

26 May 1983

Vance and Brzezinski: Feuding Chapter by Chapter

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 25— Zbigniew Brzezinski and Cyrus R. Vance, whose personal and policy disputes were an open secret while they served as President Carter's chief foreign policy advisers, have revived their feud in a pair of candid memoirs that are fueling the gossip circuits among Washington's foreign affairs specialists.

Both memoirs are written in a cool dispassionate style, which often disguises the intensity of bad feeling that prevailed between the two men by the end of the Carter Administration. Of the two, Mr. Brzezinski, who was national security adviser, and whose book, "Power and Principle," was published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux last month, is the more frank in his personal comments about the other.

"I could not help reflecting on the extent to which Vance seemed to be the quintessential product of his own background," Mr. Brzezinski writes of Mr. Vance. "As a member of the legal profession and the once-dominant WASP elite, he operated according to their values and rules, but those values and rules were of declining relevance not only in terms of domestic American politics but particularly in terms of global conditions."

Mr. Vance resigned as Secretary of State in April 1980 after failing to block the abortive operation to rescue American hostages in Iran, which Mr. Brzezinski had pushed strongly. His book, "Hard Choices," published by Simon & Schuster and due in the stores shortly, is less chatty but still more revealing about his differences with Mr. Brzezinski than many who know Mr. Vance might have expected.

'One Critical Reservation'

"I supported the collegial approach," Mr. Vance says about the plans for the handling of foreign relations at the start of the Carter Administration in 1977, "with one critical reservation. Only the President and the Secretary of State were to have the responsibility for defining the Administration's foreign policy publicly."

"Despite his stated acceptance of this principle, and in spite of repeated instructions from the President, Brzezinski would attempt increasingly to take on the role of policy spokesman," he writes.

"Eventually, as divergences grew wider between my public statements and his policy utterances," Mr. Vance goes on, "Brzezinski's practice became a political liability, leaving the Congress and foreign governments with the impression that the Administration did not know its own mind."

But Mr. Brzezinski says that while he originally supported the idea of the

President and the Secretary of State's being the primary spokesmen, "in practice it turned out that Vance, for all of his many gifts and personal qualities, was not an effective communicator, and the President started encouraging me to speak up more." Mr. Carter, in his own book of memoirs, supports Mr. Brzezinski completely on this point.

Admitting that he enjoyed speaking out, Mr. Brzezinski adds that he advocates making the position of national security adviser subject to Senate confirmation. This, he said, would accomplish two objectives. It would "legitimate" the officeholder's central role in making policy, allowing him to testify before Congressional committees, and would enable him to act more regularly as a spokesman on foreign policy issues. He complained that whenever he spoke out, "I was perceived as having usurped Vance's legitimate prerogatives."

Letting Others Do the Talking

For those who covered foreign policy in the Carter Administration, there was no question that in the first year Mr. Vance was the President's chief spokesman on that subject. He had frequent news conferences and gave several key speeches. But by 1978 he seemed to lose interest in news conferences as he became increasingly involved in negotiations. And after the Iran crisis of November 1979, Mr. Vance virtually stopped meeting with the press, and did, as Mr. Brzezinski suggests, allow others like Mr. Brzezinski and the State Department spokesman, Hodding Carter 3d, to do the talking.

In their memoirs, both Mr. Brzezinski and Mr. Vance agree that their policy differences were primarily over how to deal with the Soviet Union, and this carried over into such areas as China, Africa, arms control and ultimately the Iran crisis.

Zbig and Cy, as they called each other, began to clash over the question of Soviet involvement in Africa and whether this should be "linked" to progress in the negotiations on limiting strategic arms.

"My view was that the deployment of an American aircraft carrier task force near Ethiopia would send a

strong message to the Soviets and would provide more tangible backing for our strong words," Mr. Brzezinski writes. He says that Mr. Vance opposed this approach, and "for the first time in the course of our various meetings, he started to get impatient, to get red in the face and to raise his voice."

