

St. Clair Won't Say If Nixon Would Obey Court

Laguna Beach
Orange county

White House counselor James D. St. Clair refused under repeated questioning at a news conference yesterday to say whether President Nixon would obey a Supreme Court order to turn over subpoenaed evidence to the special Watergate prosecutor.

St. Clair, the President's chief lawyer, repeated his past assertions that it would not be proper to put pressure on the Supreme Court before it reached its decision.

At the news conference, St. Clair also said that the House of Representatives should not put the "burden" of an impeachment trial on the American people unless "the evidence is clear."

He restated the argument that he had made in the brief that he sent to the House Judiciary Committee last week. St. Clair asserted that the evidence before the

committee did not sustain the charges against the President as outlined by the committee's chief counsel, John Doar.

St. Clair also made these points:

- He said he had written to Doar asking that he be allowed to present the President's case in the public hearings to be conducted by the committee later this week.

- He disagreed with the new minority counsel of the committee, Samuel A. Garrison III, who is recommending that even if the evidence suggests complicity by the President it might not be in the public interest for the committee to vote articles of impeachment.

- In discussing his refusal to say whether the President would obey a Supreme Court decision, St. Clair argued that only the House of Representatives, through an impeachment, could direct the activities of a President.

St. Clair also charged that Doar and Albert E. Jenner Jr., former minority counsel on the Judiciary Committee, had abandoned their impartiality in the impeachment proceeding and had taken on the role of prosecutor.

In Washington, Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem-N.J.), chairman of the Judiciary Committee, told reporters that the committee's rules would not permit St. Clair to take part in the committee's rules proceedings later this week, when the panel debates the proposed articles of impeachment. St. Clair did take part when the committee heard the presentation of evidence.

Rodino said, "Mr. St. Clair has no further role. We gave him every opportunity. We bent over backwards."

The President met privately with St. Clair for two hours yesterday in the study of Mr. Nixon's private home in San Clemente, prior to the news conference.

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