

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't have any firsthand information about that, sir.

Mr. MEADER. You don't know of any individual?

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't have any firsthand information on it. I think I could probably find out who participated in it.

Mr. MEADER. You say there is no one in this room?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir.

Mr. MEADER. None of your associates who had anything to do with the preparation?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir.

Mr. MEADER. And you don't know now of anybody who did have?

Mr. HILSMAN. I could check on it, sir. I know who has the constitutional and statutory authority. That I can answer.

Mr. MEADER. You have answered that—Mr. Harriman, and the Under Secretary of State. They must take ultimate responsibility.

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir.

Mr. MEADER. My reaction to this cable is that it is an instruction to our people in Saigon to influence the slant of news stories that come out of Saigon. Do you agree with me that that is what the sum total of this cable is?

Mr. HILSMAN. Well, sir, I think that what the purpose of the cable is, the intent of the cable and the result of the cable, is to try to be more forthcoming with newspapermen about information of all kinds, while at the same time protecting military security.

PURPOSE OF CABLE

Mr. MEADER. It indicates to me that whoever sent this cable, Harriman or whoever it might be, wanted the Ambassador to induce newspapermen in Saigon to write certain kinds of stories.

Mr. HILSMAN. I don't think that was the purpose of the cable, sir, or the intent nor certainly the result of the cable.

Mr. MEADER. And you don't interpret the words in the cable—

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir.

Mr. MEADER (continuing). As indicating that purpose?

Mr. HILSMAN. I interpret the cable as I am pretty sure, as I am certain, it was interpreted in Saigon, because I have been there and talked to the Ambassador. I interpret the cable as a directive to be more forthcoming with newsmen, as forthcoming as possible consistent with military security, to provide newspapermen space on helicopters, to help them get access to the news, together with a discussion of the problems involved. These would include both policy problems with the Vietnamese Government and the military security problem.

Mr. MEADER. Let us just consider some of these statements. What about the paragraphs here which say, in effect, that our role is purely support and advisory in nature, that we don't conduct or manage any of the fighting, and that it is against our interest to have stories to the contrary?

Isn't this an instruction to the Ambassador to have newsmen write certain kinds of stories carrying out this line or this thought or this slant?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir, it is not.

Mr. MEADER. In their reporting of events in Vietnam?