

Kissinger as the super hawk

WASHINGTON (AP) — Henry Kissinger recommended "taking out two or three North Korean airfields" in retaliation for the shooting down of an unarmed U.S. reconnaissance plane in 1969, according to former President Richard Nixon.

In his final televised interview

with David Frost, Nixon said he "frankly tilted toward" Kissinger's plan, but rejected the option because he thought it might escalate into a war involving China, the Soviet Union or both.

"I figured having one on our hands was enough," Nixon said,

referring to the war in Vietnam.

Nixon recalled the North Korean incident to illustrate his claim that Kissinger often was a hardliner in private while appearing to be otherwise in public.

Nixon recalled that Kissinger viewed the attack on the plane as a test by the Russians, or possibly the North Koreans, of the then-new administration. And they as well as China and Vietnam "will be watching to see how we reacted," Nixon quoted Kissinger as saying.

A Kissinger spokesman said yesterday that the former secretary of state will not comment on Nixon's statements.

The former president said he was particularly concerned about the late Mao Tse-tung's response because the Chinese leader had lost a son fighting against the Americans in the Korean war.

"People who think Kissinger was basically a soft liner and I was a hard liner basically don't know what each of us believed," Nixon said.
