

# Possible Source of Agnew Probe Leaks

Washington

Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson said yesterday he has been told by news media representatives that the justice department has been a source of leaks about the investigation of Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

He also disclosed in an interview with the Washington Post that several FBI agents have been asked to help question Justice Department employees about the leaks.

The attorney general's comments were the first public admission that the leaks, with both the vice president and President Nixon have vehemently denounced, might have come from Justice.

On August 23 Richardson wrote Agnew that he had ordered a full-scale internal investigation on orders from the President. But his letter insisted that the leaks could have come from other sources — including White House staffers and even Agnew aides.

Yesterday Richardson noted that when he ordered the internal probe two weeks ago he had no indication that the leaks had come from Justice.

"Since then I have had indications from news media themselves that some information has come from inside the department," he said.

He added that he has talked to representatives of more than one publication and that they would not disclose their sources.

The attorney general stressed that he does not want to turn the investigation of leaks into a probe of the media.

He conceded that "it's always difficult to pinpoint the sources of any leak" but expressed confidence that "if it can be done," the procedure being followed by the man in charge of the probe—Glen E. Pommerening, the acting assistant attorney general for administration—

"will do it."

Agnew was informed August 1 by George Beall, the U.S. attorney for Maryland, that he was under investigation for possible violations of bribery, extortion, conspiracy, and tax laws. That inquiry began as a probe of alleged kickbacks from engineering and architectural firms to Maryland political figures. Agnew is a former Maryland governor.

*Washington Post*