

Johnson Accepts Schwartz's Resignation

From Bureau Being Eliminated

By RICHARD EDER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 7—The White House announced today that it had accepted the resignation of Abba P. Schwartz, a high-ranking State Department official.

Mr. Schwartz, a successful proponent of liberal immigration and visa policies and an advocate of expanded East-West contacts, was told Friday by Secretary of State Dean Rusk that a planned reorganization would eliminate the Bureau of Security and Consular Affairs, which he headed.

The disclosure came after Mr. Schwartz, who had returned the previous day from Europe, had heard through a friend about the reorganization and had asked Under Secretary of State George W. Ball and Mr. Rusk about it.

According to the deputy White House press secretary, Robert H. Flemming, the reorganization had been proposed to the President by Mr. Rusk six months ago. Why Mr. Schwartz, whose status is that of an Assistant Secretary of State, was kept in the dark all this time was not clear.

No Explanation Given

Robert J. McCloskey, chief of press relations for the State Department, said he could offer no explanation of this point. Mr. McCloskey had earlier cited the official explanation for the reorganization: that it was an economy measure responding to a presidentially inspired, Governmentwide effort, and that it would save about \$200,000 a year.

The White House's handling of the resignation appeared to

indicate considerable displeasure over its disclosure in today's New York Times and in later editions of other newspapers. Instead of responding to Mr. Schwartz's letter with one of his own, President Johnson simply accepted the resignation and sent the letter back to the State Department "for action."

Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, who heads a Senate subcommittee concerned with refugee problems—which was also a concern of Mr. Schwartz's bureau—said that he was considering holding a hearing on the reorganization. He praised Mr. Schwartz as "a direct-action liberal public servant."

It is possible that a Senate subcommittee on Government operations, headed by Abraham A. Ribicoff, Democrat of Connecticut, will also hold hearings on the reorganization.

Declines to Comment

Mr. Schwartz, who spent today in his office receiving numerous calls from friends, was bitter about the manner of his dismissal and declined to comment for publication about it.

Other State Department officials, however, expressed outrage over his treatment. Some were concerned that there would be a reversal of the liberal policy of travel between Communist countries and the United States that Mr. Schwartz was cautiously promoting.

There were a number of bitter references to William J. Crockett, Deputy Under Secretary of State for Administration, and to Marvin Watson, a White House assistant, who is reported by some officials to have worked the reorganization out with Mr. Crockett.

Mr. Crockett is unpopular with many Foreign Service officers, who believe that his efforts to apply business management methods to the State Department are a threat to its professional integrity. He has opposed some of the liberal passport policies suggested by Mr. Schwartz.

A proposal for allowing United States scholars and students to visit Cuba, which was approved by Mr. Schwartz and by the department's Latin-American and legal bureaus a year and a half ago, was dropped after Mr. Crockett opposed it, it was learned.

Some officials expressed the fear that the open-door policy, introduced under Mr. Schwartz, of allowing visits by distinguished foreign visitors with Communist backgrounds, would be halted.

Another concern, expressed urgently by some officials, was that Mr. Schwartz's indirect contacts with the North Vietnamese through the International Red Cross—to which he has been a particularly active United States representative—would be lost. There have been hopes that in some fashion the Red Cross would be able to increase its ability to assist United States prisoners now held in North Vietnam.

Under the reorganization, the offices of the bureau dealing with passport, visa and special consular problems will come directly under Mr. Crockett. Under the former arrangement, although the bureau was theoretically under Mr. Crockett, Mr. Schwartz, because of his rank, usually dealt directly with Mr. Rusk or Mr. Ball.

The office dealing with refugee problems is expected to be transferred to the Bureau of International Organization affairs.