

file - personal

President Diem's

10 Feb 63

Dear Rufe:

An idea has come up for a way to renew and strengthen the bonds of better understanding between Vietnam and our people in the Philippines. The need for something like this is very apparent to all of us who still maintain our interest in his heroic struggle, while engaged in some rather desperate struggles of our own.

Pres. Diem's image here has become vague and shadowed. The former appreciation of the humaneness and unassuming dignity which characterized him has given way to a rather shadowy picture of a family-centered autocrat who does not have the human touch. This is a sharp contrast to the true image which we in OB were so successful in projecting here and elsewhere before; the image which all who truly believe in fighting for freedom would like to see projected, if only they knew how true it is. Manny Manghan, who saw him recently, was very much impressed by the contrast between the real man, and the vague image which is usually presented.

There is an excellent opportunity for the sort of small gesture which could have much better results than a large impersonal one. OB has started a pilot project of upgrading livestock in the Philippines, an approach which seems to offer the best means of improving agronomy methods and results at the lowest cost. Be can give you the details. We have acquired, through CARE, 24 pedigree Landrace sows and four boars, and the same number of Yorkshires, as the beginning of a privately-financed OB breeding station.

The duck strains in the Philippines also need upgrading, to produce better layers, and better meat-producers. Vietnam has excellent ducks, both of the Peking variety, and the local ducks which are cured and sent to Hongkong. We would like to get 12 ducks and three drakes of the best egg, meat, and combination varieties there, in order to propagate them here, and release the offspring to our farmers. I suppose that your technical experts could find out from the Vietnamese experts the varieties most likely to prosper here.

If these ducks (and drakes) could be sent as President Diem's personal gift to the OB Foundation, it would be a dramatic illustration of his personal interest in the welfare of old friends -- much more effective than an impersonal gesture of rice to flood victims, for example. It would demonstrate that, despite natural resentment over the unduly heroic image of OB that was once fostered for fund-raising purposes, he still recognizes and remembers them.

It would be a real help to us, too. We have a bill for tax-exemption before our Congress, which means a great deal to us in facilitating the efforts of our Foundation. For President Diem to take time from his own desperate problems to help us with ours would mean the best kind of publicity for him and for us. be too much to ask

More, it would give me the leverage with my own Board of Directors so that we could reciprocate the gift with six three-month old Landrace and six Yorkshire boar piglets. These would be enough to upgrade the swine into Agrovilles, or three Strategic Hamlets. Shipping, I am sure, could be arranged through CARE.

Of course QB has not given up its international activities. You might be interested to know that the teams we are training now for Laos are being cross trained at Los Banos Agricultural school in animal diseases and nutritional problems. The laboratory technicians are receiving training in the preparation of livestock sera, and artificial insemination. In this way we are expanding on the concept we developed some years ago of multi-purpose teams, including, for the women, home technology, pest control, and plant diseases. The results are sometimes surprising, as for instance the bonzes of Sayaboury, who are now keeping busy with backyard gardens! This is our own answer to the Viet-Cong in Laos, and I think it might be useful in other places as well?

I would appreciate it if you could bring my idea to the President. I think a personal gesture of help to old buddies would have real psychological impact here. It would be a real help to us, too. Let me know how you make out, so that, if appropriate, I can start the machinery for transportation grinding at this end.

How do you like this new electric typewriter? Still trying to learn to use it, but sometimes it doesn't hit the letter I think it should.

Best to the wife and the young ones. Take time off from work to see them once in a while.

*Oscar.*

P.S: I once gave you a white carabao (statue) to remind you of you. I am sending you a pot-bellied, arthritic, and hornless - hence harmless - brown carabao to remind you of me. A bit battered and bedraggled, but still willing to try.

*O*