

A Reporter's Notebook: Students of Kissinger

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PARIS, July 10—Secretary of State Kissinger's Western European travels, unlike his trips to Communist capitals and the Middle East, had a special personal flavor. It was a kind of class reunion.

Wherever he went he seemed to run into former Harvard students and friends, some of them now heads of government. The West German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, knows Mr. Kissinger from Harvard; the Belgian Premier, Leo Tindemans, was his student there.

At a meeting with Foreign Minister Aldo Moro in Rome, Mr. Kissinger chided Mr. Moro's two principal aides in his professorial tone. Roberto Gaja and Roberto Ducci, No. 2 and No. 3 in the Foreign Ministry, had taken their lessons from him, he reminded them; now, he said jokingly, they are always criticizing what he does.

"So tell me my mistakes—what have I done wrong?" he asked in his rumbling, graduate-seminar voice.

The jokes have become a part of the Secretary's technique, both in public and in private. Usually he delivers them deadpan, and when they do not get across, that seems to amuse him even more.

He was in great, growing good humor during his trip despite signals of Watergate annoyance from back across the ocean. Like almost everyone else, he is cheered by applause.

At the headquarters of the Atlantic alliance in Brussels he was taken by surprise when Secretary General Joseph M. A. H. Luns told a news conference that he saw no need to introduce Mr. Kissinger and just gave him the floor. Dr. Luns was trying to save Mr. Kissinger time on his tight schedule, but the Secretary had obviously expected a few minutes of rhetoric and homilies in which to prepare himself.

He took the proffered microphone and, looking earnest, said: "I expected one of the Secretary General's briefer remarks, of 20 minutes or so. I had asked him to say something friendly, but I suppose he couldn't bring himself to do that."

Dr. Luns did not even flicker a smile. "Oh, I can," he said crisply. "We had an excellent meeting."

There was also some question of just how well the West German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and his colleagues understood Mr. Kissinger's remark that "the intensity with which we have pursued consultations with the federal republic in the last few days is obviously the result of long-term planning." The planning, of course, was Mr. Kissinger's — to be on hand for the three final World Cup soccer matches.

On the plane the jokes help Mr. Kissinger to talk with reporters once during each flight without necessarily revealing any news. He walks to the press section in the rear, positions himself in the aisle and begins to chat. Some can hear him, some can't.

The reporters suspect that he has a special tactic: appearing when they are trapped in their seats with meal trays or a few minutes before the plane is going to land so that it is hard to get to substantive questions. The tone is usually bantering. Landing normally marks the end of the day's access to the "senior official" on tour.

Sometimes there are little news conferences with local reporters too. Then the senior official becomes the Secretary of State, and it is fair game to ask the questions he has already answered in the air to see whether he is willing to put his replies on the record. Frequently he is.

The plane protocol is delicate but firm. Mr. Kissinger works in shirtsleeves and sets the pace. If he appears in the press section the exchange is categorized as informal and not too serious. Once in a while he calls reporters forward into the staff cabin, where they crowd around the table at which he sits.

Standing reporters and sitting Secretary, instead of vice versa, means a more serious session in which he wants to get points across. The cramped quarters and engine noise interfere with diplomatic expostulation, however. Afterward the reporters compare notes and rerun tapes in an effort to avoid too much variety in

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their versions of the senior official's views.

The frantic pace of the hops from country to country prove to everybody else aboard that they are fatiguable, but Mr. Kissinger seems to enjoy the whirl and fills every possible moment with appointments.

From time to time, though, he appears to stand back and look at himself, superstar and traveling show, with bemusement. In Munich he made a point of receiving Franz Joseph Strauss, leader of the Bavarian Christian Socialists, who had just made a speech repeating his attacks on Mr. Kissinger's policy on

détente.

On the plane next day the senior official said he had not been aware of the speech though he knew about Mr. Strauss's stand. Nevertheless, he said, Mr. Strauss always received him in the days when he was a junior professor on tour and Mr. Strauss was a former Defense Min-

ister and a political power, so he felt obliged to return the favor.

It is an extraordinary life. Mr. Kissinger flourishes on it, to a point that gives cause for wonder what a senior official would find to do with his time if he was ever grounded for a while.