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# Big Increase in Approved Wiretaps

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## Washington

A new report to Congress on police eavesdropping shows that the number of court-approved wiretaps used by Federal and State law enforcement agencies almost doubled in 1970 over the figure for 1969.

Last year a total of 597 court orders were granted throughout the United States authorizing the installation of electronic listening devices by state and federal officers. In the previous year, the figure was 302.

The surge in wiretapping by law enforcement officers was marked by a sharp rise in surveillance by the Justice Department and the state of New Jersey.

The Justice Department, which had obtained only 33 orders to eavesdrop in 1969, obtained 183 last year. New Jersey, which has developed an aggressive anti-organized crime unit in the office of State Attorney General Robert F. Kugler, got 132 court

orders last year, compared with only 39 the year before.

The report, which was sent to Congress Friday by Roland F. Kirks, administrator of the United States courts, has not yet been made public.

It covers only electronic surveillance that is used in criminal cases with court approval. Not covered is the wiretapping that is done by federal agents without court approval in internal security investigations.

President Nixon said at his

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press conference Saturday that his administration is doing less of this internal security eavesdropping than was done in the early years of the Kennedy administration. He said that at no time are more than 50 internal security wiretaps in operation under his administration, and that in 1961, 1962 and 1963 the ceiling in effect was 100 devices.

Court-approved eavesdropping by federal and state anti-crime investigators was authorized by Congress in the omnibus Crime Control Act of 1968. The law requires each agency to report its surveillance activities each year to Kirks, who compiles a national report and files it with Congress. The second such report covering nationwide police eavesdropping for an entire year was filed Friday.

## WARRANTS

It showed that New York, which pioneered court-approved police wiretapping four decades ago, still authorizes more of it than any other jurisdiction. There were 215 eavesdrop warrants granted last year in New York, compared with 191 in 1969.

It also disclosed that some state legislatures, imbued with anti-crime zeal, are pushing through laws to authorize police wiretapping when there are either no criminals who deserve to be tapped, or the local police do not know how.

Seven states that have wiretap laws file no reports, indicating that no police wiretapping was done. They are Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota and Washington.

## FILED

The jurisdictions that filed reports and the number of devices that each was authorized to install are: United States, 183; Arizona, 7; Colorado, 1; Florida, 12; Georgia, 11; Maryland, 24; Massachusetts, 7; Minnesota, 3; New Hampshire, 1; New Jersey, 132; New York, 215; Wisconsin, 1.

The data indicated that police and prosecutors are becoming more skilled in using electronic eavesdropping. A higher percentage of the interceptions were incriminating last year than in 1969, and more arrests resulted.

Last year 1874 arrests were said to have resulted from eavesdropping, compared to 625 the year before. The average device picked up 655 interceptions, of which 45 per cent were said to be incriminating. In 1969, fewer interceptions were picked up on the average device, and a lower percentage were incriminating.