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## Rep. Runnels Defends Buying of Arms Data

Associated Press

A New Mexico congressman says there wasn't anything improper in his purchase for \$2,000 of information on Pentagon weapons projects.

Rep. Harold L. Runnels said that to the best of his knowledge the men he bought the information from did not work for the Pentagon. And, he added, "they did not sell me nor did I buy classified information."

Runnels, a Democrat and a member of the House Armed Services Committee, said press accounts have made his purchase of the information appear to be a "cloak-and-dagger operation."

The Detroit News, in a story Sunday by Seth Kantor, quoted Runnels as saying "that he bought classified documents from three men last summer."

The paper said he wanted better information with which to interview generals in private hearings and to impress his colleagues.

Runnels said he purchased information on procurement of tanks and Cheyenne helicopters, indicating he wanted the data as part of his own investigation into cost overruns on Pentagon weapons contracts.

"It's fascinating to me that the private sector can come much closer to their original estimates than what we do in our Department of Defense," the second-term congressman said.

Runnels said in a telephone interview that press accounts hinted that the men he dealt with had worked for the Pentagon.

"As far as I know," he said, "they never did work for the Pentagon." But, he added, "It didn't make any difference to me. I wanted someone with expertise to conduct a project from beginning to end."

He declined to name the men he dealt with, saying he didn't want to cause them embarrassment. He said he thought they were "research analysts starting their own business."