FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The Department of Justice released today a statement by J. Edgar Hoover, setting forth the position of the FBI on wire tapping as related before a sub-committee of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives on January 13, 1950:

"In recent weeks there has been an increased circulation of inaccurate information and half-truths on wire tapping. Statements have been made which are so untrue and legally unsound that I am forced to conclude that they were motivated for the purpose of confusing the public.

"We in the FBI do not make policy. We follow it. The policy we follow on wire tapping was set by the late President Roosevelt on May 21, 1940. In each instance when the use of a telephone tap is under consideration the facts and recommendations are presented to the Attorney General, who must authorize the use of the tap before such a technique is utilized.

"There has been no concealment of either the policy or the practice. As former Attorney General Biddle stated 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.'"
"This has been the policy of Attorneys General Jackson and Clark, and it has now been reiterated by the present Attorney General, the Honorable J. Howard McGrath, who at one time served with distinction as Solicitor General of the United States.

"I have no reason to doubt the conclusions of my superiors as to the legality of wire taps as practiced by the FBI. Certainly, the lawyers whom I have just mentioned had no doubt of its legality, as evidenced by their rulings.

"Modern techniques must be used in dealing with treason, espionage, sabotage, and the kidnaping of little children.

"I dare say that the most violent critic of the FBI would urge the use of wire taping technique if his child were kidnaped, and held in custody. Certainly, there is as great a need to utilize this technique to protect our country from those who would enslave us and are engaged in treason, espionage, and subversion, and who, if successful, would destroy our institutions and democracy.

"I have reviewed the telephone taps that are in use by the FBI and, of course, I would presume to speak only for the FBI. The facts contradict the hysterical utterances of those who would have us believe that wire tapping by the FBI is unrestricted and is utilized on a wholesale basis. The fact is that the FBI has less than 170 telephone taps in existence, confined to internal security cases, throughout the entire United States and its possessions."