

U. S. INFORMATION AGENCY,
Washington, D.C., March 16, 1972.

HON. J. WILLIAM FULBRIGHT,
Chairman, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: In response to your letter of March 1, I am enclosing herewith the President's directive dated March 15 from which you will note that I am unable to comply with your request for the USIA Country Program Memoranda and associated planning documents. I find that the material you request clearly falls within the scope of the President's directive.

My staff and I have carefully examined the so-called Country Program Memoranda and find that, for the most part, these are planning or working documents subject to subsequent discussion and final approval. These documents are under constant review, and programs are changed in the light of changing developments in Washington and in the host countries.

You will note from the President's directive that he wishes the Administration to be wholly responsive to Congressional requests subject only to restrictions necessary for the proper functioning of the Executive Department.

With this objective in view, I shall be happy to supply your Committee with summaries of the approved country objectives together with a description of the activities proposed to implement them. Also, our key officers, including myself and the Assistant Directors for each geographic area, are ready to provide your staff with country-by-country briefings as well as being available at all times for questioning by you and your colleagues.

Sincerely,

FRANK SHAKESPEARE.

THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, D.C., March 15, 1972.

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THE DIRECTOR, U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY

As you know, by a memorandum of August 30, 1971 to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Defense, I directed "not to make available to the Congress any internal working documents which would disclose tentative planning data on future years of the military assistance program which are not approved Executive Branch positions." In that memorandum, I fully explained why I considered that the disclosure of such internal working papers to the Congress would not be in the public interest.

I have now been informed that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee have re-

quested basic planning documents submitted by the country field teams to the United States Information Agency and the Agency for International Development, and other similar papers. These documents include all USIA Country Program Memoranda and the AID fiscal year 1973 Country Field Submission for Cambodia, which are prepared in the field for the benefit of the agencies and the Department of State and contain recommendations for the future.

I hereby reiterate the position of this Administration so that there can be no misunderstanding on this point.

My memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, dated March 24, 1969, set forth our basic policy which is to comply to the fullest extent possible with Congressional requests for information. In pursuance of this policy, the Executive Departments and Agencies have provided to the Congress an unprecedented volume of information. In addition, Administration witnesses have appeared almost continuously before appropriate Committees of the Congress to present pertinent facts and information to satisfy Congressional needs in its oversight function and to present the views of the Administration on proposed legislation.

The precedents on separation of powers established by my predecessors from first to last clearly demonstrate, however, that the President has the responsibility not to make available any information and material which would impair the orderly function of the Executive Branch of Government, since to do so would not be in the public interest. As indicated in my memorandum of March 24, 1969, this Administration will invoke Executive Privilege to withhold information only in the most compelling circumstances and only after a rigorous inquiry into the actual need for its exercise.

In accordance with the procedures established in my memorandum of March 24, 1969, I have conducted an inquiry with regard to the Congressional requests brought to my attention in this instance. The basic planning data and the various internal staff papers requested by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House Foreign Operations and Government Information Subcommittee do not, insofar as they deal with future years, reflect any approved program of this Administration, but only proposals that are under consideration. Furthermore, the basic planning data requested reflect only tentative intermediate staff level thinking, which is but one step in the process of preparing recommendations to the Department Heads, and thereafter to me.

I repeat my deep concern, shared by my predecessors, that unless privacy of preliminary exchange of views between personnel of the Executive Branch can be maintained, the full frank and healthy expression of opinion which is essential for the successful administration of Government would be muted.