

J. Fred Buzhardt

Pentagon Lawyer Moves Up

By Michael Gitler

Washington Post Staff Writer

The appointment yesterday of the Pentagon's top lawyer, J. Fred Buzhardt, to become President Nixon's special counsel marks the third time within two weeks that the White House has dipped into the Pentagon's hierarchy to help shore up his battered ranks.

Buzhardt, 49, is a South Carolina lawyer who spent eight years as a top aide to Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) and almost three years as the Pentagon's chief legal officer.

During those three years, he has been at the center of some of the Pentagon's biggest legal hassles—including publication of the Pentagon Papers, scandals involving misuse of USO funds and Army spying, investigation of unauthorized bombing by Air Force Gen. John D. Lavelle, and attempts to work out multi-billion dollar contract disputes with some of the Pentagon's biggest defense contractors.

Just a day before yesterday's White House announcement on Buzhardt, the Pentagon, perhaps by coincidence, made it known that their top legal man had turned down requests in 1971 by since-convicted Watergate conspirators to see classified Defense Department documents dealing with the Pentagon Papers investigation.

Buzhardt's movement out of the Pentagon follows closely the interim appointment of the Army vice chief of staff, Gen. Alexander Haig, to replace resigned Presidential aide H. R. Haldeman, and Defense Secretary Elliot L. Richardson's nomination to take over from Richard G. Kleindienst as Attorney General.

Buzhardt—a West Point



J. FRED BUZHARDT
... new Nixon aide

graduate—was also one of the few experienced top level defense officials left in the Pentagon—which has been having a tough and slow time filling a number of key jobs—and his departure may make matters worse at least for awhile.

Buzhardt's White House job is described as interim, and he will retain his Defense Department title. But Pentagon officials were not certain that Buzhardt would in fact return to the Defense Department.

Buzhardt was former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird's choice to become a second Deputy Secretary of Defense, but that proposal is known to have met some resistance from the current principal deputy, William P. Clements.

Buzhardt, while an aide to Sen. Thurmond specializing in military affairs, gained a reputation as one of the few who managed to penetrate the Pentagon curtain and prepare searching questions for his senator.

He is low-key, almost phil-

osophical, in manner and finds it personally fascinating to disassemble government problems carefully and then study the pieces one at a time with an eye to finding a way to fit them back together again in better way.

His practice at doing this in his law practice, the Senate and the Pentagon will now be tested as he tries to pick up the pieces of President Nixon's biggest single problem—Watergate.

While the Pentagon lost its top lawyer in the continued high level job swapping going on in the wake of Watergate, it gained a new Secretary of Defense-designate yesterday from the CIA, Dr. James R. Schlesinger, and hired—without pay—former Deputy Defense Secretary David Packard as a part-time special consultant.

Schlesinger's pending movement to the Pentagon was generally well received by Pentagon officials, though some said privately they were hoping that former Texas governor John Connally would get the job, while a few others wondered whether Schlesinger will come sweeping through the huge Pentagon bureaucracy with the same sort of house-cleaning broom he administered during his short tour as CIA director.

Schlesinger, in effect will start with a clean slate at the Pentagon because Richardson was only at the top for three months and little was done to change the course of Defense policy or weapons programs in that time.

During his days within the White House's Office of Management and Budget in 1969 and 1970, Schlesinger was frequently pictured as

in private agreement with Packard, then Pentagon budget officer, that defense spending could be held below the actual figures that wound up in the President's budget if the Pentagon were better managed. The ex-CIA chief, however, is generally regarded as taking a conservative view on defense matters.

Packard, the California electronics millionaire who was the White House's leading choice for the top Pentagon job, said yesterday he had turned down the job for "personal reasons."

Chatting with newsmen at the Pentagon yesterday, Packard added that Mr. Nixon "has my complete confidence and full support, particularly in these troubled times."

After leaving the Pentagon in 1971, Packard ran the fund-raising campaign for President Nixon's reelection in the San Francisco area. Packard, however, ran the only fund-raising effort that was independent of the fund-raising efforts being run by former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans.

Packard said the principal reason he couldn't take the Pentagon job now involves the problem of his huge holdings in the company he helped found, Hewlett-Packard, and which he did not want to disrupt. The tax laws which enabled him to set up a trust fund for those holdings in 1969 have been changed.

As a consultant, Packard said he might try to help defend the defense budget on Capitol Hill (though questions of conflict of interest could be raised) and in particular some of the major programs he helped develop such as the B-1 bomber and Trident submarine programs.