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## Why the Threat by Kissinger?

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WASHINGTON, June 11 — How could the most popular member of the Nixon Administration think of resigning?

That was one of the many questions raised today by the news that Secretary of State Kissinger, in Salzburg on his way to the Middle East with President Nixon, had threatened to quit.

In Washington there was no lack of explanations for Mr. Kissinger's drastic and dramatic action — most of them speculative.

He has never been through the rough and tumble of politics. He has lately known nothing but adulation. He is proud of his accomplishments, and justifiably so. He can argue that attacks on his credibility at home impair his effectiveness abroad. He has always been sensitive to criticism and is sometimes emotional about it.

Afar from his normal sensitivity, Secretary Kissinger must be tired. After his 33 arduous days of jet diplomacy in the Middle East, he did not have a single day off. He immediately tackled the accumulated business of the State Department, and went around briefing Congressional committees. Then he took off again with the President.

Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, predicted today that "with a night's sleep" Secretary Kissinger would be "bright and cheerful" again. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, said, "I think he's tired."

### Marathon Diplomacy

On May 31, Secretary Kissinger returned to Washington after 33 days of marathon diplomacy that produced a military disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria.

He was pictured on the covers of Time and Newsweek. In the Harris Poll, he had just been named as the most popular member of the Executive branch of the Government.

In spite of the odds against him — his place of birth (Fürth, Germany), his modest origins, his foreign accent, he had become the most successful Secretary of State in recent memory. He had won the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to settle the war in Vietnam. His triumphs had been achieved in the unlikeliest places — Peking,

Moscow, Cairo, Damascus and Jerusalem.

Secretary Kissinger had every reason to expect that he would get a hero's welcome, as he did, and that at his news conference last Thursday he would be asked, as usual, how he had accomplished his latest miracle.

Instead, he was asked whether he had retained counsel to defend himself against possible charges of perjury in his testimony before a Senate Committee on his role in authorizing 17 wiretaps that were official information.

Secretary Kissinger seemed stunned by the question, which was only one of a persistent series that finally led him to tell Clark Mollenhoff of The Des Moines Register and Tribune, "I consider this a press conference and not a cross-examination."

"Henry came home expecting to be showered with confetti and crowned with laurel," one of his friends said later. "Instead, he met that enraged bull, Mollenhoff."

### Breakfast With Mansfield

Apparently, when Secretary Kissinger called in reporters at Salzburg today, he had been brooding since Thursday. On Saturday he had breakfast with Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Senate majority leader, and talked about resigning.

On Sunday, after The New York Times published another article about the degree of his responsibility for the wiretaps, the Secretary talked about giving up his trip with the President. He told friends his "personal honor" was involved.

People who have been in public life longer than Secretary Kissinger thought he was taking it all too hard.

"He should realize that taking abuse and criticism is a part of his job," Senator George D. Aiken, the veteran Republican from Vermont, said today.

"He should accustom himself to the fact that the Secretary of State is subject to criticism," remarked former Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Mr. Rusk, who is now a law professor at the University of Georgia, made the comment in a telephone interview.

Ordinarily, Mr. Kissinger is the most persuasive of men, both as a negotiator and as a publicist for the results of his negotiations. He is a virtuoso at briefing the press and Congressional committees.

But he has not been entirely persuasive in rebutting charges that he ordered wiretaps of his associates and of newsmen.

Suspicious persist, and Secretary Kissinger keeps addressing himself to them, although he seems to have an abhorrence of the subject of wiretapping. He keeps saying he will answer no more questions about it, but he does; he invites questions.

Despite the suspicions, a reporter telephoning around Washington today found no one saying that Secretary Kissinger should be taken at his word and allowed to resign.

Even Representative Joshua Eilberg, Democrat of Pennsylvania, who bluntly renewed the wiretapping charges against Secretary Kissinger today, said, "I hope he stays." Representative Eilberg added, "I hope also he is candid and truthful."

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee was more than willing to give Mr. Kissinger another chance to clear up accusations against him.

"I think he deserves the confidence of the country on his record," said Senator Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, a Democratic member of the committee. He added, however, that the committee should not be "blind" to the questions that have been raised.

"He is performing a valuable role," former Secretary Rusk said of Mr. Kissinger.

Almost no one has attached as much importance to the wiretapping allegations as Mr. Kissinger himself has done. The wiretapping in which the Secretary of State was involved was not illegal, as he said in Salzburg today, and some of his friends were wondering sadly why he had not decisively disposed of the issue months ago.

Elliot L. Richardson, the former Attorney General, who helped the Senate committee with its earlier inquiry into Secretary Kissinger's role in the wiretapping, said he did not see what public interest would be served by probing further into the matter.

If that was the kind of support Secretary Kissinger was trying to rally by raising a domestic political issue on foreign soil, he obviously was having some initial success. Ultimately, however, his success will be judged on his performance in Washington, not in Salzburg.