

The GOP's Statistics On Bugging

Washington

Senator Hugh Scott (Rep.-Pa.) contended yesterday the Nixon administration has cut national security wiretaps and buggings to the lowest level in more than 25 years.

Scott said the Watergate and related developments have given the public "an utterly false impression" that wiretapping and clandestine operations "were tactics dreamed up by internal security agencies and individuals solely within the Nixon administration."

In an effort to counter this, Scott recited what he termed preliminary statistics that the Nixon administration has cut wiretapping and bugging to the "lowest level since World War II."

Scott, Senate minority leader, acknowledged that his figures excluded electronic surveillance in organized crime cases and, perhaps, some internal security investigations. He described

the statistics as encompassing instances of national security electronics surveillance conducted by the FBI "under presidential authority or authority of law."

Questioned closely by White House newsmen, Scott was unable to give details about the precise basis for the figures but insisted they were compiled under the same set of criteria for all years starting in 1945.

These statistics, which he reported had just been supplied to him by White House lobbyist William Timmons in response to a request he made on May 22, showed national security wiretap and bugging cases running at slightly over 100 per year during Mr. Nixon's first term.

Scott said electronic surveillance had been particularly heavy during the administration of President Truman, had declined somewhat under President Eisenhower, had risen when the late Robert F. Kennedy was attorney general in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations and had dropped significantly when Ramsey Clark served as President Johnson's attorney general.

Scott said he thought Mr. Nixon knows that a "general get-the-President process" is being attempted and added "It is not going to work."

Asked who was behind such a move, Scott said those who tried to defeat Mr. Nixon in the November election are still trying to defeat him. Responding to a

question, he said he did not regard the Senate committee holding televised hearings on the Watergate scandal as being part of an anti-Nixon move.

Deputy White House Press Secretary Gerald L. Warren was asked if Mr. Nixon agreed there was a move afoot to "get" him. Warren replied: "I don't have a presidential view to give you."

Scott said the figures he unveiled may be subject to some slight upward revision as files on electronic surveillance are studied further. He said he expects Mr. Nixon to issue a more detailed report on the subject within the next few weeks.

The figures the White House supplied to Scott showed wiretaps and bugging at a high of 519 cases in 1945, the year for which the

statistics were given. By 1952, the last year of the Truman administration, these had dropped to 285.

For the Eisenhower administration, the figures began at 300 in 1953, rose to 322 in the following year and dropped to a low of 115 in 1960.

In 1961-63, when President Kennedy occupied the White House, the Scott figures showed a rise from 140 to 244.

During the four years of the Johnson administration, the number of surveillance cases dropped from a high of 260 in 1964, to a low of 82 in 1968.

For the first four years of the Nixon tenure, these were the figures Scott cited: 1969, 129; 1970, 102; 1971, 101; and 1972, 108.

Associated Press