

Naming of Haig Fits Nixon Pattern

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President Nixon's choice of Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. to take over H. R. Haldeman's duties as chief of staff at the White House is a typical Nixon appointment.

It shows again how the President in his time of troubles turns to someone with whom he is congenial and has had a long association.

Earlier this week, he picked Elliot L. Richardson to be the new attorney general and Leonard Garment to be acting counsel to the President. Mr. Nixon has known Richardson for at least two decades and Garment for a decade. Both have worked closely with him for more than four years.

Haig played a key role in the National Security Council staff under Henry A. Kissinger during Mr. Nixon's first term, and the President sent him on more than a dozen trips to Southeast Asia to assess the situation for him at first-hand.

The fact that Haig is a general who is now placed in a sensitive political role apparently did not bother the President.

In several conversations with intimates in the last week, the President has referred to the Sherman Adams departure from the Eisenhower administration. When Adams left, President Eisenhower appointed Maj. Gen. Wilton B. (Jerry) Parsons to be his No. 1 assistant at the White House.

One important difference is that Haig is vice chief of staff of the army on active duty while Parsons, whose brother was once Governor of Alabama, was on the retired list.

Persons had won his spurs as an aide to Gen. George C.



Gen. Alexander Haig played key role in White House foreign policy decision.

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Marshall and as the Pentagon's chief liaison officer with Congress. He was Adams' deputy when Adams, who in a sense had the power of both a Haldeman and an Ehrlichman, got into trouble over the acceptance of gifts from Bernard Goldfine, a wealthy Boston manufacturer.

According to White House aides, the President's appointments of Richardson, Garment, Haig and William D. Ruckelshaus as acting FBI director all emphasize his determination to try to restore the credibility of his presidency after the Watergate disclosures.

The appointment of Haig to Haldeman's post does not necessarily mean that someone will be named to fill John D. Ehrlichman's office as chief domestic adviser, some White House aides believe. However, there have been

rumors that the President has considered for the post such men as Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare; former Gov. William W. Scranton of Pennsylvania and former presidential aide Bryce N. Harlow, now with Procter and Gamble, has been seen at the White House a number of times in recent days.

Those who think they know the President's mind believe that the elaborate domestic affairs apparatus that funneled everything to Ehrlichman will be essentially unchanged except for the vacancy in Ehrlichman's office.

The chief weakness of the Nixon presidency in domestic affairs, according to some on the inside, is that too many basic disputes were resolved by Ehrlichman rather than by the

President. Now there may be a chance that more decisions will go to the President, who has tried to devote the bulk of his time to foreign policy.

The aides closest to the President, while shaken by what has happened, nevertheless scoff at reports in some Washington quarters that Mr. Nixon may be overwhelmed by the scandals and eventually forced to resign or face impeachment charges.

Even though these aides admittedly do not yet know all the facts, they are convinced that the President's primary resolve now is to save the presidency and to save his own name. They think he can do both.

Their explanation of why he waited so long to acknowledge that a crisis of confidence existed may not be persuasive to those who have always credited the

President with an acute political sense. Nevertheless, they contend that he has long discounted what he read in the press and wanted to believe claims by assistants that there was nothing to the charges that corruption had reached high places.

In recent days, the President has repeatedly told Cabinet officers and others that he is determined to get to the bottom of the scandal and to avoid a whitewash. They maintain that he has spoken convincingly on those occasions.

He reportedly continues to believe that his two former principal aides, Haldeman and Ehrlichman, will be shown to have a clean record, as he indicated in his Watergate speech April 30.

In view of their long and close association, his decision to accept their resignations was traumatic. He reached it only with the greatest anguish and reluctance, it is said.

Mr. Nixon was near exhaustion from lack of sleep and from overwork when he delivered the speech. He worked on it over the weekend at Camp David and was still revising it on the helicopter ride to the White House an hour before he went on the air. White House aides concede that the reaction to it was "mixed."

As for the future, the President expects to hold a news conference soon and he is thinking of making a few speeches in various parts of the country.

But yesterday he sought rest to prepare himself for what he knows are difficult days ahead. He is fully aware, his closest associates say, of the severe damage that has been done and of the threat that remains to his presidency.