

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520
FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

Mr. Joseph Toner

January 7, 1970

Joe,

I attach a letter to Bill Sullivan which is self-explanatory. Some weeks ago you mentioned that you were thinking of possibly having AID officers going out to serve in USAID attend the seven-week Basic Course here at VTC. You did not indicate whether this would be in addition to the short course they now get at the Washington Training Center, or in substitution for it. In any case, it is increasingly clear to us, with respect to State and USIA, that the customary practice of sending out JUSPAO or Embassy personnel without any serious exposure to Viet-Nam is unprofessional, and the attached letter attempts to do something about it within the State Department.

John McCaughan

OW Chron.

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FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

January 7, 1970

Honorable William H. Sullivan
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and
Pacific Affairs
Department of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

Dear Bill:

As the Department of State attempts to solve the difficult problem of providing FSO's for CORDS in Viet-Nam, I should like to raise, for your consideration, a separate but related question.

State, USIA and AID have, in the past, followed a variety of procedures in sending forward officers to the field who might or might not be serving in CORDS. Sometimes they send these officers to VTC for area familiarization and withdraw them from the Basic Course after two or three weeks. Sometimes they bypass VTC entirely. Sometimes these officers attend the entire seven weeks course. I think it would be beneficial if some system and discipline could be introduced into our procedures. Specifically, I think it would be desirable if all substantive State Department, USIA and AID officers proceeding to Viet-Nam to serve in the Embassy, JUSPAO, or USAID were first sent to attend the full seven weeks course at the VTC. As you know, the Basic Course gives some attention to CORDS itself, but is generally couched in the broadest possible terms. I do not believe that an outgoing officer can receive anywhere in the US as thorough a "briefing" on the broader aspects of the Viet-Nam foreign policy problem as is provided at this school.

At present what tends to happen is that JUSPAO, USAID, or the Embassy will develop a vacancy, and the administrative machinery will be set in motion to get a body to the field at the earliest possible time with only minimum regard for whether the individual has more than a rough clue about Viet-Nam, about US purposes and policies, or about the organization of the US and GVN efforts in the present situation. This is one more example of our "quantitative" as opposed to "qualitative" approach to Viet-Nam.

I have recently raised this problem with USIA, who have been in the habit of sending officers here for two or three weeks and then withdrawing them from the Basic Course in response to some administrative requirement in the field. I think this is poor practice and should be discouraged. In fact, we at VTC will probably shortly adopt a policy, subject to the approval of higher authority, that any officer sent here will be required to complete the seven weeks course or will not be accepted in the first place. I think our Basic Course is now sufficiently professional and useful, both in terms of its content and the practical advantages of mixing civilian and military personnel as we do, that it would be entirely in the interests of the US Government to adopt a clear policy that all substantive officers assigned to Viet-Nam by State, USIA and AID automatically attend seven weeks of training at this school. As we attempt to persuade AID and USIA as to the advantages of such a procedure--which would incidentally eliminate a lot of confusion administratively--I would much appreciate your considering the merits of this proposal as applied to the Department of State. It might be feasible to convene a meeting of appropriate representatives of the three agencies, under State's sponsorship, to try to reach a common position on this matter, if you felt this would be useful.

I make these proposals because I think they would contribute to upgrading the professional quality of our personnel in Viet-Nam in all agencies and not because of any parochial interests of VTC. I would note, however, an advantageous side effect in that, if the proposals were adopted, a better balance of civilian and military students would be achieved. As of now our classes are beginning to run about 75% military and 25% civilian. Even though, under the proposed new arrangement, the majority of civilian students would not necessarily be assigned to CORDS, the mixing of civilians and military at VTC (and during our one week at Fort Bragg) would tend to break down the parochialism which now exists to a marked degree in Saigon, where the Embassy is largely cut off from field operations, where the concerns of USAID tend to stop at the city limits, etc.

Any consideration you could give to these matters and any thoughts you might have with respect to them would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

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Ogden Williams
Coordinator
Viet-Nam Training Center

cc:

AID/A/PM - Joseph S. Toner (See attached)
O/FSI - James J. Byrnes (Talked by phone)

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