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VITAL POSTS OPEN UNDER PRESIDENT

Cabinet Filled, but Important
Decisions Still Remain

By LINDA CHARLTON

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10 — President Nixon has filled his second-term Cabinet, barring confirmation rattles, and public interest in the "new" Nixon Administration has diminished, but there are still significant decisions to be made about people and positions below the Cabinet level.

There are five new faces in the new Cabinet, five Cabinet officers staying on in the same positions, and another face that is new in the sense that the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, defined the term—"faces are new when they assume different responsibilities."

This is Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Elliot L. Richardson, who has been nominated to replace Melvin R. Laird as Secretary of Defense.

Wholesale Housecleanings

Below this level, however, wholesale housecleanings are already under way in many departments and agencies, and will continue as the decisions are made about which resignations will be accepted.

At the State Department, for example, there are at least nine vacant embassies to be filled, some of them—in France, Panama, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—of importance. In addition, a number of the pro-

forma resignations submitted by all Ambassadors were in earnest, and will be accepted. Among such resignations are those of the Ambassadors to the Soviet Union and Israel.

Of the department's Assistant Secretaries, some, such as Joseph J. Sisco, Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, are expected to be asked to stay where they are. Others, such as Marshall Green, Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, and Charles A. Meyer, Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, are reported likely to be moving into other jobs.

Rumors About Bush

George Bush, the head of the United States delegation to the United Nations, is rumored to be a likely replacement for Senator Robert J. Dole of Kansas as head of the National Republican Committee, although Senator Dole may stay on for a few months to avert the impression that he is being made a scapegoat for the disappointing outcome of the Congressional elections.

Other Assistant Secretary posts still open include one at the Department of Defense.

This position is believed likely to go to William P. Clements Jr., a Texas oil-drilling executive whose hard-line attitudes toward the Soviet Union recommended him as a balancing factor against Mr. Richardson's more moderate views.

Whether the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency will have new directors is still unresolved publicly, and still the object of much speculation.

Richard A. Helms, the present C.I.A. chief, has been reported to be on the way out because of displeasure—particularly from Henry A. Kissinger, Mr. Nixon's assistant for national security affairs, and his staff—about a lack of warning of the North Vietnamese offensive last April.

And L. Patrick Gray 3d, who has been the F.B.I.'s acting director since J. Edgar Hoover's death, has reportedly been in disfavor since he ordered F.B.I. agents to shoot out the tires of a hijacked plane.

Several persons have been rumored as likely replacements for Mr. Helms, but James R. Schlesinger, the head of the Atomic Energy Commission, remains the favorite.