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KISSINGER PHONED NIXON ABOUT TRIP

Arranged for a Report on
China Visit Without the
President's Knowledge

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WASHINGTON, March 3—

Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, acting without the knowledge or prior approval of President Ford, spoke to former President Richard M. Nixon by telephone on Monday to arrange for a written report on Mr. Nixon's trip to China, the White House disclosed today.

Mr. Ford did not learn about the conversation or the arrangement for the report until this morning, when Secretary Kissinger informed him during a meeting at the White House, according to Ron Nessen, press secretary.

Mr. Nessen said that yesterday Mr. Kissinger told the President's national security adviser, Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, about his talk with Mr. Nixon, but added that General Scowcroft had not passed the information along to the President or other senior officials at the White House.

Mr. Nessen had been insisting that neither the President nor any of his senior aides, including Mr. Kissinger, had spoken to Mr. Nixon since the former President returned from China on Sunday.

He continued to deny any such conversation, at his regular news briefing this morning.

But after being told that the columnist Jack Anderson had reported on the Kissinger-Nixon conversation on a television program and that the State Department had confirmed the talk, Mr. Nessen said he would check again. Later this afternoon he, too, confirmed to reporters that Mr. Kissinger told President Ford this morning about his talk with Mr. Nixon, during a meeting at which he, Mr. Nessen, was not present.

The press secretary said that when he asked the President about his reaction to the news of Mr. Kissinger's conversation with Mr. Nixon, Mr. Ford replied, "I didn't give it much thought."

This latest pattern of information and misinformation adds to the controversy that has formed around Mr. Nixon's visit to China since it was announced. From the beginning, Mr. Ford had sought to distance himself and his Administration from the trip, insisting it was being made by a private citizen and therefore of no particular concern to the Government.

Ford Saw Political Aspect

Before Mr. Nixon departed President Ford and other White House aides reiterated that they had no plans to debrief him when he returned. Mr. Ford and several of his campaign aides said that the former President's trip, which virtually coincided with the first primary elections, might have created political problems.

According to the "scenario" described by Mr. Nessen this afternoon, Mr. Kissinger telephoned Mr. Nixon at his home in San Clemente, Calif. on Monday. Mr. Kissinger called from Palm Springs, Calif., where he was visiting his wife, Nancy, who is recovering from an operation.

Later on Monday, according to Mr. Nessen, the "Nixon compound" telephoned "the White House" to say that Mr. Nixon would submit a report in writing to the State Department. Mr. Nessen refused to say who made or who received the call. He also declined to explain his refusal.

Mr. Nessen said that the caller from San Clemente had not mentioned the conversation between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Kissinger yesterday, according to Mr. Nessen. Mr. Kissinger called General Scowcroft and informed him of the conversation and plans for a report.

"As far as Brent was concerned, he just took the information and told nobody," Mr. Nessen said.

Then, this morning, Secretary Kissinger held his first meeting with Mr. Ford in five days and took the occasion to inform the President of his contact with Mr. Nixon. Mr. Nessen reported.