

Kissinger Assails Leaks And Threatens to Resign

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He Resents Wiretap Charges

Salzburg, Austria

In an angry, emotion-packed news conference, Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger threatened yesterday to resign unless his name is cleared of charges relating to wiretapping cases.

At times almost close to tears, his voice choking, Kissinger said he could not conduct his office if his honor is under challenge.

Declaring that he had truthfully testified in confirmation hearings last fall on his nomination as Secretary of State, Kissinger said he would leave the presidential trip and return to Washington any time the Senate Foreign Relations Committee wished to question him further.

"I do not believe that it is possible to conduct the foreign policy of the United States under these circumstances when the character and credibility of the Secretary of State is at issue," he said at an hour-long press conference. "And if it is not cleared up," he added, "I will resign."

In Washington, the Foreign Relations Committee agreed to a review of Kissinger's testimony but Chairman J. William Fulbright (Dem-Ark.) said he did not know how or when the committee will proceed with such a review.

Kissinger's troubles go back nearly a year to news stories disclosing that as Mr. Nixon's national security

adviser he had permitted wiretaps on several assistants and newsmen. Since that time reports have surfaced periodically questioning the truthfulness of Kissinger's testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the wiretap.

One of the last reports involved a tape of a conversation between Mr. Nixon and some aides in which the President was quoted as

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saying Kissinger initiated some wiretaps.

Kissinger assailed the "selective leak" of documents and asked that there be "a public accounting of those who engage in this defamation of character."

"I have in mind that those who leak documents should step forward and explain what they are doing and why they are doing it," the Secretary said.

A short time after the surprise news conference, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Mr. Nixon "is sure that those in the United States and in the world who seek peace and are familiar with Secretary Kissinger's contributions to international trust and understanding share his view that the Secretary's honor needs no defense."

Later, speaking informally to reporters, Ziegler said Kissinger had to get this "out of his system and off his mind" and that he does not expect the Secretary to leave the trip "in mid-stream."

"The trip is going ahead on schedule," Ziegler said. "The President feels that Dr. Kissinger was expressing a personal point based on his personal honor."

Asked if the President does not want Kissinger to

resign, the press secretary said the President "would be very reluctant to accept his resignation under this type of circumstance."

When Kissinger walked into the ballroom of the residence where his news conference was held, reporters expected him to talk about the Middle East trip the President begins today, when he flies to Cairo.

Instead, he announced that he had "requested this meeting as a result of the series of articles" following his Thursday press conference in Washington where he was questioned about his role in wiretap cases.

The press commented that

he seemed "irritated, angered, flustered, discom-bobulated" by the questions, he said. "All these words are correct."

There followed critical news stories and editorials, he said, prompting him to send a letter to Chairman Fulbright of the Senate For-

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ign Relations Committee reiterating "the truthfulness and completeness of my testimony" at the confirmation hearings. Kissinger never mentioned which newspapers or news agencies originated the accounts, nor was he specific about what they said.

"The innuendoes which now imply that new evidence contradicting my testimony has come to light are without foundation," he said he wrote Fulbright. "All the available evidence is to the best of my knowledge contained in the public and closed hearings which preceded my confirmation."

Nevertheless, Kissinger wrote, "At this sensitive pe-

riod, I feel it important that the committee which first examined the evidence and which has a special concern with the conduct of foreign affairs should have an opportunity to review it once again."

Kissinger absolved the Foreign Relations Committee of responsibility for the leaks. But he hinted that the House Judiciary Committee, which now has possession of the documents involved and which formerly were in the hands of the Foreign Relations Committee, is respon-

sible for the leaks criticizing him.

Questioned as to why he would raise the issue on the eve of a critical presidential trip, Kissinger said "only because I wanted to spare the United States the indignity and humiliation of having its Secretary of State, while engaged on a trip to the Middle East, constantly exposed to these public charges."

"I cannot conduct my office if I have to devote my energies to disproving allegations of perjury, nor do I believe that the United States can conduct an effective foreign policy with a secretary of state who is under attack, and, therefore, I am simply stating a reality."

Asked if he would be satisfied if the leaks ceased, he replied: "No, I think this issue now has to be resolved."

If his own honor continues at issue, Kissinger said, "I cannot perform the duties that I have exercised, and in that case, I shall turn them over immediately to individuals less subject to public attack."

