

Hart Scolds President On Privacy

By Dan Morgan

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Sen. Philip A. Hart of Michigan, in a Democratic response to President Nixon's proposals for safeguarding personal privacy, called on the administration to take a number of steps immediately to "live up to the rhetoric."

He said the President should order his administration to refrain from political spying of any kind, prohibit military snooping on citizens, and state without equivocation that the label of national security will not be used to hide or excuse illegal acts.

In so doing, Hart said in a nationally broadcast radio address that the President would help repudiate the "unprecedented efforts in this administration" to undermine constitutional guarantees of personal privacy.

In his Jan. 31 State of the Union message, the President said he wanted to work with Congress to establish new standards for controlling encroachments on privacy by data banks and electronic technology. He followed this up a week ago by setting up a committee under Vice President Gerald R. Ford to recommend regulations and policy changes.

The thrust of the remarks yesterday by Hart, who was tapped by Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) to issue a Democratic response, was that much could be done without waiting for the special committee's findings.

Hart said that the administration had opposed for several years a Senate-passed bill to prohibit government employees from being asked about their religious beliefs, politics and social lives. Hart urged the President to support another Senate-passed bill that would prohibit military

personnel from spying on American citizens.

Hart also said that the President could immediately issue an executive order requiring federal agencies to obtain subpoenas before examining "telephone records, bank records and other private business records."

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The statement credited the President with taking a step in the right direction in promising to control the use of data banks and computers.

But it added, "Despite all the disturbing revelations of Watergate, the President made no promise to instruct his administration to live up to guarantees of personal privacy contained in the Constitution."

Hart said that persons associated with the present administration have spied on political opponents, broken into buildings to seek information, eavesdropped on private conversations, used confidential Internal Revenue Service files in compiling a White House enemies list and otherwise violated the privacy of many citizens.

"As the public learned about government spying and



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... Democratic reply

wiretapping, it became fearful," Hart said. "While these fears may be exaggerated, they no longer can be dismissed as groundless paranoia."