

Congressmen Were Bugged by F.B.I. Indirectly

WASHINGTON, May 9 (AP)—Information regarding contacts between members of Congress and foreign officials was picked up by F.B.I. wiretaps and bugging devices and forwarded to Presidents Johnson and Nixon, according to a staff report of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities.

The 79-page report, released today, stressed that none of the legislators was the direct target of electronic eavesdropping but that instead they were overheard "through the bureau's coverage of certain foreign establishments in Washington," probably embassies.

The report cited the eavesdropping as an example of a situation in which "even properly authorized electronic surveillances directed against foreign targets... may result in possible abuses involving American citizens."

The report did not name any of the legislators or foreign officials involved.

Part of Senate Study

The report on electronic surveillance is one of 13 volumes being issued by the committee in support of its report on domestic intelligence activities.

The Senate committee document traced the bureau's use of wiretaps and bugging devices from 1940 to the present, describing in detail a number of previously reported cases, including the wiretapping of reporters and government officials during the Kennedy and Nixon Administrations.

Eavesdropping material involving members of Congress was first sent to the Johnson White House in March 1966 in response to a request from the President "that the F.B.I. should constantly keep abreast of the actions of representatives of these (foreign officials)

in making contacts with Senators and Congressmen," according to a bureau memo quoted in the report.

President Johnson felt that many of the protests against his Vietnam policies, particularly hearings in the Senate, had been generated by the foreign officials, the memo said.

"As a result of the President's request, the F.B.I. prepared a chronological summary—based in part on existing electronic surveillances—of the contacts

of each Senator, Representative or staff member who communicated with selected foreign establishments during the period July 1, 1964 to March 17, 1966, the report said.

The practice was reinstated by the Nixon Administration in July 1970, when Larry Higby, a White House aide, informed the bureau that H. R. Halde- man, White House chief of staff, "wanted any information possessed by the F.B.I. relating to contacts between (certain foreign officials) and members

of Congress and its staff," according to a bureau memo cited in the report.

The report noted that although the courts have placed stiffer legal restrictions on the use of electronic eavesdropping since 1972, the number of warrantless wiretaps and bugs in the area of domestic intelligence has actually increased. As of November, 1975, all warrantless electronic surveillances were directed against foreigners, the report said.