

SECRET

Director of Mission

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After May the departure of the French from Haiphong, there will undoubtedly continue to be escapees from the Vietminh zone north of the 17th parallel. The number of people entering the Haiphong perimeter now from the Vietminh zone is 3,000-3,500 per week. When that escapee gate is closed, people will probably try to get across the parallel by crossing by land directly, by sea and entering at a point south, or perhaps some by going into Laos.

It has been suggested to me that we should establish soon certain reception centers just south of the 17th parallel where people can be given emergency aid, temporary shelter and food. This might be a series of quonset centers with reasonable stockpiles of supplies. It is thought that people would be kept there for a very short time, perhaps two days. They would be registered, housed and fed, given inoculations, clothing if necessary, and transportation to a second center.

The second center would be established at or near a city such as Hue or Tourane. It would be an Interrogation Center; where intelligence would be secured, necessary checks made, classification of escapees and arrangements made for resettlements in the area where former friends, associates or relatives are now settled in South or Central Vietnam. The stay in this center would vary depending upon conditions. It would provide in addition to subsistence and shelter, hospitalization and work relief (use of certain escapees in carrying out details).

It is my understanding that plans of the Catholic Bishops include continuation of a number of teams (perhaps 50) who will remain in the North to encourage escapees and to help plan movement. It is their opinion that as Vietminh control increases more and more dissatisfaction will develop and people will move if encouraged and helped.

Preparation for this eventuality should probably begin at an early date. If Mr. Ackley continues to work with the Mission after the period of his present assignment, which nearly coincides with the Haiphong close-out, I believe he would be an excellent man to handle this operation. He would, of course, need help and I presume we could request recruitment or assignment of persons who know that game.

This memo simply introduces the idea and reflects very limited thinking. If you think we should we can go into it more thoroughly and prepare plans.

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