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The anti-Kissinger tide

By James McCartney
Knight News Service

WASHINGTON — Henry Kissinger, back from his peace-seeking mission in the Middle East, is facing the most hostile Congress he has had to reckon with since he became secretary of state.

Kissinger, who long seemed immune from criticism, is now taking it from all sides — Sens. Henry Jackson and Lloyd Bentsen on the right, Sen. Adlai Stevenson on the left and many others.

Well-posted students of Capitol Hill say an anti-Kissinger tide is continuing to develop.

"He's in increasing trouble," said one in a key committee spot.

What the growing criticism means is that Kissinger is unlikely to get the kind of freedom of action he has been pleading for in conducting foreign affairs.

Kissinger will find it harder and harder to gain adoption of agreements he has negotiated unless Congress is cut in on the action from the start.

Kissinger may be told where and how he can sell arms, which he has been passing around on his own terms. He may find his policies undercut — as in South Vietnam — because Congress won't provide money.

He may find himself on the receiving end of guidelines from Congress on how to negotiate — what he can, and can't, give away.

All this is touching off speculation here that Kissinger may not last, possibly even by his own choice.

But there is no sign that he is ready to toss in any towels yet, particularly while Middle East negotiations are hanging fire.

Said a top Kissinger aide, in obvious frustration: "The fundamental issue is the U.S. role in the world.

"There is very little understanding in Congress of the meaning of a shrinking U.S. role abroad.

On the congressional side, this kind of talk from Kissinger or his aides symbolizes the problem.

"Kissinger's idea of 'consultation,'" said a veteran of a quarter of a century, "is for him to tell Congress what he's done after he's done it.

In a series of interviews with Capitol Hill sources in key positions, there emerged universal agreement that Kissinger's prestige here has slipped sharply in recent months and is still slipping.

But none agreed that the essential issue was the U.S. role in the world.

By far the most sweeping attack from any widely respected figure in Congress so far has come from Sen. Stevenson, whose credentials as an internationalist are well established.

Many earlier critics of Kissinger have praised his diplomatic efforts in developing "detente" with the Soviets, opening the door to China and searching for peace in the Middle East.

He said Kissinger, not Congress, was responsible for the collapse of the 1972 trade agreement with the Soviets; Kissinger, not Congress, is responsible for the

collapse of U.S. influence in Turkey, Greece and Cyprus.

He accused him of failing to follow up intelligently on the opening to China and

continues to

then—unkindest cut of all— failing to find peace in the Middle East.

Jackson, a candidate for president and a powerful figure in Congress, has rapped Kissinger for a "deception" in connection with the collapse of the Russian trade agreement, by failing to

also publicly attacked Kissinger.

But Kissinger is fighting back, trying to improve his image, battling to try to explain his ways to Congress.

To Kissinger the number one problem is restoring military aid to Turkey, which Congress has cut off, in some legal way. After that comes the problem of aid to Vietnam.

make public a letter of complaint received from Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko.

Sen. Bentsen, another presidential aspirant, has

swell

Down the pike is the problem of developing a new plan for trade with the Russians.

The outlook for Kissinger is more grief, but he still may have the capacity to recoup.

A new Middle East disengagement agreement, for example, conceivably could bring him new popularity, and rescue him through 1976.