

29 July 1959

TO: Mr. Howard Elting, American Embassy
FROM: Wesley R. Fishel
SUBJECT: Colegrove Itinerary in Vietnam

Unfortunately, it has taken several days to secure the following information because of the illness of one of the principal Vietnamese sources. No effort has been made to check this information with USIS Press Officer, who may have conducted Mr. Colegrove elsewhere than did the Vietnamese themselves. I may add that I know the Vietnamese sources personally and can vouch for their integrity and honesty. In fact, some of the statements which follow were made to me by one of the sources even before we knew that Colegrove had written anything at all. I don't know what they add to your record, but here they are.

1. Mr. Colegrove was introduced to Mr. Le-Ba-Thang, Public Relations Officer, Department of Information and Youth, by the Acting Press Officer, USIS. He had interviews with the Secretary of State for Information, and the Director of Press and Information of the same department.

2. He refused visits proposed by Mr. Le-Ba-Thang to the Bien Hoa Highway and to Banmethuot, and refused to accept the offer of any facilities such as transportation. He requested instead a trip to Hue and Quang Tri. He made this trip on 26-27 June, in the company of Mr. Nguyen-Khoa Phon-Anh, of the Press Office of the Presidency. There, he visited the Re-education Center for Political Detainees of Quang-Tri Province, the Hoan-Cat Resettlement Project in Cam-Lo District, and the 28-km road from Cua to Ba-Long, which had been built entirely by hand as a community development project, and had taken one year to complete. On the following day he visited the Royal Palace and tombs at Hue. He at no time showed any interest in anything visited other than the Re-education Center. He was not interested in visiting the Demilitarized Zone, and was reluctant to see either the Hoan-Cat settlement or the above-mentioned road. He stated frequently that he was not interested and would prefer to return to Hue and rest.

3. He did not visit Radio Vietnam nor did he speak with any of its officials, so far as Director Buu Tho and Deputy Director Buu Nghi have been able to ascertain. He did have an interview with Ton-That-Thien, Chief Press Officer of the Presidency and requested an interview with the President, which he was granted and for which he submitted written questions. He saw the President on 25 June at 15:30.

4. Mr. Colegrove had been a UPI correspondent in Hanoi about 1950. He became acquainted there with Nghiem-Xuan-Thien, Phan-Quang-Dan, Tran-Van-Tuyen, and Phan-Huy-Quat. He asked Mr. Le-Ba-Thang to arrange for him to see these people here in Saigon. Thang declined, saying that as a government official he had no contact with them, and suggested that the USIS people might be in a better position to arrange this for him. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Colegrove remarked that Chester Opal had not seen fit to give him the same treatment he had given Ernest Lindley, and seemed annoyed about this.