

should straightforwardly tell the committee that. Otherwise, I think you should respond to the question of Mr. Reid.

Dr. SIMPSON. All right, sir. This gets over into an area of classification.

SOVIET FAILURES TERMED CLASSIFIED

Mr. REID. Am I to understand from your response to the chairman that there is no area here this morning, on behalf of NASA, that you can report to the American people on, with regard to Soviet space failures?

Dr. SIMPSON. There is no area that we can report on?

Mr. REID. Here this morning on Soviet space failures.

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir.

Mr. REID. So, to put the question the other way, any space failure in your judgment at this time is classified?

Dr. SIMPSON. Yes, sir, unless released by the appropriate agency.

Mr. REID. Now, that is a technical judgment as to the authority, and whether it is national security, and so on.

But, I think the American people might infer from your comment here this morning that there is nothing that they can be told about Soviet space failures at this time. Is that a correct implication, or isn't it? Either it is classified or it isn't.

Dr. SIMPSON. It is classified; yes, sir.

Mr. REID. Then there is nothing on Soviet space failures here this morning you can report to the American people that is not classified?

Dr. SIMPSON. Any Soviet failure that is unclassified has appeared in the satellite situation report. I don't know exactly how many. I know the two that you referred to last August and September are in the satellite situation report. They would be classified.

Mr. REID. Can we ask you another question here? Do you know of any Russian launches—more particularly, Russian failures—that have not been reported to the American people?

Dr. SIMPSON. I will be happy to answer that question in executive session, sir.

Mr. REID. This isn't a classified query, in my judgment. You merely have to say there are Russian failures that have not been reported, and you think, for reasons of classification, they shouldn't be.

Dr. SIMPSON. No, sir.

Mr. REID. What I am trying to get is a yes or no.

Dr. SIMPSON. Please, sir, you are asking me to report in open session on information which I received through classified sources. I will do whatever the chairman directs me to do. If he thinks it is proper for me to do it, I will. I don't think so.

Mr. MEADER. I don't understand that answering that question yes or no would in itself be a release of classified information.

Mr. HARDY. It could be.

Mr. MOSS. The chairman is very, very sympathetic to the convictions of the gentleman from New York, and shares his concern over the inability to get an answer.

But, having worked with classified information for a period of some 8 years, I recognize that, on occasion, it may not be proper for a witness to respond to a question, in an open hearing, and therefore