



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
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Special Refugee Loading Report

In the last pouch I reported on the above subject with limited knowledge, or perhaps I should say, before the story was completed. I hesitated at the time, not wanting to appear half cocked, but I was eager to catch the pouch before it left. The next day I sent a telegram asking you to ignore the report till I was able to provide a more complete story. Here it is.

Prior to the day of loading, Col. Croziat and the French transportation group discussed the target number for the shipment of refugees. The French indicated that 3,500 was a good figure, and Col. Croziat indicated that he felt it could be more. Therefore, the target set was 4,000. Late in the afternoon prior to the morning of loading, indications were that this number had been too conservative, not only because of the regular number ready to move, but also because of the introduction into the picture of a labor group who wished to go as a unit. This group wanted special publicity which was worked up with the Vietnamese and the USIS. It composed what was thought to be a vanguard of many more to come later as discussed in another report enclosed in the last pouch.

On the morning of loading, the regular refugees from camps were taken first, and when the 4,000 figure was reached, Capt. Saoli, assistant to Rubin said that that was all, permitting only one more complete family of 12 additional to load. About a dozen trucks loaded with camp refugees were returned to camp. The laborers had not loaded. This was brought to the attention of the Governor by the Evacuation Committee, (off the record with the help of Col Jones) and the Governor immediately got ahold of the Admiral Querville requesting an additional boat to take these workers out to the Howze. The Admiral consented and after appropriate fanfare, off they went. The French Transportation section was furious, and repercussions began early the next morning. Col Croziat had a talk with Major D'Achon who apparently was the most annoyed, and Croziat pointed out that any figure was only a target, and should not be rigidly held to. He explained that an economical load should be at least 3,500, but that the ship could handle at least 5,000. On one occasion it took 6,000, but it was generally agreed by all concerned that in this winter weather it was too many to cope with. The situation has now quieted down, and peace reigns once more.

My basic contention that Rubin is an obstructionist is correct, however, and I still feel that he and his section are determined to make things difficult. My feeling is that we can cope with him, but that we will have such situations as this facing us whenever there is a loophole for him to inject trouble. He has expressed in no uncertain terms his discontent with American participation in the evacuation, and this colors his actions at all times. I feel that he would like to see the air lift started again, his reasons being many possibly. I am not fool enough to accuse him of graft, although we know that people paid money in order to be placed on the air loading list. The graft was probably only in Vietnamese circles, and Rubin's desire for the air lift was limited to his desire to send the people on French planes so they could receive the credit. Anyway, peace reigns once more in Haiphong.

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We have been entertaining Mrs. Blake who tells me she is joining the staff in Saigon in Handcraft. She wanted to see examples of the work done here, and we showed her around with her husband and one other lady from Saigon, I doubt if the trip had any real value, although she feels it had. Things are rapidly closing up here, and I would suggest you discourage such visits, unless you yourself are convinced it has real value. I am not attempting to control who comes - that is not my place, but USIS lost the use of a car for three and one half days to permit us to have a car at the disposal of the party. One day was spent in a trip to the coal mines which had little to do with any duty. My candid opinion was that they wanted to come for pleasure only. That is, of course, up to you, but I dislike giving up a car, interpreter and driver when its value is so limited. Am I wrong???

One final point on the subject of material. I find increasing resistance in obtaining vehicles for shipment south. The Ministries have flatly refused to send them at this time. I had a long conference with Luat last night to try and break it loose, but am not too optimistic. March may be the earliest we can hope to clean out the place. I am trying to determine if any American shipping will be available at that time, and if not, if I can get an assurance from the French to ship the stuff - without cost.

Word has just been received of an early arrival of the plane - time to close.

R. K. Ackley

Roger K. Ackley

P.S. - I am not keeping copies of my confidential reports - please save them at your end.

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