FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Attorney General J. Howard McGrath said today that he had fully reviewed the policy followed by the Department of Justice and the FBI in connection with wire tapping.

"The present wire tapping policies were established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and adhered to by my predecessors, Associate Justice Robert H. Jackson, Tom C. Clark, and former Attorney General Francis Biddle. In view of the emergency which still prevails and the necessity of protecting the national security I can see no reason at the present time for any change."

The late President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, on May 21, 1940, in a memorandum to the then Attorney General, Robert H. Jackson, approved wire tapping when necessary in situations involving national defense.

President Roosevelt, again in a letter dated February 25, 1941, which was given wide circulation, in response to a Congressional inquiry outlined policies followed by the FBI when he said:

"I do not believe it should be used to prevent domestic crimes, with possibly one exception--kidnapping and extortion in the Federal sense.

"There is, however, one field in which, given the conditions in the world today, wire tapping is very much in the public interest."

He further stated it should be used against those persons not citizens of the United States and those few citizens who are traitors to their country, who today are engaged in espionage or sabotage against the United States.
Former Attorney General Francis Biddle also said on October 8, 1941:

"The stand of the Department of Justice would be as indeed it had been for some time, to authorize wire tapping in espionage, sabotage, and kidnaping cases when the circumstances warranted."

The policies of the Attorneys General have continued to be the policies of the Department of Justice and have been clearly and publicly stated.

As Mr. J. Edgar Hoover has pointed out, there has been no concealment of the fact that wire tapping has been used in limited cases with the express approval in each individual instance of the Attorney General.

There has been no new policy or procedure since the initial policy was stated by President Roosevelt and this has continued to be the Department's policy whenever the security of the nation is involved.