

## FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

December 3, 1969

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Operations  
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Dear Len:

This is a belated response to your letter of November 19, particularly the attachment which concerned your conversations with the Foreign Service Inspectors on November 6. You requested my comments on the attachment.

Most of the items noted are for Viet-Nam or State Department action. Paragraph 3 (Training) concerns VTC. Regarding map reading and weapons training, there is a land navigation course and some weapons familiarization at Ft. Bragg. Jake was right in opining that we have a sensitive problem in avoiding the appearance that we are training our civilian CORDS candidates to join the Army. Indeed, in one extreme case, one student going to Ft. Bragg was told that he did not have to fire the weapons since he had conscientious objections to doing so! In short, I do not think it would be valuable to stress military aspects of CORDS operations much beyond what we already do in the District Operations Course. This course is primarily oriented towards District Senior Advisors, most of whom are military. But the civilian students do take the course, and many of them have questioned its relevancy, specifically because so many military matters are included. So I think Jake is right, that map reading and weapons training be given in Viet-Nam as a supplement to what we do here, rather than beefing up these aspects of our training program in Washington or Ft. Bragg.

Regarding paragraph 9, the length of the Province Senior Advisors Course (33 weeks) has largely been determined by the Pentagon's assignment procedures. They have a well-established pipeline and want their candidates to remain here for 33 weeks, even if they are unable to make progress in the language training. Whereas civilian students to date have been topped out if they could not proceed to each successive level of language capability, the military have been recycled or have been given special language programs

in order to fill out the 33 weeks specified by the Pentagon. The case of the senior FSO's could really be handled the same way; thus it would be understood that these people would remain at VTC 33 weeks and would make such progress in the language as they were capable of. Such a policy would also facilitate our training in operational subjects, since it could be given at the same time for both military and civilians. If the civilians were topped out earlier, it would be difficult to arrange for them to get the full operational training which is spread out over a 33-week period. Such a policy would also raise military eyebrows. Questions would be asked as to why it was thought unnecessary to give civilians equal language exposure and possibly less operational training as well, etc.

On another, but related, matter, John Day, who is in charge of the Junior FSO's and who followed the two Foreign Service Inspectors around Viet-Nam but, to my consternation, did not talk to you, feels that State should discontinue sending brand new officers to Viet-Nam and should instead send young FSO's who have had one tour overseas under their belts. We concur in this view, provided that there would be no diminution of the language training; thus these young officers would come out with an S-3, R-3 level or thereabouts--the same as the candidates you are now getting. This change in approach would not only provide more mature people for Viet-Nam but would also significantly lessen the extraordinary amount of handholding we have to do here at VTC to keep these young men from going off the deep end about Viet-Nam and the various Moratoria before they ever arrive in country. The new ones are so brainwashed when they get here that about all we can do is moderate their various forms of indignation until they get to Viet-Nam, after which the problem disappears in a matter of weeks in almost all cases.

When I get copies of the Foreign Service Inspectors' report, and also John Day's written report, I will send copies to you or hold them for your early arrival in Washington.

With best regards,

Ogden Williams  
Coordinator  
Viet-Nam Training Center