

Advice Nixon Refused

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Henry Kissinger and White House chief of staff Alexander Haig have tried unsuccessfully for six months to persuade President Nixon to disassociate himself from three former top aides who are targets of the Watergate investigation, according to White House sources and a former presidential speechwriter.

Instead, the President has continued to maintain his close association with former aides H. R. Haldeman, John Ehrlichman and Charles Colson and has linked his public and legal defense to them, the sources said.

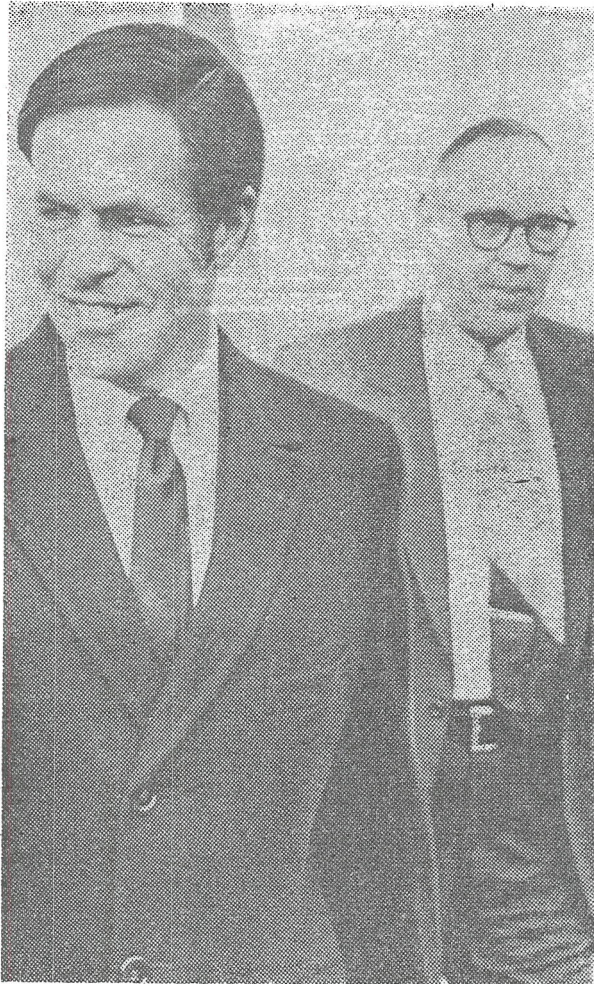
Secretary of State Kissinger and Haig believe Mr. Nixon's course could result in disastrous legal consequences and public relations problems for the President, but they have failed in all their efforts to reverse it, the sources reported.

Instead of turning to senior members of his White House staff for advice on Watergate and other sensitive issues, the sources said, Mr. Nixon has increasingly sought the counsel of his two close friends, businessmen Charles G. "Bebe" Rebozo and Robert H. Abplanalp. In addition, the sources said, Mr. Nixon has continued to meet and stay in regular telephone contact with Ehrlichman, Colson and Haldeman.

One account of unsuccessful efforts by Haig and Kissinger to separate Mr. Nixon from the three former aides was supplied in an interview this week by a former presidential speechwriter, John K. Andrews Jr., who resigned from the White House staff in December.

Reading from notes he made of July 27 discussion he had with Kissinger in preparation for a then upcoming speech by Mr. Nixon on Watergate, Andrews quoted Kissinger as recommending that "the President take responsibility for the climate of excessive warfare" in the White House.

According to Andrews, Kissinger recommended that the President say in his speech: "I've cleaned out the old staff . . . I've gotten rid of these people . . . the paranoia had been nurtured by my aides."



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H. R. Haldeman, shown above with his lawyer, is one of three men Mr. Nixon has been urged to drop.

Kissinger's suggestions were rejected, however, by another White House aide, presidential Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, who was quoted by Andrews as telling him that "contrition is bull—" Mr. Nixon's Watergate speech, delivered last August 15, included none of Kissinger's suggested criticism of the President's former top aides.

Andrews also quoted General Haig as telling him much later, on November 11, that "the President has an excessive desire to protect old friends."

According to another former White House official, Haig was approached last summer by Haldeman, and asked to raise money for the legal defense of Ehrlichman and himself.

The former White House official, who said he was told the story by Ehrlichman, then recounted the following version of a conversation between Haldeman and Haig.

Haldeman: "We (Haldeman and Ehrlichman) hear that the President doesn't want us to have a legal defense fund."

Haig: "No, that is not correct," or "No, that is not my understanding."

Haldeman: "Then raise us some money."

"I wonder what emboldened Haldeman to almost order Haig to raise the money?" The former White House official mused after recounting the conversation.

The former official, as well as other White House sources, said they had no knowledge that Haig, any White House aides or anyone else were involved in raising funds for Haldeman, Ehrlichman or Colson.

The question of a continuing association between the President and his three former aides is becoming increasingly important to Mr. Nixon's own legal position in the Watergate affair, the sources said, because major Watergate indictments are expected perhaps as soon as late next week.

In his account of Kissinger's July 27 suggestions that Mr. Nixon publicly disassociate himself from his three former aides, Andrews quoted Kissinger as saying of the three: "If they were evil incarnate, they could not have had a greater

triumph of hurting the President."

After receiving Kissinger's suggestion that the President announce in his August 15 speech that he had "cleaned out the old staff (and) . . . gotten rid of these people," Andrews said, he took the recommendations to Ziegler.

After deriding the suggestion as "contrition," according to Andrews, Ziegler said "the President shouldn't talk about his mistakes . . . but turn Watergate into a plus . . . reassure the people of the health of the system. The President shouldn't say he's sorry again. He's already said it once."

The President's August 15 Watergate speech generally followed the lines suggested by Ziegler and contained no direct references to Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Colson. Mr. Nixon said only that he accepted personal responsibility for "serious abuses" of political ethics by unnamed members of his staff.

At least four sources have said in recent weeks that the President has kept in close contact with Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Colson. The sources said that Mr. Nixon and Haldeman met shortly after Haldeman testified before the Senate select Watergate committee in August.

Two sources this week said that Ehrlichman met privately with the President about September 13. This was more than a week after Ehrlichman had been indicted in California on charges of conspiracy to commit burglary in connection with the White House "plumbers" break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

John J. Wilson, the attorney who represents both Ehrlichman and Haldeman met privately with the President several times last April, a courtesy apparently not granted to any other person under investigation in Watergate-related cases. Haldeman was also allowed to listen to some White House tape recordings last summer.

Colson resigned from the White House staff early last year to open a private law practice here. Haldeman and Ehrlichman resigned under pressure April 30 when the President said they were "two of the finest public servants it has been my privilege to know."