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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
ELLIOT RICHARDSON  
AT THE  
SWEARING-IN CEREMONY  
OF  
ELLIOT RICHARDSON  
AS  
SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

THE EAST ROOM

2:10 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Chief Justice, Secretary-designate Richardson, members of the Cabinet, Members of the Congress, distinguished guests:

It is a great honor and a privilege for me to have the opportunity of saying a few words and then introducing to you the new Secretary of Commerce.

Elliot Richardson is a favorite son of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. He, of course, served with distinction as Attorney General and Lieutenant Governor. He has served successively as Under Secretary of State, as Secretary of HEW, as Secretary of Defense, as Attorney General and then, of course, as our Ambassador to Great Britain, and now he is about to embark on his sixth major Federal appointment.

In that capacity, he will have a great responsibility in carrying out the Administration's programs and policies in the economic field. He will, of course, work with me in trying to implement the programs we set forth in the State of the Union Message, the budget message and the economic recommendation.

We all know that in the last year we went through the deepest recession since the end of World War II, but we are now on the upswing, and I think we are moving ahead very well and very solidly and very constructively.

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The fact that we had this recession was something that we didn't like, but we showed strength as a country and as a people, and the net result is we are moving ahead and moving ahead properly.

The programs that I have tried to set forth are realistic. They are common sense. They don't raise false promises or false hope. They are aimed at generating the kind of constructive action that our system of Government and our economic system will need in bringing real jobs, permanent jobs to workers of the country. They will be permanent, and they will have a future.

I believe that Elliot Richardson is the person who can move in and carry out these policies with dedication, with intelligence and with a background of experience that he has had in the Federal Government.

It will be a great addition to the Cabinet. He will be a great deal of help to me, and I know that he will have the full confidence of the American people, based on his outstanding record and all of the other accomplishments and achievements that will be evident to everyone.

It is now a privilege and a pleasure for me to ask the Chief Justice to swear Elliot in, I understand for the fourth time, as a member of the President's Cabinet.

Mr. Chief Justice and Secretary of Commerce designate, Elliot Richardson.

(Chief Justice Burger administered the oath of office.)

SECRETARY RICHARDSON: Thank you very much.

Mr. President, Mr. Chief Justice, members of my family, colleagues in Government and friends:

It is a solemn and moving experience to swear to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States. I should know. (Laughter)

It has been suggested that I may at this very moment be entering the Guinness Book of Records as the most sworn-in of Americans. If I hadn't been moving so fast from place to place, I might well have become the most sworn at of Americans, which only goes to show that you can't have it both ways. (Laughter)

Mr. President, I am deeply grateful to you for the privilege of having served as Ambassador of the United States to the Court of St. James. It wasn't a long period of service, but one which Ann and I and our family all enjoyed very much and in which we learned to appreciate more than ever the qualities of the British people and the depth of their friendship for the United States.

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In this Bicentennial year, their abiding affection for us is stronger than ever and they wish us many happy returns.

I am also grateful to you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to serve as a member of your Cabinet in the position of Secretary of Commerce. I look forward to the challenges and the opportunities of that job and I do so in the firm conviction which I bring back with me from the United Kingdom, that the strengthening of free enterprise is the only sure means of continuing the recovery that your steadfast policies have already set in motion.

The private sector is, after all, as you have emphasized, the only means of creating permanent jobs. Any other approach is a palliative at best and the creation of jobs means in turn the encouragement of investment because through investment we bring about the productivity that can in turn put people to work.

These things are vividly demonstrated by what one can see in a country, like the United Kingdom, where there has been less steadfastness sometimes in the past in the recognition of these fundamental economic truths.

I look forward also to returning to Government in association with the capable and dedicated people of the Department of Commerce. One of the great privileges of my past Government service has been to come to know and to work with a great many able people who, whatever may be said about the bureaucracy, do in fact put first a commitment to the public interest. Certainly, one of the great satisfactions of public service is the chance to play a part in things that matter fundamentally to the well-being and to the security of the people of the United States.

As Secretary of Commerce, I look forward particularly to helping you, Mr. President, and your colleagues on the Economic Policy Board work toward the clarification of the interrelationship between Government on the one side and the private sector on the other, in ways that do help to assure that in our third century we maintain the fundamental freedoms of all Americans with which our war of independence began 200 years ago.

Freedom, after all, can be preserved against a massive and centralized Government only to the extent we do not have to rely on Government for decisions that involve our individual lives, and if we are to escape the reliance on Government we must in turn have a strong and vital private sector and free market system.

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Mr. President, perhaps especially I look forward to working under your leadership, your balanced judgment, your compassion, your fairness and the realistic common sense which you not only commended to your fellow citizens in your State of the Union message but which you so fully embody.

This will be my first opportunity to serve in your Cabinet, Mr. President, and I hope that I can be of real help.

I might add in conclusion that nothing would make me happier than to be able to serve as your Secretary of Commerce until January 20, 1981, thus putting finally to rest the notion that I can't hold a job.

Thank you very much.

END (AT 2:22 P.M. EST)