

July 25, 1987

Minister Raul Ch. Rabe
Embassy of the Philippines
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Rabe,

It was a pleasure and honor to meet with you and Capt. Agustin yesterday, and per your instructions I am submitting herewith a brief personal history statement. Having long had great admiration and affection for the Philippines, I would be very happy if any experience of mine, particularly in the rallier program area, could be of use.

While John Finney was initially keen to have me go there as a consultant for the U.S. State Department or NSC, I told him, as I mentioned to you yesterday, that I would actually prefer to work for the Philippines side directly, if acceptable to them, since more could be accomplished more quickly that way.

I realize that the Philippines government, at least until it can fully recover the Marcos accounts, is in a restricted position financially, so that if I went there as a consultant to the Philippines side I would be going largely as a labor of love, based on past experiences, and would have to largely forego such fees as I charged for going to Africa in 1985-86 and would again charge the U.S. Government if I went to the Philippines under its auspices. A round-trip air ticket and some subsistence arrangements while on duty in the Philippines would presumably suffice. I would imagine that any visit of mine would initially be of fairly short duration, with possible return on a longer basis if deemed useful there.

For the time being I shall remain at your disposal or at Capt. Agustin's at any time, in case there is interest in exploring further my possible contribution to ongoing efforts in the Philippines. In any case, please send my informal paper* to anyone who you feel might be interested in it. I would also urge that someone contact former Philippines Army officer Rudy Yabut who, I am sure, could be of immense help in any rallier program, based on his outstanding performance and expertise demonstrated in Vietnam in the program there, some of the lessons of which could, I believe, be adapted to the present program in the Philippines.

Again many thanks, and cordial
best wishes to you and Capt. Agustin

W.

* Rallier Program - Yesterday and Today

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Ogden WILLIAMS

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Education: Princeton Univ. AB (1942)
Harvard Law School, JD (1948)

Employment experience:

- Pan American Air Ferries Inc. Navigator, ferrying bombers to Africa, Middle East etc. 1942
- 1st Lieut. & Capt., U.S. Army Air Forces (1942-46)
- Attorney, Carter, Ledyard & Milburn, 2 Wall St, New York, NY (1948-51) Member New York Bar.

U.S. Government (Foreign Service) 1952-76, serving in Germany, India, Vietnam, Tunisia etc.

Principal assignments included:

- Assistant to Director, and Assistant Director for Rural Affairs, USAID/Vietnam (1962-64). In charge of U.S. civilian provincial representatives and operations throughout Vietnam.
- Deputy Director, USAID/Tunisia (1965-66)
- Associate Director, USAID/Vietnam and Chief of the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) Directorate, COMUSMACV, Vietnam (1966-69).
- Director, Vietnam Training Center, Foreign Service Institute, Dept. of State, Washington DC (1969-71)

1974 to Present:

- Freelance writer (articles published in Washington Post, magazines, Alaska newspapers, etc.)
- Lobbyist for Sierra Club, Wash. DC (1979)
- Director, Washington Chapter, Afghanistan Relief Committee (1980-82)
- Consultant to International Human Assistance Programs, New York. Set up emergency food distribution program for 20,000 famine victims in Chad, Africa (1985). Follow up in Chad (1986).

Rallier Programs - Yesterday and Today

In Vietnam it was known as the Chieu Hoi Program - roughly translated as "invitation to return." It was also called the "Open Arms" program or the "Amnesty" program. By any name, and although small by Vietnam standards, it was second to none in cost effectiveness and individual contribution to the Allied effort. No program was more hated or feared by the Communist enemy. Nothing was more threatening and damaging to him than to have his people simply leave the ranks and go over to the Government side. And yet, paradoxically, no program was more directly influential in saving lives - on both sides. During the three years in which the undersigned organized and directed the program on the U.S. side (1966-69), some 60,000 Viet Cong came in under the program, of whom 48,000 were armed. This removed from the battlefield many divisions of armed enemy whose destruction by conventional means would, under the casualty ratios then prevailing, have cost more than 10,000 U.S. and South Vietnamese lives. And as a byproduct of the Chieu Hoi Program, intelligence information provided by the returnees was of enormous value to our side, and in fact provided the basis for many of our most effective military operations.

(A tragic testimony to the effectiveness of the Chieu Hoi Program is that, after the North Vietnamese Army was finally permitted to win a military victory in South Vietnam in 1975, the victors' immediate priority was given to hunting down and eliminating tens of thousands of the Chieu Hoi returnees, using undestroyed files to facilitate the hunt.)

