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4-Star Retirement Of Haig Assailed

Washington

Comptroller-General Elmer Staats has notified the Defense Department that the manner of General Alexander Haig's retirement from the Army was illegal and that the Nixon aide owes the government back military pay of nearly \$10,000 and also a portion of his retirement benefits.

In a seven-page letter to Defense Secretary James Schlesinger, Staats noted that Haig took over as White House chief of staff on May 4, 1973, but did not retire from the Army until July 31.

According to Staats' letters, military personnel on active duty are forbidden by law to hold down any job within the government that was created by statute.

Therefore, Staats said, Haig illegally held the post of White House chief of staff while still a four-star general and vice chief of staff of the Army.

Having chosen to retire from the Army rather than from his civilian job, Staats argued, Haig owes the government all military pay he received from May 4 through July 31, 1973. That comes to approximately \$10,000.

Staats also told Schlesinger in the letter, which was sent on Feb. 14, 1974, that because Haig's retirement should have begun on May 4 rather than July 31, the general was not entitled to a four-star general's pension. Haig's promotion took effect on Jan. 4, 1973, and he had not held the rank long enough to qualify.

Instead, Staats said, Haig should be receiving the pension of a two-star general, his prior rank. That would mean Haig would receive \$3300 less a year in retirement pay. He currently receives over \$25,000 a year retirement pay.

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