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Last Updated: 07/12/2023

Choice of Kissinger Tells Latin Neighbors, 'You Better Watch Out'

If he follows the Vietnam precedent, Henry A. Kissinger will advocate bombing. If he follows the pattern of Chile, he will unleash the CIA on any country that has the effrontery to elect a leftist government.

By naming the celebrated former secretary of state chairman of the new national bipartisan commission on Central America, President Reagan has managed to offend both the right, which will never forgive Kissinger for detente, and the left, to whom he recalls the prolonging of the Vietnam war, the secret bombing of Cambodia and other shameful events. Reagan has also sent a message as crude as a ransom note to our Latin neighbors: you better watch out.

Kissinger has little history in Latin America, except for his leading role in the destabilization of the Marxist government of Salvador Allende, one of the darkest pages in our dealings with Latin America. His resistance to human rights, a consideration in the area, is well documented. In 1974, when our ambassador to Chile, David H. Popper, publicly reproved the Pinochet

regime for torturing its citizens, Kissinger cabled a sharp rebuke: "Tell Popper to stop the political science lectures."

Its composition does nothing to allay suspicion that the commission, the brain-child of Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.)—who gave up on Vietnam about when the helicopters hovered over the U.S. Embassy roof—will do nothing but ratify the increased military measures that Reagan favors. AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, a gung-ho anti-Communist; Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York, one of the most conservative U.S. churchmen; John Silber, president of Boston University; Nicholas Brady, an alumnus of the MX commission; Robert S. Strauss, the Democrat for all seasons, and former Texas governor Bill Clements offer no threat to the "consensus" being sought.

Rep. Michael D. Barnes (D-Md.), the chairman of the House subcommittee on Western Hemisphere affairs, was wan about the Kissinger choice.

"It's very worrisome; it's not helpful," he said. "I was not consulted."

Barnes and Sen. Charles McC. Mathias

Jr. (R-Md.) were both swept away by Jackson's vision of "a Marshall Plan" for the region, supposedly to help peasants economically while they are dodging bullets.

Mathias, who was not consulted either, said gamely that Kissinger could be "independent." Mathias had suggested the humanist president of Notre Dame, the Rev.

Mary McGroary

NEEDS

Theodore Hesburgh, and Archbishop James V. Hickey of Washington, dissident names that must have made the White House smile.

On hearing the startling news, Barnes and Mathias had a telephone conversation in which they exchanged expressions of dismay but agreed that they would not jump ship nor yet confess that they had been used.

For Reagan and Kissinger, it was a matter of mutual, desperate need.

Reagan requires a salesman for an unpopular policy.

Kissinger requires rehabilitation.

Seymour Hersh's massive and unrelenting biography, "The Price of Power," has severely damaged Kissinger's ego and reputation. The statesman of carefully nurtured legend is lost in a dense account of toadying, back-stabbing, double dealing and deceit in the dank confines of the Nixon White House.

Kissinger, who says he has not read the book, issued a statement calling it "slimy lies." Slavish admirers, who include people whose telephones he caused to be tapped, loyally have not read it either, a fact that has not prevent them from scrambling for the cameras to denounce Hersh for "savagery" and worse.

Somebody, however, is reading it. More than 100,000 copies have been sold.

If Reagan read it, he would see that Kissinger is the past master of merchandising dubious foreign policy goods.

Throughout the Vietnam years, Kissinger managed to hold Congress and the press at bay. According to Hersh, on the inside Kissinger eagerly joined in—or initiated—every scheme for escalating the war, including, it seems, the use of tactical nuclear weapons. On the outside, he told critical reporters how much he admired their "passion" and "courage," and mournfully hinted that only he stood between them and terrible reprisals from the madmen in the White House.

He never underestimated the local mania for secrets. Behind closed doors, he would tell Congress marvelous things about what was really going on.

Former senator J.W. Fulbright, a war critic mesmerized by Kissinger, compared him favorably with his one of his predecessors, Dean Rusk.

"Rusk always said the same thing in closed and open session," Fulbright complained.

It was a mistake that Kissinger never made.

The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

The Kissinger Commission

EVEN HAD HE not been asked, President Reagan might have taken the route of a high-level bipartisan commission to help his struggling policy in Central America. The device had gotten him out of tight fixes with both Social Security and the MX. Central America is not the large but fairly defined, plate-sized topic that the other two were thought to be. But policy there is a matter in both contention and disarray. Of current national security issues, this is the one in which the administration's position is most at political risk. Sens. Jackson and Mathias so recognized in their call for a bipartisan commission.

Yesterday President Reagan swung aboard with a vengeance, assuring blinding national and international attention by naming Henry Kissinger as chairman. You remember Henry Kissinger. He used to be a diplomat holding high posts in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He is something else now: a statesman, operator and media personality of global dimensions, a personality and force who arrives (almost anywhere) pushing before him an immense bow-wave of controversy and expectation.

The catcalls are already coming in on the left; there, critics of Mr. Reagan's current policy will have to weigh their instant suspicion of the geopolitical emphasis identified with Mr. Kissinger against their reluctant appreciation of his wheeler-dealer political skills. On

the right, where Mr. Kissinger is remembered (and reviled) for his role at the 1980 Republican convention as well as for his policies, there may be even deeper misgivings about his first formal appointment under President Reagan. He is likely to be seen as a policy guerrilla.

To us, the appointment says something about Mr. Reagan's readiness to put the national interest ahead of ideological and bureaucratic backbiting. It says even more about his desperation in Central America, where he has been unable to bring the geopolitics and the local factors into line.

Some might be pleased if the Kissinger commission provided a cover of long-term economic and social dedication for pursuit of a short-term military victory. But it is as cynical to use the commission as a gimmick to pass this year's military aid bill as it is foolish to imagine that it can draw the American public into a Central American "Marshall Plan" for decades to come.

If the commission has a useful purpose, it is to quietly extricate the administration from its own bureaucratic and ideological conflicts and to furnish a more plausible and persuasive way to turn the region's conflicts to peaceful channels. One stands in awe at the interests and personalities in the Reagan administration that must be either balanced or subdued for such a course to emerge. But we think it can be done.

Into the Fray

A Wary Kissinger Returns To Limelight, Controversy

By Murrey Marder
Washington Post Staff Writer

Henry A. Kissinger was completely out of character yesterday, avoiding reporters seeking out his intentions as President Reagan's appointee to head the new commission on Central America's military, political, economic and social turmoil.

Since the start of the Reagan administration, there had been speculation that the irrepensible Kissinger would emerge in some prominent administration post, over opposition of the Republican Party's extreme right wing.

When asked to head the commission, Kissinger was surprised and extremely skeptical, and not because of false modesty, according to associates. That is never the issue in Kissinger's moves.

