

SF Examiner

Some cabinet

Top posts may go to Laird, Shultz

By Robert Young
Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON — Gerald Ford's cautious, methodical nature and his own words in advance of assuming the presidency make it almost a certainty that he will retain the Nixon cabinet for some time, perhaps for months.

Henry Kissinger already has been publicly assured of continuing as secretary of state for the foreseeable future. Ford associates said they expected the new chief executive to move slowly and carefully in picking his own cabinet and, accordingly, replacement of Nixon appointees will be gradual.

Ford indicated policy and program continuity recently, while he was still vice president, with the statement that inflation and dealing with near-term and long-range energy shortages would be the two paramount domestic problems in any administration he headed — the same problems to which the Nixon administration was giving priority.

Ford endorsed the Nixon administration's tight money policy for curbing inflation. Speaking in general terms of what could be expected should he become president, he said:

"I don't think there would be a revolutionary change in any policy, certainly not on foreign policy; shades of dif-

ference on domestic, but nothing drastic or dramatic."

Last spring, Ford was quoted as saying he had reservations about Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger. But later, Ford said he regarded Schlesinger highly. It appeared that Ford's reported lukewarm attitude toward Schlesinger as defense secretary (the cabinet post formerly held by Melvin Laird, one of Ford's most influential associates) was based not on policy differences, but on the then-vice president's opinion that Schlesinger did not know how to deal with Congress effectively.

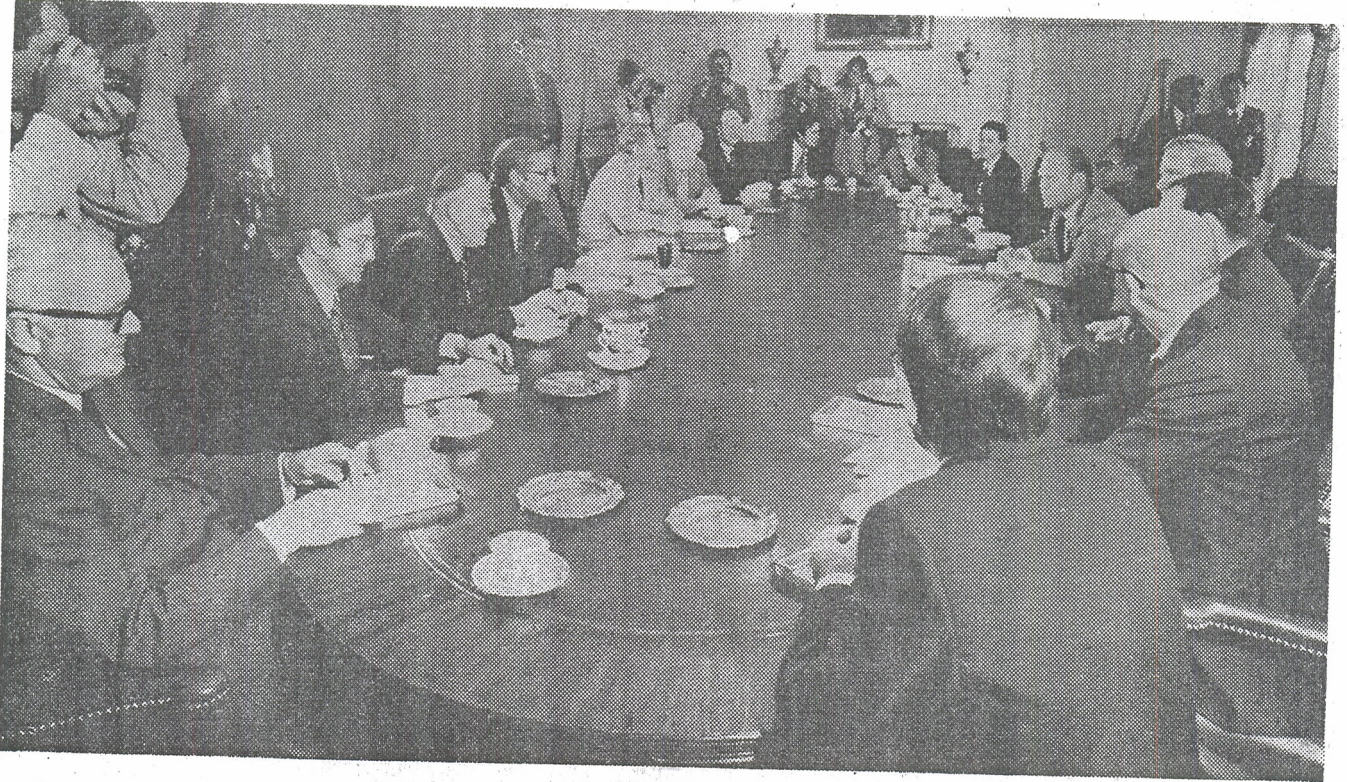
Schlesinger is expected to continue as defense secretary for some time in the face of speculation that President Ford considers Laird the best prospect for defense secretary in the new cabinet to be formed in the months ahead. The betting now is that Ford will offer Laird, a trusted and valued adviser since their days in the House, a top White House post.

Ford has indicated privately he wants George Schultz, labor secretary then treasury secretary and economic "czar" in the Nixon cabinet, to take a key post in the Ford administration.

Simon also is in de facto charge of energy policy and is well-regarded for having

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changes may come slowly



—Examiner Photo

President Ford and his cabinet at a meeting yesterday. Clockwise, starting at left, are: economic adviser Kenneth Rush; HUD Secretary James Lynn; Earl Butz, agriculture; William Simon, treasury; Atty. Gen. William Saxbe; Peter Brennan, labor; Roy Ash, budget; George Bush, chairman of the Republican National Committee; Dean Burch, counselor; HEW Secretary Caspar Weinberger; Rogers C. B. Morton, interior; Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the President; James Schlesinger, defense; Fred Dent, commerce; Claude Brinegar, transportation, and U.N. Ambassador John Scali.

done an effective job as federal energy administrator dealing with last winter's energy crisis.

President Ford also has expressed a wish to keep Interior Secretary Rogers Morton in his cabinet. Morton, who served in the House with Ford and is experienced in dealing with Congress, has said he wants to continue as interior secretary.

Two other Nixon cabinet members, Atty. Gen. William Saxbe and Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz, are likely to remain for an ex-

tended period in the Ford administration, according to associates of the new President.

They acknowledge that in view of Ford's goal of chart-

ing a course to rebuild public and congressional confidence in the aftermath of the wrenching national experience of the Watergate scandal, impeachment proceedings, and the first resig-

nation of a president in American history, he would be reluctant to move with any speed in the appointment of a new attorney general.