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Talk of the cease-fire has given us hope of at least a period of months, and perhaps years, where we can function in something resembling a normal manner. We only hope it comes about soon. I was talking with the Bishop this morning, and he is much more optimistic about the situation now -- feels that the Hanoi eagerness for a cease-fire not only indicates a profound weariness on their part, but also a fear of being swallowed up by either Russia or China. He even thinks that N. Viet Nam may accept U.S. aid after a cease fire, including some advisors, as a lesser evil than aid from Russia or China, which are much closer geographically.

I will be in Seattle shortly after New Years, and plan to spend about 3 to 4 weeks in fund-raising. Melba could start lining up engagements anytime -- with the proviso that they be worthwhile ones.

The board's demand for a financial accounting should be met by the attached statement of expenditures. It will be totally impossible for us, given our present staff here, to come up with an exact accounting of our piastre expenditures for hospital use. The major ones, such as salaries and rice, I can give exact figures for -- the others must be listed as "miscellaneous expense". I have noted that in the income tax return for the KHF filed in 1971 (I don't think I saw the 1972 one), hospital expenditures were simply listed in bulk as that anyway.

Our hospital account, as you will note from the attached statement, is getting low. We will need replenishment soon. I think a deposit of \$3000 per month, starting with November, will be adequate. As you will note on the statement, our salaries for local employees have risen considerably. This is due to a readjustment in salaries, which was long overdue. We have raised the salaries of all our employees, based on the number of children they have, in order to provide for the increased cost of living here. Rice is now 80 piastres per kilo, even at government controlled prices, and we cannot buy enough to provide it for all our employees at that price, so that they must often pay 100 or 120 piastres a kilo on the market. This is the first raise for our employees in about two years, while the piastre has been steadily devaluated in that time, and the cost of living has risen astronomically.

October was a big month for casualties -- we treated close to a hundred civilian casualties that month. Malaria is letting up a little, though we're still getting quite a lot, but pneumonia has started to outweigh it in hospital admissions. So far, relatively little plague, but the season is not well underway yet.

As you probably read back there, Dak Seang has fallen. So far, have seen no survivors from there. As of last Sunday, we were still getting some of the families dribbling in from Ben Het with wounds they'd managed to live with for 3 weeks. Dak Seang not only had families of the military there, but there was also a small village of Montagnards living close to the military camp as a "protection". So far, no word on any of these people. ARVN has sent a rumored 2 battalions to Dak To & Tan Canh, in order to fly the flag & thus establish some sort of S.V.N. presence in case of a cease-fire. The GVN is supposed to be sending some administration people there too, but they're not awfully keen on it, as may be imagined, and, so far, they haven't been bundled up & shipped off yet. We hear the ARVN up there has been getting a lot of artillery in on it, but have been holding for about 10 days now.

We've been fighting the "battle of the flag" a bit here in Kontum. The GVN announced that every building in Kontum had to fly the Vietnamese flag (VN citizens are supposed to carry one on their person as well!) We duly put up one at the hospital, though with a red cross flag next to it which is twice as large. However, the VN police came around the other day complaining we weren't flying the flag high enough. I had absolutely no intention of flying it at a level that could be seen from the surrounding hills & provide a target for rockets. We finally compromised by raising it about a foot, and I've instructed the Montagnards to tell the police, if they come around again, that we have no higher poles, and they'll have to provide the flag pole if they want it any higher. Incidentally, it's an interesting commentary on the government's feelings about its people that the sale of blue and red cloth has been banned on the market, without special permission from the Province administration. They're afraid some people might be preparing the wrong flag for the cease-fire.

Air America has started flying into Kontum regularly again -- though they leave any continuing passengers in Pleiku & go back there to pick them up. They are also flying cargo flights occasionally, but with the proviso that they be met at the airfield, so they can get off as quickly as possible again. We got an emergency order of drugs from USAID that way today -- we were really desperate for them. I must say they acted surprisingly quickly, for USAID, since we sent the wire about it less than a week ago.

