

# Kissinger and Schlesinger--2 strong egos at war

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WASHINGTON — A bitter, behind-the-scenes war is raging between two giants of the Ford Administration, Secretary of State Kissinger and Defense Secretary Schlesinger.

Conflicts between the two are denied officially in public, but confirmed privately at both the State Department and the Pentagon. They now have become a major factor in such fundamental issues as the strategic-arms negotiations, detente with the Soviet Union and military aid in the Middle East.

On one occasion recently, Kissinger openly insulted the defense secretary by suggesting — in front of TV cameras — that Schlesinger's ideas about military aid in the Mideast would be "considered" if he would present them "through proper channels."

in the Kissinger-dominated National Security Council.

Schlesinger has been no less pointed in some of his public remarks.

He has made it clear that Israel isn't going to get Pershing ground-to-ground missiles from the U.S., despite a secret Kissinger memorandum accompanying the new Sinai agreements that seemed to be a virtual promise of Pershings.

The memo — leaked to the press — promised a "study" of the Pershing issue "with the view of giving a positive response."

Schlesinger told a press conference last Monday "it is unlikely . . . that a near-term decision to provide Pershings to Israel is likely to be forthcoming."

Schlesinger also permitted his official spokesman, Joseph Laitin, to confirm that the State Department did not consult with Schles-

inger — or any other Pentagon official — before giving the secret assurances to Israel.

Kissinger, however, has publicly insisted that the Pentagon was fully informed.

"Yes," says one high State Department official, "there is a problem between the two."

Says a Pentagon official: "There are certain problems. There are basic differences of opinion between two very strong men with two very strong egos."

Says still another State Department official: "The two are like a cat and a dog. It's partly ideological — basic matters on which two bright men just didn't agree. And it's partly two monumental egos in conflict. Neither seems to think that the world is quite big enough for the other."

The most serious conflicts between the two secretaries have emerged in an internal Ford Administration struggle over basic policies in strategic-arms negotiations with the Soviet Union, the so-called "SALT" talks.

From the State Department's point of view, Schlesinger and the Joint Chiefs of Staff have been putting up roadblocks to a new SALT agreement since President Ford and Kissinger made a tentative deal with the Soviets last November at Vladivostok.

In behind-the-scenes jockey-

ing since then, Schlesinger and the Joint Chiefs have insisted that a new Soviet bomber, called the "Backfire," should be classified as a strategic weapon, and counted in ceilings set at Vladivostok.

Kissinger, apparently more eager for an arms agreement than Schlesinger, has taken the view that the "Backfire" wasn't developed as a strategic weapon by the Soviets and doesn't have to be counted.

The Pentagon reportedly has prevailed so far, and Kissinger was forced to present a hard-line

proposal he knew the Soviets would reject.

The result has been that no SALT agreement is presently in sight.

"Schlesinger thinks that Henry's attitudes toward SALT and detente with the Soviets are his Achilles heel," said one top Kissinger aide. "He thinks Henry can be shot down politically on these issues" because he believes the public is in favor of a harder line.

Also, said a Pentagon official, "Schlesinger is more suspicious of the Soviets than Kissinger."

Officials on both sides of the Potomac agree the issues dividing Schlesinger and Kissinger are neither light nor transient.

They involve basic attitudes toward the Cold War and the Soviet Union. They could very well decide whether a new SALT agreement's reached and the future of detente.

It not that inconceivable such issues will become major presidential-campaign issues next year, forcing Ford to decide which of his top-level officials to support.