

KISSINGER QUOTED ON ORDERING TAPS

Memo by Aide to Judiciary Panel Cites Testimony to Senate Unit Last Fall

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 19— Secretary of State Kissinger is said to have told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in secret testimony last fall that either he or H.R. Haldeman, President Nixon's former chief of staff, must have initiated wiretaps on 17 Government officials and reporters.

According to a memorandum prepared by a lawyer on the House Judiciary Committee staff, the Senate committee asked Mr. Kissinger whether Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., his former deputy who is now White House chief of staff, "might have initiated these taps on his own."

Mr. Kissinger, the memorandum relates, replied, "It would be inconceivable to me that Haig would go off on his own, so it would have to be they are on instructions from me or Mr. Haldeman."

The memorandum goes on to note, however, that Mr. Kissinger was asked later in his classified testimony whether he had personally approved the wiretaps, and the Secretary replied:

"Now, I would not have remembered that I personally—that it was at my personal direction and I think again this may well have been an F.B.I. euphemism."

Mr. Kissinger was apparently referring to memorandums written by the late J. Edgar Hoover, the former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other bureau officials that state outright that Mr. Kissinger had requested the wiretaps.

The heretofore secret testimony by Mr. Kissinger came during confirmation hearings on his nomination to be Secretary of State.

Kissinger's Public Testimony

In his testimony to the committee made public at the time and in subsequent statements, Mr. Kissinger has insisted that he did not originate the wiretap program, but carried out a White House decision and supplied the names of those who were to be wiretapped.

[One of those whose telephones were tapped, Morton Halperin, a former National Security Council aide, lost an attempt in Federal District Court Wednesday to have a court order lifted so that he could speak publicly about the taps. The Associated Press reported.]

When asked about the apparent discrepancy between Mr. Kissinger's assertions and F.B.I. reports that said Mr. Kissinger had initiated the taps, William D. Ruckelshaus, former acting F.B.I. director, said on Sunday:

"In the sense that he supplied the names that were tapped, he initiated it, but his definition of initiation is that it wasn't his idea to tap; he simply complained about the leaks."

The Judiciary Committee staff memorandum was prepared June 12 by William P. Dixon, a Democratic staff member, at the request of Democratic members.

Other memorandums written by Mr. Dixon were covertly released to the press, and the June 12 document was apparently the last one he wrote. He began it by stating: "In this morning's newspaper, there is printed a memorandum I prepared for certain members of this committee which the reporter stated was obtained from a member of a Congressman's personal staff. For that reason, please treat this as highly confidential."

Supplied by G.O.P. Member

The June 12 memorandum was made available to The New York Times by a Republican committee member who has generally supported the President in the impeachment inquiry. White House officials have attempted to discredit the committee in recent days because of leaks of confidential information.

The wiretaps on the home telephones of the Government officials and newsmen began in May, 1969, and were discontinued two years later.

President Nixon has asserted that he "authorized this entire program" in an effort to plug leaks of classified national security information.

The Judiciary Committee, however, has received evidence that some of the taps were placed on the telephones of officials who did not deal with national security material and that others remained in place long after the officials had left the Government and had gone to work for Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, a Democratic Presidential candidate in 1972.

The wiretap controversy reached major proportions last week when some Judiciary Committee Democrats said that they had heard evidence suggesting that Mr. Kissinger had initiated the wiretaps, and thus might have lied to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

In an emotional news conference in Salzburg, Austria, last week, Mr. Kissinger acknowledged that he was concerned about security leaks and stated that he had discussed the matter with Mr. Hoover and the President. But he said he had never "initiated" the taps and had told the full truth to the Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr. Kissinger then threatened to resign if his name was not cleared.