

HAIG ASSUMING HALDEMAN DUTIES; HUNT LINKS WHITE HOUSE AND C.I.A. TO BURGLARY IN ELLSBERG INQUIRY

'INTERIM' CHOICE

Packard the 'Leading Candidate' to Be Pentagon Chief

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MIAMI, May 4—Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. was named Assistant to the President today as President Nixon began to redesign a White House staff devastated by the Watergate scandal.

The appointment of General Haig, now Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, was described by the White House as an "interim" appointment to continue most of the duties that had been performed by H. R. Halde- man as head of the White House staff. Both Mr. Halde- man and President Nixon's top adviser on domestic affairs, John D. Ehrlichman, resigned as a result of the Watergate affair.

The Counsel to the President, John W. Dean 3d, has also re- signed. He has been replaced by Leonard Garment.

The President decided on the appointment of General Haig, according to the White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, as the first step in a complete re-evaluation of the operations of the White House.

Packard May Get Post

Mr. Ziegler also implied that David Packard would be the new Secretary of Defense. Mr. Packard served in the Penta- gon in the first Nixon Adminis- tration.

Speaking of General Haig, Mr. Ziegler said, "the President felt the necessity to have some-

one assume the many responsi- bilities of Bob Haldeman at this time while the President con- sideres the entire matter of how the White House operates in the future."

Although he refused to char- acterize the kinds of changes the President is considering, Mr. Ziegler did indicate a de- sire for basic changes.

"Members of the staff with great responsibilities are now leaving," he said, "and he is making changes and adjust- ments he feels [will be] de- signed to allow the business of the White House to proceed in a more efficient way than, perhaps, it did in the past."

Although it had been specu- lated that the new assistant would fill Mr. Haldeman's po- sition as well as Mr. Ehrlich- man's, it was made clear today that General Haig would con- centrate on those staff duties that had been performed by Mr. Haldeman. Kenneth W. Coles, now head of the domes- tic Council, will "have his duties broadened" to assume more of the administrative and policy functions performed by Mr. Ehrlichman.

Successor for Richardson

At today's press briefing, Mr. Ziegler strongly hinted at the pending appointment of David Packard as Secretary of De- fense to succeed Elliot L. Rich- ardson. Mr. Richardson has been named to head the Justice Department. The move was ne- cessitated by the resignation of Richard G. Kleindienst as At- torney General because of his close personal ties to some of those alleged to have been in- volved in the Watergate affair.

The President, Mr. Ziegler said, had personally met with Mr. Packard. "He should be considered the leading candi- date for the position," Mr. Ziegler said.

Mr. Packard, who served as

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Deputy Secretary of Defense, resigned that post in 1971 to return to private business.

The appointment of General Haig closely parallels the ac- tion taken by President Eisen- hower 15 years ago when he faced a similar decision. In 1958 the special assistant to the President, Sherman Adams, was forced to resign for accept- ing a personal gift from a Bos- ton financier.

A New Atmosphere

To fill that vacancy, Presi- dent Eisenhower turned to a military man, Maj. Gen. Wilton B. Persons, who was directed to reorganize the White House staff. Observers at the time concluded that the appointment of a military man was designed to create a new atmosphere and generate a new confidence in the operations of the White House.

General Haig has been a fa- vorite of the President's for some time, and he is said to have impressed the President with his administrative skills. He was deputy assistant to the President for national security affairs and has conducted sev- eral Presidential missions to France and Southeast Asia in connection with the war in Vietnam.

General Haig is also a close associate of Henry A. Kissin- ger, the President's adviser on foreign policy.

It is still unclear how much of the power exercised by Mr. Haldeman over access to the President will automatically be inherited by General Haig. White House officials refused to detail the responsibilities and author- ity given the general, insisting that "those matters will have to be developed."

Target of Criticism

Throughout his tenure in the job, Mr. Haldeman was severely criticized by Congressmen and members of the Cabinet for running the office with an iron fist and preventing those with whom he disagreed from seeing the President. During question- ing today, Mr. Ziegler carefully

explained that Cabinet members would not have to report to the President through General Haig.

"But," he added, "they would work with him to see the President to see what the President's schedule is. The person who will make the decision of who to see is the President himself."

Specifically, General Haig's duties were defined as those of White House staff coordinator and administrator of the immediate office of the President.

The general began work in Mr. Haldeman's office in the West Wing of the White House just down the corridor from the Oval Office last night. A final decision on his military status has yet to be made, but he is expected to remain on active duty and he is still being paid by the military.

A resignation is not expected in view of remarks that his interim appointment is not expected to last more than a few months. Those details, a spokesman here said, will be worked out by General Haig and the Army Chief of Staff, Crieghton B. Abrams.

Still on Payroll

Mr. Haldeman vacated his office over the weekend, but he, like Mr. Ehrlichman, remains on the Government payroll, and the White House refused to designate a date on which they would be removed. Both are paid the top salary allowable for a Presidential adviser, \$42,500 a year.

Today's announcements came as the President continued a working vacation on Key Biscayne where he is said to be working on further details of staff and operations changes although no further changes are expected to be announced this weekend.