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FBI File Included Noncriminals

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The computer system that the FBI is supposed to use in its war against crime has been misused to keep tabs on noncriminals.

For years, the FBI has operated a National Crime Information Center equipped with a multimillion-dollar computer. This computer is crammed with information about criminals, the purpose being to help police throughout the country identify public enemies, particularly fugitives on the lam.

It was never intended, however, that this electronic contrivance should be used to store information about noncriminals.

Such misuse, if it got out of hand, could extinguish forever the right of privacy. It could lead to a computerized master file on all Americans. At the press of a button, the computer could produce any person's life history.

In 1971, the FBI began using its master computer to monitor activities of noncriminals. The names of more than 4,700 noncriminals were "flagged."

The FBI abruptly ended its misuse of the computer center in February, 1974, two days before Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) opened hearings on federal snooping.

Ervin's successor as head of the Constitutional Rights Subcommittee, John V. Tunney (D-Calif.), has wrung a reluctant

confession from the Justice Department that the FBI had perverted the criminal tracking system to keep an electronic eye on noncriminals.

"Flags were used to help locate individuals in matters wherein the FBI had the obligation to determine their whereabouts," Deputy Attorney General Harold Tyler said in a private letter to Tunney.

The letter stressed this was done, as a "pilot program," in "national security" cases. The term "national security" has been used in the past, however, to include monitoring controversial movie stars, football players, political leaders, reporters and presidential candidates.

An FBI spokesman emphasized that the 4,700 noncriminals whose names were fed into the computer were "under FBI jurisdiction." As he explained it, for example, a potential draftee who failed to report to the Selective Service System might have been "flagged."

Tunney asked the Justice Department whether the FBI had any members of Congress in the "flag file." Tyler dodged the question, but the FBI vigorously denied that any members of Congress had been monitored.

The FBI spokesman also pointed out that the computer center was not under the FBI's sole jurisdiction but was governed by a 26-member board, in-

cluding various chiefs of police.

Tunney, meanwhile, is pressing the Justice Department for more specific answers. He is concerned that the misuse of the computer may be a federal violation.

Intelligence Digest—Once the Israeli-Egyptian agreement is implemented, an intelligence report warns, Arab extremists plan to infiltrate the neutral zone and kill some U.S. technicians manning the observation equipment. The intent, of course, is to disrupt the truce.

• A CIA report alleges that Soviet money has been passed under the table to bribe one of Portugal's top rulers. We are checking out the details.

• Japan's Defense Minister Michita Sakata has given secret assurances that the United States can use military bases in Japan to resist a North Korean attack on South Korea. Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, meanwhile, has made some anti-Japanese cracks inside the secret policy councils.

• The shah of Iran has confided to visitors that he hopes to bring diplomatic pressure to exclude both the U.S. and Soviet fleets from the Persian Gulf and then from the Indian Ocean.

• The Soviet KGB, according to intelligence reports, is encouraging Arab extremists to step up their revolutionary activities against the oil sheikdoms. Algeria and Libya are co-operating, at least indirectly,

with the KGB, the reports allege.

• Of all the oil countries, Saudi Arabia stands alone in seeking to hold off an oil price increase. Seven of the 13 oil-cartel members, led by Algeria and Kuwait, want a \$2-per-barrel increase on Oct. 1. The five remaining oil countries are willing to settle for \$1 more per barrel.

• Egypt's President Anwar Sadat is quietly seeking from the United States \$250 million in economic aid and favorable terms for the purchase of up to \$1 billion in military equipment.

• The Chinese Communists have gained the ear of the rulers of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Significantly, the Chinese are whispering anti-Soviet, not anti-American, remarks.

• Underdeveloped, Third-World nations are trying to get their hands in Uncle Sam's pockets. It's part of their campaign to redistribute the world's wealth from the rich nations to the poor nations. One suggestion, brought up in the backrooms of Washington, is that the United States put the Third World on the spot by offering a program to concentrate aid on the 30 or 40 most impoverished nations. This would bypass the nations raising the loudest holler.

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