

SALT and the CIA

Before the Senate votes on whether to approve the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty it should take up the report that there has been a coverup of the theft of top-secret information. This information pertains to two satellites.

The satellites are cornerstones in this country's plan to monitor the Soviet Union's compliance with SALT. A newspaper reports that the theft was concealed by the Central Intelligence Agency, incredibly, so as not to endanger Senate approval of SALT. The newspaper is the respected Sunday News Journal of Wilmington, Del. According to its investigation, plans for the Keyhole and Rhyolite satellites were sold to the Soviets in 1976 by employees of TRW Inc., a prime contractor for the satellite program.

But, according to the News Journal, the two men involved were not charged with the sale of those plans. Instead, it reported, they were convicted of selling microfilmed blueprints of a proposed satellite for CIA use.

The CIA terms the story ridiculous. The prestige of the paper and the digging that went into its story indicate that this is not

the case. But let the Senate determine the facts for itself.

Both the Carter administration and the Soviet Union have a campaign going to get approval of SALT. The administration even has State Department representatives traveling around the country to build up sentiment in favor of SALT. Alabama has been getting the treatment because the votes of Sen. Donald Stewart and Sen. Howell Heflin are considered very important.

The risks of SALT are such that if there is Soviet cheating, it could be catastrophic for the United States. To trust Moscow is like leaving the cat to watch the canary. The administration's response is that we have the technical ability to monitor compliance.

Even if the News Journal story does not hold up, it has been clearly established that the Soviet Union has the Keyhole plans—a former CIA employee has been convicted on that score. The Senate should determine if the CIA has misled the American public in such a way that it touches upon the question of this country's survival.