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White House Says Presidency, Not Nixon, Is Target of Attack

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WASHINGTON, July 23 — The 151-page White House defense brief presented to the House Judiciary Committee last Saturday asserts the "complete absence" of any solid evidence that would justify the impeachment of President Nixon.

The brief—the text of which is printed in adjacent columns — the conviction, voiced by both Mr. Nixon and his defense attorney, James D. St. Clair, that it is the office of the Presidency that is being besieged, not President Nixon. Mr. Nixon is not referred to in the brief by name; he is always "the President."

Although other defense submissions to the committee have been signed by Mr. St. Clair, the defense brief was "respect-

fully submitted" by the "Office of Special Counsel to the President."

But the brief also reflects faithfully Mr. St. Clair's steadfast conviction that a President cannot be impeached except for a serious, indictable offense related to government or quasi-governmental actions.

Assertion Repeated

He repeated this assertion, which is central to his defense of Mr. Nixon, at his news conference Monday night in Laguna Beach, Calif., at which he said, "An impeachable offense in my view . . . must constitute a major or serious crime committed by the President."

The defense document, thus, does not address itself to a matter that proponents of impeachment regard as one of the most serious charges against Mr. Nixon, his refusal to honor committee subpoenas.

The bulk of the brief deals with the Watergate case, and in particular with the allegation that Mr. Nixon was involved in the payment of \$75,000 in "hush money" to E. Howard Hunt Jr., the convicted participant in the Watergate break-in. It was this allegation above all that led the Watergate grand jury to list Mr. Nixon as an unindicted co-conspirator.

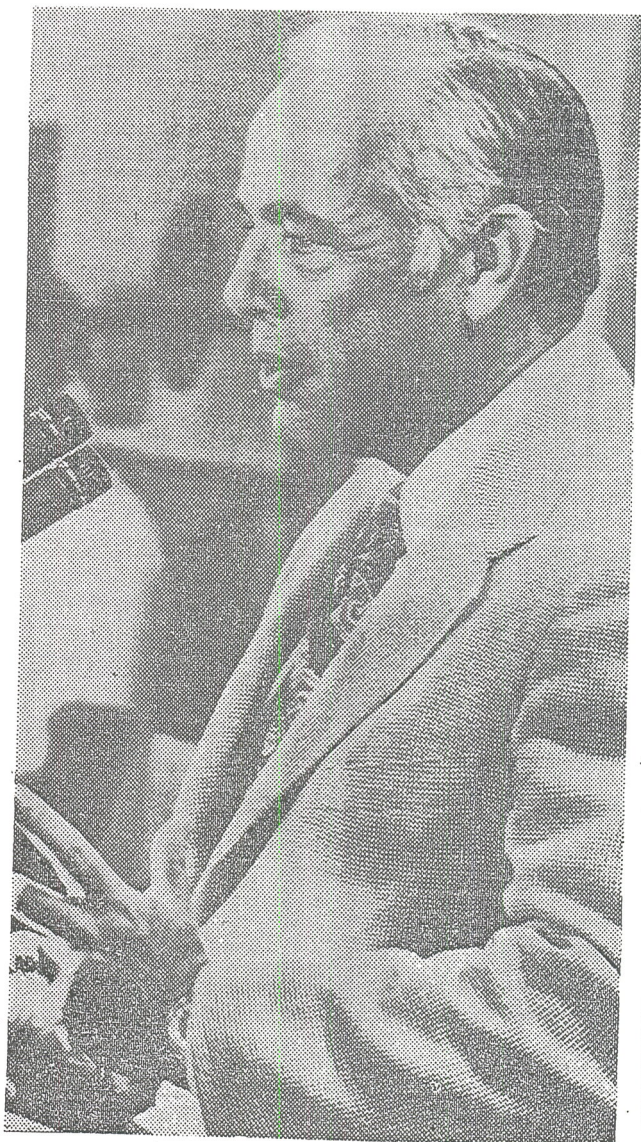
The brief argued that "the artful language and distorted juxtaposition of the parts" in the indictment "resulted in a total impression that is grossly distorted insofar as the imputed involvement of the President in the Watergate cover-up is concerned."

The brief also said that the grand jury was wrong in its finding that Mr. Nixon had authorized the hush-money payment and therefore wrong in listing the President as an unindicted co-conspirator.

Allegations Answered

The brief deals point by point with other major allegations against Mr. Nixon, making the following contentions:

¶The decision to settle anti-trust suits against the International Telephone and Telegraph



United Press International

James D. St. Clair, President Nixon's chief defense lawyer, at his news conference Monday in Laguna Beach, Calif. He refused to say whether Mr. Nixon would obey a Supreme Court order on subpoenaed evidence.

Corporation was not the result of a pledge from an I.T.T. subsidiary to help to finance the Republican National Convention in San Diego, Calif., in 1972.

¶Mr. Nixon's decision in 1972 to raise milk price supports was not influenced by a campaign-contribution pledge by milk producers.

¶The special investigations unit in the White House, known as the "plumbers," was set up by the President for national security reasons, and Mr. Nixon did not authorize or order any illegal acts.

The brief also asserted that

17 Presidential wiretaps of White House aides and newsmen were legal because of the "massive leaks of sensitive foreign policy information at the time." There is, according to the brief, no evidence that Mr. Nixon misused the Internal Revenue Service to harass the Administration's enemies.

In great detail, the brief argued that Mr. Nixon had made consistent efforts to conduct a thorough investigation of the Watergate cover-up, of which he had no knowledge, and removed from office "every White House official against whom charges were made."