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Kissinger Declines Award for Peace

NEW YORK (AP) — Presidential adviser Henry A. Kissinger declined the City Council of Churches Family of Man award for "excellence in the field of peace," a spokesman for the organization of Protestant churches has confirmed.

The spokesman said Monday that Kissinger was selected for the bronze medallion last September but he turned it down for the present time "because of his negotiations and the things he was involved in."

Copies of letters exchanged by Kissinger and the Rev. Dan M. Potter, executive director of the council, were

given to The Associated Press by the Rev. A. Kendall Smith, who said he removed them from file cabinets during a sit-in protest at the council's offices.

In a Sept. 9 letter to Potter, Kissinger wrote:

"This is a great honor that I would like in principle to accept. Because of this year's particular circumstances, however, I believe I must regretfully decline to receive the award at this time.

"I would be very pleased if it were possible for it to be given next year or if the circumstances warranted reconsideration at that time."

Potter replied that his organization did not want to "jeopardize your effectiveness in the international arena" and said he was certain Kissinger would be considered for the award again next year.

The sit-in by a group of 10 clergy and laymen began Oct. 31 over the council's alleged failure to take a strong stand against racism. The organization issued a statement denouncing racism last Thursday but Smith said he was not satisfied with it and the sit-in continued.

Smith and the other clergymen said the church organization had been "disgraced and embarrassed" by the choice of Kissinger. They said "the soul of the New York Protestant church was sold to the warmongers of the world."

Past Family of Man award winners include President John F. Kennedy and Whitney Young, executive director of the National Urban League, posthumously.