

St. Clair Told Nixon to Defy Ervin Bid

BOSTON, Jan. 5 (UPI)—James D. St. Clair, President Nixon's new Watergate counsel, said today he advised the President to defy the Senate select committee's subpoena for more tape-recorded conversations and other White House documents possibly relating to the scandal.

St. Clair, 53, a prominent Boston trial lawyer and Harvard law lecturer, was named Friday by Mr. Nixon to handle all Watergate matters and his possible impeachment defense.

At a news conference, St. Clair said he took the post because "I think it's a matter of importance and, personally, I think of great interest."

Asked what his first official advice was to the president, St. Clair said:

"I'm not prepared to discuss any advice that I have given with respect to these matters or my views on them, but I have advised that the subpoena issued by Sen. (Sam) Ervin for extensive production of documents be declined."

The White House said late Friday it would refuse to turn over nearly 500 tape-recorded presidential conversations and related material to the Ervin committee.

St. Clair, who resigned from the Boston law firm of Hale and Dorr before taking his new job, declined to say how long he might remain at the White House.

He said he quit his law firm in order to avoid any possibility of conflict of interest.