

JFK says censorship policy may have averted disaster

WASHINGTON (UPI) — President Kennedy Tuesday lifted the voluntary censorship placed on military information during the Cuban crisis. He said his recent information policies might have prevented a disaster.

Much of the President's news conference Tuesday night was devoted to the government's handling of information during the Cuban crisis, and new information policies in the state and defense departments.

Kennedy said it would have been "possibly disastrous" if news of the Russian buildup in Cuba had "dribbled out" prematurely.

He said the 12 points "that we made to the press in regard to voluntary restraints on the movement of troops and so on" would be lifted immediately.

Kennedy also said "there will be a change, I think, in the State Department policy directive" requiring all officials to make reports on their conversations with newsmen.

He indicated no change in a similar directive at the Defense Department. "The need" at the State Department, he said, "is somewhat different from what it is in the Defense Department."

The Defense Department, he said, deals with "very sensitive intelligence and the methods by which that intelligence is received."

He said his only interest in establishing such policies was to prevent release of military information "extremely inimical" to the national interest. He indicated he was mainly concerned with the possible leakage of intelligence information.

Favors Talks

As for areas not involved with intelligence, Kennedy said, "I would be delighted" to talk with Assistant Defense Secretary Arthur Sylvester, who issued the order, "and with representatives of the press and see if we can get this straightened out so that there is a free flow of news to which the press is entitled."

On other subjects, Kennedy said: —He and his family will spend Christmas in Florida this year if the situation permits. In a reference to the Cuban crisis that provoked hearty laughter, he said "I hope it will not be too dangerous in Florida this year."

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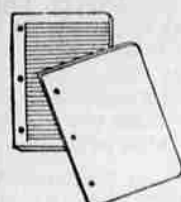
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