Talk of Haldeman Influence Persists Despite New Denials

By Lou Cannon Washington Post Staff Writer

In the seven months since H. R. Haldeman stepped down as White House chief of staff, there have been persistent reports that he continues to exercise a shadow influence in the highest counsels of the Nixon administration. White House spokesmen have always denied that Haldeman remains a figure of influence.

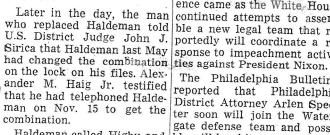
Yesterday the question came up again in the wake of testimony by Haldeman's former aide, Lawrence M. Higby, that Haldeman possessed enough authority in mid-November to order him to find a House official said the Presi-

white House deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren denied once again yesterday that Haldeman has any authority within the White House. But Warren conceded, for the first time, that the President had talked with Haldeman over the telephone and that Haldeman also held telephone conversions. telephone conversations "three or four times, maybe five" with White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, who has become one of Mr. Nixon's closest aides.

ing instructions from Mr. Haldeman" about Watergate or other issues. He declined, however, to comment on the Higby testimony on grounds the case is in court.

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PRESIDENT, From A1



Haldeman called Higby and gave him the combination. He also instructed Higby not to give any of the file's contents to Haig without first reporting back to Haldeman with a sum-

Haldeman's continuing influence came as the White House continued attempts to assemble a new legal team that reportedly will coordinate a response to impeachment activi-

The Philadelphia Bulletin reported that Philadelphia District Attorney Arlen Spec-ter soon will join the Water-gate defense team and possibly will head it.

Warren conceded that conversations with Specter are being held but said that no decision had been reached. In Philadelphia, Specter, who has mary of what Haig wanted.

Haig said he did not obtain the combination himself until practice and declined to say whether the President will be a sof his clients.



ARLEN SPECTER . may join Nixon team

The prospect of Specter's physical appointment apparently has Bet touched off a behind-the-scenes battle within the White House. Haig reportedly is sociated Press, the President's skeptical about Specter's ability to head the Nixon defense, ity to head the Nixon defense, and Mr. Nixon was "well—exas is Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania.

Scott's support is vital for the President, particularly if an impeachment resolution lems whatsoever. reaches the Senate.

courtroom experience. He has tried only a handful of cases himself, and there is a feeling by his critics that a more experienced courtroom extensions. perienced courtroom attorney should head the defense.

One source said it was possible that Specter would be-come a member of the Nixon legal team but would not actu-

examination has Bethesda Naval Medical Cen-

> In an interview with the Ascept at times I think he's tired."

Tkach said the 60-year-old President had no health prob-

In the interview Tkach said Among the objections to his one complaint was that the Specter is his lack of personal courtroom experience. He has tried only a handful of cases will be aggravated by the energy shortage because Mr.
Nixon will not be able to walk
or swim as much in Washington as he can in San Clemente or Key Biscayne.

Asked why he couldn't walk on the White House grounds, and team but would not actulated it.

President Nixon, meanwhile, heduled a mid-December to be watching him."