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Committee Says Data Withheld

Associated Press

A special Senate committee has concluded that many of the most significant presidential decisions have been withheld from the Congress and the public.

In a report yesterday, the panel said the practice that has permitted the withholding has hidden actions relating to the 1969-70 secret U.S. bombing of Cambodia, as well as other matters relating to the Vietnam war.

The report by the Special Committee on National Emergencies is scheduled to be issued later this week, along with proposed legislation to tighten the laws that have permitted the withholding.

In the report, it said the gap in the public record "is primarily due to a failure by Congress to specify substantive standards under which all be recorded."

"In addition," it adds, "Congress has not yet enacted laws which would prevent the executive from using classification to withhold information from Congress and the public.

"Until Congress grapples with these issues directly it will be faced with a continuing veil of secrecy and be unable to carry out its constitutional task of overseeing the executive," the report continues, declaring:

"The Indochina War and Watergate tragically illustrate the results of such congressional inattention."