Honorable Herbert H. Lehman  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Senator:

Your letter dated March 9, 1950, has been received and I appreciate your interest in writing as you did.

With regard to the inquiries you have received from your constituents, it is needless to say that the FBI, in discharging its responsibilities, does not engage in illegal practices in any instance. The resort to such procedures would not be countenanced by me nor condoned by the Congress.

Wire tapping, as practiced by the FBI, is carried out pursuant to policies established by the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Four Attorneys General have concurred that no Federal Statute is thereby violated. The policies of the Department of Justice and the FBI are detailed in public statements issued by the Attorney General on January 8, 1950, and me on January 15, 1950, copies of which are attached.

Your constituents who have written you regarding this matter apparently infer that the FBI follows the practice of "planting Agents in political parties." Nothing could be further from the truth. At no time has this Bureau sought information regarding legitimate political parties or organizations, or concerning the political beliefs of any citizen. It is a fact, however, that in discharging its responsibilities pertaining to the internal security of the nation, the FBI has concerned itself with the activities of all groups and individuals who advocate the overthrow of our form of government by force or violence. The development of information concerning such organizations or individuals through the efforts of persons associated with them is a responsibility and duty imposed upon the FBI. As an illustration of one case you no doubt will recall the trial of the 11 Communist leaders in New York last year where witnesses working undercover in the Communist Party testified in the trial. Such

Attachment
investigative coverage cannot be construed as illegal, but must be considered as desirable and necessary from the standpoint of maintaining the internal security of our country.

Any suggestion that this Bureau is attempting to build up dossiers on the citizens of the United States is in itself ludicrous. It is true, however, that we are expending vigorous efforts to develop and collect facts pertaining to spies, saboteurs, and subversive individuals whose fundamental loyalties are to foreign powers in detriment to our nation.

I am confident that you understand the position of the FBI in these matters, and if there are any further questions which occur to you, I hope that you will bring them to my attention.

With expressions of my highest esteem and best regards,

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Honorable Herbert H. Lehman