Kissinger Defends Credibility on Taps

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Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger sought once again yesterday to defend his public credibility in the controversy over his role in the 1969 to 1971 national security wiretapping episode.

He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that President Nixon was under a "misapprehension" if he said that Kissinger ordered the wiretapping of White House subordinates and newsmen.

The secretary had been asked by Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) about untto the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he did not initiate the requests for wiretaps.

"My role," he said, "was in supplying names as part of a program instituted by the President, the Attorney General and the director of the FBI to protect the national security."

Muskie introduced the wiretapping issue on an apologetic

was reported in an unexpurgated version of the transcripts circulated to members of the House Judiciary Committee.

President Nixon is reported to have told John W. Dean III, then his White House counsel, in a discussion of Kissinger to be a triumphal homecoming day that FBI evidence presented to them reveals that he is a better witness than we are..."

Whatever Kissinger's recollections may have been, the FBI records appear to conflict directly with Kissinger's assertions that he asked for no wiretaps.

At his Thursday press conference, under a barrage of questions on the wiretapping episode, Kissinger modified his position to say he made no has not retained an attorney.

three-hour exchange that centered on foreign aid. "It is a events. White House spokesman Gerald L. Warren said, Haig."

The former Attorney General also observed, however, that the FBI reports had to be weighed with "Dr. Kissinger's own recollection of what occurred, as to which, of course, made the request to former FBI White House liaison man William Sullivan.

This is the first suggestion that Kissinger's office played a role in turning off as well as initiating the wiretaps of 13 government officials and four newsmen.

At his press conference Kissinger angrily asserted, in response to a question, that he has not retained an attorney to defend him in any possible perjury action growing out of the discrepancies in the various accounts of his role in the wiretaps.

"I have not retained counsel," he flared, "and I am not conducting my office as if it were a conspiracy."