

27 Pilar St, San Juan
Rizal, Philippines

Dear Rufe:

Just a quicky to say bowdy and enclose the enclosures, which I thought might possibly be of interest, although do not expect anything except a polite note of acknowledgement, probably, to come of it. Al Ravenholt, whom I believe you know, persuaded me that it would be worth trying and is, I hope, carrying this back to the States for mailing. He, of course, will be working for HHH in addition to his academic duties; but is honestly, I believe, more concerned with a sound policy in Vn than with who wins the election. I assume that you too, are busy for HHH.

Can't say as I care for him myself, believe would prefer LBJ, but certainly he seems a better choice than either of his opponents in the convention.

Enclosed article was one of the most difficult I ever did, and, I think, the blandest and least useful -- but it seemed impossible to say what I wanted to and keep it what others might consider reasonable - and in 3 or 4 pages. One page and half draft, which Dorothy pronounced unreadable should have been four chapters in a book damning the Democrats from Roosevelts sabotage of Saiteny et al down to date. Ah well, the older I get the less temperate my statements, and the greater my realization that the world is hopelessly going to hell in a handbasket.

Drop a line sometime, and tell me what goes on in the world. Best regards from Dorothy and myself to you all, including a kick in the slats from me for Taiten, and a growl from Fertig. May go over to Vn w/ Dorothy in a couple of weeks, for a new visa and a little look around.

As ever,

6 September 1968

Honorable Richard Nixon
Republican Presidential Campaign Headquarters
New York City

Sir:

Congratulations to you and the GOP on your nomination, and sincere hopes for your success in your campaign, from an old acquaintance and supporter whom you may well not remember. Our most recent personal contact was when briefing you at the US embassy in Manila, about 1954; although I was also one of those who furnished you with information when you chaired, so ably, the House Committee on Un - American Activities.

Your candidacy impels me to offer to come out of the woodwork if I can be of any real service. Although I severed all government connections in 1966 (after trying, and signally failing, to assist Ed Lansdale in his most recent mission in Vietnam) I have kept quite well in touch with events there while living quietly in the Philippines. This is especially true of the civilian counter-insurgency effort, particularly the Chieu Hoi (returnee) program which was initiated under my guidance, and the Revolutionary Development effort which grew out of (and is still largely influenced by) our old Strategic Hamlet program.

Perhaps lecturing, formally or informally, and/or discussing with academic, civilian "service", or military, groups the problems and realities of Vietnam, SE Asia, and for that matter, counter-insurgency in general, might be the area in which I could be most useful. Although a conservative, and deeply involved in many essentially politico-psychological operations in SE Asia in past years, I believe I am still relatively "clean" for action in the US - although of course I was, and so far as I know, still am, a director of the American Friends of Vietnam. To facilitate evaluation by your staff of my possible utility, enclosed are a bio-data sheet, and a very brief think-piece reflecting the only views I can now espouse on Vietnam. (Perhaps I should add that I would not think it necessary publicly to affirm all these views; but equally, could not forcefully reject them.)

This letter, incidentally, repeats one sent in July, but obviously not received (since the small check which it enclosed has not been cashed) offering then to volunteer my service to your campaign.

There would seem to be five critical qualities for a President of the United States: Intelligence, intellectual integrity, vision, political savvy, and guts. So far, in my lifetime, there has been no one who seemed adequately to possess all these qualities. It has

been, and is my hope, that you will have the opportunity to demonstrate that you do.

If it is felt that I may be of service, I should be honored. I am not seeking employment, either before or after the election. As a retired officer I can travel to the States, but after arrival in Washington, could not afford any very extensive travel, unless my expenses could in some manner be defrayed.

In any event, best of luck;

Charles T. R. Bohannon

Encl: Bio Data
Vietnam - The Way Out

CTRB/ccp

VIETNAM -- THE WAY OUT

(The following brief article by a student of and participant in insurgency and counter-insurgency, who spent many of the years between 1954 and 1966 in Vietnam, in addition to many years of similar service, or simple residence elsewhere in SE Asia, is released for any use deemed appropriate, exclusively to the Republican National Committee, or assignee.)