Instead, his doubts apparently centered on whether he would become enmeshed in a hopeless cause, they said, and for Kissinger that is exceptionally important. No other former secretary of state or national security affairs adviser has managed to remain as long at or near the center of the world stage, lauded by admirers, excoriated by critics and, above all, unforgotten.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador are not issues on which Kissinger has made public claim to expertise, nor do they evoke the high drama of great power clashes on which the Kissinger legend has been built. "I think it's a very unenviable job," one Kissinger associate said yesterday, adding, "unenviable, if not hopeless."

Kissinger's close friends can always be counted on to make supportive statements, maximizing obstacles that he must surmount. But in this case, one source said, Kissinger was deeply uncertain what to do about the commission post.

"He was very negative about it, and they put a lot of pressure on him," the source said.

Kissinger's prestige has been pounded recently by new controversy aroused by author Seymour M. Hersh in his book, "The Price of Power: Kissinger in the Nixon White House." Kissinger was almost apoplectic in challenging what Hersh set out as unending manipulations and duplicities by Kissinger.

The appointment demonstrates, nevertheless, that Kissinger's name still carries enough prestige to interest the Reagan administration, despite denunciation on the right flank. At a news conference yesterday, Richard A. Viguerie, publisher of Conservative Digest, said, "It would be difficult to find a spokesman less trusted by liberal and conservatives than Dr. Kissinger."

Kissinger backers, however, said they found it ironic that for the second time the Reagan administration has called in principal foreign policy advisers who served the President Ford to help salvage foundering policy. Brent Scowcroft, national security affairs adviser to Ford when Kissinger was secretary of state, heads the continuing presidential Commission on Strategic Forces, and Kissinger served as a counselor to the panel in its earlier advice on MX missile deployment. Kissinger now is chairman and Scowcroft vice chairman of the international consulting firm of Kissinger Associates.

Central America was never a major focus of Kissinger's diplomacy, except for talks on the Panama Canal treaties, which Reagan strongly opposed. The administration presumably wants from him now not details but support and justification for its policies in a convincing global context. This can be a formidable test for Kissinger, for it can also generate renewed controversy about his diplomacy in Indochina and Chile.

Reagan Sets Up Bipartisan Panel On Latin Policy

By Lou Cannon
Washington Post Staff Writer

HOLLYWOOD, Fla., July 18— President Reagan today tried to broaden support for his controversial policies in Central America by announcing that a bipartisan commission headed by former secretary of state Henry A. Kissinger would study the "underlying problems" of the region.

In an address to the International Longshoremen's Association in which he praised U.S.-supported guerrillas who are trying to overthrow the leftist Sandinista government of Nicaragua, Reagan again left no doubt that he views the underlying problem as the spread of Marxist movements backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Administration officials said they hoped the announcement would help avert a congressional cutoff of covert U.S. aid to the guerrillas in Nicaragua. The cutoff is to be debated Tuesday in a secret session of the House with an open vote to follow.

The officials said they also hoped the new group, to be called the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, could be used to prod Congress to increase military aid to the U.S.-supported government of nearby El Salvador in its civil war against leftist rebels.

Reagan did not announce the name of any commission member except Kissinger, to whom the president referred as "virtually a legend" in diplomacy. But administration officials, some of whom met during the day to discuss the composition of the commission, said most of the other members also had been picked.

Among Democrats who have agreed to serve, according to the officials, are former Democratic national chairman Robert S. Strauss, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and Yale economics Prof. Carlos Diaz Alejandro. The Republicans were said to include Bill Clements, former governor of Texas, and Nicholas Brady, an investment banker and former senator from New Jersey.

Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York and William Walsh of Project Hope also have agreed to serve, according to the officials, and John S. Silber, president of Boston University, is expected to be a member. The officials said two or three more people may be added to the group.

Administration officials said that Kissinger, who met with senior officials in the White House late last week, at first rejected being named chairman of the commission, though he was willing to be a member. His resistance was based on the time he

would be required to spend away from his foreign affairs consulting business, these officials said.

But after further discussions Kissinger agreed to take the post, and Reagan called him Sunday evening to offer the chairmanship.

A senior administration official acknowledged that Kissinger, former secretary of state and national security affairs adviser to Presidents Nixon and Ford, was controversial with both liberals and conservatives. But the official said Kissinger's recommendations would carry weight with the State Department and his appointment would give Central America policy high visibility.

"He's a dynamic figure," this official said. "The entire national security community feels that Kissinger is better equipped to report on both a medium- and long-range solution than anyone else. Also, he wasn't heavily involved in Central American policy in the past, so his appointment doesn't raise old concerns."

Kissinger's name was greeted by silence when Reagan announced it today to the convention of union delegates. The longshoremen, who

applauded the president politely when he entered and departed and when he referred to the union and its president, Thomas W. Gleason Sr., sat silently throughout his denunciation of communism in Central America except for one moment of mild applause.

The administration's "senior counselor" on the new commission will be U.N. Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, who has taken a leading role in forming U.S. policy in Latin America. In addition, there will be eight congressional counselors, four from each house, divided between Democrats and Republicans.

Democratic counselors from the Senate will be Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), one of the principal sponsors of congressional proposals for such a commission, and Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.). Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) and Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), who are also among sponsors of the proposal, are expected to be two of the Republican counselors.

According to a White House official who briefed reporters on Air Force One traveling from Andrews Air Force Base to Florida today, the commission will report to Reagan by Dec. 1 after studying "the nature of

U.S. interests in Central America and the threats now posed to those interests."

"They will be asked to give advice to the president on a long-term U.S. policy that will respond to the challenges of social, economic and democratic development in the region and to threats to instability and security," the official said.

The Reagan administration turned to bipartisan commissions to resolve difficult political problems on Social Security and the MX missile. Reagan's action today came against a backdrop of escalating war in Central America, where the CIA is planning to support a rapidly growing "secret army" of 12,000 to 15,000 anti-Sandinista rebels in Nicaragua, according to official sources.

Reagan has become increasingly open in expressing support for these rebels, whose representatives have briefed administration officials in the White House and the adjoining Executive Office Building. Today, Reagan made clear that he supports not only the government in El Salvador against leftist rebels there but also the anti-Sandinista guerrillas in Nicaragua.

"Nicaragua is today a nation abusing its own people and its neigh-

hors," Reagan said. "The guerrilla bands fighting in Nicaragua are trying to restore the true revolution and keep the promises made to the OAS [Organization of American States]. Isn't it time that all of us in the Americas worked together to hold Nicaragua accountable for the promises made and broken four years ago?"

In his speech today Reagan used biting anti-communist rhetoric, most of it greeted silently by a union known for its anti-communism, and blamed the Soviets and the Cubans for most of the trouble in the region.

