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LARRY

TO : Mr. Charles A. Mann, Director April 12, 1971

FROM : John T. MacQueen, AD RA. *J. MacQueen*

SUBJECT: Refugee Affairs Monthly Report - March 1971

I. General

March was a very active month from the standpoint of enemy activity and refugee movements. On March 8, 1971 the enemy attacked the USAID refugee support base at Ban Nam (LS 272) damaging warehouse and office buildings and the equipment repair shop with patches charges and B-40 rockets. Four vehicles were also destroyed by explosive charges. There was no significant loss of commodities stored in the warehouses and the damage to the warehouses was repaired immediately. USAID and RLG personnel stationed at LS 272 and inhabitants of villages adjoining the site having become apprehensive of security moved to more secure villages and sites. By the end of the month people were beginning to return to their villages nearby the LS-272 base.

On March 7, 1971 the enemy attacked the (blue) Nam Phak Project (damaging the school, dispensary, office and cooperative store with explosive charges and B-40 rockets. Two HD-16 tractor dozers of USAID and an RLG farm tractor were heavily damaged by explosive charges and a USAID M-37 truck was stolen. In addition, the enemy robbed refugees and USAID employees of personal property, money, household equipment, rice, blankets, etc. It is hoped that the USAID employees will receive prompt compensation for their loss of property. They are to be commended for their courage and willingness to remain on the project site considering the fact that there are inadequate security forces to protect the project from additional attacks.

During the latter half of March, heavy enemy attacks north and northeast of Luang Prabang, as well as the area in the northwest across the Mekong River, resulted in mass movements of villagers and refugees into the city and to Xieng Mene. People were housed in school buildings, with relatives, and in temporary camps. Most of the villagers and refugees from villages north and northeast of the city wish to return to their homes if the FAR succeeds in driving the enemy back to the area of the Pak Ou River. The four thousand or so Mee and Lac Thung refugees now in Xieng Mene are pressing to move to Sayabouly Province because they have doubt that the FAR can retake the area of Phou Nam and Ban Houe. 28

northwest of Luang Prabang. The RLG officials and USAID staff of Luang Prabang are to be commended for their strong morale, leadership and efficient manner in which arrangements and accommodations were established to care for the 8,723 refugees that moved into the city of Luang Prabang and to Xieng Mene on the west bank of the Mekong River across from the city during the month. The 4,108 refugees who moved from LS-170 and LS-213 in the Xieng Khouang Region are holding in the vicinity of Ban Xieng Ngeun. At LS-25 (Phou Chia) part of the 8,259 refugees from the Xieng Khouang area have expressed a desire to move on to Sayaboury Province.

A period of relative stabilization in the Xieng Khouang area during late March enabled a recount of new refugees. Accurate reporting during February was not possible because of the mass movements and confusion resulting from enemy attacks. The Primary School Inspector of Xieng Khouang reported that 50 primary schools and five groupe scolaires have been closed in the Xieng Khouang area due to enemy activity. This has affected approximately 5,000 students. During the month of March a special sixth grade program was established in the Pha Khe refugee area for 220 sixth grade students. This program set up by the RLG and USAID will enable the 220 displaced students to become eligible for secondary school entrance examinations when they have completed the semester.

The security situation at Ban Xon (LS-272) affected the livestock program, the delivery of swine was postponed but it was possible to ship 4,000 ducks by air during the month. To date 95 pigs (40 boars and 55 bred gilts) of the planned 1,000 units have been delivered. Another 6,000 ducks are being procured for the program.

In the Savannakhet Region 464 new refugees were reported from the Muong Phalane and Ban Houei Mun areas because of enemy activity.

In the Pakse Region the refugee population was increased by 527 due to movements from Saravane Province and a revision as the result of recounts and verification. There was a revision upward in the refugee population in Sithandone Province as the result of a recount.

In the Vientiane Area the refugee population increased by 2,844 during the month. The majority of the new refugees are from the Muong Souie and Xieng Det areas and have been relocated on RLG land at Ban Hin Tid south of Vang Vieng near Ban Houei Pamone.

The FY 1972 program for refugee assistance was submitted to the Program Office late in the month of March.

II. Refugee Relocation

The Refugee Relocation Projects on the Vientiane Plain continue to make progress. The last two months of the dry season will see a major effort to clear the new village sites in the various reserve areas with the goal of clearing at least 50% of the new village sites prior to the beginning of the wet season. Area No. 3 (Tha Ngon), Area No. 7 (Nong Sa), and Area No. 4 (Phone Sai) will have priority on the available equipment. In all, 35 village sites are projected or 630 hectares of land clearing.

