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To: M. H. B. Adler, Chief, Field Service
From: Richard J. Evans, Field Representative
Subj: Security Conditions in Khanh Hoa Province

Dec. 30, 1954

FIELD REPORT FS-17

From information received from Mr. Jacques Courtial, who is an interpreter for the International Control Commission, presently in Nhatrang, it is evident that the lack of security in this area is serious. Ill feeling between the French and Vietnam Army personnel is so strong that several deaths have resulted in the past two weeks. Mr. Courtial reported that two French officers and two French civilians were killed on the road to Dalat last week. Two additional French officers were killed on a road in the south of the province. A fight in the town of Nhatrang last week between two groups of Vietnam Army personnel in which machine guns were used resulted in 10 deaths.

Personal conversation with two Canadian officers, members of the International Control Commission, substantiated these reports.

In conversation with Mr. Le Ban Chan, Acting Chief of Province, it was revealed that the Chief of Province found it necessary to move to Saigon in order to protect his life, which had been threatened. Present local government officials are in constant fear of Vietnamese Army abuse and threats.

Mr. Chan additionally reports that deserters from the Vietnam Army are very numerous in the hills throughout the province and are a menace to anyone traveling through the area without an escort.

These reports of conditions appear to be too frequent to be anything but authentic. Who is right or wrong in the differences between the VN Army and the provincial officials and between the Vietnam Army and the French does not alter the fact that such actions are seriously affecting the morale of the people, the government officials and the refugees from the north.

A continuation of these conditions will handicap the operations of the Vietnam government in implementing USOM rehabilitation projects.

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