

Nixon's Lawyer Again Challenges Dean's Story

Washington

President Nixon's chief Watergate lawyer said yesterday that tapes and other evidence support Mr. Nixon's version of when he knew of a coverup — not that of ousted presidential counsel John W. Dean III.

"The evidence does support what the President has said on this matter," James

St. Clair, the lawyer, said in a statement released by the White House press office.

At the same time, St. Clair postponed notifying Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski whether the White House would turn over additional tapes and documents Jaworski is seeking.

Jaworski said Sunday he had been told to expect the

decision by yesterday.

St. Clair's comment on the tapes intensified a public battle over Dean's truthfulness being waged by statement and counter-statement.

St. Clair jibed at Jaworski and his staff for having "seen fit to discuss in public their views" on the subject.

A spokesman for Jaworski fired back that the prosecutor's question was raised in federal court last week by a lawyer for Dwight L. Chapin, formerly Mr. Nixon's appointment secretary.

Dean is scheduled to testify against Chapin who has been indicted on charges of lying to a grand jury investigating Watergate.

The heart of the conflict between Dean and the President is Dean's contention that Mr. Nixon knew of the coverup earlier than the March 21, 1973, date that he has acknowledged.

"I can say categorically," St. Clair said yesterday, "that the tapes and other evidence furnished to the special prosecutor — at least as far as the President is concerned — do not support sworn statements before the Senate select committee made by Mr. Dean as to what the President knew about Watergate, and especially when he knew it."

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