

MACCZ-IV-CR

4 August 1970

Mr. Ogden Williams
Coordinator
Viet-Nam Training Center
Agency for International Development
Washington, D. C. 20523

Dear Ogden:

In discussions I have recently had with military graduates of the 18-week FSI course, I have become aware of several areas where the training appears to either be inadequate from the standpoint of the time allotted or the quality of the instruction given. I pass these on to you for such use as you deem appropriate.

The first area concerns the Hamlet Evaluation System. Four different officers whom I have questioned appear to be a lack of understanding of the system and the details involved in compiling and updating the HES. I would think a practical exercise wherein a type hamlet would be described to the students and a typical month of input into a hamlet dossier was provided could then result in each student actually preparing an HES and then, subsequently, having a critique by the instructor. What appears to be lacking now is a basic understanding of the procedure as well as the types of uses the HES data is applicable to.

Another area that appears to be inadequately covered is the overall reporting requirements imposed on the districts. In this connection, one time spot reports, tactical reports and recurring reports need to be covered. Particular attention needs to be given to the TFES and to the PSDF report. Like it or not, reporting remains a major requirement for District Senior Advisors.

Actual knowledge of village and hamlet structure appears to sketchy among the graduates I have interviewed. In this connection, both military and civilian advisors have commented to me that the enclosed copy of our IV Corps "Village and Hamlet Security Guide" contains a better description of village and hamlet organization than that received in the course. I am enclosing a copy of this for your perusal and will be glad to send you additional copies if you wish it as an instructional aid. Previously, I sent copies of this to Roger Darling.

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A not uncommon complaint is that some of the instructors appear to be outdated in their knowledge of Vietnam and the CORDS organization. I know this is a continuing problem and one that can be somewhat offset by guest lecturers. It can also be offset by more detailed knowledge of current security and intelligence estimates and, of course, the province monthly reports. I know that you must receive the results of the overall HES report and I am aware that your library has the province monthly reports. I am enclosing, however, a copy of the IV Corps province profiles which we use both as a reference for advisors and as an assist to the Vietnamese commander and staff during their visits to the provinces.

A major difficulty here has been the reduced input of middle level (grades 3, 4 and 5) officers and, hence, a reduction in both the quality and quantity of the civilian advisory effort. Unless this trend is soon reversed, I fear for the continuing status of CORDS and the retention of a meaningful civilian agency voice in pacification. Quite truly, I am assigning civilians to positions as Province Deputy Senior Advisors and NLD Advisors who would have been considered unqualified for these positions a year ago. No relief is apparently in sight. Although the influx of the class 7 and 8 officers has not been reduced as much, there are problems here too. Increasingly, the new arrivals are voicing objections to assignments at district level for fear they will be saddled with some responsibility or association with the military effort. Although we have been able to handle the several who have voiced this objection by assignments to Assistant NLD positions at province level, their utilization there is less profitable than it could be at district level. As an aside, the proclivity of the younger civilians to effect long hair, sideburns, beards and moustaches generally detracts from their acceptance by GVN officials. I recognize this is and must remain a matter of personal choice, but I do believe it advisable to pass on to these personnel the possibility of their lesser acceptance by the Vietnamese when their appearance varies from normally accepted standards.

I may or may not get caught up enough to take my now two months overdue SMA in late August or September. If I do, I will let you know when I am in Washington so that you may schedule me for some presentations.

Best regards,

John P. Vann
Deputy for CORDS

2 Incl(s):
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cc: Mr. G. D. Jacobson,
ACofS, CORDS, MACV