

Editor's Report

A job well done

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NEW YORK — When I wrote in this column last week about what a brilliant diplomat Dr. Henry Kissinger was, I didn't realize how prophetic those words would prove in a matter of hours. But looking back on these last seven days in October — an historic, memorable week — it is obvious that our secretary of state has more than lived up to my highest expectations of him as a statesman.



W. R. Hearst Jr.

In fact, as last week's column was rolling off the presses, Henry Kissinger was in Moscow at the request of Communist party boss Leonid Brezhnev on a swiftly-arranged, surprise mission to try to work out a joint U.S.-Soviet Union solution to the war in the Middle East.

During two intensive days of negotiation, Kissinger and the Russians produced a new formula

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for peace between the Israelis and the Arabs. That formula not only called for a cease-fire in place, but also contained the first international commitment to negotiations between the conflicting parties.

Kissinger then flew on to Tel Aviv to explain the proposal to that beleaguered, tough-minded lady, Golda Meir, and her war ministers. But by the time he got back to Washington, via London, the situation had taken a decided turn for the worse.

The cease-fire had been broken and in the ensuing battle the amazing Israelis had made additional territorial gains. Our Hearst correspondent, John Harris, gabled from the war zone that the Egyptian Third Army, pinned down along the Suez in the blazing desert sun, faced annihilation.

Harris quoted one observer as saying, "It is an army of the damned in classical war fiction; it must surrender or die."

But the Soviets were not about to let their ally face such a disaster, any more than we, presumably, would let our ally be wiped out.

They proposed that they and we should send troops into the war zone to insure the cease-fire. But that proposal was promptly — and correctly — rejected by Kissinger and President Nixon.

The Russians remained adamant — even desperate in their determination to prevent Israel from demolishing the Egyptian army. Soviet Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin delivered to Kissinger a very tough note on this matter — a note which my friend, Sen. Scoop Jackson, described as "brutal."

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At the same time, Washington began noticing strange military activities in the Soviet Union, indicating that the Russians might be planning to send troops in unilaterally to save the Egyptians.

That is when President Nixon declared a world-wide military alert of American forces. Given the perilous situation, there can be no doubt that our President made the right move and it disgusted me that some overly cynical newsmen and politicians suggested that it was all a smoke screen to cover up the furor over the Watergate tapes.

I realize that a lot of people have lost confidence in the President as a result of recent homefront scandals. But he has done a tremendous job in foreign affairs and is not about to fabricate a military confrontation with the Soviets simply to deflect domestic political fire.

The Soviets claim they had no intention of sending troops to the Middle East, but were just trying to put pressure on Israel. That may be. But we were not certain of their intentions and our President had the duty as commander in chief, and with the unanimous affirmation of his National Security Council, to take all necessary precautions.

Fortunately, the confrontation never developed, because the President once more sent the able Kissinger into the breach. At his press conference on Thursday, the secretary gave the nation a full rundown on events as they had transpired up to that time and made an eloquent plea for a United Nations peace-keeping force that would be made up of troops from nations other than the United States and the Soviet Union.

He said; "It is inconceivable that the forces of the great powers should be introduced in the numbers that would be necessary to overpower both of the participants. It is inconceivable that we should transplant the great power rivalry into the Middle East or, alternatively, that we should impose a military condominium by the United States and the Soviet Union."

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As a result of Dr. Kissinger's work, the United Nations Security Council that night approved establishment of an emergency force to enforce the cease-fire.

As readers of this column know, I often have been harshly critical of the United Nations. But in this particular situation, that world body acted exactly as it should.

Had we not had the United Nations as a forum in which to debate and decide this grave question, things might have gotten out of hand. The Security Council demonstrated that it can truly perform in the interest of world peace if the big powers are willing to use it properly.

But the lion's share of the praise for cooling off an overheated international situation must go to my brilliant friend, Henry Kissinger.

On Friday night, millions of us watched President Nixon answer questions about the Middle East and the Watergate Affair in one of the most wild and woolly press conferences of recent memory.

Although the President let his feelings show through on occasion and had some sarcastic remarks about radio and television, I thought he did a good job of keeping his cool and of replying directly and candidly to all questions. He performed well under fire.