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parade

on the cover: Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig

Keep Your Eye on Al— Gen. Alexander Haig, That Is. His Star Is Rising.

by Lloyd Shearer





The President and Mrs. Haig pin promotion to Major General on Alexander Haig, No. 2 man at National Security Affairs. Kissinger's "good right hand," he has 27 years in Army but demeanor of a professor or diplomat.

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SAN CLEMENTE, CALIF.

With the exception of the President, no one in the Nixon Administration has been more publicized than Henry Kissinger, Nixon's National Security Affairs adviser.

Yet Kissinger does not work alone. He heads a staff of 110 including messengers, secretaries, researchers, and braintrusters, all self-effacing, hard-working men and women, none of them known to the public.

Of late, however, one of Dr. Kissinger's loyal and intrepid band of devoted slaves has begun to surface.

Mark his name carefully: Maj. Gen. Alexander Meigs Haig Jr.

At 47, Al Haig is tall, blue-eyed, and

more handsome and sex-appealing than secret agent Kissinger whose deputy he is.

Soft-speaking and tactful, subtly ambitious with just the right amount of ruthlessness, Al Haig is second in command at National Security Affairs. He is Henry's "gute rechte hand" (good right hand).

Checks on Vietnam

It is he who holds together the dedicated "low profiles" who work for Kissinger while Henry cavorts in strange and foreign lands. It is through him that the mountain of position papers on Vietnam, the Middle East, the Soviet

Union, South Africa, and ad infinitum is funneled. And it is he, without fanfare or publicity, who wings off to Vietnam every six months or so, to assess firsthand for the President how things are really going.

Last month Haig returned directly to San Clemente from his eighth trip to Southeast Asia and briefed the President on conditions in Vietnam and Cambodia. He was then trotted out on a non-attribution basis to the press, which described him as "an unidentified, high-ranking source."

Although Al Haig has spent the past 27 years in the Army, "my entire adult life," he neither looks nor behaves like

rate or parochial. There is no rigidity to his mind, which is open and inquiring, or to his speech, which is academic and articulate.

Haig could very well be taken for a college professor or a diplomat, which in a sense he is. For diplomacy is certainly a requisite in getting on with taskmaster Kissinger whose tolerance quotient is low and personnel turnover high.

Last month when Henry invited Haig to the swank Bistro restaurant, one of Kissinger's favorite restaurants in Beverly Hills, along with actress Sally Kellerman, Soviet Ambassador Anatoli Dobrynin, and a flock of screen colony Republican fat-cats, several waiters mistook Haig—heaven help him, for an actor.

Probable inheritor

Should anything happen to Henry, like being appointed Secretary of State, or being incapacitated by one of his scorned girlfriends, Haig most probably would inherit Kissinger's job.

Although philosophically Kissinger and Haig see eye to eye—both are conservatives—Haig as foreign affairs adviser to the President, would certainly avoid the spotlight Kissinger, by his nature, attracts.

To begin with, Haig is a happily-married, churchgoing Roman Catholic.

Son of a lawyer, he was born in Philadelphia, attended parochial grade school in Cynwyd on the Main Line, moved up to St. Joseph's Prep and studied two years at Notre Dame before his appointment to West Point came through in 1944.

His brother, a priest, is president of Wheeling College in West Virginia, and his sister, Regina Meredith, an attorney in Pennington, N.J.

Like many young men, Al Haig set his eye on a service academy appointment because it was a financial necessity. "My father died when I was 10," he explains, "and I had pretty much to fend for myself in terms of economics. I had newspaper routes, worked for the Post Office, the Atlantic Refining Company. I even worked as a floorwalker in the ladies' department of John Wanamaker's (a well-known department store in Philadelphia) to support myself."

On to West Point

Haig earned enough money to attend the University of Notre Dame, which he left at the end of his sophomore year after majoring in arts and letters. He was graduated from West Point in 1947, last of the three-year wartime classes, and academically was ranked 214 in a class of 310.

As a second lieutenant he was ordered to Japan where he played football for the division team, and was fortuitously assigned to General MacArthur's deputy chief of staff as an administrative assistant.

In Tokyo at a musical recital he met an attractive pianist named Patricia Fox

Arthur's deputy chief of staff.

"She was playing Chopin," Haig recalls. "She was quite good, and I was impressed both by the piano-playing and her looks, so I made a point of getting to know her. The result was that we got married in Tokyo and honeymooned in Japan, and after that I had to go to Taiwan and from there to the war in Korea."

Three children

The Haigs have three children: Alex, 20, a junior at Georgetown University; Brian, 19, who's just finished his plebe year at West Point, and Barbara, 16, who attends parochial school in Arlington, Va.

A fast perusal of Haig's military career reveals a proper mixture of desk duty, field duty, luck, and good contacts.

He fought in Korea, was invalidated out with hepatitis. He commanded an armored company in Fort Knox, pulled stints at West Point and Annapolis, served as operations officer in a tank battalion in Germany, then got assigned to Georgetown University for graduate study. With a master's degree in international relations, he wound up in the Pentagon, working on top-level Middle East and European affairs in the international plans and policy division.

In 1961 when the Central Intelligence Agency fouled up so badly on the Bay of Pigs fiasco, President Kennedy desperately turned to the Army for help. He ordered Cyrus Vance of the Defense Department to take over Cuban affairs. Vance brought in Major Haig as his military assistant.

It was during the Kennedy Administration that Al Haig began to earn a well-deserved reputation as a bright, perceptive, industrious administrator who could subordinate himself to the demands of more volatile superiors. He also developed expertise in the political and diplomatic aspects of military affairs. In the course of his work Haig met Joe Califano, then the Army's general counsel.

