

Mr. MOSS. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes; gladly.

Mr. MOSS. I had planned on dealing with that, because it ties very nicely into No. 3 of the additional guidances.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Yes.

Mr. MOSS. Recognizing the deep concern of the American people and of the American press, and the fact that while you cannot at this moment, according to your statement, envision any circumstance that would justify this item, this paragraph, it seems to me that this is a case where there should be immediate clarification to the Ambassador.

I don't think that we can at any time justify as a matter of policy of our Government, whether it is fuzzily stated or otherwise, a suggestion that authority should be exercised to block access to information.

Mr. HILSMAN. I quite agree, sir.

Mr. MOSS. And I think there should be immediate steps taken to make it clear that no such authority was inferred or intended. We should not base policy on whether or not a dispatch is desirable or undesirable.

Mr. HILSMAN. I agree, sir.

Mr. MOSS. And in that matter I think that there appears a problem again, in these paragraphs of the directive. I can read them one way and get a different interpretation from others. But putting it together with the January 4 guidance, in commenting on the actions of these South Vietnamese, the reporter should not criticize them unless it is clearly warranted. I think that whether you will agree with me, a point of criticism is warranted. Men of good will will disagree.

Inherently here it says to me "discourage criticism, warranted or otherwise". I don't think we should discourage criticism as long as it is valid, and that is a matter of judgment.

You have someone over there who is reporting purely to sensationalize and to distort, and I imagine that any responsible publisher would shortly discourage his filing of such trivia.

But this guidance, taken together with the cable, I think could act as or could create the impression that our policy was actually to discourage any criticism, and that is not in our interest. I want to thank the gentleman for yielding to me.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I think the point that I had in mind has been made, with the assistance of the chairman. Thank you.

Mr. REUSS. Mr. Chairman, just briefly I want to associate myself with what the chairman just said and what Mr. Griffin has just said.

I suggest, Secretary Hilsman, that what we have got here this morning are three distinct documents. One is a statement by you, Assistant Secretary Hilsman, this morning of May 24, 1963, which I found admirable. I think it is in good clear English.

It states a policy which protects our real security, yet doesn't go beyond it. I think it is a fine statement.

I also am encouraged by reading the December 1962 letter to military personnel of General Harkins. I think that statement—particularly paragraph 3 where the general has a heart-to-heart talk with his people about how you behave with the press—is an admirable document. I would like to see this made public.

I think far from being ashamed of it, that it is a very good statement.

Then you have the cable. I come to the following conclusions from studies of all three documents.