consensus. If confirmed as Secretary of State, Dr. Kissinger not only would become available to congressional interlocutors, but Congress would come equally within the reach of his formidable powers of exposition and persuasion. Finally, by having at State a chief with the President's confidence and with great personal stature and talent, the department should be enabled to recoup its sunken prestige and morale. The country will have better assurance that considerations of diplomacy will be fairly weighed in the knot of economic, political and strategic problems ahead.

Some organizational purists may be offended that Dr. Kissinger retains his White House hat, although his National Security Council staff can hardly retain the particular function and special significance which President Nixon gave to them in his first term. Other departments concerned with international decision-making may wonder if State will not now take on excessive influence. The arrangement is something of an anomaly; students of power and bureaucracy in Washington will surely keep a beady eye on it. Our view is that there is no special magic in any one particular way of organizing the executive branch to conduct foreign affairs. No one should be better situated to decide how he wishes to organize his administration for that purpose than a second-term President who has concentrated on foreign policy.

Departing Secretary of State William P. Rogers, for reasons not entirely of his own making, did not function at the center of administration policy. He entered and left office with the hope of helping create among Americans "a new national unity and purpose in our for-



Flags on display at the State Department.

eign policy." Less a specialist in international relations than a man of keen insight into domestic requirements, he made a comment last Monday—in evident anticipation of his imminent resignation—which can perhaps serve as a valedictory for his nearly five years as Secretary of State. "I believe," he said, "that it is very important for the United States not to become so obsessed with security matters that laws are freely violated. I think one of the things that provide security for Americans is the fact that we are a law-abiding nation, and that is protection for all individuals, and a protection for individual rights." These are the words of a wise and honorable and decent man. They deserve to be pondered by Mr. Rogers' successor at State and by his erstwhile chief at the White House too.