the recent arms sales to Iran were disclosed, broadly defined what might be considered sensitive information. The policy in that memo was rescinded by new National Security Adviser Frank Carlucci after the Congressional test-imony in March.

"National security interests are those that unclassified matters that relate to the national defense or the foreign relations of the US government. Other government interests are those related, but not limited to, the wide range of government or government-derived economic, human, financial, industrial, agricultural, technological, and law-enforcement information, as well as the privacy or confidentiality of personal or commercial proprietary information provided to the US government by its citizens," the memo said.

The Pointed reference definition of sensitive information covers "everything," Peyton said. "It's so broad that it could cover every government information system," he said.

Association president Paul Zurkowski later called the rescision "a giant step in the right direction." "The most objectionable part has been removed," said John Richardson, who testified against the policy on behalf of the IEEE's Committee on Communications and Information Policy.

However, the status of the 1984 presidential decision, National Security Decision Directive 145, that set the groundwork for the database policy remains unclear. A Defense Dept. official said that the policy seemed to be effectively rescinded, at least until a review by the National Security Council of the directive. Council staffers confirmed that the directive was under review but would not comment on specifics.

Congress is now considering legislation to protect electronically stored private information. If passed, the Computer Security Act of 1987 (H.R. 145) would give the Commerce and State departments the responsibility for protecting information. The National Bureau of Standards would be responsible for setting the computer-security standards. The administration plans assigned the task to the National Security Agency and Defense Dept.

"We endorse the intent of H.R. 145 that a civilian agency rather than a defense agency should assist other civilian agencies and the private sector in the protection of computer systems," IEEE's Richardson testified Feb. 25.

Richardson criticized both the administration's and the proposed law's definitions of sensitive information as "too broad."

Developers expect DOS to diverge

Galen Gruman, Assistant Editor

"What will Microsoft and IBM do to DOS?" asked those who attended the West Coast Computer Fair in San Francisco March 26-29. IBM has since announced its next-generation operating system (see p. 86), but Microsoft remains quiet about its plans for MS-DOS, the most-used operating system in personal computers.

The new microprocessors and the recent availability of graphical operating environments promise (some say threaten) to split the IBM-compatible world between 8088- and 80286-based PC XT-like computers and 80386-based multitasking machines and between traditional command-driven interfaces and graphical environments.

The computer fair devoted two sessions to the question, but discussion continued on the exhibit floor and in sessions on other topics.

The question of what DOS to develop for repeatedly occurred in a session on RAM-resident programs. "The IBM PC and the clones were never developed to be what is becoming a multitasking environment," said Bill Higgs, director of software research services for Info Corp., a Cupertino, Calif., company. Despite Microsoft's assurances that its new MS-DOS (variously called ADOS, DOS 5.0 and New DOS) will handle memory conflicts between resident programs, software developers will find new ways to create problems, he said, and will have to wait a couple years before the new DOS is available, much less a standard.

While environments like Windows were offered as potential replacements for MS-DOS, "the world's going to be living in the current DOS world for quite some time," said Spenser Leyton, vice president of sales and business development at Borland International.

However, because Microsoft is pushing its Windows environment while also working on a new DOS to address the 80386's protected mode, break the 640K-byte addressable memory limit, and allow multitasking, panelists were divided about which operating system developers would have to write their applications for.

Because Microsoft is keeping quiet about its plans and because it is involved in the various potential divisions, speakers and attendees alike could only agree that the current MS-DOS environment would probably fracture into several subenvironments.