

U.S.I.A. Film on Dissent Stirs Capitol Concern

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 — Concern was voiced in Congress Thursday that alleged "editorializing" by the United States Information Agency in a television film about domestic dissent might be affecting this country's credibility abroad.

The concern was expressed by Representative John E. Moss, Democrat of California, who is chairman of the House Subcommittee on Government Information, and Representative Ogden R. Reid of Westchester, the subcommittee's ranking Republican member, after viewing the U.S.I.A. film, "The Silent Majority," which the agency has sent out to 104 foreign countries.

The 15-minute film strongly suggests that what President Nixon has called the "silent majority" supports his Vietnam policy and, referring to last week's antiwar demonstrations in Washington, declares that "the loudest sound is not the only one that should be listened to."

A Special Screening

Mr. Reid, who said that the film was "not particularly balanced," and Mr. Moss asked the agency to give the subcommittee a "policy letter" clarifying the agency's policies, "especially the editorializing" in its material sent overseas.

After demanding a special screening, they were shown the \$20,000 film by Eugene Kopp, the general counsel of U.S.I.A., and Anthony Guarco, deputy assistant director of the agency for motion pictures and television. Mr. Kopp and Mr. Guarco brought the film to the Capitol.

Mr. Reid said that he and Mr. Moss had conveyed to Mr. Kopp their view that United States "credibility abroad can suffer" if the U.S.I.A.'s materials receive an "editorializing" treatment.

Mr. Reid criticized the film for what he called "editorial interjections" and because it failed to show crowd scenes at the Washington Monument during last Saturday's antiwar moratorium.

The film, however, was pronounced "excellent" by the agency's deputy director, Henry Loomis, who was reported yesterday to have approved the rush production of the "Silent Majority" program.

Mr. Loomis resigned in 1965 as the director of the Voice of America, the agency's radio branch, after charging that "the Voice of America is not the voice of the Administration." His resignation stemmed from policy differences between Mr. Loomis and the Johnson Administration over the treatment of Vietnam news.

Today Mr. Loomis, who rejoined the agency under the Nixon Administration, said in a telephone interview that the "Silent Majority" showed "as persuasively as possible" the Vietnam controversy, along with the "diversity" of views surrounding it.

Bruce Herschenson, the U.S.I.A. director for motion pictures and television, said yesterday the production of the film had been cleared by Mr. Loomis.

But Mr. Loomis said today that he had not "specifically" approved the project when it was started on Nov. 4, that he had not read the shooting script and that he had not actually seen the film until last Tuesday, the day after the first 200 prints had been shipped abroad.

He said approval for a film like the "Silent Majority" was not "a big deal in the agency," but a routine matter.

The Department of State has

not seen or approved the film, either, a spokesman said today.

The 1953 reorganization plan, which set up the U.S.I.A., provides that "the Secretary of State shall direct the policy and control the content of a program, for use abroad, on official United States positions, including interpretation of current events, identified as official positions by an exclusive descriptive label."

In practice, however, the State Department offers only broad policy guidance to the information agency and does not, as a rule, pass on the content of films, broadcasts and other U.S.I.A. materials.

Apparently in connection with the U.S.I.A.'s current work on a biography of Vice President Agnew, the agency was reported today to have asked at least one television network for a kinescope of the Nov. 13 speech in which he criticized TV commentators for their unfavorable treatment of President Nixon's Nov. 3 Vietnam speech.

However, according to an agency spokesman, this was a "routine inquiry" and the agency had no immediate plans to purchase the Agnew film or to exhibit it abroad.

Among other agency film projects currently in preparation is a color picture about the United States presence in South Vietnam. The 90-minute documentary, directed by John Ford, was begun last year and will cost \$200,000. The Times erroneously reported in an article today that the Vietnam film would cost \$20,000.