

Kleindienst Sees a Decline in Wiretaps

By FRED P. GRAHAM
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WASHINGTON, June 21 — Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst said today that last Monday's Supreme Court decision on wiretapping would reduce the Government's intelligence about subversive activities, "but not to an extent that will damage our national security."

The Supreme Court held that the Government must obtain court warrants before wiretapping may be used against allegedly subversive radical domestic groups. For at least 26 years, the Government had been wiretapping such groups without court permission.

Mr. Kleindienst said in an interview that the ruling would cut down on eavesdropping for intelligence-gathering purposes because the Federal law on wiretapping requires proof that a crime has been or is about to be committed before Government agents will be given a warrant to eavesdrop.

'Not a Dead-End Street'

But he said the 8-to-0 decision 'is not a dead-end street' for electronic surveillance because the Government could request warrants when a radical group appeared to be planning a specific crime.

He said the Justice Department would cooperate with Congress in drawing up a new wiretapping law to permit court warrants in "domestic security" situations that were not clearly covered under the present law.

Mr. Kleindienst said that as soon as he read the Supreme Court's opinion last Monday, he asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation for an inventory of internal security wiretaps then in use without warrant.

There were "less than 30," he said. Of these, he said, "less than 10" were considered to be directed at groups that were not significantly involved with foreign power. Mr. Kleindienst said all of these had immediately been turned off.

He declared that the Justice Department would not attempt to continue eavesdropping on domestic groups without warrants by contending that the groups had foreign ties. The Supreme Court ruling left it undecided whether the Government might continue to wiretap without court approval where foreign intelligence was involved.

Mitchell Similarity Seen

Mr. Kleindienst's statements were made during a luncheon with members of the Washington Bureau of The New York Times.

Mr. Kleindienst, who was sworn in as Attorney General earlier this month, said there would not be "too much of a difference" between his Justice Department and that of his predecessor, John N. Mitchell.

He said that Mr. Mitchell had accomplished more than his Democratic predecessors in civil rights but that under the Kleindienst regime "more emphasis" in civil rights enforcement

than was evident under Mr. Mitchell could be expected.

He also said that there would be "a much more intensive" program of penology reform.

He disclosed that he and his family had been involved in efforts to rehabilitate two young men who would otherwise have been sent to prison. To protect their privacy, Mr. Kleindienst declined to give more details.

Mr. Kleindienst said he would not make political speeches or criticize the Democratic candidate during the Presidential campaign. Instead, he said, he will "go around the country telling the accomplishments of this Government in the justice area."

But he conceded that the Democrats could legitimately appoint. He said he would expect the Democratic nominee to say in his acceptance speech: "I will give you a new Attorney General—who won't sell out to I.T.I."

This was an allusion to Richard M. Nixon's pledge, in his acceptance speech at the 1968 Republican convention, to name a new Attorney General to replace Ramsey Clark. Some Democrats tried to block Mr. Kleindienst's confirmation by alleging that he had been improperly involved in the settlement of three antitrust suits against the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation—a charge he denied then and again in the interview today.