

Army Retained 9,200 Files on Civilians

From News Dispatches

The Defense Department said yesterday an army counterintelligence unit had kept 9,200 files on civilians and organizations in violation of an 1971 promise to stop such action.

Army Secretary Howard H. (Bo) Callaway told Congress that a microfilm library and computer index kept by the Army's counterintelligence analysis detachment "was discovered to contain information relating to the activities of American civilians not affiliated with the Department of Defense."

In his statement, Callaway said actions have been under

way to eliminate such documents from the files, but the Army is holding the material at the request of Congress for congressional investigations.

Callaway said the Army has issued a new regulation for more stringent annual file-review procedures, "which should prevent this kind of inadvertent problem from recurring."

Callaway said the Army is committed to a policy that "it is not the Army's business to know what American citizens are doing, except when their activities appear to pose a criminal threat to the security of our armed forces or when the President has ordered out the Army to deal with a civil disturbance . . ."

Callaway's report showed

that the Army stored about 6,900 documents dealing with the domestic activities of U.S. civilians and 2,300 files on activities overseas.

An Army spokesman said many of the files contained information on more than one civilian, but the number of people involved was not known.

Callaway said he thought "the violation was an inadvertent one."

During the 1960s, when there were many demonstrations against the Vietnam war, Army intelligence conducted investigations, accord-

ing to a report by the Senate Constitutional Rights Subcommittee. It said the Army kept files on at least 100,000 civilians in the late 1960s, that more than 350 separate Army units compiled files and that in many cases the Pentagon was unaware of this surveillance.