

DOLE PREDICTS HAIG CONFIRMATION

-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) today praised the choice of retired General Alexander Haig as Secretary of State, saying he "had the reputation of someone who could face the hard facts and make the tough choices, something America needs to put back into its foreign policy. The United States can only hope to meet peacefully Soviet challenges and aggression by acting in unison with our allies, coordinating our action and policies and enforcing them jointly," Dole said.

"Al Haig is the man to do that. He knows the NATO leaders personally. They give him high marks for his service under Presidents Ford and Carter as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe for NATO. His relationship with West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, in many ways our most important ally in Europe, is particularly close. General Haig has the confidence of the leaders of our allies and the respect of our potential adversaries," said Dole. "By designating General Haig as this nation's next Secretary of State, President-elect Reagan has sent a clear message to the Soviet Union and to the rest of the world about America's new foreign policy."

WATERGATE PAST

Commenting on the Senate confirmation hearings, Senator Dole said, "I know of nothing that would prevent General Haig from getting a strong confirmation vote. Of course, there should and will be a full and thorough investigation by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The tough questions will be asked. But assuming there are no unforeseen bombshells - and I know Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Jaworski has said that Haig, chief of staff in the critical last months of Nixon's presidency, has done nothing that was wrongful - then there will be no trouble with the confirmation."

Dole predicted the controversy over Haig would be "gone by the time President Reagan was inaugurated. The chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee has indicated the hearings will begin on January 9th and the Democrats on the committee have already begun their background investigation and hired the assistant chief counsel of the old Senate Watergate Committee as a consultant," said Dole. ~~"The Republican Senate will be able to give General Haig the same quick but thorough investigation we gave Billy Carter last summer under the Democratic Senate."~~

HAIG'S PAST RECORD

"The nation probably owes General Haig some measure of gratitude for his role in holding the executive branch together and in the smooth transition in getting Nixon to resign," Dole remarked, "rather than our suspicion. His record has been illustrious from the beginning, as an aide to both General Douglas MacArthur and former Defense Secretary, Robert McNamara. He participated in the Inchon landing in the Korean War, one of the most successful U.S. military operations since World War II and received a Distinguished Service Cross during the battle of Ap Gu in the Vietnam War. "Haig obviously possesses the qualifications to be Secretary of State. I trust he will be judged on that basis," said Dole.