

I think we have a good information policy for present circumstances in Vietnam, if we made it dependent upon your testimony this morning and on General Harkins' letter, and if we indicated to the field that the cable was herewith superseded by these two documents.

I think it is necessary after all, because the cable is signed by Rusk, and he is your boss, and you can hardly supersede him.

Secondly, the other good document in this series, the one by General Harkins of December 1962, is just addressed to military personnel. I don't think it has any effect on USIA, AID, the Embassy or anybody else who may be in Vietnam.

I don't think that there is a thing in the cable which is any good, which is not contained in later documents, and I think the simple way out of this, which I commend to you for consideration, is to use your May 24, 1963, statement, the December 1962 Harkins' statement, and to indicate to an Embassy Saigon that these are now the rules of the road.

Mr. MOSS. Would the gentleman agree that this paragraph in the cable that there should be very clear indication that no such policy was intended, nor should any such policy be pursued at any time?

Mr. REUSS. And some of the other paragraphs of the cable are so ambiguous that I think it would be better not to try to patch them up, but let them be superseded.

CABLE TO BE REVISED

Mr. HILSMAN. May I say that my statement is the policy as it stands at this moment, and that this is well understood by the Ambassador.

Let me also say that one of the results of this session now is that, just to remove any possibility of any misunderstanding anywhere in Saigon, though I am confident there is no misunderstanding on the part of the Ambassador and his principal officers, but to remove any possibility of any misunderstanding, I think that we will send such a cable.

We will draft a cable and specifically say "this supersedes all previous ones," and recapitulate the points in my statement, for the field, and clarify any possibility of misunderstanding about some of these loosely worded, poorly drafted paragraphs in that Saigon cable.

[Note by subcommittee: We have been shown a confidential State Department cable sent to the American Embassy in Saigon shortly after the May 24, 1963, hearing and specifically rescinding the 1962 "press guidelines" concerning criticism of the Diem government.]

Mr. REUSS. I think that would be very useful.

Mr. HILSMAN. We will do this.

Mr. REUSS. Because whatever you may say, Mr. Hilsman, a Foreign Service officer reading his little clip book of cables, tends to accept as gospel anything that has not been revoked or superseded. Unless something is done about this cable, I think it will continue to be an incubus.

Mr. MEADER. I would just like to add to this discussion that these guidelines of January 4, 1963, May 4 and 11, 1963, seem to carry the same philosophy as the cable, which is aimed at shaping the content of news stories about Vietnam.