

File

March 23, 1970

O/FSI/VTC - Coordinator

Alan Walter ECKERT

I would like to add certain remarks to the Training Evaluation Report submitted on this officer. Mr. Eckert apparently worked for the Department of the Interior and then transferred into the Foreign Service for reasons unknown to me. He virtually completed a 49-week training program in which he received Vietnamese language training up to the S-3, R-3 level. One week before the conclusion of this training he determined to return to his original agency. I have no means of knowing Mr. Eckert's internal motivations. I am obliged to take note of the fact that he became 26 years old on September 5, 1969, which at that time put him beyond the scope of the draft. I am obliged to record my general feeling that there is some impropriety in an officer transferring to a Federal position in which he, by design or otherwise, is in a draft-deferred status, and then transferring back to his original employer after accepting the State Department's money for approximately a year.

I also question the propriety of the State Department permitting him to transfer back to the Department of the Interior. I see no reason why an officer in this position should be released until he has fulfilled his commitment and justified the training and salary which were provided to him by the Department of State for many months. I believe he should have been required either to fulfill his assignment in Viet-Nam, after which he could have been transferred back to Interior, or else obliged to resign from the Service and re-apply to the Department of the Interior if he so desired.

Whatever Mr. Eckert's internal motivations may have been, and I am definitely not presuming to judge these, I think the external facts of the case are not satisfactory, and indeed doubt that his action would have been tolerated in an earlier day, when perhaps concepts such as obligation and duty were taken more seriously than they are now. Even if Mr. Eckert concluded quite objectively that he was not equipped for Foreign Service life, he should, in my view, have been obliged to perform the service for which he was trained and paid for at least one tour.

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