

# Moorer Got Kissinger Data, But Says He Disregarded It

By Michael Getler

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The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, acknowledged yesterday that some improperly obtained material from Dr. Henry A. Kissinger's office reached his desk in 1971, but that he paid little attention to it because the information was "essentially useless" and duplicated material obtained through normal channels.

Moorer, the nation's highest-ranking military officer, appeared on NBC-TV's "Today" show (WRC). His appearance marked the first personal response by the admiral to recent allegations that he and the joint chiefs were somehow involved in a military "spy ring" bent on keeping tabs on the ultra-secret diplomacy being carried on by Kissinger and the White House National Security Council.

Moorer used the occasion both to vigorously deny the existence of such a high-level snooping operation and to defend his own repu-



**ADM. THOMAS H. MOORER**  
... no "spy ring"

tation and that of the military hierarchy.

The admiral's decision to appear on the nationally broadcast television show may also reflect—at least in the view of some high-level Pentagon officials—unhappiness on Moorer's part that the White House and, to a lesser extent, Kissinger

have not made stronger statements defending him in the face of lingering allegations.

"Are you satisfied with what the White House has said in clearing your name?" he was asked by NBC newsman John Cochran. Moorer answered only: "I think that the confidence that the President has in me is complete."

Moorer explained the passage of papers from the joint chiefs' liaison office in the White House to his office in the Pentagon this way:

Navy Yeoman 1C Charles E. Radford, working as a clerk in the liaison office for Adm. Robert O. Welander, had assembled a duplicate file of documents that he typed up for Kissinger's office. Moorer said Welander delivered some of what he called "working papers" and "a collection of roughs and carbon copies" to him, explaining that "his yeoman had retained these in his clerical duties."

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## MOORER, From A1

"Now it was readily apparent," Moorer explained, "that I'd already received messages, memoranda and in some cases talked to Dr. Kissinger and the NSC staff about these matters. Since I was familiar" with the subjects, he said, "I simply did not follow through as to the precise origin of these papers," which he said dealt with "Vietnam, Cambodia, etc."

"In retrospect," he said, "particularly in light of what's happened already, I should have perhaps been more alert and followed through on the exact manner in which these papers were acquired."

At that time, he explained, "there was a very free flow of information to my desk," meaning through normal channels, and "my problem was not to find information" but "to deal with the excessive amount of information I had."

Moorer said when he eventually learned "of the full import of this matter," he directed Adm. Welander "to return any such papers to the NSC staff."

"More importantly," he said, "I want to assure the American people that I have never issued any instructions, or gave any orders, either directly or implied, to anyone to provide to me unauthorized information."

Moorer said he could not explain why the yeoman was providing such extra data except that perhaps he was "overzealous." But he stressed the information was "essentially useless" and largely "buried" in bundles of other information on the same subject "and so when I saw it, I just more or less dismissed it because it was no use to me."

Moorer, several times during the interview, raised the question of what the "motive" was of those spreading the story about military spying on Kissinger.

There have been suspicions within the Pentagon and elsewhere that the story of such an operation appeared at a time when several former White House aides faced indictments or trials for their part in the so-called "plumbers" operation.

That operation was set up secretly in 1971 to investigate leaks to the press about Kissinger's operations. The White House has cited great concern over "national security" matters as the reason for withholding from Senate Watergate investigators some information on the plumbers' operations.

Asked in the interview

yesterday what made this national security issue so sensitive that it could not be investigated, when it appeared only that an overzealous young man had given the admiral papers he already had, Moorer replied:

"I can't comment on that because I only have a limited amount of information involved in this thing."

Stressing his "personal concern" and his "institutional responsibility" as the top military man, Moorer said "the mere thought that the Joint Chiefs of Staff were cut off from sources of information and then set about to establish a system of acquiring this information in an unauthorized way is ludicrous, ridiculous and a lie."

Moorer indicated that the improper paper-passing came to his attention when detailed verbatim minutes of an NSC meeting on the India-Pakistan war—which disclosed Kissinger's famous "tilt" toward Pakistan—appeared in the Jack Anderson columns of December, 1971.

The investigation, he said, uncovered "the indication" that yeoman Radford was also the source of the Anderson leak.

Radford, however, has firmly denied this. Pentagon sources say that there was only circumstantial evidence against the yeoman and do not rule out the possibility that an intermediary may have been involved. The lack of hard evidence against Radford is said to be the reason the sailor was transferred rather than punished. Others have speculated that Radford was not punished because he was ordered to copy such documents by higher-ups.

Moorer claimed it was actually Radford's boss, Welander, who "uncovered" the source of the leak to Anderson and reported it to NSC, Moorer and former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird.

Soon after the Anderson leak and the plumbers' investigation, Welander's office was closed and he, too, was transferred, but into a job which indicated that he was not being punished.

Moorer emphasized that he had always had a good and close relationship with Kissinger "so I never felt at any time that I had any problem getting information."

He also sought to put to rest allegations that "the joint chiefs were opposed to the President's initiatives with respect to Russia and China" and were trying to sabotage them.

"That's nonsense," he said. The joint chiefs "applaud

the action taken by the President to open communications with these two large nations."

He conceded that the joint chiefs "certainly do not agree in detail" with all the elements of the strategic arms limitation talks. But he said there was an opportunity to make their case, that the chiefs "were not virgins" when it came to having things turned down, and that their approval was ultimately given to the agreements with assurances that new submarine and bomber programs could go ahead as a hedge.

Sources currently and formerly with the Administration who have talked with The Washington Post on the documents episode in recent days have also emphasized that they do not believe there was any plot to "spy on" or sabotage the White House.

Rather, they maintain that in 1971 a large part of the established bureaucracy, including at times the secretaries of Defense and State and top military people, were not fully informed about what was going on, especially with the Soviet Union and China. This, they believe, touched off an intense scramble for information within the bureaucracy among those who felt they had the right and responsibility to stay informed. It was part of this scramble and the counter-measures which resulted in such confirmed surveillance as the tapping of the phone of Laird's military adviser.

An authoritative account of the SALT negotiations contained in author John Newhouse's book "Cold Dawn" reveals the extraordinary degree of White House secrecy and that of Kissinger, "who kept fully informed only his constituency of one."

Moorer made the decision to appear on the "Today" show himself, according to informed sources, choosing to air his remarks unedited to a national television audience and bypassing newspapers and wire services, which the admiral is known to feel have been unfair to him in printing anonymous allegations about his involvement.

The admiral was "made available" for interviews to the other two major TV networks after the NBC appearance. The American Broadcasting Co. did film an interview, but Columbia Broadcasting System correspondent Bob Schieffer said the Navy told him the "ground rules" were that questions be limited to the same general ones used on the "Today" show. Schieffer says he declined.