

JAN 27 1970

C

21

ARMY GIVES REPLY ON RULE OF 'AGENTS'

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26—The Army acknowledged today that its Intelligence Command had about 1,000 "agents" across the country who conduct security checks of Army and Government personnel, but it denied that any widespread monitoring of civilian political activity took place.

The announcement came in response to an article, published in the current issue of a Washington political magazine, written by Christopher H. Pyle, a former captain in Army Intelligence. Mr. Pyle charges that nearly 1,000 plainclothes agents keep files on "virtually every activist political group in the country."

The Army said its agents' "primary duty and function is the conduct for security clearance purposes of background investigations on U.S. Army military members and Department of the Army civilian employees."

The announcement said that

the Intelligence Command also had "the mission of providing the Army with planning and earlywarning information relative to the possible development of a civil disturbance."

Such information is "limited" in scope, the Army added. "For some time," it said, "there has been a specific prohibition against military personnel undertaking such activities as undercover operations in the civilian community."