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Under fire, cowboy Henry rides

By Stan Carter
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WASHINGTON — Once again, they are shooting from all sides at Henry the K. And once again there is speculation that the former Harvard professor who once depicted himself as a lone cowboy astride his horse is riding toward a fall.

The movie is nearing its climax. The hero has been wounded but is clinging to his saddle. It's a better-than-even-money bet that cowboy Henry will fight off his attackers again, as he has in the past.

While Secretary of State Kissinger was in China with President Ford this week, the sniping at his conduct of foreign policy continued back in Washington.

Testifying on Capitol Hill, Adm. Elmo Zumwalt, former chief of naval operations, charged that Kissinger had withheld evidence from Ford about what he described as "gross violations" by the Soviet Union of the 1972 nuclear-arms-limitation accords.

"The secretary of state has not been candid in the gross nature of the cheating," declared the retired admiral, who is trying to build himself up as a candidate for the Democratic senatorial nomination from Virginia. "... The President of the United States is not aware of the extent of information being withheld from him."

Zumwalt's charges echoed allegations of Soviet cheating on the SALT-1 pact that had been made previously by former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington, a Democratic presidential hopeful, among others.

Saying he was speaking for Kissinger, a State Department spokesman described Zumwalt's assertion that his boss had been less than candid in explaining Soviet violations to the President as "A preposterous charge." Reiterating previous denials, the spokesman said: "We have no evidence that there have been any violations of the SALT-1 agreement."

More threatening to Kissinger personally is the move by House Intelligence Committee chairman Otis Pike, D-N.Y., to cite him for contempt of Congress for refusing to turn over a list of all State Department proposals for covert intelligence operations over the past 13 years.

Pike said this week that Kissinger had "substantially" complied with two other committee subpoenas but had given "absolutely nothing" in response to the demand for State Department documents. He declared he would push for House action on a contempt resolution when Kissinger and Ford returned from China.

This would be a direct challenge to Ford, as well as Kissinger, inasmuch as the President ordered the secretary to withhold the papers, claiming they are protected by executive privilege. If Kissinger were convicted of contempt, he could be sentenced to one year in prison and a \$1,000 fine.

Few people expected the full House to go along with the contempt action, let alone for Kissinger to be convicted in court and jailed, but the threat appears to have irritated him more than any of his other recent troubles.

"I profoundly regret that the committee saw fit to cite in contempt a secretary of state, raising serious questions all over the world (about) what this country is doing to itself and what the necessity is to torment ourselves like this month after month," Kissinger said when he was notified of the citations.

Even his closest friends conceded that, along with a monumental ego, Kissinger has an extremely thin skin.

In the last days of the Nixon Administration, the combination of thin skin and big ego resulted in a threat by Kissinger to resign. Stung by allegations

to a blazing

that he had had more to do than he had admitted to congressional committees with the wiretapping of subordinates and newsmen, he declared at an emotional press conference in Salzburg, Austria, that it was impossible to run the nation's foreign policy "when the character and credibility of the secretary of state is at issue."

showdown

This brought quick reassurances of confidence from Congress and Kissinger stayed on, more powerful than ever.

But the criticism that has come to a head in recent weeks is even stronger than it was then, and

—Turn to Page 19, Col. 1

the sniping is coming from all directions. Much of it, in the view of Kissinger aides, is coming from Ford's political opponents, gearing up for Ford's own White House.

The criticism has been going on for months but it turned into a torrent after Ford's dismissal of Defense Secretary James Schlesinger and CIA Director William Colby last month. The so-called "Sunday night massacre" was at first thought by many to have been Kissinger's doing, but it soon became clear that it wasn't. Kissinger, in fact, was one of the victims, losing his coveted second job at the White House as the President's national security adviser. Topping this off, Ford chose White House Chief of Staff Donald Rumsfeld, widely believed to have been leader of a movement to cut Kissinger down to size, as Schlesinger's successor at the Pentagon.

Even though Kissinger's loyal former deputy, Lt. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, took over his White House job as head of the National Security Council, the net effect was that his seven-year hammerlock on the conduct of foreign policy had been weakened.

Then came the Moynihan affair, snipping away a tiny bit more of Kissinger's prestige. U.N. Ambassador Daniel P. Moynihan has an ego that rivals Kissinger's and an equally thin skin. When he threatened to quit two weeks ago because he thought the White House and State Department were giving him only lukewarm support, rumors spread that he had been the victim of a Kissinger plot. They were denied by everyone concerned, including Kissinger, who called Moynihan from a phone booth on Capitol Hill urging him to stay on.

But the impression left after Moynihan flew to Washington for a friendly, 40-minute chat with the President — with Kissinger invited join for just the last 10 minutes — was that the U.N. envoy had won and Kissinger had lost in a new struggle for power.

Despite all this, Kissinger has not threatened again to quit as he did at Salzburg 18 months ago.

Instead, the impression he gives his closest aides is one of determination to stick it out as secretary of state through the balance of Ford's present term, even though his power has been diminished.

The reason, these aides say, is that there are still many things he wants to accomplish before he leaves office.

Foremost among them is a second-stage SALT

treaty with the Soviets that would put a cap on the arms race.

With the presidential election drawing ever nearer, many observers here think time has almost run out for reaching a new SALT agreement. But Kissinger is described by his aides as believing it can still be done. He is planning a trip to Moscow later this month to try to break the impasse.

His second major goal is to keep the lid on the Middle East until after the election.

Because of the collapse of the Vietnam peace accords that won him the Nobel Prize, Kissinger all the more wants to be remembered for these things in the history books, and he feels that he needs more time to accomplish them.

But Henry is not yet ready to ride off into the sunset of his own volition.