

SFChronicle

St. Clair

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Out of the

Nixon Case

Washington

James D. St. Clair returned to his home near Boston for the weekend yesterday, his role as Richard M. Nixon's impeachment defense lawyer ended although he remains technically a White House special counsel.

St. Clair reportedly told his White House associates that he no longer is associated with Mr. Nixon's defense, simply by virtue of the fact that his client resigned his office.

St. Clair said the same thing to reporters after Mr. Nixon's farewell speech to his staff, which the former chief of the impeachment defense witnessed from a front-row seat without any show of emotion.

Later, in an interview outside his house in the Boston suburb of Wellesley, St. Clair said he expected to remain on the White House payroll for about two more weeks.

"There are continuing things I have to do for the court," St. Clair said, such as "filing and indexing an analysis" of the most recently released Watergate tapes.

St. Clair also said he does not believe Congress "has the authority to grant immunity" from further prosecution to Mr. Nixon.

The 53-year-old Boston Attorney, whose White House salary is \$42,500 a year, reportedly was distressed when he learned last week that Mr. Nixon had withheld evidence from him for several months.

White House sources have said St. Clair threatened to resign if Mr. Nixon did not publicly acknowledge he had kept from his lawyer the substance of a tape recorded conversation with former Chief of Staff H.R. Halde-
man.

Release of a transcript of that June 23, 1972 conversation led to an erosion of Republican congressional support of Mr. Nixon, and ultimately the resignation. Mr. Nixon did acknowledge that he had not told his lawyer or other aides of the tape.

St. Clair, the head of a staff of 13 attorneys who worked exclusively on the impeachment defense, was a senior partner of the prestigious Boston law firm, Halde & Door, when he accepted the White House appointment last January 2. He then resigned from the firm.

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