

General Haig Was 'Acting President'



Jack Anderson

PRESIDENT FORD discovered when he moved into the White House that ex-President Nixon's staff chief, General Alexander Haig, was functioning as the "acting President."

This characterization of Haig has been given by sources totally familiar with the White House operations during Mr. Nixon's final months. The harassed former President had become so obsessed with his Watergate woes, they say, that he left Haig in charge of running the country.

To his credit, the able, articulate Haig held the government together as the Watergate nightmare slowly stifled the oval office. The only exception: He left foreign affairs in the hands of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

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WE HAVE now established beyond doubt that Mr. Nixon spent almost his full time brooding over his Watergate predicament and scheming with a few trusted advisers how to get out of it. "He was like a man groping through a poisonous fog," said one source.

Haig handled the presidential powers, which were thrust upon him, wisely and well, our sources agree. He was acutely conscious of his military background and tried to take a civilian's view of the nation's problems, they say.

He has tried quietly to relinquish his tremendous powers, according to our

sources, since President Ford took over. But the White House staff is so conditioned to taking orders from Haig that he still wields more authority inside the White House than Mr. Ford's top aides.

This is one reason the President eased Haig out and named him Supreme Allied Commander in Europe.

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THE POWERFUL grizzly bear, which once roamed in great numbers through the West, is now threatened with extinction below the Canadian border.

This is the main conclusion of an unpublished Interior Department report which means that the animal may be endangered unless steps are taken to protect it.

To save the grizzly, the report urgently recommends that "sport hunting be temporarily banned" in the Yellowstone Ecosystem of Wyoming, Idaho and Montana.

Conservationists estimate that only about 900 of these magnificent carnivores still survive in the lower 48 states. Yet the state of Montana, where the largest population of grizzlies exists, issued 919 grizzly permits for this year's hunting season.

If only a small number of these hunters are successful, the entire species could be nearly wiped out in the area. Yet Montana has refused to close down its season, and the U.S. Forest Service has refused to take action.