

Ford Reports Nixon Offer Of 'Proof'

Washington

Vice president Gerald B. Ford said yesterday that President Nixon volunteered to show him information proving he had no prior knowledge of the Watergate break-in or the subsequent coverup efforts.

Ford told a news conference he has not taken the time as yet to read the information.

He said the offer came during a two-hour meeting he had with Mr. Nixon Monday. 21 JAN

"I spent time talking to the President about Watergate yesterday and I know from our conversation that the President had no prior knowledge of the Watergate break-in or had any part in the coverup," said Ford.

Asked if his knowledge was connected with a statement Sunday by Senate Republican Leader Hugh Scott that he had information that would clear Mr. Nixon of wrongdoing in some aspects of the Watergate case, Ford said, "I have not seen those transcripts." 20 JAN

Later, Ford said, "The
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President volunteered to show it to me. It was part of our discussion yesterday but I have not had time to see it," leaving unclear whether there was one or more transcripts.

Scott, who said only that he had information, had criticized Mr. Nixon's advisers for not urging the President to make the information public.

Ford said "This is information that is in the hands of Mr. (Leon) Jaworski (special Watergate prosecutor) and he and the judge

have an obligation not to release that information pending indictment and trial of those accused."

The information purportedly rebuts testimony former White House aide John W. Dean III gave the Senate Watergate Committee that linked Mr. Nixon with the coverup.

Asked about the recent disclosure that an 18½ minute segment of one of Mr. Nixon's Watergate tapes may have been deliberately erased, Ford said, "I do not believe the President was involved in that at all."

"I do not know who was



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**VICE PRESIDENT FORD
He hasn't read it**

involved," Ford added.

Ford also rejected suggestions by some Democrats that Mr. Nixon resign and said "The President would be very unwise to resign. It would be wrong to do so, particularly since I believe he is not guilty of any wrongdoing and will be exonerated."

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