

RICHARDSON VOW

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Says He Will Appoint
Special Prosecutor
if He's Confirmed

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WASHINGTON, May 7

Elliott L. Richardson announced today that if he was confirmed by the Senate as Attorney General he would appoint a special prosecutor to conduct the investigation of the Watergate case.

Mr. Richardson, who has been under pressure from Con-

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gressmen and Republican party officials to appoint someone from outside the Nixon Administration, said that he had not picked anyone for the job but had "begun the search and will press it as rapidly as possible."

The prosecutor, Mr. Richardson said, will have "all the independence, authority and staff support needed to carry out the tasks entrusted to him."

Mr. Richardson, who is now Secretary of Defense, made the announcement in a statement he read to newsmen at the Pentagon. He refused to answer any questions.

Authority From Nixon

The statement came a week after President Nixon announced that he wanted Mr. Richardson to become Attorney General to oversee the Watergate investigation.

At that time, Mr. Nixon said that Mr. Richardson would have the authority to select an outside prosecutor if Mr. Richardson believed such action was appropriate.

Since then, many members of Congress and other politicians from both parties have noted Mr. Richardson's association

with the Nixon Administration since its inception and have said that he should pick someone without connections to the Administration to head the prosecution.

Last week, the Senate voted

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to call on President Nixon to appoint a special prosecutor. A vote is expected later this week on a resolution that would express the "sense of the Senate" that Mr. Richardson should name a prosecutor and that the appointee should be submitted to the Senate for approval.

Mr. Richardson, in his statement, seemed to take pains to meet the demands from Congress.

Senate Opinion Sought

He said he would ask the Senate Judiciary Committee to hold public hearings on the "suitability of the appointee" and would "welcome, in addition, an expression by the Senate as a whole of its confidence in him."

The prosecutor, Mr. Richardson said, will "be in the department of Justice and report to me — and only to me — [but] he will be aware that his ultimate accountability is to the American people."

Mr. Richardson is to go before the Judiciary Committee Wednesday for the beginning of his confirmation hearings. Members of the committee said they had little doubt that he would be confirmed, but they said they wanted to question him closely about the authority he would give to the special prosecutor.

Two Democratic members—Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia and John V. Tunney of California—said, for instance, that they were eager to learn whether the prosecutor would be able to grant immunity from

prosecution to a witness or whether he would have to clear such action with Mr. Richardson or the White House.

Another Democrat, Senator Adlai E. Stevenson 3d of Illinois, said that "to call the special prosecutor independent does not guarantee his independence." Mr. Stevenson wrote a letter last week to Mr. Richardson signed by 29 Senators calling for the appointment of a truly independent prosecutor.

Scott Wants Guidelines

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican leader, who is also a member of the Judiciary Committee, stressed the importance of "a full hearing before the committee" and said he expected that Mr. Richardson would give them "guidelines about the type of prosecutor he's looking for."

While there is little disagreement in the Senate about the need for an outside prosecutor, key Senators said they doubted that an effort would be made to require Mr. Richardson to disclose the name of his choice for prosecutor before Mr. Richardson is confirmed.

Mr. Richardson cautioned in his statement that "it may take some time to find the right person."

In explaining why he had decided to appoint someone to direct the investigation, Mr. Richardson took cognizance of the questions about his own independence. He said:

"I have kept steadily in view the essential importance in insuring that the investigations and prosecutions, whatever their outcome, are so conducted as to command full public confidence in their integrity and fairness. I have taken into account the fact that, because I have held office in this Administration from its beginning, my objectivity may be questioned."