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A Shadow Falls Over Kissinger.

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KISSINGER: Reading again his famous January 1969 Foreign Affairs article, "The Vietnam Negotiations," one can easily sense why President Nixon would have wanted such a man as his principal national security adviser. Kissinger accepted the Nixon goal of "ending the war honorably"—an outcome deemed "essential for the peace of the world," and he offered the new President a detailed seemingly foolproof route to the promised land. The Harvard cachet.

Who will ever be able to say what extra, perhaps critical, measure of confidence Kissinger gave Nixon to attempt a diplomatic feat which others then and since might have avoided tackling at all or might have tackled in a less ambitious way—those others being induced by conviction, caution or humility to wonder if the feat could or need be done?

Some say, to be sure, that Kissinger has not so much "advised" the President as received and articulated his intentions and then attempted loyally and efficiently to implement them. The Executive-adviser relationship is bound to be exceptionally difficult for any but the parties involved to comprehend—even if they do. Journalists might feel constrained not to speculate about it, if the war were not still going on.

THE RELATIONSHIP becomes even more difficult to fathom, and more inviting of speculation, when the adviser attains the separate prominence of a Kissinger. In those circumstances, the adviser, in return for a reach at consummation, risks being made a scapegoat for failure. Some who are pessimistic about the Vietnam talks wonder if this is not the final service Mr. Nixon could have in mind for his side.

That Foreign Affairs article was unquestionably brilliant. Was it, in a sense, Kissinger's job application? Certainly it was the product of a man on the make. For an academic approach-

ing the problem of negotiating a Vietnam settlement—approaching it, that is, in an academic spirit—could not easily pretend that reality is so predictable and malleable; he would be forced by a sense of history, if not also by personal modesty, to question the chances of imposing a particular pattern on a situation in violent flux. It is, of course, precisely such questions that a Presidential adviser, to remain a Presidential adviser, might wish to set aside.

The Foreign Affairs article was at the same time—OK, in retrospect—naive. Not only did it play down the messiness, the squirminess of reality. It accepted uncritically the possibility, desirability and need of negotiating a settlement. And it almost entirely overlooked one crucial aspect of diplomatic play, a President's motives and intentions, his political style.

HAS KISSINGER been compromised or "used" by Nixon? Some of his friends contend in effect that no man capable of laying out such an intricate, delicate negotiating strategy—an intellectual, a refugee from Nazi Germany, no less—could include in it the terror bombing of large cities. But I wonder if his belief in "international order," the condition he has long professed as his ideal in international relations, is not so strong and compelling as to rationalize just about any action undertaken in its name. His friends also evade what is to me the crucial question of whether his policy was premised on imaginative diplomacy, as Kissinger and his friends would have us believe, or finally on brute intimidation.

In the Johnson years, many ran down Walt Rostow for what they regarded as his intellectually forced effort to settle a pattern of order on tumbling events—a pattern congenial to the Vietnam policy his chief had decided to follow; again, a pattern whose sanctification by a Harvard don may subtly have encouraged Johnson to follow the policy flowing from it.

Kissinger's — Nixon's — early successes spared him the Rostow shadow; his status as a media personality helped too. But now his reputation and, one can imagine, much else personally, tremble on the brink: on the brink of decisions to be made in Hanoi and Saigon and on the brink of decisions to be made by his chief. Inherent in the fact of being an adviser is the twin possibility that one's advice will be faulty, or ignored.