

'Close to Vance, Califano, Kraemer'

Recent interviews with close associates of Alexander Haig, who are members of the strategic policy community in Washington, distinctly profile the U.S. NATO Commander as an opportunist of limited abilities. Like Henry Kissinger, Alexander Haig was the protégé of Fritz Kraemer, a Defense Department strategist. Haig, one official said, peddles his nostalgia for World War II to credulous patriotic Americans, but finds his closest friends among the Anglo-American Episcopalian and Jesuit elite for whom the prefix 'Anglo-' is what really counts.

The following excerpts of a conversation with John Lehman, former deputy director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and now a Republican Party foreign policy advisor, were made available to the Executive Intelligence Review.

I worked under Haig on Kissinger's staff from 1969 to 1974. I worked very closely with him. I don't know that he has decided what he will do on June 30 when he leaves NATO, but he will certainly be heard from. He has very great problems with current U.S. policy, but he would never speak disparagingly of the President while in uniform. I cannot imagine that he is not deeply upset by the defense and foreign policy of this Administration. I am convinced that that is why he quit.

Energy Secretary Schlesinger and Haig support each other and are very good friends. So are Haig and Health, Education and Welfare Secretary Joseph Califano. Haig is personally very, very close to Cy Vance. Al thinks very highly of Vance. In fact, the main influences on Haig have been Fritz Kraemer, Vance, and Kissinger. Of course, he was trained at a Jesuit prep school which gave him a logical turn of mind.

He was very highly regarded by Nelson Rockefeller. I think Rockefeller wanted him to run for President this time. John Connally would also praise Haig, same with George Bush, (Sen. Bob) Dole, (Sen. John) Tower, and John Kendall of Pepsico — he is a Haig fan.

Haig saw Nixon in Paris, but they are not close. Haig does have a close relationship with Kissinger. They talk several times a week. But Haig always talks with Vance and Califano, and of course he is close to (columnist) Rowly Evans. He knows Vance and Califano from Pentagon days under Lyndon B. Johnson, and he sees them, Vance especially, whenever he's in town and keeps in touch with them both all the time anyway. I don't see that that should surprise you, the differences are not so great.

Within NATO, Haig, is very close to NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns.

'Henry is Jealous'

A retired United States general now prominent in policy-making circles of the Republican Party had this to say about Haig.

I have known Al Haig for a long time. He has a good Jesuit background and is close to Schlesinger — they have the same attitude on U.S. and Soviet relations. ... I have no doubt Haig will speak up. His views will be widely sought and will have tremendous impact. I am not so sure Henry Kissinger is happy about that. I don't think Henry is happy about Haig at all — jealousy. Partly because of place of birth — that is, Al can run for President, but Henry can not. Henry does not like it that Al is getting all that attention.

I don't think Haig is going to run for President, but I would tell the candidate I am advising to put him in his cabinet.

The NATO situation is bad. West Germany is coming unglued. (Social Democratic Party parliamentary leader Herbert) Wehner and (SPD leader Egon) Bahr are pressuring Schmidt. What they are doing is shattering. The Soviets are moving to create the conditions of Rapallo (the trade and military pact between the USSR and Germany finalized in 1923 —ed.). They do not have any handbook as to how to create these conditions, but they are poised and ready to go. Schmidt is too smart to be sucked in, except for pressures from the left wing. He has got a genuine problem. Schmidt is popular, but his party is not. I was recently in West Germany. I was astonished by the material well-being. I met with (Christian Social Union Chairman) Strauss, (CDU security spokesman Manfred) Woerner, and Schmidt. Schmidt talked at great length to us about his European Monetary System, but I could not understand it.

Yes, I know Haig is very close to Cy Vance and Califano.

'Haig thinks like Schlesinger'

A third opinion on Haig was offered by another Republican Party advisor.

In NATO, we always accepted that the Soviet Union had conventional, on-the-ground superiority. To me, the only chance we had of balancing them off was air power and a range of nuclear weapons, but the decision was made a few years ago to go a different route. Schlesinger agrees with me. I am not sure of Al Haig's views on this, but he is very close to Schlesinger, as he is to Cy Vance and Joe Califano, with whom he used to work so closely at the Pentagon.