

November 19, 1956

His Excellency Ngo Dinh Diem
President of the Republic of Vietnam
Independence Palace
Saigon, Vietnam

My dear Mr. President:

Please accept my heartiest congratulations on the proclamation of the new constitution of Vietnam. This is truly a landmark in the advance of your country toward democracy, and one of which your country and especially you, personally, may justly be proud.

Before coming to Vietnam I read Ellen Hammer's "The Struggle for Indo-China Continues" and was struck by her remark that the announced intention to hold popular elections for a Constitutional Assembly was a "demagogic gesture" that could not possibly be carried out. How silly she must feel! This should be a good lesson to those who have been underestimating the strength of your government and especially the strength and character of its head.

I regret that I reached California too late to see the Chief Justice. His daughter, who was at my home some time ago, said that although he returned from India with a cold he insisted upon going on to Washington well in advance of the opening of the October term of Court. In addition to his regular work accompanying the opening of a new term, he had a couple of dissenting opinions to write concerning cases decided at the last session of the previous term. Judging by the newspapers he did a good job of these opinions, which may never see the light of day since the Court voted to reconsider its rulings in these cases.

No doubt the Chief Justice has written to you. In a letter to me he expressed his appreciation of your invitation and added that he hopes that on some other occasion he will have the opportunity to visit with the Bench and Bar of your country.

I deeply appreciate the signed photograph taken on the eve of my departure from Vietnam. It will remain one of my most prized possessions. I can gain new strength from noting how relaxed you appear even with all of the burdens that you carry. I wish you continued success, I am sure that you will have it.

Sincerely yours,

J. A. C. Grant, Dean
Division of Social Sciences

JACG/bp
Airmail