

Nixon Directing Foreign Policy,

By Jules Witcover

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White House chief of staff Alexander M. Haig Jr., reassured about 250 sub-Cabinet level officials of the Nixon Administration Thursday that President Nixon is continuing to shape and direct American foreign policy.

According to Charles M. Lichenstein, a special assistant to the President who attended the high-level pep talk in the fourth-floor auditorium of the Executive Office Building, Haig "made it rather clear that in his view the President was wholly in command and was performing effectively

and in detail in all the major trouble areas."

Without directly referring to concerns expressed by some that Watergate has impaired Mr. Nixon's ability to perform in the field of foreign policy, Haig predicted that Watergate "will be a very long footnote" in the history of the administration, Lichenstein said.

"General Haig did not diminish the importance of Watergate or pretend that it was not there, or that there was no impeachment inquiry," the White House aide said. "But he said in his view the people would see it in history as much less important

against the broad record of a new strategic breakthrough" in foreign policy.

Haig, in Key Biscayne with the President, denied he referred to Watergate as a footnote to history. What he said, ~~is~~ reported last night, was that "history will judge this administration by its accomplishments, by what it accomplishes in the interests of the American People."

In response to foreign policy critics who have said the President and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger were practicing Old World balance of power politics, Haig said:

"What I said is that some

people claim the Nixon doctrine is a return to 18th century power politics. And they attribute this to a European Svengali. That is untrue. What these two men are trying to do is build a peace."

Haig said he also stressed the importance of improving relations with Congress. Others present said he gave a general plea for his audience to strive for excellence in the remaining time of the administration and that this would assure the best possible judgment of history.

Haig spoke for more than 30 minutes, providing an overview of administration foreign

THE WASHINGTON POST Saturday, May 25, 1974 A 11

U.S. Aides Reassured

policy, including "the significance of maintaining detente (with the Soviet Union, the opening to China, and the Middle East initiatives," Lichenstein reported.

In emphasizing the President's control of foreign policy in detail, Lichenstein said, Haig was extremely complimentary toward Kissinger. "The implication was that the President and the secretary form a tremendously close and effective team," the aide said.

Haig's remarks, however, were regarded by at least some listeners as denigrating Kissinger at several points.

One foreign policy official said, "There was a denigration, a subordination, of the secretary's role in the President's scheme. Personally, I found it a little irritating; in bad taste. It was such a transparent effort to emphasize the President's grand design."

Haig, this source said, emphasized that the administration's foreign policy was not the result of "wizardry," but was a well-conceived presidential "design."

The source disagreed that Haig said "these two men (Nixon and Kissinger) are trying" to build peace. If Haig

had said that, the source said, "that would have been fair and inoffensive."

Dean Burch, the President's White House political adviser, also gave the group of assistant secretaries, agency lead, deputies and officials of like rank a rundown on White House legal moves on Watergate and impeachment, Lichenstein said.

As Burch and other White House aides have said publicly, Burch told the closed meeting that "he had every reason to believe the President is not going to resign, and that the President does not think he will be im-

peached," Lichenstein reported.

The briefing on legal moves, he said, included a summary of the Watergate calendar ahead, including the taking of appeals against subpoenas for the release of White House tapes and documents. Burch also reiterated the White House's hope that all House Judiciary Committee materials on impeachment will be made public, he said.

Burch reported his sense that reaction to the release of the White House transcripts was subsiding,