

Saigon, Vietnam

October 22, 1966

Colonel Charles T.R. Bohannon
27 Pilar
San Juan, Rizal
Manila, Philippine Islands

Dear Bo:

Many thanks for your letter of October 17. Your work in helping select the Filipinos for this assignment is really appreciated here. When the idea was first broached, the Regions said that they wanted to be able to control local assignments since they felt they had the best knowledge of local priorities and local personalities. Nevertheless, they will appreciate and, I suspect, follow very closely indeed the recommendations made by you which are now being passed along as also the recommendations of USAID Saigon. Monta Osborne has gone over the personnel data which you furnished and has had meetings with Li Picar. As of now, it appears Santos might go to Region I instead of Region III and Moreno might go to Long An instead of Gia Dinh. But the extremely useful aspect of your assignment recommendations was the gradation of these people as to whether they should be Regional, Provincial, etc.

Respecting Bravo, Monta and I feel that he should be an office manager in the USAID Saigon Office, not a national advisor as such. I will write you more about all this in a little while.

Let me fill you in on Chieu Hoi in general. We have 14,000 returnees in 1966 so far, and we are targeting for 45,000 for 1967. About ten days ago I briefed McNamara and his party, which included Komer of the White House, for an hour, and the point is generally accepted on the U.S. side that Chieu Hoi has equal priority to any civilian effort in the country. Komer goes further and calls it the single most important program over here. Recognition is given to the fact that the existence of the program has undoubtedly saved several thousand Free World soldiers' lives in 1966 alone. We have been instructed to budget as if money grows on trees. More important, we are now getting tangible evidence that the GVN is about to

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raise Chieu Hoi to the level of a priority national program, in which all elements should join in a mass effort to bring back the enemy to our side. Such an effort will certainly be necessary if we are to get our 45,000 next year.

Of course there are headaches too, particularly in Saigon. My job in Porter's office is to coordinate Chieu Hoi, but as the program is receiving increased attention and prestige in Washington, people suddenly discover how interested in the program they are. Director, JUSPAO, has recently launched a campaign to be nominated as the ultimate Mission agent for the Tet Chieu Hoi campaign, as if coordination of this program has not already been arranged. The pettiness that tends to appear on our side has not yet infected the really outstanding relationship I am lucky enough to have with Colonel Anh. You will recall he was Province Chief in Phu Yen and Long An. I find him a sincere, self-respecting, action-minded individual of innate dignity and virtually devoid of complexes with whom it is a real pleasure to work. We attempt to copy the old Magassaysay technique under which Colonel Anh and I descend on a Province with no prior announcement and take necessary administrative and personnel actions on the spot. Colonel Anh takes along his clerks and a whole bag of stamps and seals and authorizes people for Armed Propaganda Teams, hires new cadre from among the Hoi Chanh, authorizes weapons rewards and performs other bureaucratic actions, each of which would have been good for six months' delay under the old system. Equally important, he talks informally and at length with the returnees themselves so as to really understand their problems and feelings.

The Manila Conference is now going on, as you know. All kinds of big wheels are turning and at the end of it Chieu Hoi may be elevated to great things or crushed between wheels. In the latter case, I would expect to see you in Manila on my way back to my West Virginia farm.

Many thanks again for your great assistance and looking forward to seeing you again.

All the best,

Ogden Williams