

Mitchell Declares Courts Overstress Rights of Accused

WASHINGTON, June 9 (UPI)

—Attorney General John N. Mitchell said today that the Administration was trying to restore fairness to the courtroom, which he said had suffered because of "preoccupation with fairness for the accused."

Mr. Mitchell said that the Administration would propose legislation to "make the courtroom a place where fact is determined and innocence or guilt decided, rather than a place where fact is obscured and justice frustrated through the triumph of sophistry over common sense."

He said that the Administration was already trying to restore courtroom balance through a greater use of wiretaps and increased financial assistance to state and local prosecutors.

He did not elaborate on the proposed legislation but said that there was no intention of taking away any of the constitutional rights now afforded accused persons.

"The preoccupation with fairness for the accused has done violence to fairness for the accuser," he said in a speech prepared for the National District Attorney's Association.

"Is justice served now by shackling the prosecutor and giving more weapons to the defense?"

He said that he was referring to "the overwhelming attention to proceduralism . . . almost all of it benefiting the accused."