

Cynicism Over the Alert

By James Reston
New York Times

Washington

The main thing is that a direct clash between the policies and military forces of the United States and the Soviet Union in the Middle East has been avoided for the time being. But you have to wonder how long the American people are going to be dragged along the brink by a jumpy government they no longer trust.

This town is seething with doubt and suspicion. The Watergate scandals, the disgrace of Vice President Spiro

**Analysis
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Agnew, the resignation of Elliot Richardson, the firing of Archibald Cox and William Ruckelshaus, the indictments of Cabinet officers and White House aides, and the endless rumors of financial fiddling have all taken their toll.

SFChronicle OCT 26 1973

Julie Says Dad Is Buoyant

Washington

Julie Nixon Eisenhower said yesterday she has no doubts at all that her father will finish out his second term of office, neither resigning nor being impeached.

In a local television interview, she depicted her father as a man who has resilience. "I think sometimes he really likes a challenge. It's kind of a gauntlet thrown down, you have got to pick it up."

She said she had talked to her father on the telephone Wednesday and "I didn't even realize this Middle East thing had built up. He sounded so buoyant and on top of things. I think he rolls with the punches."

alerted everything world-wide, and this raises some interesting questions. After all we have heard about the "hot line" between the White House and the Kremlin, the trustful personal relations between Kissinger and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin and the new "partnership for peace" between the U.S. and the USSR, are we to believe that the only way Mr. Nixon can send Leonid Brezhnev the message is to put American forces all over the world on alert?

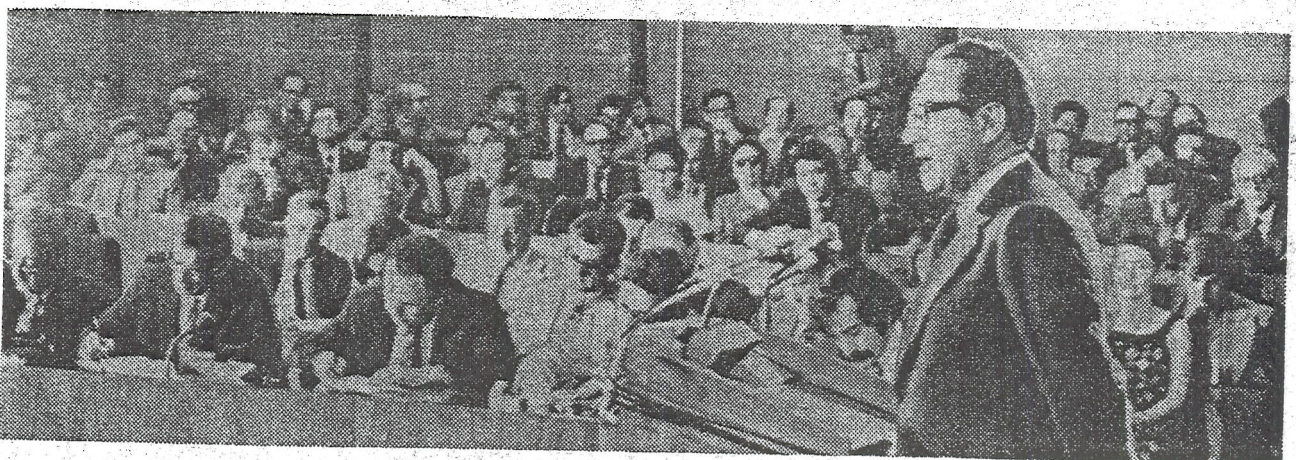
Kissinger apparently believes the answer is yes. When all the facts can be made known, he told the reporters, "I'm absolutely confident that it will be seen that the President had no other choice as a responsible national leader."

If this is the kind of world we're living in, the crisis of confidence in the administration at home is all the more serious, for even when he is faced with a genuine problem, as he was in the Soviet maneuvers in the middle of the night, he is accused of handling it in a spectacular way to defend himself.

If he had voluntarily made any one of the concessions he was forced to make under fire, he might have avoided the present poisonous atmosphere. But now if he hands over the tapes, people say he has doctored them, and even when he staggers from one move to another, he is met with the cynical remark: "A crisis a day keeps impeachment away."

"It is a symptom of what

Fri., Oct. 26, 1973 ★★★ San Francisco Chronicle 9



AP Wirephoto

Henry Kissinger, holding a news conference yesterday, discussed the need for confidence in government

is happening to our country," Kissinger said in his press conference, "that it could even be suggested that the United States would alert its forces for domestic reasons."

One reporter asked Kissinger if the Soviets thought the President was so weakened that they could take advantage of his weakness, and

the secretary of state didn't dismiss the notion.

"Speculation about motives is always dangerous," he said, "but one cannot have crises of authority in a society for a period of months without paying a price somewhere along the line."

The price at home, however, is higher than the price

abroad. Overseas, Mr. Nixon still has immense power, and when he uses it, skillfully or otherwise, he can still get results, as the improving Middle East situation demonstrates.

Not so in Washington. "There has to be a minimum of confidence," Kissinger said, "that the senior officials of the American gov-

ernment are not playing with the lives of the American people."

This is precisely true, and the tragedy is that even in this latest Middle East crisis the President didn't get that "minimum of confidence," which is why, even when his brinkmanship works, the movement for a new government goes on.