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Sen. Mansfield Calls Kissinger 'Thin Skinned'

Associated Press

Sen. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) said yesterday that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger is "a little thin-skinned" when it comes to criticism.

Mansfield, the Senate majority leader, said that Kissinger told him June 8 he was considering resigning because of the "cloud over his head" on the government wiretapping issue.

Mansfield said the next day he received a phone call from Kissinger, saying he was thinking about not going with President Nixon on the Middle East trip because of controversy.

"I guess it kept eating away at him," Mansfield said.

"I told him he ought to roll with the punches and do his job. But I guess he's a lot more sensitive than people think," said Mansfield.

"He's a little thin-skinned and not really used to the hazards of politics, or at least not as much as he is used to the laurels."

Mansfield, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he advised Kissinger not to quit; that his energies and capabilities are needed.