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There are four ways out of the war in Vietnam: The easiest is to quit, as did the French in 1954, admittedly bankrupt of self-confidence, self-respect, and honor, but with their military and civilian resources virtually untouched, as ours are today. Almost as easy would be a tacit surrender at the conference table, betraying those we are pledged to support by forcing them to accept their mortal enemies as colleagues in their government. Remember China, 1945-49? Overwhelming force, the use of nuclear weapons, an all-out attack on the North, and if wanted, five million rather than five hundred thousand troops, is another easy answer, one probably cheaper in the long run to the United States than either of the first two.

The fourth way is the most certainly least expensive and the most difficult for Americans, for it requires patience, thoughtful consistency, and trust in both our principles and our representatives. It requires many other things as well, but these are the most difficult for us. Remember the famous comment of a Japanese general after World War II? "Americans as jungle fighters? They don't fight in the jungles, they bulldozer it away." A similar comment was made some years ago in Vietnam: "Why don't you pave the whole country so all the Viet Cong will be forced to surrender in order to eat?"

Since Vietnam first came to our attention in 1940, when the Japanese moved in, we have tinkered with many solutions to the problems it poses. Each possible solution has been based on the traditional American policy that all men should be free and self-governing, and that we should help those who desire to attain this goal. Our basic policy since 1954 has been: Give such help as we think the Vietnamese need to establish their own independent, viable, free nation.

No reasonable, well-informed American who is a believer in our national political philosophy can seriously disagree.

A Challenge: Name one American (or pro-American) serious student of Vietnam, knowledgeable also of political dynamics and world affairs, who has opposed this basic US policy. Or, name one who has not, in the past 10 years, more than once opposed major actions taken in the name of that policy.

To understand the situation in which we find ourselves today, it might be useful to look at our actions and their implications, as seen through Vietnamese eyes. A summary of their usually carefully concealed views might be expressed:

"The Americans mean well, but they are unrealistic, inefficient, inconsistent, and extremely emotional. They insisted that we build a conventional army for defense against the north, but for years would give no help at all to men fighting the guerrillas. They believe men in government service should be honest, capable, hard-working, etc., and get upset when they find some who are not -- but do nothing effective about it. This is all because their infinite power makes them incapable of understanding how to use just enough power to do the job, even to get rid of hopelessly corrupt or inept officials. They have infinite material resources which they either squander recklessly or haggle over, dollar by dollar. They are efficiency experts who waste months or years on unnecessary paperwork, just like our own functionaries, so have no time to think or plan intelligently. Worst of all, they are emotional, hysterically criticizing one another, and intensely jealous. That must be why they so often send glittering noncontroversial nonentities as their senior representatives to us, while tying and gagging those few responsible, competent realists who do understand our problems. We really do not know what to do or how to do it, in spite of all our claims; why can't we have the help we need from men who do know -- and are free to act? Fighting the Viet Cong is not the major problem -- it is building a nation from millions of villagers who are aware only of their local problems; using to do this thousands of undisciplined theoreticians and self-satisfied government employees who fear responsibility more than the devil -- or the Viet Cong!

We have sought to help to build a nation and to defend it, and we have accomplished much but not enough, for reasons which the Vietnamese perhaps see far more clearly than we do. The immediate reasons are our erratic shifts of course, our often weak and inept senior representatives daily second-guessed by Washington, and our impatience. Most of all, we have failed because we have not insisted on actions guided by basic principles essential to an effective self-governing nation or an useful army.

There is only one way out of Vietnam that can serve America's interest (or the Vietnamese), just as there is only one way out that is consistent with our expressed beliefs in freedom and justice, and with our pledges of good faith. That way is to hold fast to our basic policy -- and implement it effectively, knowledgeably, and without regard for the complaints and criticisms of the self-serving, the unrealistic, and the uninformed. Most of all, in Vietnam and at home let us stop doubting ourselves, and stop doubting the basic principles by which generations of Americans have lived, and for which so many thousands of Americans have died. We must choose to act courageously and honorably in Vietnam, in the world, and at home; or assist at the burial which Khrushchev promised us.

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CTH Behannan
Manila
6 Sept 68