

Richardson Suggestion For Nixon

New York

Former United States Attorney General Elliott L. Richardson said yesterday that President Nixon should testify "before a responsible group" to demonstrate his innocence in the Watergate affair and to restore confidence in the White House.

"The most important thing he can do is demonstrate through the office of the special prosecutor that he does intend to make sure that all facts that have to do with any Watergate allegations are revealed," Richardson said on NBC-TV's "Today" show.

Richardson, who resigned last month after the firing of special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox, said a "crisis of confidence" in the Presidency now exists.

"We are in a situation where it has to be repaired," he said in the interview in Washington.

"Several concrete steps have to be taken. The President has to find some way whereby some responsible group can ask him questions, but he doesn't have to be under oath." He did not elaborate.

(The Senate Watergate committee has been seeking a meeting with the President in which Mr. Nixon would answer questions, also not under oath.)

When asked whether he thought Mr. Nixon has been truthful in denying Watergate involvement before Richardson became Attorney General, he said, "Everything I know points to conclusion that he has. He was at pains to assure that he did not have any part in any of these things."

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