
From: Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 25, 2010 10:32 AM
To: H
Subject: FW: Thanks to Secretary Clinton for Participating in the Conference on the American Experience in Southeast Asia [John Carland]

below

From: Carland, John M [mailto:CarlandJM@state.gov]
Sent: Monday, October 25, 2010 10:27 AM
To: Mills, Cheryl D
Subject: Thanks to Secretary Clinton for Participating in the Conference on the American Experience in Southeast Asia

Dear Ms. Mills—

Since the chain of events that led to the Secretary's speaking at the Vietnam conference started with my 15 March 2010 email to you about Brownie Ledbetter's illness, I thought I would close the circle with another email to you asking if you would pass this letter of appreciation to the Secretary. I wanted to go on record saying how much we in the Historian's Office, and how very much I personally, appreciated both her presence and her remarks at the conference.

Best,

John

Dear Secretary Clinton:

Thanks so much for delivering the opening speech at the Historian's Office's Conference on the American Experience in Southeast Asia. It was eloquent and affecting. Your speech welcoming the audience struck the perfect note for (1) celebrating the achievement of the Historian's Office documentary histories on Indochina/Vietnam and (2) using that event to explore the history of United States policy in Southeast Asia, 1946-1975. It also placed in context what we were about to do at the conference. We couldn't have found a better way to kick off our two days of historical exploration than your speech. You gave us marching orders to study the conflict in Vietnam and the American role in it but not to let that past blind us to the common ground our two countries now occupy. And that's what we tried to do.

The conference itself was very successful. We have had good feedback from attendees and from participants. The speeches of Dr. Kissinger, Deputy Secretary Negroponte, and Ambassador Holbrooke, sent out ripples of stimulating and provocative discussion, while the scholarly papers presented by American and international scholars not only placed their comments in historical context but also, and more generally, increased our

knowledge and understanding of conflict in Indochina. The official historians from Vietnam fulfilled one of my first requirements—that we provide our former enemy’s perspective during the conference. And the media panel—with old Vietnam hands such as William Beecher, Edith Lederer, Marvin Kalb, Morley Safer, and Barry Zorthian on it—added zip to the proceedings as well as substance to our understanding of the media role in this conflict. (We put the media panel video on our website Friday, accompanied by a transcript.)

In addition to the preceding I also wanted to tell you how pleased I was to have had the opportunity to briefly chat with you immediately before your speech, and last March, too, after I gave you the sad news about Brownie Ledbetter. Throughout that March conversation I was also having an intense debate with myself over whether I should or should not ask you about opening the conference. I glad I did and glad that you said yes.

I also wish to tell you (no surprise here, I’m sure) how well you are served by the likes of Lona Valmore and Lauren Jiloty. Over the spring and summer Lona gave advice and reassurance in a number of emails when I was structuring what I hoped you would do for and at the conference. She went out of her way to be helpful and positive. And Lauren, as the conference drew near, gave me the sort of precise guidance, and in an always friendly and efficient manner, about your speech and the surrounding scenario that lowered my anxiety level considerably. I am grateful to both of them.

Finally, as I head toward retirement in February, I wanted to tell you that we in the Historian’s Office--and none more than I--see you as a first-rate Secretary of State doing an outstanding job in, to say the least, challenging circumstances. I am personally proud to have been in the Department and served while you were Secretary. Again, the speech was great. Thanks for doing it.

Sincerely,

John M. Carland
Senior Historian
Conference Coordinator and Program Committee Chair
Conference on the American Experience in Southeast Asia, 1946-1975
Office of the Historian