

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

May 5, 1970

Honorable Robert W. Komer  
The Rand Corporation  
1700 Main Street  
Santa Monica, California 90406

Dear Bob:

Thanks for your letter of April 23. I was in Thailand at the time doing a survey of the AID public safety program with John Manopoli, and therefore only saw your letter today.

With respect to your honorarium, I am informed if the honored guest is already in Washington, he only gets \$50. Had we brought you in from out of town, then you would have gotten \$75 plus travel. This goes to show that people from outside Washington are considered to be wiser than those who are here.

Regarding my end of tour report, I didn't particularly mention Porter, as you know, but did laud the 1966 period. You will recall that that was when you gave me carte blanche, and in the six months prior to the organization of OCO and later CORDS, the carte blanche really operated. In that time we were able to establish the basic essentials of Chieu Hoi, recruit a full team of field advisors from scratch, start the Kit Carson program, and do five or six other things. The formation of OCO and the later formation of CORDS no doubt served many U.S. purposes, but they were not of particular advantage to someone running a single project such as myself. Indeed, CORDS, after your departure, became more and more wrapped up in its own red tape. While you were there, it was still possible to shortcut the system when something really important arose, but the ability to operate efficiently, sensibly and freely in Viet-Nam was increasingly curtailed thereafter. My own background in Viet-Nam is such, and particularly as regards dealing with Vietnamese officials at any level, that all that I needed or wanted was the freedom to operate and over-all bureaucratic support which you provided at the outset in 1966. With that in hand, I needed no guidelines or maps as to how to proceed. Indeed, I am reminded of the story of Professor George Lyman Kittredge, the authority on Shakespeare at Harvard, who was once asked by a student as to why he had never gotten his PhD. Kittredge replied, "Who would

examine me???" You can be sure that, if I ever do get a chance to write a history of Chieu Hoi, the contribution you provided at the policy level will not be overlooked.

As regards writing such a study, I would be in a better position to do so if I were sitting in the hallowed halls of Rand Corporation with nothing else to do. Here at VTC one has a day to day succession of small fires either to light or put out, which is hardly conducive to the academic atmosphere.

During my month's stay in Thailand, I did get over to Saigon for 24 hours and talked to Maynard, Jacobson and others. Although security in the countryside was still remarkably good, there was real concern in two main areas, namely, the economic situation and the deterioration in the political harmony at the Saigon level. Ky and Loan were apparently mounting operations to undermine Thieu, and Thieu was acting more and more like Ngo dinh Diem in his later period. The Japanese have a proverb that character is destiny. National character is, I believe, also national destiny, and Viet-Nam is a startling case in point.

Please stay in touch with us and if the occasion arises, return to delight or infuriate our student body, as the case may be.

All the best.

Sincerely,

*SW* *5-7*

Ogden Williams  
Coordinator  
Viet-Nam Training Center

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*Speakers*  
cc: *CORRES (Gen)*