

MITCHELL REPORTS WIRETAPPING RISE

Says Government Steps Up
Use in Criminal Cases—

He Denies Repression

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5—Attorney General John N. Mitchell disclosed today that the Federal Government was rapidly expanding its use of wiretapping against suspected criminals.

"The only repression that has resulted is the repression of crime," Mr. Mitchell declared in a speech before the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

In reporting on the use of wiretapping against criminals, which was authorized by Congress in 1968, the Attorney General chided the Johnson Administration for refusing to use wiretapping on the ground that it might create fear of pervasive government surveillance.

He termed such fears "bogeys" and said that one of his first acts had been to order the use of court-approved wiretapping, as authorized by the 1968 law.

133 in Seven Months

Mr. Mitchell said that a review of the first one and a half years' experience in using such wiretapping had convinced him that it was the most valuable tool available to his anticrime investigators, and that "we need not apologize to the absolute civil libertarians" for using it.

Last year the Justice Department used 30 court-approved taps. During the first seven months of 1970 it used 133, Mr. Mitchell said. He said that about 80 per cent of the overheard telephone calls were incriminating—proof, he said, that the Government is not using wiretapping for "fishing expedition."

So far this year, 419 arrests and 325 indictments have re-

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Mitchell Reports More Wiretaps Discounts Fears of Surveillance

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sulted from wiretapping, Mr. Mitchell said.

His speech was given before the police chiefs' annual meeting at Atlantic City. The text was released here. Mr. Mitchell urged the police chiefs to use wiretapping in those states where judges were permitted to authorize it, but he warned them that the Justice Department would prosecute policemen who tapped without court authority.

Mr. Mitchell's speech was devoted entirely to court-approved wiretapping in criminal cases, and not the more controversial issue of Federal wiretapping and other electronic eavesdropping against radical domestic groups and suspected foreign spies.

He has asserted in court cases that he has legal authority to eavesdrop without court authority on both types of groups when he considers national security to be threatened. This type of surveillance has not been ruled upon by the Supreme Court, and the Government has not disclosed how much of it is going on.

Justice Department officials here said that of the 133 wiretaps used in criminal cases in the first seven months of this year, 82 were in gambling cases, 28 concerned narcotics investigations, and the rest involved loan sharking, interstate transportation of stolen property, counterfeiting, kidnapping and obstruction of justice. Documents to disclose where the wiretaps were used were not available.



Associated Press

Attorney General John N. Mitchell addressing police chiefs in Atlantic City.

In informal statements after delivering his prepared remarks, Mr. Mitchell asked the organization of police chiefs to select representatives to attend a meeting with him and his top assistants at the Justice Department.

The meeting's purpose, he said, will be to discuss three major law enforcement problems: the series of attacks on police officers, the recent wave of bombings, and accusations of improper conduct by police officers.