



Saigon
9 Nov 1966

Dear Rufus:

Since we have some of your favorite stationery here, I might as well use it myself. Thanks for your letters to members of the Team. Very helpful!

After many days of thinking, writing, re-thinking, and re-writing, I have put out a classified paper on the strategy for 1967. It's blunt enough and plain enough, I feel, to attract considerable attention here and in Washington. I didn't spell out who was to do what, nor volunteer SLO for anything. But, I did come out in plain language on just what has to be done in 1967, with commentary on consequences.

At the urging of most of the Team, I sent it first to Hodge - yesterday - with a request that he approve my distributing it. If I don't hear from him in a day or so, I'll get busy and distribute anyhow.

There's such a dirty power-struggle going on behind-the-scenes among Americans, that it's time that someone talked plain turkey to them about the war and Viet Nam. Incidentally, the civilian vs. military aspects are getting ludicrous - in Mission Council meetings, Porter's bi-weekly meetings, etc. Everyone trying to gain brownie points for self - at the expense of the other guy. I catch most of them eyeing me at these meetings. Maybe my disgust shows. I just wink at them, when they



look. It adds to the "mystique". It amuses me that Habib is secretly after Porter's job, and all the time egging Porter on into intemperate acts. Ken Unger, I hear by grapevine, is secretly in cahoots with Habib. What a viper's nest! Incidentally, as could be expected, our VN friends seem well-informed about the intra-mural American sporting event of the current knife-in-the-back. It would shock our officials to get the VN reading of their characters.

I gave a "backgrounder" to the Vietnamese and Chinese press last night. They got what I said all garbled, but we had lots of fun. JUSPAD was surprised at the turn-out. Apparently the biggest mob of local journalists they had seen. Many of those present got emotional and asked me to stay in Viet Nam "forever". Since I was going up into Tay Ninh today, where Bill DePuy is trying to fight a big battle with the VC, I took a dim view of that "forever" bit.

The Tay Ninh visit went well. Since I spent most of the time with the Philippine troops - and introducing their leaders to a number of folks in the Province - I took Val and Joe Banzon with me. A fine day out in the fresh air and sun. I even got a new Chinese rifle from Trung and Nhan, taken from the VC. Told them that after DePuy had expended all his artillery, so I could sleep at night there, I'd spend a couple of days.

Love to Barbara & the family. Best. Ed