

SFChronicle
The Wiretap Controversy

JUN 14 1974

Senators Back Kissinger

Washington

With a majority of the Senate expressing confidence in Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's integrity, congressional leaders declared yesterday that government wiretapping is justified and legal when done to protect national security.

A majority — 51 senators — signed a resolution introduced Wednesday by senator James B. Allen (Dem-Ala.) calling Kissin-

ger's integrity and veracity "above reproach."

The Foreign Relations Committee is preparing to reopen its investigation of allegations that Kissinger initiated wiretaps on 13 former aides and four newsmen to find the source of news leaks during the period from 1969 to 1971.

Kissinger, who denies he initiated the taps, threatened in an emotional news conference in Austria Tuesday to resign unless "some responsible forum" cleared him of allegations that he lied about his role in the White House surveillance efforts.

Senate Democratic leader Mike Mansfield, one of those who signed the resolution of support, said he has "every confidence" in Kissinger and believes the controversy swirling about the secretary is more "damaging in his own mind than it is in reality."

Mansfield, asked about wiretapping to find the source of news leaks, said he believes wiretaps "might be necessary for the protection and security of the nation" in certain instances.

Republican leader Hugh Scott agreed, saying that the "assumption that wiretapping is totally illegal runs up against the other situation: How do you protect national security?"

House GOP leader John J. Rhodes asked:

"... Were the wiretaps that were ordered justified for reasons of national security? I personally feel that this question can be answered in the affirmative."

Scott later took the Senate floor to declare that leaks on the Kissinger wiretap controversy and news stories based on them were disgraceful.

"Let's not continue to hound, harass and pursue the secretary of state as he pursues the foreign policy of the United States," said Scott, aiming his remarks particularly at the press.

But Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (Rep-Conn.), a member of the Senate Watergate committee, disagreed, saying that Kissinger "is not a victim of a biased news media, the Watergate or the House Judiciary Com-

mittee.

"Dr. Kissinger is a victim of his own administration which has chosen to with-

hold information from the committee and the public," Weicker said.

United Press