

Kissinger Suggests Awe of Hoo

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Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger suggested to Senate investigators that his acquiescence in the 1969-to-1971 national security wiretaps was prompted, in part, by his fear of the late J. Edgar Hoover's political power in Washington.

Kissinger's admission was contained in closed-door testimony, given last July and made public in heavily sanitized form yesterday by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The testimony did not resolve any of the major contradictions between the secretary's own version of the wiretapping episode and that of the FBI as contained in memoranda left by Hoover and the

testimony of other bureau witnesses.

"My impression was that Hoover was rather suspicious of me . . . and therefore in my conversations with Hoover I might have had a tendency to show him that I was alert to the danger of security, particularly considering his political power in Washington," Kissinger told the largely friendly Senate committee.

He made the observation when questioned about a May 9, 1969, Hoover memorandum reporting a Kissinger demand that the FBI uncover the source of news leaks and that he would "destroy whoever did this if we can find him, no matter who it is."

Kissinger amplified before the committee:

"The idea that Director Ho-

over would take orders from a presidential assistant who had just come to Washington, I think, would be contradicted by anybody who had ever dealt with Director Hoover."

In their testimony both Kissinger and his former deputy, Alexander M. Haig Jr., minimized their role as initiators of wiretap requests and placed the responsibility on Hoover and former President Nixon, who has publicly acknowledged he was responsible for the surveillance program.

Kissinger said that the first four wiretap targets, three of them National Security Council subordinates and a former senior Pentagon military adviser, were designated by Hoover.

Haig, who was identified in

FBI records as having initiated requests for 12 of the 17 wiretaps, testified that "I never would have submitted a name that I did not get from Dr. Kissinger, or from the President with Dr. Kissinger's knowledge . . ."

At one point in the hearing Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) exclaimed to Haig: "I am puzzled, as is the chairman. The FBI documentation which has created most of the recent resurgence of interest in the whole matter tells a different story than we have heard from the Secretary of State and from you as to your respective roles, the originating authority and how the program was implemented."

Asked by Muskie if the FBI could be wrong, Haig responded that "I think their

Hoover Fostered Role in Wiretaps

bookkeeping can be inaccurate, yes."

The final round of hearings last July on the wiretapping program was held at Kissinger's request after he warned in an impassioned press conference at Salzburg last June 11 that he would resign unless he were cleared of publicly voiced suggestions that he misrepresented his role in the 17 taps.

The committee gave him that verdict by reaffirming its approval of his nomination as Secretary of State.

"This new record may raise additional questions about certain aspects of the wiretap program," a committee summary of the new inquiry concluded. "But, we believe it should lay to rest the major

questions raised about Secretary Kissinger's role."

One aspect of the case the committee was unable to resolve was the disclosure that the wiretap on former National Security Council staffer Morton Halperin was placed in operation three days before an authorization was signed by former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

Halperin has incorporated this fact in his civil damage suit against Kissinger and other former administration officials.

The new testimony included a repudiation by former Assistant FBI Director William C. Sullivan of an earlier claim he made in a letter to Hoover that Kissinger had visited his office with Haig on May 20, 1969, to read wiretap logs.

Sullivan had, in his precious

account, quoted Kissinger as saying: "It is clear that I do not have anybody in my office that I can trust except Col. Haig here."

In written testimony to the committee Sullivan, who was at the time the FBI liaison with the White House on the wiretaps, said he could not recall the incident.

Kissinger, when asked about the alleged comment, testified that "it could have been made as a semi-sarcastic statement in response to some description of people around me."

Both Kissinger and Haig indicated to investigating senators some suspicion that they, too, were under surveillance during the program.

Speaking of the surveillance of an acquaintance of his, Haig said: "I did not like it be-

cause he was a personal friend of mine, but I quite frankly assumed I was being surveilled at that time."

Kissinger, at one point, acknowledged that he may have inquired half-facetiously of former Assistant Attorney General Robert Mardian: "Do you have what I said on the phone?"

Former FBI supervisor Bernard Wells, who assisted Sullivan with the paperwork on the wiretap program, testified that the taps were ended because they "outlived their usefulness. They were not very productive."

"Sort of a bore?" inquired Foreign Relations Committee Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.).

"It sure was," answered Wells.