

NATO Warned by Kissinger on Allowing Reds in

By FLORA LEWIS

Special to The New York Times

PARIS, Dec. 17 — Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger insisted during his recent trip to Western Europe that the United States is determined to do what it can to prevent Communists from moving into Western governments.

At the North Atlantic alliance meeting in Brussels and in private conversations, he was understood to have made firm statements about the likely reaction to any such move as Communist participation in the Italian Government.

He was said to feel that a government role for the Italian Communists could have a domino effect in France and West Germany. Europeans were told that it would be a tremendous setback for the United States, leading to the withdrawal of American forces and making the continuation of the Atlantic alliance impossible.

Mr. Kissinger is aware, the Europeans were informed, that the activities of the Italian and Yugoslav Communist Parties, which insist on autonomy from Moscow's dominance, are an irritant to the Russians. But his view is said to be that they will be a nuisance to Moscow whether the United States has anything to do with them or not, and that in any case they are willing to take America's side against the Russians only when their own survival is involved.

No Dialogue Allowed

This is the reasoning behind the Secretary's determination not to allow any United States dialogue with Western European Communists. American policy is to deal with Communist parties only when they have come to power and it is unavoidable, but to oppose their achieving power as far as that is possible.

This is the explanation given for refusing visas to Western European Communists, among other measures. Similarly, American diplomats are under instructions to avoid all but minimal, relatively low-level contacts with the major Western Communist Parties.

The important parties in the West are in Portugal, Spain, France and Italy. According to officials involved the United States Embassies in Lisbon, Madrid and Paris are forbidden to deal directly with local Com-

munists, and the embassy in Rome limits itself to low-level contacts.

The reasoning given in each of the four embassies for avoiding contact is that it could convey an impression of United States endorsement of their parties and give them an aura of respectability they might not otherwise achieve.

Others Less Reclusive

The policy is specifically American. In Rome, for example, other Western ambassadors regularly meet with the Communist Party chief, Enrico Berlinguer, and other Communist leaders as a part of their normal task of collecting information, assessing important personalities and judging both the likelihood and risks of the Italian Communists' achieving their aim of pushing their way into a coalition government.

The envoys give their views to American diplomats, but the United States Embassy limits its first-hand observation to lower-level contacts with Sergio Segre, in charge of the Italian Communists' international relations.

In France embassy contacts with the Communists are unofficial and tend to be masked as reporting on labor unions.

In Italy and France, according to official sources, these orders date back to the cold war, and the instructions have been neither renewed nor changed in new political circumstances, which include top-level American dealings with Moscow and Peking and important evolutions in the Western Communist Parties.

A Major Political Force

In both Italy and France the Communist Parties, the biggest in the West, may enter government after the next elections.

In Portugal and Spain, the issue of dealing with Communists did not arise until fairly recently because right-wing dictatorships excluded them from any open activity. However, the Communists have been in the Portuguese Government since the revolution of April 25, 1974, and came close to taking power this summer.

In Spain, the Communists are an important but probably not dominant element in the opposition, which remains illegal.

The United States Embassy

in Madrid does have direct contact with other underground opposition parties, in Spain at the highest level. Under instructions from Washington, it stays clear of the Communists officially; the rule is sometimes discreetly and indirectly broken by lower-level officers.

An Invitation by Error

The same holds true in Lisbon, though the Communist Party is in the Government. On one occasion, the Communist leader, Alvaro Cunhal, was invited to the United States embassy by mistake. He was a Cabinet minister at the time, and the Government members had been asked to a reception for Senator Edward M. Kennedy.

Mr. Cunhal showed up. There was no way to avoid allowing him to shake hands with the Senator, the guest said, and a local photographer snapped a picture of the encounter, but the embassy was able to get hold of the film.

Usual diplomatic practice is to meet with representatives of all important local groups to keep Washington well-informed on trends, personalities, and political prospects.

The United States reasoning that contact with Western Communist leaders could be interpreted as endorsement was also applied when the United States made it clear that it would not give Mr. Segre, the Italian official, a visa to accept an invitation to speak at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York this fall. Last month, Mr. Segre did manage to visit the United States as a member of a multiparty delegation of Italian members of parliament.

Mr. Segre accompanied the group on a visit of the United States Air Force Academy and the highly secret NORAD defense installations at Colorado Springs, the crucial center to give warning of a surprise missile or bombing attack.

The commander of the United States Sixth Fleet, who is also the Atlantic alliance commander in the Mediterranean, recently called on the Communist who is the newly elected Mayor of his home-port city, Naples. Most of the Italian cities where the United States maintains consulates now have Communists as mayors or as leading figures in municipal government, and the United

States consuls meet them and do business with them in the normal way.

Allied diplomats and some American diplomats are privately critical of the United States policy of avoiding contracts as a renunciation of easily available information and perhaps of influence. Those who support it say that there is no information of importance that meeting with Western Communist leaders could provide that cannot be gathered in other ways.

According to embassy sources and to non-Communist politicians who have spoken with Secretary of State Kissinger, he is worried about the

Cabinet Posts

strength of Western European Communists as a threat to détente and a destabilizing factor in his "delicate calculations" of East-West balance.

In Eastern Europe, where Communist Parties run the governments, American diplomats have full contact, as far as the Communists permit it. In Lisbon, Madrid, Paris and Rome, United States ambassadors see Soviet and other Communist counterparts. And throughout Western Europe, it is normal for United States ambassadors and their staffs to have regular meetings with the leaders of local non-Communist parties.

REMEMBER THE NEEDIEST!