

# 47,000 Listed as Threats

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DAVID R. MacDONALD  
... explains files

The Secret Service maintains a list of 47,000 people it considers potential threats to the President or others it protects, a House Government Operations subcommittee was told yesterday.

Assistant Secretary of the Treasury David R. MacDonald said, however, that the Secret Service keeps under surveillance only "about 300 individuals who are considered extremely dangerous."

MacDonald said that every presidential assassin had a history "of political activities which might be termed 'radical' for lack of a better definition. Among other criteria, political activities may be significant in determining whether an individual is of protective interest," he added.

Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) stressed concern that the Secret Service has thousands of names of people "who are merely political dissidents" with no threat of violence. She noted that 20 persons active in

anti-war activities but never convicted of crimes are listed in its files.

MacDonald said in his prepared statement that the Secret Service also sought to protect a President "against the obloquy of unintentional association at speakers' tables or elsewhere with organized crime figures or other figures, where he may be held up to hatred, ridicule or contempt.

"To a limited degree the Secret Service has traditionally attempted to keep the President and other protectees

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from being associated in the public mind with this category of person," he said.

Later, MacDonald said the Secret Service recently has been reviewing this objective and "we doubt there is statutory authority" for trying to protect a President's reputation.

Rep. Paul McCloskey (R-Calif.) asked what law gave the Secret Service authority to take custody of former President Nixon's tape recordings. "I don't know that there is any," replied MacDonald,

except for the service's general authority to guard the White House.

MacDonald said the service's file of 47,000 names has been reduced from about 500,000 that were on file in 1963 and is reviewed annually, with names removed after five years if they are no longer considered a threat.

He said the Secret Service passes information to another law enforcement agency only if the agency can show that someone is clearly threatened. "As there is a right to privacy, so there is a right to domestic tranquility," MacDonald said.

The Abzug subcommittee is considering the exemptions provided the Secret Service and the Internal Revenue Service in the Privacy Act that takes effect later this year—from having to tell people what information they have collected about them.

Internal Revenue Commissioner Donald G. Alexander testified, "We need some sort of information-gathering system, but we don't need anything like our Special Service Staff (SSS)." The operated secretly between 1969 and 1973, allegedly singling out political activists and White House "enemies" for surveillance by federal tax agents.