



E. R. ZUMWALT, JR.
ADMIRAL, U. S. NAVY (RET.)

September 23, 1994

Ms. Patricia N. Moller
Desk Officer, Vietnam
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
Department of State
Main State Department Building
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Ms. Moller:

As you know, I led a team of four on a visit to Vietnam from 9 September until 16 September.

I went there in my capacity as Chairman of the Agent Orange Coordinating Council and Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Viet Nam Assistance for the Handicapped (VNAH) foundation. Dr. Arnold Schecter (resume attached), who has conducted for a number of years pilot studies of Agent Orange, accompanied me on what was his eleventh trip to Vietnam. Mr. Ca Van Tran, President and Founder of VNAH accompanied me on what was his sixth visit to Vietnam. Lt Col James G. Zumwalt, USMCR, accompanied me as a representative of his late brother, LTJG Elmo R. Zumwalt, III.

Our schedule of visits is attached. The visits with President (General) Le duc Anh; General Vo Nguyen Giap, the NVA Commander-in-Chief during the Vietnam War; General Tran van Tra, the wartime Commander of the Viet Cong in South Vietnam; the Minister of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, Tran Dinh Hoan, who is the cabinet minister responsible for Agent Orange research; Dr. Hoang dinh Cau and Dr. Le cao Dai, the two senior officials on the Agent Orange/10-80 committee. All gave strong declarations of their official support for joint U.S./Vietnam Agent Orange research. (This research has been recommended by the National Academy of Science's IOM report, *Veterans and Agent Orange: Health Effects of Herbicides Used in Vietnam*. The Appropriations Act of 1994 contains a stipulation by Congress that the NIEHS do pertinent Agent Orange research with Vietnam.)

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These officials, and the other officials called on, praised the accomplishments of Mr. Ca Van Tran and our VNAH foundation in providing artificial limbs and wheelchairs for veterans from both sides and civilian war casualties. At the Tu Duc VNAH facility, our party fitted out the 11,000th limb and allocated wheelchairs to those who were too crippled to be fitted for limbs. There we learned of the requirement for about 60,000 more limbs. It is hoped that AID funds will be forthcoming in greater amounts to continue this vital humanitarian effort.

Our party stressed to each of the officials with whom we met the vital importance that Americans place on getting the fullest possible accounting of our POW/MIAs. In that regard, we were pleased to hear that Lt Col Richmond, US Army, who heads the POW/MIA search detachment in Vietnam, is convinced that these officials are seriously seeking to provide full cooperation on the POW/MIA issue.

Each official with whom we met stressed the importance they attach to economic cooperation with the U.S. and to diplomatic recognition. The Minister of Trade, Le Van Triet, asked how they could improve economic cooperation with our country. I suggested to him and all other officials that the Vietnamese practice of greatly modifying in the licensing process the signed Memoranda of Understanding with U.S. businesses was a major problem. I also suggested that better access for Vietnamese-Americans and selected use of former Vietnamese leaders in exile would facilitate economic progress. The Minister plans to visit a seminar on doing business in Vietnam in Columbus, Ohio, on October 17-21, 1994, and asked me to facilitate meetings with Secretary Ron Brown and Ambassador Mickey Kantor during his visit to America.

I delivered a letter from President Lawless of Texas Tech University to General Giap inviting him to attend a seminar on the Vietnam War from 18-20 April 1996. The seminar will be hosted by the Center for the Study of the Vietnam Conflict, whose advisory board I chair. General Giap indicated a willingness to consider the invitation with friendly prejudice.

In response to queries from LtCol James Zumwalt, Generals Giap, Tra, and Quang all indicated a willingness to record their recollections of the War in oral histories which Jim Zumwalt plans to do with them in the near future.

Although there was occasional reference to the wartime damage inflicted on Vietnam by the U.S. forces, all officials went to great lengths to stipulate the importance they attach to friendly relations with the U.S. In this regard, it was clear that both

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military and political figures consider China to be a potential threat and that future U.S. relations with Vietnam is important in that light.

Our trip was heavily covered by the wire services, CNN and foreign media. *Inside Edition* covered all the key elements of our visit and will plan one or two, 30-minute programs in the October/November time frame. We held press conferences in Bangkok on 18 September and in Washington, DC, on 23 September. Our news coverage and our impact on Vietnamese officials were both considerably helped by the media reports of the draft EPA report which was released for comment on 13 September. This report serves to reinforce and extend the scientific indications of serious health effects of dioxin.

I will be submitting abbreviated reports to Congress.

Sincerely,



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Enclosure

cc: Secretary of Defense (Attn: ISA)