

Army Back In Civilian Spy Action

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army has suspended orders to purge its Investigative Records Repository of reports on civilians not connected with the military and is continuing to feed the mammoth file with raw FBI data.

The Army has been under congressional attack for its domestic intelligence operations, and orders issued Dec. 15 by its adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Kenneth G. Wickham, have been recently interpreted to mean the military is ending most of its watch on civilians.

But the general superseded that order with a private directive this month to the commander of the Army intelligence headquarters at Ft. Holabird, Md., where most of the records are kept.

The first order required a purge of all Army files of information on civilians not affiliated with the Defense Department and also prohibited storage of such FBI reports.

However, the second order temporarily exempts the Investigative Records Repository (USAIRR) at Ft. Holabird "because further study is needed to determine the impact of these two requirements."

Wickham's second directive states: "After the survey a decision will be made as to whether USAIRR will be permanently exempted from the prohibition on storage of FBI reports of civilians not affiliated with the Department of Defense."

Asked for comment, Army spokesmen said they were unaware of the second directive and could not immediately respond.

Even without the superseding order, non-military sources point out possible loopholes in the Dec. 15 directive which they say leave the Army with broad authority for continuing its domestic surveillance.