

Dismissal Story

Helped Rusk

---Schlesinger

LAT-11/29/65

WASHINGTON (AP) — Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. said Sunday he may have helped, rather than hindered, Secretary of State Dean Rusk by writing that President John F. Kennedy planned to replace Rusk after 1964.

Schlesinger, former special assistant to the late President, discussed his book "A Thousand Days" and its statement about Rusk before a radio-television panel (Meet The Press—NBC).

The historian was asked if he thinks it was useful to report Mr. Kennedy's attitude toward Rusk.

"I don't think it was useful or useless," Schlesinger replied. "I think it made no difference at all." Later he added:

"I may indeed have helped Secretary Rusk, because for a time it made him something of a martyr here in Washington. . . ."

Stated Confidence

Schlesinger also said he considered whether he should leave the Rusk passage in the book after it had been published in Life magazine.

"One reason I did was . . . (that) President Johnson gave a press conference in which he stated his confidence in Secretary Rusk in most emphatic and vigorous terms," Schlesinger said, "and it seemed to me, in view of the indestructible confidence President Johnson had in Secretary Rusk, that any reservations that some previous President may have had two years earlier could not injure the secretary's capacity to discharge his duties."

Schlesinger was asked about a New York Times story "in which you said that you had lied to the press at the time of the Bay of Pigs

(Cuban invasion) about the size of the men and people who were there, and you regretted that you passed along the cover story, or so you were quoted."

Schlesinger said, "That cover story was a misrepresentation. One was instructed to give it out."

"Now, it may be that I should have resigned from the government rather than mislead the New York Times," he continued, "but it

seemed to me that in the end my confidence in the Kennedy administration was such that regardless of my dislike of the Bay of Pigs, I wanted to continue working for that administration. Therefore, I followed the instruction and gave out the cover story."

Schlesinger asserted that the New York Times a few days earlier had "suppressed a story by Tad Szulc from Miami, giving a fairly accurate account of the invasion plans."

"If I was reprehensible in misleading the New York Times by repeating the official cover story, the Times

conceivably was just as reprehensible in misleading the American people by suppressing the Tad Szulc story from Miami. I, at least, had the excuse that I was working for the government.

"I prefer to think that both the Times and I . . . were actuated by the same mo-

tives; that is, a sense, mistaken or not, that this was in the national interest to do so."

The New York Times declined to comment on Schlesinger's remarks.