

ADM-ARBOSO-VN

(Assorted International Meddlers - Aggregated Rover Boys & Old Soldiers,
Operational - Vietnam)

13 Feb 63

Dear Ed:

When Sam was through he mentioned the difficulty in getting informal dope, so told him that we would try to fill you in at fairly regular intervals. Although not a great deal new or exciting, will try herewith, and would appreciate an indication whether or not it should continue.

Planning and preparation for surrender program going well, in fact faster than we can keep up with it. Planned kick-off in about a month, but anticipate it may be delayed to finish preparations. Principal planning weakness now is that it is thought most who come in will be sent back to their hamlets, the rest being mostly exploited for paywar or intelligence, relatively and absolutely few being resettled. Believe the VN have their sights set too low, but not anticipate difficulty in adjusting them if necessary.

Lou & I 3 weeks ago took Manny Manahan to visit some Spec Forces Montagnard villages. He (me too) tremendously impressed by work being done, potential for more, desirability of getting Igorotes in to help bridge the gap between Montagnards and lowlanders (which causing much high-level concern on both sides here now - many Vns still feel liquidation best solution of Mont problem-- our partywaists feel we should quickly turn over Monts to Vn control). Have tried to stir up interest in getting in Igorotes, several people seem interested, may be reflected in messages stateside. Talked it up with Blackburn when he visited Phils.

Biggest problem with Strategic Hamlets is getting information about them. No system for collecting, and individuals in provinces find themselves running like hell to keep up with the few which they deal with. Badly needed is responsive system of regular inspection of all of them, with reporting tapped at province level by US reps there, ditto in Saigon. Problems: Persuading VNs that we should be allowed to do it; Selling importance to US officials and getting the money for the job. Talked it up to Tanham while he here, on basis that it would be a wonderful research job for Rand to sublet to ECCOI. Idea being that we could pull selected ECCOI people who know the language, and put them on a regular survey and reporting schedule.

Am getting worried about Macapagal, who seems determined to make himself a bigger and better Queson. Find that few of our friends supported him because they liked or believed in him - merely as better than Garcia. Johnny SJ refused to support either one. Manny doing very good job, has developed a great deal, seems very sound. Your gang in Manila knows you in line for 2nd star, extended tour -- very happy. Repeat that you still have a home there; in my opinion nuts if you don't move into it eventually.

Atmosphere here in Rufe shop very fine - get things done. He doing tremendous job, you should be very proud of him. Much as I hate to work, and to leave home, am still happy to try to help him out. Who knows, may get paid for it some day -- meantime there is a lot to do, and it needs doing. Take it easy, let us hear from you.

T Malupit (Ba)