

SECRET

JOINT WEEK 46

November 1954

Political

International Control Commission received complaint from Viet Minh accusing French ships of entering North Viet-Nam territorial waters. French in turn protested that thousands lives Catholics fleeing Viet Minh zone in small boats are endangered by tides and rough seas while Viet Minh refuse authorize French assist. Action French ships based on international law governing rescue at sea in case distress. Saigon press release stated Commission intervened with Viet Minh who agreed permit French ships enter territorial waters if Commission given prior notice each time and has member aboard. De Beaufort Mission subsequently denied existence such agreement stating Viet Minh have refused all French requests to date. Commission sent mobile inspection team to site where 4,000 escapees recently marooned on sand bar. Other teams investigating Phat Diem where reportedly about 30,000 Catholics wish evacuate. (UNCLASSIFIED).

Comment: Ag Indians insist on unanimous decisions, and Poles often wish delay investigations, much effectiveness of Commission action lost due excessive length time between incidents and arrival of teams. Lag gives Viet Minh time organize phony set-up and pro-Viet Minh demonstrations. (CONFIDENTIAL).

ICC team presently investigating Viet Minh hindrance potential Catholic refugees Phat Diem area. Also reported that vital questions re circulation mobile teams raised in ICC with no definite solution yet reached. (SECRET).

Navy

GENERAL: "Escape" rescue operations off Bui Chu, and specific instances within DRV territorial waters increased. 4-11 November about 10,000 picked up by Bois Belleau, Capricieuse (F-745), CDT. Giraud (F 755), Glaive (P 632), Cassequet (633), Vulcaï (A656), ECM -9052. (UNCLASSIFIED).

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