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Overseas Data Cited

Bill Would Extend Privacy Act Terms

By William F. Willoughby
Washington Star Staff Writer

Legislation has been introduced in Congress which would extend the regulations of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts to files sent overseas by federal agencies.

Rep. Edward Beard, D-R.I., introduced the legislation just before the two-week recess for the Fourth of July.

The bill would require that if the United States is to continue its membership in Interpol, the international police agency, then information on Americans kept by Interpol overseas should be made available for recall if requested.

UNDER DOMESTIC coverage, it now is possible to have files pulled on organizations and individuals. While information contained in the files may not be expunged, correcting data may be attached by the individuals or organizations involved.

But once information of this nature is in the hands of foreign agencies such as Interpol, there is no opportunity to gain access to the files for corrective purposes. Information that is considered to be false or misleading about the individual or organization, thus, could continue to be circulated freely among the 124 nations which are members of Interpol.

The United States is a

member of the privately controlled agency, which has headquarters in a Paris suburb, and contributes approximately \$550,000 a year in funds and salaries for personnel.

Beard's bill would provide that the United States not be a member if the privacy conditions are not agreed to.

He said, "We should ensure that Americans are safe not only from foreign military and economic threats, but foreign threats to their privacy. We should let the world know" that the rights of Americans are "of prime concern to the Congress, and Interpol will be the first to be so informed."

AFTER congressional hearings earlier this year, prompted by a two-year investigation by the National Commission on Law Enforcement and Social Justice (NCLE), controversy has swirled around Interpol and American involvement in it.

NCLE data indicates that Interpol as late as 1972 was headed by former Nazis, with hints by NCLE that the agency might be used to cover up the identity of wanted Nazi war criminals.

The NCLE, based in Los Angeles, is sponsored by the Association of Scientists for Reform, and has chapters in 22 cities and is associated with similar groups in five other countries.