

# Revising Presidency: Why the Pace Is Slow

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 27—When President Ford was sworn into office on Aug. 9, he and his closest advisors were determined to reshape the Presidency he inherited from Richard M. Nixon. This would be done largely by making it more open and more broadly based and by removing everyone who had any association with the Watergate scandals.

That effort has been pursued since then, with some success. But change is proving more difficult than some of Mr. Ford's associates expected, so entrenched were some of the personnel and methods of the Nixon Administration and so strong is the tradition of a dominant Presidency.

As a result, it may be some months before the extent and nature of the changes Mr. Ford can effect are clear.

Removal of Nixon personnel associated with Watergate has turned out to be the most immediate difficulty. Mr. Ford's advisers have been almost unanimous in saying that the housecleaning had to be a clean sweep, and that it must include Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., the White House chief of staff, who has held that position since H. R. Haldeman

resigned under fire April 30, 1973.

Mr. Ford's advisers point out that General Haig had an important role in formulating Mr. Nixon's Watergate defense and in the dismissal last October of the first special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, and was in charge of the White House staff at the time when the handling of tape recordings and other evidence became a controversy.

## General Expects to Stay

Furthermore, the four-star general's appointment as White House chief of staff was controversial because he held the post for a few weeks before resigning from the Army, setting what some consider a precedent for military involvement in the Government.

One close associate of Mr. Ford, who has been a part of his advisory staff, said last week that he was convinced that General Haig would be leaving after the transition was complete, within two to three months, in keeping with the policy of having a "100 per cent Ford Administration."

But General Haig and some of the White House staff think otherwise.

"The President asked me not

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once, not twice, but three times to stay." General Haig said in a telephone interview, and he pointed out that J. F. terHorst, the President's press secretary, had announced that President Ford had asked General Haig to stay indefinitely.

One Presidential aide said privately that Mr. Ford had apparently decided to compromise his resolve for a clean sweep of those associated with Watergate because, in addition to liking General Haig, he found that he would need the chief of staff for some time.

Under Mr. Nixon's method of running the White House, General Haig was the one conduit from the President to the rest of the executive branch. He also oversaw the Presidential staff, which now numbers about 500 persons, exclusive of the Office of Management and Budget and other White House agencies.

## Uneasy Truce Prevails

When Mr. Ford assumed the office, the aide said, he had no

one immediately available to assume control of the staff in the way General Haig could.

The staff now includes Nixon people and Ford people, working side by side in an uneasy truce.

Still on the payroll and occupying offices are a number of people connected with the Nixon militancy that the new Administration seems eager to keep out of the limelight. They include, among others, Patrick J. Buchanan, the speech writer, and the Rev. John J. McLaughlin, a Jesuit priest who did public relations work.

Most of these are said to be looking for other employment, in and out of government, and, while the Ford staff is eager for them to go, it does not want to dismiss them summarily in the way that unwanted staff people were discharged under Mr. Nixon.

There is no indication that any deadline has been put on their leaving. As long as there are Nixon holdovers on the staff, General Haig's services as chief of staff are considered valuable to the new President.

## Would Resume Career

Also contributing to the reluctance to let General Haig go is the fact that he played an important role in Mr. Nixon's resignation as President, urging it in the final days, and the fact that Mr. Nixon had drafted him from the military to take over the White House staff assignment, making it difficult for him to return to his military career because of the political nature of his job.

Although he would like to return, there is opposition within the military to his doing so.

General Haig's staying and holding his present responsibilities, however, runs counter to the recommendation of Mr. Ford's special transition committee, a recommendation intended to disperse authority under Mr. Ford's design for reshaping the Presidency.

Under that recommendation, now on the President's desk awaiting his approval, Mr. Ford would have five or six close

advisers, each for a particular function of government. The chief of staff would no longer be the conduit through which the President conducts all business. The chief of staff, as largely an administrator and coordinator, would be sharply downgraded in both function and influence.

While Mr. Ford's style and inclination seem to favor dealing directly with many in Government, the problem of how to structure the staff remains unresolved, and students of the Presidency point out that the pressures of the office have persuaded other Presidents to insist on a "tighter ship" with more centralized control, however they may have felt about broad contacts in the beginning.

Mr. Ford comes from the Republican school of politics that calls for restraint by government at all levels, and when he became President he indicated that he would make the office more into what it was like under President Eisenhower, showing more respect for Con-

gress and other institutions that was done in recent years.

Yet he also accepted the public expectations of what the office is supposed to be, expectations that have grown since General Eisenhower's day—an office that people look to for solving a growing range of problems and setting the tone for public manners and morals.

Since taking office, Mr. Ford has seized upon controlling the economy in a time of inflation as the chief problem to be solved, and this and other issues have so occupied his time that he has had little left for reshaping the office. Some of his friends doubt he will find much time for that in the fu-

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