No 'Bluffing Game' Wanted

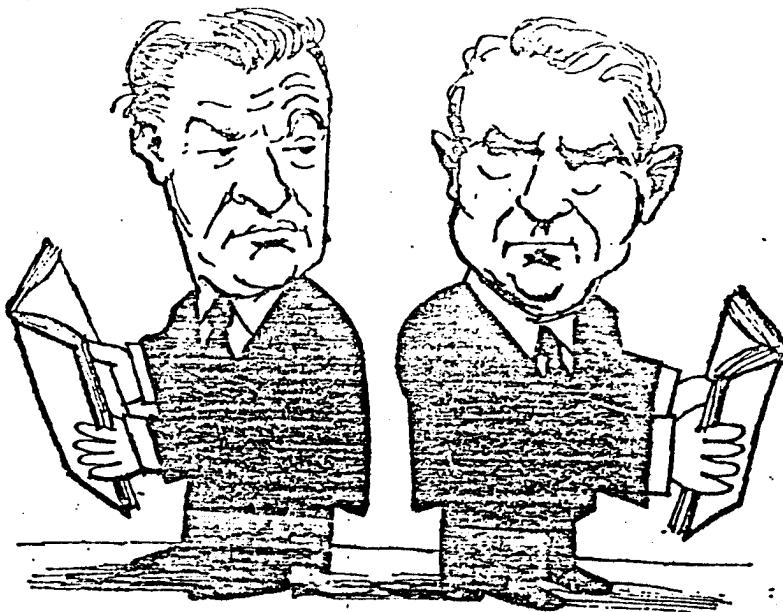
Mr. Vance, talking of this proposal, says that when it came up at a meeting on Feb. 21, 1978, he said that if a carrier was deployed, and if Somalia was invaded by Soviet-backed Ethiopia, "it would be perceived as a defeat for the United States." He says that neither he nor Defense Secretary Harold Brown "wanted to engage in a bluffing game."

"The meeting closed with agreement that there would be no linkage between the Soviets' and Cubans' activities in the Horn and other bilateral issues between the United States and the U.S.S.R.," Mr. Vance says. But clearly irritated, he notes that on March 1, Mr. Brzezinski "stated publicly that Soviet action in the Horn would complicate the SALT talks." President Carter, Mr. Vance says, "denied" the United States wanted to link the talks with the Horn, but did say that Soviet activity in the Horn could make it difficult to get the arms control accord ratified.

"We were shooting ourselves in the foot," Mr. Vance says.

Mr. Brzezinski's recollection was similar, if more colorful than Mr. Vance's. "As soon as the linkage issue surfaced, Cy became very angry and agitated," he writes. He said that at a meeting on March 2, Mr. Vance said, "Zbig, you yesterday and the President today said it may create linkage, and I think it is wrong to say that."

The public was not aware initially of the Vance-Brzezinski feud, and the first detailed press account of the dispute was published 14 months after the inauguration.



It was over China that Mr. Vance and Mr. Brzezinski had their most difficult moments. Both agreed on the value of concluding negotiations with Peking on establishing formal diplomatic relations, but for quite different reasons.

Mr. Brzezinski makes it clear that he favored close ties with Peking for strategic reasons, to put pressure on the Soviet Union and to counter Moscow around the world. But Mr. Vance wanted to give priority to improving relations with the Soviet Union and was opposed to anything other than an evenhanded approach to Peking and Moscow. The issue came to a climax on Dec. 13, 1978, when it became evident that as a result of secret talks in Peking the United States and China were close to an agreement to normalize relations.

Mr. Vance had a meeting scheduled in Geneva with Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko of the Soviet Union from Dec. 21 to Dec. 23, in which he hoped to conclude the negotiations on limiting strategic arms. Because of that, "I had wanted the announcement of normalization to come after my Geneva meeting with Gromyko," Mr. Vance writes. He said that he and Mr. Carter had agreed on announcing the Peking breakthrough on Jan. 1. On Dec. 13, Mr. Vance was in the Middle East. He said that he got a phone call there from Mr. Carter "who to my surprise told me that he wanted to move the date of the announcement up to Dec. 15."

A Lecture From Gromyko

"The news came as a shock," he said. "At a critical moment, Brzezinski had blacked Christopher and Holbrooke out of the decision-making for about six hours, and they had been unable to inform me in advance of what was taking place." He was referring to Warren Christopher, the Deputy Secretary of State, and to Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

As a result of the normalization, Mr. Vance said that the Soviet attitude in the strategic arms talks the next week hardened. "Gromyko's lecture on China was not entirely unexpected," Mr. Vance said, "but the emphasis he put on how normalization was taking place was troubling. The Soviets felt that the timing and the characterization of normalization were deliberately provocative and intended to be publicly perceived as such."

Mr. Brzezinski has another version of what happened. He said the reason Mr. Vance did not reach agreement with Mr. Gromyko in Geneva was that "a large number of issues remained unresolved at this stage." He says that "revealingly, Dobrynin appears to have shared the view that SALT was not ready by December 1978." The Soviet Ambassador, Anatoly F. Dobrynin, told him, he said, in late January 1979, "quite flatly that the stalemate in Geneva on SALT was produced not by our normalization of relations with China or our invitation to Deng Xiaoping to visit Washington, but simply by the fact that a large number of outstanding issues were still unresolved."

"I must say that on that point I found Dobrynin's position more credible than the line that some State Department officials were feeding to the press," Mr. Brzezinski says, "that somehow or other, SALT, which according to them should not be linked to any adverse Soviet behavior, was compromised by our decision to establish normal relations with China."