

Saigon - Friday 2 August

Pat,

Yesterday I had a conversation with Mr. Mark Carr of Bank of America re prospects for opening an account there. There seem to be no major complications except that if it was to be established in the name of Minh Quy we would have to produce a letter of sponsorship or authorization from one of the government ministries — which, in our case, seems to have been irretrievably lost. An alternative solution would be to open an account in your name until such time as either you or Bishop Seitz can work out a new letter of understanding with MOH. Seems to me this would greatly simplify cash transfers from the States: National Bank of Commerce could cable our regular monthly sums directly to Saigon, and Bank of America could then cable the amount in piasters to us via one of the Kontum banks. It would be a quicker method, and what's more it would further simplify our relationship with CRS. As I see it, the less we have to depend on them for such things as banking and procurement, ^{the} better service we can expect in other essential departments such as visa sponsorship and fund-raising. I think it's really important that we try to stay out of CRS's hair as much as we can and only rely on them for things we can't do for ourselves..... Incidentally, Bob Trott said the other day that they've got two of the CARE-Mexico team members lined up already, and that they're looking for them to arrive in country some time in September. If and when they finally get here, I believe we'll be able to relay ~~our Cullen~~ for a degree of ongoing support in matters of procurement & administration...

I wanted to write a longer letter to send off with George Christian this morning to go over some financial matters — but got caught short; so here goes. This will be of interest to John too since he's now holding the pursestrings, so I'll include an extra copy for him.

- Your hundred-dollar personal check will be processed the same way as all the others — i.e. it'll take three weeks or so to clear — so why not borrow the amount from the operating funds that were sent up with George (2,517,600\$) until the check finally comes through.
- We've gotten an extension on our COREV trucking & oxygen grant, an additional 1,300,000 piasters. I will get CRS to cable this money up to Kontum, payable to you at one of the local banks (you should get an arrival notice through the local post). Seeing as we're in debt to Mr. Ninh for 1,295,000 for the last truck load of rice (10 tons) I would suggest borrowing this cash to pay him off, then replenishing the trucking fund later on with surplus money from operating funds as well as additional monies from COREV. This morning I spoke to the Vietnamese Bishop who runs COREV trying to get a status report on our request for a year's rice supply (it came to just over four million P's, based on estimated consumption of 1500 kilos per month). He said they were a bit behind in their processing of project proposals due to the absence of the Apostolic Delegate, who's just returned to Saigon. He was familiar with the proposal however and gave full assurance that it would be approved at their next meeting — in fact he said we could go ahead with rice purchases now which could be paid for with existing funds, to be reimbursed by the new COREV rice money after this is finally approved and placed in our hands. Therefore I would suggest we get Mr. Ninh to write up a new set of bills — two separate ones for fifty bags each — and dated during the month of August — so that we can in turn bill the COREV rice fund for one batch of fifty bags, leaving the other fifty available for employees to purchase. Soon as the rice money comes through we take fifty bags' worth of piasters (897,500\$) to reimburse part of the IOU to the trucking account and pay back the rest out of operating funds.
- Seems complicated doesn't it? Problem is, I got those hundred bags of rice thinking funds would be coming through immediately; but there's been a delay, and I don't think it's fair to keep the dealer waiting for his money.....
- John Cullen reports that CRS has transferred 1500 dollars to be used to cover the piasters' monthly allowance for the next year (or, possibly longer, depending on future piaster devaluations and whether or not we decide to raise their stipend). He we prefer us to draw this in quarterly installments, so I shall try to send up 240 with the next Kontum-bound traveler — maybe Kerry if he makes it down soon.

- I've drawn 50,000 from a special donation to CRS for the purchase children's medicines; will make the purchases as per instructions given by Dr. Pra and George Christian a while ago, and send them up by courier.
- Pat, do we really need another EMO machine? When I told George yesterday that I'd submitted a request for such to Mr. Hunt at the British Embassy (very favorably received, but he said it would probably take a couple months to fill the order) he said that we were already pretty well stocked in this department. Do you want to cancel or revise the order? Can you think of other equipment, particularly of British manufacture, that might be more useful at the hospital?
- Could you inform Edric that one of the 2 Japanese-trained Montagnard nurses whom I met in Saigon several months ago and who later took a job at Larsky clinic is reportedly unemployed at the moment. Should I pursue the matter and see if I can get her up to Minh Quy for a visit?
- Am enclosing a letter from Nancy Putzel, a newly-arrived handicrafts specialist being sponsored by CARE. She seems a very dynamic person with lots of good ideas, however it strikes me she may have some mistaken notions (based on earlier conversations with me) of Ya Vincente's mobility & availability. Anyhow I'm off the scene for the time being and it's for you folks to decide. Nancy thinks she might be able to make it up for a visit sometime in September...
- John, you will notice on the report of pig-barn construction costs that was sent up this morning with George, that I omitted not only sand and gravel but also the 45 extra bags of cement that were used. This is because I'm virtually certain that the purchase of these would have been covered by Caritas-Austria funds, and these same bags of cement have most likely been represented to CRS as being paid for from that source. (This should make Kerry happy as it reduces the amount of excess spending on construction, although strictly speaking Austria-Caritas money wasn't designated at the outset to help support the pig project as I recall.) Let me know if I'm mistaken; otherwise I'll collect the money from Bob Trott (218,850\$) and send it up with Kerry or whoever comes down next.
- Pat, did you have any discussions with Father McVeigh about CRS's administration of USAID funds designated for the care of malnourished children? He does not take the view that was originally expressed by Terry Kirch and Hugh O'Neill — that any pediatric patient at Minh Quy was by definition suffering from malnutrition because it's so widespread in our area, therefore we could rightfully expect reimbursement for virtually our entire pediatric in-patient load. He points out that when he begins funding various centers that are involved in care of malnourished children, it will be to those who have a specific and identifiable program. He says that as a layman (and I believe he is supported by Mrs. Lien the nutritionist in this) he would not consider that a malnourished child could be effectively treated for malnutrition ~~per se~~ in the space of two or three weeks, which is the average length of stay at Minh Quy, but rather it would involve about three month with a special feeding program etc. My question is, does Minh Quy in fact have a significant number of pediatric patients (Father McVeigh incidentally has no preconceived notions — nor apparently does USAID — about the legal age limit to define a 'pediatric patient') who suffer from malnutrition to such an extent that they are kept under special care and feeding for a matter of months and released in rehabilitated condition? If this is the case and if we could demonstrate this to Father McVeigh (which would involve a project description and perhaps segregating a section in one of the wards especially for such cases) then I think he would consider covering the expenses incurred. Could you put this on your agenda along with a visit to Mr. Jarr at Bank of America for your next trip to Saigon?

I'll go over now and fetch Randy's questionaires from CARE. Hope yesterday's letter will prove more or less acceptable to all parties involved...