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REPORT DEPLORES WIDE ARMY SPYING

Senate Unit Hints '60's Files
on Civilians Still Exist

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 29—A Senate subcommittee reported today that Army spying on civilians in the late nineteen-sixties was "far more extensive than we had imagined" and suggested that all the military dossiers and computer files might not have been destroyed, despite Pentagon promises that they would be.

The report, issued by the Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitutional Rights, concluded that the surveillance program had been "utterly useless" to the Army in terms of its basic function, providing advance information on potential civil disturbances.

"In fact," the report said, the program "was merely wasting time, money and manpower, and infringing on the rights of the citizens it was supposed to be safeguarding."

Ervin Heads Panel

The subcommittee, headed by Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, began its investigation into Army surveillance in January, 1970, shortly after the first published disclosure that the program existed.

During public hearings before the subcommittee a year later, high-level Army officials acknowledged that they had been seriously misled by military commanders over the extent and purposes of the surveillance.

In a brief introduction to the 97-page report, Senator Ervin says, "The absence of civilian control over this surveillance prior to 1970 has already been established. This report proves the absence of central military control as well."

The reports says that there were more than 350 separate records centers scattered among Army units in the United States, each containing intelligence data on civilian political activity.

"It would seem that each data bank grew independently, with no 'close supervision' from a central authority on what to store or not store," the report says.

"Moreover," it adds, "it appears that none of the agencies paid any attention to the publications or holdings of the others in deciding who or what should be data-banked."

Volume Called Surprising

The sheer volume of raw intelligence data was surprising, the report says, noting that one Army headquarters unit in Texas had a total of 190 linear feet of dossiers and file cards dealing with "subversive" individuals and organizations.

Every major Army command in the United States was found to have extensive surveillance files—a far broader pattern than had been suspected—and smaller intelligence collections were found in scores of local area headquarters units.

The subcommittee reprinted many of the entries, without names, and noted that "one person, for example, is described as having numerous pro-Communist associates; another is alleged to be an avowed Marxist, and a third is described as an active demonstrator with a Red background who is a radical."

The report adds, "The connection between these beliefs, actions and associations and the Army's civil disturbance mission is nowhere indicated."

Letter Writer Listed

One computerized file system, obtained by the subcommittee and reprinted in part, listed a Massachusetts woman for the following reason:

"Has written a number of letters to U.S. Government officials, Civil Defense officials and to newspapers. The letters are generally very critical of Federal and local governments because of what she considers the futility of a Civil Defense program and refusal of countries to disarm."

Army officials have said that the disclosure of the spying was as damaging to the military as the controversy over the mass slayings at Mylai and have insisted that all traces of such activity have been expunged.

Yet the subcommittee report says that "the complete destruction of the regional and local files cannot be assumed."

Subcommittee officials explained that there was some evidence that a few Army men had hidden away files and dossiers in the hope that the program would be revived in future years.

The report's complaints about the file systems dealt not only with their extensiveness but also with the quality and type of information that was being compiled about civilians between 1967 and 1970, when the intelligence program was at its height.

"These vast collections of fragmentary, incorrect and irrelevant information, composed of vague conclusions and judgments and of overly detailed descriptions of insignificant facts, could not be considered 'intelligence' by any sense of the word," the report says.