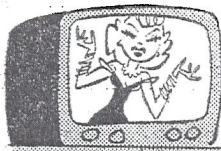


Terrence O'Flaherty



On a Clear Day ...

THE END of an old year gives our fatherly television newsmen a moment to pause and look back over the trail — hopefully from a higher position than the one occupied 365 days before. The rest of us poor hikers listen eagerly in the hope that they may declare the journey worthwhile and the future bright.



Henry Kissinger

Judging from the first two such moments provided by CBS on Thursday, it was not a clear day on which to see forevermore.

In an hour-long report titled "The Elusive Peace" CBS attempted to locate the missing fragments of what Henry Kissinger blissfully proclaimed to be the Vietnam "peace at hand" on October 26.

Early in the program it became evident that locating and reassembling the pieces was a task more suited for the archeology wing of the Smithsonian, but nevertheless Charles Collingwood waded through the interviews, film clips, and doubletalk to come to this half-hearted conclusion:

"It would be cruel to say again that peace is in sight, but it would be crueler to say that peace is now completely out of reach. The machinery to reopen the talks is still in place; the channels of communication are still open; the outlines of what the peace might look like are still on the drawing board ...

"But there is a natural turn to all things and there are signs to be read that the main war, at least, is fitfully approaching its terminal phase, although the hour, the date, the manner of its ending cannot now be foretold. Peace remains elusive but the invisible forces making for peace may still be gathering strength."

★ ★ ★

HAVING ended that program still on its hands and knees, so to speak, CBS decided on a different tack for its other report of the evening. To answer the awesome question, "Whatever Happened to '72," CBS cut its newsmen short and eight junior high school students — by tradition, the strength of the program — in heart. But the puzzle