

April 3, 1966
Viroflay, France

Dear friend,

The political situation in SVN is full of danger. The current crisis has become the most grave since the fall of the legal government of Diem.

Out of the present political crisis will arise a "sterling quality" nationalistic regime, strong and with popular support, responding to the deepest aspirations of our people. Or SVN will be engulfed by chaos and be lost to Communism. And this will be the prelude to domination of SEA by the forces of Evil.

Everything depends upon the wisdom of the [responsables de l'heure] : the American administration as well as the Saigon military junta.

The hour is grave and I feel that I must apprise you of my sentiments on the subject of this crisis, which has flared into the open for several weeks already.

I believe that, despite all efforts, which can be only vain, the military junta in Saigon can no longer remain in power. It must cede its place to a civilian government, the sooner the better. The
XXX TIME WAITS FOR NO MAN.

The successor civilian government to the military junta will be only provisional. This provisional government would have two missions to accomplish, two clearly-defined objectives: 1) to re-establish order, and 2) to prepare the elections (drafting a Charter or Constitution, a Referendum on the Constitution, Legislative Assembly).

After the elections, a legal government would thus be put in power. And SVN would thus be endowed with legal institutions. [un Etat Sud Vietnamien verria ou reverra ainsi le jour.] The voice of SVN, the legal voice, could thus be heard in the international scheme of things. And the US would then be a veritable ally.

The problem in SVN is essentially a military problem and political problem. As for the military strategy, the decision of the US to send troops to SVN (which carries its own consequences), has assisted the South greatly in holding fast until now. BUT, as for the political strategy, no SERIOUS efforts have been made since the fall of the Diem government.

THE CURRENT CRISIS, DESPITE THE ACOMPANYING DANGERS, IS AN AUSPICIOUS OPPORTUNITY WHICH WE MUST NOT LOSE. IT IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ALLOW NATIONALISM TO COME TO THE FORE, A NATIONALISM GROUNDED IN THE DEEPEST HISTORICAL TRADITIONS OF VIETNAM. INSTEAD OF GIVING WAY TO PANIC, WE MUST REJOICE AND ASSIST THE EMERGENCE OF A REJUVENATED VIETNAMESE NATIONALISM.

Only such a nationalism will be able to uproot Communism.

The anti-American slogans (which one can only deplore) being brandished these last few days in Hue, Saigon and Danang, are still only the expression of a feeling of nationalism exacerbated by so many past frustrations.

BUT these slogans carry with them the risk of becoming more grave, of being the violent expression of a deep outrage which will be exploited by the VC. And the sentiments of anti-Americanism, which at the moment are still harmless and insignificant, ~~XXXX~~ have the potential of growing more frequent and serious and of becoming an inauspicious rallying signal.

Everything depends upon the wisdom of American leaders in both Saigon and Washington. I do not believe that it is a sound policy to give the impression ~~that~~ Washington is linked at all costs to the tyrants or to appear to impose or maintain in power ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ either regimes which are held in disrepute by the people or men without any real popular support [origins, foundations?]....

I cannot tell you everything in one letter, But ~~XXXXX~~ I think I've told you the essentials. In any case, I place myself entirely at your disposal in order to discuss with you or your friends, if need be, all questions which are of interest to you.

Regards.....

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