After reading the letter to Fulbright, Kissinger launched into a lengthy review of the record, which some have charged demonstrate he misled the committee regarding his role in wiretapping cases and also

in the operation of the so-called White House Plumbers' unit designed to stop security leaks.

The impression has been created, he said, "that I was involved in some illegal or shady activity that I am trying to obscure with misleading testimony."

After a series of leaks in 1969, he said, the President, after consultation with him, Attorney General John N. Mitchell and the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, ordered a series of wiretaps. Kissinger defended the taps as legal and something that had been done in every administration since Franklin D. Roosevelt's.

He said he received summaries of the FBI findings from the wiretaps, but he heatedly denied reports that his office received descriptions of "extra-marital affairs or pornographic descriptions."

"No verbatim transcript was ever sent to my office," he said, only "a page and a half summary of conversations" relating to national security.

After May, 1970, he said, no more FBI reports were sent to his office although wiretapping continued under White House direction.

He said that in 1969 it was decided that wiretaps would be instituted on individuals on Kissinger's staff who had "adverse information" in their security files, who had access to documents that had been leaked and of individuals whom the FBI discovered in its investigations might be possible sources of leaks.

Kissinger said he did not initiate any requests for wiretaps "that were not triggered either by a security violation or by fulfilling the criteria of adverse information in the security files, and that last criterion was met only once at the beginning of the program."

In one of his most emotional statements, Kissinger said, "Our national debate has now reached a point where it is possible for documents that have already been submitted to one committee to be selectively leaked by another committee without the benefit of any explanation."



AP Wirephoto

Ready for Nixon

A mammoth statue of Pharaoh Ramses II at a Cairo railroad station gazed down at a lamppost decorated with American and Egyptian

flags in honor of President Nixon's visit. The President will arrive in Cairo today for the start of his Mideast tour. Story is on Page 9.

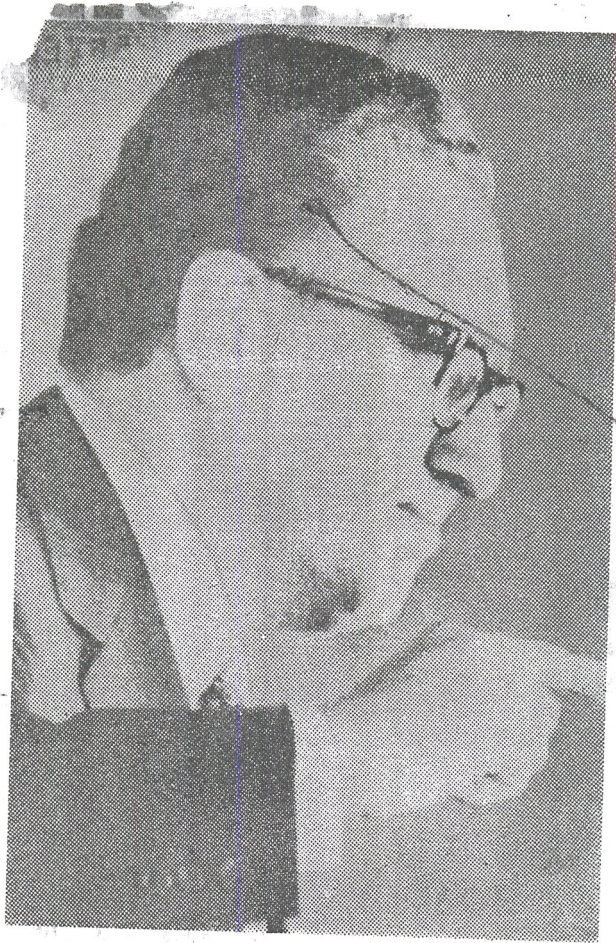
Then, his emotions welling up even more, the Secretary said he had been identified as one interested primarily in the balance of power.

"I would rather like to think," he said, "that when the record is written, one may remember that perhaps some lives were saved and that perhaps some mothers can rest more at ease, but I leave that to history.

"What I will not leave to history is a discussion of my public honor."

He said he did not know why there were attacks on him and did not believe "that I am surrounded by a conspiracy."

Washington Post



AP Wirephoto

SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER

An emotional session with reporters in Salzburg