

September 2, 1959

The Honorable C. Douglas Dillon
Under Secretary of State
Department of State
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Under Secretary:

One of the most impressive social and political achievements since the end of World War II has been the establishment of the Republic of Vietnam as an economically viable and independent constitutional republic. Not only has this young country been able to preserve its political freedom and integrity as a member of the community of free nations; it has at the same time managed to guarantee to its people many of the same basic freedoms and social advantages which we ourselves in the United States enjoy. Since the tragic Geneva partition of 1954, Free Vietnam has attempted to effect a sweeping social revolution, providing the people with those marks of social progress which we in the West sometimes take for granted: public education for all; equal rights for women and for ethnic minorities; the right of a farmer to own the land he farms; public safety and health.

Conscious of these great strides, we believe that the American public should be made aware of what can be achieved in a country recently freed from colonial domination without sacrificing the basic guarantees of freedom and opportunity to its people. Consequently, we have called a Conference for October 23-24 to be held in New York which will review progress in the fields of public health, education, land reform, public administration and the many other areas of social endeavor in Vietnam since 1954. Both Vietnamese and American experts--private and governmental--will present academic papers on these subjects. I have enclosed a copy of the tentative agenda.

On behalf of the American Friends of Vietnam, Mr. Under Secretary, I have the distinct honor of inviting you to make the principal address of this conference at a luncheon on October 23rd. Your address might well encompass the subject of social welfare and development for all

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of Asia, outlining the views of the U.S. Government in fostering such progress. A suggested title might be "U.S. Policy and Asia's Quest for Justice." We are confident that your participation in this manner would be a memorable occasion which would be clearly felt throughout Southeast Asia, as well as in our own country.

I look forward to your reply in the deep hope that your busy schedule will permit you to join us in October.

Very sincerely,

John W. O'Daniel, Chairman
Lt. Gen. U.S. Army (Ret.)

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enc.

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