



8 March 1986

The Honorable James C. Miller III  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Washington, D.C. 20503

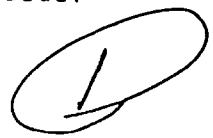
Mr. Miller 

I know that you share my concern regarding the increasing threat to our national security posed by unauthorized disclosure of classified intelligence information. The compromise of our intelligence sources, both human and technical, has placed lives in jeopardy and rendered expensive technical collection systems ineffective. Unfortunately, we have not been able to take effective steps to punish those who have violated their obligation to protect classified information and this has created the perception that nobody cares. We simply must restore discipline to the handling of sensitive information.

While there is no single solution to the problem of leaks, one step that can be taken is to enact legislation that would criminalize the reprehensible conduct of disclosing classified information to those outside government who are not authorized to receive it. Enactment of leaks legislation, combined with a vigorous effort to detect those who are engaged in disclosing classified information, will restore an element of risk to those who misuse classified information.


We have proposed leaks legislation as part of the draft Intelligence Authorization Bill for the past two years. Last year, objections were raised to the inclusion of leaks legislation in the Authorization Bill because the issue needed to be studied more closely and a consensus reached within the Executive Branch on whether we should attempt to enact leaks legislation. To date, I am not aware that any action has been taken to reach such a consensus.

This year we again proposed leaks legislation as part of the Authorization Bill. Once again, we were told that consideration of leaks legislation should be postponed. I do not believe we can continue to indefinitely postpone taking effective action. Too many of our nation's secrets have already been compromised to continue a business as usual attitude.



Given the exceedingly compressed time frame imposed on the authorization process by Gramm-Rudman, I do not want to jeopardize the rest of our FY 87 authorization bill because of another internal debate on this issue. Therefore, I reluctantly agree to the deletion of the leaks provisions from this year's bill. In return, I trust that OMB will support and facilitate the enactment of strong leaks legislation this year.

Sincerely,



John N. McMahon  
Acting Director of Central Intelligence