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**Percy Says VOA
Violated Charter**

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Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.) charged yesterday that the Voice of America violated its charter by suppressing news of developments leading up to the American evacuation of Vietnam.

During hearings by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on budget authorization for the United States Information Agency, of which VOA is a part, Percy questioned USIA Director James Keogh for over an hour on VOA coverage.

Percy cited the VOA charter as saying, "VOA news will be accurate, objective and comprehensive." Yet, he said, "during the last two months of April, as the evacuation of Americans from Vietnam became a preoccupation of the world press, the administration and the Congress, the VOA news was not similarly preoccupied."

"I have been informed that the censorship of VOA broadcasting during this period culminated in the actual censorship of President Ford's own remarks," Percy said.

"A correspondent covering President Ford's speech at Tulane University later discovered that his reporting of the President's comment that 'the war in Vietnam is finished as far as America is concerned' was censored."

Keogh defended the VOA policy as flowing from a decision made by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Vietnam and being consistent with a provision in the charter that the radio follow State Department guidance on policy questions.

Keogh said that reports other than official statements were not carried because VOA "was listened to closely in Saigon and (some reports on the evacuation

planning) could have caused violence and bloodshed in Saigon."

The Voice of America broadcasts regularly to Vietnam in Vietnamese.

Keogh said that "there was the greatest concern" for the lives of Americans in South Vietnam and that officials wanted to take no actions that could lead to panic there and possible danger for Americans.

He added that he was not aware that President Ford's remarks had been censored and if so "it was a misinterpretation" of the policy. Keogh later said a check of reports on the Ford speech showed that VOA did carry his statement that "the war in Vietnam is finished."

In other testimony, former CBS President Frank Stanton reviewed the findings of a panel he headed, which has called for a massive reorganization of U. S. foreign information and broadcasting operations.

The Stanton panel proposals would in effect dismantle the USIA, creating a separate agency to handle cultural affairs and an independent VOA and placing foreign information activities under the State Department.

Stanton argued that this would lead to clearer distinctions between political information and cultural information and make the presentation of each more effective. Keogh said it would reduce effectiveness.

While there were probing questions to Stanton, particularly on the functioning of an independent VOA, support for some or all of the Stanton panel's proposals was indicated by Percy, Clifford P. Case, (R-N.J.) Dick Clark (D-Iowa), Stuart Symington (D-Mo.) and Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.).