"There is a war in Central America that is being fueled by the Soviets and the Cubans," Reagan said. "They are arming, training, supplying and encouraging a war to subjugate another nation to communism—that nation is El Salvador. The Soviets and the Cubans are operating from a base called Nicaragua. And this is the first real communist aggression on the American mainland."

Reagan praised members of Congress of both parties for proposing the bipartisan commission on Central America. But he warned that military assistance for El Salvador could not be put on the congression-

al back burner while the commission studies a wide range of proposals, probably including massive economic aid similar to the Marshall Plan that reconstructed Europe after World War II.

While the commission is engaged in its study, Reagan, said, "we must not allow totalitarian communism to win by default."

The 116,000-member Longshoremen's union Reagan addressed today was one of the few to endorse him in the 1980 presidential campaign. Other presidents have shied from the ILA, which has seen more than 30 officials, including 10 vice presidents, convicted of racketeering, extortion and similar charges since 1977.

FBI Director William H. Webster has been critical of corruption in the union. White House spokesman Larry Speakes last week declined to respond to questions from reporters when asked about Webster's criticism of the ILA.

Reagan praised Gleason, an opponent of the administration's anti-racketeering legislation who has said he invoked the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer questions of a federal grand jury investigating charges of ILA corruption. Reagan

said Gleason demonstrated "the kind of integrity and loyalty that's hard to come by today."

The president was flanked by Gleason and Secretary of Labor Raymond J. Donovan as he spoke. Also at the head table was Kemp, who accompanied Reagan when Gleason made his presidential endorsement on a windswept Buffalo pier in 1980.

Reagan made several verbal stumbles during his speech, apparently because he was bothered by reflections on the teleprompters. Except for mentions of Gleason's name, his audience showed little enthusiasm.

In his remarks, the president said approvingly that "ILA" meant "I Love America," the slogan which also appeared on a banner on the wall of the Diplomat Hotel, where the union is holding its convention.

"With a timely investment now, we can save freedom in Central America," Reagan said in concluding. "And I believe we must make that investment. I believe we have a moral responsibility to do so. And I believe with the help of organizations like the ILA we will succeed in expanding freedom for the people of Central America."

Staff writer David Hoffman contributed to this report.

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Old Debate Revived

Latin Unit Gets Mixed Reviews

By David S. Broder
Washington Post Staff Writer

President Reagan's decision to turn the political problem of Central America over to a bipartisan commission headed by Henry A. Kissinger drew mixed reviews yesterday, reviving an old debate over the limits of partisanship in foreign policy.

Senate Majority Leader Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) and House Majority Leader James C. Wright Jr. (D-Tex.) endorsed the commission and applauded the

NEWS ANALYSIS

selection of the former secretary of state as its head.

But there was criticism of the Kissinger choice from both the political left and the right, with some Democrats warning that their party is making a mistake to "buy in" on Reagan's controversial Central American policy by participating in the commission.

Nonetheless, Reagan reportedly enlisted four major Democratic political figures, AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland, former Democratic national chairman Robert S. Strauss, Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) and Sen. Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.), chairman of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, as members of the commission or its congressional advisory group.

Kissinger, meanwhile, was denounced yesterday at a news conference by leaders of several New Right groups as "the mortician of American national interests."

Rep. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), a liberal critic of Central American policy, said that Kissinger's record is one of "total reliance on militarism and power. I can't see anything good coming of it."

Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) said, "There may be someone in this broad land who is lower on my list of choices than Mr. Kissinger, but I can't think of him."

Chairman of the Western Hemisphere affairs subcommittee of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Helms said that he will call Kissinger before the panel to find out "what, if anything, he knows about Central America."

The original Senate sponsors of the bipartisan commission idea adopted by Reagan said yesterday that they were pleased by his move. Jackson called it "a good first step," and said that Kissinger's "prestige" would be an asset for the commission. Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) said Kissinger "can be objective and independent. He doesn't have to carry water for anyone."

But Rep. Michael D. Barnes (D-Md.), who co-sponsored a similar House resolution with Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), said that he was "disappointed" after hearing Kissinger's name.

"It sends the wrong kind of signal," Barnes said. "The Latins best

remember Kissinger as one of the architects of our policy in Chile, which resulted in the overthrow of the government. He's not known for his advocacy of development assistance in the Third World."

Conservatives voiced the opposite worry. Howard E. Phillips, head of the Conservative Caucus, called Kissinger "the symbol of the abandonment of our own interests and our own allies." Kemp, trying to calm those criticisms, said, "I believe he will do a good job. He wants to do one."

Rep. Clarence D. Long (D-Md.), whose House Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations must approve funds for Central America policy, said, "I hope it is only a trial balloon . . . I would like to see it shot down."

"I think the commission idea is a good one," Long said, "but I can't imagine a person appointed to head it up who would be less likely to have the confidence of Congress."

Behind the controversy that always attends mention of Kissinger there was a larger dispute among Democrats on the political wisdom of joining high-profile presidential

commissions dealing with controversial issues.

Twice before Reagan has turned this year to similar commissions in areas where public opinion and congressional majorities were opposed to his policies. A bipartisan commission headed by Alan Greenspan, chairman of President Ford's council of economic advisers, came up with a compromise solution on Social Security financing.

And a commission headed by Ford's national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, gained at least temporary congressional support for continued funding of the MX missile.

A White House aide said that the political purpose of the new commission is similar to the Scowcroft and Greenspan panels: to help cement Democrats to Reagan's goals and, if need be, to provide Reagan an umbrella under which to make accommodations with critics.

While the commission's mandate will focus on long-term issues in Central America, the official said, a secondary charge will be to "build a national consensus for the policy we have."

In both the previous cases, some congressional Democrats complained that they lost an issue to use against Reagan and saved him from political embarrassment. They said that they fear the same thing will happen again.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll last month found that, by a 3-to-2 margin, voters said they thought Reagan and Democratic leaders were working against each other, rather than together, on Central America policy.

But the same poll found that a plurality of voters said they thought Democratic leaders in Congress had "given in too much" to Reagan on Social Security.

Sen. Christopher J. Dodd (D-Conn.), who gave the official Democratic response on television to Reagan's speech on Latin America earlier this year, said yesterday that he is concerned that "we can end up, as we did with the MX, pulling the administration's chestnuts out of the fire."

"The Reagan policy is not popular. The administration understands that and will use this [commission] to minimize the damage."

Conservatives outraged at Kissinger appointment

Panel's goal: Find answer

By Jeremiah O'Leary
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — In a bold initiative to forge a national consensus on his embattled Central American policy, President Reagan yesterday named controversial former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to head a new bipartisan commission designed to seek long-term solutions for the troubled region.

