

Mr. HARDY. And if you don't, you are in violation of the law.

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir; I understand that, but I mean I understand this to be his directive to me in terms of my job.

But with reference to the organization of classification, the point I am trying to make is that people down the line do not unilaterally go over and agree with somebody to classify or declassify things on their own. This is the point I am trying to make. This is no capricious—

Mr. HARDY. That was not what I was asking you.

Dr. SIMPSON. All right, sir.

Mr. HARDY. What I was trying to determine is that you must get some information about foreign launches.

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARDY. On your own.

Dr. SIMPSON. I am cleared up to a certain level, sir. There is no question about it.

Mr. HARDY. I am not talking about classified information. I am talking about information put out by foreign governments.

I would think that—maybe you don't, and maybe your agency hasn't grown up enough to get them yet, but I would think—that NASA would be collecting on its own certain information with respect to foreign progress in space activities.

Now the question is simply this. Having developed that information on your own, do you classify it or do you refuse to classify it because you asked the Department of Defense won't you classify this so we can't release it?

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir; we don't ask the Department of Defense to classify anything so we can't release it. If in the rare occasions that we think something should be classified, we do it for substantive reasons.

Mr. HARDY. The thing that I am trying to understand is this. If you get information from the Department of Defense which carries a defense classification, you have got to respect it.

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes.

Mr. HARDY. And that is as it should be.

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARDY. There isn't any question of that.

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARDY. But if you get information independently, then the question in my mind is why you wait to get the Department of Defense to act on it and make its own determination, before you take action with respect to determining whether it should or should not be released.

Dr. SIMPSON. Because we are part of the Government, sir, and we are responding in these cases to the fact that we are part of the Government—

Mr. HARDY. Well, I am in the Government too.

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. HARDY. If I picked up information of that kind, then you are trying to tell me that I should wait and find out—now this is publicly announced in the foreign country, and it comes to my attention.

Maybe I could listen to a radio broadcast and get an official announcement of a foreign government, and if I spoke to you about it,