

Kissinger Firmly Denies Secret Pacts

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Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger and Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) exchanged caustic charges yesterday about secret accords on the 1972 U.S.-Soviet nuclear pact, on the eve of new arms negotiations in Moscow.

At a news conference, Kissinger labeled "totally false" charges by Jackson that

the United States in 1972 allowed the Soviet Union to deploy 1,020 long-range submarine missiles, instead of the 950 publicly reported.

Jackson pursued the charges in a closed hearing before his Senate Armed Services Committee where he directed Kissinger to testify under oath for more than three hours.

At the end of an extraordinary day of controversy over nuclear weaponry, Jackson said a new U.S.-Soviet "secret agreement" — which aides said was signed in Moscow June 18 — is expected to close what Jackson called "a loophole." Jackson said this would bring the Soviet submarine levels back to "the originally agreed and congressionally approved limit of 950" missiles.

Kissinger insisted there was no loophole to start with, but he acknowledged that after the 1972 Moscow summit the Soviet Union "disputed our interpretation." As a result, said Kissinger, after a month of exchanges in 1972 Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin signed an "interpretive agreement" to cover the issue.

Administration officials said that what has just been agreed to with the Soviet Union is a general agreement on implementing the U.S.-Soviet 1972 accords, which includes language that "tightens up" earlier understandings.

"We never had the slightest feeling that there was a loophole," said one administration official. However, he said that government lawyers, looking at the 1972 Kissinger-Dobrynin post-summit accord last March, saw "a theoretical possibility" of misinterpretation and it was decided to pin down the issue further. There was no objection from the Soviet Union this time, it was claimed.

Jackson said yesterday, "The issue here is not 70 missiles more or less. The issue is the withholding from the Congress and the American people a secret agreement that had the clear effect of altering the terms of the SALT interim agreement."

Kissinger adamantly denied yesterday that there could be such an impact on the 1972 accord.

This sharp controversy, on the evening before the departure of President Nixon and Kissinger for Europe and the next Moscow summit talks, underscores the obstacles ahead in achieving concurrence on further stages of nuclear arms limitation.

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It is clear that any agreement that may be made will be subject to a rather contentious debate," Kissinger acknowledged at his news conference.

However, Kissinger said, "with respect to several aspects of the current nuclear arms race, there is a very definite time pressure. What we will do is to negotiate according to our best conception of the national interest."

Jackson charged last week that new testimony showed that the United States had not only permitted the Soviet Union to exceed the limits reported to Congress on undersea missiles, but that the United States unilaterally secretly agreed to limit itself to only 656 submarine missiles, instead of the 710 authorized for it.

Kissinger countered yesterday that "those arguments are totally false in every detail; they have no merit whatsoever, and I shall now explain why."

He then spent more than a half hour on his version of the highly complex nuclear mathematics on just those two points.

In the process, Kissinger acknowledged U.S.-Soviet exchanges on both points raised by Jackson's challenges.

On the last day of the 1972 summit conference, Kissinger disclosed, President Nixon informed the Soviet leaders that the United States "had no intention of exercising" the right it had to exchange older land-based Titan intercontinental missiles for nuclear submarines.

The reason for this, said Kissinger, is that the United States had halted building Poseidon submarines in order to concentrate on more advanced Trident submarines. But Tridents, said Kissinger, were "never planned for deployment until after 1977," after expiration of the five-year interim accord on offensive nuclear weapons.

This meant that the United States prior to 1977 would deploy only 656 submarine missiles instead of the 710 authorized by the SALT accord. Telling the Soviet Union of this, said Kissinger, "was not a concession" but only "a relatively minor gesture designed to retain general confidence."