

Major Shifts in State Department May Involve Ball, Alexis Johnson

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There will be a major turnover in the top command of the State Department within the next few months.

The resignation of the Department's No. 3 official, Thomas C. Mann, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, has automatically focused attention on the plans of the No. 2 official, Under Secretary George W. Ball.

It has been an open secret in official circles in Washington for months that Ball had

contemplated resigning this summer. He followed the diplomatic course yesterday of saying he was "not prepared to confirm" such reports, but noted that he has served longer in that post than anyone except Sumner Welles, who served with Secretary Cordell Hull.

The State Department's No. 4 official, Deputy Under Secretary U. Alexis Johnson, had been slated to become Ambassador to Japan. When that was reported it was publicly scoffed at by President John-

son, who always bristles at such disclosures and sometimes reverses his plans as a result.

There is now some speculation that Alexis Johnson may be asked to take the post vacated by Mann, with the title of the No. 3 post shifted back once again to Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Many of Alexis Johnson's associates are hopeful, however, that his assignment to Japan will come through eventually.

Another top post in the Department to be filled is the chairmanship of the Policy Planning Council. That post has just been vacated by Walt W. Rostow, who moved to the White House to assume part of the duties performed by McGeorge Bundy, who recently resigned.

A lesser office also vacant at State is the post of Administrator of the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, vacated by Abba P. Schwartz who resigned when confronted

See SHIFT, A8, Col. 3

SHIFT--From A1

Shifts Seen In State Department

with a decision that would have reorganized that bureau.

The reorganization plan, however, is now up in the air.

There is no evidence that any of the top-level changes that have taken place or that are anticipated involve basic policy differences. On the contrary, the anticipated departure of Ball is attributed, as was Mann's resignation, to general weariness from following an exhausting pace for too long a time.

Five years in high office under the nuclear-age pace of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations is simply wearing out many top officials. Ball, who is 56 and a prominent lawyer with national and international interests, entered the State Department as Under Secretary for Economic Affairs on Jan. 30, 1961. He became Under Secretary on Nov. 29, 1964, replacing Chester Bowles.

Speculation inescapably also has increased about how long Secretary of State Dean Rusk will physically be able

to carry the burdens of his present post, that began on Jan. 21, 1961.

Rusk is admirably spoken of throughout the Administration as "the iron man." With Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, who has similar durability, Rusk shares the heaviest burdens in the President's Cabinet.

Rusk Burden Heaviest

But the weight on Rusk is heavier than on all others of Secretarial rank, mentally and physically. Some insiders compare the task to that of the Presidency itself. In addition to an immense burden of official and social diplomatic duties, Rusk also follows a bruising schedule of world travel.

Rusk right now is having what for him amounts to a rare respite; he has been home in bed for two days with a cold and laryngitis.

While his physical bulk usually conceals it, intimates say that the 57-year-old Rusk is often "bone weary" but drives himself at a regular seven-day-a-week level out of

supreme loyalty to his job.

President Johnson has showered Rusk with probably more public encomiums than any Secretary of State ever has received; but many observers believe it to be physically impossible for Rusk to remain at his post for a prolonged period of time.

Possible Rusk Successors

There have been recurrent reports that when Rusk's departure comes, President Johnson will contemplate replacing him with Arthur J. Goldberg, United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Now another line of speculation has turned up in official circles.

It is a report that Washington attorney Clark J. Clifford, a consultant to both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations, may be named to succeed Ball, and later, to replace Rusk.

Clifford is presently chairman of a nine-member Foreign Intelligence Committee, created by the late President Kennedy, after the Bay of Pigs debacle, to serve as a check-point for operations in the work of gathering foreign intelligence.