

Burch Ducks Question on Court Order

Dean Burch, President Nixon's White House political adviser, sidestepped as "hypothetical" questions yesterday as to whether the President will abide by a definitive order of the Supreme Court on release of White House tapes.

Burch made the response on the White House lawn to questions triggered by the Supreme Court's ruling yesterday to hear the dispute between Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski and Mr. Nixon over the President's claim of executive privilege to withhold White House tapes.

Asked how he would advise the President on the politics of defying a Supreme Court decision, Burch said only that if "that occurrence should arise," he would give his advice.

Burch and Gerald L. Warren, White House deputy press secretary, both said the White House would fine its position with the court "at the appropriate time."

Burch devoted most of his time to criticism of the House Judiciary Committee for refusing to open its hearings now or to call witnesses now on the Watergate phase of its staff inquiry, as urged by the White House.

He said he could not imagine that "the American peo-

committee's meeting in secret, without hearing witnesses. He said the only way to find out the truth is in an adversary proceeding where the President's lawyer, James D. St. Clair, is permitted to cross-examine witnesses. He called it "incredible" that no witnesses were being summoned.

The committee should dispose of the Watergate phase of the impeachment inquiry

ple will stand still" for the before going on to other phases, Burch said, and it was his judgment that "their case is Watergate or nothing."

Burch acknowledged that there is bipartisan support on the committee for demanding more White House materials, but he said he did not believe that reflected a negative vote for the President on the ultimate question of impeachment.