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Notes on Conference of 3 Feb. 1955

Present: Capt. J. D. Callitt USN MAAG  
LT. COL. V. J. Grunat USMC MAAG  
Mr. E. K. Ackley USOM RISP Haiphong  
Colonel Riner French Army Chief Bureau of Civil Affairs, FTNV  
Major Herbert F. A. Chief of Communications FTNV

Subject: Discussion of Evacuation of Civilians and US Aid Material

1. The conference took place in an informal manner. The primary purpose of the discussion was to firm up procedures for the evacuation of remaining American Aid equipment and to determine what steps were being taken by the French to evacuate civilian goods of Strategic importance. The results of the conference are as follows:

a. Procedures for Evacuation of American Aid Material not US Property

- (1) The USOM representative submits a list of material to be evacuated to Colonel Riner.
- (2) Col. Riner issues a letter to USOM representative authorizing evacuation.
- (3) A period of 5 days is then required to permit IOC verification of the material in question.
- (4) USOM representative contacts Col. Riner and fixes date for loading.
- (5) Col. Riner provides military escort and arranges for delivery to US ship.

COMMENT: Note that no US personnel is involved in actually moving the material. The French feel it essential to provide military guards to minimize possible disturbances incident to the removal of equipment. They assume responsibility for actually bringing the material to the dock.

b. Procedure for Evacuation of US Govt Property

- (1) No written authorization is required.
- (2) US Govt property may be loaded on US ships at any time.

c. Status of Evacuation of Civilian Goods of Strategic Importance.

- (1) On 27 Jan a letter was forwarded to Gen Kly listing 44 business establishments within the perimeter, a number of which had equipment or raw materials of strategic importance.
- (2) Col Riner presumes this list was forwarded to Paris where discussions are supposedly underway between the French, British and US government representatives on the evacuation.
- (3) At the moment Gen Cogny has not authorized the sale, to the communists by private concerns, of any equipment of strategic value. However, some concerns will not evacuate certain goods because such evacuation is uneconomical from their point of view.
- (4) Col Riner asked M. De Bresson to have a decision by 15 Feb as to whether or not the French will evacuate, gratuitously or not the strategic equipment which private concerns will not evacuate at own expense.

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- (5) A number of concerns, among them S.A.C.R.T.C., are willing to sell some of their equipment to communist representatives, but so far no authority to do so has been granted by the French at Haiphong.
- (6) There are about 24,000 metric tons of equipment to evacuate. This does NOT include the coal mines but includes the cement works.

COMMENT: The French submarines at Haiphong are apparently moving towards a showdown with Saigon as to what steps the French will take to prevent the falling into communist hands of material of strategic value. Any prescriptive buying by US interests of strategic goods should thus be held in abeyance until the French have indicated which way they will move. In this conjunction it should be emphasized that the actual cost of transportation is not the major expense which is involved in the evacuation costs at least from the view of the businessman. Where the evacuation costs pile up is in dismantling equipment, crating, moving to pier and loading on ships. The decision to enter into prescriptive buying must be made only after all other possibilities (i.e. French action) have been exhausted and then only after a detailed and careful analysis of all the factors involved. It is not impossible to visualize a situation where equipment purchased by the US cannot be moved because of lack of labor or communist agents exciting local inhabitants to demonstrate. The whole question is most delicate and policies regarding such actions on the part of the US govt should be determined at the highest level.

NOTE: The comments express only the views of the MAAG representatives at the conference.

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