

CURRENT PRESS POLICY

Mr. Moss. To your knowledge is there any effort on the part of the Government of Vietnam to censor any of the dispatches filed?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir. I have been unable to find any example of where they outright censored a cable.

There have been instances where they have delayed the transmission of a cable 2, 3, or even up to 10 hours, 10 or 12 hours, but no attempt to censor the cables. The press of course uses commercial cable channels.

Mr. Moss. Other than the guidances, is there any later general policy which has been circulated through the military personnel than that contained in the December 19, 1962?

Mr. HILSMAN. Not to my knowledge, sir, and let me point out again that my recapitulation at the end of my statement is a statement of our press policy.

Mr. Moss. And to your knowledge is there any policy of our Government, whether or not formalized, that attempts to prevent the publication of anything occurring in Vietnam at this time?

Mr. HILSMAN. Only those things that are military secrets, sir.

Mr. Moss. Only those things which are clearly military secrets?

Mr. HILSMAN. Yes, sir; or during a delicate negotiation where we would want to withhold sensitive information until the negotiation was completed, until agreement.

Mr. Moss. Then you are not preventing publication?

Mr. HILSMAN. No, sir; delaying publication.

Mr. Moss. Delaying publication.

Mr. HILSMAN. In a question of current negotiations. Otherwise, we only withhold things that are national security secrets.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Mr. Chairman, when you finish I have a question.

Mr. Moss. Mr. Griffin.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I would like to go back to this paragraph of this cable signed by Secretary Rusk about seeing that correspondents do not go on missions likely to result in stories harmful to the war effort.

Can you point to anything in the so-called superseding letter of General Harkins which does supersede that particular paragraph?

Mr. HILSMAN. Sir, I am just totally unable to find out what the meaning of that paragraph is.

Mr. GRIFFIN. The meaning is quite clear, that the Ambassador has the authority to determine that correspondents will not be taken on certain missions likely to result in stories harmful to the war effort. It seems to me he has still got that authority.

Now whether or not he uses it, he has the authority, unless it has been taken away, and I don't find any specific language that takes it away. I come back to this particularly in view of the three guidances here that were subsequently issued, and noticing that they are not directed so much at our military people in the field as they are directed to the reporters.

Then I ask myself the question "Well, how would they enforce something like this?" and it would seem quite logical to think that they enforce it or could enforce it by granting or withholding permission of reporters to travel. Now if I am way off base, straighten me out.

Mr. HILSMAN. Let me say on my own authority, the Ambassador, what I was going to say is would not—the trouble is I can't think of a practical example of this, you see.