The nine-member panel, similar in concept to commissions that worked out compromises in the Social Security and MX missile controversies, was asked to report by Dec. 1.

Reagan announced the formation of the commission in a speech to the International Longshoremen's Association in which he sharply attacked Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista regime on the eve of the fourth anniversary of its revolution.

He called Nicaragua under Sandinista rule a nation that is abusing its own people and its neighbors.

The policy of the United States, Reagan said, is to provide a shield of military training and assistance to help the other Central American countries protect themselves.

The president told more than 1,000 dockworkers that the blue-ribbon commission will lay the foundation for a unified national approach to the freedom and independence of the countries of Central America.

While the commission will define responses to meet the problems of the region in the years ahead, Reagan appealed for action by Congress now on his request for more aid to El Salvador. The membership of the commission, designed to help achieve a consensus between the administration and a balking Congress on Central American policy, will be announced later this week by the White House.

"In the meantime, we must not allow totalitarian communism to win by default," Reagan told the dock workers.

In the hard-line speech, Reagan said the guerrilla bands fighting against the Marxist Sandinistas in Nicaragua are trying to restore the true revolution and keep the promises the Managua regime made to the Organization of American States.

To emphasize the repressive nature of Sandinista rule, Reagan quoted from a Washington Times dispatch from Honduras. The dispatch said refugees were relieved to have escaped from Nicaragua and from the daily interference in their lives.

Reagan's speech came on the eve of a rare closed meeting of the House to debate whether to cut off covert funding for anti-Sandinista rebels.

"In April I reported to Congress that the problems in Central America have the potential to affect our national security. This is still the case, and I want to reinforce it. Many of our citizens do not fully understand the seriousness of the situation, so let me put it bluntly: There is a war in Central America that is being fueled by the Soviets and the Cubans," Reagan said. Reagan lashed out at the Managua government, charging it with carrying out a revolution of broken promises.

"The consensus throughout the hemisphere is that while the Sandinistas promised their people freedom, all they have done is replace the former dictatorship with their own," Reagan said. He called the Sandinistas a "dictatorship of counterfeit revolutionaries who wear fatigues and drive around in Mercedes sedans and Soviet tanks with the promise of spreading their brand of revolution throughout Central America."

Reagan said that since his report in April, Cuba has sent its best-known combat general to Nicaragua, and more Cuban troops and Soviet supplies have poured in.

"This cannot be allowed to continue," Reagan declared.

He said the Soviets and Cubans are arming, training, supplying and encouraging a war to subjugate another nation through communism. That nation is El Salvador.

"The Soviets and the Cubans are operating from a base called Nicaragua. This is the first real communist aggression on the American mainland," Reagan added. "We tend to forget sometimes that here in the Western Hemisphere we are Americans from pole to pole."

By turning for the third time to the commission concept in response to a major national debate, the president was following the advice of Sens. Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., and Charles McC. Mathias, R-Md., and Reps. Michael Barnes, D-Md., and Jack Kemp, R-N.Y.

Jackson has called for a "Marshall Plan" for the region, similar to the massive infusions of American help after World War II that helped restore the economies of Western Europe.

Reagan said it is well known that Central America suffers from decades of poverty, social deprivation and political instability, and these problems are being exploited by the enemies of freedom. He said the United States cannot afford the luxury of turning away from its neighbors' struggles as if they did not matter, for there would be a terrible price for our neglect.

The president, speaking to one of the more militantly anti-communist unions, said those who say democracy cannot work in Central America are talking "baloney, and I think we'd all say something stronger down on the docks."

If democracy can work in "Costa Rica and Honduras, it can work in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala," Reagan declared. "There is still time for the peoples of Latin

America to build a prosperous, peaceful and free future, and we have an obligation to help them for our own sake as well as theirs."

Reagan said the union assembly of 1,300 stevedores at the Nicaraguan port of Corinto found their meeting packed with Sandinistas and that six union leaders were arrested for the presumed crime of trying to develop ties with independent trade unions.

With a bow to 83-year-old ILA leader Thomas W. "Teddy" Gleason, Reagan said, "If all the longshoremen in Corinto are like Teddy Gleason, the Sandinistas have a real fight on their hands."

"Isn't it time that all of us in the Americas worked together to hold Nicaragua accountable for the promises made and broken four years ago?" Reagan asked.

"The dictatorship of Nicaragua is effectively trying to destroy the budding democracy in El Salvador. El Salvador's revolution is one that is building democracy in contrast with the corruptive revolution in Nicaragua which has repressed human liberties, denied free unions and elections, censored the press, threatened its neighbors and violated public pledges," Reagan said.

The president said he realizes that human rights progress in El Salvador is not all he would like it to be. He asserted that the killing must stop but said it must be realized that much of the violence there, whether from the extreme right or left, is beyond the control of the government. He said he is committed to further improvement and needs American help.

Capitol Hill reacts mildly

By Bill Kling
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

Conservative groups usually aligned with the White House on public issues expressed outrage yesterday at President Reagan's selection of former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to lead a commission-style assessment of United States policies on Central America.

On Capitol Hill, the reaction was mixed and crossed party lines.

Some conservatives indicated they are so furious over the president's action that they may scrap a project to solicit broad conservative support for Reagan's efforts in El Salvador.

"The White House doesn't understand," a puzzled and angry conservative spokesman told The Washington Times. "We've been meeting privately for weeks with (White House officials) to gin up a major mailing campaign among conservatives (to seek support for Reagan's Central America policies). This has almost killed that initiative. I don't know what they've gained (from the Kissinger appointment)."

Conservative leaders — including Richard Viguerie, publisher of The Conservative Digest, and Howard Phillips, head of The Conservative Caucus — convened a news conference at the National Press Club to voice objections to the Kissinger designation, recalling in sharply critical language his role in the Vietnam War.

Congressional supporters of Reagan's policies spoke favorably about the Kissinger appointment while critics exhibited suspicion. The appointment came under immediate and sharply worded fire from two congressional subcommittee chairmen who deal with Central America.

"There may be someone in this broad land who is lower on my list of choices than Mr. Kissinger, but I can't think of him," Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, said in announcing plans to call Kissinger before his panel to learn "what if anything he knows about Central America."

Rep. Clarence Long, D-Md., chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, which considers funds to finance Central America policy, said, "I hope (the news of Kissinger's appointment) is only a trial balloon and, as far as I am concerned, I would like to see it shot down. I think the commission idea is a good one but I can't imagine a person appointed to head it up who would be less likely to have the confidence of Congress."

Also critical was Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn., an outspoken critic of Reagan policy in

Central America. "What we see is the same products being repackaged, looking toward a different public relations vehicle to sell a failed policy. I am highly skeptical about it (the commission). Government by commission is not a good idea," Dodd said.

