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Army's Eyes on Labor

By Jared Stout

BOSTON — (NNS) — Army intelligence units were ordered to spy on the nation's labor movement in April, 1969—two months after the Pentagon had told the Army to reduce its surveillance of civilians.

The April 23, 1969, "Information Collection" orders issued by the U. S. Army Intelligence Command were made available to the Newhouse News Service yesterday by former Army agents.

The orders led to surveil-

lance of labor leaders and strikes in at least two Southern cities — Memphis, Tenn., and Greensboro, N.C. Both strikes involved black sanitation workers demanding higher wages.

The Nixon Administration has claimed Defense Department civilians ordered a cut-back in Army spying on civilians on Feb. 5, 1969.

1000 Agents

But the order to spy on labor — issued to more than 1000 Army agents in some 300 U.S. field offices — made

no reference to then Army Undersecretary David McGiffert's order to slow down surveillance.

Instead, the April orders from the intelligence command stated the unit's commanding general retained authority to initiate undercover work — a marked contrast to McGiffert's demand that uniformed military personnel obtain his approval before starting any new spying operations.

Nowhere in the April, 1969, spying orders was there any indication the Army undersecretary's restrictions on undercover work were ever passed on to local commanders of intelligence units.

Protest Groups

The April orders were signed by Lt. Col. Orville K. McClay as chief of the intelligence command's domestic intelligence section, at Fort Holabird near Baltimore, Md.

The documents restated Army interest in — and orders to watch — protest

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groups in the anti-war, anti-draft, civil rights, black power and extreme right-wing movements.

These included such organizations as the NAACP, the Revolutionary Action Movement, the Minutemen, and Women Strike for Peace.

Col. McClay's orders apparently left to local commanders most decisions on which labor enterprises and personnel they should watch. The orders called for, in part:

"Identification of individual leaders and members of the striking union to include background information as well as official titles or positions, and degree of participation in previous strikes and/or labor disturbances.

"Indications of migrations of large numbers of (labor) leaders to the affected (strike) area.

"Indication of present and future plans, to include the capability of carrying out any acts of violence or disturbance."

Strike Issues

Orders also required agent reports on issues involved in strikes plus the status of relations between law enforcement officials and striking unions or leaders.

Agents also were ordered to learn whether "underground labor instigators" were present in a strike or labor dispute.

In testimony before Sen. Sam Ervin (D-N.C.) and his subcommittee on constitutional rights, Nixon Administration officials said the pace of Army surveillance had slowed markedly beginning with the Feb. 5, 1969, order from McGiffert.