Our first task in the reorganization and upgrading of the Chieu Hoi Program in 1966 was to establish and codify the basic doctrine of the program. It was accordingly divided into the following elements;

1. INDUCEMENT
2. RECEPTION & INTERROGATION
3. TRAINING
4. RESETTLEMENT
5. FOLLOW-UP

Each of these phases is now briefly explained:

1. INDUCEMENT This concerns the measures taken to attract ralliers to the program. It involved making known to the Viet Cong that they had an option to leave the enemy ranks without penalty under an amnesty offer of the Government. Techniques included air-dropped leaflets and Safe Conduct passes, broadcasts, rallies. The inducement flowed from the political decision of the GVN to offer amnesty, pardon for offenses committed while under VC control, a draft deferment (initially one year, later six months) and legal reestablishment as a full member of South Vietnamese society.

It is very important to note that this was, and had to be, a bona fide political offer on the part of the South Vietnamese Government. It was not primarily an intelligence program but rather a program of social reconstruction. (In fact, no CIA personnel were on the U.S. staff in the Chieu Hoi Program, and no CIA funds were included in its budget.) Intelligence information was an unvaluable by-product of the program, but was not allowed to become its main purpose or *raison d'être*.

2. RECEPTION & INTERROGATION This involved not just the physical Chieu Hoi Centers which were built and manned in each province of South Vietnam. Much more fundamental were the principles underlying the reception process. These included that the returnee must be provided not only with security, shelter, food etc., but more importantly that he be regarded and treated with dignity and consideration. The man who had left the close embrace of the Viet Cong must be helped to feel at home in his new context. Chieu Hoi Centers were not detention camps or prisons. Returnees could actually walk out of the Center and rejoin the VC, but very few ever did.

As regards interrogation, intelligence debriefing by US or South Vietnamese interrogators normally had to be conducted on the premises of the Center, or with official written permission, including the consent of the returnee, for interrogation elsewhere. This was

done to preclude, insofar as possible, any mistreatment or denigration of a returnee during the interrogation process, which would have struck a body-blow to the success of the program. By contrast, considerate and, above all, dignified treatment of the returnees led to voluntary cooperation far more valuable to us than any coercion could have provided.

Over time, GVN Chieu Hoi Centers came to be guarded by so-called Armed Propaganda Teams - ralliers who would not only provide security but also go out into enemy areas to induce more ralliers. (It is interesting to note that in the communist Tet offensive of 1968, the Armed Propaganda Teams provided invaluable help in defending provincial towns against enemy attack. None went over to the enemy side.)

3. TRAINING During the period of approximately six weeks that the returnee spent at the Chieu Hoi Center, he received first rest, food and medical attention, and then various types of training activity. These would include lectures on the GVN aims in the war, GVN views of world communism and of North Vietnamese policy, the role of the U.S. in Vietnam etc. There would also be, for example, carpentry, masonry, handicrafts activities and the like, designed to keep the returnees busy and usefully occupied, as well as possibly helping him make a living after leaving the Center.
4. RESETTLEMENT After their six weeks at the Center, the returnee was assisted in reentering Vietnamese society. Many just wanted to go home to their families. Others, particularly if their homes were located in insecure rural areas, preferred to waive their draft deferment and enlist immediately in some branch of South Vietnamese armed forces in order to have the security of belonging to an armed group, or because soldiering was their only skill. Some even joined U.S. Army or Marine units as "Kit Carson Scouts" where many became invaluable resources, usually in direct proportion to the acceptance and confidence extended to them (or not extended) from the U.S. side.
5. FOLLOW UP Records were kept as to the returnee's home address and where he intended to go after leaving the Center. Local police were instructed to check up on what became of returnees from time to time. Special investigations were also conducted on a spot-check basis by both GVN and U.S. teams, including formal studies by U.S.-contract "think tanks." It was determined that less than 1% ever re-defected to the Viet Cong, of whom some may have been deliberate penetrations from the outset. Such penetration attempts were usually fairly easy to spot. A true returnee would not hesitate to give information on his former VC unit in most cases, whereas a penetration agent would not be free to do so. Suspicious individuals would then be separated out for police investigation. (On one occasion when a VC agent was discovered, no hint was given to the individual until the next assembly of all the returnees in one place. Then the guilty party was announced and told to stand up and tell his comrades everything. At this point the genuine defection occurred, and the culprit, now neutralized and rendered harmless, became

all the more useful and cooperative, in gratitude for not being punished.)

