

[REDACTED]

Date approximate: 20 August 1972

Dear John,

I am sorry not to have written sooner, but kept thinking I would be back there within a week or two, all the time I've been here. However, it now looks like it will be at least 2 to 3 weeks longer before I can get away, and possibly longer yet. This all has to do with problems with getting the boys settled here which were unanticipated. I obviously can't leave them here without being sure they are in a proper spot, and what seemed to be an adequate arrangement has fallen through very suddenly. I will not bring them back to Viet Nam until they can travel on US passports -- otherwise, I can envision a situation within the next few months where I and other US citizens might be ordered to leave, and they not permitted to leave, being still VN citizens & I can't tolerate that idea. My lawyer is working on the possibility of a special bill thru congress to make them citizens faster, but don't know how long that will take. I'm also attempting to make other arrangements for them to stay here so that I can be back in Viet Nam as soon as possible.

Thanks very much for holding down the fort during my prolonged absence. I hope your bout with hepatitis was a light one & you're now recovered? I just had a letter from Barbara, which says the Western nurses are now all staying in Kontum. What would be the objection to moving everything & everyone back there? (I can imagine lots of them -- such as road now open & helicopters or planes not available, etc.) However, if it looks feasible to move back entirely to Kontum, please feel free to make the decision -- in consultation with Montagnard staff & the Bishop of course.

If I get stuck here still longer than anticipated, would you be willing to stay on? And if so, what would be your limit? I think I'll be able to get things squared away within 3 to 4 weeks, but I honestly can't promise that at this time, and, of course, am very interested in being sure that things are under control in my absence. How does the general military & political picture look in the highlands? News here is zero. I'm still pessimistic about anything long-range for any part of Viet Nam, but would like to keep Minh-Quy going as long as possible. And I will certainly be back as soon as I can possibly make it.

Thanks again. Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

*[Signature]*