

Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, CORDS

MACCORDS-CH

30 October 1967

Mr. Lawrence Grinter
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Dear Buck:

This weekend I finally was able to read your monograph on the Chieu Hoi program from cover to cover. I found that as soon as I started it I could not put it down. I had assumed that this was a field in which anyone who wrote anything would merely be rediscovering the wheel, particularly after the 1965 Gosho report and the Simulmatics study itself. I was, therefore, very pleased to find that I was really learning something in what you have written.

I checked certain items in the margin and will now make a few comments:

(1) Page vii. I am informed that few Huks actually receive land under EDCOR, but the promise, plus the few who did, was extremely valuable.

(2) Page ix. Since you wrote the paper, responsibility for Chieu Hoi has been shifted over to CORDS under MACV. In CORDS is the Chieu Hoi Division, of which I am in charge. Also concerning page ix, the effect of a series of elections, plus lessened direct military contact with the enemy, particularly the former, has hurt us badly. Thus, we have about 25,000 Hoi Chanh so far this year, and will only get a 50% increase over 1966 instead of the 100% we had hoped for originally.

(3) Page xxi. In the quotation attributed to me, which I remember, I think I mentioned also Belle Isle, a Northern prison for Southern captives. The two examples cited were both on the Confederate side. I suppose it was up to the Union to have a Chieu Hoi program more than the Confederacy.

(4) Page 5. I am convinced that the Tet phenomena is caused much less by psyops than it is by the fact that the VC have to relax their controls over their people during this period and let them go home. Once out of the control system, many people defect.

(5) Page 23. We achieved a breakthrough on use of Hoi Chanh in the RD program. As of now, more than 1,100 have been accepted for training, some to be used as fillers in ordinary RD teams and some to be set up in special 59-man teams. The first 300 have graduated and are performing in an outstanding manner in the field. This was a pretty major breakthrough in GVN use of Hoi Chanh.

(6) Page 37. Chuyen is something of a headache despite his contributions. The same personality traits which made him dissatisfied with the VC for not recognizing his seniority, genius, etc., attempt to come out in his job at the National Center. I think he was born dissatisfied and will probably stay that way.

(7) Page 68. The footnotes should refer to Mr. Romeo Raneses.

(8) Page 88. It is unfortunate that the example cited on pages 87-88 is not too good a one since the Chieu Hoi Chief was using the same group of Hoi Chanh permanently who were, in effect, running a private business for his profit. Also on page 88, Phu Bai is near Hue, not Danang, and is administered as part of the Thua Thien Chieu Hoi program.

(9) Page 95. Perhaps you are right, but I doubt there are any Hoi Chanh as guards at the US Embassy. They are used as guards in various provincial offices.

(10) Page 108. I am not aware that any treacherous Hoi Chanh were involved in the Ashau incident as the statement could be interpreted to indicate.

(11) Page 111. An APT platoon has 36 men, but two teams have 74 men because of the addition of two extra officers.

(12) Page 113. Unfortunately, it is not yet foreseeable when there would be at least one Chieu Hoi Village for every Chieu Hoi Center. There have been real problems locating land in secure places and also, a village cannot be built until there are volunteers to build it and live in it. For this reason, there are only about 17 villages actually completed at this time. This is not as regrettable as it sounds as we do not want to build villages unless people want to live in them, and would prefer Hoi Chanh returning to an existing village to speed their integration, if such is possible.

(13) Page 114. Again, Phu Bai is near Hue.

(14) Page 116. I suppose Danang or Hue could be used here.

All of the above are nitpicks. I fully agree with your conclusion that resettlement is the No. 1 priority and it will be the main focus of the program in 1968. Regarding the training program, on the vocational side we have been receiving some assistance from Education Consultants, Ltd., a former RMK training group, who have 11 operating sites now assisting the Chieu Hoi program. The Seabees also are doing more and more vocational training for us. As regards political training, there are some 82 new political instructors now on board who will be going to the field after November 1. They have been in training a long time and it is hoped they will improve the program. It will never approach the best of VC training, however, because the GVN as yet has no clear and common ideal, which is to sell in a missionary way. Without content of this type, no course can be all that successful. Sometimes essentially bad causes lend themselves to fanaticism more easily than complicated good causes.

Regarding jobs, we have at least arranged for the Office of the Prime Minister to "recommend" the creation of job committees in the provinces and the Labor Ministry has published implementing directives, but like everything in Vietnam, it will need pushing throughout the coming year if anything is to actually happen, particularly in view of other priorities which the Government has to handle. I forgot to mention that 50% of the new political instructors are Hoi Chanh. We are still plagued with the MSS clearance problem. You simply cannot get the MSS to agree to let Hoi Chanh work on military bases where many of the jobs are, without "sponsors." The sponsor, in effect, must guarantee the future behavior of the Hoi Chanh and go to jail if the Hoi Chanh commits a crime. It is obvious that sponsors are not easy to be had under such a concept.

Finally, Buck, as you know from your experience here, identifying the problem is one step, suggesting solutions is the second step, but implementing is the third step and presents vast and more difficulties than the first two. Regarding the high-level VC, we will only get them when the GVN presents a package sufficiently attractive so that it can compete with the vision with which the enemy has systematically intoxicated himself for many years. This will not happen overnight.

For your possible interest, I enclose a few papers which we have produced recently. It was a real pleasure to hear from you and I congratulate you on such a perceptive and helpful paper. Regarding Jim Kelly, I have developed a tremendous guilty conscience because I have been carrying his carefully laundered clothes wrapped in brown paper around in the back of my car hoping that I can get them mailed in small installments to

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the States. What is his latest address as of now? Perhaps I shall be returning to Washington in January and will look forward to seeing you then.

All the best.

Sincerely,

OGDEN WILLIAMS
Chief, Chieu Hoi Division

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