

Anti-War Cases

U.S. Ordered to Reveal Wiretaps

Washington

U.S. District Judge Aubrey E. Robinson Jr. ruled yesterday that the federal government must disclose the nature and extent of wire taps and electronic surveillance on several anti-war leaders and groups.

The government had contended that it was not com-

pelled to disclose such information on "national security" grounds.

Although such orders are not unusual in criminal cases, Robinson's decision marks the first time that the government has been ordered to disclose such wiretap information in connection with a civil suit, according to an attorney familiar with wiretap cases.

The order cannot be appealed, but the government could file a motion asking the judge to reconsider his order or asking that the information be placed under seal once it is given to the plaintiff, according to the attorney.

Leon Friedman, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney in New York, termed the order a "significant victory" in disclosure of wiretap information. Government attorneys could not be reached for comment.

The ruling came in a suit filed 4½ years ago by eight persons charged with attempting to disrupt the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago and nine groups active in the anti-war movement. The suit was delayed while criminal charges against the eight were being litigated.

The government had submitted a 43-page brief in defense of its refusal to answer interrogatories in the suit, which are written questions submitted by the plaintiffs.

Those interrogatories — which the government must now answer within 30 days — ask for detailed information as to which plaintiffs were tapped, when they were tapped, how long the taps remained, who authorized the taps, and the reason such taps were deemed necessary.

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