

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

5 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

This is the message Secretary Rusk mentioned at lunch today.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
EO 12958
3.4(b)(6)>25Yrs
(C)

I had requested permission from Secretary Rusk to disregard an instruction from the Ambassador that we not distribute this message, rather that we all await the Ambassador's own description of a conversation [redacted] into which this material would be incorporated.

EO 12958
3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
EO 12958
3.4(b)(6)>25Yrs
(C)

The message is not in quotation marks, because it is our Station Chief's write-up of the main points [redacted] made to him.

Rich
Richard Helms

Attachment

~~SECRET~~

Thursday, September 7, 1967

EO 12958 3.4(b)(1)>25Yrs
(C)

TEXT OF CIA REPORT [REDACTED]

A resident [REDACTED] who returned [REDACTED] in late August, 1967, from Canton where she had a reunion with her family, including a daughter who arrived in Canton from Haiphong in July, 1967, and a grandson who also fled from Haiphong to China in mid-August, stated that according to these members of her family there was no electricity nor water service in Haiphong. (Source comment: These refugees were not questioned about the specific dates the stoppages occurred nor the emergency measures put into effect.)

According to these two members of her family, the electric dynamo station at Lac Vien and Minh Khai Streets, Haiphong, had been completely destroyed in a recent air attack. (Source comment: The informant did not question her relatives about the specific date of the incident.) The refugees stated further that other recent air attacks against Haiphong had resulted in the destruction or heavy damage of the Haiphong Cement Works, the sardine factory at Cua Can, the battery factory near the railroad bridge, the wool factory at An Duong, and the dockyards at Ha Ly. The refugees reported also that the Haiphong customs godowns had suffered heavy damage as well as the Paul Bert Quarters of a cadre training facility in recent attacks.

The refugees stated (but did not say they had personally witnessed the incident) that during one recent air attack against Haiphong, in early August, the crew of an anti-aircraft position in the city had panicked before American aircraft were actually over the city and had fired their weapons at ground level instead of skyward, killing and wounding a large number of civilians gathered near a square on Saigon Street close to the Chinese Communal House.

According to the refugees, living conditions in North Vietnam were extremely hard. Families were being allowed to purchase only two rice bowls and one towel per family every six months. These essentials were only sold upon submission of the family's registration booklet. In the event of breakage to a rice bowl, the broken pieces had to be shown in evidence before authorization could be obtained to replace them. Each family was further allowed only one half a bar of soap every three months.

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The refugees stated that vegetables were rare and expensive. Although meat was available, the price had reached a level beyond the means of most, with some people complaining they had not tasted pork in a year; pork was being sold at 13 Dongs a catty. The price of rice at the official rate was set at .30 Dongs per catty; rice on the black market, however, commanded a price of three Dongs per catty. The official rice ration was approximately 15 kilos per person per month, but this was cut by 50 percent with flour from the Soviet Union. No cooking oil or sugar was seen on the market. It appeared that the North Vietnamese Government was acting leniently towards the black market, since the refugees had heard of no profiteer having ever been punished for this activity. Cheap cotton cloth from the Soviet Union had recently been brought in and was not rationed. Despite its poor quality, according to the refugees, the people were happy to have it and it sold well.

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