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Leaks of Top-Secret Material 'Reprehensible'

In The New York Times on April 4 and again in The Washington Post April 5, it was reported that modified U2 planes would be used to monitor Soviet missile testing. Those U2 flights, it is claimed, will compensate for the loss of our monitoring facilities in Iran. The source for this information was administration officials.

Just one day before The Times published its account, I attended a top-secret briefing, which was severely restricted in attendance because of the sensitive nature of the information being discussed. Part of that secret briefing related to the U2 flight plans revealed in The Times. I simply cannot object strenuously enough to this use of highly classified data in the effort to sell SALT II to the U.S. Senate and the American public. There seems to be a double standard in operation with regard to the disclosure of classified information, one for the administration and another for the Senate.

Not only was top-secret informa-

tion leaked to the press to serve a political end, but the information that was leaked also left a very distorted and inaccurate picture. The administration is well aware that many senators are convinced that SALT II is not verifiable. The loss of our electronic listening posts in Iran has served only to reinforce this conviction. Naturally, the administration is desperate to overcome that perception, and it seems willing to leak top-secret information to the press to do it. The fact of the matter is that the leaked information leaves the impression that the problem of verifying SALT II has been solved. It has not. No modified U2 planes will compensate for the loss of our facilities in Iran. To assert the contrary is to misrepresent the facts.

The disclosure of classified information is bad enough in itself; to do so in order to leave a false sense of security is reprehensible.

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