

1973 Arms Cover-Up Is Laid to Kissinger

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 —

Some 1973 intelligence reports that the Soviet Union might have violated the agreements on strategic-arms limitation were withheld by Henry A. Kissinger from certain top Administration officials and Congressional leaders, according to documents and testimony at a House hearing today.

Documents produced at the hearing showed that shortly after the arms-limitation accords were signed in Moscow by President Richard M. Nixon, Mr. Kissinger, then the Presidential Assistant for National Security Affairs, arranged to limit the circulation of intelligence reports on possible Soviet violations. Among those affected, it was disclosed, was William P. Rogers, then the Secretary of State.

The documents, from the

Central Intelligence Agency, and the testimony were given to the House Select Committee on Intelligence.

The charge against Mr. Kissinger has also been made on several occasions by Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr., retired chief of naval operations, who told a House panel early this month that the Russians had committed "gross violations" of the 1972 accords but that the Secretary of State had not properly informed President Ford.

According to C.I.A. docu-

ments, an intelligence report on Russian missile-silo construction was withheld from certain top Government officials and Congressional leaders from June 9, 1973, until Aug. 8, 1973.

The committee staff members said there were indications of "numerous other withholdings" in the files they examined. According to the testimony, since the "hold system" meant that the person barred never knew the information was developed, in effect he never knew that he had not been briefed.

In the 1973 instance, Edward Proctor, deputy director for intelligence at C.I.A., became so concerned about the withholding that he wrote Lieut. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, then acting director of the C.I.A., that "at

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minimum I think you should seek Dr. Kissinger's assurance that he has informed or will inform the President of this situation and the concern it generates."

A 'Strong Case'

At another point in the same memorandum, he said he would not "presume" to suggest whether key members of Congress should be briefed, but he said there was a "strong case" for informing Mr. Rogers, U. Alexis Johnson, the chief of the United States delegation at the arms talks, and Sidney N. Graybeal and Brig. Gen. William Georgi, the commissioner and deputy commissioner of the United States-Soviet group assigned to monitor compliance.

Under questioning today by A. Searl Field, staff director of the committee, William R. Hyland, chief of the State Department's intelligence office, acknowledged that even though these officials were not told, the matter was raised with the Russians on two occasions.

"You mean the Russians were told about this?" Mr. Field asked. "Well, who were we keeping the secret from?"

Mr. Hyland said the "hold system" kept the material from United States officials who had the clearance to read the intelligence report but had "no policy considerations in this area, no particular need to know."

It was unclear from today's questioning just who had the power to remove the names of officials from the C.I.A. circulation list. Nominally, Mr. Proctor agreed, the Director of Central Intelligence, at that time General Walters and later William E. Colby, designated the persons. But the memorandums made it clear that the National Security Council staff gave the names of persons who could be told or who could not be told.

Arrangements by Cline

It was reported today that when the first hold arrangements on the arms matter were made in 1972, Ray Cline, then chief of the State Department's intelligence office, told members of one intelligence group that he "must keep Rogers and Johnson informed about" all substantive findings on the arms issue.

He asked for clearance to do so and was, in effect, told to handle the matter informally. Mr. Cline was one of the men who testified today.

Mr. Cline said his concern with the "hold-down system" was that it did not have "certain checks and balances" that would rule out the possibility of "suppression of information unattractive to policy-makers."

This has been the thrust of the investigation by the committee headed by Representative Otis G. Pike, Democrat of Suffolk. It has conducted several hearings on whether Mr. Kissinger and others in government and the intelligence community could withhold vital data from the President, thus affecting his decision-making.