



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

David O. Cooke: Promises to check for duplicate files.

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Mt. Weather May Be Duplicate File Cache

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Mt. Weather, a secret underground government facility in Northern Virginia, may be a storage place for duplicate government computer files on private citizens, Sen. John Tunney (D-Calif.), told a congressional hearing yesterday.

Although each government agency may keep the original computer files under tight security, Tunney said, the duplicates might not be as secure. He said he fears the Mt. Weather data might be accessible through other computer terminals—one run by the White House, for example — without adequate protection of personal privacy.

There is no question a President has a right to the most confidential information, Tunney said, but without proper safeguards there is the possibility of abuse by others.

Tunney said he has information that underground caves at Mt. Weather are used to store duplicate computer files ranging from highly secret Defense Department systems to the Internal Revenue Service and FBI data banks on individuals.

Mt. Weather is one of several underground complexes in the mountains west of Washington that would house key government officials if there were the threat of an attack on Washington. There

have been reports that Mt. Weather also may serve as a major communications facility for the CIA.

Tunney made his comments while questioning David O. Cooke, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, during a joint hearing by two Senate subcommittees on military computer systems.

Cooke said he "would have to verify" whether duplicates of the defense computer files are kept at Mt. Weather. Specifically, Cooke said, he will check to see if there are duplicates of more than 100,000 files gathered by the Army, on individuals during civil disorders of the late 1960s. Congress has been told these files were destroyed.