

level throughout Vietnam, is, I think, a more precise statement of what our policy is. It is the one that has effect because it is the one that goes to the people who actually deal with the press.

Mr. REUSS. What is the date of that airgram?

Mr. MOSS. December 19, 1962.

Mr. REUSS. I see.

Mr. MEADER. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Meader.

PREPARATION OF CABLE

Mr. MEADER. Mr. Hilsman, this cable seems to be a joint operation, State, Defense, and USIA. That implies that several minds were brought to bear on the drafting of this cable.

Are you at all familiar with the background of the preparation of this cable? Did you personally have any hand in it?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir; I did not. It was before my day, and I am afraid there is no one left in the Vietnamese task force that was there at that time. Mr. Wood was there, but Mr. Wood is now in Saigon on a trip.

Mr. MEADER. Would Mr. Harriman have had a part in the preparation of this cable?

Mr. HILSMAN. He would release it; yes, sir. He would have released it.

Mr. MEADER. Would he have been the final authority on the message and its dispatch to the American Embassy in Saigon?

Mr. HILSMAN. He would have been the signing officer, the final releasing officer; yes, sir.

Let me say on this cable. From what I do know of the circumstances under which it was prepared, this cable was, as many things are, drafted in a crisis situation.

But the purpose of the cable was to make sure that the field understood that American newsmen had the right and should be given accommodations on helicopters. That was the purpose of this cable, that space should be provided on helicopters and all other American-owned equipment for newspapermen. This was the purpose of it.

Mr. FASCELL. You mean free?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MEADER. Do you know or do you not know the name of any individual who had a hand in the preparation of this message?

Mr. HILSMAN. I didn't understand the question, sir.

Mr. MEADER. I say do you know or do you not know the name of any individual who had a hand in the preparation of this message.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir. It is a joint State-Defense-USIA message, and the people who would have responsibility in the field would be the Vietnamese—

Mr. MEADER. No, no. My question is the preparation of the cable, apparently a joint document, State, Defense, and USIA. You already said that Mr. Harriman would have final authority for the approval of the message and its dispatch to the Embassy.

Now what I am trying to get at is who, what individuals were involved in the preparation of this message. Were you?

Mr. FASCELL. If it will help you, George, I will say I prepared it.