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**Richardson May Accept
New Job on Nixon Team**

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 23 — Eliot L. Richardson said today that when he took himself out of the game last weekend he had not really left the Nixon team.

His statement to a news conference, far from dramatizing a resignation on principle, sidestepped the legal and political issues of the constitutional crisis. And it encouraged speculation that the 53-year-old Boston Brahmin would accept a fresh post in the Nixon Administration, most likely in the foreign field and possible soon in the Middle East.

Mr. Richardson had prospered within the Administration, and had simultaneously suffered in his liberal Massachusetts political base for his talent at accommodation. Against the advice of friends and staff, he had acceded to White House wishes on busing, on the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam, and, most recently, in the bargaining that allowed Spiro T. Agnew to walk free of a jail sentence from the Vice President's office.

No Room for Compromise

In the battle over the Watergate tapes and his old law professor, Archibald Cox, Mr. Richardson found no room for compromise and resigned rather than disobey the President's order to dismiss Mr. Cox.

The devotion to principle that Mr. Richardson mentioned most often today was President Nixon's concern for confidentiality in his office. But almost immediately after the Richardson news conference, the White House, reversing itself, announced it would deliver to the court all the tapes Mr. Cox had subpoenaed.

Mr. Richardson declined to take a position on the legality of President Nixon's short-lived and unilateral "compromise" that would have filtered the tapes through Senator John C. Stennis, Democrat of Mississippi. That, he said, was "for a judge to determine."

Impeachment of the President, he said, is "a question for the American people," but

one he said he could not comment on.

The President's dismissal of Mr. Cox "intruded upon" their earlier agreement, he said, but he avoided a questioner's wording that Mr. Nixon had "broken his word" and argued that Presidents can change their minds.

To soften the break further, he compared his exit from the Nixon Administration to his being "fired by Bobby Kennedy" in 1961—even though Mr. Richardson's dismissal as a Federal prosecutor in Boston a dozen years ago was part of the expected transition between the Eisenhower and the Kennedy Administrations and was delayed at Mr. Richardson's request.

Unlike William D. Ruckelshaus, the former Deputy Attorney General who was dismissed last Saturday for the same reasons that Mr. Richardson resigned, Mr. Richardson held his parting news conference in the Justice Department building. Mr. Ruckelshaus used the National Press Club as his forum.

Mr. Richardson did not rule out another assignment from President Nixon, with whom he has long felt a deep personal kinship.

Eden's Example

Last May when Mr. Richardson, then the Secretary of Defense, became Attorney General, he spoke harshly of the "sleaziness" that had corrupted the Department of Justice in the first Nixon term. Many observers saw him as a "Mr. Clean," a formidable candidate for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1976.

When he resigned as Attorney General last Saturday, some wondered if he had considered the precedent of Anthony Eden, who quit as the British Foreign Secretary in 1938 in protest against the appeasement policy of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain—and then returned to office under Winston Churchill and became Prime Minister himself in the nineteen-fifties.

But Mr. Richardson's exit lines emphasized his loyalty to President Nixon. "I strongly believe in the general purposes of his Administration," he said.