

Betty Beale: Washington

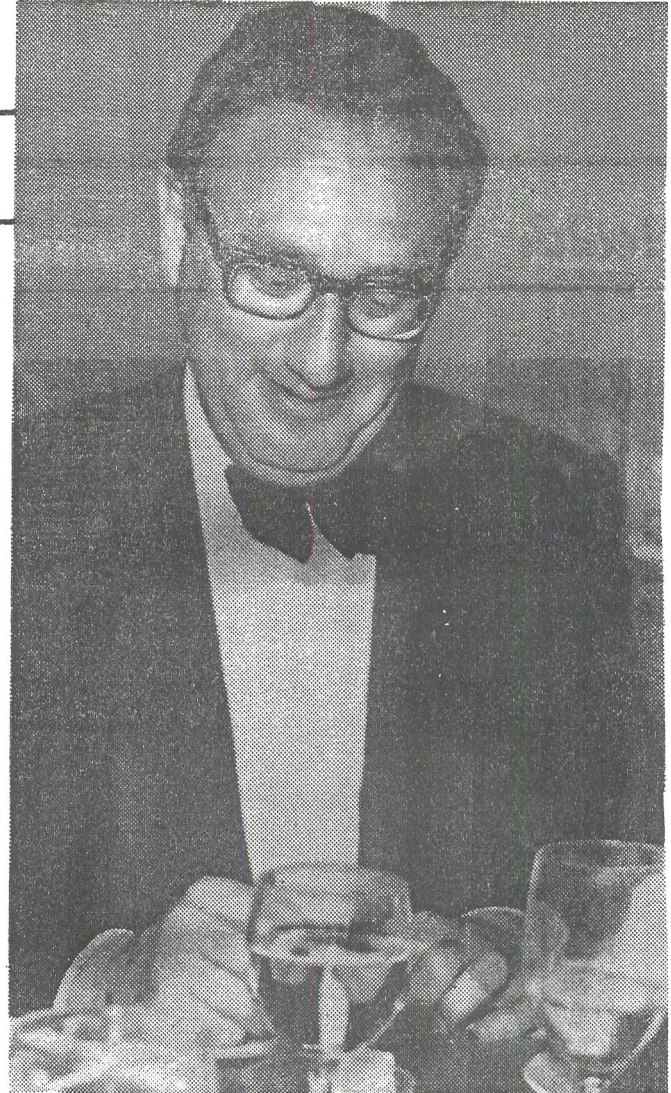
The rumors about firing Kissinger

WASHINGTON — Henry Kissinger remains the toast of this town and every other capital, so a column of a week ago that said a White House ring of jealousy was closing in on him shook Washington. "It's inconceivable that the President would fire the most respected official in his Cabinet," was the response everywhere.

"It would be absolute madness," commented Alice Longworth who has never deviated from her statement of sincere affection for the Nixons. The fact that Tom Braden, who wrote the column, is a friend of Henry's and was dining with the Kissingers and Nancy's brother the night before in the Grande Scene restaurant at the Kennedy Center gave it credence.

Actually, a source close to the President told me last fall that Nixon was on the verge of removing Henry a year ago but didn't risk the adverse reaction because of his Watergate problems. The reason was the same: the President's displeasure over Kissinger getting all the credit for Nixon's foreign policy.

The same source, who was also jealous of Kissinger, said the latter had blamed Secretary Bill Roger's State Department for leaks that Henry himself had dropped to his columnist friends. Was that an effort to undermine Kissinger if and when the President got up the nerve to ask for his resignation? "You hear these



rumors all the time," said one of Henry's closest aides. "I don't put any faith in the story."

In the meantime, Nancy and Henry are happily installed for the summer in the Washington house of former Ambassador to Luxembourg Wiley Buchanan, who has indicated he would like to become Ambassador to Great Britain. Later they will move to the Georgetown house they have leased. Nancy is now writing thank-you notes for all those wedding gifts they can't even keep.

Jeanne Ehrlichman wasn't down for long following the jury's verdict of guilty against her husband. "We will take it to a higher court," she said, meaning that through prayer she and her family are placing the whole issue of justice in God's hand. "John would never have condoned anything illegal. If the President had asked him to do something like a break-in, John would have told him it was wrong."

Does he feel differently toward the President since Nixon is the one who wouldn't let his lawyers look at John's White House notes?