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The Washington Angle

By DAVID BARNETT

WASHINGTON —

The Inverted Question

For generations, men have used the loaded question to make points. The most extreme example: "When did you stop beating your wife?"

Some of the critics of Sen. Stuart Symington (D-Mo) contend the potential presidential candidate has been using loaded questions in hearings of the Senate Aero-Space Committee.

He has repeatedly asked administration defense chiefs, in effect, whether intelligence reports on Russian strength by the Central Intelligence Agency had been "downgraded" to justify the administration's economy-minded Defense budget.

The impression that came out of the hearing room was that the senator actually was charging that his reports from CIA contained a much higher estimate of the Soviets' missile strength than did those reported by Defense officials.

A comcest reporter who went so far as to report that impression was brought up sharp by the senator. He pointed out that he had made no such charges, had only asked questions.

A check of the transcript of the hearing shows the senator to be definitely correct.

But the loaded questions were there in quantity.