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**RICHARDSON SAYS  
HAIG BACKED COX**

**Asserts Chief of Staff Tried  
to Persuade Nixon Not to  
Order Halt to Tape Suit**

By LESLEY OELSNER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22—El-  
liot L. Richardson says that  
Alexander M. Haig Jr., Presi-  
dent Nixon's chief of staff, told  
him he had unsuccessfully tried  
to dissuade the President from  
ordering Archibald Cox on Oct.  
19 to stop all court actions to  
obtain White House tape re-  
cordings and related documents.

The former Attorney General  
said in an interview, "Haig said  
that he had tried, but that the  
President wouldn't yield on  
that."

Mr. Haig, in an interview last  
night, made it clear that he was  
not denying the Richardson ac-  
count but declined to discuss  
the matter. Sitting before the  
fireplace in his office in the  
West Wing in the White House,  
he said, "I don't discuss what  
discussions I had with the  
President."

Mr. Cox's refusal to comply  
with the President's order led  
to his dismissal on Oct. 20 as  
the special Watergate prosecu-  
tor.

The order led as well to Mr.  
Richardson's resignation as At-  
torney General and to the dis-  
missal of William D. Ruckelshaus  
as Deputy Attorney General. In  
the wake of Mr. Cox's refusal  
to comply, the President di-  
rected first Mr. Richardson and  
then Mr. Ruckelshaus to

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dismiss the prosecutor, and  
each in turn chose to leave  
office rather to obey.

Mr. Richardson recounted Mr.  
Haig's statement in an inter-  
view this week at his home in  
McLean, Va.

Mr. Richardson said that Mr.  
Haig made his comment on Fri-  
day afternoon Oct. 19

It was the end of a week of  
negotiations involving the  
White House, Mr. Cox and Mr.  
Richardson, regarding the man-  
ner in which the President  
should respond to Mr. Cox's  
Subpoena—which had just been  
upheld by the United States  
Court of Appeals—for tape re-  
cordings of nine Watergate-re-  
lated conversations.

Much of the discussions had

centered on the proposal under  
which Senator John C. Stennis,  
Democrat of Mississippi, would  
prepare an "authenticated"  
summary of the contents of the  
tapes, and the summary would  
be presented to the courts rath-  
er than the tapes themselves.

Mr. Richardson said that he  
had become increasingly aware  
that the White House wanted  
to link the Stennis proposal to  
a limitation on Mr. Cox's abil-  
ity to go to court in pursuit of  
any other presidential tapes or  
documents.

So, he said, he tried to de-  
vise some way to "handle the  
relationship between the basic  
Stennis proposal and the White  
House view that Mr. Cox  
should be foreclosed from pur-  
suing other documents.

**A Rejected Thought**

He thought first of writing  
into the proposal some refer-  
ence to its status as a "prece-  
dent," he recalled, but dis-  
missed that as unworkable.

"So then I had the thought,"  
he said, speaking with delibera-  
tion "that the way to do it  
was to try to persuade the  
President to drop any mention  
of other situations and him-  
self, in effect, to put forward  
the Stennis proposal alone."

"So I called Haig to urge  
that, and later Buzhardt [J. Fred  
Buzhardt Jr., a White House  
lawyer] and talked to Haig a  
second time," Mr. Richardson  
said. "Haig said that he had  
tried but that the President  
couldn't yield on that."

That evening, the President  
announced both the Stennis  
proposal and his order to Mr.  
Cox, directing the prosecutor to  
refrain from all future court ac-  
tions aimed at obtaining Presi-  
dential papers.

The Stennis plan was subse-  
quently dropped as a result of  
public and political criticism.

The question of just what  
was said in the negotiations  
that week regarding Mr. Cox's  
future access to other Presi-  
dential papers and tapes has been,  
from a different angle, a mat-  
ter of some dispute lately.

Mr. Richardson testified be-  
fore the Senate Judiciary Com-  
mittee that he opposed the  
White House efforts to forbid  
Mr. Cox to go to court to seek  
Presidential documents beyond  
and in addition to the tapes of  
the nine disputed conversations.

**Support for Summary**

In the interview, the former  
Attorney General said that he  
made clear to the White House,  
on Oct. 15, and especially on  
Oct. 17, that he would try to  
persuade Mr. Cox to accept the  
Stennis summary in place of  
the tapes of the nine specific  
conversations, but that he  
would not try to persuade the  
prosecutor to agree that access  
to other material should be  
foreclosed as well.

