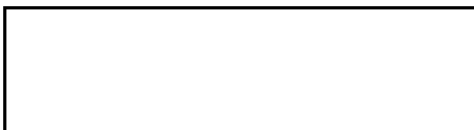


CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

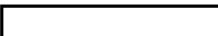
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

1 June 1971



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Dear Mr. 

Mr. Helms has asked me to reply to your letter of May 25th concerning rumors that this Agency is involved in the drug traffic in Southeast Asia. We are aware of these rumors and are as concerned as you are.

In case you have not seen a statement made by the Director in a speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors in Washington, D. C., on April 14, 1971, I will quote in full the passage pertinent to drug traffic:

There is the arrant nonsense, for example, that the Central Intelligence Agency is somehow involved in the world drug traffic. We are not. As fathers, we are as concerned about the lives of our children and grandchildren as are all of you. As an Agency, in fact, we are heavily engaged in tracing the foreign roots of the drug traffic for the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs. We hope we are helping with a solution; we know we are not contributing to the problem.

Furthermore, a study of The World Heroin Problem has just been published and is the report of a Special Study Mission composed of Morgan F. Murphy, Representative from Illinois, Chairman, and Robert H. Steele, Representative from

Connecticut. This is a very comprehensive study of heroin traffic around the world and each area is taken up in detail. Talking particularly about South Vietnam, the report states on page 21, ". . . there is no evidence that any official of a U. S. agency has ever been involved in the smuggling of heroin into South Vietnam."

In sum, this Agency does not participate or assist in, or condone in any manner, trade in drugs of any sort. If any employee were found to have been associated in any way with drug transactions, his services would be immediately terminated and the matter would be referred to the proper enforcement authorities. We can say this with assurance since, as mentioned by Mr. Helms, we have for years been working with the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs, assisting it with whatever information we can obtain on drug transactions, so we would know if any of our personnel were involved.

We fail completely to understand the motivation of those who distort information and spread false rumors such as you refer to in your letter.

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Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Lawrence R. Houston
General Counsel

cc: ER
Asst to DCI-Mr. Goodwin
OLC
CI-Mr. [Redacted]
General Counsel

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5. [redacted] Accompanied Messrs. [redacted]

[redacted], SAVA, to a briefing of Ed Braswell and Jack Ticer, of the Senate Armed Services Committee staff, on the drug situation in Southeast Asia. The Committee staffers were pleased to get this information and said they would not attribute anything contained in the briefing to the Agency. The briefing was rather general in nature and did not get into great detail on Saigon government involvement in the problem.

Braswell repeated the statement he has made on numerous occasions since the Defense procurement authorization bill was before the Armed Services Committee last year that they needed information from the Administration regarding our policy in Southeast Asia. As before, I told Braswell this was something that should be taken up either with the Department of Defense or the White House.

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4. [Redacted] [Redacted] advised me of a contact from Colonel Hobson, of the Department of Defense, on queries they have received from Senator Harris (D., Okla.) and Congressman Bingham (D., N.Y.) about the Ramparts article alleging Agency involvement in the drug traffic in Southeast Asia. I suggested that in their replies to these queries in which they plan to state they have no information about this, they incorporate the letter from Mr. Ingersoll, BNDD, to Representative Gubser (R., Calif.) which the Congressman will be putting in the Record in the next day or two. Mellor said he would pass on this suggestion.

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