

JUN 15 1974

WXPost

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# Kissinger's Resignation Threat

Henry Kissinger's first serious thought of resigning came not last week but in April 1973, as the Watergate crisis exploded—and it was directly linked to his precarious position as an outsider in the Nixon White House.

For four years, Kissinger had been the target of Chief of Staff H. R. Haldeman, who used to refer to him in the inner sanctums as "Superkraut." Despite rising popularity and diplomatic triumphs, Kissinger always felt imperiled. Partly from that sense of siege came his ready consent to wiretap his own aides in the name of security. From it, too, came his brooding 14 months ago that the wiretaps would someday be used to entangle him in Watergate.

He was prophetic. Intimates are convinced that Haldeman's chief associate, John D. Ehrlichman, has leaked information against him. But the irony of his resignation threat is this: It fortifies both Mr. Nixon and indicted Watergate conspirators, including Haldeman and Ehrlichman.

All now seem under the same tent. Mr. Nixon and his disgraced aides benefit from association with Nobel Prize winner Kissinger. But both his brilliant career and American foreign policy are threatened.

Suspicion of Kissinger by the Haldeman gang came from his associations: Harvard professors, Georgetown dinner parties, Vietnam sessions with Nixon-haters. He had also hired scorned "Eastern elitists."

In the paranoiac White House, where everyone beyond Haldeman's inner circle was an enemy, Kissinger's political antecedents as intimate adviser of Mr. Nixon's political foe, Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, were suspect.

Kissinger had his own ample share of paranoia, and the Nixon White House polished it. Thus, two years ago Kissinger ended an early-morning Oval Office session with the President and Haldeman to keep a breakfast appointment. When Haldeman asked who with, he named the author of a new Nixon book.

"He's no friend of ours," Haldeman exploded in anger. Kissinger turned to the President and said the book had praised the Nixon foreign policy, but that he had skipped the rest of it. Mr. Nixon was amused, but Haldeman was outraged.

When the decision was made in May 1969 to start tapping telephones of reporters and national security aides, Kissinger offered not the slightest resistance. He himself was enraged at the leaks. They threatened his network of secret diplomatic activity. He felt that a government unable to keep its secrets could not operate.

But beyond that was his own endangered flank. Surrounded by aides whom Haldeman regarded as Nixon enemies, Kissinger was "holier than the Pope," listing his closest associates on the National Security staff among those having access to secret information.

When Watergate broke, Kissinger quietly suggested that both Haldeman and Ehrlichman resign in Mr. Nixon's interest. They did not react favorably,

and Ehrlichman later became a source of newspaper stories seeming to link Kissinger into the enveloping scandal. Kissinger kept silent but even in April 1973 he was privately talking resignation if a spurious tie-in connected him with Watergate. Thus, when he went public in Salzburg, the words that flowed had been practiced in his mind for many months.

In going public, Kissinger is seeking a total exoneration that may be beyond anyone's power. Ambiguities over his exact words about the wiretapping issue can't be resolved.

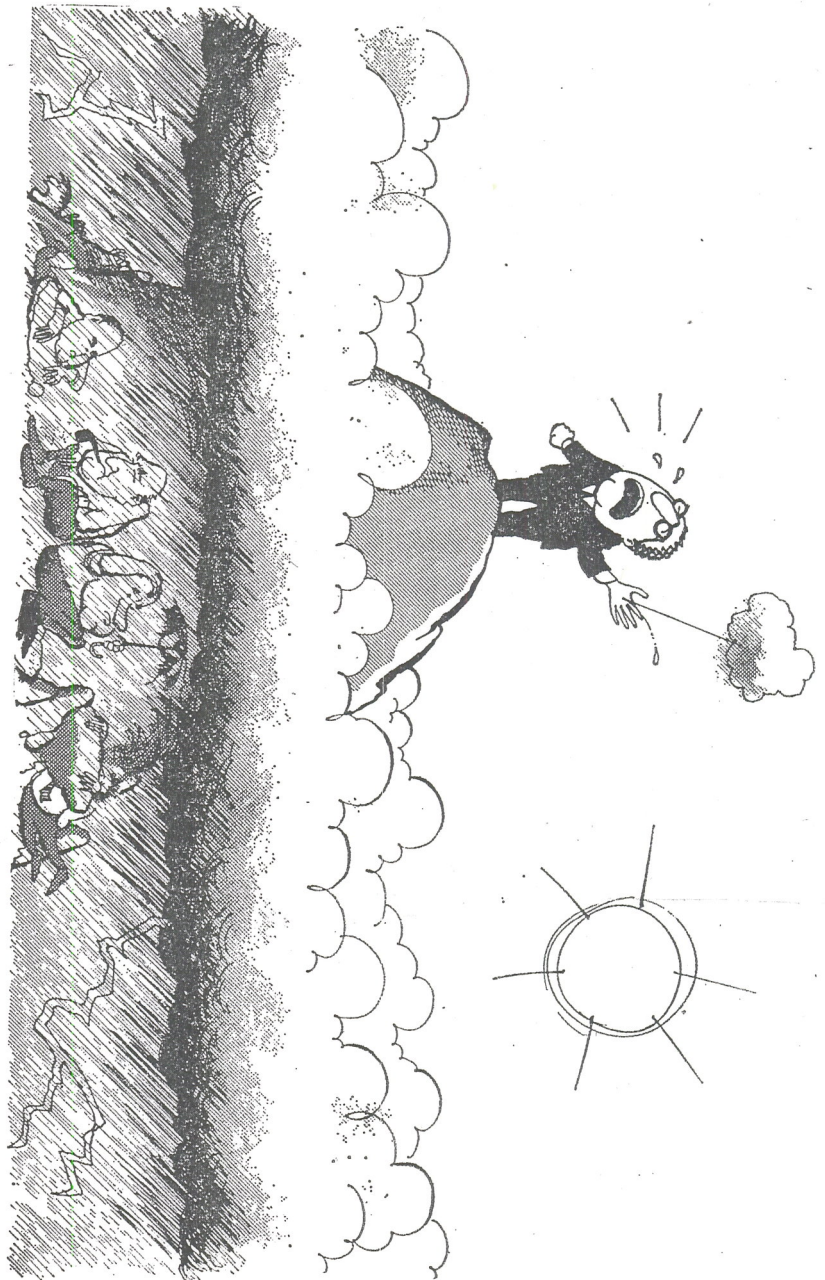
Kissinger has now given Mr. Nixon his best anti-impeachment ammunition: linking his celebrated name to the President's, in the sense that, for totally

different reasons, both are now under attack from press and politicians. As one member of the House Judiciary Committee told us: "This affair has robbed the impeachment proceedings of its viability."

Kissinger's enemies are now cheering: Liberals who will never forgive his toughness—and success—on the Vietnam war; Zionists who feel he has betrayed Israel; anti-Soviet hardliners who hate his policy of detente.

Kissinger's public outrage over the issue of the security taps has now crystallized an international dilemma. But the real problem stemmed from a White House that fed and fostered paranoia in everyone who touched it.

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By Auth for the Philadelphia Inquirer