Moving up

When later, Cyrus Vance was appointed Robert McNamara's Deputy Secretary of Defense, Vance wisely moved both Haig and Califano up with him.

Subsequently Lyndon Johnson came to believe that Joe Califano was the source of much of McNamara's creative brilliance. He insisted that Califano be transferred to the White House, a move which immediately provided Haig with influential contacts in the highest echelons of government.

Although Califano, a Democrat, is no longer in government—he is a senior partner in the prestigious Washington, D.C., law firm of Williams, Connolly & Califano—he and Al Haig remain the closest of friends and see each other frequently.

Says Califano: "Al Haig is one of the new breed of sophisticated Army officers. He knows politics, international

ple. He has a first-rate mind, and he is not afraid to speak it. He was my deputy in the Pentagon, and he argues brilliantly and forcefully. Once you hear him out, he will go along with the decision. But he is a man of great integrity."

Haig returns the compliment. "Joe Califano," he says, "is one of the most brilliant men I've ever worked with." Haig also applies similar superlatives to describe Henry Kissinger.

Kissinger, in turn, predicts flatly, "One day Al is sure to become Chief of Staff of the Army or maybe chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He has all the attributes: intelligence, diligence, discipline, and experience."

The Haig-Kissinger mutual admiration society was founded in December of 1968, Haig was then a deputy commandant at West Point, the equivalent

"Concurrently," Haig remembers, "Henry gave me some work to do in an organizational way in tailoring the staff as he developed experience with it."

Arguments rare

A former member of Kissinger's staff who worked with Haig, recalls, "In the early days, Al's job was not particularly well-defined. But it quickly became apparent to some of us that his outstanding virtues were reliability and obedience. He rarely argued with Henry, in contrast to the academic types who did, and being a military man, he never questioned authority. He respectfully did what he was told to do, and he made no waves. He never constituted a threat to Henry's position, which back then was not nearly as secure as it is now. And in time Henry came to rely



Kissinger and Haig relax at San Clemente after a working session with Nixon. Should Kissinger take up another post, Haig is regarded as likely successor.

of dean, and Kissinger was working at the Hotel Pierre in New York City, putting together a foreign affairs staff for the newly elected Nixon.

As Haig recalls it, he received a telephone call from Gen. Andrew Goodpaster, either one of the most brainy or overrated officers in the Army (depending upon whom one talks to), informing him that "they were taking a look at me as a possible military adviser on the staff of the newly reinvigorated National Security Council."

Queried by Kissinger

"When I met Dr. Kissinger," Haig narrates, "he asked some very brief questions. He explained that he was interested in a military man who was a field soldier and a commander and not so much a military intellectual."

Since Haig had commanded troops in Vietnam in 1966, and had in fact won a battlefield promotion for leading troops in action on Route 13 near An Loc, Kissinger decided he might do. He asked Haig to report to Washington where Haig soon began preparing daily brief-

upon him, and even more important, to trust him."

Haig phrases it differently. "Over a period," he explains, "Henry and I developed a special rapport. From my perspective I found most of his views compatible with mine."

"The first time he suggested I go over to Vietnam to assess things for him and the President was in January or February of 1970. Since then I've gone back almost every six months. Usually the trip is at a juncture in the situation which requires a personal assessment for the President. He and Henry don't rely totally on reports from the field. They're much too prudent for that."

Last month on July 13th, Sen. Barry Goldwater, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, told the guests at a \$100-a-plate Republican fund-raising dinner in San Diego, "I predict that in the next month or 60 days the war will formally be over."

When General Haig was asked to make a prediction on the same subject, based on his past knowledge and his most recent inspection trip, he smiled and shook his head negatively.

an intellectual exercise," he demurred. "What I can say is that we have arrived strategically, militarily and in a sense, psychologically, at a point which makes the character of this particular juncture somewhat different from past crisis periods."

"I think many times Americans have a great tendency to look for a millenium in which struggles will stop. I don't think the world is made that way. All I can say is that the chances for peace, in my opinion, are better now than they have ever been, that the character of the conflict will be fundamentally modified."

Assesses Hanoi drive

When asked how he assessed the North Vietnamese offensive which began on March 30th this year, Haig replied: "I believe they had a number of objectives. One was to destroy the ARVN (South Vietnamese Army) as a fighting force, if not physically, at least in the context of inflicting a psychological defeat. I think, too, that they hoped to establish some territorial strong points, enclaves, from which they could raise the North Vietnamese flag and stake a legitimate claim for whatever political negotiating solution would be arrived at."

"There's no question that the persistence with which they hit such objectives as An Loc, Kwantom, and Hue gives credence to the fact that they were willing to pay almost any price, because they suffered severely there."

"I don't believe they've accomplished their objectives," he went on. "The enemy initiatives have dropped off. They've taken very severe local defeats. ARVN morale is on the rise, and at this juncture they're as strong if not stronger than before they were attacked. I would see an improving situation for the South Vietnamese. Now I don't mean to imply," he hastily hedged, "that there will be no local setbacks and that there won't be some sharp fighting from time to time. But I believe that with U.S. air and naval power, they will hold."

Stimulating—but

Haig, who puts in a 13- to 15-hour day as Kissinger's deputy, assigning, supervising, and reading the endless papers prepared by Henry's foreign affairs specialists, says that he finds the desk life intellectually stimulating, challenging, and rewarding. "But at some time," he concedes, "I'd like to return to the Army, which after all, is my chosen profession."

In Army circles, the word is that Al Haig, now a two-star general, is headed for four-star rank.

"No matter who's elected President," one envious colleague declares, "Haig can't miss. His good friend, Joe Califano, is general counsel for the Democratic Party, and his good friend Henry Kissinger, is tops with Nixon. On all sides he's surrounded by friends. Al's star is rising." □