

Ford Claims Facts Clear Nixon; Says Revenue Share Threatened

By Carrol Cagle

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SANTA FE, N.M., July 12—Vice President Ford said today the full package of evidence released by the House Judiciary Committee would clear President Nixon "of any impeachable offense."

At a brief news conference en route to the Atomic Energy Commission's Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory, Ford said:

"I think the evidence as a whole—the new evidence as well as the old evidence—clearly exonerates the President of any involvement in the break-in, or in any ITT or milk fund impeachable offense.

"And I think the preponderance of the evidence—all of it—is in favor of the President and exonerates him of any impeachable offense," he added.

Later, speaking to the National Lieutenant Governors' Conference in Santa Fe, Ford said a "behind-the-scenes effort" by federal bureaucrats

and Washington lobbyists has been launched "to kill general revenue sharing."

"They want to help recapture the money and authority lost through governmental decentraliation," Ford said.

The Vice President departed from his prepared text to make the assertion. Maryland Lt. Gov. Blair Lee III said during a question period that he had "heard the rumors of a mounting conspiracy to do away with general revenue sharing" and asked Ford to identify those behind the effort.

Ford replied that federal bureaucrats and "a number of trade associations that justify their own jobs in Washington" are behind what he called the "quiet but sinister effort."

The Vice President said he felt compelled to call attention to the possibility because "I fear that it will surface too late. I'd rather be prepared for the battle rather than caught napping."

The bulk of Ford's prepared text was on new federalism and centraliation of governmental powers. He was interrupted by applause when he asserted: "Americans must never be reduced to computerized robots by a single center of power."

Although not mentioning Watergate by name, he defended his journeys of 100,000 miles since December and said, "It would be a mistake for federal officials in Washington to isolate themselves from those who pay their salaries and hold them responsible."