

TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH FRANK SIEVERTS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT
IN WASHINGTON.

March 18, 1975

FILE _____

Mr. Sieverts: I just wanted to touch base with you because I have talked so often with Grady and Dr. Bailey about the missionaries missing since 1962 and I'm now so personally concerned about the 8 who have been in Banmethuot during the last few days.

What do Dr. King and Grady plan to do when they get to Saigon?

Mr. Kerr: They're going really to get an overall assessment of our entire work in Southeast Asia with the view of having to make some decisions about personnel and where they will go if they have to leave the areas they're in at present. They hope, if conditions permit, to get into Phnom Penh for a day just to see what is happening there, then they will go over to Bangkok, and possibly up to Vientiane for a couple of days to get a view of that work.

Mr. Sieverts: Do you have any information at all about the group in Banmethuot?

Mr. Kerr: No, we had a call from Mr. Revelle in Saigon yesterday, and he simply reported that the city was in the hands of the North Vietnamese. He said the village where most of the refugees had fled to after the take-over of the city has now also been taken by the North Vietnamese, so that if our people happened to flee with them, then presumably they're in that trap now.

Mr. Sieverts: But you have no direct communications with the Aids in Banmethuot, so as far as you are concerned, they are missing?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Sieverts: We regard them that way, too. What has been your policy in talking with the press? Have you given out the names of the people?

Mr. Kerr: No, sir, we have taken the position that we understand is also the position of the State Department as far as the press is concerned. We just don't want to give out the names at this point.

Mr. Sieverts: But most of the names are in the paper, unfortunately; probably they were received from Viet Nam. OK then, there's nothing else we can add. I hope you will convey to Dr. Bailey and to Grady and all the others our very great concern about this situation. We're as much in the dark, I'm afraid, as you are as to what is happening. I am struck by the fact that Mrs. Mitchell is in the group. Many times I've thought about her over the years.

Mr. Kerr: We can be sure you will keep us informed, is that right?

Mr. Sieverts: Absolutely. You have Jim Bullington's number (Viet Nam desk) and let me give you mine.

Frank Sieverts - (202) 632-9454

Jim Bullington - (202) 632-2038

If you get any word, please call - if you get any indication from Grady or Dr. King it would be very helpful if we stayed in the closest touch. Will Grady be in touch with the American Embassy?

Mr. Kerr: Yes, he does plan to, and to get in contact with everybody and anybody who might have any help for us there.

Do you have any word about any of the other areas in Viet Nam and the seriousness of the situation? Are you anticipating a full attack shortly - do you think the government will stand, or not stand? Do you think there might be a new DMZ? Is there any information along this line you can give us?

Mr. Sieverts: Nothing. The newspapers are speculating on a withdrawal from the entire Highlands area. We can't confirm that, but we can't deny it, either. That's really all I can say at this point.