

Pentagon Agency Resumes Press Interview Monitoring

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The former practice of monitoring conversations with newsmen has been re-instituted in the Pentagon's International Security Affairs office directed by Assistant Secretary G. Warren Nutter.

The ISA operation—sometimes called the Defense Department's little State Department—has rules forbidding officials there from accepting telephone calls from newsmen without prior clearance from Pentagon public information officials, according to officials who work under Nutter.

Also, face-to-face interviews between ISA officials and newsmen must be attended and monitored by information officials. This was the practice under former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara throughout the Defense Department, unless the person interviewed chose instead to take the time to submit a writ-

ten report of the conversation afterward to the information office.

Although those department-wide written rules have been discarded by Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, an assistant secretary like Nutter can still invoke them for his own agency.

Jerry W. Friedheim, deputy assistant secretary for public affairs, conceded that this is the case at ISA when newsmen complained on Wednesday about the widespread monitoring at the Pentagon.

Several reporters in a written query asked the ISA for a copy of its monitoring rules. The response ISA issued reads, "Mr. Nutter's internal instructions to his office are an internal matter."

ISA manages many of the military aid programs contained in the foreign aid bill and related legislation.

At a news conference at the Pentagon yesterday, Deputy

Defense Secretary David Packard decried the defeat of the foreign aid bill in the Senate and said "we've failed to get the story over" about the importance of military aid.

Asked if more liberal information policies at ISA might contribute to broader understanding about military aid, Packard said he was not ready to say "what we do in the future" about getting the story across.