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Secret Reports Keep Air Force Informed on

Bimonthly Bulletin Being Sent to Base Commanders

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 28—

Commanding officers at hundreds of Air Force bases in this country and abroad regularly receive secret reports on the activities of antiwar, dissident and radical groups, chiefly the Black Panther party.

This information, including comment and analysis of the current trends in what the Air Force calls "radical anti-establishment groups" at home and overseas, is contained in a secret bimonthly bulletin, "Significant Counterintelligence Briefs." Known as SCIB, it is issued by the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations.

The Air Force believes that the reports are vital in acquainting its key officers with the background of political dissidence that increasingly faces them among black airmen and others in their commands.

The bulletin is now in its 20th year of secret publication. Only in recent years has it turned toward domestic political problems.

A copy of the bulletin was made available to The New York Times as controversy continued here over the role of Army counterintelligence, which has been shown to have spied on more than 18,000 American civilians from 1967 to 1969.

'Security Problem' Seen

A high-ranking Defense Department official said in an interview this week that the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations fulfilled its "specific responsibility of keeping commanders in the field fully informed" by supplying them with political information that might be related to the "security, mission or viability of

United States Air Force bases and other installations."

But Defense Department officials have acknowledged, under questioning, that whether domestic political intelligence should be fed to field commanders poses an issue of propriety.

These officials said that an Air Force commander must be aware of the background and nature of dissidence to be able to deal "intelligently and constructively" with such phenomena as Black Panther memberships on his base.

They said that a "security problem" was involved inasmuch as black airmen were increasingly receiving mailed Panther literature, including leaflets urging them to desert, "destroy the Army from the

inside," sabotage equipment and kill officers.

"If only one black airman responds to this sort of appeal and picks up a gun, we may have a tragedy on our hands," a Defense Department official said. "So it is the responsibility of our counterintelligence people to keep the commanders informed about what the black Panthers are doing and saying. We cannot ignore it."

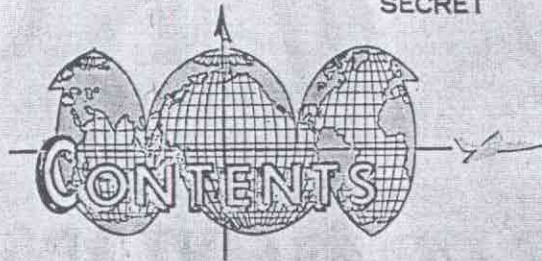
The Air Force asserts that, unlike Army counterintelligence, its Office of Special Investigations has never engaged in collecting information on civilian groups and persons considered radical or subversive.

Uses Data From F.B.I.

The office, according to the Air Force, obtains its basic data from the Federal Bureau of Investigations, local police forces, various United States intelligence agencies and, on occasions involving potential security problems overseas, even from foreign police departments.

But the office, which is the investigative arm of the Air Force Directorate of Special In-

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SIGNIFICANT
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Recent Air Force brief refers to Huey Newton, leader of the Black Panthers, on cover

Radicals

for Civil Disturbance Planning and Operations, set up in 1968, is to provide airlift capability for troops ordered by the President in the event of major disorders.

A delimitations agreement was signed July 2, 1969, by the members of the United States Counterintelligence Investigative Agencies, an association including the F.B.I. and Army, Navy and Air Force intelligence. Under the agreement, the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations is responsible for the investigation anywhere of "all activities falling under the categories of espionage, counterespionage, subversion and sabotage" involving "active and retired military personnel of the Air Force."

Restricted Jurisdiction

In all cases involving Air Force civilian employees in the Continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, it is charged with taking whatever actions are necessary as a result of any investigation, although it is not responsible for the inquiry itself. But it has the authority for both investigation and disposal of the cases of Air Force civilian employees abroad.

The Office of Special Investigations, which reports directly to the Inspector General of the Air Force, Lieut. Gen. S. W. Wells, interprets its counterintelligence mission as being essentially restricted to Air Force bases and installations and military and civilian personnel.

Established Requirements

An internal Defense Department document, dated Sept. 9, 1970, and signed by the department's controller, Robert S. Moot, says, "The O.S.I. has established requirements for collecting and reporting information relating to: demonstrations, agitation, propaganda and disruptive activities directed against the role of the United States in Vietnam, Selective Service, or the military establishment which affect the security, mission or viability of United States Air Force bases and other installations."

The office, according to Mr. Moot, is also responsible for information on "civil rights and racial agitations occurring on Air Force bases or involving Air Force personnel."

But the Air Force insists that this "collecting and reporting" is confined to its bases and installations and does not

investigations, headed by Brig. Gen. Joseph J. Cappucci, is the agency that evaluates and analyzes all this data in preparing the secret SCIB reports.

The Air Force's counterintelligence effort in the field of domestic politics differs considerably, therefore, from the operations of the Army, which used its own covert agents to spy on Americans and built a computer bank of data resulting from these investigations.

In the wake of disclosures of the Army's operations, the Defense Department now authorizes only limited intelligence-gathering on incidents that might lead to a Presidential call for Federal troops.

Senate Hearings Slated

The controversy over the Army's activities, and Congressional skepticism over its statement that it has discontinued most of the spying, has led to the scheduling of hearings on Feb. 23 by the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, headed by Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina.

The House Committee on Government Operations may hold hearings earlier on the domestic counterintelligence activities of the Army, the Air Force and the Navy.

The Air Force's assigned role under the Federal Directorate

Black Panther Party Major Subject of Intelligence Unit

include investigations among civilian groups.

Officials said, however, that it would be normal practice for an Air Force commander to be in touch with the F.B.I. and the local police if his base appeared to be threatened by demonstrations or similar activities.

They said that the Office of Special Investigations had no authority to assemble dossiers on Black Panthers in the Air Force because the party is not illegal. They said the office would act only if a Panther engaged in "illegal" activity.

Interviews with Defense Department officials and the contents of the secret intelligence bulletins suggested that the Air Force was principally concerned with the Black Panthers in its midst, along with general antiwar activities.

The officials said that Students for a Democratic Society and its Weatherman faction were not considered a serious security problem.

They said that an increase in Black Panther militancy in the Air Force dated to last autumn, a judgment reflected in the comments in the secret reports.

The SCIB reports, which carry a "secret" stamp on the cover and inside pages, provides Air Force commanders with a counterintelligence digest of "radical" activities at home as well as of Communist and other political or subversive organizations abroad.

The reports offer comment and analysis, such as the conclusion in the bulletin issued Jan. 6, that, while antiwar efforts in the United States diminished in the second half of last year, "this could easily be the calm before another storm."

Newton Activities Discussed

The issue devoted a long section to the activities of Huey P. Newton, minister of defense of the Black Panthers, contending that he was "reportedly discouraged over the poor reception of his speeches" since his release from prison.

However, the bulletin remarked, "The failure of Newton's speaking campaign does not in itself constitute a turning point in Black Panther party fortunes."

The bulletin reported that "the Black Panther party and several black extremist groups affiliated with them" had been "foremost" among those distributing a new "underground

manual" throughout the United States.

It described the manual as a "46-page, profusely illustrated pamphlet [that] contains explicit instructions on production of all varieties of explosive and incendiary devices, and for this reason is considered very dangerous in the hands of extremists."