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STRATEGY AT BASE
OF FORD SHAKEUP

President Says He Wanted
'a Team That Was My Team'
—Leak Imperiled Plans

By LESLIE H. GELB

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3—The strategy behind Vice President Rockefeller's withdrawal, the dismissal of Defense Secretary James R. Schlesinger and other possible moves yet to come is to put a distinct Ford imprimatur on his Administration's domestic and foreign policies, Administration sources said today.

As Mr. Ford said at his news conference tonight, "I wanted a team that was my team."

The first move was to be the announcement of Mr. Rockefeller's decision not to be Mr. Ford's running mate, a move planned for and made public today, but agreed on between the Vice President and Mr. Ford about two weeks ago. This, the officials said, was to strengthen Mr. Ford's conservative credentials on domestic policy.

The second move—the removal of Mr. Schlesinger and William P. Colby, Director of Central Intelligence, along with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger's relinquishing of his job as national security adviser

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to the President—had been scheduled to be announced next Wednesday. This, the officials maintained, was to evoke the sense of a Ford foreign policy, a policy that would continue détente with the Soviet Union.

But this carefully planned scenario went awry yesterday when the dismissals and switches were "leaked" prematurely to the press. In the absence of the Rockefeller announcement, the officials said, the leaks gave off highly undesirable and conflicting signals.

Mainly, it created the impression of Mr. Kissinger's having used the prospect of losing his National Security Council post to stage a counter-coup against his bureaucratic rivals.

Kissinger As Survivor

But the officials portrayed Mr. Kissinger as more the survivor of a sweep than its author, surviving because of the President's respect for his abilities, his popularity in the country, and Mr. Ford's basic agreement with his Secretary's policy of détente with the Soviet Union.

As the officials explained it, the strategy entailed taking the following steps:

¶Making it clear to Mr. Rockefeller that it would be best if he removed his name from consideration as Mr. Ford's running mate. Mr. Rockefeller has been the main source of tension between the White House and such party conservatives as former Gov. Ronald Reagan of California. Mr. Rockefeller's withdrawal, along with conservative stances on a number of domestic issues, was presumed to put Mr. Ford in a better position in the New Hampshire and Florida primaries next March—primaries the White House now fears the President might lose.

¶Dismissing Mr. Schlesinger now, before the critical stage on the strategic arms limitation

talks in the next few weeks, when Moscow is scheduled to respond to the latest American proposal. The move, then, was not so much to endorse Mr. Kissinger as it was to make clear that future policy on détente is Mr. Ford's and is supported throughout his administration. Détente is also a policy that gives Mr. Ford support from political moderates.

¶Taking away Mr. Kissinger's role in the National Security Council. This would serve the dual purpose of demonstrating that the Secretary of State did not have a complete stranglehold on foreign policy decisions, and paradoxically, it was hoped, make it easier for Mr. Kissinger to function. Thus, it would somewhat diffuse the pressures that have been building against the Secretary. And the loss to Mr. Kissinger's prestige would be mitigated by naming his deputy in the National Security Council, Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft, as Mr. Kissinger's replacement.

¶Coupling the dismissal of Mr. Colby with the Schlesinger and Kissinger moves to limit the general fallout of all the changes. Mr. Colby knew that his days were numbered because of the feeling in the White House and the State Department that he was not doing a good job containing the Congressional investigations of the intelligence community. A new face, in his case George Bush, now head of the American liaison office in Peking, would be able to go to Congress and ask for a grace period before pressing their investigations further.

It was also learned today that Lieut. Gen. Daniel O. Graham, director of the defense intelligence agency, had resigned.

Siding With Schlesinger

A number of these men had been siding with Mr. Schlesinger against Mr. Kissinger in the debate over the détente policy.

White House officials and others familiar with the deliberations said that the details of all of these moves were set only last week, but the general idea went back to the days of the transition from the Nixon Administration to the Ford Administration.

At that time, Mr. Ford's transition groups, consisting of former Gov. William W. Scranton of Pennsylvania, Donald Rumsfeld, now White House chief of staff; John O. Marsh Jr., now counselor to the President; Senator Robert R. Griffin, Republican of Michigan, and, informally, Melvin R. Laird, a former Secretary of Defense, recommended that Mr. Ford immediately remove the Nixon men from the Government and establish himself in his own right.

