

3/24/59

Release of Argus Scientific Results

We regret that unknown persons gave out information prematurely and selectively to a single newspaper about the Argus experiments. This unauthorized step removed the decision on release from the orderly processes of Government. It is clear that whoever made this information prematurely available did so without any authorization on the part of the Government. In my judgment it is not in the over-all interest of the United States for individuals to decide, on their own, whether and when restricted material should be made available to the press.

On the one hand, the Argus experiments were of direct military interest. On the other hand, they offered a major opportunity to acquire considerable basic geophysical data of importance to all scientists participating in the International Geophysical Year. It had been planned to make the scientific data available to the scientific community. Because of the considerable quantity of data collected during some 250 passes of the Explorer IV satellite, the past half-year has been occupied with the reduction and evaluation of these data in order to assess matters of military importance and to separate out those of special scientific significance.

Responsible scientists who had been advising on the project originally recommended the classification and restrictions on the publication of the information and were advising with Government officials about the material that could be appropriately made public and when it should be made public.

There has been no withholding of fully evaluated scientific results,

*Argus**A*



since the technical reports are still in preparation. Plans had been formulated before the premature release to summarize the scientific findings during one of four symposia at the annual meeting of the National Academy of Sciences on April 27, 28, and 29. [A general description of the experiments was released yesterday by my Science Advisory Committee.]