However, Senate Republican leader Howard Baker, R-Tenn., said the choice of Kissinger was "an excellent idea." Sen. John Stennis, D-Miss., called the president's announcement "a necessary first step in achieving a national consensus on a foreign policy in Central America" and said "things may have been different" had a bipartisan panel evaluated U.S. policies in the Vietnam conflict. Sen. Dave Durenberger, R-Minn., said Reagan "is on absolutely the right track in coming up with this commission."

Sen. Paul Tsongas, D-Mass., said the Kissinger appointment "is a high-risk venture." He questioned "whether Henry Kissinger understands the dynamics of the Third World" and criticized his "actions concerning Angola, Cambodia and Chile," asserting he "focused on the East-West view of those situations."

At the conservative press conference at the National Press Club, Viguerie said Reagan's choice was "a political mistake" because it "would undermine the credibility of the commission and thus the president's own credibility on the issue of Central America."

"This . . . will make it very difficult to get grass-roots conservative support for a Republican ticket in 1984," Viguerie said. "Dr. Kissinger was America's No. 1 foreign policy official when our foreign policy virtually collapsed, leading to the loss of Angola, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. He bears much responsibility for the giveaway of the Panama Canal and for policies that winked at the continued Soviet domination of Eastern Europe."

"It is important for the commission chairman to be someone trusted by a broad cross-section of the American people. It would be difficult to find a spokesman less trusted by liberals and conservatives than Dr. Kissinger."

Patrick McGuigan, reading a statement by Paul Weyrich, president of Coalitions for America, called Kissinger "the mortician of American national interests (who) applies cosmetics to foreign policy problems and then buries them." His appointment, he said, "will make it difficult, if not impossible, to rally conservative support for the president's policies in Central America. The level of distrust toward Dr. Kissinger among grass-roots conservatives is that high."

The Conservative Caucus' Phillips described Kissinger as "the architect of a 'no win' U.S. policy in Vietnam and . . . the symbol to many people throughout the world of U.S. abandonment of our own vital interests and of our own allies." The appointment, Phillips said, "will send the wrong message not only to millions of Americans who would like to see a restoration of the Monroe Doctrine as the cornerstone of U.S. policy in Central America, it

will also send the wrong message to people who are on the front lines of the battle for freedom in El Salvador and among the anti-Sandinista forces in Nicaragua."

Retired Army Brig. Gen. Albion Knight, director of The Conservative Caucus' national security task force, said Kissinger symbolizes "negotiation with the enemy (in Vietnam) for a short-term pragmatic advantage which resulted in the loss of freedom for millions of people."

"The situation in Central America is very much equivalent," Knight said. "If we forget that freedom is at stake in Central America and if we accept the same kind of recommendations that Dr. Kissinger gave the presidents regarding Vietnam, then we will again have blood on our hands."

Neal Blair, president of Free the Eagle, another conservative group, noted that, when he was campaigning for the White House in 1980, Reagan was critical of Kissinger as "symbolic of a military demise in America." He said Reagan's decision is "disheartening to us."

Alejandro Orfila, secretary-general of the Organization of American States, welcomed "this presidential initiative which is designed to promote a long-term U.S. commitment to assist its closest neighbors."

Tass, the official Soviet news agency, said the commission is designed to "railroad" Reagan's policies through Congress and accused the administration of "planning to step up further U.S. interference in Central America."

Another problem, another area: Kissinger called in from bullpen

By Richard Slusser
WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF

So Henry A. Kissinger, a peacemaker to some, a saber-rattler to others and a weak compromiser to others, is now to serve another president in another area of the world.

Presidential appointments have become such a habit for this diplomat of diplomats that the only question seems to be whether future presidents will run out of areas of the world whose problems he may be called upon to solve.

President Reagan announced yesterday that he is naming Kissinger to head another bipartisan commission, this one to recommend a solution to the troubles besetting Central America.

Conservatives distrust Kissinger for the way he ended the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, which they view as a sellout, despite claims that the deal secured "peace with honor."

Liberals regard him as the post-Napoleonic era's Prince Metternich in 1980s attire, seeking to create a big-power concert of views at the expense of the rest of the world.

Liberals as well as conservatives remember that he declared "peace is at hand" in Vietnam shortly before the 1972 election, while the war dragged on.



There was light at the end of the tunnel but the tunnel was longer than he thought.

Remembered chiefly as Richard M. Nixon's secretary of state, Kissinger so dominated that office and that administration's foreign policy that it is assumed — erroneously — he held the title for both of Nixon's terms.

Whatever happened to the William P. Rogers, the man who was Nixon's first secretary of state and who held the title longer than Kissinger?

Kissinger is what happened.

Kissinger wrote speeches for Nelson A. Rockefeller in his race with Nixon for the Republican presidential nomination in 1968.

By election time Nixon admired Kissinger more than Kissinger admired Nixon, and he promptly selected Kis-

singer for national security adviser in his Cabinet.

Kissinger filled his role as national security adviser so well that he finally became known as the de facto secretary of state.

When Gerald Ford became president, one of his first announcements was that he was keeping Kissinger as secretary of state.

One of Kissinger's greatest or worst accomplishments — depending on the beholder's political views — was the establishment of diplomatic relations with China. Other than a group of ping-pong players, Kissinger was the first American to visit China in years, a ploy he carried out in secret while pretending to be on a tour of Pakistan.

In the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war, Kissinger and Nixon leaned toward Pakistan, as did China. India won, however. Pakistan lost its eastern wing — what now is Bangladesh — and Nixon almost lost his secretary of state.

Kissinger has received greater unanimity of praise for his handling of the Middle East situation following the 1973 Yom Kippur war between Egypt and Israel during Nixon's second term. Then he undertook a furious round of "shuttle diplomacy" to secure the peace.

With his selection to head the Central America commission, Kissinger now will have served six of the last seven presidents.

Kissinger was out in the cold, diplomatically speaking, during the presidency of Jimmy Carter, but he kept busy by writing, speaking, offering advice to other people and lobbying for soccer's 1986 World Cup to be held in the United States. And he continued going out to parties, holding on to his reputation as a jet-setter secretary of state, diplomatically and socially.

Kissinger may direct panel on C. America

By Steven R. Weisman
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — President Reagan is giving "serious consideration" to naming former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as chairman of a bipartisan commission aimed at seeking support for the administration's policies in Central America, a senior administration official said Sunday.

Reagan planned to call for creation of such a commission in a speech Monday to the International Longshoremen's Association in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., said the official, who did not want to be identified.

A White House spokesman, Peter Rousset, refused to comment Sunday night on the report. An answering service that responded to calls to Kissinger's home said that he was not in.

