

September 24, 1970

O/FSI/VTC - Ogden Williams

Nomination of Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Bich (Second Cultural Attache, Vietnamese Embassy) for Appropriate Recognition by the Foreign Service Institute for Meritorious Contributions to the Program of the Viet-Nam Training Center.

Mr. Bich has lectured regularly at the Viet-Nam Training Center, since its establishment in May 1967, once every six weeks to successive Basic Courses. He was born in Hanoi in 1937. He went south and had his elementary and secondary education (and six months of university) in Saigon. He first came to the United States in 1956, and received a BA in Political Science from Princeton in 1958. He has also attended Columbia University, and the Universities of Vienna, Munich, and Kyoto. Mr. Bich entered the diplomatic service of the Government of Viet-Nam in 1966, assigned to the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington.

Mr. Bich's professional specialty is "culture," and he does more than merely talk about it—he illustrates and entertains with songs, dances, and poetry. Those who later on see and hear on television the classical opera performed in South Viet-Nam are able, thanks to Mr. Bich and to their Vietnamese language training, to understand better its significance as well as literal meanings.

Recently Mr. Bich has also lectured on the history of Viet-Nam, specifically on the development of nationalism. The course has been well received and students have evinced interest in it. Additionally, Mr. Bich participates in the Extended Course program where he leads lecture/seminars on Vietnamese music, theater, and literary traditions, expanding on information contained in his lectures to the Basic Course. Mr. Bich has displayed his interest in helping VTC students achieve a better understanding of the Vietnamese people in many ways, one of which has been his making available to the VTC certain study and resource materials unavailable through normal channels. For example, the VTC Library now contains copies of Mr. Bich's translations of the Vietnamese national poem, Kim Van Kieu, and a compendium of other traditional Vietnamese poems.

Mr. Bich has been very effective in presenting a dimension of Vietnamese life underlying the main concerns of U.S. Government programs. He gives a lively demonstration, with explanations in excellent English, and our students profit from it.

It is strongly believed that Mr. Bich should be given appropriate recognition for his long and professional service to us. If visiting lecturer designations were available to members of foreign embassies, such would clearly be recommended by VTC in Mr. Bich's case. Since such individuals are not eligible, however, it is suggested that an appropriate scroll or certificate be prepared and that Mr. Bich be invited to the office of the Acting Director of the Foreign Service Institute for an award ceremony.

O/FSI/VTC:JEMacDonald:REZimmerman:
OWilliams/umma:d