SECRET 231745Z DEC 68 CITE 0756

FROM J. SIMONTON

SUBJECT: NEWS MEDIA COVERAGE

The subject is news media coverage of NASA launches from VAFB. Through local agreements and in compliance with VAFB regulations and AFM 207-24 the test wing has been able to control image forming news media coverage of events on VAFB in the near vicinity of 608AJ facilities. In particular NASA desires to have open coverage of their launches from SLC-2E. So far we have been able to prevent this believing that once a newsman has a camera in the area you cannot control where he points his lens. We have not been successful in controlling the access of news media personnel to the launch area. NASA has a press trailer which is parked just outside the caution areas from which the personnel have been allowed to have open telephones to broadcast stations in the local and surrounding areas. Again, control of what is said during a real time broadcast is impossible. Local NASA officials are reluctant, to say the least, to

TERMINE SUCH ARRANGEMENTS SINCE THE NASA GUIDELINES INDICATE MAXIMUM PRIVILEC SHOULD BE OBTAINED FROM EACH OPERATION. EVEN THE PRE-PUBLISHED RELEASES ARE SOMEWHAT COUPPER TO OUR DESIRES IN PUBLIC INFORMATION RELEASES. FOR EXAMPLE QUOTE: ESSA LAUNCH DELAYED AT Vandenberg. VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE (AP) - SPACE OFFICIALS YESTERDAY ANNOUNCED A 24-HOUR DELAY IN TODAY'S SCHEDULED LAUNCH OF THE EIGHT ESSA WEATHER SATELLITE, TOS-F.
LAUNCH WITH HIGHER PRIORITY. THE SATELLITE IS NOW SET TO GO UP AT
9:21 A.M. TOMORROW.
The TOS-F, WHICH CARRIES AUTOMATIC PICTURE TRANSMISSION CAMERAS,
WILL BE CARRIED ALONG ON A DELTA ROCKET. UNQUOTE. THE HIGHER
PRIORITY LAUNCH WAS CORONA.

ONE OF THE LOCAL NEWSPAPER REPORTERS HAD A ONE LINE "GLIMPSE" IN
THE NEXT DAY'S PAPER "TOKYO NEWSMAN AT NASA WEATHER SATELLITE LAUNCH
SITE THE MORNING." THE SAME PAPER CARRIED THIS ARTICLE QUOTE: TIROS
LAUNCH SCRUBBED FOR SAFETY REASON, FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF CONSTRUC-
TION WORKERS ON THE MANNED ORBITING LAB PROJECT ON SOUTH VANGENBERG
FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE DECISION TO "SCRUB" THE LAUNCH OF A NASA
WEATHER SATELLITE FROM HERE TODAY.

COUNTDOWN ON THE TIROS SATELLITE WAS BROUGHT TO WITHIN FIVE

PAGE 3 075 S E C R E T
MINUTES OF LAUNCH AND HELD WHILE SAFETY OFFICIALS WEIGHED THE
DANGERS TO THE WORKERS SHOULD THE VEHICLE HAVE TO BE DESTRUCTED
SHORTLY AFTER LEAVING THE PAD. NASA OFFICIALS SAID THE DECISION TO
POSTPONE THE LAUNCH WAS MADE AFTER IT WAS DETERMINED THAT EXTREMELY
HIGH WINDS AT HIGH ALTITUDE MIGHT BLOW DEBRIS INTO THE CONSTRUCTION
AREA IF AN ABORT TOOK PLACE.

MINUTES BEFORE, A SHIP PASSING THROUGH THE LAUNCH SAFETY ZONE ALSO
CAUSED A SHORT DELAY. THE SATELLITE ORIGINALLY HAD BEEN SCHEDULED
FOR LAUNCH YESTERDAY BUT WAS POSTPONED TO ALLOW THE AIR FORCE TO
LAUNCH A SECRET MILITARY SATELLITE, UNQUOTE.

REQUEST YOU ESTABLISH AN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY ON NASA
THAT IS APPLICABLE TO ALL INDIVIDUALS AND AGENCIES. THIS SHOULD
DEFINITELY BE A WHITE POLICY, WITH WHATEVER CLASSIFICATION YOU DESIRE,
TO ENABLE NEGOTIATION WITH THE NASA PERSONNEL AND OTHER NEWS
MEDIA AT THIS LEVEL.

THIS SUBJECT IS TIMELY DUE TO THE NEGOTIATIONS NOW UNDERWAY WHERE-
BY NASA IS ATTEMPTING TO ASSUME A GREATER DEGREE OF CONTROL ON SLC 2.