

Information Drive By Secret Service Could Affect Many

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The Secret Service has issued to the nation's Federal and local law enforcement agencies a set of guidelines, which, if literally interpreted, would have them collect negative information about vast numbers of Americans.

Labeled "For Official Use Only," the guidelines were apparently issued last summer to supplant another set that had stemmed from the Warren Commission's recommendations dealing with the protection of the President.

But the current guidelines apparently go far beyond those envisioned by the Warren Commission, which investigated the assassination of President Kennedy.

To Protect Officials

Jack Warner, an assistant to the Secret Service director, said the guidelines were intended to facilitate the gathering of information to be used to protect the President and other high officials.

Yet the wording of the "U.S. Secret Service Liaison Guidelines" requests not only information about obvious threats to the President and others protected by the service, but also this other information:

¶About attempts to "embarrass" high officials.

¶"Regarding civil disturbances."

¶On people seeking "redress of imaginary grievances, etc."

¶On people making "irrational" or "abusive statements" about high Government officials.

¶"Regarding anti-American

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or anti-U.S. Government demonstrations."

A Secret Service official, who requested anonymity, commented: "The choice of language is certainly unfortunate and could mislead less sophisticated people into thinking that they should collect and send us information that certainly wasn't desired."

The guidelines direct the mailing of "routine reports" to Secret Service headquarters here and the telephoning of "emergency information, especially in reference to Presidential protection."

The guidelines have been sent to at least seven Federal law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Central Intelligence Agency, as well as to many police departments.

Many Groups Protest

Many legal and scientific groups have protested the collection of such information and its use against persons seeking full or part-time Federal employment. They contend that the practice leads to blacklisting and that persons on such blacklists seldom, if ever, have the right to confront those who feed the information to Federal agencies.

The groups also contend that unsubstantiated reports of abnormal behavior and participation in political activities, usually left-wing, find their way into security "data banks" of many Federal agencies.

According to the contentions, the agencies then trade the information among themselves.

Information that might be regarded as innocuous in one

agency might be regarded as extremely damaging in another.

The groups concerned about blacklisting are seeking to determine who has access to the information, what criteria are used to judge its potential harmfulness to an individual and how it can be used against him.

The New York Times reported last month that blacklists of scientists nominated for part-time advisory positions had been drawn up within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The sources of the information that was used against the scientists have yet to be explained.

'Negative Information'

The legal and scientific groups also contend that in recent years participation in demonstrations protesting United States involvement in Vietnam has been regarded by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as "negative information." The practice, it is alleged, has the secondary effect of stifling legitimate protest.

In a suit filed in Federal court in Boston, Dr. Henry S. Kahn, a physician, is seeking to force the Department of Health, Education and Welfare to give him a commission in the Public Health Service.

Dr. Kahn charges that the commission was offered pending the outcome of a security check and that it was withdrawn when the results came in. He asserts that his opposition to the Vietnam war and his participation in protest demonstrations were the reasons for the withdrawal.

Among the pieces of information used against Dr. Kahn was a newspaper clipping stat-

ing that he was among the participants in an antiwar demonstration.

Mr. Warner, the Secret Service aide, said emphatically that the service would not allow information collected under the guidelines to be used in this manner.

Mr. Warner said the Warren Commission Report, Volume XVIII, Page 930, contained a "sample letter" that might be sent by the service to local police chiefs asking for information needed for the protection of the President.

Aid to Protection Effort

The intent of the letter is to allow the Secret Service to amass and digest more easily information on persons who might threaten the President, members of his family or high officials. Congress has authorized the Secret Service to do this.

Yet the language of the guidelines contrasts sharply with that of the sample letter, which does not contain references to embarrassment, civil disturbances and other things mentioned in the guidelines.

Mr. Warner said the service routinely processed 6,000 to 7,000 pieces of information a month and had assessments of their potential value and importance.

He implied that if the guidelines were interpreted literally the Secret Service would be receiving much more information.

When two lawyers who served on the Warren Commission staff were asked for comment about the guidelines and the intent of the commission's recommendations, they replied that the guidelines appeared to have gone beyond the commission's intent.