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Ervin Plans Hearings on Storage by U.S.

of Data on Individuals

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 2 — Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. announced today the first legislative step in an attempt to create a Federal regulatory agency to curb what he called a computerized threat by the Government against Americans' constitutional freedoms.

The North Carolina Democrat, chairman of the Constitutional Rights Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, disclosed in a statement that his subcommittee would hold the first of a series of open

hearings here Oct. 6 through 8 on the rapid growth of surveillance activities and intelligence storing computer data banks in nearly a dozen Federal offices.

A conservative former judge of North Carolina's highest court, Senator Ervin has said he has become deeply concerned about the effects of Government snooping and record keeping on the personal and political liberties of ordinary citizens.

To end what he believes are widespread and "clearly unconstitutional" abuses of computer-equipped Government in-

formation files, Mr. Ervin indicated that the hearings would produce a proposal for "a new, independent agency to control Federal data banks."

Right Would Be Protected

The agency would protect and enforce a new statutory right of all citizens to learn what information about them is being collected and stored here and to demand corrections or deletions if it invades their rights under the First Amendment, unduly invades privacy or is irrelevant to a legitimate pursuit of Government.

The First Amendment to the

Constitution forbids the Government to interfere with the rights to worship, to free speech and freedom of the press. It also guarantees citizens the rights to assemble peaceably and "to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Senator Ervin said today these rights were already seriously threatened by "prying into those protected areas."

The hearing next month, subcommittee staff aides said today, will chiefly explore the recently discovered practice by the Army of collecting data on what its intelligence agents deem to be the "political dissent" or "civil disorder" activities of civilians.

The Army acknowledged earlier this year the truth of most charges in an article in The Washington Monthly, written by a former Army intelligence officer, Christopher Pyle. The report said that the Army had maintained a computer data bank on the activities of law abiding civilian advocates of antiwar or anti-Government sentiment. Senator Ervin's subcommittee has tended to regard skeptically Army claims that the practice has since been discontinued.