

# Richardson Doubts a Drive In White House Against Him

By John P. MacKenzie  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson said yesterday that there was no White House campaign to discredit him but there might be "an impulse" there to challenge his credibility.

As for alleged administrator now than 12 years ago "drinking problem," Rich-

ardson said he was no answer when similar reports were spread by individuals whose corruption he had exposed in a television whisper that he had been an attorney general of Massachusetts.

Richardson's carefully worded answers to newsmen were made after he testified before a special Senate subcommittee on ways to limit the emergency powers of the presidency.

Richardson and former Solicitor General Erwin N. Griswold endorsed in principle a bipartisan proposal to terminate presidentially declared states of national emergency which have been in effect since 1933 and to give Congress more power the next time the President invokes emergency authority.

When newsmen asked about reports that President Nixon or his aides called him a "liar" in discussing the Oct. 19 Justice Department firings with members of Congress, Richardson said the White House had denied the use of the word "liar."

Asked whether there was a drive to discredit him, Richardson said he did not draw that conclusion.

"I think there is, at most, an impulse to convey the idea that there the credibility of so many people is challenged, there are no exceptions to the rule," said Richardson. He would not elaborate.

On the drinking question, "stale, baseless rumors" have plagued him for many years based only on a drunken driving conviction when he was 18, said Richardson, who is now 53. He said the matter had been laid to rest at each hearing before he was confirmed as head of the departments of Health, Education and Welfare, Defense and Justice.

Richardson said he had "no inkling" during negotiations with Alexander M. Haig Jr. and White House lawyers that any subpoenaed presidential tapes were missing or incomplete and he was sure the fact was unknown to the administration aides as well.