Senate Study on Leakers Termed 'Operation Nothing'

A former Pentagon security chief calls a recent Senate investigation "Operation Nothing" because it suggests laws cannot stop official Washington's biggest villian—the "leaker."

The 80-page Senate intelligence subcommittee report on secrecy and disclosure, released last week, said insoluble problems often arise in attempts to prosecute and punish those who make security information public.

That finding irritates W. Donald Stewart, former chief of the Defense Department's investigation division, who said he ran many a leaker to ground before he retired in 1972.

"It can be solved," Stewart said in an interview. "But the committee wouldn't even allow me to testify because, unfortunately, I cited some flagrant leak cases involving senators and congressmen."

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), chairman of the subcommittee that studied the security leak problem for 18 months, said in presenting the report that even the strictest legislation would not stop leaks because the leakers can fight back with a form of blackmail, by threatening to disclose classified material.