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John Griffin, Administrative Officer

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Jack E. Ryan, Deputy Chief, Police Admin. Division

Cap Pistols in Possession of Americans in Saigon

This is a written recapitulation of our conversation of Sunday, October 26, regarding the above subject. It is thought that perhaps consideration should be given to bringing this matter to the attention of the Embassy Security Officer.

At approximately 11:30 A.M., Sunday, October 26, 1958, a Vietnamese neighbor called upon me at my residence for the purpose of making it known that an 11 year old Vietnamese boy had just been arrested by an officer of the Saigon Police Department on a charge of possession or displaying a cap pistol in public. (It should be noted that a law in the form of a decree was placed into effect suppressing the sale and public display or use of cap pistols in 1956.) It was also brought to my attention that the cap pistol in question belonged to my stepson who apparently had loaned the pistol to his Vietnamese friends during the course of a game which he and a group of Vietnamese had been playing.

The father of the arrested boy and I then proceeded to the Second Precinct Police Station. We were directed to the police post next to the main market where we located the boy and the arresting officer. All four of us then proceeded to the Second Precinct Station where the usual myriad of reports were completed on the matter.

The boy was released to his father's custody and was told they would have to return later in the afternoon for the purpose of an interview and additional paper work. The officer in command of the station advised me that I would also be required to report that same afternoon. However, I pointed out very diplomatically that the entire affair was not sufficiently important, in my opinion, to warrant being disturbed any further regarding the matter. The officer was advised that any additional information could be secured by mail.

It is not known at the present time what final disposition has been made of the case. There is a possibility that the boy's father may well be required to pay a fine.

With regard to the seizure of the cap pistol, I have no intention whatever of requesting its return.

Inasmuch as many young American boys are known to possess cap pistols here in Saigon, and inasmuch as the PX recently sold a substantial quantity of them, it may be well that the attention of the American community be called to the existing Vietnamese law regarding cap pistols. This is with the view of attempting to avoid any unnecessary embarrassing developments.

JER/her