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Contempt Action Filed Against Kissinger

Associated Press

Rejecting a compromise offer from President Ford, Chairman Otis G. Pike (D-N.Y.) of the House intelligence committee filed contempt action in the House yesterday against Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

Pike said he would ask for a House vote "in a couple of days" unless the intelligence committee opposes his position at a meeting today.

Mr. Ford's compromise offer was to identify to the House committee all U.S. covert intelligence operations abroad since 1961 that were requested by the State Department, rather than by intelligence agencies.

But Pike said the offer does not comply with the committee's subpoena for all State Department requests for information on all covert operations whether carried out or not.

Pike said the State Department originally told his

committee it requested five covert operations during the 14 years but said the department has now found 25 requests for covert operations.

The contempt citation, if approved by the House, would direct Speaker Carl Albert (D-Okla.) to turn the case over to the local U.S. attorney for prosecution.

Albert refused to back Pike or oppose him, but indicated he would not stand in the way of a House contempt vote if Pike asks for one.

"I have great respect for the secretary (Kissinger)," Albert told reporters. "I have great respect for the committee I appointed. I don't want to prejudge."

Kissinger would say only that he will let the White House negotiate the matter.

Pike dropped two other contempt citations against Kissinger, on grounds that committee subpoenas have been complied with.

They were for minutes of National Security Council approvals of reportedly more than 100 U.S. covert intelligence operations since 1965, and for U.S. intelligence estimates of Soviet compliance with arms agreements.

Mr. Ford's compromise offer, in effect, was to extend the covert operations approval decisions back to the 1961 date in the State Department subpoena, and to identify the operations requested by the State Department.

White House counsel Philip W. Buchen told the committee, "This additional step should, we believe, make it possible for the committee to obtain the information that your letter indicated was necessary without affecting the President's claim of executive privilege."

Pike contended Mr. Ford could not invoke executive privilege for past Presidents.