

Hotline Wiring

How Governors Were 'Bugged'

Washington

Governor Marvin Mandel of Maryland said yesterday his red "hotline" telephone to national civil defense headquarters was miswired so it transmitted conversations from his office even when the receiver was down.

A telephone company official guaranteed that no conversation — either Mandel's or other state governors' — got out where it could be overheard on the giant "party line" linking all state capitals with civil defense headquarters in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Mandel told a news conference in Annapolis that the special phones in the offices of about 40 other governors were similarly miswired. Mandel met reporters after columnist Jack Anderson wrote of the Maryland governor's telephone in his syndicated column.

PRIVACY

"This is outrageous to live under these circumstances," said Mandel. "This is a terrible way to have to conduct a business or government or any other type of activity — always worried about your privacy."

Bay James Mundis, a representative of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, said "We are certain no conversation ever got out on the network where it could be overheard."

He explained that the telephones used in the civil defense network were "four-wire" instead of the usual "two-wire" instruments found in most homes and businesses.

Because of this, he said, any conversations the phones might pick up because of miswiring would never get beyond a locked terminal box, usually located in the case of the governors in the statehouse basement.

Mundis said the four-wire telephone system was used primarily to get better fidelity on the line, so that gover-

nors could plug it into loudspeaker systems if they wished. A byproduct of that, he said, was the double safety system that blocked any stray conversations from going out on the network.

Red telephones similar to the one in Mandel's office rest in about 30 other governors' offices around the nation; Mundis said, and 18 states have them in their state civil defense headquarters.

Mundis said checks had begun as soon as word of Anderson's column got out. He

disputed Mandel's assertion that about 40 other hotline instruments were wired wrong.

"As of early afternoon," Mundis said, "we had checked 16 of the phones without finding any others miswired." He said that the check did disclose that the telephone in the office of the Delaware governor had been similarly miswired, but that it subsequently was corrected.

BUGGING

Mandel said he discovered the miswiring October 27 during a routine check for bugging devices. The wiring error kept the microphone in the phone's mouthpiece from shutting off when the cradle was depressed.

Private investigator Edward Boyle, who inspected the hotline telephone with state police Lieutenant Norvall Cooper in late October and discovered the wrong wiring, said he did not believe the instrument was deliberately fixed to transmit at the time.

United Press

11-18-70
S.P. Chron