

Jaworski Reported Rebuffed

2/6/74 Statement for Scott

By William Claiborne
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The White House verbal counterattack Monday on the credibility of John W. Dean III was in acquiescence to demands made by Senate Minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.), it was learned yesterday.

The written statement by White House special counsel James D. St. Clair to the effect that presidential tape recordings "do not support" Dean's testimony was telephoned to Scott just in time for him to release it to a Capitol Hill luncheon gathering of Pennsylvania newspaper editors and reporters—but not until the guests were half finished with their meal.

The host obviously knew he would have good news to tell though. As one of those present described it, Scott announced during the fruit cup that he had been advised by the White House that some news would be forthcoming.

As the guests reached the main course, a secretary entered with a message for the senator. St. Clair's statement was ready.

Scott then told the gathering about the challenge of Dean's testimony—at the same time the statement was being put out across town in the White House press room by deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren.

Scott's announcement ended days of intense efforts by the GOP leader to obtain White House support of his credibility.

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Nixon Sends Letter

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President Nixon reportedly has rejected Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski's requests for additional tapes and documents on the ground that the special prosecution force already has enough evidence to wind up its investigation of the scandal.

The White House response to Jaworski's requests was contained in a four-page letter sent Monday evening by special presidential counsel James D. St. Clair.

Officials of the prosecution force declined to discuss details, but there were indications last night that St. Clair's letter echoed Mr. Nixon's remark last Wednesday in his State of the Union address that "one year of Watergate is enough."

The thrust of the letter was that the White House is convinced that it has surrendered enough confidential presidential papers for the government to successfully prosecute anyone criminally involved in the Watergate scandal, it was understood.

Despite the expressions of pessimism voiced in the special prosecutor's office following receipt of St. Clair's letter, the phrasing of the document was considered sufficiently cloudy to warrant a request for clarification, staff members said.

Jaworski was in Houston yesterday and could not be reached for comment.

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White House Reported to Refuse Prosecutor's Evidence Request

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However, a statement issued by the special prosecutor's office said, "This office has received a lengthy communication from the White House counsel which will require clarification and further discussion between Mr. Jaworski and Mr. St. Clair. We will have no further comment un-

til those discussions are held late this week."

Jaworski is expected to return to Washington tonight, an aide said.

Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren yesterday acknowledged the existence of St. Clair's letter, but refused to go beyond that.

In a spirited exchange reporters at the daily White House briefing, Warren indicated that his silence on the tapes issue was at St. Clair's direction.

"Mr. St. Clair is entrusted with this matter and I am not," Warren said in response to one question about the letter.

In answer to a rephrasing of the same query, Warren said testily: "When you are asking me to comment on confidential communications between the White House council's office and the special prosecutor's office it should come as no surprise to you that I will take the guidance of the White House counsel in my answer to you."

Warren said he had met earlier in the day with St. Clair, who is in charge of Mr. Nixon's Watergate defense task force.

Warren's reticence appeared to reflect the posture of press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, who announced on Friday that it is the "very firm determina-

tion" of the President and his aides that presidential spokesmen will not routinely respond to Watergate queries at the regular White House briefings.

The evidently strained relations between the special prosecution force and the White House began to surface over the weekend when Jaworski said in a television interview that he expected a reply from St. Clair on Monday to his request for additional Watergate tapes and documents.

The special prosecutor is believed to be seeking 20 more documents, including one tape.

In the Sunday interview, Jaworski said if the White House refused to honor his request for additional evidence, he would consider asking the U.S. District Court to issue subpoenas.

That course would set the stage for a repeat of the constitutional confrontation created when the former special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, subpoenaed tapes and documents from Mr. Nixon last summer.

Cox won in district and appellate courts, but was fired Oct. 20 after he refused a "compromise" put forward by the President in which the President would submit summaries of the contested tapes to Sen. John C. Stennis (D-Miss.) for verification and Cox would give up pursuit of other evidence through the courts.

President Acquiesced To Scott

SCOTT, From A1

while at the same time plunging the President's lawyers into a new major dispute with the Watergate special prosecution force.

Previously, Scott had criticized the White House for not backing up his repeated assertions that summaries of presidential tapes contradict Dean's testimony that Mr. Nixon first became aware of the attempts to cover up the Watergate scandal before last March 21.

Scott had brought up the whole thing on Jan. 20, when he said he had seen such evidence. The White House was silent and let Scott speak for himself.

Then the office of the special prosecutor was asked in court about the veracity of Dean and said it had no reason to doubt the testimony. With that, Scott began to show signs that he was facing a credibility test of his own.

"I'll be God-damned if I'll be a patsy for anyone," Scott told reporters on Jan. 30, adding that he had urged White House officials to release some of the tape summaries. He warned that "if the rug is pulled out from under me," he would have more to say.

The sharpest blow to Scott's assertions about Dean came last Thursday when Watergate Assistant Special Prosecutor Richard J. Davis declared in U. S. District Court that "We have no basis for believing that Mr. Dean has committed perjury in any proceeding."

The next day, Scott and House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes (R-Ariz.) went to the White House and met with Mr. Nixon. Scott made it clear then that he wanted a White House statement backing his position on Dean, a congressional source said.

Later in the day, Scott returned to the White House and talked about the matter at length with chief of staff Alexander M. Haig Jr.

Haig first suggested that a statement could be issued through the regular White House press spokesmen, but Scott is understood to have vetoed that idea. Sources said he wanted a statement from a high-level presidential assistant. The two men then agreed on St. Clair.

Scott returned to his office and told members of his staff that St. Clair would be issuing a statement on Monday.

Monday was Scott's regular monthly luncheon with Pennsylvania newspaper editors and reporters. It was evident to Scott, his aides say, that the issue of Dean's veracity would come up.

The Republican leader was said to be particularly sensitive about a home-state newspaper cartoon which depicted him sitting alone at the end of a tree limb.

One of Scott's aides said the senator repeated to the newsmen at the luncheon that he had "gone to the well time after time" for the President, but that he did not intend to become a "patsy" in the controversy surrounding Dean's testimony.

"My job is not to protect the President or his aides, but it is to protect the truth. My sole concern is the pursuit of the truth, and there I have been in an uncomfortable position for some time," Scott was quoted as telling the newsmen.

While Scott's aides were reluctant to discuss the extent of the pressure their boss put on the White House last week, one of them said, "He made a very, very strong position that something had to be done by the White House to back him up."

Not one other member of Congress has admitted seeing the summaries and transcripts of the tapes that Scott says prove Mr. Nixon innocent of the cover-up.

The White House refusals to make the summaries of the tapes generally available, according to the senator, have been based on a reluctance to set a precedent for other requests or to prejudice the rights of potential defendants.

With the release of St. Clair's statement, Scott was said to have told friends he was relieved that the controversy over Dean was again a "matter between the White House and the special prosecutor, where it belongs."