

EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
OFFICE OF THE NAVAL ATTACHE
SAIGON

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From: U.S. Naval Attache, Saigon
To: Director of Naval Intelligence

Subj: Intelligence relations between the Office of the Naval Attache and the French, statement of

1. Within the past week it has become increasingly apparent to the Office of the Naval Attache that formal intelligence relations between this office and the French, which have been deteriorating over the period of the past several months, have reached a point at which the French refuse to discuss - much less exchange - matters of mutual intelligence interest. This deterioration is best described by citing the results of three recent approaches through normal intelligence channels for what has heretofore been routine information.

a. A written request for a breakdown of French Naval and French Naval Air Forces in Viet Nam by numbers and types of ships/aircraft, officers and enlisted, was sent to the Military Attache Section of the Secretariat Permanent de la Defense in December 1955. No answer was ever received. Attempts of this office to expedite the receipt of this information were met by obvious stalling tactics culminating in our being referred to Major DEGAS, G-2, EMCEC (Etat Major Commandant en Chef). DEGAS unhesitatingly stated that such information would not be forthcoming except on a quid pro quo basis. Since such an exchange was beyond the operational scope of this office, this meeting with DEGAS terminated the attempt to obtain this information through normal attache channels.

b. An informal approach on an other intelligence matter was made by ASTALUSNA on 7 February 1956 to LT JEAN TALLOT who has replaced LCDR RAPIN in the Deuxieme Bureau of the French Navy Headquarters (F.M.E.O.). Upon handing him a written sheet upon which there was stated a question, TALLOT picked it up, glanced at it and firmly returned it. Speaking in French (which was odd since he is completely fluent in English and has never spoken French to ASTALUSNA before) with the unmistakable intention of going on record in a matter in which he did not wish to be misunderstood, TALLOT stated that he was not prepared to officially exchange any information with the Office of the Naval Attache, such an exchange being specifically forbidden to him by directive from higher authority. Any intelligence exchange would have to be submitted in accordance with the provisions of a monthly exchange system between CINCPAC and EMCEC utilizing the offices of the Senior American Attache (USARMA).

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c. A third example of French reluctance (if not refusal) to exchange information was revealed when ASTALUSNA asked CDT PIFRE of the Military Attache Section of the Secretariat Permanent de la Defense when the French would hold another briefing on the activities of the DRV, PIFRE's answer to this was, "Captain, your next briefing will be at the cocktail party".

2. It has been frankly stated to ALUSNA that the French intelligence community feels it has been left holding the bag when it comes to their receiving intelligence in return for that which they have passed to the Americans. Specifically, as expressed by DEGAS and TALIOT, the French were stampeded into releasing information to be used for a briefing of Admiral Stump when he was in Saigon in November 1955. The information was purportedly given with the understanding that the Americans would respond to a set of specific questions in exchange. Since no response has been forthcoming and since the past two monthly intelligence releases by CINCPAC to the French have been negative, it is apparent that formal intelligence meetings between the Office of the Naval Attache and the French are at an end.

3. It should also be made a matter of record that TALIOT remarked that if the Americans wished to set up some other exchange system (through Washington and/or Paris/Saigon) rather than through CINCPAC, perhaps that might be made the basis for future exchanges between the French and the Americans, but in the absence of any such arrangements, no information would be exchanged or discussed.

4. The only other channel left to ALUSNA is on the basis of his personal social relations with VADM Jozan and his staff which continue pleasant and frequent. These often lead to discussion of problems affecting French-American relations in Viet Nam which are quite frank but not very constructive serving primarily to emphasize their unhappy and bitter state of mind over their own country's deteriorating position versus that of the U.S., not only in Viet Nam but in world affairs.


R. S. BROOKINGS II