

### *Destroying Records*

The UPI article which appeared in The Post May 31, page C6, under the heading "U.S. Archivist Decries Destruction of Data" does not accurately reflect my views or my testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Relations.

Each year the federal government generates some six million cubic feet of records—enough to fill the National Archives Building seven times. Most of those records, fortunately, have only a temporary value for the government or for citizens. In this age of inexpensive copying many records are merely informational duplicates of each other. Others contain the scattered pieces of information which are brought together in less bulky form in reports and other documents. As a result we are able to destroy most of this mountain of records within a relatively few years without any real loss of information that might be needed by the government, citizens, or future scholars.

What is true of the government's records in general is also true of classified records: there is no more need to preserve the duplicative classified records than there is to preserve comparable non-classified records. Indeed, sound records management practices and sound security practices both suggest the desirability of destroying such "useless records" (as we once called them) at an early moment.

Consequently, rather than decriing the destruction of such records, I applaud it and encourage it. Very wisely the Congress has provided legislation on such record disposal, and destruction takes place only after our professional staff has assessed the material and recommended its disposal. Saving everything or methodically declassifying useless material are not viable alternatives.

JAMES B. RHOADS,

Archivist of the United States,

Washington.

[REDACTED]

Dear Jim, Rhoads letter in today's Post is a perfect redefining of "memory hole." If you have not saved it I have. Note especially, " Saving everything or methodically declassifying useless material [sic] are not viable alternatives." And their "professional staff" decides what to destroy and when. I missed the original UPI May 31, 68 story headed "U.S. Archivist Decries Destruction of Data." HW 6/15/74  
I have written Arvin as you/Bud suggested