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6/14/76

NEW US TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM

Q: The Vice President said in his speech last Wednesday that the Administration is deeply concerned about the problem of Soviet eavesdropping on telephone conversations in the United States, and that steps are being taken to reduce the vulnerability of our telecommunications system. What is the nature of these steps that are being taken?

A: In many years the use of microwave transmissions have portended the possible interception of telephone traffic by someone having the necessary equipment. We have been aware of this potential for some time and have taken prudent measures to deal with it.

(F.Y.I. ONLY: For obvious reasons it would be inappropriate to discuss the nature of these measures .

END FYI)

January 17, 1975

SUBJECT:

OFFICE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY

For Announcement

As a matter of information, there have been stories about the possibility of transferring the Office of Telecommunications Policy to the Department of Commerce. That transfer has been considered by the President and has now been rejected.

Why did the President reject the transfer?

GUIDANCE: The President decided that OTP has a role to fulfill in communications and that is best fulfilled within the Executive Office of the President.

Had the final decision been made to transfer OTP?

GUIDANCE: The decision was originally presented in the context of developing the budget and a tentative decision was reached which, after full consideration, has now been changed.

Isn't it true that Roy Ash advocated the transfer, and hasn't Ash now lost another battle?

GUIDANCE: I don't think I should discuss the advice given to the President by his advisors. If you wish to speak with Mr. Ash, you certainly may do so.

JGC