

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

October 6, 1970

Honorable William E. Colby
Deputy COMUSMACV for CORDS
c/o American Embassy
Saigon, Viet-Nam

Dear Bill:

For a long time the Viet-Nam Training Center has been guilty of an anomaly which I think we should correct. At present, we give PSA's 33 weeks of training which includes 600 hours of language. By contrast, the 18-week course for DSA's provides only 300 hours of language. The overwhelming feedback from Viet-Nam is to the effect that the PSA's seldom use the language they acquire and that there is much less need for Vietnamese at the province level. Conversely, the evidence is that a Vietnamese language capability is far more valuable at district level. In short, we believe that it would be much more rational and useful if the DSA's receive 600 hours of language and the PSA's received only 300. The content of the operations courses would remain the same.

Specifically, we would like to explore with the Department of the Army whether they could send us PSA's for 18 weeks and DSA's for 33 weeks, instead of vice versa as at present. Since you can only absorb PSA's at a certain rate, we would presumably request half as many military PSA's who would process through here twice as quickly, so that the number reaching Viet-Nam would be unchanged. With respect to DSA's, there could be an initial hiatus during the period of change over from an 18-week to a 33-week course, but this could be staggered so that the effect would not be too severe for CORDS during the change-over period.

Before pursuing this idea vigorously with the Department of the Army, I wanted to make sure there was no objection from your end. The proposed changes would, I believe, result in your getting more of the younger officers at the district level arriving in Viet-Nam with at least a 2-level competence in Vietnamese, while the older officers would have somewhat less Vietnamese which many of them have difficulty in absorbing anyway and do not use after they arrive in-country.

We would much appreciate getting your views at your convenience.
Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Ogden Williams
Coordinator
Viet-Nam Training Center