



Kissinger's Quitting Not Unthinkable

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NOT SO long ago, the thought of the U.S. government without Henry Kissinger was unthinkable.

Last June, when he threatened to quit, a shocked Senate instantly voted its faith in him, wiretaps or not.

In fact, for these past five years, Kissinger had only to roll his eyes and speak nostalgically of Harvard yard to stir a passionate protest from his idolaters.

But that has all changed. At his recent news conference, the Secretary of State denied he had any thought of resigning, which was a way of acknowledging that it had become thinkable to others.

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CONGRESS, once the most ardent chapter of his worldwide fan club, has become a hotbed of heretics. His wisdom on Turkey, Pakistan, arms sales, strategic balance is openly questioned by junior members who six months ago would have thought themselves privileged to be in his presence.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when the decline began. Kissinger referred to "the new leadership in Congress." Actually, the old leaders are all still in place. It is the new membership, particularly in the House, which has changed the strategic balance. Scores of young men literally marched into office

from the barricades of the antiwar movement.

Kissinger seems to be under demythification at the White House as well. Once the star whose night flights separated him from the dreary earthlings around Richard Nixon, he is becoming a member of the Ford team, mouthing along with them the sordid old sophistries that are all that is left amid the general collapse of their sordid old policies.

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WITH Cambodia dying and Vietnam wasting fast, there are no solo turns for Kissinger. He is talking about the domino theory, with appropriate reproaches for those who "sneer" at it. He has, like the President and the secretary of defense, gone back to 1965 for his rhetoric. He sounds like Dean Rusk with a German accent.

The "nightmare of recriminations," which Kissinger and Mr. Nixon vowed to spare the country, as they staved off "precipitate withdrawal" for four and a half years, is obviously not going to materialize. The consensus on foreign policy which Kissinger says is "imperative" has, as a matter of fact, occurred finally on Vietnam. The country does not wish to finance the prolongation of the agony.

Congress seems quite ready to face the "nightmare" which the administration is trying to fabricate.