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Nixon Rebuilding White House Staff

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon named former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird his counselor for domestic affairs Wednesday as he continued rebuilding the Watergate-riddled White House high command.

—Disclosed that Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. is retiring from the Army to become presidential assistant in charge of running the White House staff.

—Broadened the role of Ronald L. Ziegler, who will become a presidential assistant in charge of all White House communications while remaining as press secretary.

Laird in effect replaced John D. Ehrlichman, and Haig replaced H. R. Haldeman, the two top presidential assistants who resigned April 30 in the wake of the Watergate scandal.

Laird, a former nine-term congressman from Wisconsin,

said he was coming out of retirement because "government in some quarters is at a standstill" as a result of Watergate.

"This cannot be allowed to continue," he told a news conference. "...It is absolutely essential that we get on about the business of government."

Several weeks ago Laird had told newsmen that if Nixon were involved in the Watergate scandal he would not want to know about it.

He told the news conference that these remain his personal views "because of my concern about the presidency." But he added, "I have been assured of his noninvolvement and I accept that."

Laird said the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the government are investigating the scandal as they should, and "the truth will be known and it should be known."