

Resignations Leave Gaping

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A gaping hole has been left in the White House staff by the resignations under fire of H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, the two men who have been with the President longer than any others on the staff and who have been his most trusted advisers.

While there is no assistant to either man equipped to fill his shoes, substantively or in the confidence of the President, the chief void will be felt by the President rather than by the remaining staff members.

Whether Mr. Nixon will seek new confidants to replace the two departed aides or whether he will restructure his staff will depend on his own evolving approach to the staff problem in the light of changed circumstances.

He is almost alone in lamenting the fall from grace of his two chief aides. Tears were not shed yesterday by members of Congress, by the Republican National Committee or even by many

White House staff members. It is only the President who is suffering inconvenience and in routine.

"I need him," President Eisenhower said plaintively in 1958 when the demand was first made for the discharge of Sherman Adams, then the most important presidential assistant. (It is ironic to remember that Adams was always convinced that Vice President Nixon was one of those who advised Gen. Eisenhower to ask for his resignation.)

"I need them," Mr. Nixon may have said to himself many times in recent weeks as other Republican leaders demanded the scalps of Haldeman and Ehrlichman, and he implied as much publicly yesterday in attempting to give the appearance that they are leaving with honor.

There is one person left among the original Nixon assistants who may become more important even than in the past. Rose Mary Woods, the President's principal secretary, has been with him since he was a

member of the House.

She was at Camp David over the weekend when the final decisions were made to clean house. She knows the President's ways and she knows his old friends. She has sometimes been shunted aside by the possessive Haldeman, who ran roughshod over any who got in his way or rivaled him in access to the President.

Now the capable Miss Woods is guarding the President's door and helping to determine who sees him and who does not.

The new structure will emerge slowly, aides now believe. If new top aides are brought in, new faces may also be seen down the line as the new men create their own staffs and develop their ways of doing business for the President.

Ehrlichman and Haldeman personified the up-tight Teutonic atmosphere at the Nixon White House, and the bulk of the men who worked for them are technicians they recruited and directed.

Haldeman has commanded the speechwriters,

the White House press office, the congressional liaison team, the appointments and scheduling operation, the President's travels and the large staff of secretaries and administrative personnel in the White House.

His assistants have been just that, never powerful in their own rights.

Ehrlichman's own personal staff has been of the same type. But under him is the important Domestic Council, now headed by Kenneth Cole, who, with the departure of Ehrlichman, will work more closely with Secretary of the Treasury George P. Shultz and the three Cabinet officers who also are presidential assistants: Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development James T. Lynn and Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Shultz, already one of the most influential men in the administration, is expected to play an even more significant role in shaping

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administration domestic policy.

It is widely believed that these others, in addition to Cole and Shultz, will play a larger role: Leonard Garment, named yesterday as acting counsel; speech writer Patrick J. Buchanan, who strongly urged the President to face up to the implications of the Watergate crisis; special assistant Raymond K. Price, who also urged decisive action and who worked on last night's speech with the President; Roy L. Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget and an assistant to the President; special counsel Richard A. Moore, a Californian and long-time Nixon friend and political consultant; and Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, if he survives the reorganization now in progress.

Ziegler has spent a vast amount of time recently with the President. If Ziegler has lost credibility in the eyes of many reporters, he apparently still has the President's confidence and

maintains that he has no intention of leaving.

The National Security Council staff under Henry A. Kissinger is unaffected by the changes although its work has also been disrupted by the President's consuming concentration on Watergate.

In picking Garment to be acting counsel and Secretary of Defense Elliot L. Richardson to be Attorney General, Mr. Nixon named two men he has known a long time and trusts.

If he names two new staff men, he may follow the same course, if he can. He characteristically did not go outside for new faces, as many persons have urged, but sought men with whom he is comfortable.

If he does go outside and choose independent-minded men to join his staff, it will show how deeply he thinks the scandals have undercut his presidency and how far he will move from his moorings to bring about radical reform.

The shake-up may also

mean that Mr. Nixon, who has expressed the belief that almost anyone can run the domestic side of the government and that a President should concentrate on foreign policy, will now be forced to pay more attention to domestic issues and relations with Congress, the governors and mayors, and with the Republican National Committee.

He was always wanted the Haldemans and Ehrlichmans to protect him from the avalanche of domestic problems, the insistent demands of members of Congress and from too many staff, and party Cabinet problems.

While Mr. Nixon is a product of Congress, he was never really a part of the Capitol Hill club. He never absorbed its folkways the way Presidents Truman and Johnson did. He has always felt that relations with Congress were something of a nuisance, something to make headlines but not to determine a President's place in history. He believed that in the history of legisla-

tive-executive struggles it is the powerful executive who wins.

Thus, he needed the Haldeman-Ehrlichman team to block and tackle, a task they did so efficiently that when they needed friends in Congress they could not find them.

Early this year, Mr. Nixon said in an interview that he could and did delegate power and trust subordinates to handle many matters, but he insisted that he was "quarterback and coach."

"I make all the important decisions, domestic or foreign," he said.

Fifteen days before his second inaugural, he said that the "the nucleus" of his staff to carry out his orders would be five assistants: Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Ash, Shultz and Kissinger.

Now the "coach and quarterback" has seen his team decimated with the departure of the first two, the two personally closest to him and senior to all the others in time of service to him.