

President Is Quietly Phasing Out Nixon's White House

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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With the announcement that Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. will go to Europe as NATO commander, President Ford has virtually completed the process of removing power in the White House from the hands of Richard M. Nixon's men.

Next on Mr. Ford's agenda for putting his imprint on the executive branch is a housecleaning of the Cabinet left behind by Mr. Nixon, according to associates familiar with the President's plans.

Mr. Ford has not engaged in any wholesale dismissal of his predecessor's aides, nor has he brought in platoons of his own people to squeeze the old staff from their offices.

But those few men who held power in Mr. Nixon's White House are either gone, are scheduled to leave and therefore lack real authority, or have had their jobs downgraded.

General Haig, the highest-ranking and most powerful holdover, as well as the most visible symbol of the continued presence of Nixon men in the White House, is scheduled to assume command of United States Forces in Europe on Nov. 1. He is expected to leave for Europe, where he will also command the forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

A number of names have been circulating around Washington as possible successors to General Haig. They include William W. Scranton, former Governor of Pennsylvania who is a member of Mr. Ford's transition team; James T. Lynn, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Donald Rumsfeld, ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Robert T. Hartmann, counselor to President Ford; S. William Seidman, executive director of the National Conference on Inflation, and Gerald D. Morgan, a Washington lawyer.

No matter who gets the job,

the next White House chief of staff is expected to play a different and less powerful role than did either General Haig or his predecessor, H. R. Haldeman.

According to White House insiders, Mr. Ford plans to have five or six aides report to him on a daily basis and act as his liaison with the rest of the Administration, as well as with Congress.

The new chief of staff, these officials say, will not function as a kind of deputy President, as his immediate predecessors did. He would be, instead, a staff coordinator, keeping order in

the President's paper work and keeping track of all White House projects.

An aide close to Mr. Ford said that the President was looking for "a strong administrator with political savvy" to fill the post. The President, he said, does not want someone who is "cold and disinterested" but rather someone who will be able to get along well with members of Congress and other governmental officials.

Last night the President said that he would announce soon a replacement for J. F. terHorst, who resigned as press secretary

because he could not support the President's decision to pardon Mr. Nixon.

However, members of the White House staff are still telephoning reporters in Washington and other parts of the country to ask for recommendations about whom should be appointed.

At the moment, Mr. Hartmann, a former newspaperman who holds Cabinet rank as counselor to the President, appears to have the freest access to the President. Mr. Hartmann is said to wander in and out of the Oval Office even when

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Staff and Planning to Decentralize Post

President Ford is conferring with Cabinet officers and then to enter the discussions.

By almost all accounts, there has been considerable friction between the Nixon holdovers and the staff that President Ford brought into the White House. Mr. Ford's close aides are reportedly irritated by what they say is the reluctance of the Nixon staff members to resign.

Several of the Nixon holdovers have commented privately on what they said was the inefficiency and naivete of the new men running things for President Ford.

Some of Mr. Ford's close aides acknowledge that he has moved slowly in clearing Mr. Nixon's men from his Administration. But they say that his caution stems from a desire to maintain "continuity and stability" in the executive branch.

Mr. Scranton, who has acted as Mr. Ford's chief talent scout, explained in a recent telephone interview that the President wanted first to erect a structure in which he could function comfortably before deciding on a staff to run that structure.

"You don't fire people just because you don't like them,"

Mr. Scranton said. He added that he had provided Mr. Ford with a list of names to be considered in filling high Administration posts. He said that the list was intended to be used over the next four to six months.

But Mr. Ford has apparently decided to deal compassionately with the men and women who served President Nixon. He has found a number of major Nixon aides other jobs in his Administration and is waiting for others to find new employment outside the Government before replacing them.

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Held by Haig

Meanwhile, Ronald L. Ziegler, President Nixon's press secretary, is gone. He is still on the White House payroll but he departed for California with Mr. Nixon on Aug. 9, and has remained there.

Ken W. Clawson, who was White House director of communications, still has an office in the Executive Office Building but his operation has been terminated.

James D. St. Clair and J. Fred Buzhardt, counsels to President Nixon, left the White House shortly after Mr. Ford took office.