

Haig Denies White House Staff Friction

By Helen Thomas
United Press International

White House Chief of Staff Alexander M. Haig Jr. said yesterday that he was "somewhat appalled" at recurring reports of friction between the holdover staff of former President Nixon and President Ford's top assistants. The situation, he said, is "precisely the opposite."

In an interview, Haig said there has been and remains a "cooperative spirit" between Nixon staffers and Ford staffers. He expressed his "highest regard . . . for the group of men Ford has around him."

"What we're dealing with today is a great deal of mythology," he said. "I don't suffer from insecurity pangs."

"In terms of my relationship with the President, I've been getting along very well. I see him every morning and I go over with him a vast number of substantive issues. He sets the tone . . ."

Haig said he planned to stay on at the White House for as long as he could serve the President and the country.

As for Mr. Ford, Haig said, "in my humble perspective, the President was off and running from the moment he stepped into office."

Reports have circulated that some of Mr. Ford's top aides and the now-disbanded four-member transition panel had recommended that the President eliminate the position of chief of staff and transfer Haig out of the White House.

But White House Press Secretary J. F. terHorst has said on several occasions that Mr. Ford asked Haig to stay on indefinitely.

In the final weeks leading up to Mr. Nixon's resignation Aug. 9, Haig was the White House staffer who saw him most regularly and who presented him with continually diminishing options as his chances of surviving impeachment became hopeless.

Haig indicated that Mr. Nixon wavered back and forth, up and down, on whether to quit. But he flatly refused to discuss any detailed aspects of the last Nixon days in the White House.

"I don't think it's a good time for it," he said, "not at this juncture."