

Justice Dept. as Nixon Defender

Washington

The Justice Department has offered to continue to defend former President Nixon in civil suits pending against him, a department spokesman acknowledged yesterday.

Assistant Attorney General Henry Petersen made the offer to Mr. Nixon's lawyer, Herbert J. Miller, but there was no immediate indication of whether it has been accepted.

A Justice Department spokesman said the proposal also would apply to any future civil suits filed against Mr. Nixon "if the depart-

ment determines that Nixon was acting within the scope of his authority" at the time of the actions that gave rise to the suits.

The spokesman declined to specify what civil suits are pending against Mr. Nixon, though the former President has been sued by several former administration officials who were wire-tapped under White House orders during the Nixon years.

The Justice Department spokesman said he didn't know if the offer had been approved by President Ford.

Associated Press
