



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

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

Weekly Report - Haiphong

The report this week will be brief, but this does not mean lack of activity. My report on Friday gave some of the refugee picture, and also expressed concern over movement of material. The situation now stands as follows:

Material:

For the first time in several weeks I feel we are making good headway on collection of American Aid. As related in my last letter, I had a conference with the Delegate, Mr. Luat, and as a result, a strong letter was issued by him ordering the collection of vehicles between the tenth and the 13th of January. Five came in yesterday, and were placed in the warehouse area. They came from the hospital, but we got them at 1:30 during the siesta, and only the doctor was around. We do not expect incidents at any other place.

The Sword Knot, currently unloading in Saigon, will be returned here to be utilized entirely by AEA on the next trip. The remaining asphalt will be loaded, and every other thing we can get our hands on that has an American nameplate on it. We are taking Mr. Reiner at his word, and not taking action on French made stuff which may or may not be American counterpart. That is pretty difficult to prove, and his concession to consider American Made as American Aid is good enough at this stage. I shall keep you informed of developments as the load collects. I require your immediate reply to the telegram on if the Vocational Industrial School temporary buildings should be removed or not. It is AEA equipment, but \$ 1,500 U.S. equivalent seems terribly high for what it is. The walls are brick so you could not use those and all you have left are three units of roof. I'm afraid someone is making a fair bit of pocket money out of this.

*Just what
 we need!!*

Refugees:

Thank goodness the blankets came in when they did - the first ten thousand were issued, and cold weather has again hit us. The break in the weather happened to be the same period we were without blankets before the Herkimer docked with the fresh supply.

We continue to try and guess the movement for the spring, with most heads feeling that 100,000 is a fair figure. I myself am a bit more conservative, placing it at 70,000. I think the main difference in why we disagree is that I feel fewer people will leave Haiphong than hoped for. As I have stated previously, a port is a strategic area no matter who controls, and business is always good, particularly with south China now made a potential market.

Another unknown factor is the coal area. Should the equipment go, it can be expected a good portion of the workers will also go, but if it remains, almost none of the workers will go.

We are looking forward to the arrival of Ambassador Collins and party this week, and trust that he will be satisfied with the progress made.

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General:

I was under the impression you planned a meeting in Saigon in early January for the field men. Should you not be having such in the next week or so, I feel I should write you a pretty full report on the conference in Hong Kong as a number of steps should be taken in the immediate future. These include establishment of collection centers along the 17th, interrogation centers, etc.

Hackett telegraphed for the plane to stop in Hue on the return trip last Friday, but we did not receive the message till 6:00 P.M. long after the plane had left. I wish there was some way of faster service at the relay station in Saigon. While on this subject, I can report that the radio is now fixed up with the emergency generator, and is only awaiting the crystal to be able to speak directly with the Balduck should the need arise.

Currently the city is rather quiet. Thievery is on the increase, with the result that we are asking for military guard for the Annex. Twice in one week the building was entered, one time obtaining the wallet of Col. Croziat, the other time apparently only to 'case the joint'. We also had some washing stolen one night.

There are changes in the composition of the Canadian element of the Commission, but we keep close to the men as they shift, and thus continue good relations. Had a very pleasant lunch there yesterday.

Commandore Frank is to be relieved in ten days but reports we have on his replacement are very good, and we feel sure that things will run even smoother. It is still the intention to withdraw the American cargo vessels approximately the end of January, and leave one transport ship for refugees. We have been pressing for two, but Admiral Sabin said that he could not do it. The one saving grace is that there will be two here for a limited period before the Howzie is slated to go, and that period happens to concur with the period immediately after Tet when we expect any increase in numbers to show. This will permit as safety valve until a reconsideration can be requested for additional shipping.

I assume you have taken action on my passport, and that you have forwarded the two telegrams to me that I attached with the cable to Washington asking for the extension. Those I need for my own files.

Well, that is the top of the news from Haiphong


Roger K. Ackley

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