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(Special Technical and Economic Mission)
TO CAMBODIA, LAOS AND VIETNAM

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Haiphong
VIETNAM
December 13, 1954.

Office of the Special Representative
of the Mission Director
for North Viet Nam

Weekly Report

General:

The office continues to function smoothly. The fact that MAAG has moved in next door to us has facilitated rapid consultation and the result is that both MAAG and USOM are better informed of each others efforts. I have made arrangements for accommodation of the replacement for Miss Guy, with the hopes that he will prove to be satisfactory and that Miss Guy can be released one week from the arrival of the replacement. If he is keen at all, that should provide an adequate training period, particularly in view of the comparatively limited functions of this office.

I have given notice to the driver effective the 15th of December, and have made arrangements for the best mechanic in the Ford workshop to begin his duties upon the release of the driver. He will be provided a garage to work in, and comes equipped with his own tools. The salary will be the same as we had been paying the driver.

The anticipated trip to Hong Kong which you are kindly arranging becomes more of a necessity with each passing day. The break will do me good, and I plan to hasten back at the earliest possible date.

Relations with the various elements of the Viet Nameese government, MAAG, USIS, the Military Attache, and the International Commission continue to be good. Also the U.S. Navy. A common understanding on our mutual problems has been arrived at, and just between us girls, we are getting priority on getting our things out, even to the asphalt which will go on the ship after the one currently loading. As cabled you, the Plymouth is on its way south, after being carefully loaded. The Jeep Station Wagon is being used by the USIS except for periods when I require it such as tomorrow when the Life photographer arrives. The Vedette runs well, and I believe will see me through - without additional tires.

With the security of the area not assured after February, my schedule for closure is uncertain. I will remain as long as desired of course, but must consider the developing situation carefully in the light of continued usefulness. So far all is quiet except for two minor riots or near riots. Both concerned themselves with rumors of the removal of material. One was in the Haiphong Power Works, the other at the Hospital. Both were unjustified, and the crowd dispersed. One hand grenade was thrown in the Chinese quarter a few nights ago after midnight, but of little consequence. The crews continue to load ships well, and appear cheerful in their work.

Shops are being closed slowly and others selling out, prices are slowly rising on most items. Some foods are becoming scarce, and rumors are going around that French bread, for example, will not be available after February 1. I do not eat bread..

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Refugees and Escapees:

The actual figures of arrivals into the Haiphong area are to be found in a separate report made in this same pouch. In general, the numbers are sharply dropping. This may be due in part to the cold weather here, the rain, and so on, but I think it is due much more to the increased vigilance of the Viet Minh. People are now being contained in their own villages, they are being questioned at once should they attempt to sell their water buffalo or furniture, and they are forbidden to congregate in large groups. Movement into Hanoi, which has been the gateway to freedom in a sense has been almost completely stopped. My information comes from friendly members of the International Commission. *Temp*

In reply to your FS-5, the situation is as follows: The beach operation is postponed until the advent of good weather. I obtained information on the one landing site possible to the south, and find that an LST can come within 200 yards of the shore at Tra Ly. I checked with friendly ICC men on the possible legality of the operation as I saw it and received an O.K. It does require the use of one of the two Viet Nameese LSTs which are currently in Saigon and being operated by a French company. The Mayor of Haiphong told me that he had requested the ship and had been refused. I personally question if he ever asked. When the weather clears, this should be gone into at your end with the thought that the ship steam down from Haiphong during the day planning to arrive at the appointed spot about midnight. By checking tides, the best time of the month can be readily established. It should be near high tide. This permits the Escapees to walk for six hours of darkness thus permitting wide dispersion of the people prior to pick-up. By dawn, the ship could be at sea on the way to Haiphong. The only danger is the possibility of being shot upon from the beach should Viet Minh patrols be near. The beach is far enough removed from any town to make this unlikely. The Catholics are ready to operate on this when the weather breaks.

The other scheme is to set a time for people to suddenly gather at the cathedral in Hanoi and request permission to proceed to Haiphong. I have discussed this with the Catholics and they concur, after which I discussed it with the Canadians. They O.K.ed it, and the date and time is tentatively set for Christmas Day at 8:00 A.M. At such a time, movement to the church should be comparatively easy. One or more ICC will be on the spot, and will move them directly to the train which has a departure time of 11:00 A.M. Should this prove workable, a day a week will be set aside for such movement. However, because movement into Hanoi is difficult, the number this process can produce is probably not large.

A third scheme I'm cooking on is the utilization of an island named Island du Tigre at approximately the 19th parallel. This is apparently unoccupied by the Viet Minh, and is outside the three mile limit permitting French ships to make pick-ups. When the monsoon season is over, the refugees could sail to the island and await the ship, such ships coming as often as necessary, say every three or four days should the night traffic from the mainland justify.

