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# PHILLIPS Wilson News Curbs Defeat Themselves

CPYRGHT

## Reporters Develop Own Channels Outside Defense Bottleneck.

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Committee, in a report on July 27 said: "The study of the Defense Department so far shows that informational policies and practices of the Department are the most restrictive—and at the same time the most confused—of any major branch of the federal government."

The committee added: "Unfortunately, there has existed and still does exist in high Government and military circles a strange psychosis that the Government's business is not the people's business."

### Horribly Over-Classified.

Coolidge is well aware of the other side. Although so far he has been working into the problem and described himself as a "blotter" receiving information, he also told the Post-Dispatch: "There is no doubt we are horribly over-classified."

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12. A COMMITTEE to devise means to halt "leaks" of information in the Pentagon was established by the Secretary of Defense Charles E. Wilson, Aug. 12.

In a letter to Charles E. Coolidge of Boston, a former assistant secretary of defense whom he had appointed to head the committee, Wilson said "he was seriously concerned over the unauthorized disclosure of military information." He wrote "this must stop," and asked Coolidge to prepare an interim report as early as possible to eliminate this threat to national security.

It appears that Wilson wants to extend the heavy barriers already surrounding information in the Defense Department. Although he has been disturbed by recent "leaks" of classified papers, the information that was leaked never could have been classified.

The leaks concerned national defense policies, but were not of a nature to injure national defense. Rather, they were concerned with policies that should have had national and Congressional discussion instead of having been approved and adopted in secret in the Executive Department.

### Leaks Called Inevitable.

Many take a directly opposite view from Wilson. They believe that the highly restrictive information policy of the Pentagon, together with the tendency in the office of the Secretary of Defense to make decisions affecting the services, hundreds of thousands of people fill out an adequate hearing, makes "leaks" inevitable.

It is their contention that what is required is a less restrictive information policy, rather than the current restrictions and procedures which are applied to the information.

He had some statistics showing that the armed services classify 3,000,000 linear feet a year of documents for security purposes, and that each foot contains 2000 sheets of paper. In other words, six billion sheets of paper have a security stamp placed on them by the armed services each year.

Part of the difficulty stems directly from President Eisenhower. He was reported early in his administration as being very much concerned over the release of some photographs of the Nike anti-aircraft guided missile. As the story goes, Mr. Eisenhower called up Erwin (Charles Erwin Wilson) and renewed him out in good first-sergeant style. The Secretary of Defense, to prevent further such leaks, concentrated the information release problem in the office of the Secretary of Defense.

What the President did not know—he had been in Europe the time and no one told him—was that the offending photographs of the Nike had been released two years previously.

### At about the same time, there

was some competitive speech-making between the service secretaries, in which they tried to attract attention by the release of information about new weapons. The President did not like this.

As a result, the three service secretaries, each one heading an organization of more than 1,000,000 men, were engaged in a

self the task of being the only spokesman for the Army, Navy and Air Force, he also reorganized the information services so that only the Defense Department Office of Public Information was the channel for release of information or the agency through which to make legitimate appointments.

The Defense Department spends about two-thirds of the United States annual budget and has approximately 4,000,000 persons in it, civilian and military compared with 1,214,250 persons in all the other agencies of the Government combined.

### Has No Policy.

Obviously Wilson does not have an information policy. Instead, he has erected a dam to hold back all information proper and improper. The bottleneck he has created could not possibly release 5 per cent of the legitimate information that should be available to the public.

### Necessarily, reporters are

forced by such conditions to develop their own channels, outside Wilson's bottleneck. At the same time the services, denied a chance to present their stories or views, establish "official leaks" for trustworthy reporters.

The restrictions of Wilson's system thus defeat themselves. This is not meant to imply that genuine security information is not to be leaked. No responsible newspaperman will print such information, nor