

RICHARDSON SAYS TAPES ARE CRUCIAL

Asserts Recordings 'Could
Very Well Tip' the Case
Against the President

By RICHARD L. MADDEN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 28 —
Former Attorney General Elliot
L. Richardson said today that
the White House tape record-
ings being sought by the
House Judiciary Committee
impeachment inquiry "could
very well tip" the case "one
way or the other."

Mr. Richardson said that a
failure of President Nixon to
comply fully with the commit-
tee's subpoena for the tapes
would lead to "adverse infer-
ences" about Mr. Nixon's in-
volvement in the Watergate-
related matters.

Asked in an interview on the
National Broadcasting Com-
pany's "Meet the Press" tele-
vision program if he thought



Associated Press
Elliot L. Richardson
shielding eyes from TV
lights before taping inter-
view Saturday.

sufficient evidence had been
made public yet on whether
Mr. Nixon was guilty of an in-
dictable offense, Mr. Richard-
son replied:

"I don't think that the evi-
dence that we know about as
newspaper readers or tele-
vision listeners is quite enough.
I think the case is close and
this, of course, is why the
tapes are as important as they
are."

"They could very well tip it
one way or the other, and this
is why, also, a failure to pro-
duce tapes would, I think, legiti-
mately give rise to adverse in-
ferences as to any ambiguities
that otherwise exist."

Senator Jacob K. Javits, Re-
publican of New York, who was
interviewed on the CBS Inc.
"Face the Nation" program,
said that Mr. Nixon should give
the Judiciary Committee "every-

thing."

A committee subpoena de-
manding the tapes of some 42
conversations of Watergate-re-
lated conversations is return-
able by 10 A.M. Tuesday.

Mr. Nixon, who spent the
weekend at the Presidential re-
treat at Camp David, Md., met
with Ronald L. Ziegler, the
White House press secretary,
and Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr.,
the President's chief of staff,
presumably to discuss his re-
sponse to the subpoena.

Dean Burch, counselor to the
President, told the Republican
National Committee Friday that
Mr. Nixon would turn over to
the House Committee "massive
body of evidence" that, he said,
would be "substantial, relevant,
compelling and persuasive."

White House officials have
suggested, however, that it was
likely that Mr. Nixon would
turn over transcripts with
"irrelevant" sections and coarse
language deleted, rather than
the tape recordings themselves.

The officials have also said
that the President was con-
sidering a public appeal, possi-
bly in a nationwide television
address tomorrow night, to
urge acceptance of his position
and to reassert his innocence
of any wrongdoing.

Representative Peter W.
Rodino Jr., Democrat of New
Jersey who is chairman of the
Judiciary Committee, has re-
peatedly said that he and the
committee would reject trans-
cripts submitted instead of the
tape recordings.

Mr. Richardson said in his
television appearance that the
supplying of edited transcripts
would be an insufficient re-
sponse to the subpoena.

"I think," he said, "the Ju-
diciary Committee has a right
to know what has been omitted,
in effect, and to exercise some
independent judgment as to
what is relevant to its purposes,
and I don't think that for the
President unilaterally to furnish
what he thinks is relevant and
say 'That is all you get' is a suf-
ficient response to the sub-
poenas."

Mr. Richardson, who resigned
last Oct. 20 rather than comply
with Mr. Nixon's order to dis-
miss Archibald Cox, then the
Watergate special prosecutor,
said that "the pattern" would
bother him if he were a House
member weighing impeachment.

He added:

"The direct answer is I don't
think that the evidence is suf-
ficient in any given situation
—milk, I.T.T., cover-up of Wa-
tergate—to, as we know it
now, directly to implicate the
President, but the cumulative
pattern of these things sur-
rounding the President in each
case involving somebody next
to him in responsibility cre-
ates a really troublesome ques-
tion as to the degree to which
one can infer his responsibility,
and that is why I say a failure
on his part now fully to meet
the requests for tapes justifies
an adverse inference on this
every question."