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'IDLE SPECULATION'

# Garment Minimizes Court Standoff

Associated Press

White House counsel Leonard Garment dismisses as "idle speculation" questions on whether President Nixon would refuse to comply with a Supreme Court order to surrender further Watergate evidence.

Garment said yesterday on the CBS program "Face the Nation" that it is "invalid as well as idle" to suggest that any such action would bring on a constitutional crisis.

But two members of the House Judiciary Committee, Reps. William Hungate, D-Mo., and David W. Den-

nis, R-Ind., said on ABC's "Issues and Answers" that noncompliance with or rejection of a Supreme Court decision would be viewed as "a very serious matter" by the impeachment panel.

Dennis predicted, however, that the President would abide by the court's decision.

**THE CONGRESSMEN** disagreed on the overall impact of the evidence heard thus far by the committee, however. Hungate said it has "at least a prima facie case" against Nixon, but Dennis said it was not

"terrifically strong" and likely would boil down in any event to the Watergate cover-up.

Arguments are scheduled for July 8 on Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski's demand for tapes of 64 presidential conversations wanted for use in the Watergate cover-up trial in September.

U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica ruled for Jaworski last month, but Garment said that Nixon's chief Watergate lawyer, James D. St. Clair, is "confident about the outcome of the appeal."

Garment said Nixon does

not view himself as above the law, but that the impeachment process "is the way that the President is held within the law."

**WHEN HE WAS** asked then why Nixon has not complied with the House Judiciary Committee's subpoenas for more evidence, Garment replied that "Cooperation in the impeachment proceeding does not mean that he abandons the responsibilities of his office."

"Were he to accept the unilateral determination of the Congress" as to what evidence is needed, Garment, said "obviously the result of that would be that every piece of paper in the White House would be open to examination."

As to Charles W. Colson's statement in court Friday that Nixon had urged him to defame Daniel Ellsberg in 1971, Garment said: "That is something I don't know about. I can't speak with any certainty about what took place at that time."

Colson was sentenced to one to three years in prison and fined \$5,000 for the smear campaign against Ellsberg, and some members of the House panel have said they intend to investigate whether Nixon should be held criminally liable as well.