

'U.S. Needs Privacy, Too'

Washington

Attorney General Edward H. Levi said last night that the government shares with individuals the need for privacy and confidentiality if it is to perform its job properly.

In what was described as a major policy statement, Levi acknowledged the desirability of striking a balance between secrecy and openness, but he repeatedly emphasized the need for government to preserve

areas of confidentiality rather than the public's right and need to be informed.

"A right of complete confidentiality in government could not only produce a dangerous public ignorance but also destroy the basic representative function of government," Levi said in his speech to the Association of the Bar of the city of New York.

"But a duty of complete disclosure would render impossible the effective operation of government," he said.

Referring to a congressional bill that would require the federal government to obtain a court order for all wiretaps and to file detailed reports with the judicial and legislative branch, Levi said, "The wisdom of this scheme is dubious at best."

Washington Post