

PROBLEM OF DECLASSIFIED INFORMATION

Perhaps one of the most difficult things we have to do in this committee is to deal with the problem of classified information. This is sacrosanct; don't touch it.

I speak the sentiments of every member of this committee and, I think, of the House, when I say that when there is properly classified information bearing upon the security of this Nation we have no desire to have it exposed to public view or to make it easy for any foreign power to have knowledge of it.

But, there is an easy method here to delegate responsibilities imposed on the civilian agency, and I am concerned as to whether or not that hasn't already happened. Apparently NASA takes the direction of the Department of Defense, without question.

Now is it a fact that the agency is satisfied that it is getting full information and is making that information available to the American public within the bounds of security?

Dr. SIMPSON. I don't have any reason to think—and as I have told you, I am not on all the councils on these things, but I do not have any reason to think—that anything is being improperly withheld from us.

Mr. Moss. You are satisfied that you get every bit of information. I am particularly interested in the fact that these satellite situation reports do not include failures of the Russians.

Do you get information on Russian failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir.

Mr. Moss. You do not?

Dr. SIMPSON. No.

Mr. Moss. You mean that the space agency charged with developing the policies of our Government—

Dr. SIMPSON. I beg your pardon; let me be clear. I have in mind this particular report.

The space agency and the properly constituted officials of the space agency do receive information that is available to the Government as a whole on these matters, I am sure, but I do not know the nature or the times or what not.

I think you would have to pursue this, if I may respectfully suggest, in executive session with the people who really both give and receive this information in its entirety.

I am not myself involved in knowing everything that is received in NASA at the highest levels of classification. With all respect, sir, I am not trying to be evasive.

Mr. Moss. I realize you are not trying to be evasive. Do you feel that you as a top, I assume, policymaker in NASA—

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. Moss (continuing). Have full information on Russian affairs?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir, I do not. I don't have any reason to know that I do; no, sir. I have not been told that I know all about Russian failures. It is possible that I do, but I don't have any knowledge of my own or any participation in any committee or group that would—

Mr. Moss. Do you feel that you have all the information you require in the discharge of your duties?