

***"Politics represents the art of calculated cheating."  
—James Schlesinger, 1967***

## The truth about James Rodney Schlesinger

The oft-repeated theme of the May 6 antinuclear rally in Washington, D.C., was that Energy Secretary James Rodney Schlesinger was the arch-enemy of the assembled horde of zero growth antinuclear fanatics.

In point of fact, Schlesinger represents the "right" side of a contrived "right"- "left" assault on advanced technology, the perfect foil to Ralph Nader's leftist crazies. Since he first chaired the Atomic Energy Commission in the early 1970s, Schlesinger has acted under this "hard technology," proindustry cover to implement policies from the inside that are far more devastating to industrial progress and energy development than would have been possible by the Nader-environmentalists working nominally outside the government. Schlesinger is aptly described as a Jane Fonda 'mole' in government.

It is useful to review the facts about the man described by Texas Governor William Clements as the most dishonest person he has known in government:

At an Atlanta conference of the nation's electric utilities during March, Schlesinger convinced the audience that he is an ardent friend of nuclear energy development. In practice, none of the post-Three Mile Island assaults against nuclear power could succeed were it not for the years of preparation by Schlesinger.

\*Schlesinger, as chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission in 1971-73 began to dismantle the government agency set up under the 1954 "Atoms for Peace" policy of President Eisenhower to establish centralized coordination between government and private industry in the development of atomic power. Schlesinger began by contracting Arthur D. Little Co. to reorganize the agency.

By the time Schlesinger was finished, the AEC was dismantled into a separate Nuclear Regulatory Commission and, initially, the Energy Research and Development Agency (ERDA). Schlesinger, at the time, told an astonished group of utility executives that collaboration between the AEC and the utilities was at an end: "Gentlemen, I'm not here to protect your AAA-bond ratings." In this case he was not lying.

\*His next act as head of the AEC was to open the floodgates to the incredible court delays that, prior to the Three Mile Island incident, have done more than anything to destroy nuclear development.

Nine days after becoming AEC chairman, Schles-

inger reversed commission opposition to an attempt by the Natural Resources Defense Council to halt the Calvert Cliffs nuclear power plant near Baltimore for environmental reasons, handing the environmental groups a landmark legal precedent. As a result of escalating costs and delays, the overall program projections of 1,000 reactors by the Nixon Administration has been reduced to less than 300 reactors by the end of the century.

\*In December 1976, Schlesinger told the *New York Times* he was "irked when referred to as a champion of nuclear power." Well he should be. In setting up the Department of Energy, he buried the nuclear component of energy R & D while he helped to shape the attack on both the Clinch River Fast Breeder reactor project and reprocessing. "Clinch River is not cost-effective," was Schlesinger's argument. Carter's opposition to the breeder was shaped by Schlesinger and ensured a major slowdown in the commitment of the utilities to nuclear power generation. The reason is simple: without breeders, which breed more fuel than they consume, the present supply of fissionable uranium is enough to fuel existing light water reactors only until the end of the century.

At the Atlanta conference, Schlesinger reiterated the line that breeders and reprocessing are cost-ineffective and unnecessary until well into the next century. Killing breeders and fuel reprocessing places creates an absolute—and arbitrary—ceiling on nuclear fuel supplies. This guarantees soaring prices for uranium, which are presently controlled in world markets through the so-called London uranium cartel.

\*Within the DOE, Schlesinger has driven out of office every top policy level advocate of nuclear development. Budgets for nuclear development have been slashed and the long promised licensing legislation has never emerged in any form that could undo the damage of Schlesinger's initial Calvert Cliffs decision.

His next move, as he himself hinted at Atlanta, will be to militarize civilian nuclear energy, "resorting to self-policing if we must." He told the audience in Atlanta: "We must separate the weak from the strong utilities and make sure the weak ones do not adopt the nuclear option."

—William Engdahl