

The War Against Kissinger

Throwing out the baby with the bath is likely to be the end result of the expanded warfare directed at Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger. The baby in this instance is the Nixon foreign policy opening the way to at least the chance for a peaceful world and an abatement of the nuclear arms race.

The squalid bath water of Watergate may finally drown everything good and bad. If that happens, the loss may be irreparable and the opening to a peaceful understanding between East and West closed for a long time to come.

Returning from the Mideast hailed as Super-K and a miracle worker, Kissinger faced a press conference bent on establishing his guilt in the wiretaps of his co-workers in the National Security Council and certain newspaper men. The persistent question was whether he had proposed those wiretaps or whether he had merely supplied a list of names of those who had had access to secret information. The question was never satisfactorily answered as reporters playing Mr. District Attorney bore in.

To this observer, Kissinger's position in the early years of the Nixon administration when he was in the White House as adviser on national security affairs seems clear. He was trying to

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survive in a nest of vipers. The palace guard had no love for the brilliant professor who had achieved a position of such influence in the vital area of foreign policy.

In the long view of history, it may be determined that he sacrificed too much, cut too many corners for personal power. But for those of us living in this precarious moment, the verdict of history is at the end of a long dark and perhaps impassable tunnel. If the nuclear arms race between the two superpowers goes on and still other nations get the potential of the weapon of annihilation, there may be no history.

The assumption of some reporter-commentators who direct their fire at Kissinger is that diplomacy should be treated like the police beat. You score if you get the bad guys and you better believe there aren't any good guys.

Above all, no secrecy—with the diplomat, the Secretary of State, exposed to the fierce light of the police line-up.

This is a dangerous distortion of the reporter's function. Any protracted and difficult negotiation, such as that in the Mideast, has elements which cannot in the first stages be disclosed. Those elements, which one must assume do not violate the national interest, are an essential part of the diplomat's trade.

In the Mideast negotiation, President Hasef Assed of Syria could privately tell Kissinger that he would do everything possible to prevent Palestinian terrorists from infiltrating into Israel. But he could not put this in writing nor could he advertise it publicly if a disengagement on the Golan Heights was to be achieved. In his turn, Kissinger would pass this on to the Israeli negotiators.

What this comes down to is trust. The trust that Kissinger inspired in his shuttle diplomacy was an important ingredient in his success. Should that trust be destroyed in one way or another we shall be the poorer.

What disturbs one observer is the way each new blow at the Nixon administration brings an almost gleeful gloating. *Hah, we've got the evil-doers on the run.* My own reaction to the plight of the nation caught up in the Watergate whirlpool is one of profound sorrow. How can this have happened to my country to which my forbears came long ago?

It is a looking glass world. The speech that President Nixon made to the midshipmen at Annapolis was a solid, persuasive exposition of what could and could not be accomplished through a detente with the Soviet Union. If the name of a Hubert Humphrey or an Adlai Stevenson had been attached to that speech, the liberals would have been on their chairs cheering.

Let me venture one precarious prophecy. If Nixon is removed from office by resignation or impeachment, we shall see a sterner, harsher and perhaps even a more dangerous period ahead. The stable will have been cleaned out and that will be a satisfaction. But what comes after in a battered and bruised system appears to be of little concern to those crying loudest for blood.