

Schlesinger

Senate OKs New Defense Chief

Washington

The Senate unanimously approved yesterday the nomination of James R. Schlesinger, former head of the Atomic Energy Commission and Central Intelligence Agency, as President Nixon's third Secretary of Defense.

Schlesinger replaces Elliot L. Richardson, tapped by the President to head the Justice Department after Richard G. Kleindienst left office as the Watergate scandal touched his "friends."

The Senate gave its 91 to 0 approval after Senator William Proxmire (Dem.-Wis.) withdrew his objection to the nomination because of Schlesinger's testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee supporting the continued bombing of Cambodia and possible renewal of the air war in Vietnam.

POLICY

Senator Stuart Symington (Dem. - Mo.), acting chairman of the armed services panel, said it would have been "very difficult" for Schlesinger to take any other stand on the bombing, since it reflected administration policy.

Symington described Schlesinger as an "independent and courageous" administrator with the potential of becoming "a really great secretary if he uses his own judgment in these matters." The new secretary is an authority on weapons systems and their financing.

Proxmire said he still was disturbed by Schlesinger's views on U.S. policy in Indochina, but that he had decided to vote for confirmation because of his general qualifications.

In written question-and-answer testimony submitted to Proxmire, Schlesinger explained: "In general the



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JAMES R. SCHLESINGER
Unanimous approval

only circumstances in which I could foresee any possibility of renewed U.S. bombing of North Vietnam would be major aggressive actions by the North Vietnamese which would threaten South Vietnam in obvious violation of the Paris agreements.

"I do not believe that such circumstances will arise."

BUDGET

Schlesinger, 44, joined the government in 1969 as assistant director of the budget bureau, where he built a reputation as a cutter of spending for weapons systems.

He headed the AEC from Aug. 10, 1971, until his appointment as CIA director last December 21.

Schlesinger is a Harvard graduate, and was a professor of social sciences at the University of Virginia between 1955 and 1963 before joining the Rand Corp. where he was a weapons analyst for six years.

Melvin R. Laird, a former congressman from Wisconsin and now a special aide to the President, was defense chief during Mr. Nixon's first term.

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