

Bipartisan Move In Senate to Back Kissinger

Washington

A bipartisan group of senators introduced a resolution yesterday declaring the integrity and veracity of Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to be above reproach.

The resolution, expressing highest regard and confidence in Kissinger, was introduced by Senator James B. Allen (Dem-Ala.), with 38 cosponsors by the end of the day. It was allowed to lie on the table in the Senate to permit additional signatures.

The expression of support came a day after Kissinger asked the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to review his role in national security wiretapping. Kissinger said he will resign if challenges to his veracity are not cleared up.

The committee agreed to Kissinger's request but has set no definite date for a session.

Senator Clifford P. Case (Rep-N.J.), who with Senator John Sparkman (Dem-Ala.), made up a special subcommittee to examine Kissinger's role in the wiretapping last September, said yesterday he still believes the committee's decision was correct.

Case said he concluded then, on the basis of Kissinger's explanations, that his role in the wiretapping did not constitute a barrier to his confirmation.

He said the senators saw only an FBI summary of the wiretaps of 17 individuals, including four newsmen, without raw backup information or memos.

He said the FBI records showed Kissinger as having "requested" wiretaps, but the senators saw no reason

to question his explanation that the decision was made higher up and that his role, as director of the National Security Council, was to identify possible sources of leaks of important security information.

Representative Joshua Eilberg (Dem-Pa.), a member of the House Judiciary Committee, said Tuesday "materials have been supplied to us which constitute positive proof that Kissinger did institute those taps."

But Representative Charles Wiggins (Rep-Calif), another committee member, said yesterday the committee has a document, signed by Kissinger, that shows Kissinger did not originate the wiretaps.

Senior GOP senators, in separate Senate speeches, called angrily for an end to "whispered assaults" on Kissinger's honor.

"The unattributed leaks of information about him are scurrilous, dangerous and damaging to our foreign policy," said Senator Strom Thurmond (Rep-S.C.).

Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania called it "reprehensible" and Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep-Ariz.) termed it "incessant nit-picking."

Thurmond said the issue is one of semantics, involving the meaning of such words as "initiate," "authorize," "recommend" or "request" and it is not worthy of national debate.

Scott and Goldwater said the news media, in stories about Kissinger, are overlooking the duty of the government to protect national security.

"Very little attention is given to the overriding reason for wiretaps — national security," Goldwater said.

Scott said newsmen are "putting the cart before the horse" in making an issue of who tried to prevent disclosure of government secrets, rather than how the secrets were leaked.

One of Kissinger's fellow cabinet officers, Secretary of Commerce Frederick B. Dent, came to his defense with a statement deploring "this irresponsible assault on the honor of the Secretary of State."

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