

RICHARDSON FEELS HE WAS BETRAYED

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Says Watergate Represents Shoddy Moral Standards

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WASHINGTON, May 10—

Elliot L. Richardson said today that he felt "betrayed by the shoddy standards of morals" of those Nixon Administration officials who have been involved in the Watergate affair.

In an effort to persuade the Senate Judiciary Committee that he would pursue the Watergate investigation vigorously if he is confirmed as Attorney General, Mr. Richardson told the committee that his sense of betrayal would at least compensate or neutralize any feeling I might have arising out of my prior associations."

Mr. Richardson, who was nominated by President Nixon to be Attorney General last week, is now Secretary of Defense. He has also served in the Nixon Administration as Under Secretary of State and Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.

Members of the committee, which will decide whether to recommend his confirmation to the full Senate, have questioned him extensively about whether his being a part of the Admin-

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istration since its inception would give the prosecution of the Watergate case an appearance of being rigged.

Position Shifts

Yesterday, Mr. Richardson repeatedly insisted that he would maintain "ultimate responsibility" for the Watergate prosecution, a position that was challenged by several committee members.

Today, however, he became more conciliatory, promising to give the special prosecutor, once he selects one, wide latitude in conducting the investigation.

And, as if to emphasize his own independence from the Nixon Administration, Mr. Richardson told the committee that he planned to maintain an "arm's length" relationship, even at times an "adversary relationship," with the White House throughout the investigation.

"Indeed," he remarked, "the President has told me he does not want to be informed" about the progress of the inquiry.

Mr. Richardson said that he hoped to select a special prosecutor "tomorrow or the next day," submit his name for clearance to the Federal Bureau of Investigation Monday and announce the choice by the end of next week.

Mr. Richardson told the committee that he would expect the prosecutor to keep him up to date on the investigation and ask for advice "when a close call had to be made," but he said he did not expect to "stick my finger in the day to day prosecution."

'Contract' Planned

In fact, Mr. Richardson told the committee, he is drawing up what would amount to a contract between himself and the special prosecutor, outlining precisely what responsibilities would be delegated to the prosecutor. Both he and the prosecutor would sign the document, Mr. Richardson said, and it would be made public.

Attorney General - designate promised that he would not interfere with the judgment of the special prosecutor except "in extreme cases," such as the prosecutor's actions being "beyond the pale of responsible judgement."

Even these assurances, however, left some Senators with reservations about how independent the prosecutor would really be.

Senator Birch Bayh, Democrat of Indiana, said he was still concerned about whether there would be an "appearance" of independence in the investigation. He told Mr. Richardson:

"You do a magnificent job of making me feel secure about appearances. But then you add a sentence and, in effect, pull the trap door shut. You insist on adding the caveat, 'when the prosecutor is acting responsibly.'"

Mr. Richardson seemed annoyed at the repeated questions about his independence. At one point, he told Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts:

"There is the implication that, because I've been part of the Administration, I might go easy or I might be tempted to go easy."

Hearings to Continue

"Actually, my feeling is the opposite. I don't want to be dramatic or melodramatic, but I am one of the Republican officeholders who feel betrayed by the shoddy standards of morals of people whose activities have recently come to light."

Members of the committee said that the likelihood was that Mr. Richardson would eventually be confirmed, al-

though the procedure might take several more days or even weeks.

The committee will resume hearings next week, probably Monday or Tuesday.

The Senators continued today to stay away from direct questions about what Mr. Richardson would do if the investigation turned up evidence that President Nixon was involved in an illegal action.

At one point, Senator Kennedy remarked that it was "difficult to look down the road as to who might come up on the horizon."

And Senator Bayh asked Mr. Richardson to expound on how he would go about subpoenaing White House files or obtaining an affidavit from the President.

But the Senators seemed reluctant to ask the question that, in private conversations, they acknowledged was on their minds.

Meanwhile, the 61-member Democratic Advisory Council, composed of Democratic Governors, Congressmen and state and local officials, called on Mr. Richardson to disqualify himself from the Watergate prosecution.

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