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Weekly Situation Report - Week Ending Jan. 1

This report includes escapee data not included in the report for the week ending December 25.

During the week ending 25 December, 7,152 escapees arrived in Haiphong. This unusually large number included approximately 3,000 escapees from Vinh. The following week ending January 1 saw 3,709 escapees arriving at the embarkation camp in Haiphong. The marked decrease is a reflection of stepped-up Vietnamese vigilance in the Vinh area which appears to have closed that escape route. The French naval vessel standing off the Vinh coast to pick up additional escapees finally returned to Haiphong on January 1 without having picked up any additional persons. Escapee operations continue without change in the Phat Dien area. No new plans have been reported from the north. However, the evacuation committee is actively planning for escapee operations after May and the complete withdrawal of Free Vietnamese and French forces from North Vietnam.

As of January 2 a total of 581,409 persons of all classes, both military and civilian, had crossed the 17th parallel, as indicated hereunder:

	FRENCH & OTHER TRANSPORTATION		Self-Evacuated	U. S. NAVY	TOTAL
	Air	Surface		Surface	
French Military	20,186	43,625			63,811
VN Military	6,025	34,603		13,657	54,285
French Civilians	10,407	17,813			28,259
VN Civilians	142,852	63,413		170,420	376,875
Others	363	11,683	41,328	4,805	16,851
TOTAL	179,833	171,366	41,328	188,882	<u>581,409</u>

Reports from Haiphong indicate increased dissatisfaction with Vietminh rule inside the occupied zone. This information has been received from persons arriving in Haiphong by railroad from Hanoi. As a result there has been a noticeable increase in the number of permanent residents within the Haiphong maritime zone who have applied for transportation southward in the near future. Both the president and the

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secretary general of the Vietnamese Confederation of Christian Workers were in Haiphong urging and assisting as many as possible of the 25,000 workers in the area to evacuate, as their services are no longer required in the area.

On January 1 a total of 11,430 refugees were in the embarkation camps awaiting transportation southward. The evacuation committee is reported to be considering an increase in the cash relief payments made to these people from the present 7-piasters per day to an undisclosed higher amount.

The office of the Commissioner for Refugees reports a total of 225,769 persons located in the resettlement areas in South Vietnam as of January 3. The report indicates that 16,884 housing units had been completed and occupied by the same date.

The Commissioner remains unable to provide resettlement data for Central Vietnam. The field representative in Hue was able to obtain resettlement data for the provinces of Quang Tri, Thua Thien, and Quang Nam, including the Tourane maritime zone. His report shows 21,817 people in 3,841 completed units within these provinces. This report will be submitted to the office of the Commissioner by Mr. Thelen to demonstrate that the required resettlement data is available in Central Vietnam.

The evacuation of AEA materiel is continuing satisfactorily. New lists of over 40 vehicles have been submitted by the Vietnamese services of the north for eventual evacuation. However, chiefs of state services are hesitant to release vehicles until they are certain that the evacuation of this equipment will not hamper their operations. Therefore it has been necessary to extend the projected completion date for evacuation of all AEA equipment from the end of January to mid-March.

During mid-November a French fishing contractor requested assistance from U. S. agencies in Haiphong for the evacuation of approximately 1,000 Chinese fishermen and 178 fishing vessels. An investigation of this situation by U. S. naval personnel at Cac Ba, an island in the Baie d'Along, reveals that the fishing vessels and personnel can be evacuated without assistance from the U. S. Navy. The vessels were found to be of sufficient size to sail from the Baie d'Along to southern ports under their own power. It appears the French contractor asked for U. S. Navy assistance in the form of an LSD to haul the vessels in order to protect his own interests and control over the fishermen. He apparently is afraid that the fleet will disperse if the fishermen set sail for the south independently.

During the week a detailed survey report was prepared on the resettlement situation in Baria province. Copies of this survey report prepared by Mr. Coster will be circulated to the interested divisions.

All available data on Ben Tre province has been assembled in a special file for consideration by the newly established Resources Development Advisory Staff in the Mission to survey and evaluate proposed resettlement sites.

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