Schlesinger Says State Tries to Usurp Policy

Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. said yesterday that President Kennedy's problems with the State Department were rooted in the State bureaucracy's feeling that "foreign policy . . . is their personal property to be preserved against interference and meddling from the White House."

State careerists, Schlesinger charged, have a "deep commitment to past policies, whether good or bad, with a kind of concealed feeling that if you change a past policy, it is implying that the policy was wrong."

He added: " . . . I would say we would not have had the Alliance for Progress; we would not have had the American University speech; we would not have had the partial test ban; we would not have handled the Cuban missile crisis the way it was handled; we would not have had the change of policy toward the third world if these matters had been left to the State Department."

Schlesinger, a former Harvard University history professor who served as a White House assistant under Mr. Kennedy, made his comments on the radio-TV program, "Meet the Press" (NBC, WRC).

Most of the discussion involved his book, "A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House." The book has sparked considerable controversy, principally because of Schlesinger's assertion that Mr. Kennedy planned to re-

See SCHLESINGER, A6, Col. 5.

place Dean Rusk as Secretary of State.

Schlesinger disputed Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey's criticism of his remarks about Rusk as harmful and mischievous, saying: "I thought it was important to record it because the object of history is to come as close as possible to a truthful reconstruction of the past and this seemed to me part of the record."

In his book, Schlesinger states that Mr. Kennedy's dissatisfaction with Rusk resulted from the Secretary's failure to reform the State bureaucracy. Yesterday, he said his book was not intended as a "polemic against Rusk" but was aimed at pointing out some of the problems that faced Mr. Kennedy.

Figured in Problems

The State Department, he insisted, figured very prominently in some of these problems "in spite of the fact that the Department and the Foreign Service contained some of the ablest people in government."

In the view of Foreign Service careerists, Schlesinger said, Mr. Kennedy "intervened too much personally" and failed to acknowledge "the difficult problems of checking everything in foreign policy because if you do 'A' it may have concealed unanticipated side effects all through the alphabet."

While conceding that this is an important consideration, Schlesinger implied that it also makes for a great deal of hidebound thinking within State. As a result, he said, State wound up in the position of resisting many of the most important foreign policy initiatives of the Kennedy Administration.

Given Cover Story

Schlesinger also was asked about a recent story in the New York Times quoting him as admitting that he lied to the press at the time of the Bay of Pigs about the size of the Cuban exile invasion force. The Times story also said Schlesinger now regrets having passed along this misinformation.

In commenting yesterday, he said that during the Bay of Pigs crisis the Administration officials involved were given a "cover story designed to minimize the significance of the operation saying that only three or four hundred men landed rather than 1400 and so on."

Conceding that the cover story was "a misrepresentation," Schlesinger said:

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

He said that a few days earlier, the Times itself had suppressed a story from one of its correspondents giving a "fairly accurate" account of the invasion plans.

"I think," he concluded, "that both the Times and I, in our exercises in misleading, were actuated by the same motives; that is, a sense, mistaken or not, that this was in the national interest to do."