The 67th EVAC is due to deactivate almost momentarily -- no one has an exact date, but they say by the end of this month at latest. This seems to be "for real" this time, after many false alarms in the past. This will not make a huge difference to us anymore, since helicoptered transportation for us to send them patients is virtually unobtainable now anyway. US choppers have almost stopped flying into Kontum, and we have to rely on VNAF for any choppers. So far, we haven't asked them to transport a patient, but I am not optimistic about our chances if and when we do. We simply are going back to the old days, when the patient's outcome depended entirely on what we could do here. If we don't have a lot of serious casualties, this will not be too un-nerving.

All for now. My best to all there.

To Gwen:

(2) We've got quite a garden going now at our new house. Our former vegetable & fruit garden at the real Minh-Guy has had to be abandoned since the offensive, since it is now a mine field. We've tried to get them to deactivate the mines, but it seems the ARVN who planted them have no map of where they are. The latest plan was to blow them all up with dynamite (we feared for our buildings if this were to occur), but it seems they don't have enough dynamite on hand at the moment. So, in the meantime we're taking all the available land near our house for a vegetable garden. We got seeds from a donated lot that CRS Saigon had -- they were packed for 1970, but they certainly seem to germinate all right, since plants appeared above the ground in less than a week from the time they were planted. We have quite an exotic assortment, as well as the usual corn, beans, and greens that the patients will appreciate -- we've planted cantaloupe, peas, parsnips, and I don't know what all. We'll have to wait & see which turn out. There were also a bunch of flower seeds in the lot, and we've planted a riotous assortment in our patio & along the fence -- some familiar ones like morning glories & nasturtiums, plus a number that I've never seen before.

-----There have been, and still are, a lot of attacks on the villages even a few kilometers out of town -- the few that are left there -- and I am very tired of treating casualties. Also, there has been a 130 mm Russian

cannon firing on the town at irregular intervals which disturbs me considerably. It is far enough away that we know they can't possibly be aiming at anything specific, such as the airfield or military camps, and the idea of indiscriminate firing into the town makes us feel as if we're engaged in a massive game of Russian roulette. Since it started, there have been about 20 civilians killed, and 25 to 30 wounded. Its latest performance was yesterday around noon, but fortunately the only casualties then were three Montagnard children, all with minor wounds.

STATEMENT OF EXPENDITURES MINH-QUY HOSPITAL

Oct. 1, 1972 thru Nov. 1, 1972

|                                                                               |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| BALANCE ON HAND IN CHECKING ACCOUNT OCT. 1, 1972                              | \$13,500 |
| CHECKS WRITTEN OCTOBER 1972                                                   |          |
| 1) To: CRS, Saigon<br>For: Susan Little, back salary plus air-fare            | 648      |
| 2) To: Barbara Corvino<br>For: Salary                                         | 100      |
| 3) To: Barbara Corvino<br>For: Salary                                         | 70       |
| 4) To: CRS, Saigon<br>For: Tom Coles -- Airfare plus back salary              | 1,323    |
| 5) To: CRS, Saigon<br>For: Tom Coles -- remainder of back salary              | 258.55   |
| 6) To: Harry Hartwig<br>For: 3 months salary                                  | 270.00   |
| 7) To: Catholic Relief Services, Saigon<br>For: Piastres for hospital expense | 5,000.00 |

Total Dollar Expenditures  
\$7,669.55

Balance on Hand 11/1/72 \$5,830.45  
(checking account)

PIASTRE EXPENDITURES FROM PIASTRES ACQUIRED BY CHECK (7) ABOVE:

PIASTRES RECEIVED (\$5000 US at 440.55 piastres per dollar) 2,202,750 piastres

LOCAL EMPLOYEES SALARIES NOV. 1, 1972 886,300 piastres

BALANCE ON HAND: 1,316,450 piastres