

Grim New Report On 'Army Spying'

Washington

A Senate subcommittee reported yesterday that Army spying on civilians in the late 1960s had been "far more extensive than we had imagined" and also suggested that all the military dossiers and computer files might not have been destroyed, despite Pentagon promises to do so.

The report, issued by the judiciary subcommittee on constitutional rights, concluded that the far-reaching surveillance program was "utterly useless" to the Army in terms of its basic function — providing advance information of 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 was supposed to be safeguarding."

PROBE

The subcommittee, headed by Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem.-N.C.), began its investigation into Army surveillance in January, 1970, shortly after the first published accounts 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 Army snooping.

In a brief introduction to the 97-page report, Ervin noted that "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."

Buttressing the senator's conclusion was the report's finding 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 independ-

Romney Defends Storm Aid

Washington

Housing Secretary George Romney, under criticism in recent weeks for slow federal reaction to Hurricane Agnes' damage, said yesterday "never before have homeless families been re-housed so rapidly."

"It took us six months to provide approximately 5000 units following Hurricane Camille," Romney said. "Now, in nine weeks we have provided temporary housing for 17,382 families. In other words, in about one-third the time, we have done three times as much."

He credited cooperation among governmental and private organizations and the victims of the storm that caused devastation in Pennsylvania and New York.

The secretary said that three weeks ago "we had provided approximately 6500 units of temporary housing; as of Monday, the figure had risen to 17,382 units for the more than 27,500 applicants who have been adjudged eligible for help."

Romney also said that the housing in Rapid City, S.D., where a dam broke during June floods, has been completed.

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ently, with no 'close supervision' from a central authority on what to store or not store," the report said.

"Moreover," it added, "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."

The sheer volume of raw intelligence data was surprising, the report said, not-

ing 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 to exist 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 noted that "the connection between these beliefs, actions and associations, and the Army's civil disturbance mission is nowhere indicated."

SYSTEM

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 repeatedly described the public revelations about the unauthorized Army spying to be as damaging to the military as the My Lai massacre scandal and insisted that all traces of the snooping activity have been expunged.

Yet the subcommittee report stated that — as in the case of dossiers accumulated by the Army intelligence command — "The complete destruction of the regional and local files . . . cannot be assumed." It was subsequently explained by subcommittee officials that

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

The report's most significant complaints about the file systems, apart from their extnsiveness, dealt with the quality and type of information that was being compiled about civilians during 1967 to 1970, when the intelligence program was at its height.

SITES

"Army intelligence was not just reconnoitering cities for bivouac sites, approach routes and Black Panther arsenals," the report said, referring to the growth of the program after the civil rights riots of the 1960s. "It was collecting, disseminating, and storing amounts of data on the private and personal affairs of law-abiding citizens. Comments about the financial affairs, sex lives, and psychiatric histories of persons unaffiliated with the armed forces appear throughout the various records systems.

In a final comment, the report noted that the collection of intelligence data has occasionally been justified on grounds of necessity.

"Yet," it stated, "it appears that the vacuum cleaner approach of collecting all possible information resulted in great masses of data on individuals which was valuable for no legitimate (or even illegitimate) military purposes.

"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."