

an evaluation to the American public, on how our space effort is making out, consistent with the President's desire to see us first in space, if you are not able to comment on or release appropriate information on Soviet successes and Soviet failures in space, as I assume some of them at least are not entirely military in application?

Or to put it another way, are you in a position now to evaluate the Soviet space programs compared with ours, and give an evaluation to the American public as to how we are making out, and to report fully on Soviet experiments and launches in space, because as I understand the discussion today, there has been certainly a lack of clarity, if not the claim that certain information has been withheld on Soviet space launches.

I would think the American people would have to look to NASA for an evaluation of that and not to the Department of Defense.

Dr. SIMPSON. Respectfully I must disagree. The Space Act is very clear in its directive to the Administrator that he furnish the American people with the widest possible information on our space program, and this we are attempting to do.

NASA has, so far as I know, no statutory or other formal responsibilities so far as tracking, assessing, and reporting on the Russian space effort.

Mr. REID. But we cannot operate in a vacuum, can we? Do you not have to measure the success of our program in relation to Soviet efforts?

Are you saying the American people have to look to the Department of Defense for any evaluation of Soviet space efforts, peaceful or otherwise? Where is NASA's responsibility to evaluate our own space effort in relation to the Soviets, in peaceful areas?

NASA DENIES EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITY

Dr. SIMPSON. Well, it is not NASA's responsibility to evaluate the Russian space program. We don't have that responsibility. I really don't see how I can go beyond that.

Anything that we receive that is unclassified on any area of space activity we give the widest possible distribution and publication to, especially in the area of scientific and technical information. We have a large program in this particular area.

Mr. REID. Let me go at it from a different tack. Is there any reason the American people, in the judgment of NASA, should not be fully informed as to Soviet space efforts in the peaceful areas of exploration of space?

Dr. SIMPSON. Again, sir, you ask me this question—NASA has a mission. It is an agency operating out in the open. It is publishing its own program. I am not in a position, I don't have access to all the issues and ramifications in order to answer that.

Mr. REID. What are the ramifications? My colleague, Mr. Hardy, mentioned a minute ago that he would be interested in knowing what the ramifications are that you cannot discuss in open session here with regard to Soviet space efforts.

If the American public is not to look to NASA in matters of this kind, where is it to look? Are you suggesting that it must look to the Department of Defense for peaceful Soviet information or peaceful Soviet space efforts?