

CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. John M. Dunn, Personal Assistant to the
Ambassador, Saigon

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Proposed Ambassadorial Visit to Phu Yen Province

1. I would strongly recommend that before I leave at the end of next week, the Ambassador visit one of the provinces in which our counterinsurgency/provincial rehabilitation operations have been most extensive and where tangible results have been achieved. This would give him a first hand, on-the-ground view of what is possible here in Vietnam and also of what some of the real field problems are.

2. I recommend Phu Yen Province for such a visit because much of our pioneer efforts in provincial rehabilitation were started there. This was the first province in which a coordinated military and civilian pacification effort, based on the strategic hamlet concept, was started in June 1962 and where USOM placed its first Provincial Representative in October 1962. From a situation in the Spring of 1962 when the province chief was restricted in his movements to the front yard of his house, the security situation has so improved that today travel is relatively free throughout most of the lowland area of the province. What would be of most interest to the Ambassador, I believe, are the political as well as the social and economic developments which have reinforced the improvement in security and have given it a sound political base. This is the province, visited by Mayor Cromier of Leominster, Mass., in which the growth of grass-roots self-government impressed him greatly.

3. As an incidental item of interest, our Province Representative there is Bob Burns, a native son of Massachusetts.

4. During the visit, it is anticipated that the Ambassador would spend most of his time seeing the hamlet people and the provincial administration in action. The accelerated pig raising program, which began in this province, would, of course, receive due attention. He would also visit hamlets which have actually been attacked by the VC and have a chance to talk to the hamlet people.

5. If the Ambassador agrees, about 48 hours notice is required to arrange the trip. We would plan to leave at 0800 in the morning, arriving at Tuy Hoa, the capital of Phu Yen, at 1000; leave Phu Yen at 1600 and return to Saigon at 1800. Depending upon the Ambassador's inclination, Vietnamese officials such as the Minister of Interior and Colonel Lac, who are directly connected with the Strategic Hamlets, can be invited. Would suggest you, Bill Trueheart, Joe Brent, Dick Stilwell, Bert Fraleigh (my deputy) and myself in addition to the Ambassador as the American party. USOM will furnish the aircraft, a two-engine, ten-place Beechcraft.

I would recommend Tuesday or Wednesday of next week for the trip.