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CHM SP
via Saigon RW

UNITED STATES OPERATIONS MISSION TO VIETNAM



AMERICAN EMBASSY
SAIGON, VIETNAM

12

Roy

September 4, 1963

Attached memo would be made available to Whiskey + The Ambassador

Mr. Leroy S. Wehrle
Deputy Director
USAID
c/o American Embassy
Vientiane, Laos

Dear Roy:

Thank you for your recent letter and for thinking about us in your excellent idea of establishing a regional supply pool, hopefully, regionally financed. We are enthusiastic about this for several types of items whose use is common to Laos, Vietnam and Thailand, as well as Cambodia if it can be included. These are particular items such as vegetable, grass, field crop and fruit, and fruit tree seeds and seedlings; veterinary and medical supplies, insecticides and rodenticides, possibly hand tools and simple farm machinery, perhaps heavy construction equipment and spares, etc. For items such as cement, foodstuffs, reinforcing rod and the like, Vietnam is already well-covered and we do not believe a common stockpile of such bulk items to be too feasible (under our FY 1964 program we are ordering 90,000 tons of cement). On foodstuffs and feedstuffs we might help you in a pinch from our large PL 480 Title II Program stocks. If you are contemplating a program of any size, we could perhaps stock it for you.

Please let us know your further thinking and suggested courses of action and whether or not you want us to take any action or to wait until we hear from you further.

We presume you are abreast of cable traffic on the emergency foodstuffs and seeds for your Lao Bao needs and are waiting your further confirmation before proceeding. I went up and personally checked out the possibilities - the memorandum I wrote about it is attached. I don't believe you can expect much immediate action here, however, due to the local crisis.

Finally, as you know, we got off the airshipment of improved variety sweet potato tubers and cuttings for Pop on schedule despite some hectic moments assembling it. We hope you have already gotten the cuttings planted. 100 sets of instructions were sent on how to plant them. We suggest that the tubers be planted in a good moist place near a stream.

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GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3-year intervals.
Declassified after 12 years.

DECLASSIFIED UNDER AUTHORITY OF THE
INTERAGENCY SECURITY CLASSIFICATION APPEALS PANEL,
E.O. 13526, SECTION 5.3(b)(3)
ISCAP APPEAL NO. 2015-111, document no. 32
DECLASSIFICATION DATE: May 01, 2017

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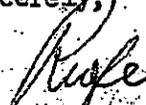
bottom where you can irrigate the patches by hand in the dry season. This will give you a permanent supply of improved cuttings for later extension. We have succeeded in extending these sweet potatoes all over Vietnam from a few hundred original cuttings brought in five years ago. The results are dramatic with average yields running three to four times local varieties under similar planting and growing conditions.

We also shipped four improved-variety, cross-bred piglets which have been fully inoculated against swine diseases. These piglets are the kind with which we are having such fine success here in our pig program and are sent as a special surprise for Pop. They grow three times as fast and four times as big as local native pigs and we think they will do the same for him. There are three sows and a boar, so he should have piglets in about seven more months. We are enclosing some literature on our pig program for his use.

That covers quite a little ground for one letter, so will close for now with the happy news that despite other difficulties, our rural program is still going -- in most areas -- like a house-a-fire. Unless we can solve the political problems soon, however, all may well be lost. Hope to hear from you that the sweet potatoes and pigs are as good for you as they have been for us.

My regards to Jo Ann, Charlie Mann and Pop.

Sincerely,



R. C. Phillips

P. S. Would appreciate your permission to release the OB personnel if it is feasible.

cc: Pop Buell

Enclosures

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Mr. William C. Trusheart, Charge d'Affaires
ad interim

August 16, 1963

Rufus C. Phillips

Assistance to FAR Battalion 33

1. During my recent stay in Hue, I was briefed on 12 August by General Tri, Commander of the 1st Division, ARVN, and his G-2, Captain Minh, on the status of FAR Battalion 33.

2. At the beginning of the briefing I explained to General Tri that USOM/Vietnam had been asked to look into the possibility of supplying rice and other assistance to FAR Battalion 33 which was reported to be starving and I would appreciate any information he could give me about the status of the Battalion and of any assistance the GVN was giving it. General Tri and Captain Minh then gave me (along with Mr. Helbo, U. S. Consul at Hue, Mr. Greiner of CIA, Mr. Asher of USIS, Lt. Col. Dunlap of MAAG, and Mr. Maynard of USOM) a very detailed run-down on the FAR Battalion and ARVN contact with it. Afterwards, he gave me several papers plus a map (which are attached) which cover most of the information given in the briefing.

3. Several important points were made during the briefing which do not, however, show up in the attached papers. According to General Tri, the 1st Division has had a five man intelligence team with the FAR Battalion for several months. The Division is fully aware of their requirements, its representatives having personally visited all the units. At present, the Battalion and the population are having difficulties in feeding themselves but are not actually starving. General Tri has been negotiating with the FAR Commander for some time and has recently concluded an agreement with him to exchange 500,000 VN Piastres for Lao Kip each month in order to permit the Lao to purchase foodstuffs in Vietnam. ARVN will also supply the Lao with vehicles and gasoline. In return for this, the FAR Battalion has agreed to carry out intelligence activities for the 1st Division (covering the main infiltration routes between Houei Sane and Tchepone) and to provide cover for intelligence and sabotage activities of VN special forces-type teams. According to General Tri, this agreement had been concurred in by the President and he is expecting funds to put it into effect.

