

# Post-Watergate Proposals Hit

## The Washington Post

NATIONAL NEWS  
COMICS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975

C1

By Ronald J. Ostrow  
Los Angeles Times

Elliott L. Richardson, soon after taking command of the Watergate-shaken Department of Justice, issued an order to help "eliminate the causes of distrust" of the government.

The order required department employees to make written records of contacts they had with outsiders, including members of Congress, on matters pending in the department and to place the record in the file on the case.

Richardson's successor, William B. Saxbe, created a new office in the department as a final effort at shorting up confidence in the nation's law enforcers.

The Office of Special Review was to have investigated violations of law, regulations and standards of conduct by department personnel and to report directly to the Attorney General and his deputy.

Richardson's order is not being enforced, and Saxbe's new office has never been filed.

Now some of the key recommendations for averting future Watergates made by the Special Prosecution Force are receiving a lukewarm response from Justice Department policymakers.

The unenthusiastic reaction could spawn criticism that the Justice Department suffers from a memory span so short Watergate left no lasting impression.

On leaving office as the last fulltime Watergate prosecutor, Henry S. Ruth Jr., said: "There seems to be no

sense of urgency" about taking such a fundamental step as announcing that the Justice Department intends to vigorously enforce federal election laws.

Deputy Attorney General Harold R. Tyler, Jr., said in an interview that some of the recommendations, while they have a surface appeal, present real problems when they are examined closely.

"I'm not about to go down the glory road until I know exactly what we're doing," Tyler said.

As an example, Tyler cited reservations about the recommendations of the Special Prosecution Force that the Richardson order requiring written notice of outside contacts on pending matters be reassessed.

"Are congressional figures going to want me reporting every time they call me as Deputy Attorney General and tell me they would like to see so-and-so appointed such-and-such?" asked Tyler. "I don't think they are." Tyler said that "Anybody who wanted to be dishonest" could easily evade the regulation. "You just don't do it."

"What are you going to do as a sanction? Are you going to make it a crime? If I were a prosecutor and I started thinking about prosecuting somebody for not making a memo of a call from a senator or a White House official, I'd



HAROLD R. TAYLOR JR.  
... files reservations

have great troubles given the requirements of Anglo-Saxon criminal law notions.

Taylor also cited the interaction of requiring written notice of all contacts with the freedom of information and privacy laws.

"Are people going to like it when suddenly they find out that this stuff may have to be reproduced later on and disseminated? This is something that isn't quite as simple as everybody seems to think it is."

"I'm wondering if it's really the most desirable thing for the body politic. I'm not so sure it is. It might cut off the flow of proper public communications to bureaucrats like me here in the department. I'm not sure that's what the public wants."



HENRY S. RUTH JR.  
... last prosecutor

Taylor voiced reservations, too, about the Special Prosecution Force's call for a new unit inside the Justice Department to investigate and prosecute federal corruption much like the organized crime drive that was initiated in 1958 and greatly expanded in 1961.

The No. 2 man in the department likened the proposal to Saxbe's creation of an office of special review to investigate possible corruption inside the agency.

After recruiting a staff of "good people, you've got to have something for them to do," Tyler said. "Are they going to be beating around looking for corruption under every rock. Perhaps it would be encouraging to some, but if it doesn't exist in a given period, then what do you do?"

Saying he had twice served in the military, Tyler shook his head and added: "I know what idle inspector general types can do."

To be sure, Tyler welcomed some of the recommendations by the special prosecution force.

The proposals and his reaction include:

Campaign managers should not later be named as Attorney General or to some other high Justice Department post. Tyler, saying "I assume I'm here partly for the reason I was not anybody's campaign manager or anything close to it," added, "I think there's a good deal to say for that."

Opposition to creating a permanent special prosecutor. "I'm very much in favor of that position," Tyler said. "I think it's the duty of the Administration and Congress and the Department of Justice to see to it that the department behaves in a responsible, professional way."

Extending the Hatch Act, which bars most federal employees from taking an active part in political campaigns, to all Justice Department employees, including the Attorney General and other political appointees. It would add "a certain amount of public confidence," Tyler said.