



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

Haiphong, ~~INDIA~~ VIETNAM
February 4, 1955.

Office of the Special Representative
of the Mission Director
for North Viet Nam **Cement Plant - Haiphong**

Mr. Binart, Commercial Agent for the plant came in to see me and ask if we could assist in taking 18 to 20 thousand tons of cement to Saigon. I told him the policy on this matter - that at French request, we could assist at regular commercial rates. He explained that they wanted to continue full blast till March 31, and then close with no stocks on hand, and, insofar as possible, no stockpile of cement. He went on to say that the manager was going to Hong Kong to seek out additional bottoms for such transportation. He left pleased. My attitude was based, of course, on both our policy established and also the assurance you mention of Mr. Barrows in your letter.

Upon the arrival of Col. Croziat, however, I was informed that at the Saigon conference with Admiral Sabin and the French, it was agreed that the French would assume full responsibility for both the coal and the cement. Admiral Sabin then said that U.S. ships would not carry cement. I got in touch with Mr. Binart, explained the change of policy to him, expressed our regret at having to alter my position, and he left understanding the situation and appreciating our attempt to help.

Apparently, the French do not want the company to remain here until March 31, and are therefore limiting the amount of cement they are willing to carry. I assume that the same principle might well be applied to the coal mines to ensure removal of the equipment should the decision be made to remove it.