

As you can understand, enactment of the Robertson amendment has necessitated a review of this agency's procedures in connection with submission of materials to the Congress and the General Accounting Office. This review is being undertaken at the present time.

I do, however, wish to assure you that a response to your request will be forthcoming within the prescribed 35-day period of the Robertson amendment.

Sincerely yours,

L. J. SACCIO, *Acting Director.*

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, November 10, 1959.

HON. MICHAEL J. MANSFIELD,
Chairman, Subcommittee on State Department Organization and Public Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am advised that on October 8, 1959, there was delivered to the Office of the Director of the International Cooperation Administration your written request that you be furnished with that agency's evaluation report of the program in Vietnam.

As I have stated on other occasions, it is the established policy of the executive branch to provide the Congress and the public with the fullest possible information consistent with the national interest. This policy has guided, and will continue to guide, the executive branch in carrying out the mutual security program so that there may be a full understanding of the program and its vital importance to the national security.

At the same time, however, under the historic doctrine of the separation of powers between the three great branches of our Government, the executive has a recognized constitutional duty and power with respect to the disclosure of information, documents, and other material relating to its operations. The President has throughout our history, in compliance with his duty in this regard, withheld information when he found that the disclosure of what was sought would be incompatible with the national interest.

It is essential to effective administration that employees of the executive branch be in a position to be fully candid in advising with each other on official matters, and that the broadest range of individual opinions and advice be available in the formulation of decisions and policy. It is similarly essential that those who have the responsibility for making decisions be able to act with the knowledge that a decision or action will be judged on its merits and not on whether it happened to conform to or differ from the opinions or advice of subordinates. The disclosure of conversations, communications, or documents embodying or concerning such opinions and advice can accordingly tend to impair or inhibit essential reporting and decision-making processes, and such disclosure has therefore been forbidden in the past, as contrary to the national interest, where that was deemed necessary for the protection of orderly and effective operation of the executive branch.