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**Mitchell
Defends****Wiretaps**SFChronicle
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Attorney General John N. Mitchell said yesterday the nation never before has faced "so many revolutionary elements determined to destroy by force the government and the society it stands for."

Defending the Nixon administration's policy of wiretaps in domestic subversive cases without prior court approval, Mitchell said electronic surveillance "has been a vital part of the government's defense against subversion for the past three decades."

Mitchell's remarks were in a speech for delivery to the Virginia State Bar Association.

The government now is appealing to the Supreme Court an Appeals Court ruling that electronic surveillance of domestic groups is unconstitutional without a court warrant obtained in advance.

Mitchell contends that the Constitution gives him, as the President's functionary, an inherent right to use electronic surveillance in cases where the national security is endangered.

Associated Press