

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

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to Rick Spratling

OPENING STATEMENT

OF

SENATOR PAUL TSONGAS

Senate Foreign Relations
Confirmation Hearings on
General Alexander Haig for
Secretary of State

January 9, 1981

Also to U.P.I.

617-227-7400

The issue before the Foreign Relations Committee is to advise and consent on the nomination of General Alexander Haig as Secretary of State.

It is a duty constitutionally mandated, and I for one take it very seriously.

The incoming Administration will be headed by a President whose experience in foreign affairs is limited. Foreign policy decisions as President will then be to a large extent a product of the advice given to him by his Secretary of State. The degree of dependence upon the Secretary of State will be greater than that of any President in recent years.

Thus, General Alexander Haig has not only been nominated for a position, he has been nominated for exceptional control over the powers of our nation -- and of the world. In his hands may be, in a nuclear age, the survival of our species.

Is General Haig equal to this responsibility? I don't know. But it is our duty -- constitutionally provided -- to find out.

It has been suggested that the full record of General Haig should not be reviewed. How strange. It has not been suggested that the records of other nominees be so limited.

General Haig's record is one that is positive in a number of respects. As Supreme Allied Commander in Europe and Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. European command, the General won the respect of much of the political leadership of that continent. He served as White House Chief of Staff at a very difficult time and many credit him with helping to steer us successfully through a potential constitutional crisis. More

recently, he has won plaudits from business leaders for his service as President and Chief Operations Officer of United Technologies.

There are other aspects of General Haig's record that must also be examined. They raise many questions to which we will hopefully seek the answers. The issues here are several. But they revolve around one basic question. What does the past record of General Haig suggest about future foreign policy decisions? What, for example, was General Haig's role in the attempt to prevent Chilean President-elect Salvador Allende from assuming his duly elected office -- and what can we expect as the policy of this Administration in future Third World situations of a similar nature.

For example, what was General Haig's role in the secret bombing of Cambodia and the purposeful illegal and unconstitutional exclusion of the Congress and the American people from that fact -- and what can we expect as the policy of this Administration in future tense situations as to consultation with the Congress.

For example, what was General Haig's role in the wire tapping incidents of 1969-1970, and what can we expect from General Haig if faced with a foreign policy situation if he were to be given an order by the President which might be illegal.

These issues are fundamental. They will be, and should be, pursued.

That is the reason for a confirmation hearing. The Senate is duty-bound, not just to consent, but to advise as well.

Are the so-called Watergate matters also relevant? The fact is that the data now available to the Committee does not provide sufficient grounds for a decision on that question. The fact is that the pertinent tapes of the Nixon Administration have not been made available to this Committee. Perhaps there are some who feel that General Haig's interests are best served by not making those tapes available. Because of that failure to make the tapes available, my questions will in all likelihood not involve Watergate matters. But in the long run I do not believe such a state of affairs serves General Haig's interests or the national interest. For until we get at all the facts -- and I in no way imply by that that the facts would necessarily be to the General's detriment -- then a cloud will hang over the office of Secretary of State. I believe this is especially unfortunate for General Haig as he sets out on the most important and most difficult job of his career.

James G. Thompson

Handwritten notes and signatures, including "Thompson" and "James G. Thompson".

David Rogers
wants to talk
with you...
some time this week
on confirmation
process

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10:00 @ night Freeman
Washington Bureau
Wednesday or Tuesday

2133 Wisconsin
Up from Seaman

Don Quarter
E. J. [unclear]
C. N. [unclear]
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Warner & P.M.
Response