The idea of a commission has won increasing support within the administration since the approval of a Senate resolution June 15 calling for "a national bipartisan commission to address the serious long-term problems of security, poverty and democratic development in Central America." The resolution was sponsored by Sens. Henry M. Jackson, D-Wash., and Charles McC. Mathias Jr., R-Md.

Although Kissinger, who is now a private consultant in New York, does not have a record of expertise or involvement in issues affecting Central America, senior administration officials are known to feel that he would add credibility to any effort by Reagan to win further support for his policies.

Administration officials said Reagan was turning to the commission approach after his requests for increases in aid for El Salvador and other countries in Central America were rebuffed in Congress.

In addition, according to administration officials, Reagan recently has been asked to consider increasing the amount of military assistance to the governments of El Sal-



Henry Kissinger

vador, Guatemala and Honduras, because of a generally deteriorating military situation in Central America.

Congress has been reluctant to approve this year's request of \$110 million for military assistance to Central America countries, and administration defense specialists have suggested that even more money would be needed next year.

Faced with the prospect of an increasingly impatient public, Reagan's advisers have been working in recent weeks with allies in Congress to arrange for a commission to examine all of the alternatives in Central America.

Jackson and Mathias, in calling for such a commission in June, said its goal would be to "build the necessary national consensus" on a "comprehensive United States policy" toward the region.

The commission would, in theory, study the long-term problems in Central America even while Congress approves the president's request for increased assistance. The administration is also trying to prevent Congress from cutting off covert aid to rebel forces that are seeking to overthrow the government of Nicaragua, which Reagan has characterized as the primary supplier of rebel forces in El Salvador.

Kissinger likely to get policy job

BY A WASHINGTON TIMES STAFF WRITER

Former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger is expected to be named by President Reagan today to become chairman of a new, heavyweight bipartisan commission to make studies and policy recommendations over a wide range of American security and economic assistance options toward Central America.

Well-informed administration sources said the final decision on the Kissinger appointment will be reached before the president addresses the International Longshoremen's convention in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., today. But the source said Kissinger is "heavily favored" on the list of possible chairmen and added, "We wouldn't be this far along if Dr. Kissinger was not willing to take on the job."

Kissinger, 60, who was an all-powerful national security adviser to former President Richard M. Nixon and was secretary of state from 1973 through 1976, has not held public office since the end of the Ford administration. It is reported Kissinger has the approval of such key players as Reagan's national security adviser Wil-

liam P. Clark and of U.N. Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, as well as two senators instrumental in gaining acceptance for the commission strategy: Henry Jack-

son, D-Wash, and Charles McC. Mathias, R-Md.

Official sources said last night the commission would be made up of a cross-section of individuals from labor, the Hispanic and academic communities, business and former security officials. The idea sprang from the success Reagan achieved by using similar blue-ribbon commissions on the difficult MX missile and Social Security solvency problems as a bridge toward consensus with both parties in Congress.

The administration has been in a long-running, far from successful battle with congressional opponents of increased overt and covert military assistance for El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala to halt the spread of Marxism in the Central American region orchestrated from the Soviet Union, Cuba and Sandinista Nicaragua.

Officials believe that if the commission comes forth with a report that includes a sort of "Marshall Plan" for Central America and strict human-rights requirements

for the governments being helped by the United States, then Congress will not spend so much time putting political land mines in the path of every U.S. policy initiative.

Kissinger never showed much interest in Latin America except in the case of Chile from the time the late Marxist President Salvador Allende took office in 1970 until he was overthrown by the military in September 1973. Kissinger was largely distracted by his peace-making role after the Yom Kippur War in the Mideast, by the opening of diplomatic relations with China and by the termination of the war in Vietnam.

He was once quoted as saying, facetiously, "South America is a dagger pointed at the heart of Antarctica."

However, he has a special interest in Mexico and has traveled in the region. As Kissinger's friends say, "Henry is a quick study." His credentials for resisting the spread of communism are well-known, and this makes him politically akin to Reagan, Clark, Kirkpatrick and Reagan's essential constituency.

Officials said the commission will be named in full later this week and that the president wants the panel to work with more than the usual speed because legislation affecting Central American policy is pending. Reagan probably wants the findings of the commission in his hands before he meets with President Miguel de la Madrid in Mexico in mid-August.

It is understood that the State Department, increasingly being nudged out of the mainstream of policy toward Latin America, is not enchanted with the idea of having security and economic solutions for Central America originate with the study commission. But the White House is openly dissatisfied with State's performance in the region, and the big decisions are now being made by Reagan, Clark and Kirkpatrick. Secretary of State George P. Shultz is fully occupied with the Mideast, arms control, China, NATO and scores of other foreign policy matters.

The primary function of the commission will be to create a better atmosphere between Congress and the administration so the two branches are no longer at loggerheads over how the United States conducts itself across the board.

Reagan already has a special envoy for Central America, former Sen. Richard Stone, working to achieve an accommodation on El Salvador that will satisfy congressional critics of military aid and perhaps lead to conditions under which the leftist rebels will participate in elections scheduled for late this year.

But Stone is authorized only to negotiate how the election will be conducted so that all Salvadorans can safely take part. He is not authorized to undercut the government in San Salvador by entering into negotiations with the rebels for power-sharing or anything else. The rebels, estimated at 4,000 to 7,000, boycotted the last election in May 1982 and failed to prevent more than a million Salvadorans from turning out to vote.

There will be no members of the administration or of Congress on the commission but — as it is now conceived — the commission would have broad authority to consult with Central American governments and other political entities. The basic policy of the United States is not to negotiate the terms of power with opposition forces in Central America, but the Salvadoran election and nearly every other aspect of the U.S. relationship with the region are open for discussion.

High on the list of problems is that of human rights and U.S. pressure on El Salvador to bring to justice those on the government side who took part in the murders of American nuns and labor officials there. The White House hopes a broad program to deal with the social and economic issues will bring congressional acquiescence to the covert and open military assistance being given to El Salvador, Honduras and the anti-Sandinista Nicaraguan forces.

Reagan returns to Washington today after speaking at the opening of the International Longshoremen's Association convention in Fort Lauderdale and meeting with Jewish leaders in Florida. The ILA represents more than 116,000 dockworkers under the leadership of 83-year-old Thomas W. Gleason.

The longshoremen are militantly anti-communist and often have set their own foreign policy by refusing to load or unload ships in commerce with the Soviet Union and other Communist nations.

— Jeremiah O'Leary

Kissinger to Head New Central America Panel

Reagan Says Group Will Seek Bipartisan Policy for Troubled Region; Report Expected by Dec. 1

By ELEANOR RANDOLPH, *Times Staff Writer*

HOLLYWOOD, Fla.—In an apparent attempt to expand support for his Central American policy, President Reagan announced Monday that former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger will head a bipartisan commission to determine ways to bring "freedom and independence" to troubled Central America.

