

Europeans React to the Dismissal

NATO Reported to Feel It Is Losing Strong Ally

By BERNARD WEINRADE NOV 4 1975

Special to The New York Times

LONDON, Nov. 3—European nations reacted with surprise and uneasiness today to news of President Ford's dismissal of Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger.

Mr. Schlesinger was a highly respected figure at headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the initial reaction of some officials was that the organization had lost a valuable and tough ally.

One NATO official in Brussels said of Mr. Schlesinger, "He knew his stuff."

In Bonn, West Germany's Defense Minister, Georg Leber, was described by an aide as "surprised," and "quite stricken." Mr. Leber had been a leading European exponent of Mr. Schlesinger's views about the importance of maintaining a high level of defense spending and of not sacrificing preparedness for detente.

British Are Silent

British officials declined to discuss the American reshuffle of national security posts.

The other reported moves by President Ford—the dismissal of William E. Colby as Director of Central Intelligence, and the removal of Secretary of State Kissinger from his post as the national security adviser in the White House—were viewed largely as domestic decisions. It was Mr. Schlesinger's ouster that stirred the most ripples.

A major Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, published in Oslo, said in a leading article titled "Confidence in Kissinger," that President Ford had made a decision that would have an impact on Soviet-American relations.

"The Communist leaders in Moscow must feel happy about the removal of a Secretary of Defense whom they accuse of using all means to try to close the road toward closer cooperation between the Soviet Union and the U.S.," the newspaper said. "It looks as if Mr. Ford is willing to follow the recommendations of his Secretary of State and take certain risks in order to reach a SALT [Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] agreement with the Soviet Union."

Initial European reaction was

mutated, even confused, because the news of Mr. Schlesinger's dismissal broke too late to make the morning editions of many newspapers. The Government shake-up, however, was the lead item in the radio news this morning in Britain. Then afternoon newspapers here, and across Europe, carried lengthy articles about it.

The thrust of the articles was that Mr. Schlesinger, a hard-liner on detente, had been defeated by Mr. Kissinger. The front page of *Le Monde* in Paris this afternoon spoke of "a success for the Secretary of State, whose detente policy for many months had run into the reservations, if not the outright hostility, of the Defense Secretary and the Pentagon."

The conservative Rome daily *Il Tempo* said: "The President seems to be giving a new impulse to foreign policy, continuing on the road to detente. Italian officials made no comment on the dismissal."

It appeared that NATO officials were most concerned. Mr. Schlesinger was viewed as an authoritative strategist and analyst who was, in the word of one Brussels source, "very tough, said what was on his mind and made decisions quickly."

"The people here say they're going to Miss Schlesinger," said the source.

In Brussels, Mr. Schlesinger pressed two key issues: arms standardization, or closer links between NATO nations in buying and manufacturing weapons; and the maintenance of troop levels, despite effort by Italy, Britain and the Netherlands to cut back.

Discussing Mr. Schlesinger's replacement, Donald H. Rumsfeld, the White House chief of staff, some NATO officials expressed fears that he lacked the muscle of the outgoing Defense Secretary. Mr. Rumsfeld had formerly served as United States representative at NATO.

Alliance officials said privately today that Mr. Rumsfeld seemed a "question mark," in terms of policy. He was remembered as a novice on foreign affairs and officials said "some slippage" was inevitable in Mr. Schlesinger's policies.

TIMES, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1975

of Schlesinger With

Surprise and Uneasiness