

TAPS ON NEWSMEN BY F.B.I. ALLEGED

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Time Magazine Says Action
Lasted About Two Years

NYTimes

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 — Over more than two years, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under orders from the White House, tapped the telephones of six or seven newsmen and a number of White House aides in an effort to determine how information was being leaked to the press, according to Time magazine.

The magazine, in its issue that will be on newsstands tomorrow, attributes its report to "four different sources in the Government." Time does not name the newsmen or the White House officials involved.

A Justice Department spokesman refused today to comment on the report. Time quoted a White House spokesman as denying that the taps had ever existed.

Time says that the wiretapping began about three years

ago when J. Edgar Hoover was director of the F.B.I. and continued when L. Patrick Gray 3d took over as acting director after Mr. Hoover died last May.

The taps were removed last June after the Supreme Court ruled that court orders were required before the Government could install wiretaps on the telephones of persons without foreign connections, Time says.

Mitchell Role Alleged

According to the magazine, Mr. Hoover initially balked at the White House directive to install the wiretaps, but he was ordered by John N. Mitchell, then Attorney General, to follow it.

Time goes on to say that the wiretapping operation "actually helped to keep Hoover on the job." It reports that Richard G. Kleindienst, now Attorney General but then Mr. Mitchell's deputy, "tried to force Hoover to step down and in 1971 even gave his support to a proposed Congressional investigation of the F.B.I."

Mr. Hoover, however, threatened to disclose the wiretaps to Congress, and the "scuttle-Hoover maneuver was quickly forgotten," according to the Time report.

Time says that the wiretaps never uncovered any White House leaks.

Mr. Kleindienst, Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Gray could not be reached for comment today. Time did reach Mr. Kleindienst and Mr. Mitchell and quoted them and the White House spokesman as denying that the taps had ever existed.

Mr. Gray is scheduled to tes-

tify Wednesday before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is considering his nomination to be permanent director of the F.B.I. It is considered likely that the Senators will ask him about the Time article.

Charges by McGovern

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25 (UPI)

— Senator George McGovern, Democrat of South Dakota, said today that President Nixon's Administration had amassed a "simply stunning" record of actions against critical news organizations in the last year.

Senator McGovern, the 1972 Democratic Presidential candidate, said the Administration had sought to cut off the flow of news by denying reporters access to information and by threatening jail terms for those who would not serve as Government informants.

When those tactics failed and news agencies published criticism of the Government, the Administration attempted punishment, the Senator said.

Mr. McGovern made the remarks in a prepared speech at Brandeis University in Waltham, Mass. The text was made public here.

"The record of the last year alone" in Administration attempts to punish news organizations "is simply stunning for its ingenuity and sweep as well as its utter disregard for the spirit of the First Amendment," Senator McGovern said.

"Unless such repression is stopped, the outcome may be newspapers that are blank and airwaves silent on the great issues," he said.