

NYTimes MAR 5 1976

CABLE INTERCEPTING CALLED INADVERTENT

WASHINGTON, March 4 (UPI)—A Pentagon attorney said today that the National Security Agency "inadvertently" intercepted private cables of American citizens while reading the messages of foreign governments.

Officials of two major telegraph agencies had testified under threat of contempt of Congress that they did not provide access to such private cables by the N.S.A. and the Federal Bureau of investigation.

Richard A. Wiley, the Pentagon's general counsel, said today in a letter to Representative Bella S. Abzug, Democrat of Manhattan, that officials of the security agency and the F.B.I. were willing to testify about such cable traffic in open session before the House Government Operations Committee's Subcommittee on Government Information and Individual Rights, of which she is chairman.

"N.S.A. is prepared to state that, in these operations, the communications of U.S. citizens are sometimes inadvertently acquired and to testify as to certain directives which pertain to the processing and handling of this type of traffic," the letter said.

But Mr. Wiley said he was not willing to discuss in public collection techniques or what happens when an American citizen is mentioned in foreign government cables.

CIA (D)