

September 25, 1970

Mr. Lawrence A. Marinelli  
Office of Assistant Chief  
of Staff for CORDS  
Headquarters MACV  
APO San Francisco 96222

Dear Larry:

Guy Jones just talked to me on the telephone. I told him that, in our recent budget meeting with AID, it appeared that they would accept the cut offered by us of \$10,500 and would remove myself and Jones from the VTC payroll and put us on some regular AID payroll, and that this might be the way the problem would be resolved for this fiscal year. If true, this would mean that we would not have to call upon CORDS/Viet-Nam to bail us out. It may turn out, on the other hand, that AID will review its assault, and that we have in fact been granted no respite in our continuing battle to keep VTC's budget up to minimum levels. The kind of money we talk about here must seem totally ridiculous to you in Viet-Nam. It should be realized, however, that VTC voluntarily cut \$63,000 from its 1969 actual expenditures in initially presenting the FY 70 budget, and absorbed the pay increases of some \$13,000 without adjusting priorities for that, so that even a few thousand dollars lopped off now would really cut into the irreducible standards of our operation.

After talking with Guy, I discussed again with the Acting Director of the Foreign Service Institute, Howard Sollenberger, our financial situation and particularly the staff trips to Viet-Nam which have been scheduled for this year. He pointed out that AID's future position on the VTC budget is still not known and that we may not yet be out of the woods. He continued to be extremely anxious to ask CORDS/Viet-Nam to pick up VTC's staff travel for the rest of the year, pointing out that although the budgetary relief would, by CORDS/Viet-Nam standards, be insignificant, such action on the part of CORDS/Viet-Nam would be highly desirable for other reasons. In the first place, the State Department is trying to curtail overseas trips by staff members, and the Foreign Service Institute does not wish to appear to be out of step with general policy, even though the VTC is a special case. Also it would demonstrate field concurrence in the desirability of those trips on their merits.

I dare say there are many in Washington who look with deep suspicion on overseas trips, and for good reason. VTC's policy of updating its staff has always been regarded as a dubious exercise by people who are not familiar with our problem. The gesture by CORDS/Viet-Nam of picking up these trips would lay this type of criticism to rest once and for all.

Let me mention my own convictions about these trips. It is absolutely clear to me that if we are to remain current and relevant in our training about Viet-Nam, CORDS and the specific on-going programs of CORDS, we must either have a staff consistently replenished by rotation of personnel coming in from the field, or we must send staff members to the field at periodic intervals. The first alternative does not work because (1) we cannot get returning officers assigned to VTC on a frequent and continuing basis, and (2) we must in any case develop some expertise in our instructional methods, and this only occurs when a man has been on the staff long enough to develop such expertise. Whereas trips by people like myself might be challenged, updating our actual instructors is really essential to our mission. As far as I am concerned, VTC has to run a good program. CORDS/Viet-Nam and the situation demand it. If we do not run a first-rate performance, our operation will be taken over by others who might do even less well. In any case, those of us engaged in the activity would not be content to settle for a second-rate operation as a matter of principle. In short, the results of staff visits by VTC personnel, as expressed in better lectures, better response to student questions, updated course materials, and the like, leave no doubt in my mind as to the desirability of these trips. I would therefore like to propose for your consideration that CORDS/Viet-Nam assist us in the following specific categories:

6 staff trips @ \$1,650	=	\$9,900
2 area specialists @ \$2,650	=	<u>5,300</u>
Total		\$15,200

At the moment, Bob Zimmerman, Chairman of our Basic Course, is cleared to arrive in Saigon on October 14 or 15. The next trip would be that of Capt. Gardner, due to arrive October 23. Capt. Gardner's trip is now being suspended pending the results of this appeal to you. If you agree to our request, CORDS/Viet-Nam could either (1) issue invitational travel for the remaining VTC trips in accordance with a schedule we would send you; (2) merely cite complete funding data in the cable of concurrence which you customarily send us regarding these trips. Since

Capt. Gardner's trip is now hanging fire here (despite cable concurrence from Viet-Nam previously received), could you respond to this letter as quickly as possible. Please show it soonest to Guy Jones so that he can be in on the problem at that end. Anything you can do for us will be highly appreciated, as you know.

All the best,

Sincerely,

Ogden Williams  
Coordinator  
Viet-Nam Training Center

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