

US Senator McCain calls police on anti-Kissinger protesters

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John McCain, the chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, called the Capitol police and had antiwar activists arrested and ejected from a hearing Thursday when they protested the appearance of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

Members of the Code Pink group held up signs denouncing Kissinger as a war criminal and shouted their intention to make a citizen's arrest, dangling handcuffs in front of him and distributing an "arrest warrant" citing Kissinger's role in the Vietnam War and other crimes during his tenure as national security adviser and secretary of state, from 1969 to 1976.

McCain warned the protesters to sit down and be silent, while his aides hurried to get police reinforcements. As several cops marched one of the demonstrators out of the hearing room, McCain bellowed, "Get out of here you low-life scum," a scene that was then transmitted repeatedly on cable and broadcast television.

After the brief disruption ended, McCain made a groveling apology to Kissinger, who appeared as part of a panel of former secretaries of state, joined by George Shultz and Madeleine Albright, to discuss the global strategy of American imperialism.

"Dr. Kissinger, I hope on behalf of all of the members of this committee on both sides of the aisle—in fact, from all of my colleagues, I'd like to apologize for allowing such disgraceful behavior towards a man who served his country with the greatest distinction," he said. "I apologize profusely."

McCain's invective against the protesters is a measure of his own inability to articulate any political defense of the crimes with which Kissinger is associated. The "warrant" distributed by Code Pink noted only three of the most serious—the slaughter of millions in Vietnam, the CIA-backed coup in Chile, in

which tens of thousands were murdered, and the Indonesian invasion of East Timor, costing 200,000 lives.

Kissinger's colleagues at the Senate hearing also have serious crimes to account for. Shultz was secretary of state in the Reagan administration (1982-1988), during the illegal US "contra" war against Nicaragua, the invasion of Grenada, and the CIA-sponsored guerrilla war against the Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan, which gave rise to both the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

Albright, secretary of state from 1997 to 2001 in the Clinton administration, was a leading advocate of US military intervention in the Balkans, first in Bosnia, then in the 1999 war against Serbia over Kosovo. She also helped oversee the sanctions against Iraq and repeated bombings and missile attacks that devastated the country prior to the US invasion launched by the administration of George W. Bush.

The apoplectic response by Senator McCain, applauded by his Senate colleagues and the corporate-controlled media, is an expression of the crisis atmosphere and disorientation that prevail within leading circles of the Washington political establishment.

Two years ago, when Democrats controlled the Senate, the chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, Dianne Feinstein, called the police against Code Pink protesters and barred them from attending a hearing on the nomination of John Brennan as CIA director. The protesters had denounced Brennan for the drone missile assassination campaign he ran from the Obama White House.

Once Thursday's hearing resumed after the expulsion of the protesters, the former secretaries of state on the panel were divided amongst themselves on certain

policy issues. Kissinger was particularly critical of the bipartisan campaign to provoke further confrontations with Russia over Ukraine. “I’m uneasy about beginning a process of military engagement without knowing where it will lead us and what we’ll do to sustain it,” he said. “This is a territory 300 miles from Moscow, and therefore has special security implications.”

Albright and Shultz, on the other hand, attacked the Obama administration for being insufficiently aggressive over Ukraine. They both urged direct US arms shipments to Kiev.

Kissinger also urged caution in the intervention against Islamic State guerrillas in Iraq and Syria, saying, “We must not let that degenerate into another war that we don’t know how to end.”



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