He said that on Oct. 19 he  
became aware of the White  
House desire to link the fore-  
closure to the Stennis summary  
proposal, and that he had ob-  
jected.

But not until that evening,

he said, when Mr. Haig called  
him at 7 o'clock to read him a  
letter the President was send-  
ing to Mr. Richardson, did he

realize that Mr. Cox was to be  
"instructed" not to try to ob-  
tain other presidential material.

President Nixon, however,  
has been variously quoted by  
Congressmen as having told  
them that Mr. Richardson "lied"  
or mislead the Senate in testifi-  
ing about his role in the nego-  
tiations. The White House has  
denied the use of word "lie."  
It has said, however that the  
President referred to "several  
versions of the events" leading  
to Mr. Cox's dismissal.

Mr. Haig said last night that  
"there is nothing in dispute"  
except for the meeting at the  
White House on the morning  
of Oct. 19 among Mr. Richard-  
son, Mr. Haig and other White  
House aides, in which the pro-  
posal to link the Stennis plan  
to the foreclosure plan was  
discussed.

As Mr. Haig explained it, his  
"perceptions" of the meeting  
were different from Mr. Rich-  
ardson's. Mr. Richardson ac-  
cording to Mr. Haig, believed  
that the White House announce-  
ment would likely include  
"some combination" of the  
Stennis and foreclosure plans,  
while Mr. Haig believed that it  
was clear that the discussion  
had involved the plan to "in-  
struct" Mr. Cox to refrain from  
further litigation.

The Senate Judiciary Com-  
mittee is expected to vote next  
week on whether to call Mr.  
Haig to testify about the ap-  
parent conflict.

**More Difficulty Seen**

Mr. Cox's objections to the  
foreclosure arrangement were  
that his job of prosecuting  
Watergate cases would be made  
infinitely more difficult and,  
in some cases, perhaps impossible  
without access to Watergate-  
related presidential papers.

Mr. Richardson has said con-  
sistently in his public state-  
ments that he could not impose  
such a limitation on the special  
prosecutor's independence be-  
cause he had promised the  
Senate, during his own confir-  
mation hearings, that the  
prosecutor would be allowed  
independence.

The President has consist-  
ently argued that any forced  
disclosure of Presidential papers  
or conversations would inhibit  
White House personnel in their  
work and discussions and would  
thus hinder the functioning of  
the executive branch.

Others have suggested,  
though, that the President may  
have been using the Watergate  
tapes case almost as a decoy,  
that by denying access to the  
tapes he could also deny access  
to other documents that might  
be more incriminating.

The President has also been  
reported to have said, at vari-  
ous times, that he would prefer  
having Mr. Cox out of office.

According to Mr. Richard-



son's chronology of the week  
that culminated in Mr. Cox's  
dismissal, the negotiations be-  
gan with the White House  
suggesting that Mr. Cox be  
dismissed.

On Monday morning, three  
days after the appeals court  
ruled that Mr. Nixon must  
comply with the subpoena, "I  
was called over the White  
House," Mr. Richardson said.

In a meeting with Mr. Haig  
and Mr. Buzhardt, he said he  
was told the following: "The  
President would prepare his  
own edited version of the  
tapes, this would be offered to  
the court, and Cox would be  
fired."

"I said no, I thought it was  
a terrible idea and if that hap-  
pened, I would resign," Mr.  
Richardson said.

Later that day, he went on,  
Mr. Haig broached the Stennis  
proposal. According to Mr.  
Richardson, he said that he  
would try to persuade Mr. Cox  
to accept the summary as a  
substitute for the tapes—mak-  
ing clear, he said, that he  
would not try to persuade Mr.  
Cox to give up the chance for

access to any other Presidential  
papers later.

As has been made clear  
through his statements and his  
writings, Mr. Cox did not find  
the Stennis idea acceptable.

Thursday night, when Mr.  
Richardson went to the White  
House once more, there was,  
he said, "long discussion."

"The plan that was put to  
me Thursday evening," he said,  
"was that if Cox definitively,  
flatly rejected the Stennis pro-  
posal, that he would be fired."

Mr. Richardson said that he  
went home that night and  
wrote out a summary of "rea-  
sons why I must resign," and  
that on Friday morning, he  
asked for, and was told he  
could have, an appointment  
with the President. He planned  
to tell Mr. Nixon, whom he had  
not seen or talked to all week,  
that he would resign, he said.