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REPORT VIET NAM EMERGENCY

Telephone conversation with Mr. Jim Bullington of State Department: (3/14/75)

Mr. Bullington states that, as for the situation in Banmethuot, there has been no radio contact with the American personnel there since about 11:30 a.m. Saigon time, March 12. He assumes (and the State Department assumes) that the battery for the radio went dead. He reports, however, that the situation is very dire, indeed. The NVA troops have taken over most of the city, only a very few remaining pockets of resistance are still inside the city. The South Vietnamese have sent in substantial forces to reinforce their situation there, but these are on the outside of the city and perhaps will endeavor to retake the city.

As to the general situation, Mr. Bullington states that it is his opinion that this is a general offensive, probably on the magnitude of the March, 1972 offensive. There is major fighting going on in all four military regions of the country. Yesterday attacks were launched in the Delta and so fighting has spread throughout the entire country. These attacks, in some instances, are involving division and reinforced division elements of the North Vietnamese army. There are a number of vital installations that are under attack. This cannot be considered a peripheral situation.

He reports that the city of Tinan is cut off and is under quite heavy attack. He also reports that an attack was launched in the Delta against the city of Cantho. Another province center in the Delta, Moc Hoa, is under threat of attack though no major attack has yet been launched in that area.

Mr. Bullington stated that he was in Hua during the Tet offensive of 1968 and for nine days, he was hiding behind enemy lines before he was finally rescued, or was found, by the elements that reoccupied the city of Hua. It is his advice that the less publicity that we give and the news media give, to our personnel in Banmethuot, the better chance they have of escaping. For this reason the State Department has not publicly released their names. Certainly we must tell their families and interested friends but at this point it is his advice that we should not make this a publicity campaign.

The following is a phone conversation with Drew Sawin, also on March 14:

Regarding the Viet Nam situation, Drew says that in Banmethuot the situation is much the same. He states there are three very firm bunkers in the city that have been there for quite sometime and they believe that the group of Americans is in one of those bunkers. They have not been able to determine which one. According to information he has, their food supply and water supply seems to be adequate. They have had trouble trying to find which of the bunkers is the location where they presently are.

*He says 18 "other Americans" are in Banmethuot, but no one is saying anything about them. "I assume they are our people", he said.*

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There is a special unit with the South Vietnamese forces who have made repeated attempts to get into the city and find the American group. They thus far have failed. It is also his understanding that FULRO elements are also attempting to get in contact with our people. It is his assumption that the Johnsons are probably with FULRO people since just about thirty-five yards from Johnsons' house was the FULRO leader's home. Drew said that our properties in Bamshtuot, residences, Bible school and church, have probably been severely damaged because of their proximity to the South Vietnamese artillery base.

He further states that there are eight divisions of North Vietnamese troops poised on the 17th parallel.

#### CAMBODIA

Drew says there is one note of encouragement. Sihanouk wants to talk. It is Sihanouk's persuasion, and also the persuasion of people in Washington, that, if Phnom Penh falls in the fighting, the North Vietnamese will control the situation and Cambodia will cease to exist as a separate country. It is Sihanouk's concern that some compromise be reached before the city is over run. He would then return with the support of the Chinese. Drew states: Phnom Penh will go. The question is whether we can help it to fall to the proper kind of government setup rather than to the North Vietnamese. He states that Mike Mansfield will probably be asked by the President within the next day or two to go to Peking in order to contact Sihanouk there.

The following is a resume of a telephone conversation with Jack Reville at 10:30 a.m., March 14:

#### BANMETHUOT:

The situation has not appreciably changed as far as the missionaries are concerned. Radio contact has been lost and not reestablished. Practically the entire city is under the control of the NVA forces. Reinforcements have been sent in by the Saigon Government but they are located outside the city. Rumor has it (and it is only rumor) that Rev. Y. Han, Rev. Y. Ngue, and Rev. Cung have been captured.

#### PLEIKU

All C&MA personnel have left Pleiku with the exception of Dr. Greene and Gail Fleming.

Mr. and Mrs. David Heath and Mr. and Mrs. David Beack are in Saigon. Bao Loc, however, is still reported to be peaceful.

Fighting has slackened off to the North of Hue. At present it seems that there is no major effort to overrun the city of Hue.

TININ

There is no fighting reported in the city. Thirteen Vietnamese Christian families have moved into the church. The mission has sent in money for rice for these people.

CATHO

It is reported to be all right. The Ellisons have indicated that they are fine.

The Kaysers are still in Phan Rang. They have not moved as previously reported. There is no trouble in their area.

Rick Drummond called from Danang. He says there is no significant activity in and around the city itself. To the south at Tamky, there is heavy fighting. There was a very excellent district conference held at Danang recently. There are one hundred thousand refugees in the city of Danang who have fled south from the Quan Tri province.

Jack Revelle also reported that residents of the city of Barmethuot are fleeing to the East. He is not certain how they managed to get out whether the North Vietnamese have permitted them to leave or just what the situation is, but this is the report that has reached him.

I told Jack that Dr. L. L. King and I would arrive in Saigon on Wednesday. I told him that we would want to meet with his mission committee on Thursday and that we would ask him to advise Mr. Mieng of our coming and indicate that we would like to meet with as many of the national church committee as possible on Monday, March 24. Jack said he would arrange for us to see the U. S. Ambassador and, also, the Canadian Ambassador.

Jack also reports that the report about the Raday village (where Johnsons presumably are) being largely devastated is not true. Aerial photos of that area, which have been shared with Revelle, do not show significant destruction or damage.

T. G. Mangham, Jr.  
m Regional Director

TGM/eh

cc - Nathan Bailey  
L. L. King  
G. M. Cathey

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