

Chief of Nixon's Guard Is Removed

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By PHILIP SHABECOFF
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WASHINGTON, Feb. 13—The White House disclosed today that the head of President Nixon's Secret Service detail had been removed from his post.

The disclosure came amid reports from sources close to the Secret Service that some agents assigned to the White House to protect the President and his family feared their mission was being compromised by political considerations.

The White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, confirmed at a press briefing today that Robert H. Taylor, chief of the White House detail for the last four years, had been moved out of the White House and had been offered a

job at Secret Service headquarters.

Mr. Ziegler denied published reports that Mr. Taylor had been ousted because of a "rift" with H. R. Haldeman, the White House chief of staff.

In a telephone conversation later in the day, Mr. Ziegler insisted that any reports that Mr. Taylor had been removed for punitive reasons were "absolutely incorrect." Mr. Taylor, he said, is being promoted to a higher post within the Secret Service and the shift in jobs was "based upon discussions within the Secret Service."

Mr. Ziegler said that reports that Mr. Taylor was leaving because of a dispute with Mr. Haldeman were "unfair to a professional Secret Service officer" and "simply untrue."

However, sources intimately acquainted with the inner workings of the Secret Service insisted later in the day that Mr. Taylor had been removed because of a clash he had with Mr. Haldeman last Nov. 3 at the time of the national election campaign.

The clash reportedly occurred when Mr. Haldeman sought to relax security measures during a campaign stop by President Nixon in Providence, R.I.

According to the sources, Mr. Haldeman wanted to drop ropes holding back the crowd at the Providence airport after Mr. Nixon's plane landed there so

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that the President's supporters would be able to rush across the tarmac for a "spontaneous" demonstration.

But Mr. Taylor reportedly refused to allow it and, according to one source in a position to know what went on, he threatened to arrest Mr. Haldeman if the Presidential aide went ahead and ordered the ropes lowered.

After that incident, the sources said, Mr. Haldeman sought to have Mr. Taylor removed as head of the White House Secret Service detail.

William L. Duncan, second in command of the White House security force, is also leaving his post, John Warner, public information officer for the Secret Service, confirmed in response to a question. He said that Mr. Duncan had asked to be transferred to a field post.

At least one reason Mr. Duncan is leaving the White House, the sources said, is his strong support for the position taken by Mr. Taylor toward Mr. Haldeman.

They added that James J. Rowley, director of the Secret Service, had bowed to Mr. Haldeman's demand, supported by other White House staff members, that Mr. Taylor be removed.

Mr. Taylor has been offered the post of special agent in charge of the Foreign Dignitaries Protective Division and has decided to accept it, Mr. Warner said.

Meanwhile, Richard E.

Keiser, a member of the White House Secret Service detail, has been named acting chief of the detail, Mr. Warner said. He added that no decision had been made on a permanent replacement for Mr. Taylor.

The Secret Service men at the White House were said to be deeply demoralized by the circumstances under which Mr. Taylor departed, according to sources close to them.

Agents Held Worried

Some agents assigned to protect the President were described as being concerned that they would have difficulty in concentrating on their job because now they must "worry" about the consequences of how they perform their task.

Mr. Warner said that the whereabouts of special agents were never disclosed and that he could not confirm that Mr. Taylor had been in Providence last Nov. 3. He said that there would be no comment about morale problems in the Secret Service.

In a telephone conversation this evening, Mr. Ziegler insisted that, because the story of a rift between Mr. Taylor and Mr. Haldeman was untrue, the alleged incident at the Providence airport must therefore be untrue as well.

Mr. Ziegler also declared that Mr. Duncan's departure from the White House detail had nothing to do with Mr. Taylor. Mr. Duncan was leaving at his own request to further his career interests by taking a field post, the White House press secretary asserted.

Mr. Ziegler said he was concerned that "the story is getting out of hand."

Mr. Warner, the Secret Service spokesman, said that both Mr. Taylor and Mr. Duncan were on sick leave. Neither could immediately be reached for comment.

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REPORTS

Ziegler said he is a friend of Taylor's and, in the telephone conversation, reiterated his concern about the spread of these reports. He stated categorically that "never at any time did Taylor threaten to arrest Haldeman."

He said that Haldeman had been in charge of the President's travel arrangements and that Haldeman and Taylor had had "a number of discussions about how to do things," but that there had been "no rift."



United Press International
Robert H. Taylor, who has been removed as head of the White House detail of the Secret Service, with President Nixon at a recent ceremony.