In any case the follow up program provided a ready answer to the cynics who claimed, quite mistakenly, that the amnesty program was "an R & R program for Viet Cong," etc. Some conventional military and civilian authorities held strongly stereotyped views that all defectors were by definition contemptible traitors, etc. In fact, most Viet Cong joined the Viet Cong either by forced draft or, if voluntarily, for a number of human, non-ideological reasons. They also left the Viet Cong for human as opposed to ideological reasons, the exceptions being the few North Vietnamese who rallied (whose families were in the North) and the higher-ranking NVA and VC officers (field grade or above). These ralliers were motivated either by classic disillusionment with communism or by personal hatred of their former colleagues.

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The Chieu Hoi Program was commanded and manned throughout South Vietnam by GVN personnel, both military and civilian. At each echelon, however, so-called "advisors" - U.S., Australian and Filipino - worked alongside their Vietnamese counterparts. A purely GVN program would have been sounder politically, but in practical terms the U.S. had to keep a handle on the use of U.S. funds (about \$10 million annually during my tenure). Also, the entire Chieu Hoi concept was originally unknown to the Vietnamese and was strictly a U.S. idea drawn from the earlier successes of Magsaysay's "all-out friendship or all-out fight" campaign in the Philippines. Thus, for a time, the role of foreign advisors as animators was needed.

I would estimate that about 40 Filipinos served on the US advisory staff in the Chieu Hoi Program at this time. I had recruited them from Manila because I had worked closely with Filipinos during my earlier tours in Vietnam in 1956-57 and 1962-64 and knew their potential worth, which in my view outweighed the antipathy to them felt by many xenophobic Vietnamese. For one thing, the Filipinos were already Asians and thus far more adept than most US advisors in knowing what was really going on in the Centers, instances of corruption in the GVN structure, morale of the returnees, etc. I had superb US, Australian and Filipino individuals in the program. At their best I ranked them on a par. Among the latter, men like Captain Rudy Yabut, on loan from the regular Philippine Army, stood out. Yabut ended up as chief of the entire program for IV Corps in the Delta in 1969, following in the footsteps of Majors Burns and Riddle, on loan from the Australian Army. From Saigon down to the regional and province levels I had a network of loyal and effective Filipino personnel fully knowledgeable in the concept and operations of a successful rallier program. Some elements of this network could, I dare say, be very useful in the Philippines today.

Comments on Administration

It is vitally important that the persons who command and direct a rallier program be themselves thoroughly aware of the political and philosophical validity of such a program and dedicated to its success.

All cadres at every level must be indoctrinated in the program's concepts and trained in its structural elements as noted above. Reporting and evaluation should be done following the same structures - Inducement, Reception & Interrogation, Training etc.

Without here going into the details of recruitment policy and screening, it should be remembered that Filipinos, although now living in a society all too rife with corruption and duplicity, have nevertheless a high sense of pride and personal honor, and are prone to strong personal loyalties and devotion to duty if led with reciprocal loyalty and personal consideration.

From the outset a Philippines rallier program, under an easily identifiable name such as New Life Program, Operation Unity or whatever, should cultivate the image of an elite unit with strong organizational pride and internal loyalties. Its doctrine and operational strategies must be made simple and clear and known to every man from top to bottom.

Also from the outset, the new or reorganized program should actively explain its mission and methods to the related organizations which could by their attitudes and conduct make or break it, particularly the regular armed forces, the police and the intelligence services. It should be explained to the army why search and destroy operations generate no ralliers, ~~while~~ while clear and hold operations generate many. The intelligence services must know that they must not kill the golden goose by trying to convert the Government's political offer, initiative and program into a mere intelligence bonanza. The natural scepticism and hostility of old-line bureaucracies can be mitigated if the advantages of a successful rallier program - to them - are adequately explained.

The Philippines are a particularly fertile field for a successful rallier program for several reasons: First there is the historical example of Ramon Magsaysay's successful efforts against the Hukbalahaps. Secondly, there are Filipinos already on the ground who have themselves experienced the operation of a highly effective rallier program in Vietnam.

Finally, the basic concept of a rallier program is philosophically, ethically and politically valid. Once under way it builds its own momentum from human nature itself, as brotherhood, cooperation and success are found to be a refreshing alternative to hate, mutual destruction and seemingly endless strife. It improves the image of the Government while mitigating the causes of insurgency. It is a natural and enormously valuable addition to the national strategy of any country faced with insurgency and ~~xxx~~ civil conflict.

Ogden Williams
Ogden Williams

March 22, 1987