

NYTimes
Statement by Richardson

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 7—
Following is the text of a
statement by Elliot L. Rich-
ardson:

In nominating me as Attorney General of the United States, President Nixon charged me with responsibility for "uncovering the whole truth" about the Watergate case and related matters. He also stated his determination that "justice will be pursued fairly, fully and impartially, no matter who is involved."

I have accepted all of this charge. If confirmed by the Senate, I shall carry it out to the very best of my ability.

The President also committed to my decision the question of whether or not to appoint a special prosecutor.

In considering this question, I have kept steadily in view the essential importance of insuring that the investigations and prosecutions, whatever their outcome, are so conducted as to command full public confidence in their integrity and fairness.

Question on Objectivity

I have taken into account the fact that, because I have held office in this Administration from its beginning, my objectivity may be questioned. I am also convinced that the Attorney General must retain final responsibility for all matters coming within the jurisdiction of the department.

After such careful thought about how best to respond to these concerns, I have decided that I will, if confirmed, appoint a special prosecutor and give him all the independence, authority and staff support needed to carry out the tasks entrusted to him.

Although he will be in the Department of Justice and report to me—and only to me—

he will be aware that his ultimate accountability is to the American people.

The person selected to fill this role will have to meet stringent standards of qualification. He must not only be an individual of the highest character and integrity but be widely so recognized.

He must not have been associated with any of the persons alleged or suspected to have had a part in the matters under investigation. He must be judicious in temperament and independent in spirit. He must have a proven record of outstanding competence as a lawyer, preferably including trial experience.

Search Already Begun

It may take some time to find the right person. I have already begun the search and will press it as rapidly as possible.

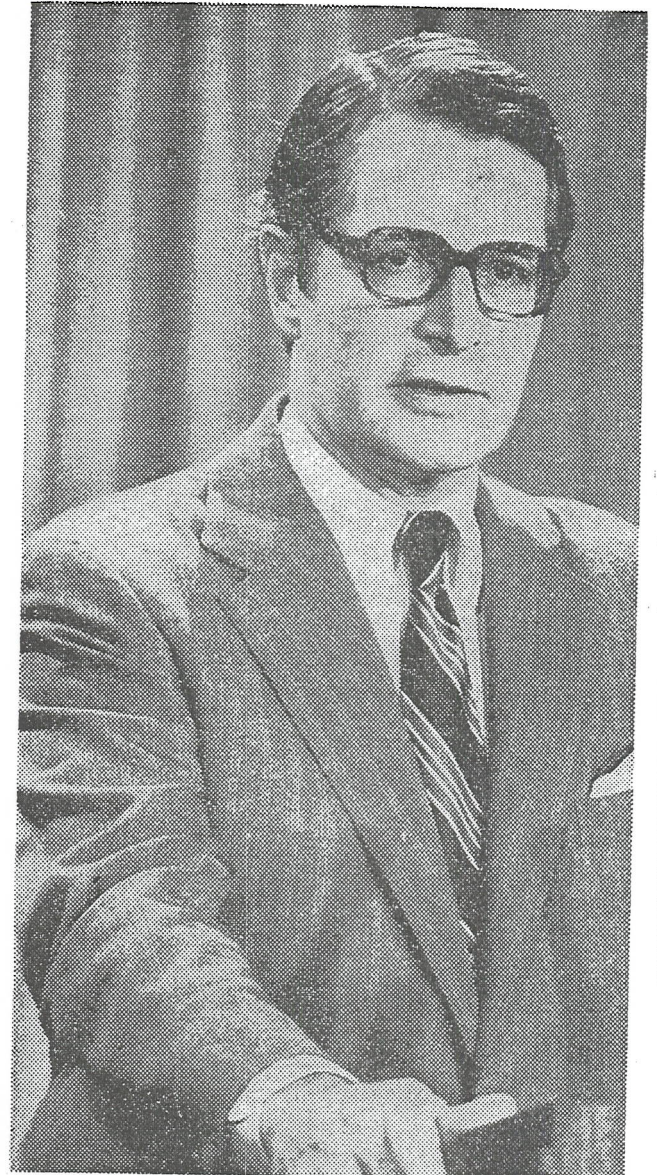
After the selection has been made, I shall ask the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to hold a public hearing for the purpose of satisfying itself as to the suitability of the appointee. I would welcome, in addition, an expression by the Senate as a whole of his confidence in him.

One further point. My decision to appoint a special prosecutor should not be interpreted as casting the slightest doubt on the integrity or competence of any person in the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the office of any United States Attorney.

On the contrary, I have the highest respect for the dedicated professionals who staff these organizations. My objective is one I know they share with me: To assist in doing what has to be done in a way that contributes to strengthening the legal and moral fabric of our society.

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United Press International

Elliot L. Richardson discusses Watergate investigation