4. General Tri made the point several times that due to the situation the Lao Battalion found itself in, it had in the past played ball with

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oth side. Although the Lao Commander is anti-communist in his beliefs, no activities of any consequence have been carried out against the Pathet Lao. General Tri made it clear that he did not anticipate any real action from the Battalion, but that he believed the advantages to be derived from monitoring, if not actually controlling, the infiltration between Houei Sane and Tehepene were so great that it was well worth trying to assist and use the Battalion. He felt that adequate cooperation could be obtained by carefully controlling the granting of assistance. General Tri asked that any assistance granted be channelled through, and carefully controlled by ARVN, expressing a conviction that cooperation received from the Battalion would otherwise be minimal.

5. During the briefing it was stated that the Lao would need rice in addition to the exchange funds mentioned in the attached papers, although this is not stated in the documents. This is apparent from the relatively small amount of money proposed to be exchanged monthly, and the reduction by nearly one-third from the nominal ration value. This point, as well as the discrepancy between strength breakdown and total strength for rations, of the Lao Battalion, needs further clarification.

6. General Tri and his staff gave me the impression of knowing exactly what they were about. I indicated to him that it was very doubtful that we would be able to assist with any funds, but that we might be able to help with supplies in kind, if required. This could be done by making purchases at Quang Tri, through our provincial representatives, of supplies which would then be turned over to ARVN for delivery to Lao Bao, and pick-up by the Lao. General Tri said that this procedure would be agreeable to him.

7. Comments and Recommendations:

a. General Tri was frank and open in his presentation, which appeared to be entirely above-board. The impression was given that American support and participation were welcome. I believe that General Tri's analysis of the situation is correct, and I agree with his view that assistance should be channelled through ARVN and carefully controlled in order to assure the continued cooperation of the Lao Battalion.

b. Based on the foregoing, I would be happy to contact Secretary Thuan to determine if, and how, the GVN plans to support General Tri's agreement. Following that, I suggest a meeting with CAS and MAC-V to discuss how American support and participation should be handled.

cc: Mr. J. L. Brent, Director, USOM
Mr. D. R. Smith, OSA
Major General R. G. Stilwell, J-3, MAC-V

DEM
CW
This sounds all right
to me - we still work
Saigon to keep us in
forward to be sure it's
working.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

MANV - 1
MISSION TO VIETNAM

12

November 7, 1963

Mr. Mann:

AMERICAN EMBASSY
SAIGON VIETNAM
October 31, 1963

Attached is a letter from Rufe Phillips. I am not sure of where these should be taken up but I would guess it would be either in your committee or in the Chadbourn committee if this has been set up.

Evidence so far indicates Rufe's points are very well taken.

Leroy S. Wehrle

YOC Committee

AS

ed from General Oudone will be able to deliver. person whom you might be try.

Max

riends of mine and I have sure that Oudone could you are currently under-

Disaga

be away from the Mission if we can help you, please as Assistant Director.

ram and it looks as though comment without being on and see it; however, I did east in the written des-program. From my own ex-program here, I have found of all and that any rural assemble a three-legged stool, al and economic development e village chiefs have tra-gram of improving Tasseng, ituted (indoctrination and ards, complaint and action ach village to hold a new rship. If there is some-ould provide the population

in the villages with an opportunity to things and could be tied in with an overall idea of basic democracy beginning at the grass root level. Training programs could also be instituted for the village chiefs.

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UNITED STATES OPERATIONS MISSION TO VIETNAM

AMERICAN EMBASSY
SAIGON VIETNAM
October 31, 1963

Mr. Leroy S. Wehrle
Deputy Director
USAID
c/o American Embassy
Vientiane, Laos

Dear Roy:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I received from General Oudone Sananikone and a letter to him which I hope you will be able to deliver. Oudone is a very talented and highly motivated person whom you might be able to help to make a contribution to his country.

He and his wife have long been personal friends of mine and I have the greatest confidence in both of them. I am sure that Oudone could make a major contribution to the program that you are currently undertaking.

As I stated in my letter to Oudone, I will be away from the Mission here for at least 3 months. In the meantime, if we can help you, please contact my Deputy, Bert Fraleigh, who is acting as Assistant Director.

I have read the dispatch on your new program and it looks as though you've made an excellent start. I hesitate to comment without being on the spot and having a chance to talk about it and see it; however, I did note that one thing seemed to be missing, at least in the written description. This was the political part of the program. From my own experience, even prior to the Strategic Hamlet Program here, I have found this to be perhaps the most important factor of all and that any rural security program, if it is to succeed, must resemble a three-legged stool, with security, political improvement, and social and economic development as the three legs. I realize that in Laos, the village chiefs have traditionally been elected, but I wonder if a program of improving Tasseng, Muong and Khuong leadership could not be instituted (indoctrination and training programs, competitions, incentive awards, complaint and action system, etc.), along with possibly obliging each village to hold a new election if only to confirm the existing leadership. If there is something wrong with the local leadership, this would provide the population in the villages with an opportunity to change things and could be tied in with an overall idea of basic democracy beginning at the grass root level. Training programs could also be instituted for the village chiefs.

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Shayne

Disagree

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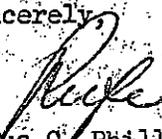
I believe that such a program as you are undertaking needs a basic and simple political philosophy as a springboard if the economic and social improvements are to have real meaning to the average villager, thus increasing his loyalty to the government.

I am sure that there are better ideas and more practical ones than those which I throw out here on the spur of the moment. These are merely illustrative of the kind of approach and thinking which I believe should be an essential part of any village development and security program (Ayub Khan's basic democracy program in Pakistan is perhaps another example).

In closing, please let Bert know if there is any help that you think we can render. There may also be some specific development program ideas growing out of our experience here which could be utilized in Laos.

My warmest regards to JoAnn.

Sincerely,


Rufus C. Phillips
Assistant Director
for Rural Affairs

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