

# President Claims

## Richardson Lied

Report 11/10/73

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Nixon claims former Atty. Gen. Elliot L. Richardson lied in sworn testimony about Richardson's role in the ouster of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox, several Republican senators said Thursday.

The White House denied the President called Richardson a liar. It said the senators misunderstood Nixon.

Nixon made the claim, and raised a question of whether the Senate Judiciary Committee would seek action against Richardson for perjury, during a session with GOP senators Wednesday night, the senators said.

The legislators said Nixon did not expand on his statement that Richardson lied in testimony before the committee, but turned the explanation of his remark over to White House chief of Staff Alexander M. Haig Jr.

In a statement, Richardson said he stands on his testimony before the committee.

The senators who quoted Nixon as calling Richardson a liar declined to be identified.

According to three senators at the White House meeting, Haig disputed Richardson's committee testimony that Richardson opposed a White House order for Cox to cease efforts in federal court to obtain tapes and documents in Watergate-related probes.

Haig said that, in fact, Richardson had been an originator of a proposal to limit Cox's probe, the senators reported.

White House officials, who

were present at the meeting but also declined to be identified, said that at no point did Nixon call Richardson a liar.

They said any comment the President made about perjury followed a statement by one senator that any charge of untruthful testimony from Richardson would imply that perjury had been committed.

The White House officials said Haig told the senators that Richardson's Senate account reflected a misunderstanding and was not consistent with the White House understanding that Richardson initially supported the whole package of a once proposed compromise on nine subpoenaed Watergate tapes.

Later, Kenneth W. Clawson, the Nixon administration's deputy communications director, distributed a statement which said:

"White House officials said tonight that the unidentified senators quoted in the Associated Press story obviously misunderstood President Nixon's remarks concerning former Atty. Gen. Elliot Richardson.

"What the President told the senators was that there are several versions of the events that led up to the discharge of former special prosecutor Archibald Cox and that Mr. Richardson was simply articulating one of those versions.

"Any suggestions that the President accused Mr. Richardson of lying or called for a Senate investigation involving perjury are simply not true."