

WXPost FEB 20 1974

U.S. Sued On Spying In Germany

By Timothy S. Robinson
Washington Post Staff Writer

A group of American citizens who have lived in West Berlin in recent years charged the U.S. Army with spying on their activities in Europe.

The allegations were made in a suit filed in U.S. District Court here by 16 civilians, a former GI, the Lawyers Military Defense Committee (a civilian group that represents GIs overseas) and the Berlin Democratic Club, which backed the presidential candidacy of Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.).

According to the suit, the Army conducted a massive intelligence operation on the civilians in Germany.

Included in this intelligence-gathering activity were illegal wiretaps, infiltration of the organizations, the keeping of secret files, "blacklisting" of the group's members and the opening of private mail, the suit claims.

Filed with the suit were several documents which the plaintiffs identified as copies of confidential reports on their activities that were compiled and read by military personnel.

They also filed affidavits of a former military intelligence officer who said he was ordered to destroy documents relating to the alleged illegal surveillance, and who also provided copies of some of those documents to the press.

Among persons overheard on the wiretaps, according to the suit, were journalists and attorneys. Among the 17 individual plaintiffs are free-lance writers, a correspondent for Liberation News Service, two attorneys and two ministers.

Named as defendants are Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger, Secretary of the Army Howard H. Callaway and several military intelligence officers.

The alleged illegal wiretaps were "conducted for the express purpose of determining the political views, associations and activities of the plaintiffs... and... of intercepting communications between and among attorneys and their clients," the suit says.

The Berlin Democratic Club claimed that its private meetings were infiltrated by intelligence officers in an attempt to ascertain who belonged to the organization.

It also charged the Army with opening its mail and obtaining a copy of a petition calling for the impeachment of President Nixon that had been signed by more than 325 Americans living in Berlin.

The petition was photographed, and the names of persons who had signed it were placed in a military intelligence file on "dissident persons," the suit charges.

The Army maintains a file on the club "which characterizes it as a 'leftist' and 'subversive' organization linked to the Democratic National Party," the suit adds.