Speaking to a convention of the International Longshoremen's Assn., Reagan said he will continue to push for "a shield of military training and assistance to help our neighbors protect themselves" from Soviet and Cuban troops who he said have produced "the first real Communist aggression on the American mainland" in Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Controversial Figure

However, he said that Kissinger's commission, which is expected to submit a report by Dec. 1, will work on "a long-term, unified approach" to U.S. policy toward Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador.

The choice of Kissinger, a controversial figure who has been criticized by both liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans, provides the former secretary of state with his first official platform in the Reagan Administration, even though he has advised Reagan's foreign policy team unofficially on such issues as the Middle East and the MX missile debate.

Kissinger served as secretary of state under Republican Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford, but Reagan's traditional conservative followers have made it clear over the years that they believe that Kissinger was too soft on the Soviets when he helped negotiate such policies as detente with the Russians.

Reagan supporters booed Kissinger at the Republican National Convention in 1976, primarily for his perceived role in the negotia-

tions with Panama on the treaties that returned the Canal Zone to Panamanian sovereignty and will lead to full Panamanian control of the Panama Canal itself by the year 2000.

To an audience that sat quietly and did not applaud Kissinger's appointment, Reagan said that Kissinger is "a very distinguished American, outstanding in the field of diplomacy, virtually a legend in that field."

The appointment of the commission, a proposal that has been pushed in recent weeks by congressmen representing a wide range of political views, came during one of the President's toughest speeches to date on his fears that Soviet and Cuban forces in Nicaragua are trying to destroy the "budding democracy" in El Salvador.

"There is a war in Central America that is being fueled by the Soviets and the Cubans," the President said. "They are arming, training, supplying and encouraging a war to subjugate another nation to communism. That nation is El Salvador."

Saying that the Soviets and Cubans are operating from a base in Nicaragua, the President said: "This is the first real Communist aggression on the American mainland. We tend to forget sometimes that here in the Western Hemisphere we are Americans in every country from pole to pole." Reagan also criticized the rulers of Nicaragua, which today celebrates the fourth anniversary of the Sandinista revolution's overthrow of the dictatorial regime of President Anastasio Somoza, as

leaders in a "revolution of broken promises."

He called the Nicaraguan government "a dictatorship of counter-revolutionaries who wear fatigues and drive around in Mercedes sedans and Soviet tanks and whose current promise is to spread their brand of 'revolution' throughout Central America."

The President also defended the government of El Salvador, which has been criticized in international circles for not controlling death squads that may be responsible for the killings of several thousand Salvadoran people in the past year. "Peaceful change has not always been easy or quick," the President said. "We realize the human-rights progress in El Salvador is not all we would like it to be. The killing must stop."

'Beyond Government Control'

"But you have to realize much of the violence there—whether from the extreme right or left—is beyond the control of the government," the President said.

The President also said, "Most of our aid (in Central America) is not military at all," and he added, "America's emphasis in Central America is on economic and social progress, not on a purely military solution."

Reagan's speech to the ILA, which endorsed him in his 1980 presidential campaign, drew two standing ovations but also bewildered looks as he discussed Central America policy, a subject that many of the dock workers found affects their lives less directly than economic and trade policies.

The ILA and Thomas W. (Teddy)

Gleason, its president of 18 years, were the subject of a five-year investigation by the Justice Department in the 1970s. Gleason, who was not charged, nevertheless was criticized by key members of Congress for not purging union officials convicted of racketeering and embezzlement. The investigation resulted in the conviction of more than 1,000 union and shipping officials, according to Senate committee documents.

However, Reagan praised the union and Gleason for their "generous support and encouragement."

"I'll tell you what I've always liked about Teddy: He sticks by his union; he sticks by his friends, and he sticks by his country—the kind of integrity and loyalty that is hard to come by today," Reagan said.

'Constituency Building' Called Panel Aim

Mainstream Support for Latin Policy Sought

By RUDY ABRAMSON, *Times Staff Writer*

WASHINGTON—The Reagan Administration hopes to use its new blue-ribbon commission on Central America as a device to generate more mainline political involvement in U.S. Latin American policy and to move away from battle lines between "committed liberals and hard-line conservatives," according to sources who took part in the planning of the panel.

The Administration was still seeking candidates for the new panel after former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's appointment to head it was announced by President Reagan. The sources said the White House is looking for well-known figures who are perceived as political moderates in order to generate more public support for U.S. efforts against leftist insurgents in El Salvador and the leftist government in Nicaragua.

9-Member Commission

Concerned that Reagan's Latin American policy speech to a joint session of Congress earlier this year had failed to stir much support, the Administration intends to use the Kissinger panel for "long-term constituency building," the sources said, while U.S. special envoy Richard B. Stone "tries to keep the pressure off on the charge that the Administration is not interested in negotiation."

The decision to bring Kissinger, who is considered anathema to many of Reagan's most loyal political supporters, into a highly visible policy role came less than three

months after Stone was named special envoy and six weeks after Thomas O. Enders was removed as assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs and replaced by Langhorne A. Motley, the U.S. ambassador to Brazil.

State Department spokesman Alan Romberg said that the appointment of the nine-member Kissinger commission will affect neither Stone's presidential mandate to seek negotiations in Central America nor the State Department's overall policy management.

Stone met privately Monday with members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to discuss his trip to Central America earlier this month. He returned to the United States prematurely after failing in efforts to talk with representatives of El Salvador's leftist rebels. Romberg said that Stone probably will return to the area shortly to renew his efforts.

But a participant in discussions leading to formation of the new commission said Stone's role may now be considerably diminished. Congressional sources, who declined to be identified, said that the former Florida senator already has had sharp disagreements with Administration officials over the extent of efforts to negotiate with leftist insurgents.

Ire of Conservatives

Reagan's announcement of Kissinger's appointment Monday brought immediate and angry reaction from leaders of conservative organizations that have long disagreed with the former secretary of state on policy matters.

Instead of "simply naming Dr. Kissinger to sell an ill-defined Central American policy," said Conservative Caucus leader Howard Phillips, "it would be far wiser for the President to clearly spell out to the American people what his policy in Central America is, and then rally people behind that standard."

Richard Viguerie, publisher of the *Conservative Digest*, called the decision to bring Kissinger into Latin American policy-making "a serious mistake" and warned that the action will "make it difficult for the President to get grass-roots support for a Republican ticket in 1984."

"It would be difficult," Viguerie said, "to find someone less trusted by liberals and conservatives than Dr. Kissinger."