One key White House official said:

"I got the feeling that the President decided in August of last year that there would be no changes in the foreign policy or national security area. He set about changing the White House on the domestic side. I was absolutely sure he'd make a judgment that the window was closed, that the Cabinet was set.

"Apparently, he came to the conclusion that he had been long enough now and that there were things he wanted to do."

Officials said that the Presi-

dent's hand was forced yesterday by the premature leaks on the dismissal of Mr. Schlesinger and Mr. Colby. The intention had been to have the Rockefeller announcement today and the statement on the dismissals on Wednesday.

At this point, the officials said that Mr. Ford was compelled to break the news to Mr. Colby and Secretary Schlesinger yesterday morning and in a hasty and messy way. The President's hand, they said, was also called somewhat early on making the final decisions on their replacements — Mr. Bush and Mr. Rumsfeld.

In last week's maneuvering, Secretary Kissinger and Mr. Rumsfeld did well for themselves, the officials said. Mr. Kissinger turned aside Mr. Ford's plan to replace him at the National Security Council with Mr. Marsh. Instead, the Secretary got the President to agree to General Scowcroft. The judgment was that Mr. Marsh would have been more independent of Mr. Kissinger than the general.

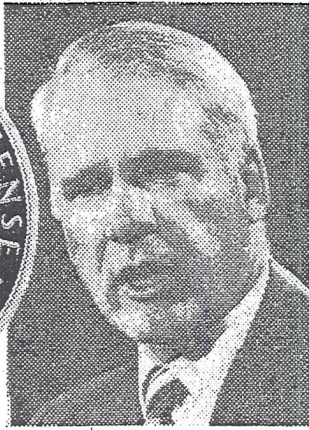
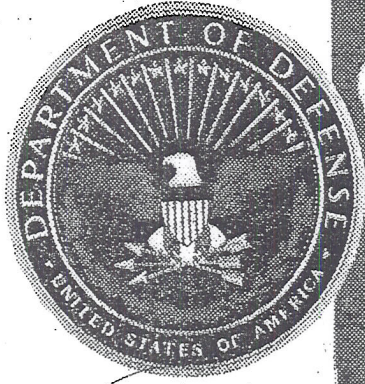
A Plus for Rumsfeld

A senior official close to the White House said he saw the events of the last 24 hours as a plus for Mr. Rumsfeld.

"Everybody is reading this as a Kissinger win," the official said, "but Bush is Don Rumsfeld's friend and Rumsfeld now has hardware, a base from which to work, and he still has entree at the White House."

The official contended that Mr. Rumsfeld had "done a Kissinger," that is, had gone to the Cabinet and kept his power in the White House. And the official said that Richard Cheney, Mr. Rumsfeld's present deputy and presumed successor, is in "Don's image."

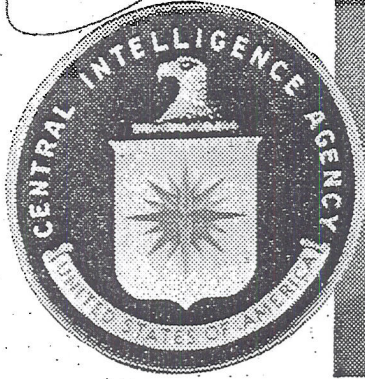
General Scowcroft, he continued, is "his own man" and "he's no mere toad," and Mr. Kissinger had a lot of power in the White House.



United Press International, Associated Press

James R. Schlesinger, left, who was dismissed as Secretary of Defense, and Donald H. Rumsfeld, the White House chief of staff who has been named to replace him.

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William E. Colby, left, the former Director of Central Intelligence, and George Bush, the head of the American liaison office in China, who will be nominated to post.

The New York Times
Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, and Lieut. Gen. Brent Scowcroft who has been named to succeed Mr. Kissinger as head of the National Security Council. General Scowcroft had been Mr. Kissinger's deputy as security adviser.

