

# Behind Shift: Push for Arms Pact

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 3—Although President Ford treated the subject of détente cautiously tonight, the dramatic personnel shifts he announced appeared to signal a strengthened determination to strike a new strategic arms agreement with the Soviet Union. Without this accord, the policy of détente would be in serious jeopardy.

In his news conference, Mr. Ford mixed a desire for improved Soviet relations with renewed pledges for a strong national defense, and said that while he wanted a new arms accord, he was not negotiating with Moscow under any "time pressure."

Mr. Ford refused to confirm this, but the dismissal of Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger seemed a victory of sorts for Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's efforts to seek accommodation with the Russians in the nuclear arms area. An unintended consequence of the upheaval may be to give additional arguments to the conservative critics of détente who have been unhappy for some time with Mr. Kissinger.

Senator Henry M. Jackson, a leading "anti-détente" in Washington, bitterly assailed Mr. Schlesinger's removal as a virtual capitulation to the Russians since he was the best-known Administration skeptic about détente. The Washington Democrat's voice was not alone.

On the other hand, some advocates of arms control who have been unhappy with the tough negotiating demands of the Pentagon and Mr. Schlesinger tended to see his replacement as an encouraging sign for an accord with Moscow limiting offensive strategic arms.

Insiders insisted that Mr. Schlesinger's dismissal was not due to differences over détente alone and that it would be wrong to attach such a policy motivation to it. As so often happens, however, the perception may be as important as the reality.

If the Kremlin views the dismissal as a forerunner of new concessions on arms control, it may adopt a harder line, waiting for the United States to soften its position.

Likewise, if the Chinese discern a weakening of American resolve toward Moscow, they may lose interest in better relations; for the Chinese the ties with Washington were important mainly to counter the Russians.

The shifts — the directorship of the Central Intelligence Agency and Mr. Kissinger's post as national security adviser to the President were also involved — will undoubtedly be scrutinized in every foreign office. The Western Europeans, always quick to doubt the American commitment, will question anew Washington's readiness to keep its forces at full strength on the Continent; the Japanese and the South Koreans will inquire about the

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defense implications; the Israelis will ask if Mr. Kissinger will have a freer hand to put pressure on them for further withdrawals from occupied territory.

Mr. Ford will probably have to do what is usually done when top policy-makers are abruptly removed: stress that basic policy remains unaffected.

The timing of Mr. Schlesinger's dismissal has exceptional relevance to relations with the Soviet Union, coming when questions have been raised here whether it is possible to achieve a new strategic arms accord in time to stave off major new escalation of the arms race.

The President and Leonid I. Brezhnev, the Soviet Communist party leader, agreed a year ago in Vladivostok on the framework for a 10-year accord putting a limit of 2,400 on the number of each side's strategic delivery vehicles—bombers and missiles—1,320 of which could have multiple warheads.

The details of the accord were to be negotiated and the agreement signed when Mr. Brezhnev visited Washington. His visit was planned for last June, then slipped to July, then to September, to October, to December; now officials are

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Mr. Kissinger has asserted that 90 per cent of the agreement has been negotiated, but the remaining 10 per cent has been hard to conclude, in part because of differences between Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Schlesinger.

The Pentagon insisted that a new Soviet strategic bomber, known in the West as the Backfire, be included in the 2,400 total and that none of the new American cruise missiles—low-flying subsonic vehicles—be included.

The Russians have taken the opposite view: no Backfires and all the cruise missiles, which can be fired from vessels at sea.

Mr. Kissinger was known to feel that the Pentagon was too rigid on both weapons systems, and the latest American position, presented to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei A. Gromyko, in September, was said to be a result of hard bargaining between Mr. Kissinger and Mr. Schlesinger. The Russians have not responded.

Mr. Ford has indicated that he supports Mr. Kissinger's approach, and the Russians may well view the appointment of Donald H. Rumsfeld to the Pentagon as a victory for détente.

Since Senator Jackson and others who share his views, among them the retired Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., will regard any deal with the Russians now as a result of compromise, President Ford will probably have more trouble getting Congressional approval than if Mr. Schlesinger had remained and given his support.

Mr. Kissinger's differences with Mr. Schlesinger went beyond the strategic arms talks. In recent months there has been a constant stream of press reports of their disputes. The Pentagon made it clear after Mr. Kissinger's return from the Middle East in September that its officials had not been informed in detail about the Sinai negotiations.

In particular, Pentagon officials maintained that they were not consulted about Mr. Kissinger's pledges to give sympathetic consideration to supplying the Pershing missile to Israel. That led Mr. Kissinger to charge publicly that the Pentagon knew of Israel's interest in the Pershing, a ground-to-ground battlefield-support weapon, since August 1974. He accused defense officials of making statements in the press that they never raised in the Government.