

Would you tell the committee how the report was released?

What was the premature aspect of the report's release, or just generally, how and why was the report released?

Mr. PERRY. I would like to do that. I think it is appropriate that it be in the record. It reminds me of my experience as a Navy midshipman, when I was taught that there is no such thing as an excuse; there is just an explanation, and that is usually not satisfactory.

The work was put down on paper, I think, around Christmastime. During the holidays the Division of International Affairs in the Treasury was, it seemed, working around the clock in the office on the overall balance-of-payments programs, and the procedures and so on suffered because of it.

I was loaned to the Department of Commerce for 2 weeks to help set up the direct investment program; again, not an excuse, but an explanation.

In this period, we received some requests from the Hill, quite appropriate requests, that Treasury was doing some work in this area and they wanted to get a general briefing on these views. Re-creating a situation in which I was not present, my impression is that what happened is that the Treasury staff did not make it clear that they were in the early, infant stages of this work, that standard operating procedures, if you will, had not yet begun to crank. And when the stories got into the paper, it seemed appropriate that other elements of the congressional delegation in the Northwest should receive the benefit of the same information.

Frankly, the tremendous pressures involved in putting together the New Year's Day balance-of-payments program brought about a mixup. There was the impression that copies of this staff paper had gone to the interagency group, and it had not. I do not know exactly who did not push the button, or when that should have actually been done. This is just sort of the general sequence.

Senator HATFIELD. When Senator Morse indicated that he had read accounts of the report in the Oregonian before members of the Forest Service had seen it, you indicated that certain members had been briefed and then articles appeared in the paper and you felt that all members of the delegations involved or concerned should have equal——

Mr. PERRY. I added one other thing, sir. I did not think that the staff in their briefing had made the status of their work appropriately clear.

Senator HATFIELD. Do I understand, then, that those members you had briefed evidently had made some public comments about this and therefore, this activated your premature release of the report before standard operating procedures had been applied?

Or were members briefed from the Hill first with no intervening press comments made and then other members were given the report for public release? Which of these two situations prevailed?

Mr. PERRY. I believe it was the second, sir.

Senator HATFIELD. Yes.

Were there any partisan considerations given in the briefing or in the information being given to other members of the delegations from the Pacific Northwest?