

SFChronicle

JUL 16 1974

Nixon Letter

Key Senators Believe Kissinger On Wiretapping

Washington

Key members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee appeared ready yesterday to accept the testimony of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger as to his role in national security wiretapping.

Chairman J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.) told reporters that "the discrepancies . . . are not of great substance."

Senator John Sparkman (Dem-Ala.) said he is "ready to stand" on the committee's finding last September that Kissinger's role in the wiretapping of 17 government officials and reporters was not a barrier to his confirmation to be secretary of state.

Kissinger had testified that his role was to supply names of members of the National Security Council staff with access to information of the type being leaked to the press. He said he did not initiate the wiretapping. Kissinger was President Nixon's national security adviser when the wiretaps were begun in 1969.

Fulbright made public a letter from Mr. Nixon calling Kissinger's testimony "entirely correct."

In his letter dated July 12, Mr. Nixon affirmed his statement of May 22, 1973, that "I authorized this entire (wiretap) program."

Referring to the "crucial importance of secrecy in negotiations with foreign countries," the President's letter said:

"I ordered the use of the most effective investigative procedures possible, including wiretaps, to deal with certain critically important national security problems. Where supporting evidence was available, I personally directed the surveillance, including wiretapping of certain specific individuals.

"I am familiar with the testimony given by Secretary Kissinger before your committee to the effect that he performed the function, at my request, of furnishing information about individuals within investigative categories that I established so that an appropriate and effective investigation could be conducted in each case. The testimony is entirely correct; and I wish to affirm categorically that Secretary Kissinger and others involved in various aspects of this investigation were operating under my specific authority and were carrying out by express orders."

Senator Stuart Symington (Dem-Mo.), told reporters, "It is clear to me that anything Dr. Kissinger did, he did under instructions."

Senator George Aiken, (Rep-Vt.) was asked if he had heard anything to make him believe that Kissinger should not have been confirmed.

Aiken responded: "Hell no; excuse me, strike the first word."

The senators commented after a two-hour closed door hearing that FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley and two other FBI agents as witnesses.

Fulbright said Thomas J. Smith, an inspector in the FBI intelligence division, and James B. Adams, deputy associate director of the FBI, reviewed the background of national security investigation procedures going back to the 1930s.

"What was done in this case was quite consistent," Fulbright said.

The chairman called the investigation, undertaken at the request of Kissinger under threat to resign if his veracity was not confirmed, "a tempest in a teapot."

Associated Press