

We publish everything, not only on launches, but we go to great effort—and I would like to emphasize this, since there seems to be some misunderstanding—we go to great effort to study and bring together and to publish and disseminate all unclassified information from Russian sources or elsewhere. There is no disagreement on that.

But we define the policy simply on the basis of what we receive on an unclassified basis. We can publish only that information that is unclassified.

Mr. HARDY. Let me, if the gentleman will permit, try to clear up my confusion on this.

Suppose the Russians announce a launching, and perhaps even say, which is hardly likely, but suppose they announce a failure, and NASA had independent knowledge of that.

Do I understand that your policy would prohibit you from publishing that, unless the Department of Defense authorized it, although Russia has publicly announced it?

You are not permitted to let the American people know about it, unless the Department of Defense says you can go ahead and do it?

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Chairman, that is something I think we should have the Department of Defense explain, if they are issuing instructions to NASA on the basis of—well, to suppress information which has been publicly released by a foreign government.

Mr. REID. If I may, Mr. Chairman, just to pursue the clear point that my colleague has just raised, as I understand it, you now have no authority and do not constitute it as your responsibility, speaking for NASA under the statute, to release any information whatsoever on Soviet launches, except as may be released by Mr. Sylvester of the Department of Defense.

You have no initial initiating responsibility on any Soviet launches, unless it is cleared by the Department of Defense, whether it is classified or unclassified.

Dr. SIMPSON. That is true, sir.

CHANGE IN STATUTE SUGGESTED

Mr. HARDY. I would think then, Mr. Chairman, that actually the statute which has been discussed and which created NASA as an independent agency should be modified and put under the Secretary of Defense, because it seems to be subservient to the Secretary of Defense under this procedure that has just been outlined.

I would suggest that we ought to change the statute and put it where it belongs. If Mr. McNamara is going to call all the shots for the Department of Defense and NASA also, we might just as well know it.

Mr. MOSS. Let me say that I can understand the reasoning that brought forth that observation from my colleague.

But I think he also shares my conviction that perhaps we should proceed to have the statute, which is rather clear, administered on a more independent basis than it is presently being administered.