

Haig's Knack For Hitting It Right

By Vera Glaser and Malvina Stephenson

Washington

WITHOUT his White House security blanket, General Alexander M. Haig Jr., the new Army vice chief of staff, suddenly has become super-cautious.

The handsome, brilliant Haig became a headline name when he was Henry Kissinger's traveling companion.

In the 1972 campaign Haig, a Nixon loyalist, dazzled Republicans at unpublicized briefings on Vietnam.

But after a recent day at the Pentagon, which included a visit to President Nixon, Haig showed other facets of his little-known personality.

During an interview, Haig's eyes were chilly blue. His pretty wife, Pat, sat behind him, silent and attentive.

"Just don't make me controversial," Haig said, settling into the sofa of his modest suburban home.

Haig, 43, appears to have a knack for hitting it right. He married a general's daughter, landed in the White House and zoomed from colonel to four-star general in four years.

Since January 5, he has been the Army's No. 2 man, but the direct White House

telephone line remains in his residence.

Haig's caution undoubtedly is related to his new vulnerability, both inside and out of the Pentagon.

No longer protected by executive privilege, he must appear when congressional snipers call him to Capitol Hill.

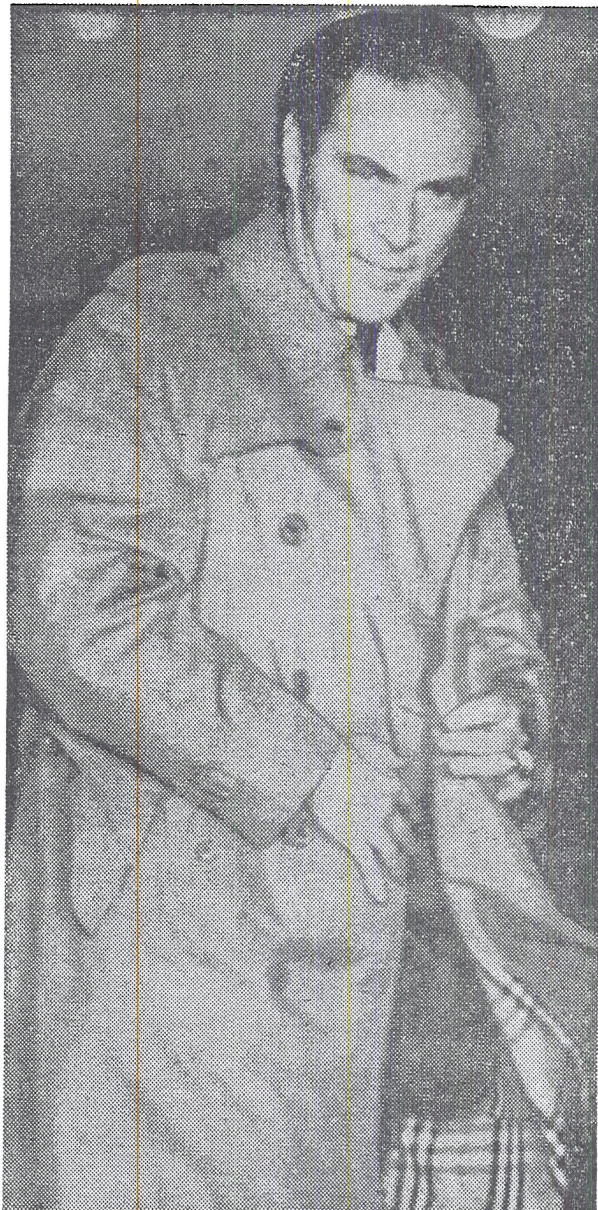
Some of the 243 generals over whom he was chosen as vice chief may be miffed. If he remains a pipeline to the White House, he might be one-upping his own bosses in the Pentagon.

The perquisites of Haig and other high-ranking officers are under fire. Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.) has introduced a bill to end the military practice of using enlisted men as servants.

In a floor speech Proxmire attacked the costly training given enlisted men in gourmet cooking (Mrs. Haig says she is "not an especially good cook"), tending bar, arranging hors d'oeuvres, etc.

Haig's new salary and allowances are equivalent to \$43,080 a year. Four enlisted men, with salaries totaling about \$30,000 are authorized for his personal and household chores.

The Haigs and their three



GENERAL ALEXANDER HAIG
"Don't make me controversial"

children will move shortly into a spacious house at Fort McNair.

"Observing that it's unfair" not to provide help when one is expected to "entertain so many people," Mrs. Haig became the first general's wife to publicly defend the "servant" system.

Her chatty remarks were made before General Haig entered to speak for himself. He downplayed his continued link with the White House and his briefings for GOP leaders.

The reason President Nixon still calls on him, the general said, is that "I have

taken a certain degree of background knowledge with me, which it's essential to tap if needed; but it will become less so."

He claims the briefings he gave Nixon surrogates and campaign officials last fall were not political because "they were the same I gave

congressional and academic groups. They asked the same questions."

He burst out laughing for the first time when asked his view on the Equal Rights for Women Amendment, which could make women subject to military conscription in emergencies. After

trying to change the subject, he said, "I don't think we are ready for women to carry rifles, subjected to those kinds of risks."

He added, "We have ROTC for the girls now. I think this is fine."

Haig has passed an acid test by adeptly coping with

prima donnas like Kissinger and South Vietnamese President Nguyen Van Thieu. He is able to do it because "he's direct and has a sense of humor," Mrs. Haig said.

But to these reporters Haig himself showed none of Kissinger's self-deprecating wit.