Meanwhile the Commission processes over 100 petitions a day, but when they go into the area in question, the people are afraid to speak. At times, the Commission has to make a determined effort to even get near enough to the people to converse with them, let alone having an opportunity to speak to them in private.

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The ICC has done one forward step worthy of mention here. They have established a mobile team to pop into an area fast when word reaches them of a concentration of people wishing evacuation. } *Weeber*

Meanwhile, here in Haiphong things are moving along. The new camp is a model one, well drained, nicely located outside of town, and well put together. We have closed the camp in town as undesirable, and the tents are in the warehouse of the Evacuation Committee now that the AEA warehouse has been dismantled. The blankets you took such good action/are also stored there, although many have been distributed of course due to the backlog of some 10,000 people without blankets.

A word needs to be said about the movement south of the refugees. Col. Blanchet assured us that priority would go to sea movement, and only such numbers as our ship could not care for would go by air. To date this has not happened. Cpt. Rubin has stated that he is the boss of the evacuation, and no one else. This is contrary to the statement of Mr. Reiner, and we are in the process of doing some sorting on this matter at the present time. Cpt. Rubin has proven very difficult and uncooperative with American shipping, and even stated he told the ship must go, even if without a load, "Fine, let it go, we will take them by air." I think this obvious almost insubordination of Rubin to policies his superiors issue will be sorted out here.

Material:

It is in the area of material evacuation that most of my energies are now being directed. Increasing numbers of visitors are asking the assistance of USCM, and they are promptly directed to the proper channels. However, the American Aid goods are being faced from a number of different directions. A Mr. Lien, attached to Mr. Luat's staff is assuming major responsibility for the formulation of the long elusive list of remaining AEA stuff. This I am promised by Monday at the latest. Having learned a few things during my stay here, I have the AEA themselves drawing up a list which will be in my hands by Friday (revised day). Meanwhile I am scooting around making up my own list checking against an elaborate book of everything North Viet Nam is supposed to have received since the very beginning.

Mr. Luat's staff is also making up a list of those items that are now in the hands of the Viet Minh with a plan to submit this list through the ICC for returning to Haiphong for shipment south. While I have little hopes of seeing the items, the counter-irritant should be good to throw a little dust in the air and cover our evacuation a little better. I have already mentioned that the asphalt will be going soon, as will the warehouse which has already been taken down and bundled. On the same ship I expect to place a 27 ton barge, and possibly a few trucks that are floating around - two for example, with P.T.T.

Now, on the subject of material in general. We are all about agreed that there is little of real value to take out of Haiphong with two or three exceptions. One is the coal equipment of course. I think you can put it in your pipe and smoke it that the coal equipment will never get out of here. If it does, it will have to be with a substantial cash settlement by us, and also very probably some troops to clear the area to avoid a major riot. About a quarter million people would be affected by the close of the mine. I just do not think we will get away with it. The flashlight factory is currently planning on going south in February. I do not have the French figures you requested as yet, but may get them as early as tomorrow. On your FS-6 I will telegraph you in a few days. *T. Reiner*

While I have not had a recent chat with Madam Ngai, I feel that her date of April is much too late, and the schedule needs to be moved up to February. I realize that this makes complications for you there, but not as bad as some complications might be here. The fact that civilian security will not be

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assured here by the French after February makes our position weak should something happen to the orphans.

Afterthoughts:

Vic and I see eye to eye on the need to get our stuff out of here, and Jim is playing ball with us. We hope to clean up all the stuff within the month. Of course to Commadore Frank, this is on a space available basis, and so it shall be, but there will be space available if worked right. We did pretty well on the last ship. I hope to be able to tell you where every piece of AEA stuff has gone before I finish. Starting a long series of meetings on this with various Viet Namese officials. This ties in with the approach to the Viet Minh through the ICC, mentioned earlier in this epistle.

The Chinese have submitted a rather complete list of who is going and when. Just came in today. None going in January due I presume to the Chinese New Year. Indians are planning on getting out according to the scuttlebut, but no particulars yet. Viet Names figure will be disappointing I predict. A good set-up in a crucial point like a port makes the woods of Ben Hoa look pretty sad.

Security here is better. Sent two MAAG youngsters home to Saigon. That spot at Diana's smelled too much of Commie, although the boys are howling that "We wuz railroaded". MAAG now has a security filing cabinet, and the Military Attache has an excellent large safe - heavy too.

Well Mike, that looks like the top of the news from here for this week. Probably many things more to say, observations to be given, etc, but the w on this typewriter is too bad so my typing finger is giving out.

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Enclosed are some of the daily reports unedited that Lee does for me on newcomers from behind the curtain. Let me know if you can use such.

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