

FORD IS HOPEFUL OF COMPROMISE IN TAPE DISPUTE

Suggests Senate Committee
Make 'Refinements' in Its
Demand for Documents

BACKS NIXON'S REFUSAL

Vice President Also Hopes
White House Will Revive
Its 'Operation Candor'

By ANTHONY RIPLEY

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 6—Vice President Ford said today that some compromise might be possible between the White House and the Senate Watergate committee following President Nixon's rejection on Friday of committee requests for more than 500 tapes and documents.

As he had in an earlier confrontation with the special prosecutor's office, Mr. Nixon cited the need for confidentiality in Presidential communications.

Mr. Ford, appearing on the National Broadcasting Company's "Meet the Press" program today, backed the President's refusal but sought compromise rather than confrontation.

"I hope and trust that as we go down the road perhaps there can be some compromise," Mr. Ford said. "But a 500-document demand is far too broad, far too much of a fishing expedition."

'Area of Compromise'

He continued:

"Now, if they are willing to make some refinements in the demand, cutting it down to things that are more relevant to the committee's responsibilities, then I think there may be—and I underline 'may be'—an area of compromise."

The Vice President said that though he had been on a family vacation during the last two weeks, he had been in touch with the President "five or six times personally by telephone."

Last week, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina who is chairman of

the Watergate committee, also indicated a possibility of compromise in an interview in his home state.

President Nixon lost in both the United States District Court and the United States Court of Appeals in attempts to keep Presidential documents out of the hands of the special prosecutor.

Following his second setback, Mr. Nixon attempted to arrange a compromise with the former special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, but was turned down. He dismissed Mr. Cox, saying he was pressing too hard on the issue.

The Senate's request for such documents was turned down by the President and by Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District Court.

Congress has since passed a law giving the Senate a firmer

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legal footing for going back to court.

The committee's request for information is based on its legislative job—that is, to find out what went on in the Watergate scandals as a basis for writing laws to prevent them from happening again.

In today's televised interview, Mr. Ford said he hoped the so-called "operation candor" would be revived. This was a White House effort to put Watergate related facts more fully before the public.

The White House has reportedly backed away from Operation Candor.

"I have expressed my desire that the White House not only initiate, but also expand its Operation Candor," the Vice President said. "I did favor the President going out to meet the people as he did prior to the Christmas holidays."

"I was very much in favor of the President disclosing his income tax returns, as well as his financial situation, and I hope and trust, despite what I understand is some reluctance at the present time, that the President will continue with Operation Candor with a full disclosure, or a white paper involving the I.T.T. matter and the so-called milk fund contribution."

The references were to a multimillion-dollar pledge by dairy interests seeking quotas to limit imports and for rises in price supports and to the in-

vestigation that grew out of a \$400,000 pledge from the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation for the 1972 Republican National Convention.

Mr. Ford said he was "absolutely certain" that Mr. Nixon

"was acting properly and practically" at the time milk price supports were increased. As for I.T.T., he stated, "I am convinced that the President is absolutely free and clear of any wrongful actions as far as I.T.T. is concerned."