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...And Ruins A Foreign Policy Dream

When he began drafting the foreign policy speech he delivered before members of the Associated Press this week, Henry Kissinger dreamed large dreams.

He saw the speech as a chance to re-establish the old American ideal that politics stops at the water's edge. He saw Democrats whom he admires—Sens. J. William Fulbright (Ark.), Frank Church (Idaho), Edmund Muskie (Maine)—coming to the White House to discuss mutual troop withdrawals and the related balance-of-power problems.

He saw President Nixon taking off for his forthcoming European journey with a galaxy of foreign-affairs minded among Democrats as well as Republicans standing at planeside to whisper into the presidential ear. In short, he saw the speech as a chance to re-establish a bipartisan foreign policy in this country.

This has been Kissinger's aim since the President lured him from Harvard and his duties as foreign policy specialist for New York Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller. Now that the war was over, he reasoned, it was no longer difficult to imagine achieving that aim. A lot of Democrats, he thought, wanted to get back into the foreign policy argument. They had never been happy with George McGovern's moralism on

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Vietnam. They thought the war was a mistake. But they regretted that the lines had become drawn as between the forces of good and the forces of evil so that argument was impossible.

And so, as he sat down to write a first draft, even the prospect that his recent agreements with North Vietnam would be violated did not make Kissinger think that the goal was unattainable.

He knew—and reasoned that Democrats knew—there was not one chance in 10 million that the U.S. would send troops back into Indochina. He thought Democrats might support him in selling the pass dearly and trying to get Hanoi to live up to the agreements, particularly if he could bring Democrats back into the wider area of foreign policy decisionmaking.

Kissinger has more than once re-



Henry Kissinger

minded friends that the Democratic Party is responsible for many of the greatest foreign policy achievements since World War II. McGovern, he has argued, left Democrats in the position of a party without any foreign policy. Therefore, this was the time for movement.

Two events ruined Kissinger's dream. The first was President Nixon's speech imposing controls on meat prices. Kissinger was not aware that Mr. Nixon would use the occasion to denounce his war opponents, raise the issue of amnesty and wrap himself in the mantle of leadership for those who did not "desert their country." But this mistake might have been surmounted.

The Watergate scandal, mounting in impact as the time for Kissinger's speech neared, ended all hope that the speech would serve as a vehicle for a fresh start.

Among major American newspapers, only the New York Times gave top play to Kissinger's call for a reappraisal and reaffirmation of our ties to Europe. Others featured evidence of a new secret fund disclosed in Newport Beach, Calif., and controlled by the President's personal lawyer, Herbert Kalmbach.

Television news shows gave Kissinger's answer to a question on the Watergate medium play and virtually ignored the fact that the question came after a major speech on foreign policy.

Of all the White House aides, Kissinger is now the only one who has any credibility; one of those who can say without causing raised eyebrows that he had "no prior knowledge." Yet Kissinger, too, is fixed in the Watergate spotlight, unable to move. Foreign policy, like domestic policy, now awaits the shake-out, and the answer to the question whether anybody in the White House can again speak for the country.