

St. Clair Calls Evidence Inadequate

By Carroll Kilpatrick
Washington Post Staff Writer

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., July 22— James D. St. Clair said today he advised President Nixon in a two-hour meeting today that "in my judgment, if all the evidence is viewed objectively, it would not sustain" any of the impeachment articles.

St. Clair, the President's chief attorney in the impeachment fight, charged that the staff of the House Judiciary Committee which has prepared articles of impeachment has abandoned an impartial role and assumed "a prosecutorial role" and attempted to tell members of Congress how to vote.

At a televised news conference here St. Clair said that the evidence, if viewed in its entirety, "doesn't even

come close to establishing guilt" on the President's part.

St. Clair said he was confident that the House will focus on the narrow issue of whether the President authorized the payment of hush money.

St. Clair said he had written to House Judiciary counsel John Doar requesting that he be permitted as the President's attorney to participate in the open debates the committee plans.

Doar has not yet replied to his request, St. Clair said.

An impeachable offense must constitute a major or serious crime, the attorney argued. He said he did not think the American people would accept anything else.

Maintaining that the key issue was the alleged payment of hush money to E. Howard Hunt, St. Clair said that the

evidence demonstrates Mr. Nixon never approved such payment.

Like all other White House spokesmen, St. Clair declined to say whether Mr. Nixon would abide by a Supreme Court decision ordering him to turn over additional tapes to Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

Rejecting repeated attempts by newsmen to pin him down on the question, St. Clair said it would not be responsible for him to comment while the matter is before the justices.

When a reporter asked if Mr. Nixon would plead the Fifth Amendment, he said he would not.

St. Clair said he had spot checked the tapes but had not heard a large number of them.

He said he was confident that the tapes were in a safe place.