

Fulbright Asks Haig to Explain Kissinger Role in Taps

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WASHINGTON, July 10 — Senator J. W. Fulbright said today that he had asked President Nixon and the White House chief of staff, Gen. Alexander M. Haig, to provide information to back up Secretary of State Kissinger's contention that he did not mislead the Foreign Relations Committee last fall about his role in the wiretapping of 17 officials and newsmen between 1969 and 1971.

Early this evening, General Haig said in a telephone interview that he had told Mr. Fulbright this afternoon that "I would be pleased to testify" before the committee to support Mr. Kissinger's previous statement.

General Haig's comments appeared to indicate that possible confrontation between the Foreign Relations Committee and the White House would be avoided.

Earlier today, talking to newsmen after the committee's first hearing on Mr. Kissinger's wiretap role, Mr. Fulbright said he had sent letters to Mr. Nixon and to Mr. Haig on June 25 and had not yet received responses.

A White House spokesman also said tonight that Mr. Nixon would cooperate with the Fulbright investigation.

He said it was particularly crucial for General Haig to testify because he had been Mr. Kissinger's chief deputy on the National Security Council staff in the period under study, and was Mr. Kissinger's liaison with the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which carried out the taps.

Role Examined

The committee, after an extensive set of hearings, including an examination of Mr. Kissinger's role in the wiretapping, approved him as Secretary of State last September.

At that time, Mr. Kissinger testified that because of alarm in the White House over information leaked to the press about national security affairs, he was told to supply names of people on his National Security Council staff who might have had access to information being leaked or

whose names were mentioned in the investigation of others.

He also reportedly told the committee in private that those on the staff with adverse information in their security files were also wiretapped.

But last month, newspaper articles, based on leaks from the House Judiciary Committee and elsewhere, noted that the late J. Edgar Hoover, when director of the F.B.I., had written memos asserting that Mr. Kissinger had asked for specific taps on individuals. This seemed to contradict Mr. Kissinger's contention that he did not initiate the taps, but had merely provided names of those who were eligible for tapping.

Resignation Threat

Mr. Kissinger, in Salzburg, Austria, on June 11, threatened to resign from office if the Foreign Relations Committee did not clear him of any wrongdoing. He announced that he had asked the committee to undertake a new investigation of his role in the wiretapping.

Mr. Fulbright, talking to newsmen, said that "the central issue is whether [Mr. Kissinger] misrepresented in a significant way the role he played in the wiretapping."

Other Testimony

Although he noted that there were now at least two lawsuits testing the legality of those taps, Mr. Fulbright said that no one on the committee was suggesting that Mr. Kissinger

was involved in anything illegal in going along with the taps.

Today's witness was Attorney General William B. Saxbe, who told newsmen later that he testified that the Justice Department had given the committee all the records in its files on the wiretapping.

Mr. Saxbe said he was unable to judge Mr. Hoover's memos, since it was possible Mr. Hoover listed Mr. Kissinger as an "initiator" of taps without Mr. Kissinger having been that directly involved.

He also said that since Mr. Hoover had died in 1972, it was possible that the committee might never get to the truth of the matter.

Mr. Fulbright, however, said that White House information might help the committee, as

would, perhaps, testimony from other F.B.I. aides, who will be called to testify in coming days.

He said he did not expect to call Mr. Kissinger before the committee until the week beginning July 21. Mr. Kissinger will report to the committee, however, on the recent summit in Moscow and his trip to several European countries.

The letter to Mr. Nixon on June 25 asked for an additional elaboration on the origins of the wiretap program. Mr. Nixon, on May 22, 1973, said that he had ordered the wiretaps because of disclosures in the press of what he regarded as National Security information.

The letter to General Haig asked him to testify.