

Haldeman, Ehrlichman Both Out

Washington Post Service

Washington

President Nixon accepted the resignations yesterday of his chief White House advisers, H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, and of Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst.

He also announced that he had fired his counsel, John W. Dean III, who thus became a casualty of the very scandal the President had charged him to investigate.

The dramatic news of the dismantling of the White House command staff that served Mr. Nixon through his first four years in the presidency was the most devastating impact that the Watergate scandal has yet made on the administration.

REPLACE

The President immediately set into motion a major reshuffling of top administration personnel to replace the Watergate casualties.

Defense Secretary Elliot L. Richardson was appointed to replace Kleindienst and to take over responsibility for "uncovering the whole truth" about the Watergate scandal.

As temporary successor to Dean, the President chose his special consultant, Leonard Garment. Mr. Nixon said Garment "will represent the White House in all matters relating to the Watergate investigation and will report directly to me."

The immediate reaction to the White House announcement was a mixture of re-

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lief, especially among congressional Republicans, at the prospect of internal hou-

se cleaning. But there was also some dismay at the President's failure to appoint a special prosecutor for the Watergate inquiry.

PRAISE

Mr. Nixon used warm words of praise for Kleindienst, Haldeman and Ehrlichman in announcing their departures.

He said Kleindienst's decision to leave because of close ties to individuals implicated in the Watergate inquiry was "in accordance with the highest standards of public service and legal ethics." The individuals to whom Kleindienst alluded presumably included former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, who was in charge of Mr. Nixon's reelection campaign at the time of the Watergate bugging incident.

The President spoke of Haldeman and Ehrlichman

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as "two of my closet friends and most trusted assistants in the White House."

Mr. Nixon stressed that "neither the submission nor the acceptance of their resignations at this time should be seen by anyone as evidence of any wrongdoing by either one. Such an assumption would be both unfair and unfounded."

FIRING

By contrast the firing of Dean was revealed in one coolly-phrased sentence: "Finally, I have today requested and accepted the resignation of John W. Dean III from his position on the White House staff as counsel."

Dean served notice on April 19 that he would not become a "scapegoat" for the Watergate scandal. Word was also passed by associates of Dean that he was ready to implicate Ehrlichman and Haldeman in the case.

Besides the resignations announced yesterday at least five other high administration or campaign officials have quit in the wake of revelations about the Watergate: Mitchell, presidential appointments secretary Dwight Chapin, special counsel to the President

Charles W. Colson, deputy campaign director Jeb Stuart Magruder and acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray III.

IMMOBILITY

The massive shakeup of the White House command and the ensuing personnel shuffling threw the administration into a state of disarray, if not temporary immobility.

It threatens the federal government's largest single enterprise, the Pentagon, with a leadership void with Richardson's new assignment. In the White House, Haldeman and Ehrlichman had been regarded as indispensable to the President. Haldeman, particularly, was the ultimate traffic controller and organizer of the flow of presidential business.

In the Justice Department the departure of Kleindienst came fresh upon the heels of the political melodrama of the decline and fall of acting FBI director Gray, an episode that had already seriously demoralized both the bureau and the Justice Department.

And there was no assurance that yesterday's events would bring a halt to the Watergate revelations. Ahead are the prospects of indictments, criminal trials, heavily-publicized Senate hearings and the question of presidential involvement. Watergate's political liabilities are still incalculable with the polls registering the most precipitous drop of the President's popularity in his entire tenure of office.

When news of the White House shakeup reached the Senate Foreign Relations Committee yesterday, during an appearance by Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Senator Jacob K. Javits (Rep-N.Y.) said he was "very deeply disturbed" by reports that "the Watergate scandal has immobilized the government processes of the United States."

Rogers replied that from the standpoint of foreign affairs, "nothing has happened that has bogged down or anything of the kind. I can assure you and the American people that the government is functioning effectively in the foreign affairs area."

But Rogers, for many years a political intimate of the President, said he had

discussed with Mr. Nixon the need for "corrective action" in the political system — particularly "campaign contributions and appointments . . . I talked to the President about it and he agrees. It is an evil that affects any particular administration; it is a fact of life."

CHANGES

In yesterday's statement, the President said Richardson's charter as new attorney general will include recommending changes in the law "to prevent future campaign abuses of the sort recently uncovered." The abuses to which he referred were secret election funds for the 1972 campaign amounting by some estimates to more than \$2 million. A secret election fund was also the central issue in Mr. Nixon's 1952 "Checkers" speech.

At that time, Mr. Nixon went on national TV to defend himself, saving his spot as Dwight D. Eisenhower's running mate. Checkers, Mr. Nixon's dog, was mentioned in the speech.

Haldeman and Ehrlichman, in their letters of resignation, both pledged to cooperate fully with the Justice Department investigation and will meet this week with U.S. attorneys and with the Senate select committee investigating the Watergate affair.

"I fully agree with the importance of a complete investigation by the appropriate authorities . . ." Haldeman wrote, "but am deeply concerned that, in the process, it has become virtually impossible under these circumstances for me to carry on my regular responsibilities in the White House."

Ehrlichman wrote: "I have confidence in the ultimate prevalence of truth; I intend to do what I can to speed truth's discovery."



UPI Telephoto

RICHARD KLEINDIENST
Attorney general quit



AP Wirephoto

LEONARD GARMENT
President's new counsel