

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

March 19, 1971

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

Dear Bill:

Thank you for your letter of March 8. I hasten to reply, not knowing whether this will reach you before your next return to the U.S. on home leave.

Regarding your letter, since no Class 5 officers are working at district level today, there would seem to be no reason for them to receive the District Course in its present form. I would point out, however, the present District Course contains 300 hours of language training. Under our agreements with State, Class 5 officers would not normally be given long-term language (approximately 1200 hours). Thus, we have the following options open to us:

1. Give Class 5 officers the six-week Basic Course (which includes 30 hours of introductory Vietnamese language) plus a week or two of special briefings on the 1971 Plan and other operational matters at the province level, and then send them out. This would involve a program of approximately eight weeks at VTC.
2. The Class 5 officers could receive the Basic Course plus two weeks of operations plus whatever amount of language training you deem desirable short of the normal commitment to the long-term language course of 48 weeks. This would have to be worked out carefully between CORDS and State.

In short, it would seem logical to give up District Operations training in its present form for Class 5 officers, but in so doing we also give up 300 hours of Vietnamese language. Does this trouble you? Obviously, the easiest solution would simply be to eliminate any language requirement for Class 5 officers beyond the 30-hour introductory program, and send them out after only eight weeks at VTC. Frankly, I would tend to favor such a solution. I feel

that personnel today generally do not want to tie up substantial amounts of time in training for Viet-Nam. With the exception of those junior officers who are set aside for language training, I see many advantages in not extending the training time at VTC beyond what is absolutely necessary.

Since you will soon be in Washington, would you be free to discuss this with us as well as with John Burns and others?

Sincerely,

Ogden Williams  
Coordinator  
Viet-Nam Training Center