The problem of land claims within the reserve areas was brought forcibly to the attention to the Chao Khoueng of Vientiane Province and the Ministry of Social Welfare during March. Maps have been prepared in some of the reserve areas by the Agents of the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Chao Muongs showing areas of land claimed by individuals that are subject to question.

The main difficulty appears to be the lack of someone with sufficient authority within the RLG to make the decision to either eject the individual from the reserve area or to honor his claim. The RLG Director of Resettlement pointed this out in a letter to the Secretary of State for Social Welfare who subsequently brought the matter up before the Cabinet of Ministers.

The RLG Director of Resettlement, Manh Traymany, and Hugh Brady visited the Seno Project in Savannakhet and the Houei Nam Phak Project in Pakse during March. In Savannakhet they held meetings with the Chao Khouengs and various RLG service chiefs regarding future development at Seno and Mr. Manh discussed the details of the buffalo loan program. Counterpart Kip is being put in place as budgetary support for the program.

A couple of good rains in the Seno area have provided 2 to 3 meters of water in the reservoirs and from all appearance to date they will be very successful. Land clearing has begun with an HD-16 bulldozer. The plan calls for each family to have 1/2 hectare of their 2 hectares cleared by machine this season. The two Ministry of Social Welfare farm tractors are busy plowing garden and rice paddy land for the villagers.

The Asian Christian Service has proposed to begin a program of handicraft and agricultural training in the project in conjunction with the RLG. This proposal is under consideration by the Khoueng (Provincial) committee.

At Houei Nam Phak the rebuilding of public facilities, after the PL attack on 1 March, is almost complete. The situation in the project is back to normal. Construction of village number two continues. During the visit to Pakse Mr. Manh Traymany met with the Chao Khouang and also talked at length with the Houei Nam Phak villagers. The main concern of both the RLG Khoueng officials in Sedone and with the villagers in the project is that USAID might suspend or abandon the project. The feeling among the Lao is attributed to rumors but they were reassured during the visit that USAID plans to continue the project. It was pointed out, however, that land clearing work utilizing heavy tractor-dozers has to be suspended because there are no replacements for the two tractor-dozers damaged by the enemy during the attack of March 7, 1971.

III. Personnel

Mr. William Luken arrived at post on March 10, 1971 to assume the duties of Administrative Officer for the Office of Refugee Affairs.

IV. Food for Peace Program

Please refer to the report of Mr. Roger G. Sprowls, Food for Peace Officer.

During the month a total of 373 metric tons of PL-480 food commodities were drawn from the large in-country stock. There are approximately 1,500 metric tons in Bangkok to be shipped to Vientiane and to field stations (Pakse, Ban Houei Sai, etc.). As soon as contract negotiations for the processing of noodles from wheat flour are completed, this commodity will begin to move at an accelerated rate.

V. Logistics and Supplies

Food and other commodities were moved by surface transportation to the following locations from Vientiane:

	<u>Salt</u>	<u>Rice</u>	<u>Canned Meat</u>	<u>Commodities</u>	
B. H. S.	-	-	-	2.7	M. T.
L. P.	10.0	295.5	35.0	17.3	"
Syby.	5.0	86.0	-	28.2	"
V. V.	-	85.5	-	-	"
LS-272	40.0	182.5	83.8	43.5	"
Vte.	10.7	428.6	-	10.9	"
Paksane	5.0	289.8	-	3.1	"
Svkt.	-	<u>50</u>	-	-	"
	70.7	1,417.9	118.8	105.7	"

Air and surface deliveries were made from:

Ban Houei Sai

Air dropped	Rice	68.2	M. T.
Air landed	Rice	242.5	"
Truck	Rice	33.5	"
River	Rice	16.1	"
Air & Surface	Salt	13.0	"
Air dropped	Bulgur Wheat	1.8	"
Air dropped	Cornmeal	20.3	"
Air & Surface	Protein	7.9	"
Air landed	Salad Oil	<u>.4</u>	"
	Total	403.7	M. T.

Vientiane

Air dropped	Rice	1,385.7	M. T.
Air dropped	Protein & Rice	769.3	"
Air landed	Rice	180.5	"
Air landed	Protein	26.9	"
Air landed	Salt	6.6	"
Air dropped	Cornmeal	138.6	"
Air dropped	Noodles (CSM)	<u>3.0</u>	"
	Total	2,510.6	M. T.

ORA:JWMacQueen:viv

DIST: OD, DD, AD/M, AD/FIN, AD/FO, AD/PE, AD/RA(5), ESD(2),
SMB(2), C&R(3), AC/Vte, Sby, LP, BHS, Svkt, Pakse, XK,
All Division Chiefs, Laos Desk, AID/W

