

A Discreet Nominee

James Rodney Schlesinger

CIA

By LINDA CHARLTON DEC 22 1972

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 21— James Rodney Schlesinger, whose expected nomination as the new head of the Central Intelligence Agency was announced by the White House today, received considerable public attention as the Atomic Energy Commission chairman who took his wife and two of his children along to witness the controversial detonation of a hydrogen bomb in the Aleu-

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tion Islands. But that incident, in November, 1971, about four months after he became chairman of the commission, was one of the less startling actions of his tenure.

Faced with trying to reconcile the opposing interests of conservationists and advocates of nuclear energy, Mr. Schlesinger began by indicating that he was no longer going to take the traditional A.E.C. position of championing the rights of nuclear energy above all others, including those of citizens.

This he did by deciding, on taking office, not to appeal a Federal court decision requiring the commission to be responsive to questions on the location of nuclear power plants and their effects on the environment.

Public Interest Stressed

Not long after this, he told representatives of the nuclear industry that the commission "exists to serve the public interest," not that of the industry.

During his 17 months as chairman of the commission, he has also undertaken a drastic reorganization of its structure—cutting back on high-level staff and creating a new "assistant general manager for environmental and safety affairs."

While the 43-year-old Mr. Schlesinger has made no secret of his advocacy of nuclear energy as a power source, he says that the skeptics have a right to be heard.

In a magazine interview, he urged "getting away from the attitude, to wit, that atoms are beautiful.

"Historically, this attitude is understandable," he said. "But, in fact, atoms may or may not be useful, depending on the circumstances."

He urged the commission

to broaden its concern to take in the entire energy area.

Before heading the commission, Mr. Schlesinger was assistant director of the Office of Management and Budget. He joined the Nixon Administration in 1969 after working for the Rand Corporation as director of strategic studies. During his years at Rand, he was a consultant on atomic energy to the Budget Bureau and directed a nuclear-proliferation study commissioned by the Federal Government.

Born in New York

Mr. Schlesinger was born in New York on Feb. 15, 1929. He graduated summa cum laude and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

He also won a prize of \$2,400 that underwrote a year's travel in western Europe and parts of Africa and Asia. "I learned that the world was a very complicated place," he said, "and that the narrow discipline of economics gave a narrow insight into the social life of man."

He returned to Harvard for his master's and doctorate degrees and in 1954 married Rachel Mellinger, who was then at Radcliffe. They have four sons and four daughters and live in Alexandria, Va.

They moved on to the University of Virginia, where Mr. Schlesinger taught economics for six years except for a six-month leave of absence to teach at the Naval War College in Newport, R. I. He wrote a book, "The Political Economy of National Security" and it was this that attracted the attention of, and a job offer from the Rand Corporation.

Mr. Schlesinger is described as an unpretentious, plain-living man who wears off-the-bargain-rack suits, drives a retirement-age car, enjoys bird-watching and reading Lutheran Theology and writes his own policy speeches.

For all his articulateness, the normally frank Mr. Schlesinger has demonstrated recently that he can keep his mouth shut. Speculation that he would be named to the intelligence agency has been swirling through Washington since the beginning of the month, but he has been as discreet as any C.I.A. operative of fact or fiction.