



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA OPERATIONS MISSION
(Special Technical and Economic Mission)
TO CAMBODIA, LAOS AND VIETNAM

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

"CONFIDENTIAL"

Haiphong, ~~North Viet Nam~~ VIETNAM
December 20, 1954.

Weekly Report - Haiphong

General :

This week has been a comparatively quiet week permit us to have time to spend on lining up future shipments of both material and refugees. Several worthwhile conferences were held on both subjects, and it is hoped that we can soon give a final standing on the items to be shipped. The office has run smoothly, and the following actions taken: 1. I have dismissed the driver and hired in his place a mechanic. The man hired plans to remain here indefinitely, and he is considered the best mechanic at the Ford garage which has just closed. He will maintain the car, as well as other vehicles used by the various American units here, and do all repair work for us at the Public Works garage. He has his own tools, and I feel that a substantial saving will be effected over the former costs of upkeep on the old cars. If parts are not available here, we will request them from you asking that they be sent on the first plane up. Public Works has requested the return of the Jeep Station Wagon, and I am giving it up as a gesture of cooperation in desiring all AEA equipment to be sent south at the earliest possible date. 2. We have requested in a priority message to you that our cash fund be brought up to a higher balance. I desire to make payment to the staff prior to Christmas, particularly as the money is already overdue. 3. I am giving consideration to dropping the interpreter by the end of January should the clerk you are sending prove adequate. With the gradual run-down of the operation I am of the thought that an interpreter should not be necessary. At the present time Major Walker uses him more than I, but even that use will be largely completed by end of January. 4. There is some discussion here about changing living quarters, but no steps will be taken unless it proves to be a united step on the part of most or all of the Americans, and will be done in part as a security measure in the event of civil disturbances.

Haiphong seems rather quiet, with only an occasional threat of riot, usually made in connection with a rumor of removal of essential equipment. Since the rumors are groundless, no riots have taken place other than the two near riots mentioned in my report last week. I assume you found my report - I checked and saw that the courier had signed for it, so if it is missing, it must be at your end. I find that telegrams leave here promptly, and are delivered promptly, but I fear that there is an unnecessary delay at your end before you receive them. I would suggest you make another contact with the Military to sort this out. In this connection, the radio operator has asked in October for a couple of twelve volt batteries, and a crystal for his radio. These have not been sent. Because of increasing power failures here, operation of the radio cannot be counted upon. A generator is rigged up, but the above mentioned items are essential to make it operate. The crystal is essential to rig the radio to talk with the American ships in the harbor. We have no way of getting them to request assistance in the event of emergency. While evacuation plans have been made, they obviously depend upon the Navy, and the contact by radio is of utmost importance. Would you, therefore, take the matter up with the Military Attache without irritating him on this subject.

"CONFIDENTIAL"

"CONFIDENTIAL"

Refugees :

In a separate envelope you will find the weekly figures for incoming refugees, and it is self-explanatory. The Hawze was delayed in refueling, and will not be here to take a load of refugees to Saigon until the 27th. This is going to assure a full load and then some. The French have already requested help in getting some out, but they are informed of the corrected date. Because of this delay, my figures for Christmas packets must be altered. My revised figure is 13,000 on Christmas day. Already about ten thousand are in camp. The air lift is not being used for camp residents, only for people resident in Haiphong itself. I was prepared to speak to Captain Ruben about some priority for sick, etc, but he has just received word from his authorities to give priority to the sea travel, and as this is contrary to his desires, I did not think this was the moment to take up this matter. Apparently the letter was rather firm, and was seconded by another letter confirming this from Saigon French authorities.

The Christmas gathering has been called off by Father Khue. He feels that the priest in the cathedral in Hanoi would face danger, and in view of the possible train method of escape open still, he did not want to take the risk. It is true that a small number continue to come from Hanoi by train, and while I was hoping for a demonstration as a propaganda value, I did not press this point at this particular time. I am informing the ICC this afternoon.

Father Khue mentioned to me that people are coming out with less and less, and he is hopeful that every step is being taken to assure them of care in the south. We are moving, I feel, into more and more of a true Escapee program, where delays in issuing money or food would cause serious hardship and even possible death. In this connection, I am most pleased with your promptness in forwarding the blankets. I hope my fifty thousand figure was a good educated guess. Certainly it should be enough as things now look, and any residual can be shipped south for the Dalat area where they will always be appreciated. On the other hand, should the Viet Minh become less attentive to the flight of refugees, the number of blankets sent might not see us through. You will be kept informed of need in ample time to permit shipment by sea should the need arise.

The new camp is proving to be an excellent one. Water is supplied by the city, and then is refiltered by a Navy unit - the result is that it is the best water in the city by official test. The land is well drained, and the camp has excellent latrines and is well laid out. I think I mentioned previously, even the area is well lighted at night.

Mr. Ham, head of the Evacuation Committee approached me on providing tents for the families of the newly formed Militia until April or May. I directed him to the French, as they assume full responsibility for military families. He came back to me saying that they had no tents. This I question, so I asked Mr. Ham to get a written request from the French, asking for the tents from us. My hesitation is twofold - one, as stated above, the French assumed responsibility for military and dependents and I hate to open the door on this, and two, I am more than a little concerned at giving official recognition to the Militia as I feel that it is probably contrary to the Geneva Treaty. The only loophole would be if they were considered as replacements for units disbanding. Should I get an official request, I will come at you on it before assenting to the use of tents for this purpose. They only want fifteen, but the principle of it bothers me.

"CONFIDENTIAL"

"CONFIDENTIAL"

Material :

The Captain Olson which just departed took the AEA warehouse as well as a quantity of Catholic Church material. The next ship in will take all the asphalt except for the leaky containers. There is still a need for approximately five hundred tons here, and we feel it is likely that the leaky tins will care for this amount. Thus there should be about 250,000 2,500 tons on the next boat. This completely finishes everything in the AEA warehouse area.

The PTT approached me on shipping some equipment south on the USOM plane. I refused unless it cleared through the French. Nuff said. Apparently two vehicles were impounded by the French on their (PTT) attempted move south by commercial means. These vehicles are AEA equipment, and I am making representation to have them released immediately for shipment.

The Public Health group are staying away from me religiously while adjusting their institutions to permit the declaring surplus of virtually all the AEA equipment. Under the circumstances, I am just as religiously staying away from them. In another week or so I feel the "surplus" list will be available and it will be forwarded to the French for approval.

I am very hopeful that the end of January will see all the AEA equipment out except for the evacuation committee stuff such as a few vehicles and tents. There will also be much of the USOM furniture left, including three Frigidaires. All are in use by the American community, and I feel it is a service we can and should render until much nearer the very end.

General :

May I express my appreciation at the chance to get up to Hong Kong and have a talk with Jim Campbell. There are many aspects needing discussion, and should the visit be fruitful enough as I hope it will, I will request permission to come to Saigon for a conference. It may be that I cannot get on the Cathay Pacific flight back to Haiphong direct, and thus may have to come by Saigon anyway. Believe you got an information copy of my wire to Hong Kong.

Relationships continue to be good with all elements, and I continue to find the work stimulating and abundant.

J.R. C. C. C.

"Confidential"