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**Secrecy in the Wrong Place**

SOME American scientists have suggested that the Russians could have obtained all the information they needed about the theory of atomic weapons without committing a single act of espionage in this country.

In the view of these scientists the Russians could have acquired all the essential theoretical information simply by keeping up with what the government was releasing officially on the subject or by reading the technical journals.

This is a matter that elicited a recent expression of concern from Allen W. Dulles, head of the Central Intelligence agency. He said he would give a great deal to be able to learn as much about the Soviet union as the Soviet union "can learn from us" by merely reading the press.

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth before a detailed catalog of American weapons in production or scheduled for production turned up in Washington without any kind of secrecy label. Possibly the Russians already were familiar with the contents of that catalog, but the incident did underscore what Dulles had been talking about.

It does seem a little strange that information should circulate so freely in these vital areas whereas utmost secrecy prevails in other areas of government where the people have every right to expect enlightenment.

SIGMA DELTA CHI, professional journalistic fraternity, has pointed to a spreading tendency in government to maintain secrecy in matters not involving national security but vitally affecting the taxpayers.

It recalls that in 1953 congressional committees held 1,357 star chamber meetings from which both press and public were barred. This was 44 percent of the 3,105 congressional committee meetings held that year.

Considered at these secret meetings were such subjects of legitimate concern to the people as appropriations, expenditures, taxes, drought relief, foreign aid, disposal of surplus farm products, waste in government, tariffs, public housing and immigration.

Certainly representative government can't function at its best when the restraint of public opinion is missing in the legislative process. But public opinion can't form in a vacuum.

Equally disturbing is evidence that this tendency in the federal government is providing an example for similar secrecy at the lower levels of government.

If the country needs obviously less secrecy in matters properly the concern of the public and less laxity in matters involving national security.

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