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Sharp Jab at Haig Role in Cox Firing

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Representative Edward I. Koch (Dem-N.Y.) criticized White House chief of staff Alexander Haig yesterday for the part he played in the events surrounding the firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox.

"It ill serves the national interest or mood to have a general in the White House whose actions and language are more appropriate to a military junta than a civilian government," Koch said in a speech on the House floor.

Koch said he was referring to the phrase "The commander-in-chief has given you an order" which Haig reportedly used in unsuccessfully directing Deputy Attorney General William D. Ruckelshaus to fire Cox. Ruckelshaus was fired when he refused to carry out the order.

The New York Democrat also said many Americans were "shocked" by Haig's order that the FBI seal off the offices of the special prosecutor.

"It seems the White House has no intention of abandoning the arrogant style that was the hallmark of H.R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman," Koch said. "The palace guard is now run by a general who forgets that the President and his staff are the public's servants, not its masters," he added.

Haig is a retired general who was serving as the Army's vice chief of staff when President Nixon tapped him to head the White House staff in the wake of resignations arising from the Watergate affair.

"When I was in the Army I had to learn how to do things in a military manner. Now that General Haig is a civilian, he should re-learn how to do things in a civil manner," Koch said.

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