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6 April 67

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Dear Rufe:

Just a quickie to let you know how that medical supply business turned out for ECCOI, as witnessed by the enclosure. ECCOI establishes the ground rules of how the thing should operate, so someone else gets the contract -- probably someone like Landis who will regard it as an opportunity to get rich through the diversion of supplies.

About two weeks ago the AID personnel people sent a circular around to all the ECCOI-Logistics people, asking them if they would not like to sign on as direct hire when the ECCOI contract expires, apparently 1 May. Don't know whether the CASHPA-CALO people were also circularized or not.

The conclusion seems unquestionably to be that there is dirty work at the crossroads. Johnny believes it is simply discrimination against a non-US flag firm, plus the desire of contracting types to get things as cheaply as possible -- although this certainly cannot apply to the medical supply bid. I fear that it is more than that, that it is something which MIS should take a damn good look at.

Johnny, of course, is both mad and sad. His first reaction was to want to pull out altogether, seeing that as the only reasonable alternative to starting an all-out war. After I got him cooled down on that, he decided that ECCOI should try to work through an American firm, either one established specially for the purpose or an existing one. Talks are presently going on with American Architects and Engineers (I mentioned them to you while you were here, and finally remembered that I first met Unger at the house of their head, Igor Adamovitch) but the amount involved do not seem large enough to interest them.

The two expiring AID contracts (Logistics and CASHPA) make the difference between a profit of about 4-5,000 dollars a month, and a loss of about 1,000, unless there is the sort of severe retrenchment which is almost impossible for him. This alone would almost justify the establishment of an American counter-part firm, if the right man could be found to run it (as the Saigon rep) and if the problem is simply one of preference for an American flag firm. While in Hawaii (at John O'Donnells school for boys) from 7 to 15-18 April will try to look into the costs of setting up a firm, just in case.

Any ideas or suggestions, as well as any feasible action, will of course be muchly appreciated. I hate like hell to see the one man left in high life here who seems to be really capable and friendly to Uncle so pushed around that he is strongly tempted to join the mob. Also, of course, the operation seems still to be damn useful in itself to Uncle.

Pat phoned to say she had received a watch for me from you. Havent had a chance to pick it up, but many thanks. Please give our best to Barbara et al, and drop me a line when you get a chance.

As ever

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C.