

Secret Army Data Banks

Washington

The Army created two highly secret computerized data banks in the late 1960s to store intelligence information on U.S. citizens, a Senate subcommittee was told yesterday.

Robert E. Jordan III, former general counsel of the Army, said the existence of the data banks at Ft. Holabird, Md., and Ft. Monroe, Va., was kept secret even from the Army's senior civilian officials.

The systems were "filled with a lot of unevaluated 'junk' information about individuals and incidents which had an enormous potential for abuse," Jordan told the constitutional rights subcommittee.

"When we had finally obtained a copy of the biographical bank printout — after being assured that no such compilation existed — one of the staff members in the Army general counsel

office flipped through the listings," Jordan said.

"I recall that in looking at the entries for only surnames beginning with 'A' and 'B' we found the name of an outstanding Special Forces colonel and a major general who was a division commander, each accompanied by an ideological code which cast doubt on his loyalty to the United States," he said.

Jordan said a reconstruction of events indicated the names of the officers were put in the computer because both were on the subscription lists of an anti-war underground newspaper.

Jordan was the leadoff witness in hearings conducted by subcommittee Chairman Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.), into Ervin's proposed bill to limit by law the extent by which the military is permitted to engage in domestic intelligence.

Associated Press