

Abrams Is Nominated for Chief of Staff

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WASHINGTON, June 20 — President Nixon today named Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, commander of United States forces in Vietnam, as the Army Chief of Staff.

If approved by the Senate, General Abrams will succeed Gen. William C. Westmoreland on July 3. General Westmoreland, who has served a full four-year tour of duty in the Army's top post, will retire with the rank of general.

Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, announced that Mr. Nixon had also decided to reappoint Adm. Thomas H. Moorer for another two-year term as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Admiral Moorer's second term will run from July 3, 1972, to July 2, 1974.

Successor Not Announced

There was no announcement of General Abrams's successor in Vietnam. Mr. Ziegler said the details of General Abrams's departure from the field and the identity of his successor "are still being worked out," but the widespread expectation here is that it will be Frederick C. Weyand, General Abrams's deputy in Vietnam.

The New York Times, in a

dispatch from Washington on May 31, said General Abrams's nomination was imminent. The dispatch reported that the White House had originally intended

to announce the promotion on April 15 but held back because of the North Vietnamese offensive, which began in late March.

General Abrams is said to have been the enthusiastic first choice of Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird.

General Abrams has supported the Vietnamization program, Mr. Nixon's policy of gradual withdrawal of American forces, despite objections in the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

According to some defense sources here, several civilian defense officials had hoped that Mr. Nixon would choose a younger man.

General Abrams is 57 years old, and there was some thought that his five-year tour of duty in South Vietnam had left him out of touch with some of the Army's mounting social problems.

Some officials, therefore, suggested that General Abrams's term be limited to two years instead of the normal four. But Mr. Ziegler's announcement today said that General Abrams would serve the full term.

General Westmoreland is 58. Mr. Ziegler said he would be "appropriately honored" at White House ceremonies after his term ends in July. Admiral Moorer is 60.