For Meeting with Refugee Comm.  27 April 1955

1. Review of report -
   a. general aspect
   b. specific questions -
      1. decentralization
      2. adm., services, exp., fin.
      3. program changes etc.

2. Discussion of Regional or Field Adm. -
   a. geographic boundaries
   b. location of camps
   c. other possible ways of org.
   d. Provincial Chiefs, etc.

3. Other questions
   a. resp. of Chef de Cabinet
   b. of Dip. Comm.
   c. utilization of personnel
   d. training program
   e. rel. of dir. of resettlement & planning
   f. survey team & field effort
Memorandum for the Record

Meeting with Mr. Ton That Hoi, Délégué for the PMS

Place: Dalat

Date: March 30, 1956 (p.m.) March 31, 1956 (a.m.)

Present: Dr. M. Phuoc, Refugee Commission, Walter Mode

There were two purposes for the meeting with the Délégué: (1) to explain the Interior Report and (2) to ask his information concerning the present study of the four ministries.

Concerning the first purpose, I talked very frankly as to the background material, the basic research and interviews which were done, and the general conclusions which were reached. I also told him of the meeting with the Minister of Interior, at which time we suggested that a commission on area boundaries be set up consisting of the Secretary of Interior, three regional délégués, representation from the Office of the Presidency, and that MSU field administration staff would be available as consultants. Mr. Hoi thought that this was a good idea. He said that he had the impression that when the Michigan State report was made, it would eventually be carried out without consultation with him. I said that I did not think that this was so and would certainly recommend against any arbitrary move of this nature.

I told him that we recognize many special problems in PMS, such as the predominance of tribal people over the Vietnamese to the ratio of about eight to one. He said that this fact alone was reason for special consideration of the PMS area. He cited certain items which he had worked for in his handling of the situation, such as: (1) equal pay in both civil and military duty (this apparently was not done under the French); (2) that schools were being provided on an equal basis with the Vietnamese; and (3) that preferential treatment in certain taxes was given to the tribal people, especially the tax which required a certificate to be carried on your person at all times. He explained that the tribal people did not want to carry identifications and that this had been eliminated because they do not live in one place and are nomadic by their nature.

Mr. Hoi said he would be happy to serve on such a commission if he were invited.

Mr. Hoi invited me to return and see for myself some of the tribal problems on a field trip which would include the three provinces of Kon Tum, Plei KU, and Ban Me Thuot. He said that he, personally, would go with me and point out some of the real difficulties and the problems which made PMS different from either Central Vietnam or South Vietnam. I told him that, if possible, I would try and arrange for such a trip.
The second purpose of our two meetings was to obtain his thoughts on the four ministries. Because of the limitations on his time, very little was discussed concerning Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, and Education. The primary topic of conversation was the Viet Minh infiltration in the tribal communities. He thought that the Information and Civic Action services should be greatly expanded in PMS. He thought that instead of taking refugees from the North, people from the tribes and communities in PMS should be selected for Civic Action training and that they return to their village and community instead of a person from the North. I asked him if he thought that he could supply 300 young persons who could take training at Civic Action. He assured me that he could. He suggested that this be done promptly because of the current problem with the Viet Minh. He said that the Viet Minh was making inroads very fast on the tribal population and that the Vietnamese government had done very little to either stop this or to have a positive program to win the tribal people.

Walter W. Mode
Memorandum for the Record

Meeting with the Commissioner-General for Refugees

Place: Dalat

Date: March 31 (p.m.) 1956

Present: Mr. Bui-van-Luong, Commissioner-General for Refugees; Dr. M. Phuoc; Walter Mode

The Commissioner-General for Refugees was in Dalat on a holiday, and he invited me to his house for a social visit, but it actually ended up in a discussion of the refugee problems. No particular decisions concerning them were made, but he expressed satisfaction although not perfect agreement with the six-month report on the central office study which was made a few days ago.

Walter W. Mode