

Mr. GALLAGHER. Thank you, Mr. Horton.

The subcommittee is very fortunate this morning in having as its first witness in this series of hearings Mr. Vance Packard. Mr. Packard is more responsible than any man in our country for alerting us to the dangers that lurk in the twilight of our sophisticated society and the changes that are coming about and creating perhaps a new environment.

Vance Packard, for the last decade, has served as a public conscience for various actions by this Government and business that infringe on individual rights and individuality, largely through such books as "The Hidden Persuaders," "The Status Seekers," "The Wastemakers" and "The Naked Society."

We are indeed honored and privileged to have you open these hearings this morning, Mr. Packard.

Please proceed.

STATEMENT OF VANCE PACKARD, SOCIOLOGIST, AUTHOR, AND LECTURER

Mr. PACKARD. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to submit my thoughts on the matter of your current concern, the proposals to establish within the Federal Government national data centers.

The chairman has already identified me. I would only say my particular concern has been the impact on the individual citizen of pressures generated by social and technological change, and that my last book, "The Naked Society," was specifically concerned with the erosion of individual privacy arising from these changes and I have talked and written on the basis of later developments which, as you well know, have frequently involved activities within the Federal Government.

I believe your inquiry is an immensely important one. The implications of permitting the Federal Government to assemble in central data banks, or a center, information provided by or about its individual citizens are far reaching. There is clearly a threat to individual liberty in such a project.

Some time ago Dr. Robert Morison, as scientific director of the Rockefeller Foundation, warned:

We are coming to recognize that organized knowledge puts an immense amount of power in the hands of the people who take the trouble to master it.

Certainly we are seeing and hearing that information is power. If this is so, then all of us should be uneasy about the vast amount of information that the Federal Government is starting to store away on its citizens in dossiers, card files, and electronic memory banks.

In recent years we have seen an enormous growth in techniques for observing, assessing, controlling, keeping track of and exchanging information about people. To mention just a few, we have the hidden tape recorders, the lie detectors, the undercover agents, the personality assessors, and the bureaucratic investigators. Many of the techniques in use have been made much easier for the trained investigators by the proliferation of recordkeeping in our increasingly bureaucratic society.

Recordkeeping itself is becoming fantastically more efficient in reducing space and promoting speedy retrieval of information. We