

However, from our own standpoint and from a knowledge of what is happening, maybe we ought to have a definition of what these words really mean.

Mr. HILSMAN, I make these observations strictly based on conversations and testimony that have been had in the Armed Services Committee.

Again, I say I don't want to suggest that our American military personnel are either directing or leading combat operations, but maybe we need a definition. If I had known that statement existed, I would have asked General Shoup for one.

Mr. HILSMAN. Sir, they are participating as advisers in combat operations. That is perfectly true.

Mr. HARDY. If you heard the testimony which was given before our committee in connection with a discussion that came up over the use of helicopters as a platform for firing in combat, I think you would understand why I would like to have a definition of these terms.

Mr. HILSMAN. I can only say that the policy is not that—

Mr. HARDY. I understand that, and I think it is a sound and proper policy. But again, for my information I would like to have a definition of what those words mean as they are applied in Vietnam.

Mr. FASCELL. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire?

Mr. MOSS. Mr. Fascell.

Mr. FASCELL. Thank you.

Mr. Hilsman, it seems to me that you have got a basic problem that won't be resolved and can't be resolved if the Ambassador is to be the sole person of responsibility in the area of operation. I assume he is, even in the context of a military operation of the nature, whatever that is, that is now going on in Vietnam.

I say that for this reason: for example, and without taking sides on the question of either the cablegram or whether or not it is superseded by some general's letter, I would suggest that you could find any motive you wanted to in the writing of either one. That is the first thing.

Secondly, I would suggest that the Ambassador or any ambassador could interpret it in any way he wants to, and that the cablegram and the letter are written exactly for those purposes. I don't think you could write a guideline in this kind of an operation.

The reason I make that statement and that conclusion, and it may not be valid, but I am making it anyway, is because in one paragraph of the cablegram you start out with a statement to the effect that this is a Vietnamese war. Well, I dare say that in the first place the Ambassador is going to have to interpret that the way he sees it.

Secondly, any newsman going anywhere seeing anything could interpret it exactly to the contrary. So if this is a policy statement as a guideline for the Ambassador to be a guideline for the newsmen, you start out with an impossible situation.

Mr. HARDY. Would the gentleman permit me to call his attention to an attitude of one of his Florida colleagues about the operations in Vietnam.

Mr. FASCELL. I didn't say that. That is what the cablegram said.

Mr. HARDY. I understand that. But South Vietnam and the operation in which we are participating over there was pretty largely the basis for including combat pay in the pay bill the other day.