

TALK ON BETWEEN SCHLESINGER AND ZUMWALT
About 23 October 1974

1. Schlesinger stated that he had just come off of television in which he made the point that fat in the Defense Department was a wasting disease - there wasn't any anymore.
2. He said that there seems to be general indifference to the Navy's problems on the Hill.
3. He had read the Stennis speech to which I had referred him in another conversation. He said that he found it Pollyannish, that it didn't look to the future. He said that he plans to go see Stennis in Mississippi and work on him with regard to NATO and also with regard to the unsatisfactory maritime balance.
4. He said next year he expects to be the year of the Navy and he intends to get on it and hit it hard.
5. He said that he has had no luck with regard to stemming the Rickover tide, rather just the opposite. He emphasized that the Navy has got to make the patrol frigate program work; it has got to keep the 963 destroyers flowing. He had thought that he had this on track but has found the whole problem in despair since inflation has come along.

6. He said that the Defense Department didn't do all that badly in the '75 budget but that the Navy got badly clipped.
7. I said that I thought that some of this was Stennis' effort to be punitive because I had refused to bail out Litton. Schlesinger agreed.
8. I asked him if Rumsfeld was giving him support yet and Schlesinger said he had not yet had a chance to develop this support. He said that Kissinger is still steam-rolling and is hard to keep in check. I reported that everybody has it that only Schlesinger can be a counter to Kissinger with regard to the Presidential ear, and asked him whether he thought he had done enough. Schlesinger said that he had spoken up at a few NSC meetings and felt that it had some effect. I asked him what about the private meetings with the President and he didn't seem to feel he had done particularly well there. I told him that Paul Nitze was continuing to hit hard the need for support of Schlesinger's views in a sophisticated way. Schlesinger said he didn't need sophisticated support, he needed blunt support at this time. He asked why Nitze and Zumwalt don't try to build an external organization, for example, a committee for the strong national defense

to try to develop popular support. He went on to say we're getting very bad headlines, for example, recent polls over suggested the showing that 44% want to cut defense whereas the fact of the matter was that many more than 44% think we're doing about right or not enough.

Schlesinger suggested that we get organizations like AFL-CIO, CO-ED and David Rockefeller to help. He said he was beginning to despair that we could stop the steam-roller effort to take us right out of the competition with the Soviets.

8. I pointed out again that SEC DEF has to carry the primary ball. SEC DEF said that Paul Wineke carry only the McGoverns and Symingtons - we've got a fiscal drag on Defense. He urge me to talk to Paul Nitze and to start trying to get in touch with younger people. He pointed out how badly LaRoche, that is, how sloppy his work is and yet it seems to be used by a lot of people. He said that the Navy is going to go even below those 500 ships that I used to talk about and go in to the 400's in the year ahead.