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Successor to Haig

Donald Rumsfeld

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 24—Donald Rumsfeld, named today to succeed Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., but not to replace him as White House chief of staff, is a

Man in the News take-charge personality who has a knack for getting close to Presidents and for getting himself out of dead-end political situations.

As an assistant to the President with Cabinet rank who was chief of the anti-poverty program in the early years of the Nixon Administration, Mr. Rumsfeld was a member of the Nixon inner circle. He was a part of the group of six, including H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, that used to meet with Mr. Nixon over coffee at 8 A.M. to discuss problems and plan the day ahead.

When he assumes his new duties this Friday, again as an assistant to the President with Cabinet rank, he will once again sit in with a handful of other Presidential intimates. The White House press secretary, Ron Nessen, said today in announcing the appointment that Mr. Rumsfeld would be responsible for administration and coordination.

A source close to Mr. Rumsfeld said that the Illinois Republican had wanted to leave his present post as Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and return to Washington, but not in a White House job. The source added that Mr. Rumsfeld had expected a Cabinet post such as Housing and Urban Development where he could have more independence and political visibility.

Part of the Team

But President Ford apparently wanted Mr. Rumsfeld, a man who helped him engineer his 1965 election as House Republican leader and who most recently worked as part of the President's four-man transition team, close by.

As if to assuage fears among President Ford's other advisers and satisfy the curiosity of newsmen, Mr. Nessen stated that "all senior advisers are equal." Members of the Ford team have repeatedly stressed that the new man in this job would not be given the power of Mr. Haig or Mr. Haldeman.



Brash and informal

"It's a Ford White House now," Mr. Nessen said, adding that the President and Mr. Rumsfeld would work out together the way in which White House operations would be coordinated. "This President wants to have access to a lot of people and does have access to a lot of people," Mr. Nessen continued in explaining that Mr. Rumsfeld would help manage "the best use of the President's time."

With his varied background and contacts, with his well-known brashness and informality, Mr. Rumsfeld can be expected to cast a wide net for the President.

He had all the right qualities for a successful political career. He is strikingly handsome, energetic, has a good sense of humor, a fast intelligence and the ability to make snap decisions.

The new White House aide graduated in 1954 from Princeton, where he was captain of the wrestling team. He has also been a Navy jet pilot, an aide to Senator Robert R. Griffin, Republican of Michigan, when he was in the House, and served briefly with a banking business in Chicago.

On the strength of these, Mr. Rumsfeld was elected to the House four times beginning in 1962 from the wealthy neighborhood that lines Lake Michigan north of Chicago. His campaigns were noteworthy for the support he generated among young people and for his margins of victory.

As a Representative, he had a reputation for being a moderate Republican. This reputation derived from a very conservative voting record coupled with a bent for fighting for reforming and modernizing the Republican party.

Mr. Rumsfeld turned his energies to national politics and the 1968 campaign of Richard M. Nixon. During that campaign, he served as one of 10 surrogate speakers for Mr. Nixon.

In his dual capacity as assistant to Mr. Nixon and director of the poverty program, Mr. Rumsfeld fought to keep the program going. And under his aegis, the program survived but more as a laboratory for ideas than as an operating agency. He left this job in December, 1970, and the activities of the Office of Economic Opportunity soon vanished.

His next assignments were as counselor to the President

and director of the Cost of Living Council, established to control inflation as part of the Nixon wage-price program. He was generally regarded as an effective administrator. He began to have problems with Mr. Haldeman and Mr. Ehrlichman, and eventually asked Mr. Nixon for a foreign assignment. He was named the envoy to NATO in December, 1972.

For the time being, Mr. Nessen said, Mr. Rumsfeld will continue to serve in the NATO post, but he added that Mr. Ford would soon nominate a successor.

Mr. Rumsfeld, who is known as "Rummy" to friends, is married to the former Joyce Pierson, his high-school sweetheart, and they have three children.