

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 68NEW YORK TIMES
16 May 1985

State Department

*Who's Who Now the
Old-Boy Network Is Dead*

By LESLIE H. GELB

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 15 — Before the Vietnam era, the important relationships inside the State Department and Foreign Service flowed principally from family background and Ivy League school connections. Then, in the mid-1960's and early 1970's, working on and in Vietnam became the central link for the inside power-brokers.

Now there is no single network that pervades Foggy Bottom, no single set of friends and allies bonded by one common experience who help one another into top positions and call one another on the old-boy basis to iron out their bosses' differences behind the scenes.

Now there are at least four often overlapping networks: of Asia hands, of former Vietnam servers, of special assistants and of old Henry A. Kissinger hands who dominate European issues.

Bonding Occurred Early

Like most networks, the bonding among these people occurred early in their foreign service careers. Unlike most political networks, the bonding is not based on ideological goals. Most of these officials are demonstrably apolitical, although most tend toward the conservative side of policy for professional diplomats.

Many of them can be found either in those jobs on the seventh floor that deal with Secretary of State George P. Shultz daily and directly or in the No. 2 or "principal deputy" slots directly under assistant secretaries of state. If it can be said that the State Department can be controlled at all, these are the pivotal positions.

And according to a number of State Department officials, the two men at the core of the networks or those with the most links are M. Charles Hill,

whose job as executive assistant to the Secretary gives him an office with adjoining private doors to Mr. Shultz's, and Frank G. Wisner, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Africa. Mr. Wisner has links to all four networks, Mr. Hill to all except the Asia hands.

Without any of these links except Asia but right up there with direct dealings with Mr. Shultz and around the building is Nicholas Platt, the department's executive secretary. From his glass-enclosed command post in the middle of the seventh floor near Mr. Shultz's office, Mr. Platt decides who will handle what issues and controls all formal communications into and out of the department.

Said one official who is close to all three men: "We're not talking about a conspiracy here. These are guys, along with a lot of other guys, who have worked together over the years and trust each other and try to help each other."

The old Asia hands whose careers have been principally based in that area include Mr. Wisner and Mr. Platt, along with Morton I. Abramowitz, the director of the bureau of Intelligence and Research; Kenneth Quinn, a deputy to Mr. Platt; and Michael H. Armacost, the Under Secretary for Policy. Mr. Armacost, who had been serving as Ambassador to the Philippines, leapfrogged over his colleagues a year ago when Mr. Shultz picked him for the department's No. 3 job.

The special assistants' club includes Mr. Hill, Mr. Quinn, Mr. Wisner and John H. Kelly, now principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Europe. Both Mr. Wisner and Mr. Kelly were deputies to the executive secretary in the recent past. Also in this club is Arnold Raphael, the No. 2 man in the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, who used to be an aide to Joseph Sisco when he was Under Secretary for Policy in the Kissinger era and later an aide to Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance.

The Vietnam group has dwindled over the years. But some of those whose ties go back to the years of American involvement there are Mr. Hill, Mr. Wisner and Mr. Quinn, as well as L. Craig Johnstone, who is now Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs handling Central America, and John D. Negrofonte, now Ambassador to Honduras but slated to be Assistant Secretary for Oceans and International and Scientific Affairs.

The most insular of the networks is the European one. The group coalesced when Mr. Kissinger was Secretary of State from 1975 to 1977. Unlike the other networks, the Kissinger hands stuck almost exclusively to the European area and particularly to Soviet-American relations. Almost all of them were protégés of two key Kissinger aides, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, now at the Brookings Institution, and Lawrence S. Eagleburger, now president of Kissinger Associates, a consulting concern based in New York.

Three in this group are now deputy assistant secretaries in the European Affairs bureau: John Kelly, a Western European expert; Robie M. Palmer, a Soviet expert; and James F. Dobbins, and arms control expert.

Speechwriters for Kissinger

In the Kissinger years, Mr. Palmer and Charles Hill were the prime speechwriters for the Secretary, while Mr. Wisner handled the negotiations on what was then called Rhodesia and is now Zimbabwe.

All these men also were connected to L. Paul Bremer 3d, now Ambassador to Sweden. He used to be a special assistant to Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Eagleburger and was the department's executive secretary under Alexander M. Haig Jr. And it was he who brought Mr. Kelly and Mr. Hill up to that seventh-floor office.

There are, of course, other networks throughout the building, but none whose influence is so pronounced with Mr. Shultz and so widespread in affecting personnel and policy decisions.