

An Attack on Nixon 'Espionage'

Washington

The American Civil Liberties Union accused President Nixon yesterday of showing "a contemptuous disregard for constitutional freedoms" by sanctioning the widespread use of political espionage.

This charge was made in a 26-page position paper that dealt with a broad range of civil liberties questions raised by the Watergate scandals.

The ACLU statement asserted that "all of the methods of political espionage contemplated in the 1970 plan* (excepting only mail covers . . .) were employed by the federal government during the past few years.

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The civil liberties organization took sharp issue with the President's May 22 statement that national security wiretaps installed without court order to trace news leaks were "legal at the time." The ACLU report said "those taps were as illegal when they were installed as they are now."

Such taps were ruled unconstitutional in June, 1972. "The Supreme Court decision did not make such taps illegal," the statement held, "it merely confirmed that they were illegal."

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*text filed Watergate 23 May 73