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Second Thoughts

The White House has wisely rejected the Central Intelligence Agency's proposal to make it a crime for a government official to disclose classified information to anyone not authorized to receive it. Cooler heads prevailed over William J. Casey, the director of Central Intelligence, who put forth the idea in an effort to stop leaks.

The proposed law would have faced substantial opposition in Congress, where lawmakers know that their ability and the public's ability to participate knowledgeably in national-security debates depends on having information that is officially deemed "classified." As we noted in this space earlier this week, much of what is classified shouldn't be, and the only people who are kept uninformed are the American public.

We hope that the rejection of Casey's proposal signals a recognition by the Administration that current laws are adequate to protect true national secrets, and that there is little danger in the people's knowing what their government is up to.