

The briefings of the Vietnam Government have not been felt at all adequate, nor have the correspondents attending those briefings felt that they were always truthful.

What steps does the American Government, either through the members of the military missions or through the Embassy, take to make certain that our people are correctly informed? * * *

Mr. HILSMAN. I think that the summary of what the instructions are that have gone to the field, and also of my understanding as a result of talking personally with the Ambassador about it as to what our policy is, is recapitulated in my statement. This is it.

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The herbicide briefing by the Vietnamese Government was an excellent one. It is our policy, as I say on this last page of my statement, to continue our efforts to persuade the Vietnamese Government to cooperate more fully with U.S. newsmen, and so on. This is our policy.

We are even looking into and have done something about trying to improve Vietnamese communications, not only for military purposes, but for press purposes.

This has been one of the problems as a matter of fact, and sometimes it would be much more in the Vietnamese interest as well as our interest if some of these stories of what happens up in the northern part of South Vietnam could get down faster.

The recent operations in Quang Ngai Province were really very successful operations, but the facts on it did not get to Saigon for 2 days. Now I don't know when they got to the Vietnamese Government, but they did not get to our people for 2 days after the operation.

The stories that had come out before indicated that the Quang Ngai operations had resulted in a defeat for government forces. These stories were based on rumor only. The facts were that it was a victory. We gave the correct information to the press; but by that time it was 2 days old, you see, so it did not get anywhere.

Now I only say this to indicate that it is in the Vietnamese interest that communications be more rapid and that information not be stale. We want to help them with this to the extent we can. * * *

Mr. Moss. Now the briefings held by the Vietnamese Government, are those monitored by representatives either of our military forces or of the Embassy?

Mr. HILSMAN. We don't have the authority in Vietnam to monitor them, sir.

What we have done is to keep pressing them to conduct better and fuller, more complete, more accurate briefings, and offer to help, and we keep offering to help. * * *

Mr. Moss. Now has the Government given study to the problem of the delays, the reasons for delays in transmission of stories? Sometimes they run 24 hours or more after the fact.

Mr. HILSMAN. Or even longer, 2 or 3 days. Yes, sir; we have, and we are trying to figure out ways that we can help the Vietnamese get quicker communications.

Some of it is just lack of communications. * * *