NYTimes

Reporter'sNotebook: A Kissinger Seminar

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24 -As Secretary of State Kissinger's Air Force jet headed home Saturday night from Geneva on the last leg of his 15-day trip to 13 countries, the newsmen aboard were invited to his cabin up front for a farewell glass of champagne.

Mr. Kissinger greeted them with a smile, but the reporters noticed that his eyes were reddish and his voice was hoarse, and that he was was hoarse, and that he was constantly having to blow his nose. The Secretary of State had caught a cold the day before, and he looked as fatigued as mst of the news-men fait men felt. But instead of a final toast

But instead of a final toast and some much-needed sleep, Mr. Kissinger turned to one of those present and asked: "How do you think the trip went?" That started an hour-long give-and-take that ended only when one of Mr. Kis-singer's aides insisted that he ought t turn in.

singer's aides insisted that he ought t turn in. When the newsmen re-turned to their seats in the rear of the plane they seemed to agree that Mr. Kissinger was human after all. He was clearly tired, but wanted to make sure that the reporter

clearly tired, but wanted to make sure that the reporters had the right message be-fore he went to sleep. The "message" on this trip was that everything had gone as well as Mr. Kissinger hoped: Relations with Euro-pean allies had improved, and the Arab-Israeli peace talks had begun with a minimum of invective and a reasonable of invective and a reasonable hope for progress in coming weeks.

weeks. It was hard to dispute Mr. Kissinger's interpretation be-cause he had jealously guard-ed the details of his nego-tiations. Almost all the information provided to the press was dispensed by Mr. Kissinger personally, only occasionally by George S. Vest, the State Department's new spokesman. Because of what the Secre-

new spokesman. Because of what the Secre-tary called the delicacy of the talks, he was reluctant to give a detailed rundown give a detailed rundown either for direct quotation or even as "background." Re-porters still have only a gen-eral idea of what transpired at the crucial talks with President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt, President Hafez al-Assad of Syria and with the Israeli Cabinet. But Mr. Kissinger was more than willing to discuss the philosophy of his approach to negotiations, a field in which he clearly does not re-gard himself as a neophyte. One newsman called such dis-cussions with the press "Kis-singer 242: A flying seminar in American Middle East di-plomacy." "In negotiations," he said

piomacy." "In negotiations," he said one day, "if you put down specific proposals before you know where you're going, it is almost suicidal." He warned newsmen that they should not expect him to say one thing to Arabs and

another to Israelis. "Eventu-another to Israelis. "Eventu-ally, the two sides will get together and compare notes. If they find out they've each been told different things, you're dead."

you're dead." During one session with reporters, Mr. Kissinger was asked the American position on oil embargoes. "You may not believe it, but what I say in private is not very differ-ent from what I have said in

pubilc." Some laughter, in disbelief, followed.

Wherever the Kissinger party went, local officials and newsmen wanted to know whether President Nixon would probably not be forced out. He also wanted it known that Mr. Nixon was still running foreign policy despite his own seming in-dependence in that field. Every night on the trip, Mr. Kissinger sent back a 10-

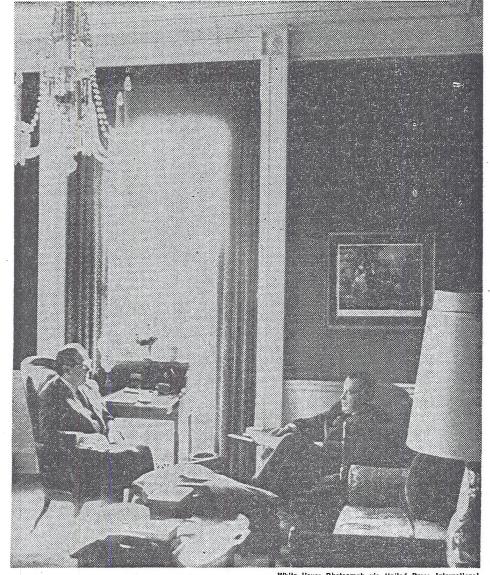
page memo to Mr. Nixon on what he had done during the what he had done during the day. And without fail, he re-ceived a reply from Mr. Nixon of two to three pages in the morning giving him in-structions or advice.

