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Snooping Lull

Pentagon Files on 25 Million People

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Washington

The Defense Department admitted yesterday it is keeping files on 25 million citizens.

It said it has stopped snooping on civilians to collect information for future use by troops called in to suppress civil disturbances, but spokesmen did not indicate there are any plans to destroy files already gathered.

Pentagon witnesses said an end has been declared to widespread Army surveillance efforts against civilians begun in 1967 during severe urban disorders and anti-war protests.

"The Army is out of it," Assistant Defense Secretary Robert F. Froehlke told the Senate subcommittee on Constitutional Rights.

Surveillance will be resumed, he said, only if the defense secretary of his designee declared that a "distinct threat" exists of civil disturbance beyond the capability of state and local law enforcement authorities to quell. And even then, no covert surveillance will be permitted without specific authority of the secretary, he said.

Froehlke testified that 25 million index cards on individuals containing vital statistics and a reference number for more extensive written dossiers are kept by the Pentagon's "Defense Central Index of Investigations."

Many of the cards, which are now being punched into a scientific IBM 360/40 comput-

sons . . . considered to constitute a threat to security and defense . . ."

The Army alone has 7,890,630 dossiers, Froehlke testified, all stored at Ft. Holabird, Md., including separate files on the President and his cabinet.

At one time, Froehlke acknowledged, a dossier was kept on Senator Adlai Stevenson III (DEM-Ill.). But he said it consisted primarily of newspaper clippings and the file has since been ordered destroyed, along with those of "a large number of well-known public figures."

Froehlke said a new policy

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which went into effect at the Pentagon only Monday will ban "physical or electronic surveillance of federal, state or local officials or of candidates for such offices."

One Texas black state legislator testified last week his speeches and phone calls have been bugged by the Army for the past ten years.

Under the new policy, Froehlke said, Army undercover men must get specific permission from the defense secretary or his designee before conducting covert surveillance activities against any group or individual. In addition, secret FBI reports no longer will be kept in Army dossiers.

But Froehlke said purging FBI reports and other material now illegal from the Army files would be a "monumental job."

"A mass screening of the 3 million dossiers would be a

Compare figures and dates marked in red with those of story in SF Examiner 2 Mar 71. Is the difference in the numbers due to the fact that dossiers on the President, cabinet members, governors, et al are kept in a "separate, controlled vault area"? This difference is 752,449.

be reviewed for "unauthorized material" before they are handed out to any of the 688 persons permitted to see them, he said.

Froehlke said the dossiers on the President, Vice President, cabinet members, state governors and other high-ranking civilian officers are kept in a "separate, controlled vault area." His prepared statement did not say why these files were kept.

Froehlke said domestic intelligence activities were started in 1963 in response to desegregation violence in the South but were greatly expanded after the 1967 urban riots in Detroit and Newark.

To protect persons and property with the greatest effectiveness in case their troops were called out, "military commanders must know that all that can be learned about

the area and its inhabitants," Froehlke said.

"Files were kept," he said, "on persons and organizations who conceivably might contribute directly or indirectly to the creation, exacerbation or continuation of civil disturbances. They were

Froehlke said in all fairness it should be recognized the plan was drawn up in "a crisis-oriented time" when pressures on the government were mounting.