

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

MEMORANDUM

February 16, 1970

TO: Honorable William E. Colby
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FROM: Ogden Williams, Coordinator, Viet-Nam Training Center
SUBJECT: The Future of the Viet-Nam Training Center

The VTC is in my view more beleaguered by events now than at any time in the past, so far as I am aware, and it may be difficult or impossible for this School to provide the services to CORDS/Viet-Nam that it has provided in the past. We are faced with problems in the following areas:

a. Student Enrollment. CORDS Class XXV entered the Basic Course on February 16. The class includes 31 persons, of whom 26 are military, 3 are AID, 1 is USIA, and 1 is from State. The particular problem area is State. In order to fulfill its commitment to CORDS/Viet-Nam, State would have to enroll 37 officers between now and June 30. As you know, State recently decided not to send junior officers on their first tour to Viet-Nam--which effectively closed off that avenue of enrollment--and has not yet taken effective measures to provide more senior Foreign Service Officers. It may be that State has decided it is unable or unwilling to provide volunteers or directed assignees. To date it has not even been possible here to get even a clear answer to that question, but I believe CORDS/Viet-Nam should be informed. At the present time, it thus appears that future VTC classes will resemble Class XXV in terms of student enrollment.

b. Budgetary Restrictions. Because of its own budgetary problems, AID has required VTC to cut back more than a \$100,000 in FY 70 and to reflect such cutbacks in FY 71. This will eliminate the Fort Bragg trip, probably require some reduction in staff, and necessitate other economies. We can live with these economies, but the fact of budgetary cutbacks has morale overtones which are perhaps even more meaningful than the actual funds involved.

Another important point should be made. As the student body becomes eight-tenths military, AID may be increasingly reluctant to pay the bill for military students and may understandably raise a question as to why it would not be better to turn the entire training program

over to the military. Such a move is particularly possible since VTC is now funded by the Office of the Assistant Administrator for Personnel and Manpower and no longer by the Vietnam Bureau. The original White House directive which required AID to assume the funding responsibility for VTC is increasingly becoming a dim historical memory in any case, and it is not even a memory to the people now responsible for funding VTC, since the Vietnam Bureau is now out of the act. Thus it is not an impossibility that the whole concept of VTC as a civilian institution, and as a prototype for other interagency training in the future, may be in jeopardy. You may or may not feel that this is a meaningful issue.

c. Student Career Development. Today a very promising AID long-term language officer from Class XVIII, who was due to go forward to Viet-Nam in April, submitted his resignation because he has become convinced, based on the experience of AID personnel returning from Viet-Nam, that he has no realistic hope for a career in AID work after Viet-Nam, and he cannot defer serious planning for his future when it seems virtually certain that he will be unemployed 18 months from now if he continues with his Viet-Nam assignment. This is a most unfortunate situation since the particular officer concerned had volunteered for AID and for Viet-Nam because he wanted to be in AID, whereas many (and perhaps most) of the other AID officers are continuing with their present program primarily in order to avoid being drafted.

There is nothing that any of us can do about AID's budgetary pressures. There is probably nothing we can do to improve the employment prospects of these AID officers (most of whom are former Peace Corps men and excellent material). There probably should be something we can do as regards the State Department's willingness to support CORDS/Viet-Nam in accordance with its prior commitments. The VTC itself has absolutely no leverage in this matter. There is no parent agency in Washington with a real bureaucratic interest in the continuance of VTC. Our only customer is CORDS/Viet-Nam. If pressure is to be applied, I believe it must be applied by you. In this connection, I would strongly urge that a meeting be held between yourself, Ambassador Sullivan, Mr. Sollenberger and myself. Since you will be fully occupied with the Fulbright hearings for the next few days, such a meeting would have to take place after you have completed your appearances at such hearings. Then, I hope you would agree to request a meeting with Ambassador Sullivan, and we will adjust our schedules accordingly. If this proposal meets with your approval, could you inform me as to your wishes on extension 70700?

cc:
EA:WHSullivan
O/FSI:HESollenberger

O/FSI/VTC:OWilliams:pak 2/16/70