

# Senate Unit Says Cable Companies Aided in Spying

By NICHOLAS M. HORROCK

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 6—For almost 30 years three international telegraph companies secretly supplied to the United States Government copies of most of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence disclosed today.

The committee made public its report on Operation Shamrock, a secret program to scan cable traffic for intelligence data, begun under the Administration of President Truman and discontinued last May by James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of Defense.

Though the intrusion by the government into cable traffic had been disclosed at earlier congressional hearings and in the press, the report made public today the first formal history of an operation that several members of the committee said they believed had violated the Constitution and the Federal Communications Act.

## Published Over Objections

The committee made the report public over the objections of the Ford administration and three of its Republican members, Senator John G. Tower, of Texas, the vice chairman, Barry Goldwater of Arizona and Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee.

Publication of the report was followed by the testimony of Edward H. Levi, the Attorney General, who said that President Ford had ordered the National Security Agency — which conducted Operation Shamrock — to keep him informed of its various electronic-surveillance programs.

Mr. Levi read a 61-page statement on the complexities of balancing modern electronic-surveillance techniques and intelligence needs with the constitutional protections against government invasion of individual's privacy.

## Legality Not Judged

Mr. Levi presented no conclusions on the legality of Operation Shamrock or on the security agency's practice of listening in on overseas telephone calls to obtain information on antiwar groups and narcotics smuggling.

According to the committee's report, James Forrestal, Secretary of Defense in 1947, asked the three companies to turn over to the Government voluntarily the message traffic of certain specific foreign intelligence targets. The report did not name the targets, but presumably they were embassies and individuals in contact with the Soviet bloc.

The companies were RCA Global Communications, Inc., I.T.T. Communications and Western Union International, the report said.

"The three companies were assured that if they cooperated with the Government in this program, they would suffer no criminal liability and no public exposure, at least as long as the current [Truman] administration was in office," the report said.

Mr. Forrestal also told the companies that the project had the approval of President Truman and the Attorney General, Tom C. Clark. According to the report, government officials and company representatives sought authority for the activity on only one other occasion, in 1949. From that time on the program operated without the express approval of any President or Attorney General, the report said.

## Government Got Tapes

A former deputy director of the National Security Agency, Dr. Louis Tordella, testified that to the best of his knowledge no President since Mr. Truman had been informed of the operation the report said. In the early days of Shamrock the government received paper

tapes of messages that had gone by cable as well as microfilm of messages sent over short wave. This material was sorted by hand on the basis of its destination.

In the early 1960's, the report said, two of the companies began storing copies of their messages on magnetic tape, and the tapes were turned over to the National Security Agency. From that time on the agency's computers were able to select messages to analyze on the basis of the content instead of the destination.

"This meant, for example,

that telegrams to or from, or even mentioning, United States citizens whose names appeared on the watch list in the late 1960's and early 1970's would have been sent to N.S.A. analysts, and many would subsequently be disseminated to other agencies," the report said. The watch list was composed of individuals and companies that various intelligence agencies wanted to keep track of.

"Of all the messages made available to N.S.A. each year, it is estimated that N.S.A. in recent years selected about 150,000 messages a month for

its analysts to review," the report said. Thousands were reported distributed to other agencies.

National Security Agency officials and representatives of the companies testified that the companies received no compensation for their cooperation, nor did they get government favoritism in other business dealings.

The transfer of tapes took place mainly in New York. Company offices in Washington, San Francisco, and Miami also participated, the report said.