

O/FSI - Mr. Howard E. Sollenberger

November 19, 1970

O/FSI/VTC - Ogden Williams

Recent Developments at VTC

The following are some of the highlights of activity here in recent weeks, to keep you posted:

1. Possible New Training Missions for Military and Naval Personnel

a. We were recently informally approached by contacts from the Department of the Army who indicated that Army is considering putting on a special 4-day orientation and background session for all General officers and Colonels going to Viet-Nam to assume command positions. Very rough estimates projected about 100 General officers and 200+ Colonels per year. The Department of the Army representatives raised the question as to whether VTC might not be the best possible place to conduct such training. They are aware that we conducted brief sessions for DEPCORDS officers like Ted Long, John Gunther Dean, Ambassador Funkhauser, etc. Our reputation seems to be generally high in the Department of the Army, and it may be that some people feel that our insights could usefully be communicated to senior commanders going to Viet-Nam. I told them that we would have to get more precise data on the numbers involved, scheduling and the like. I suggested that perhaps we should deal only with the General officers, in order to reduce the number of trainees involved. They initially doubted if it would be feasible to split the program between the Generals and the Colonels, but said they would probably be back with more detailed figures.

Comment: In principle, I believe the Institute should exert leadership where it can. I doubt the feasibility of handling the very substantial numbers involved in this idea, but since the program is only a 4-day one which might be scheduled four times a year, for example, it seems worth exploring further on a strictly informal, low profile, basis. There is nothing at all firm in the picture yet. In any case, no language training would be involved and no extra costs would be incurred by VTC.

b. For the past several months we have been providing individualized operations and language training to Captain William Crowe of the Navy, who is going to Viet-Nam as the Senior Naval Advisor. (Navy is reimbursing State for the language training.) Crowe is very enthusiastic about the insights he has received here and asked if we would permit naval personnel

to discuss with us possibilities of providing training at VTC for senior naval advisory personnel going to Viet-Nam. Here again is an opportunity for the Institute to provide leadership and exert a beneficial influence in the foreign affairs area. I will keep you fully posted as soon as this proposal becomes anything more than just an idea.

2. PSA - DSA Programs

I have previously forwarded to you some background material on the problem of reversing the Province Senior Advisor and District Senior Advisor programs.

3. Further Developments re: VTC "Sponsorship"

You will recall our conversation with General Haig at the time of Kissinger's visit to VTC, when we described the precarious bureaucratic existence of VTC and when General Haig suggested we should have an NSDM, etc. You also remember that during the time of our budgetary confrontation with A.I.D., I met with Haig and received his assurances that they would support the priority of our mission. More recently, Don Brewster, who has recently joined that staff, has requested backup material on VTC, to include evaluations performed by CORDS/Viet-Nam, the Department of the Army, and others, which I have provided. Whether or not anything will come of all this in terms of reaffirmation of VTC's priority is still problematical, but we are hopeful.

4. Visit to Viet-Nam

Within a few weeks, and with your concurrence, I hope to request CORDS clearance for a visit to Viet-Nam in January. My last visit there for VTC was in October 1969. Among the items of my still incomplete agenda will be to negotiate a possible takeover by CORDS of the language training costs for military students at VTC (or possibly all students?) so as to permit a reversal of the present PSA and DSA language programs. Naturally, considerable staff work will have to be done at this end before January, to make sure this is the solution we want. Another principal item will be to explore more thoroughly than has yet been done exactly what we can do in the training area to give real backup to the new program directions in Viet-Nam. These directions include greater emphasis on politico-economic development, greater "civilianization" of the struggle, etc. I would want to talk at length to men like John Gunther Dean, Ted Long, John Vann and others, quite apart from senior officials in CORDS, the Embassy and A.I.D. Already our District Course, for example, is heavily weighted toward non-security aspects of training, but I am sure you feel we must do more in this area.