Time

dominance made less and less sense. Washington's master plans for Western Europe became increasingly irrelevant. Why should not Charles de Gaulle pursue his own vision of a European third force? Why should the military commander of NATO always be an American? For Kissinger, who believes that the age of superpowers is drawing to an end, the growth of independence in Western Europe is natural and desirable.

When he travels to Western Europe next week with Nixon and Rogers, the tour will be something of a personal triumph for Kissinger. It represents, if only symbolically at the moment, a renewal of the kind of relationship that he has advocated. Europeans are intensely, if not always justifiably, suspicious of American attempts to guide their policies, and are increasingly resentful of the growing U.S. involvement in their economies. Kissinger believes that the Atlantic nations can cooperate closely in many spheres, once they can agree on what he calls "coalitions of shared purposes." Precisely what these purposes will be, beyond the obvious mutual interest of defense, remains to be worked out by Nixon diplomacy.

The Disraeli Conservative

Kissinger calls himself a political independent. "If I were in 19th century Great Britain," he says, "I might be a Disraeli Conservative in domestic affairs, but not in foreign policy." Disraeli was an unabashed imperialist. Kissinger, by contrast, believes that U.S. power must not be spread too thinly, especially in politically underdeveloped areas that Americans little understand.

It is curious that Henry Kissinger, the futurist who demands that the U.S. look far ahead before deciding what to do tomorrow morning, should be so much at home in the 19th century. However, states and statesmen were more predictable during that period, and the margin for error was a little greater. He is not alone in arguing that the U.S. could benefit from reading—and understanding—history. "The pre-eminent task of American foreign policy," he has said, "ought to be to get some reputation for steadiness. Whether we are dangerous to our enemies one can argue, but we are murder on our friends. We will not get steadiness unless we can have a certain philosophy of what we are trying to do."

That 19th century certitude, of course, should still be supplemented by instinct, another essential trait in an age when the only rapid communications were between a man's brain and hand. Kissinger, in *A World Restored,* quotes a line from Metternich: "I was born to make history, not to write novels, and if I *guess* correctly, this is because I *know*." As he helps Richard Nixon make history, Kissinger will have to make some knowing guesses himself, probably fateful ones. The U.S. can hope that Kissinger, a man of brilliant intellect, will guess correctly—and that Nixon guessed correctly in choosing him.

Pueblo

INVESTIGATIONS

Pueblo and L.B.J.

In the anguished hours after the seizure of U.S.S. *Pueblo,* the Navy desperately charted a plan to recapture her. In fact, *Pueblo* was doomed, both by prior military ineptitude and Washington's well-founded fears of the consequences of any such action.

Testifying before the Navy court of inquiry in Coronado, Calif., last week, Rear Admiral George L. Cassell, former assistant chief of staff for Pacific Fleet Operations, said that the Navy launched its rescue mission immediately after the capture. Two U.S. Navy destroyers, U.S.S. *Truxton* and U.S.S. *Higbee,* were ordered to sail to Wonsan. Under heavy air cover and backed up by a U.S. ultimatum to the North Koreans, *Higbee* was to dash into Wonsan harbor and escort *Pueblo* to safety. However, noted Cassell, the plan was vetoed by "higher authority."

TED LAU

CAPTAIN JOHN WILLIAMS
The advice was simple: don't do it.

That higher authority was Lyndon Johnson. As the destroyers headed out, the President called a conference in the White House with top military and foreign-affairs aides. The advice Johnson received was simply: Don't do it. Johnson wholeheartedly concurred. Said he: "I don't want another war." One participant recalls that there was little debate. "On this one," he says, "there were no hawks, there were no doves. It was unanimous. Apart from the danger of starting another war with North Korea, it was obvious to the President and his advisers that the rescue attempt would almost certainly result in the immediate death of *Pueblo's* crew."

14 Feb 69

Documents or Lives? Last week's hearings gave *Pueblo's* men the first opportunity to show their devotion to their skipper, Commander Lloyd ("Pete") Bucher. Without exception, they substantially corroborated Bucher's testimony that the ship could not have been defended. The hearings did not go as well for two other officers, however.

Lieut. Stephen R. Harris, who was in charge of *Pueblo's* highly classified research spaces, was called on to explain his failure to destroy mounds of classified documents that ultimately fell into North Korean hands. Harris testified that he did not have enough weighted bags to sink the documents. When one man was wounded by machine-gun fire as he tried to toss one of the bags overboard, Harris decided to keep the men inside to try to burn the documents. The lack of time, the confusion, and the smoke from smoldering documents on the deck made his mission impossible, he said. However, two other officers testified that they had been able to destroy classified documents under their control. And despite the machine-gun fire, they said, they had ventured on deck and had not been hit.

The issue was made even more confusing by a Navy intelligence expert, Captain John H. D. Williams. He maintained that every scrap of classified paper on *Pueblo,* all 2,000 pounds of it, could and should have been destroyed. Williams said that the entire crew should have been released from general quarters to carry the material into one nonessential compartment. There it could have been doused in gasoline and burned. An icy, self-assured officer, Williams made it clear that in his opinion Bucher and Harris had all the destruction equipment they needed. All that was missing was the ingenuity to do the job. And, he indicated, that task in his view was more important than saving sailors' lives.

No Air Cover. As serious as Williams' implications were, even more damaging was the fact that Rear Admiral Frank L. Johnson, then Commander of Naval Forces, Japan, had knowingly failed to provide available air cover for the vessel. The details were not made public, but when *Pueblo's* sister surveillance ship, U.S.S. *Banner,* had earlier cruised off North Korea, Admiral Johnson requested half a dozen or more Air Force F-105 fighters for air cover. The fighters were flown from Okinawa to South Korea, where they were kept on "strip alert," ready to go to *Banner's* aid. Inexplicably, Admiral Johnson did not request the same protection for *Pueblo,* which was stationed far closer to the Korean mainland. Instead, the F-105s remained on stand-by alert on Okinawa, 900 miles from the hapless spy ship. It was no excuse that, even if the aircraft had been ready to defend *Pueblo,* Lyndon Johnson might well have refused them permission to take off for the very same reason that he embargoed the Navy's 19th century-style rescue mission.