

Symington Protests Kissinger's Power

By JOHN W. FINNEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 2— Senator Stuart Symington protested today that Henry A. Kissinger, the President's adviser on national security, had become "Secretary of State in everything but title" and that as a result Secretary of State William P. Rogers had become a laughing-stock in Washington.

Mr. Symington spoke in the Senate as he deplored what he termed the increasing concentration of power in Mr. Kissinger's hands, which, the Missouri Democrat contended, was upsetting the balance of power between the executive branch and Congress.

The complaint, seconded tonight by Senator J. W. Fulbright in a speech in Tallahassee, Fla., reflected the growing frustration in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee over the refusal of Mr. Kissinger to testify before Congressional committees. This has led to a belief in the Senate committee that a wall of secrecy is developing between the executive branch and Congress on such foreign policy matters as the war in Indochina.

'An Empty Exercise'

At one point in his speech, Senator Symington suggested that a Congressional appearance by Mr. Rogers had become "a rather empty exercise" because of what he termed the diminished influence of the Secretary of State.

The comment that Mr. Rogers was being "laughed at," which was not included in Mr. Symington's advance text, prompted an angry rebuttal at the House and a strong en-

dorsement by President Nixon of Secretary Rogers.

At the direction of the President, his press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, called a special briefing to say that Mr. Nixon felt that the comments about Secretary Rogers were "misleading, totally inaccurate and unfair."

Obviously speaking from notes dictated by Mr. Nixon, Mr. Ziegler said that Mr. Rogers was "the President's chief adviser on foreign policy and will remain that; people who think otherwise are misleading themselves and others."

Friend and Associate

Mr. Ziegler said that he had been instructed by Mr. Nixon to say that the President had "the utmost confidence in the Secretary of State" and that he valued Mr. Rogers as a member of his Cabinet and as an old friend.

Administration officials also suggested that reporters get the text of a letter that the President wrote Feb. 9 to Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont, the ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, defending Mr. Rogers's role in the Administration.

"Bill Rogers, the President wrote, "takes part in every step of the planning and discussion associated with foreign policy. He and I are in constant touch, and while the responsibility for the final decisions must be mine alone, as Secretary of State and as a longtime friend and close associate whose counsel I value very highly, Bill Rogers knows and understands my thinking and my decisions, and I want to as-



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Senator Stuart Symington

suer you that he has my complete confidence.

It is known that Mr. Rogers has become increasingly sensitive privately to suggestions that he has become subordinate in power and responsibility to Mr. Kissinger.

Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York and like Senator Symington and Senator Fulbright a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, brought the speculation to the Senate floor today. In responding to the Symington comments, Senator Javits said Mr.

Rogers "should resign" if the case was as described.

But Senator Javits made it clear that he disagreed with the Symington appraisal that Mr. Rogers had become a laughing-stock, and Senator Symington, a friend of Mr. Rogers, replied that it was "to the credit" of the Secretary of State that he had not resigned.

In his speech, Senator Symington complained that Mr. Kissinger had acquired a "unique and unprecedented authoritative role" over foreign policy "with a resultant obvious decline in the prestige and position of the Secretary of State and his department." Mr. Kissinger, he said, has become "Secretary of State in everything but title," but unlike the Secretary of State refuses to testify before Congressional committees, invoking "executive privilege" as a member of the President's staff.

As a result, Senator Symington said, Congress and the American people, "are being increasingly denied access to pertinent facts about major foreign policy decisions, and therefore neither Congress nor the people have any real knowledge, let alone a voice, in the formulation of policy decisions which could well determine the nation's future."

In a speech at Florida State University in which he warned that American democracy might become a casualty of the Vietnam war, Senator Fulbright said the effect of the executive privilege invoked by Mr. Kissinger "is exactly the same as a break in diplomatic relations between nations."