Moderates' Interest Sought

Nevertheless, advisers on Central American policy said the Administration concluded that it had to do something to develop more interest by political moderates in the U.S. role in Latin America.

Stone's appointment as special envoy was virtually forced upon the Administration by Rep. Clarence Long (D-Md.), chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations, who threatened to hold up funds for El Salvador unless a special ambassador was named.

Stone's nomination was widely criticized on grounds that he had no diplomatic experience, but Long said Monday that he thinks the special envoy is "doing about as well as you can. But I hesitate to praise anybody," Long added, "for fear he may be fired."

Kissinger! Good heavens!

Government by commission is a cop-out undertaken by an administration too scared — or confused — to lead. Already, the Reagan administration has resorted to the Greenspan commission, which did little but paper over the cracks in Social Security, and the Scowcroft commission, which did a bit better in advancing the cause of the MX missile originally botched by the White House. Now — sigh — here's the president turning to another commission, this time for help on a Central American policy being ripped apart by Congress *because* the administration failed to define that policy clearly and then stick to it.

And naming Henry Kissinger to head the commission — well, it's more than disheartening that the Reagan administration thinks it can't run the government without him. Choosing him of all people says a whole lot about how tight is the box the administration has got itself into. Had it mounted a full attack on the wretched and restrictive Boland Amendment, had it not tried to placate the loud congressional opposition instead of consistently and energetically asserting what's at stake in Central America— ah, well, we've bemoaned all that before.

Of course, one reason the administration hasn't been able to go over Congress' head to muster public opinion behind its Central American policy is that there is no public opinion on the issue. Remember that recent poll showing only a dismal 8 percent of Americans having the foggiest idea of whom the U.S. supports in in the region and why?

Thus, if one of the severest problems facing the Reagan administration in fighting against Marxist penetration of our backyard is public ignorance or indifference (take your choice), Kissinger is certainly the man to command the widest possible attention for the Reagan policy. Kissinger *remains* a household word.

But what's the policy he'll be bringing to the public's attention? If it's one Mr. Reagan truly believes in, then why isn't the president himself defining and explaining it to the public?

And what's the message for this nation's friends trying to resist Marxist insurgency in Central America and elsewhere? That Henry Kissinger is going to bring the peace to Central America that he helped bring to Vietnam? The phony peace he swallowed and called "honorable"?

Let the President Conduct Foreign Policy

The MX missile is a dangerous weapon and nerve gas is terrible stuff, but liberals and Democrats are getting themselves into an untenable position by trying to kill these two programs right now in Congress.

In 1980, the people of the U.S., bless them, did elect Ronald Reagan as president. According to tradition and the Constitution, and by reason of practical necessity, the president is responsible for conducting U.S. foreign policy, and Mr. Reagan should be allowed to conduct it.

This obviously doesn't mean that Congress hasn't any power to affect foreign policy and must let a president do entirely

the opposition argued, we can no longer effectively make an issue of the actual use of chemical warfare by the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and by their satellites in Southeast Asia. Also, we would "escalate the arms race" to new levels and cause the negotiating atmosphere in Geneva to deteriorate.

For the president's side, Sen. John Tower responded by reminding the Senate that Germany in World War II was deterred from using chemical warfare by knowledge that the Allies could do the same. He said that the Soviets haven't any incentive to negotiate a chemical ban because they are far ahead in chemical-warfare preparation.

Sen. Tower recalled "a chilling thing said to me at Geneva one time when I was engaged in conversation with Alexandr Shchukin, the scientific adviser to the Soviet negotiator on SALT II. I said to him, 'We have unilaterally given up the B-1 bomber. What will you do in response?' He said to me, 'Senator, I am neither a pacifist nor a philanthropist.'"

On both nerve gas and the MX, the Reagan theory of negotiating is to build up to build down—to create threats to the Soviets' position so as to induce them to negotiate arms reductions.

No one actually knows which side of the argument is correct, but it should give opponents of the president pause to know that the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, Andrei Sakharov, supports him—at least on the issue of heavy missiles.

"While the U.S.S.R. is in the lead in this field," Mr. Sakharov wrote in a recent letter, "there is very little chance of its easily relinquishing that lead. If it is necessary to spend a few billion dollars on MX missiles to alter this situation, then perhaps this is what the West must do."

The president's negotiating strategy deserves a try. He was elected president, and the Soviets aren't philanthropists. This isn't the same as voting to get the U.S. into a war. These are reversible decisions. If

the president can't produce agreements through tough-guy bargaining, or if he seems to be bargaining in bad faith, the programs authorized in 1983 can be deauthorized in 1985. No MXs are scheduled for deployment, anyway, until 1986.

Congressional pressure on President Reagan has produced some good results: It led to appointment of the Scowcroft Commission, out of which came a compromise whereby the president would get the MX, but his arms-control critics would get adjustments in his START negotiating strategy and a commitment to deploy a single-warhead missile system.

But, out of anti-nuclear passion or hope of partisan advantage in 1984, many Democrats seem intent on wrecking the compromise by cutting off funding for the MX.

On grounds of arms control, practical politics and their own credibility, though, Democrats should let the president have his MX this year.

There are some indications that the Soviets just now have decided to agree to major cuts in their strategic arsenal. If the Reagan strategy is working, then the Democrats would be working against arms control to deny him his lever.

Some Democrats think they would hand away a potent "peace issue" in 1984 by funding the MX, but that isn't so at all. Every single Democratic presidential candidate is against the MX, so the voters know that it won't be deployed if one of them is elected. Let the MX and the rival nuclear bargaining strategies be a major campaign issue and see what the electorate thinks.

Finally, Democratic credibility is at stake. Those who favor a U.S.-Soviet nuclear freeze—including five out of the six Democratic presidential candidates—say that it will be mutual, verifiable and negotiated. An MX cutoff by Congress constitutes unilateral disarmament of the president.

Mr. Kondracke is executive editor of the New Republic.

Viewpoint

by Morton M. Kondracke

as he pleases. Especially when a president's policy seems to be leading inevitably to war or disaster, the Congress should intervene.

But that isn't the situation prevailing with the MX and binary nerve gas, which have been voted down or narrowly sustained in congressional action recently and remain in precarious condition.

In both cases, the argument concerns how best to negotiate with the Soviet Union. The president and his opposition have very different ideas, which were illustrated July 13 during the Senate debate on the authorization of nerve-gas production.

Both sides agreed that negotiations in Geneva for an international agreement banning chemical-warfare agents have been stymied, largely by lack of Soviet cooperation. The question was how best to get the talks moving.

Nerve-gas opponents, led by Democrat David Pryor of Arkansas, argued that the U.S. should maintain the moral "high ground" by forgoing production and should keep international opinion focused on Soviet intransigence.

If the U.S. goes ahead with production,