

Nixon Flies to the Bahamas

By Sydney Kossen

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GRAND CAY (Bahamas) — President Nixon flew here yesterday, hoping perhaps to find at least temporary relief from the burgeoning Watergate scandal.

Nixon alighted from an Air Force helicopter with two personal friends, Florida neighbor Bebe Rebozo and Paul Keyes, former producer of TV's "Laugh In."

They were welcomed by New York industrialist Robert Abplanalp, owner of the private vacation island about 150 miles east of Miami.

Before leaving his Key Biscayne home, Nixon talked by phone with General Alexander M. Haig, Jr., new White House staff coordinator.

Aides here declined to comment on whether the President felt that the former White House staff structure contributed to the dimensions of the Watergate scandal.

But presidential press secretary Ronald Ziegler noted that previous top assistants "who had great responsibility" are gone.

He said Nixon "will make changes and adjustments following those departures which he feels are designed to allow the business of the White House to proceed in a more effective way than perhaps they did in the

past."

Haig's new office in the White House West Wing has been vacated by H. R. Haldeman, the iron-willed former gatekeeper who decided what people and papers got through to the President.

Haig, who indicated he does not expect to hold the job for the rest of Nixon's second term, retains his Army's status and four-star general's salary of \$36,000 a year.

The White House would not say how long Haldeman and former domestic adviser John Ehrlichman would continue receiving maximum presidential assistant salaries of \$42,500 each. Both resigned last Monday and have been making command appearances before the federal grand jury in Washington.

The personable, efficient General Haig, who has served the President on missions to China and Vietnam, will have many of the responsibilities but not the clout possessed by Haldeman.

Asked whether the new staff organization would keep the President better posted on day-to-day White House operations, Ziegler replied:

"Here again, that goes to a question I was asked earlier and I just don't want to be specific today because I

don't have enough discussion behind me on this matter to be specific, and I don't want to speak on a basis of the knowledge I have now."

Ziegler was much briefer in reply to a question about Martha Mitchell's remarks that people at the White House were spreading lies about her and planting rumors that she is insane.

"No," Ziegler said. "I have no comment on those statements."

Observers remained confused over the meaning of Nixon's instructions Friday to present and past staff members. He told them in effect to decline to speak to Watergate investigators about their contacts with the President.

The White House explained that these are merely new guidelines on executive privilege, designed to place minimum restrictions on aides when questioned by the FBI, Senate investigators or a grand jury.

Others saw it as an attempt to muzzle staff members in light of developments involving John Dean III, White House counsel dismissed by Nixon.

Talking with Sen. Lowell Weicker (R-Conn.), Dean hinted that Nixon knew of an attempted cover-up of last year's burglary and bugging of Democratic National Headquarters.