



# Ford's 'Massacre'

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**B**Y CHOPPING and changing top national security advisers, President Ford has tried to reassert personal authority over his crumbling administration. But in the process he stimulated new doubts as to whether he has the brains to be President.

For the Sunday massacre advertised, disarray in a way that makes Mr. Ford easier meat for his political foes in both parties. Hence . . . the logic of the event which preceded everything — the decision by Nelson Rockefeller that he would not seek the vice presidency as Mr. Ford's running mate.

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**W**HEN WORD that Rockefeller would bow out reached the White House late last week, Mr. Ford suddenly felt himself under strong pressure to show he was boss.

That focused attention on three glaring exceptions to the "let's all be buddies" spirit which is Mr. Ford's idea of running an administration. First there was the problem of a seemingly omnipotent Secretary of State.

The symbol of Henry Kissinger's power was his unprecedented double role as Secretary of State and head of the National Security Council. Some of the President's closest aides, moreover, believed that Kissinger tended to

overshadow the President in the eyes of the public.

The second problem was Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, a man of rugged honesty who probably takes defense more seriously than any of his predecessors. Schlesinger was repeatedly at odds with Kissinger on matters of substance that were leaked to the press and thus became presidential headaches.

At a time when the President was pinning his electoral hopes on budgetary stringency, furthermore, Schlesinger was fighting vigorously against cuts in the defense budget.

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**F**INALLY, there was the sad case of William Colby, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency. Colby, genuinely shocked by disclosures of past CIA horrors, broke the cardinal rule of the intelligence game.

Rather than take the blame chin out, he came clean. He thus kept passing to Mr. Ford hot potatoes the President couldn't, and still can't, handle — including notably the stories of assassination plots.

Superficially Mr. Ford got all these problems out of his hair by the Sunday massacre. The seemingly arbitrary decisions, however, betray a President who seems not to know what he's doing.