

month. At issue is this: Is the document properly classified as a "confidential military secret" or is it being covered up because it might embarrass the Kennedy administration's relationship with the authoritarian Diem regime?

The document is signed by Rusk. In the cable jargon the State Department uses when communicating to field stations, it is labeled "Message to Amembassy, Saigon 1006."

ADMINISTRATION WITNESSES

The House subcommittee, conducting a wide-ranging inquiry into censorship and charges of news management, already has heard in public session Assistant Secretary of Defense Arthur Sylvester and his State Department counterpart, Robert Manning. Each is in charge of public information for his department.

They may be called back in closed session to testify about "Saigon 1006."

An official description of the South Vietnam news situation prepared by subcommittee staff members mentions that a "confidential State Department message to the American Ambassador in Saigon stated that 'more flexibility at the local level' was needed in dealing with U.S. newsmen covering the Vietnam operations."

But sources familiar with the document say it goes far beyond such general language.

Two members of the subcommittee have confirmed that they know of the existence of the message. Both say they have not actually seen it, but have been briefed on its contents, which seem certain to add fuel to outcries against alleged news management.

A June 30, 1962, letter from Sylvester to Representative John E. Moss, Democrat, of California, the subcommittee chairman, describes the order in general terms, calling it a "basic directive for U.S. reporters, issued February, 20, 1962." The letter says it is a joint State-Defense USIA message to the American Ambassador.

Among other things, Sylvester told Moss that "there is no censorship of press dispatches or other news material." This would not be inconsistent with the content of the order, which reportedly concerns the physical placement and travel of American reporters, rather than censorship of their written dispatches.

Mr. REUSS. Let me start on that. The news story, as I hastily read it, says that the cable contained two main points. They are news policy advice allegedly given to the American Ambassador in Saigon by the State Department:

Keep American reporters away from areas where fighting is being done entirely almost entirely by U.S. troops.

Is that contained in the cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. That is contained nowhere in the cable, sir. In fact, the thrust of the cable—well, let me say first of all that there are no areas where the fighting is being conducted—what were the phrases there?

Mr. REUSS. "Entirely or almost entirely."

Mr. HILSMAN. Either "entirely or almost entirely" by American forces. We are not in a combat role there, and the news story is grossly inaccurate in that. Nothing like that statement is contained in the cable, and in fact there are no areas where U.S. forces are engaged "entirely or almost entirely" in combat.

Mr. REUSS. The second alleged directive of the cable is as follows:

Keep American reporters away from any area which will show the extent of President Ngo Dinh Diem's failure to attract the full allegiance of the South Vietnamese people.

Is there such a directive in the cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. Nothing remotely similar to this in the cable, sir. And may I also add that the thrust and intent and result of the cable was to permit the greatest possible access to the news all over Vietnam to include all activities going on. That was the thrust, intent, purpose, and result of the cable.