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INTELLIGENCE DATA BACKED

Top Defense Officials Defend Shift In Estimates

Washington, March 27 (AP)—America's top defense officials have strongly defended shifting intelligence estimates as an effort to make the best use possible of information on Soviet military might.

Representative Mahon (D., Texas), chairman of the House Defense Appropriations subcommittee, warned, nevertheless, he would "not tolerate for one minute" any possibility that intelligence information had "been tailored for political purposes."

Highly censored testimony made public today by the subcommittee had Mahon and Representative Ford (R., Mich.) closely questioning the Secretary of Defense, Robert S. McNamara, and Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, about charges intelligence information had been rigged.

Points To Estimates

Ford said Pentagon estimates appeared to show a "missile gap" compared with the Soviet Union one year and [illegible] weapons [illegible] (twelve) later.

"Could there be any possibility of them being rigged?" Mahon asked.

"I see no possibility whatsoever," [illegible] replied. "I know [illegible] involved and [illegible] politically [illegible] of this, [illegible] estimates [illegible] presented [illegible] as of [illegible] States Intelligence Board [illegible] year, and as [illegible] by my predecessor [illegible] those that [illegible] the services [illegible] rejected [illegible] McNamara added [illegible] in [illegible] by [illegible] intelligence [illegible] on [illegible] intelligence [illegible] into [illegible]

". . . We just better use all the intelligence-gathering techniques we can, otherwise the reliability of these figures have little or no value as far as I am concerned," Ford said.

Later, Gen. Frederic H. Smith, Air Force vice chief of staff, [illegible] questioned about the change [illegible] estimates of Russian missile [illegible] the change in estimates [illegible] not reflect any lessening Soviet capacity.

"They had the capacity," Smith said. "It is a recognition that they did not do what our intelligence people thought they would do."

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