Debate Grows Over Access To U.S. Files

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WASHINGTOm--Last spring, two New York public library employees,.apparently classified documents. The incident provided a glimpse of the Reagan administration's attitude on what should be revealed to the public. It also illustrated how little success it has had in also reviewed the Freedom of Information Act, the courts have overruled several efforts to withhold documents, and some agencies have reversed their position.

Still, critics complain that executive-branch efforts to control government information have not been so systematic, and they charge that the Reagan administration has reversed a 30-year trend toward less government secrecy. A "Contagious Disease"

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Reagan appointees have restricted access to government files under the Freedom of Information Act and pressed Congress to narrow it further. They have set out to tighten secrecy of classified and even unclassified intelligence data. But their progress has been slow, and in some respects blocked. Congress has so far refused to narrow the Freedom of Information Act, the courts have overruled several efforts to withhold documents, and some agencies have reversed their position.

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