

JULY 15, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

NOTICE TO THE PRESS

The President went into Secretary Schlesinger's office at 11:15 a. m. and met with the Secretary, Deputy Secretary Clements, OMB Director Jim Lynn, OMB Deputy Director Paul O'Neill, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Brown, and General Brent Scowcroft. The meeting lasted 15 minutes. It was mainly an overview of the Department's objectives and problems with particular emphasis on the need to provide management incentives within the Department.

The Secretary pointed out that the Department employed some 3 million people including military and civilian and that he had given the service departments the assurance that "where you find waste and correct it, we are prepared to turn this into combat troops and equipment within your department."

At 11:32 a. m. the President went into a large conference room. Seated at the table with him were: Director Lynn, General Brown, Secretary of the Navy Middendorf, Chief of Naval Operations Holloway, Marine General Wilson, Deputy Director OMB Paul O'Neill, General Scowcroft, Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Jones, Secretary of the Air Force Mac Lucas, General Kerwin, Acting Secretary of the Army Augustine, Deputy Secretary of Defense Clements and Secretary Schlesinger. There were some 42 other people also in the room but not at the table.

Secretary Schlesinger welcomed the President as "the real Chairman of the Armed Forces Council." The President said he was delighted to have the opportunity to come back to the Pentagon and to meet with the Secretary and his associates. He pointed out that he had worked for many years on the appropriations committee and had an intimate knowledge of the problems and successes of the Department of Defense. He stated that the Department of Defense had "more people, more facilities, more real responsibility for the security of our Nation than any other Department. Efficient management of these people and resources makes all of us feel more secure.

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Secretary Schlesinger then gave the policy framework under which the objectives had been created. Secretary pointed out that deterrence had been the Department's major objectives. That they try to provide to the President multiple conventional options, maintain a high readiness of forces with emphasis on mobility and provide hedges against uncertainties in the future.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Clements then explained the management initiatives system in effect at the Pentagon. The President asked about regular meetings and reports to follow up on the original formulation of the systems and he was assured that these take place regularly.

The President and Secretary Schlesinger discussed the need for effective use of bases in quantity and quality and finally the discussion concluded on reserve problems and effectiveness and recruitment and training of the regular forces. The President closed with an emphasis on the great responsibility of the Defense Department for the security of the Nation and the need for continued effective management of their resources. He pointed out that in addition to the general public there were 3 million lives within the Department itself that are affected by management decisions.

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