Aide Says Pentagon Computers Aren't Used to Check Citizens

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WASHINGTON, June 23 (AP) —Defense Department officials acknowledged today that they operates a number of computers but they said that none of them were used to hold files on American citizens.

One of the biggest Pentagon computer networks is called ARPANET and D. O. Cooke, a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, told a hearing of two Senate subcommittees:

"Let me emphasize that it is not a 'secret' network, that it is used for scientific research purposes, that it contains no sociological or intelligence data on personalities, and that it is a marvel in many ways. But it simply does not fit the Orwellian mold attributed to it."

Reminded by Senator John V. Tunney, Democrat of California, chairman of the hearing, that the Pentagon recently acknowledged finding some domestic surveillance files ordered destroyed four years ago, Mr. Cooke said the 9,200 files represented a "relatively small remnant" of the material collected at the height of civil disturbances in the late nineteen-sixties.

He said the vast majority of the civil disturbance files were destroyed, as ordered, in 1970 and 1971.

Senator Tunney said the session was the first of a long series of hearings on surveillance technology.

He asked Mr. Cooke what he knew about a number of systems, including Project Zenith, which Mr. Tunney said was a White House effort to centralize various domestic files; and Harvest, a National Security Agency computer.

Mr. Cooke said he knew nothing about Zenith except that it was not tied to any Defense Department system.

Asked whether Harvest contained files on American citizens, Mr. Cooke said he did not know but would rather not talk about it in open session.