

Ervin Says Army's Agents Spied on Illinois Politicians

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 — Army intelligence agents have spied on Senator Adlai E. Stevenson 3d, former Gov. Otto Kerner of Illinois and about 800 other civilians in Illinois alone, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. said today.

Senator Ervin, a North Carolina Democrat who heads the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, said his information was supplied by a former Army agent who was assigned to political surveillance in Illinois.

"The Army investigated these men during their campaigns for office and while

they were in office," said Senator Ervin.

He disputed earlier assertions by the military that investigations of civilians were limited to those who demonstrated a penchant for violence or other illegal conduct.

"It was enough," he said in a statement, "that they opposed or did not actively support the Government's policy in Vietnam or that they disagreed with domestic policies of the Administration, or that they were in contact or sympathetic to people with such views."

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A spokesman said the Army was gravely concerned by the reports and was looking into them. He added that Army policy emphatically prohibited collection of information of the type reportedly gathered in Illinois.

At the White House, Ronald L. Ziegler, Presidential press secretary, said in response to a question, "It's inconceivable to me that that would take place. We certainly don't condone it."

Aside from Mr. Stevenson and Mr. Kerner, Senator Ervin said, the Illinois target list of the 113th Military Intelligence Group, with jurisdiction over the Middle West, included Representative Abner J. Mikva, Democrat, and a host of state and local officials, political contributors, newspaper reporters, lawyers and church figures.

Mr. Kerner, now a Federal judge, headed the Presidential commission on violence that submitted a report that stirred some controversy.

Senator Stevenson told a reporter today that he felt he was being observed on several occasions during this year's campaign. But he said he had thought then that the mysterious photographers with telephoto lenses were from the opposite political camp. Now, he said, he does not know whether the alleged spying was "by the political opposition in Illinois, by the military or by whom."

Mr. Mikva told the House that if the reported practice was widespread, "we have reached a frightening state against civilian control over the military."

Representative George H. Mahon, Texas Democrat who is chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said that if the accounts were accurate he shared Mr. Mikva's sense of outrage and would make inquiries at the Pentagon to prevent a recurrence of such surveillance.

Senator Ervin said the former agent would be called to testify before his subcommittee next February.

The Senator did not identify his informant, but The Evening Star said he was John M. O'Brien. The newspaper reported that Mr. O'Brien identified himself in an interview as a domestic spy for the Army and said of his activities:

"The Army wanted to determine their political views so that in certain situations we would know how they would react; whether they would condone violence or be for non-violence."

In a letter to Mr. Ervin, the

agent said the 113th's intelligence gathering switched from strictly military information gathering in early 1968, and after June, 1969, "my entire effort . . . was directed against individuals and organizations not associated with any military activities."

He said the information was "placed in classified military files, with a copy of the information being sent to various other Federal agencies and to the command center at Fort Holabird, Md."

Discharged Last June

Special to The New York Times

CHICAGO, Dec. 16—The Chicago Daily News, in a news article from Washington today, identified the former agent who made the allegations as John M. O'Brien, 26 years old, who was discharged from the Army as a staff sergeant last June 8.

The Daily News said Mr. O'Brien, a native of Chicago, left Loyola University here during his junior year in 1965 to join the Army.

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