



REAR ADMIRAL L. S. SABIN, U.S.N.

CONFIDENTIAL

4 October 1954

My dear Mr. Stansbury:

This will constitute an interim reply to your Confidential Memorandum of September 14, 1954, alleging mistreatment of Mr. Ngo Van Cuong, a Vietnamese correspondent who had embarked in U. S. S. MONTROSE during a passage which culminated September 12, at Haigon. As copies of your letter were sent to the American Embassy, MAAG and the Naval Attaché, these agencies are being furnished copies of this interim report in addition to the C. O. MONTROSE.

MONTROSE is presently enroute to the United States and a full reply to your Memorandum must await an opportunity for the Commanding Officer MONTROSE to read the detailed charges and to answer them. The information herein is based on a despatch reply from the Commanding Officer, MONTROSE, to a brief of the charges which I sent him by message.

The Captain of the MONTROSE is Captain J. D. ANDREW, U. S. Navy. He is a mature and experienced officer who I am sure would not knowingly tolerate untoward conditions in his ship. The "Captain" SUMMERVILLE mentioned in your letter was undoubtedly Commander SOMERVILLE, the Ship's Executive Officer.

Captain ANDREW reports that Mr. Cuong was quartered with the control team and assigned to the troop officers stateroom in which there was a desk. The control team was subsisted in the general mess with food served on trays in the troop quarters which has tables. The two white Russians who ate in the wardroom did so as personal guests of one of the officers who personally paid their mess bill. (It may not be commonly understood that food for Naval officers aboard ship is not furnished free of charge. All Naval Officers are required to pay for their food on a monthly basis.) The refugees were carried in the troop spaces normally used for our own troops and in the upper number five hold.



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It is a matter of deep concern to me that such charges have been leveled against the personnel of a U.S. Navy ship carrying refugees. We have made every effort to handle the refugees with patience, kindness and generosity and to make them as comfortable as possible. Letters and oral expressions of gratitude on the part of the refugees for the treatment they have received would appear to be directly at variance with the allegations made by Mr. Casag.

Upon receipt of Captain ANDREW's full report after his examination of the charges contained in your letter, I shall forward you a complete report. In the meantime please be assured that I will continue to demand the same high order of duty performance by the officers and men of the ships engaged in this operation which I believe has generally characterized their efforts to date.

Very truly yours,

L. S. SABIN.

Copy to:

American Embassy
MAAG
Naval Attaché
C. O. MONTROSE

Mr. Edward Stanbury,
Office of U. S. Information Service,
Suzon, F. I. C.