

Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, CORDS

MACCORDS-CH

11 December 1968

Ambassador W. E. Colby  
Saigon, Vietnam

Dear Bill,

In connection with your telephone call of today, it would perhaps be most appropriate if I attempted to express in writing my reactions to your kind proposal that I take over the Refugee Program after winding up this tour in Chieu Hoi.

My difficulties with accepting the proposal are really twofold. First, professionally, I would be taking a further step towards specialization in a narrower scope. After having had two broad general assignments in AID--one in charge of all Provincial Representatives in Vietnam in 1964, and again as Deputy Director in Tunis--I was well aware of the professional dangers of returning to Saigon to run only one program. However, the desire to return to this country and a strong belief in the value of Chieu Hoi made me willing and even eager to accept the job. Now, rightly or wrongly, I feel that I should branch out again, and return to the general managerial duties which I had been performing prior to this tour.

The second considerations are more personal. After a heavy bout with hepatitis and the general accumulated effects of service in Vietnam since July 1966, I think a year away from this place would be most beneficial. Such an interlude would also permit me to deal with various personal situations not related to the job.

From past experience I know that the initial excitement of returning to the US and looking forward to new horizons may soon die away, leaving one with great nostalgia for Vietnam and a growing desire to be back where the action is. Indeed, if the situation were such that I had some choice of options to exercise after a substantial period in the States, then returning to Vietnam might seem more attractive, being done as a matter of deliberate preference. But such is not the case.

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In view of all these considerations, I think you should count me out as a Refugee candidate at this time. I am most grateful and appreciative that you have seen fit to consider me for this post and may one day greatly regret I did not accept it, but I feel some inner conviction that I must grasp the more dangerous nettle and not settle back into an ever deeper groove here in Vietnam at this time.

With best wishes.

Respectfully,

Ogden Williams