

26 December 1971

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Dear Frank,

Here is the report of Professor Ho to President Thieu on herbicide damage in the RVN. There is a possibility that even a little money, less than 100,000 dollars, would be of major benefit to Vietnamese science and scientists who wish to conduct research on the natural ecology and on land use in Vietnam. Herbicides would come into it but wider areas of important research would be easy to identify. Right now there are some things going on; for example, USAID is attempting a forest resource survey. But I suspect that most of the expertise will be western, with some Vietnamese ministerial participation. What I suspect is missing is a role for Vietnamese scientists that would allow the deeper study and the education of scientists that is needed to support a healthy and independent scientific community there. To my surprise, I found Viet scientists to be quite good on the average- with some excellent ones in a few cases. Ho is one of these. He is a member of a Vietnamese herbicide study group which is assisting the NAS herbicide study. Its chairman is Professor Le Van Thoi, a reasonably good natural products chemist. To boil this all down, my suggestion is that Ho and Thoi be sounded out informally to see what proposals they might have. But this should not be done unless there is prior agreement by AID that they will try to help if a U.S. advisory group of scientists gives the Vietnamese proposals a favorable rating.

I enclose the Humphrey resolution and speech on the Geneva Protocol. It would do some good if Muskie came out in favor of ratification with no special exemptions for riot gas, herbicides, or any other toxics.

MM:mm