

Office Memorandum

Peterson *of the Refugee Rel. Com.*
 UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO :
 FROM :
 SUBJECT :

DATE :

Saigon, September 24, 1954.

To : Dr. LA VERGNE
 From : R.K. ACKLEY
 Subject : Distribution of Welcome Kits.

I Problem

The Welcome kits were intended as a unit for distribution to evacuees upon arrival in Saigon. It was planned the kits would be here for distribution in early August. As an experiment 10,000 were ordered. These kits are now here (less 8,000 bags due in approximately one week) and assembly can begin. The Association of American women in Saigon has offered to assist in assembling the kits.

However, serious doubts have been raised concerning the desirability of making a mass issue as originally planned. There are many reasons for this, some of them being as follows :

- a) The kits are too late to effectuate a propoganda punch.
- b) The kit has a number of items unknown and unused by the great majority of the evacuees.
- c) To issue to some and not all would promote ill feeling unless much care is given to the issue.

II Solution

Certain basic principles should be kept in mind in the utilization of the kits. First is that they were purchased for the evacuees. Second, a sizable American expenditure has been made and therefore the wisest possible solution should be followed to maximize the investment. Third, due to the items in the kit, many of which are utterly strange to the evacuee, a personal hygiene period of education is essential to distribution. Based on these three hypotheses, the following solutions are given and my judgement on each.

- a) Issue to functionaires only.

The functionaires are civil servants and even though they came from the north, their salaries have continued and their presence here represents a transfer, not a flight. They

circulated within the Health & San. Div.
7 October 1954 - JH.

do not constitute a needy group. Also the Viet Nam Refugee Section does not favor issuance to these people.

b) Issue to evacuees arriving in Central Viet Nam.

This proposal has one advantage, namely distribution could be made to all families arriving in that part of the country. However, the kit is designed for an individual not a family, and mass distribution of some of the items would provoke a negative reaction due to lack of acquaintance with the contents or how to use them.

c) Distribute through the Health & Education programs looking toward a six month distribution period.

This can provide all three principles enumerated above. Hospitals can give a kit to in-patients, health education classes can give prizes of kits, schools can train the children in proper use of the contents and issue, and dispensaries can use some to good advantage.

This last method has my wholehearted support. Anything less than this might ~~will~~ breed more ill will than good.

The Health Division is currently considering additional ways of proper utilization of the 10,000 kits. I propose the matter be left in their hands for implementation.

In my opinion this Division should not have the sole responsibility for implementation but to assist in every way possible to make it effective. If there is merit in the school idea.

I concur - issue them thru the school.

Can we see a list of kit contents? If the proposed health education program materializes at Camp St Jacques, perhaps that is the place to issue them - the health team being responsible, as a part of the education program. M.L.

I concur. issue thru the Health Ed. program. - JHB -

Let the Administration present the kits to the counterpart Administration to win friends and influence - or donate the kits to local pharmacies as non-profit gift.

Frankly, this is an egg. Let the guy who ~~laid~~ laid this one figure it out himself. H+S has its own headache.