Mr. Kissinger has his per-sonal likes and dislikes about the people he must meet dur-ing these trips. When newsmg these trips. when news-men complained about the grueling pace of the journey, he replied, "But at least you don't have to sit through the talks."

His favorite leader semed to be King Hussein of Jordan, the most pro-Western and colorful of the Arabs, who surprised Mr. Kissinger by hovering his helicopter by hovering his helicopter over the Amman airport just as the Secretary was about to depart and waving good-by to him. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, the most con-servative of the Arab lead-ers, was described by Mr. Kissinger as "quite a savvy guy." He admires the Israeli leaders for their toughness, but it is clear that he finds it more difficult negotiating with leaders of democracies than of autocracies. A special place on Mr. Kis-

A special place on Mr. Kis-singer's list is held by Le Duc Tho, the North Vietnamese Politburo member, whom Mr. Kissinger saw in Paris Thurs-day to talk about the shaky Vietname cocce first the way day to talk about the shaky Vietnam cease-fire they ne-gotiated over a four-year period. Mr. Kissinger some-times expresses very caustic views of the Vietnamese, but he seems to enjoy seing Mr. Tho, whom he calls "Ducky" in private. "When we get together it's

DEC 2 5 1973 THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1973



White House Photograph via United Press International President Nixon and Secretary of State Kissinger meeting yesterday in the Lincoln Sitting Room of the White House. They conferred for an hour.

like an old, war veterans' re-union." Mr. Kissinger said. "We talk about how we overcame the crisis in the nego-tiations together."

came the crisis in the nego-tiations together." One can only wonder what "Ducky" calls Mr. Kis-singer in the privacy of the Politburo. Mr. Kissinger for years has ben known around Washington as "Henry," but now some aides call him "H.A.K.," the way he is re-ferred to in State Depart-ment cables. A growing num-ber of people now simply ad-dress him as "Mr. Secretary."

On Mr. Kissinger's latest previous trip to the Middle East, in November, newsmen paid particular attention to how the Arab leaders reacted visiting the hilltop site alone,

without the press along. to his being Jewish.

to his being Jewish. On this trip, the reporters were curious what effect Mr. Kissinger's background had on his visit to Israel. In both cases, the impact seemed negligible. Mr. Kissinger has stressed that he views him-self as an American Secre-tary of State and whatever he may thing of his religious background, he keeps it very personal.

background, ... personal. Mr. Kissinger's only de-parture from this policy oc-curred last Monday morning his entourage was precurred last Moncay morning as his entourage was pre-paring to leave Jerusalem. He asked to visit the Yad Vashem memorial to the Jews who died in Nazi extermina-tion camps during World War II. But he insisted or r

When he met newsman later he refused to discuss his emotions at the memorial. Twelve members of his family were killed in the war.

While Mr. Kissinger was traveling, reports appeared in the American Press of an impending marriage to a long-time escort, Nancy Mag-iinnes. At first he made light of the spearte but when they of the reports, but when they continued he authorized Mr. Vest to deny them. Finally, an exasperated Mr. Kissinger told reporters he was so busy that if he married anyone, it would be Joseph J. Sisco, his top Middle East expert, with whom he was spending most of his evening hours.

.

Security on this trip was exceptionally heavy. Mr. Kis-singer's Secret Service agents often drove behind his car often drove behind his car with submachine guns stick-ing out the windows. They feared an assassination at-tempt somewhere along the line. The murder of the Spanish Premier, Adm. Luis Carrero Blanco, on Thursday —just 24 hours after Mr. Kis-singer had talked withhim in Madrid — came as a shock to the security men, who seemed to worry even more.

when Mr. Kissinger was delayed for six hours in Damascus as the result of his talks with General Assad, some agents even began to some agents even began to worry about a kidnapping attempt. It was not until the Air Force jet began to near Washington that the agents seemed to relax.

But Mr. Kissinger does not like to appear nervous about his safety and tends — at least in talks with newsmen least in talks with newsmen. — to make light of his own tight security. As his plane was heading toward Andrews Air Force Base, Mr. Kissing-er looked at the security mem standing nearby and said jokingly, "Tll probably get knocked off on the way in from Andrews."