



Changing of the guard at embassy in Bonn: What else will change? ^{AP}

Diplomacy: The New Model Ford

It was after midnight in Jerusalem several months ago, and an exhausted Henry Kissinger was in his sixth-floor suite in the King David Hotel. Suddenly, the telephone jangled at his bedside. A call was coming in from Grand Rapids, Mich.—from the Vice President. Startled, Kissinger ordered it put through immediately, and seconds later he was talking to Gerald Ford. In no time, it became clear to the Secretary that there had been a mix-up. Ford had been sent a message to call Kissinger's White House office for a late fill-in on the day's shuttle diplomacy, but somehow the Vice President thought he was supposed to phone Kissinger in Jerusalem. Despite the hour and the confusion, the Secretary of State launched into a detailed Mideast discussion with his newest—and most important—foreign-policy pupil.

That long-distance briefing was part of an intensive effort by Kissinger to educate Ford in the nuances of super-power diplomacy. At the Secretary's urging, Ford hosted a series of receptions at Blair House last winter to meet members of the Washington diplomatic corps. Then, as Watergate pressures on President Nixon mounted, Ford—with Kissinger at his side—increasingly sat in for the President in handling visiting dig-

nitaries and even held a formal dinner for Jordan's King Hussein. Recently, Kissinger stepped up the pace of his tutelage—making sure that Ford attended breakfasts for Congressional leaders at the State Department dining room. "If only on the basis of these sessions," said one Kissinger aide, "Ford was getting a seminar on foreign affairs."

He certainly seemed to need it. "Jerry Ford," one supporter quips amiably, "knows as much about foreign affairs as a butterfly." The meager record of the new President's overseas travels left a cold trail last week for world leaders searching for clues to his thinking. Even the countries he officially visited during his quarter century in Congress seemed to have no memories of his passage. The Soviet Embassy in Washington at first insisted that Gerald Ford had never visited Moscow (he was there in 1959); the French said they had no record of his ever being in Paris (1973); and nobody in the British Foreign Office could summon more than a hazy recollection of a visit by Ford during the 1950s.

Ford's almost invisible profile on the world stage is all the more remarkable in that he was first elected to Congress on a platform stressing foreign policy.

During the 1930s, in college and law school, Ford had been an ardent isolationist. But then World War II intervened, and Navy Lieutenant Commander Ford came home from the Pacific with a much more internationalist point of view. On his arrival in Washington, the freshman congressman was taken under the wing of Michigan Sen. Arthur Vandenberg, who had undergone a similar wartime metamorphosis out of isolationism. Ford often said in later years that Vandenberg had a "very substantial" influence on his thinking on foreign policy.

But while Ford prefers to describe his stance through the 1950s and 1960s as "dyed-in-the-wool internationalist," the phrase "cold warrior" would appear to characterize his views more accurately. Few congressmen were stauncher hawks on Vietnam. In 1967—when many Americans who once supported the war were having second thoughts—Ford castigated President Johnson for failing to bomb many highly significant military targets in North Vietnam.

TALKING WITH PREMIER CHOU

But when Richard Nixon took office in 1969, Gerald Ford began a series of foreign-policy shifts as dramatic in their way as Nixon's own. Nixon, after a lifetime as a cold warrior, moved to normalize relations with China and to seek détente with the Soviet Union, and Ford made the switch with him. By the spring of 1970, Ford was telling audiences that "President Nixon no longer sees the Communist world as a monolithic enemy alliance," and he indicated that that was also his own view. Step by step, Nixon moved into what he called an "era of negotiation"—and in most cases, Ford was close behind. Indeed, Ford felt hurt in early 1972 when China invited the Senate leaders, but not their House counterparts, to Peking. Soon, Ford got his own invitation and met for five hours with Premier Chou En-lai. He termed the session "probably the greatest experience of my lifetime, as far as foreign policy is concerned."

Though Ford pledged last week to carry on the Nixon Administration's policies toward Russia and China, some changes in emphasis appear possible at least in his dealings with the Soviet Union. "I strongly believe that détente has been very beneficial," the new President recently declared. But Ford also feels that the U.S. should not brush moral issues aside to develop relations with Moscow. In a 1971 speech that seems relevant today, Ford said the President "has a historic opportunity to serve a compelling humanitarian cause" by linking the treatment of Soviet dissidents and Jews with détente. "The Russians will be seeking various [U.S.] concessions and compromises," he declared. "The time would be ripe for President Nixon to very appropriately raise the issue of Soviet Jewry with the Soviet Government."

Ford's concern for Soviet Jews is only one of many stands over the years that

have earned him a reputation as a staunch friend of Israel. Earlier this year he received the 1974 America-Israel Friendship Gold Medal from a prominent Jewish organization. But while his consistent support in Congress for military and economic aid to Israel has created a measure of alarm in Arab capitals that a shift away from the Nixon Administration's evenhanded policy is imminent, Ford in recent months has appeared to give full support to Henry Kissinger's rapprochement with the Arab world. And Ford declared earlier this year that he would not favor the U.S. entering into a formal treaty with Israel.

Indeed, steering clear of any commitments that could drag the U.S. into another conflict abroad seems likely to emerge as one of the major elements in the Ford Administration's foreign policy. Ford recently reaffirmed his belief that

"It may be a little too small," he replied.

Ford is also likely to continue to be a firm supporter of foreign aid. "It's my judgment," he said not long ago, "that a foreign-aid program is an important ingredient in the implementation of U.S. foreign policy." In fact, Ford played a major role last year in getting a foreign-aid bill passed by Congress after the program had limped along for years.

WORKING WITH CONGRESS

The ability to work with Congress should serve Ford in good stead, for the extraordinary circumstances that brought him to the Presidency clearly argue for increased emphasis on Congressional advice and consent in the field of foreign affairs. Ford has already indicated he thinks the White House and Congress should work together in this area. While this will probably preclude much of



With Chinese envoy Huang Chen after swearing-in: Up from Isolationism

the U.S. should provide economic assistance and military hardware to its allies. But he added: "We have got to be extremely careful, very restrained, in the commitment of any U.S. military personnel for a combat purpose."

That doesn't mean Ford envisions any cut in military spending. "We can only achieve peace in this very difficult world today by being militarily strong," he recently declared. The new President favors moving forward on the Trident submarine program, and earlier this year, he called for a feasibility study on construction of a network of mobile land-based missiles. Ford also emphasized that he is totally opposed to a unilateral reduction of American forces in NATO. "Unilateral troop cuts," he said, "would undermine our negotiations with the Soviet Union directed at mutual force reductions in Central Europe." As for the over-all defense budget, Ford was asked recently what he thought of the proposed \$7 billion increase for fiscal 1975.

the flashy secret diplomacy of the Nixon era, one prominent European expressed hope that "détente between Congress and the White House may finally help unlock the long-stalled trade legislation."

To accomplish this, Ford may have to let the scales of power shift a bit away from Henry Kissinger and toward such powerful Congressional voices as Sen. Henry Jackson. "The brilliance of Mr. Kissinger," editor Theo Sommer of the German newspaper *Die Zeit* predicted, "will in the future find counterweighting forces in the Congress—especially in the Senate." While Ford may be content today to play up to Kissinger's ego, ultimately he may want to make America's foreign policy his own. "For the moment, Kissinger is Ford's diplomatic walking stick—enabling him to wade through the murky international waters," a Chinese analyst said last week. "But in the end, it is the master, not the walking stick, who has to make the major decisions."