



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

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Haiphong, VIETNAM
January 3, 1955.

Weekly Report - Haiphong

General:

Conditions here remain steady, little expressed unrest, but a general drop off in population, number of stores, vehicles, and business activity. There is a growing desire to evacuate south on the part of all classes. I believe it can be safely stated that the attitude is growing, both in Haiphong and behind the curtain, toward increased dissatisfaction with the rule of the Viet Minh, and this is generally and forcefully stated on every hand. The chairman of the Evacuation Committee says that at no time since before the war has the feeling been so strong on the subject, and he looks for a substantial movement south which will be reflected in both material and refugees.

Relations continue to be good. The only personal report I can make to the contrary is a brief incident I had in the form of a tomato which hit my windshield on the way in from one of the camps. We could use the person that threw it - it was a dead center shot. Glad it was not anything more lethal. Col. Jones was with me, and I take satisfaction that it must have been meant for him!

My conference in Hong Kong was definitely worthwhile, and I am eager for the conference you mentioned to be held in the near future in Saigon in order to discuss our findings with you. I feel they are too long and too involved to take space in this report.

Material:

A list of remaining material has been given me which I feel is not complete, but is a step in the right direction. The list includes some forty vehicles, but takes little else into consideration. Twenty two of these will be coming on a ship within two weeks. Tomorrow 8,295 barrels of asphalt are leaving Haiphong for Saigon along with two section of a "Canadian Barge" which is claimed is AEA equipment. I saw no reason to argue. The other unit has already been sent by French ship. There will be an additional load of asphalt when the "Sword Knot" returns from this trip. We had room for all the AEA asphalt, but a shortage of dunnage made it a substantial saving to delay the last part until the dunnage was returned. Will you please ensure the return of the dunnage. The Captain of the ship has already been instructed. It may prove helpful to put action portions in red, which I shall try to do in the future. In general I feel that the end of January will see all our material out except for certain vehicles which already I have assigned a schedule of evacuation for, the last going in March. Also the USOM furniture will be left till a later date. Wish you could send Mrs. Chambers up here for a few days to accept or reject the furniture in our name. Some of the Frigidaires are in bad shape in my opinion, but not knowing supplies and standards there, it is hard to determine if they should be shipped. Nuff said.

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As a matter of record, it should be noted that the military evacuation is proceeding ahead of schedule, and by end of January, it should be well in hand. The use of four American LSTs are proving a big help, and the other American ships are doing a fine job as well.

Refugees:

The detailed report is to be found in a separate submission giving camp populations and movement. In general, there has been little increase in numbers or type of escapee. The reasons for coming, the method of escape and there general condition of the escapees is unchanged.

As you are well aware, it seems to be a habit of the Viet Nameese to tend to either misrepresent or exaggerate plans. The latest was started by the Secretary General of the Viet Nameese Confederation of Christian Workers who, it was reported, indicated a movement of workers amounting to 200,000 in the next two months. It turns out the entire Confederation has 200,000 workers, and there is an estimated 25,000 in Tonkin which is the potential to draw from. What part of that number will come only time will tell. As you know, the Navy is rather eager to pass on to Sabin all such rumors and gossip, and it is often given a cloak of truth. My own attitude is that we should investigate without comment, and certainly without action being taken before the pattern has become clear. We have talked though how we could care for a very substantial increase should it happen, and we can care for any increase without requesting an additional ship until the problem is directly on us. Therefore, unless you indicate otherwise, I will not forward the rumors.

The first ten thousand blankets have been issued, and the additional 13,000 are docking today. Many thanks for your prompt action. Practically none of the blankets have found their way into the market. I am told only six in all. That is rather remarkable and points up the need we have had.

I would appreciate a briefing on the air lift. Who has paid for it, how many planes were set aside daily for this purpose, if it is in use still, and if not, can it be turned on again should the need arise? The air lift has been used in recent months for the citizens of Haiphong only, and it is supposed to have stopped as of January 1, a matter which I have not been able to check on with certainty.

The Evacuation Committee is asking for an increase in the amount of money to give to the escapees while here in Haiphong. It amounts to seven ps a day now plus rice. I am not ready to indicate my concurrence from this end. Lee is circulating around in the camps to get a solid story on need, temper, etc. This is a Vietnamese problem of course, but they are nice enough to ask my advice, and I am honest with them. They also asked for permission to issue looms and spindles for weaving to the refugees. I turned this down, and they are abiding by it. Pointed out this is a transit camp, not a resettlement camp, and that we would be happy to move the looms to Saigon for issuance there to the refugees.

In view of the fact that I will be coming south within a week, I think this is enough for today. Selah

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