

# Watergate Isn't Fun Anymore



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Washington

**T**HINGS GOT a bit hectic in the World's Greatest Deliberative Body the other day. Senators tumbled over each other in their rush to endorse a resolution declaring that Henry Kissinger's "integrity and varacity are above reproach."

Never let it be said that our government is full of Hamlets who allow the native hue of their resolutions to be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.

Why, even the Secretary of Commerce, Fred Dent, rather grandly announced that he has "confidence" in Kissinger's integrity. You ask: "What does the Secretary of Commerce know about the complicated issues involved in the current controversy?" Don't ask.

Ask instead about the significance of the remarkable government-wide reflex to rally 'round Kissinger.

This reflex involves more than a proper respect for Kissinger's exemplary patriotism and momentous achievements. It also involves palpable panic, especially in Congress.

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**U**NTIL NOW the spoor of the Watergate beast has led directly toward Mr. Nixon and those unpleasant friends of his — Messrs. Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Colson, Mitchell, et al. But now there is evidence that the most admired man in America, Kissinger, has done some dishonorable things, like misleading a Senate committee about his role in a secret and dishonorable wiretapping program.

Until now some people actually have enjoyed Watergate. But now they are

faced with the possibility that there may be some evidence damaging to Kissinger, and suddenly Watergate just isn't fun anymore.

Unfortunately, the charges against Kissinger are numerous and specific. They cannot be blown away by a Senate "resolution." Too many people — some identifiable, some identifiable — dispute Kissinger's sworn testimony that he did not initiate, and was a reluctant participant in, the wiretapping.

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**A**S IS THE case with us all, fatigue magnifies Kissinger's flaws, and even when he is in the pink he does not suffer criticism gladly. He is not used to hearing unpleasant questions. Sycophants on his staff and in the press revolve around him like satellites around a sun.

In Salzburg, at his version of Mr. Nixon's 1962 "last press conference," Kissinger resembled a duke addressing very minor barons as he decreed to the Senate: Affirm my veracity, or I will take my bat and ball and structure of peace and leave town.

His message was not original: *Après moi le deluge*. The Senators touched their forelocks and scrambled to sign an affirming resolution.

Actually, were Congress to follow the evidence about Kissinger's veracity wherever it leads, crops would still grow and songs would still be written. But the Senate would rather declare Kissinger "above reproach" before getting bogged down in the evidence.

**Arthur Hoppe is on a week's vacation.**