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# A Preemptive Eruption by Mount Henry Kissinger?

Halfway through November, spewing smoke and cliché hundreds of feet into the air, Mount Kissinger entered a peculiarly active phase. Though no actual loss of life seems to have occurred, "Kissinger Alerts" were broadcast on an hourly basis, warning the populace to beware of falling platelets and other detritus from this semi-extinct volcano.

The first eruption took place in the London Economist, dated November 13-19, and took the form of a "conversation" between

the sort now enjoyed by the Brzezinskis, Ruskis and Burdys of the world. The Kissinger imperial ego evidently regards this latter course as unthinkable.

I had thought that Mr. Kissinger's chosen mode, that of international superstar, café society's preferred oracle, would not for long endure; that the decline would be rapid, from special adviser to NBC, to guest on the Johnny Carson show, to final apotheosis on the Hollywood Squares. Not so.

Needing, by the look of his appurtenances and domestic requirements, at least a million a year in income, Mr. Kissinger has lived by his wits with amazing success. There is now a whole range of semi-extinct volcanoes, including Lord Carrington and R.O. Anderson, grouped under the generic title "Kissinger Associates" and charging \$250,000 entry fee to each client. There are business consultancies to Goldman Sachs and Chase and advisory functions at ABC and Newsweek.

Necessary in the success of this type of operation is the belief of client or public that the relevant retired statesman has anything to offer, beyond gallon jugs of "wisdom" and "experience." The trick here is to ensure at least the appearance of "briefings" or "consultancies" by those actually in power, and of course the possibility that the retired statesman might one day get back into power himself. Mr. Kissinger, hinting that he might have had a hand in the formulation of the Reagan plan for the Middle East, perennially bathing himself in rumors of an emissary or more substantial role, and at a pinch proffering sagacious public advice, is a master at giving the volcano at least a semblance of life.

Yet there was more to the November eruptions than such normal considerations. Oddly enough, Anthony Lewis provided the tipoff. Normally this liberal columnist is so quick to leap on his moral high horse that he clears the saddle by a couple of feet, but on November 22 he hailed Mr. Kissinger's utterances on the Middle East, while adding cautiously that "on such issues as Vietnam and Chile he used power beyond the limits of decency. We can expect to learn more about his role in Chile from a forthcoming Atlantic Monthly article by Seymour Hersh."

The commotions of Mount Kissinger were at once, in my view, satisfactorily explained: a preemptive strike. If a volcano is bursting ponderously into life, you have less time to inspect the pool of sewage spreading across the backyard. The issue of the Atlantic with Mr. Hersh's article in it went on the newsstands a day or two after Newsweek grandly promulgated Mr.

Kissinger's views of the Russians.

Mr. Hersh's article has not caused much of a stir. The Washington Post said it contained "no smoking gun." These are times, of course, when a gun has to explode in your hand for anyone to pay attention. Wounds are being healed, Vietnam memorials unveiled and ex-presidents rehabilitated at such a rate that they'll probably be reappointing Spiro Agnew soon as secretary of commerce.

Mr. Hersh's examination of the actions of Messrs. Nixon and Kissinger immediately before and after the popular election of Salvador Allende in September and October 1970 seems to me to establish as solidly as available historical evidence will probably ever permit that orders for the overthrow—and, Mr. Hersh implies, the assassination of—Allende came out of the president's office and were urged by his national security adviser. Mr. Hersh also deduces that CIA operatives were dispatched to Chile and that their mission culminated in the murder of Gen. Rene Schneider, commander in chief of the Chilean army. Mr. Hersh's investigation demonstrates that Mr. Kissinger subsequently lied repeatedly about his and his master's attempts to bring down the legally elected Chilean president. The article shows in detail Messrs. Nixon and Kissinger conspiring with U.S. executives to subvert Chile.

You could argue that a man who tried and may indeed ultimately have succeeded in engineering the overthrow of Allende is well qualified to assess the best manner of dealing with the former head of the KGB. But that is not quite how Newsweek presented Kissinger's expertise. For the opinion-forming elite, as represented by the editors of the Economist and Newsweek, the smoking volcano seems permanently to overshadow the smoking gun, which shows you can survive anything, provided you are statesmanlike about it.

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## Viewpoint

by Alexander Cockburn

Mr. Kissinger, coyly described as "a private citizen" and the editor of the Economist, a long-term Kissinger disciple, Andrew Knight. Over five interminable pages the two K's rambled through the politics of the Levant, leisurely seeking out and successfully locating the obvious: the "fresh beginning" now to be described beneath the rubble of Lebanon; the hopes, but yet the perils offered by the Reagan plan; the possibility for moderate advance, yet the ever-present menace of extremism.

Hardly had the basso rumblings died down before Mount Kissinger burst into activity once more. The eruption came this time in Newsweek, in the edition that went on sale on November 22. That magazine's new young editor in chief, William Broyles, seemingly as eager an acolyte as Mr. Knight, spread Mr. Kissinger across four inside pages and gave him the cover as well: "How to Deal with Moscow—An Exclusive Report by Henry Kissinger."

Once again, for those foolhardy enough to embark on the text, there was the exhausting trek through slowly cooling statesman-speak: "To bring about a genuine change—expressed in substantial reciprocal arms reduction and restraint in international conduct—requires American leadership founded in firm purpose, clear concept and steadfast strategy. . . . Our policy must be based on strength to discourage adventurism yet at the same time offer a vision of a better world for all peoples. . . ."

At first I took all this volcanic activity to be part of a normal pattern: Mr. Kissinger's perennial need to keep his name in the public eye as a senior statesman, and thus maintain his exchange value. In a decently ordered world Mr. Kissinger would have at some point endowed himself with legal credentials and thus could now—like Cyrus Vance or William Rogers—have retired to the powerful obscurity of an obscurely powerful law firm. The alternative, for which no known credentials are required, would be an academic position of