

## Warrantless Taps Supported by Levi; 148 Made Last Year

WASHINGTON, June 24 (AP) —Attorney General Edward H. Levi said today that the Justice Department authorized warrantless national security wiretaps on 148 persons last year, a significant increase over the average during the five previous years.

In addition, he said, Federal Bureau of Investigation agents, again acting with the Attorney General's express and required approval, installed hidden listening devices to pick up the conversations of 32 more persons.

In a letter to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts who is chairman of a Judiciary subcommittee concerned with wiretapping and other forms of electronic surveillance, Mr. Levi agreed with his predecessors in saying that such practices were legal.

"Based on an examination of the relevant precedents, it is the position of the Department of Justice that the executive may conduct electronic surveillance in the interests of national security and foreign intelligence, and in aid of his conduct of the nation's foreign affairs, without obtaining a judicial warrant," Mr. Levi said.

Mr. Kennedy released the contents of the letter without commenting.

The Attorney General gave these totals of the number of subjects telephone wiretapping

over the last six years: 1969, 113; 1970, 90; 1971, 87; 1972, 102; 1973, 116; 1974, 148.

He gave these totals of the subjects of microphone surveillance: 1969, 14; 1970, 19; 1971, 16; 1972, 31; 1973, 38; 1974, 32.

In the first four months of 1975, the maximum number of telephone wiretaps in operation at any one time was 91, and the minimum was 67, Mr. Levi said. He said that the maximum number of microphone surveillances in operation was 20, and the minimum was 9.

"On April 1, 1975, there were 75 telephone and 15 microphone surveillances in operation, he said.