

Schlesinger Denial In Pentagon Furor

Washington

Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger said yesterday "there were clearly improprieties" in the 1971 transmission of White House documents to the military chiefs. However, he denied there was a spy ring.

"I think the thing has been blown out of all context," Schlesinger said at a news conference.

Saying his investigation has turned up no evidence of any illegal actions, the Pentagon chief added that "I don't think that there was a spy ring or a 'Seven Days in May' exaggeration there." In the novel "Seven Days in May" members of the Joint Chiefs staff plotted to seize control of the government.

Schlesinger indicated he has gone about as far as he intends to go now in investigating the 1971 episode. He gave Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, a vote of confidence even while saying "It is clear that Admiral Moorer was less than fully alert" to the fact that he was getting unauthorized material from the National Security Council files.

Schlesinger disclosed that his top aide had been denied access to a tape recording of an interrogation by a member of the White House "plumbers" of Rear Admiral Robert O. Welander, who headed the Joint Chiefs staff



AP Wirephoto

JAMES SCHLESINGER
Some 'improprieties'

liaison office at the White House.

The defense secretary said J. Fred Buzhardt, President Nixon's counsel, told Schlesinger's aide that the tape would not be available. Schlesinger said "It was not clear to me whether it was impounded" in connection with court proceedings.

In any event, Schlesinger indicated he had little regard for the plumbers, a small group set up in the White House to plug news leaks.

"I'm inclined to doubt the plumbers had the answer," Schlesinger said.

At another point in the long news conference, Schle-

singer attempted to clarify his recent assertion of a change in the nation's nuclear targeting doctrine designed to widen the President's choices for responding to a possible Soviet nuclear threat.

Schlesinger stressed that the new approach "does not mean we are pointing missiles away from cities at military targets" but indicated the United States is broadening the number of military targets on the deterrent list. Thus, the President could pick and choose to suit the nature of the threat and avoid, if possible, all-out nuclear war.

Perhaps to reassure the Russians, Schlesinger said, "We are not seeking to achieve a major counterforce capability." In the jargon of the nuclear strategist, counterforce involves disarming an opponent by a surprise first attack.

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