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Haig Picked As Head-of Nixon Staff

By Austin Scott

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KEY BISCAYNE, Fla.,
May 4—President Nixon today named Gen. Alexander M. Haig, Jr., a man he has frequently relied on in difficult situations, as an interim replacement for resigned White House chief of staff H.R. (Bob) Haldeman.

The selection of Haig, one of the fastest rising generals in the Army and a clear favorite of the White House, was Mr. Nixon's first public move to repair the gaping holes torn in his staff by the Watergate scandal.

There were hints that the President may go much further than just replacing bodies, restructuring the staff as well as making changes in the flow of information.

"In his own mind he has all options open," said press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler. Future changes, Ziegler said, will be "designed to allow the business of the White House to proceed in a more effective way than perhaps it did in the past."

Haig headed the White House advance team that went to China in January, 1972, to prepare for the President's meeting with Chinese leaders, and made 11 trips to Indochina during the final negotiations of the Vietnam peace agreement.

At 48 a four-star general for only eight months, Haig becomes the gatekeeper over much of the flow of information and individuals to the President.

"Gen. Haig will have the responsibility of . . . coordinating the flow of information in to the President," along with scheduling, Ziegler said. It's a job about which Haldeman once said, "Every President needs an S.O.B., and I'm Nixon's."

It's also a job with which Haig is familiar. As deputy assistant to the President for national security affairs, Haig organized foreign affairs adviser Henry Kissinger's staff to keep the work of the National Security Council flowing smoothly, and prepared for the President a daily 10- or 12-page summary of security conditions throughout the world.

President Nixon was quoted as saying in September, "When you see the lights burning late in Kissinger's office, it's usually Haig," and describing him as "one of the outstanding military men I've met."

"A great portion of the work will be administrative, but he will also be involved in policy formulation," Ziegler said. "The President has great confidence in General Haig, not only in his abilities as an individual, but also in his administrative abilities."

Haig conferred with the President for 45 minutes Thursday morning, Ziegler said, and is already at work



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New White House chief of staff Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr. talks to newsmen in the office of his predecessor, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, who resigned last Monday.

HAIG, From A1

in Haldeman's corner office in the West Wing of the White House.

Haldeman resigned April 30 but is still on the payroll, Ziegler said, with no firm date for the termination of his \$42,500 annual salary.

"It is my understanding that he intends to be out of his office this weekend," Ziegler said. Asked about a specific date for removing Haldeman from the payroll, Ziegler said, "I anticipate it will be relatively soon."

Haig will continue on the military payroll at his present rank, Ziegler said, and will be one of the candidates considered to fill the White House job permanently. Pentagon sources said Haig considers his appointment temporary and intends to return to his position as Army vice chief of staff.

Haig stopped in briefly at the Pentagon yesterday, to see his boss, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton W. Abrams.

As he was hurrying out of the building, Haig told a few newsmen that he was "surprised" by his new assignment but that it was "just fine" with him. He added that he was starting on it "right now. I've got a lot of work to do and I'm going to do it."

Haig said "yes," his new assignment was a temporary one, and "no," he would not be leaving the Army, as his black limousine pulled away from the Pentagon and headed across the river to the White House.

The President's action has parallels from his days as Vice President when presidential assistant Sherman Adams was forced to resign in 1958, and President Eisenhower brought in Gen. Wilton Persons to become No. 2 man at the White House.

When Mr. Nixon nominated Haig to become a four-star general last Sept. 7, he stepped over 240 senior Army generals to pick him, and skipped him right over the three-star rank.

Haig joined Kissinger's staff as senior military adviser in January, 1969. By November, 1969, he had his first star, and within 18 months he was deputy assistant to Kissinger, having impressed both his boss and the President with his abil-

ity to grasp the large and unwieldy policy questions handled by the National Security Council, and to put in long hours of work that kept much of the organizational burden off Kissinger.

There was, however, some private sense of frustration expressed by a few top Pentagon officers yesterday. Though nominated by the President to become vice chief of staff last September, Haig's special duties as deputy to Kissinger kept him from moving to the Pentagon until January, and now he is gone again.

Coming on the heels of Defense Secretary Elliot L. Richardson's pending transfer to the Justice Department, Haig's departure marked the second time in a week that the White House reached into the Pentagon's hierarchy to help solve the Nixon administration's personnel problems.

Asked what party Haig belongs to, Ziegler said he thought the general was a Republican, but could not say for sure because "you won't believe this, but the general and I have never discussed politics."

In the matter of a successor for Richardson, Ziegler confirmed that multimillionaire industrialist David Packard is the leading candidate for Secretary of Defense. Packard held the job Deputy Defense Secretary for 35 months during Mr. Nixon's first term.

In Washington, it was understood that Packard is in fact prepared to accept the nomination if arrangements can be made to allow him to avoid dumping his huge holdings (\$400 million-plus) in Hewlett-Packard Corp., the Palo Alto, Calif., electronic firm that he co-founded. It is believed that the Senate Armed Services Committee will approve a trust fund arrangement similar to that approved when Packard became deputy secretary in 1969.

Selling such a huge block of stock, which is normally in the earlier instance, Defense, could have a serious effect on the company, and Packard apparently is intent on avoiding this.

In the earlier in stance, Packard gave the \$27 million in profits earned by his stocks to charity.