

Kissinger could be Nixon's second State secretary

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WASHINGTON — It is time to ask,

quite seriously, whether Dr. Henry A. Kissinger may not be the secretary of State in the second Nixon Administration — assuming there is a second Nixon Administration, as most people now do.

It is a point that has been idly discussed before now. Given Dr. Kissinger's role in foreign policymaking, a good many people have said that he really ought to be presiding over the State Department. Some have added: "Why not?" But the answer has always been relations with Congress, and all the obvious other complications of the case.

For a long time, nonetheless, Henry Kissinger has been used by the President as secretary of State in all but name. He is in Peking at the moment, negotiating on the President's behalf with Premier Chou En-lai.

Joint architects

The SALT agreement is also before the Senate; and the President and Kissinger were the joint architects of the skillful, long-headed diplomacy that produced a SALT agreement in Moscow only about a fortnight after the blockade of Haiphong Harbor. When the House and Senate committees came to the White House to be briefed on SALT, it was again Dr. Kissinger whom the President deputed to do the detailed briefing.

He did a dazzling job of it, too, according to no less an authority than the lonely SALT critic, Sen Henry M. Jackson. In sum, the work that Dr. Kissinger is now openly doing has certainly ceased to be the work of a hidden though powerful

Joseph Alsop

member of the White House secretariat. And he is doing that work to steadily mounting applause.

New developments

Even so, the question in the first paragraph would hardly be worth asking if it were not for some new developments, so trivial seeming they have not been noticed. It is baldredash that foreign policy has never been made in this manner in our government. Colonel Edward Marshall House under President Wilson. Har-

ry Hopkins in the war years under President Roosevelt, both enjoyed situations almost identical with Dr. Kissinger's today.

In theory it could go on forever, or at least as long as President Nixon himself goes on. In practice, however, one has to begin to think about other possibilities in view of the small but fairly eyebrow-raising signs above-mentioned. One such is the novel relationship between Kissinger and the prickly chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. J. William Fulbright.

The first meeting on the level of what might be called coziness was arranged by a charming woman, Mrs. Thomas Braden. But that initial luncheon has been followed by at least one other, reportedly suggested by Sen. Fulbright himself when Dr. Kissinger asked how and where he could brief the senator on events in Moscow.

Confidential situation

It is the sort of thing one never absolutely knows about. Yet consider Kissinger's intensely confidential situation in the White House. In view of that situation, it is hard to imagine him moving to establish a personal link with Senator Fulbright, without the express approval of the President for such a move. It looks, in short, as though the President had here begun testing the water on Capitol Hill.

There has been another, even more significant episode of the same sort, and still more recently, too. In brief, there was a serious question in the White House, reportedly, about whether Dr.

Kissinger would discard the protective cloak of executive privilege. The idea was to have him appear before Sen. Fulbright's committee, if not others, to expound the SALT agreement as only Kissinger seems to be able to do.

Origin of an idea

The idea obviously originated in Kissinger's four bravura on-the-record press conferences during the Moscow trip — among the most extraordinary and successful feats of exposition the U.S. government has seen in decades. But the point is, again reportedly, that the idea was President Nixon's, and that the arguments against discarding executive privilege were apparently made by Henry Kissinger. These latter proved decisive.

Yet if you think about it a little, there are only two possible deductions one can draw from the fact that the President even gave temporary thought to such a thing, which could only have been a beginning of Kissinger testimony. One deduction is that Richard M. Nixon sees Henry A. Kissinger's White House usefulness coming to an end at the close of the present presidential term. That is what will happen, beyond doubt, if former Secretary of the Treasury John Connally becomes secretary of State after the election.

As to the other possible deduction, it is that President Nixon is already thinking of making Henry Kissinger go public for good by naming him secretary of State, while John Connally moves into the vice presidency. Stranger, more irrational things have happened.



Dr. Henry Kissinger
Two possible deductions