

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE VIETNAM CONFLICT

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January 25, 1994

Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr.
1500 Wilson Blvd., Suite 641
Arlington, VA 22209

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Dear Admiral:

I learned this morning that President Lawless has now agreed to go forward with the next round of recruiting for the National Council, and will very shortly be sending you the letters, following the same procedure as with Ambassador Colby and Professor Pike, for your personal covering letter. I enclose a copy of my letter to President Lawless and the draft letter of invitation that I wrote for him. In it, I used Doug Pike's very generous comments about our Center and its future role.

I am taking the liberty to enclose a draft covering letter for you to consider. As you will see, the initial paragraphs are virtually unaltered from the ones you sent to Ambassador Colby and Professor Pike. I have only altered the final paragraphs to match the different level of acquaintance with our effort of the five individuals we are now approaching.

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An update on some different topics: The University has now received \$3.5 million to build an international cultural center, which, it is estimated, will be completed in 1995. The director of international programs has invited the Vietnam Center to occupy offices in the new building, and I have accepted. I think it will be an appropriate location for us.

A Vietnam vet (Khe Sanh) currently completing a masters degree at Eastern Washington State University has applied to enter our doctoral program. His masters thesis dealt rather nicely with the 1963 Buddhist uprising, and he is very keen to continue his study of the Vietnam war. I look forward to his arrival this Fall. By that time at least one of our Vietnam masters students will have completed his thesis and will be moving on to doctoral studies, probably here. That would make four doctoral candidates in Vietnam.

Following is the status of our graduate studies program:

- Blake Dunnavent: Completing his doctoral coursework this semester. Then will be working on a dissertation on the Navy in Vietnam.
- Katherine Fanning: In preliminary stages of doctoral coursework. An army reservist, she completed a masters thesis on the Turkish Army in Korea, and now aims to specialize in Vietnam.

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Les Cullen: Masters thesis on the role of the Navy in Operation Rolling Thunder. He will complete this semester, and intends to continue on to doctoral studies here.

Ben Dubberly: Masters thesis on atrocities in Vietnam. Probably will complete this semester.

Craig Hannah: Masters thesis on tactical air in South Vietnam. Will complete in Fall, and intends to continue on to doctoral in this field.

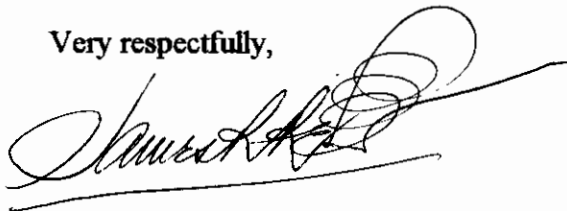
Robert Topmiller: This is the Vietnam vet scheduled to begin doctoral studies in the Fall.

In non-Vietnam related studies, I have one student writing a thesis on the Marines in China in the 1920s, and another working on a study of the amphibious force from 1945 to 1950.

I have advised the chair of the History Department that this Fall I will be making formal recommendation to establish a freshman-level course entitled "Vietnam and America," which I would offer to large (up to 250 students) classes. My idea is that this course will meet the non-history majors' desire to learn about Vietnam, and thus will free up the senior level course, which I will then limit to students who want to participate in more serious advanced study of Vietnam. One result will be to deal with those who are only casually interested at the freshman level, but I have a suspicion that in the long run the freshmen course will attract more students to study military/naval history by exposing them to Vietnam right at the beginning of their studies.

Thank you for the working paper, *Vietnamese Archives and Scholarship on the Cold War Period*, which will be very useful for our students.

Very respectfully,



James R. Reckner

encl:

Draft covering letter

Copy of letter to Dr. Lawless dated January 18, 1994, with enclosure

D-R-A-F-T

I am pleased to forward, with my warm support, the attached letter from Dr. Robert W. Lawless, President of Texas Tech University, inviting you to join Bill Colby, Douglas Pike and me on the National Council for Texas Tech's Center for the Study of the Vietnam Conflict. Full details are contained in Dr. Lawless's letter and enclosure.

The entire Vietnam Initiative at Texas Tech University is geared toward preserving the historical record of the American experience in Vietnam and encouraging younger generations to examine that record. At present, two doctoral dissertations and three masters' theses on Vietnam-related topics are in progress at Texas Tech. Two additional Vietnam-related doctoral candidates are anticipated this year, and there is promise of many more such studies in the years ahead.

Although the Vietnam Center at Texas Tech is a young organization, you will find that it is very dynamic. And, as is apparent from Dr. Lawless's letter, it has institutional support at the University's highest level. Within the last year the State of Texas has funded a \$6,000,000 "Special Collections" building, part of which will house the rapidly growing Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech, and a \$3.5 million International Cultural Center has also been approved. When completed in 1995, the International Cultural Center will house the offices of the Vietnam Center. But despite the Center's steady progress, there yet remains very much to do.

The Center successfully hosted its first conference on Vietnam in April of last year; a conference which received warm praise from many of the academic participants. Plans are going forward now for a second conference in 1996, and it already promises to surpass last year's event. I personally am hoping to be able to arrange General Vo Nguyen Giap's presence at it.

I know that you, like all of us who were touched by the American experience in Vietnam, share the Center's goals of preserving the historical record and encouraging future generations to search for the lessons of that experience. There can be no better way for us to realize that goal than to help ensure that this endeavor flourishes. In urging you, therefore, to favorably consider Dr. Lawless's invitation, I am asking you to lend an active hand toward establishing the Center for the Study of the Vietnam Conflict as a, possibly *the*, premier Vietnam research center for future generations.