

# Richardson Determined Get Rid of 'Sleaziness'

By JOHN W. FINNEY

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WASHINGTON, May 24—Elliot L. Richardson said today that as the new Attorney General he was determined to eradicate "a kind of sleaziness that has infected" the processes of government.

At a farewell news conference in the Pentagon on his final day as Secretary of Defense, Mr. Richardson directly linked the atmosphere of "sleaziness" to the Watergate case and "other related matters."

Without listing any specific examples, Mr. Richardson suggested that the Watergate affair had infected the process of law enforcement. As one way of restoring public confidence in the integrity of government, Mr. Richardson said that as Attorney General he would emphasize that law enforcement must be carried out with "scrupulous" regard for individual rights.

Mr. Richardson, whose nomination was confirmed yesterday by the Senate, will be sworn in as Attorney General tomorrow at the White House following a Cabinet meeting President Nixon formally submitted to the Senate today the nomination of James R. Schlesinger, presently the director of Central Intelligence, to be the new Secretary of Defense.

## A Switch in Subject

Seated behind a large desk on which was placed a red rose, and doodling star designs on a scratch pad, Mr. Richardson, now that his nomination as Attorney General had finally been approved, was in a relaxed, philosophical mood as he met with reporters in his Pentagon office, ostensibly to review his brief tenure as Defense Secretary. But the discussion quickly turned to the Watergate affair, and, in fact, it was Mr. Richard-

son who first raised the subject.

In describing his philosophical approach to his new job as the nation's chief law enforcement officer, Mr. Richardson said he thought he had an opportunity to "restore national consensus" in the integrity of government by emphasizing that enforcement of the law must not be placed ahead of respect for individual rights. It was when reporters asked him if he thought this had not been the case in recent years that Mr. Richardson injected the Watergate case into the discussion.

"I'm saying," he said, "that I think the whole Watergate and other related matters have created a situation in which it's hard to separate out the things that have been done. This is a little hard—I haven't thought it out very clearly myself."

"But a kind of sleaziness has infected the ways in which things have been done, and this has touched agencies that have been concerned with law and law enforcement almost inevitably as part of the government."

"One of the ways in which people perceive government, one of the ways in which it touches them most is through the law enforcement process," he continued.

## Atmosphere Criticized

To a large extent, their respect for government is affected by the fairness and integrity of the law enforcement process.

"So I think there is an opportunity to restore confidence through finding ways in which the law enforcement process can be made to be, and perceived to be, scrupulous in the ways in which it carries out its job."

Mr. Richardson said he be-



United Press International

Elliot L. Richardson talking with reporters at the Pentagon yesterday, his last day as Secretary of Defense.

lieved that the "atmosphere" of the Watergate case had "infected the processes of law enforcement" and therefore that "the processes of law enforcement have a contribution to make to the improvement of that atmosphere."

At the same time he said it was "unfair to pick on law enforcement as such" since "the law-enforcement people have not been found implicated in this that I can think of."

When a reporter observed that former Attorney General John N. Mitchell had been indicted, Mr. Richardson replied that the indictment was "not in a manner involving the performance of his role as Attorney General."

On May 10, a Federal grand jury in Manhattan charged Mr. Mitchell with conspiracy to defraud the United States and

with perjuring himself in his testimony before the panel, which was investigating a secret, \$200,000 contribution to the Nixon re-election campaign.

On the use of unauthorized wiretaps or illegal methods of search to investigate breaches of national security, Mr. Richardson took the position that such methods have "no application or justification" in "domestic matters."

"I think the key to this has to be in the determination in the first instance of what is the national security interest at stake," he said, and the question becomes one of "whether the line between responsibility or protection of the nation, in terms of its relationship with the rest of the world, is being overstepped in a situation where the interests involved are really primarily domestic."

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