

ROWLAND EVANS AND ROBERT NOVAK

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Kissinger, Rogers rarely invited to the same diplomatic functions

WASHINGTON—Sensitivities to ever-increasing ridicule of the once-powerful State Department and its boss, Secretary of State William P. Rogers, have now risen to a danger point so alarming to foreign embassies that Rogers and the all-powerful Henry Kissinger seldom are invited together to social or diplomatic functions.

A case in point were the two separate dinner parties that the Canadian embassy wisely gave in preparation for President Nixon's state visit to Ottawa on April 13.

The first, on March 10, was for Rogers. Kissinger was the guest of honor at a similar dinner just before both men accompanied Mr. Nixon to Canada.

The understandable reason: Rogers, denied the traditional role of the President's pre-eminent foreign policy adviser, has been so overshadowed by the glittering Kissinger for so long that he now instinctively avoids all but official encounters. Most of these are either over the telephone or in the White House.

Likewise, Rogers, a cool, dispassionate gentleman on the outside with iron self-control, has conspicuously boycotted traditional Washington forums such as the annual dinners given by the Gridiron Club and the radio and television correspondents where the press roasts Washington's high and mighty.

Again, the understandable reason: Rogers has been so shell-shocked by invidious Rogers-Kissinger comparisons that he will go to almost any lengths to avoid them. In the words of a sympathetic, long-time Rogers friend, "Bill takes the pain with grace and forbear-

ance on the surface, but it ties his stomach in a knot."

If this tension were limited to Rogers himself, who long ago decided that loyalty to President Nixon transcended all else, the heightened sensitivities in Foggy Bottom would be little more than a footnote in history. In fact, however, the issue is far larger than Rogers.

Thus, Rogers' own inner resentment of the public dominance of Kissinger is only a pale reflection of the resentment throughout the higher ranks of the State Department bureaucracy. One target of this passion is Kissinger—not so much Kissinger the man but Kissinger the chosen instrument to plot and carry out Mr. Nixon's ambitious foreign policies. The other target is Rogers himself, fairly or not regarded as a passive Nixon agent in the State Department who, out of loyalty, refuses to battle for his own constituency.

A prime example is the bitter struggle now going on between the State and Treasury Departments for control of U.S. economic policy abroad. Secretary of the Treasury John B. Connally, a skilled and ruthless infighter, is seen by high-ranking State Department officers as filling a policy vacuum created by Rogers' reluctance to start a fight that would embarrass Mr. Nixon.

One result of this is the prediction now being privately voiced that State Department operatives themselves will soon take on the fight to preserve State's traditional influence over foreign policy.

"The idea that State is a supine bunch of cookie-pushers is inaccurate," in the words of one high official. "When the worm turns, it will turn with a vengeance."