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THE GABLATIN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SERVICE

STUART L. HANNON  
*Vice President*

May 16, 1968

Mr. Ogden Williams  
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c/o American Embassy  
APO 96243,  
San Francisco, California

Dear Oggie:

I must start out by saying that I am not sure if I wrote to you a month or so ago or was just thinking about it. In any event, I did intend to communicate with you as a result of a series of discussions I have had with AID people, particularly Sy Taubenblatt, regarding a better planned and coordinated approach of the private sector to some of the non-military problems of South Vietnam. Admittedly, it is hard to separate these things at this awful stage of the conflict but, regardless of what evolves from the propaganda show in Paris, something better will have to be done. In a postwar situation, of course, the immediate reconversion problems constitute a vast pattern which may be premature at this point to elaborate on.

As you may or may not know, after I returned from Vietnam and spent a year with AID, partly in communications but predominantly in briefing FSOs and FSRs as well as lecturing on the outside, I joined General Electric in charge of a number of industrial and investment studies of Southeast Asia. This did not include Vietnam. However, my activity did involve a number of trips to Asia, meetings with national development banks and the ADB, with our Ambassadors and economics people outside of Vietnam. When I left GE for the above organization about eight months ago, I took a number of these interests with me. We are involved in an increasing amount of business consultation, both with U.S. corporations and with Asian corporations and governments. Along with all this, I have tried of course to keep in touch with almost everything in Vietnam which, as you can appreciate, is no easy job.

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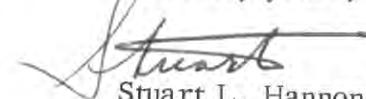
What I would like to have very much from you, if you have the time and interest, is a statement and corresponding evaluation of those systems, services, managerial elements, etc. that Vietnam might best utilize at this point from American private enterprise. I am familiar with most of our business activities over there now, so you needn't cover that ground. Rather, what is needed, what is missing? Perhaps, above all, with application to some solution -- which would certainly be political as well as economic -- of the horrendous refugee crisis.

I am involved in quite a lot of coordination on this Southeast Asian predicament so far as business interests are concerned and I will be seeing Bill Jorden as soon as he returns from Paris, as I saw him shortly before he left. As you know, he is the spokesman for our delegation there, and before I left AID I worked closely with him and with George Reedy in the White House on a number of angles, some of which worked out satisfactorily and were supported in one form or another by Mike Forrestal, Unger, and a few others.

If you wish, Oggie, your letter to me can certainly be confidential, although there is nothing confidential about our meetings with AID personnel in Washington. All I want is the best assessment that I presently can get from Saigon and I don't know of anyone who can better provide it than you. As you might imagine, I have felt like a Cassandra for a long time, remembering some of my futile efforts in 1962 to inject more political corollary into our economic efforts and to concentrate much more on the five northern provinces instead of scattering our shot from Hue to Camau.

With all good wishes -- and try to stay out of range!

Sincerely yours,



Stuart L. Hannon

SLH/cl

P.S. As you may know, Senator Ribicoff's campaign against the prodigality of our Vietnam costs is going to stir up another hornet's nest of questions, especially coming in the <sup>wake</sup> of Gaud's own admissions of bad performance. So it may be that the planning of a few positive answers involving suggestions from the private sector could be well undertaken at this very time.