

FORD SAYS NIXON HAS BEEN CLEARED

Asserts That All Evidence
'Exonerates the President'

By MARJORIE HUNTER

SANTA FE, N. M., July 12—

Vice President Ford said today that "new evidence as well as the old evidence" exonerated President Nixon of any impeachable offense.

The Vice President's continued defense of the President came at an impromptu news conference earlier today in Albuquerque before he came here to address the 13th annual Conference of Lieutenant Governors.

Asked today if the new evidence raised any doubts in mind about the President's innocence in the Watergate affair, Mr. Ford replied:

"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, of any involvement in the I.T.T. and milk fund or impeachable offense, and I think the preponderance of the evidence, all of it, is in favor of the President and exonerates him from any impeachable offense."

The Vice President has been critical, from time to time, of the tenor of Mr. Nixon's taped conversations with White House aides and critical of the President's delays in making evidence available. However, Mr. Ford has maintained from the beginning that he believes that Mr. Nixon was not guilty of any impeachable offense.

Yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee released eight volumes of evidence it has accumulated during its impeachment inquiry.

Mr. Ford plans to meet with the President tomorrow morning at San Clemente. The subject of their meeting has not been disclosed.

The Vice President flew to New Mexico this morning for a 20-hour day of political and official functions. He was greeted at Kirtland Air Force Base in Albuquerque by a large placard reading "Ford In '74."

In his speech to the lieutenant governors, Mr. Ford called for Congressional action on the Administration's revenue-sharing proposals.

"No country as diverse as the United States can be effectively governed with a rigid sameness of categorical standards imposed from Washington," he said.

The Vice President ruled out any tax increase or cut in the coming year but he said that the Nixon Administration had plans to try to cope with inflation and he inspected the President to announce them within the next week to 10 days.