



Q

8 Oct.

1700

1250 Conn. Ave N.W.

Dear Ed,

I finally got to talk to
the "Chief" today. Had to
ride up to N.Y.C. with him
in his jetstar but managed
to talk to him on the way
back. Gave him the photos
and your letter.

He was very interested
to hear how you were doing.
I led in with an explanation
of what the photos were about
and how you were using
informal meetings with the
Vietnamese to get our ideas
across. How this contrasted
with previous formalism.

I told him that the main
~~was~~ obstacles of Vietnamese
sensitivity and U.S. bureaucracy
were slowly being overcome.

The establishment of close
personal relations with the Vietnamese
was developing well despite
the initial problems caused by
too much ~~the~~ publicity. ~~I~~
Getting the Americans working together
and turned to Vietnamese
needs was going to be your
biggest problems. I told him
about the informal team
dinner with Lodge, how narrow



and persons at it had been and
how Lodge took you with him
to see Ky and was giving you
freedom in which to operate. I
explained ~~that~~ ^{that} you had been
named as Chief of the U.S.

Mission Liaison Group in
charge of rural construction
(pacification), I told him that
you were beginning to con-

vert this into an operations
coordinating group on the U.S.
side and that this gave
you a good charter to assist
the Vietnamese politically in
their main problem, pacification,
which I equated with winning
the support of the population.

I told ^{him} you felt that Ky
had potential because he was
honest, intelligent, well-motivated
and could talk to people. I
said that if we could hold
the top three Generals - Ky,

Thieu and Thi together I
believed that stability could
be achieved. He asked about
Gent - I told him Gent had
volunteered his services as a
Doctor to the Government & that
Bui Diem who had been Gent's
principal assistant had continued
in the current government as
Ky's principal assistant. He asked
to be remembered to both Gent



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and Ben Dism. I told him
that Ben Dism had been
very helpful in setting ^{up} informal
dinners for you to get to
know Ky, Thien, etc.

He asked about the AID
Mission. I told him in some
detail how Wilkes had just
about wrecked it but Mann,
who was an action type, was
now trying to pull it back
together. He asked about

Bert. I told him we were
trying to work Bert back into
the AID Mission but were
having some problems because
Wilkes had carried out ~~as~~ a
character assassination campaign
against him. He asked me
to give him a list of the
team members he had met,
including Bert, because he
wanted to drop them a personal
note.

He asked me if I felt
you could pull it off. I
said yes, despite all the
difficulties, with some time
and a little luck. He ~~said~~
asked what he could do to
help from back here and
I said give Ed the time.



I said "There was so much deterioration and anarchy in South Vietnam that unity and the creation of a common cause took time. I said negotiations now, or any time soon would be disastrous. He said he agreed completely and that this was the point of view he was trying to put across to the President. I explained in brief, a few of the problems such as ~~the~~ corruption, religious division, the need for a moral basis for the war - the solutions for which could be found only with time and patience. He agreed and said he would do what he could.

The pit star was so noisy that I had to yell most of this at him. Senator Moss and Baye were in the seats alongside and did not hear except at one point he asked me to explain to them how some actions which looked good back here might cause problems in Vietnam. I said it look too often to the Vietnamese as if the Americans were making their decisions for them. I cited our emphasis in the press and how we were going to handle the refugees as an example. Here we were sending out all the experts and making it appear to the



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Vietnamese as if we were going
to make permanent refugees
out of them, while the Vietnamese
wanted, for good reasons, to train
and arm them to go back
to their own villages a
very special ~~public~~ approach.

The "chief" wanted Ky's
100 day speech inserted in the
Congressional Record. I'm trying
to get it to see if it
came out anything like you
wanted it. If not, we won't
do it. If you do get
some ^{which should be published} significant speeches soon
later on, I suggest you
mail them to me immediately.

Have also seen Unger (twice)
Brendy very briefly & Stoner.
Had lunch with Bill Connell &
gave him much the same as
above. Unger was very friendly.
I told him what the problems
were without going into ^{too much} detail & I was generally
optimistic about prospects while
being realistic about difficulties.
I explained to him the religious
problem and in general your
approach to it which he was
enthusiastic about. He was
enthusiastic about the scholar-



Ship program m. ⑥

Also talked to Chet Cooper in more guarded fashion. I met Vu Van Thai in Cooper's office & we had a nice general chat. He put in a plea for more help for Vietnamese students - particularly the ones at Hue. I related what Col Liew had said & Dr. Mai Van Ye - more book trips for the students to broaden their horizons. Thai was enthusiastic about television but wanted it under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education. Both Cooper & Unger thought this was a good idea as apparently L.B.V. would like to give the Vietnamese television but using the proposed US Armed Forces network. I don't think that will be useful unless the ^{true} ownership of the facilities can be completely relinquished & I don't see how that can be done. Separate "educational" TV for the Vietnamese with civics classes, adult education, etc would be terrific & would keep it from being the kind of propaganda with which the Vietnamese are already bored to death.

Have called Helen who sounded reasonably cheerful & all the other wives. Elzette was pretty depressed but



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I think I managed to cheer her
up.

Saw Tran Van Dinh who asked
me to pass on to you the following.
When Co was in town he learned
from Co's subordinates that
the guy has a terrible problem
on his back. His wife gambled
away 15,000,000 p's from the
"Veterans Fund" in one day. Ac-
cording to Dinh, this was confirmed
by General Vy who said that
he had ordered his ^{own} wife to
resign as Treasurer of the
"Veterans Fund" when she was asked
by Mrs Co to give her 1,000,000
p's without any justification.
Dinh said that one of the
teams must get close to Co
and help him work out this
problem. He said he talked
to Co & Co appeared nervous,
irritable and anti-American
~~to~~ in his statements -
undoubtedly because of this problem.
Dinh's solution for the Vietnamese
grafting wife problem is to
put all wives of the top
military command in Dalat &
have the generals share quarters
& a common mess in Saigon.
(Maybe this is the only solution)



As for his own future, Dinh
said he is ready to come under
my auspices you suggest. I
told him of Vo Van Hai's idea
of initially giving him a post
in the Foreign Ministry & he
agreed that this would be a
good first step if it could be
worked out. I explained about
how he had publicized in the
Foreign Press as a neutralist.
He said he could make some
strong anti-communist statements
which would be published here
for reply. I think if you felt that
would be helpful.

In summary, Ed, my
pitch has been that things
are going as well as can be
expected, that you are getting
in close to the Vietnamese
but that the situation is
so difficult and delicate
that no miracles can be
expected, that you need time
and patience back here above
all. This seemed to meet with
understanding from all I talked to.

Wish I could have stayed
& wish I had more time here to
help. Please let me know any
specific I might help on & give
my best to the Team. Good luck &
all the best. I will try to return as
soon as I can but don't believe it
possible for at least a month.
All the best — Rufa