

Questions of Simple-Minded Intelligence

There is unquestionably much interest in reports that Army agents have been spying on politicians, even if the disclosures do not testify to military intelligence; indeed, this particular surveillance operation—which might be called the “You, Too” program—may be about to self-destruct.

The cover on these activities was blown nearly a year ago, but it was not until yesterday that any appreciable numbers of Congressmen and Senators began blowing their tops—demanding full reports from the Pentagon and voicing protests in outraged terms.

Actually, there have been recurrent reports all year, beginning with a former Army captain's account in Washington Monthly magazine, about military surveillance of political activity by private citizens, including Mrs. Martin Luther King, folksinger Joan Baez and Dr. Benjamin Spock. Only Sen. Ervin (D-N.C.) reacted in any forceful way to the initial disclosures.

And it was Ervin who publicized new

charges this week—from another former Army agent—that such Illinois political figures as Sen.-elect Stevenson, Rep. Mikva and former Governor Kerner had been shadowed by military “spooks” as recently as last June.

The Army's hasty official disclaimers appear to be no more reliable than its original promises, dating back many months, to dispose of its existing dossiers on civilian political activity. It is, however, possible that some belated official action will be taken before Sen. Ervin convenes an official inquiry early in the new year. In the meantime, Secretary of Defense Laird need make no more anguished pleas against further Congressional cuts in the defense budget. If he is really interested in compensating for the \$2 billion about to be trimmed, he might take a fresh look at the \$2 billion plus now being spent on armed forces intelligence—much of it for spying on Americans whose activities are a matter of public—and often distinguished—record.



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