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Personal Privacy Defended by Ford

Vice President Gerald R. Ford continued his attack on governmental infringement of personal privacy yesterday, telling a conference of broadcast editorial writers that the "flow of news on the Watergate matter" is obscuring "one of the most serious problems we face today."

Emphasizing his role as chairman of the Domestic Councils Committee on Privacy, Ford urged the editorial writers to support legislation to give subjects in computer files access to information concerning them.

"I believe the individual should be his own policeman,"

Ford said. "This approach is complicated and difficult . . . but is far superior to . . . a Big Brother agency taking control."

Ford again hit the General Service Administration's recently scuttled plans to establish a massive data bank. The large computer system—called FEDNET—was to have linked GSA and the Agriculture Department and could have been expanded to include other federal agencies. Plans were dropped after Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), Ford and the Office of Management and Budget focused public attention on the proposal.