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21 November 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

SUBJECT : Saigon Staffing

REFERENCE : Department of State Telegram - Saigon 16414

1. This proposal cuts across your recommendation for a provincial reporting system. From the names selected and their overwhelmingly USAID and CORDS backgrounds, I fear you would not get the kind of provincial reporting you are expecting, and in fact this function would be apt to fall on the OSA officers called for in this pattern (who would in my opinion be diverted from penetration work and possibly not as broadly based in their appreciation of the total political/economic/security situation).
2. Perhaps the way out is for you to suggest co-opting some of the junior officers in the provincial assignments from the refugee and similar chores they are assigned herein, to serve as provincial reporters, with the central staff being a projection of Jacobson's "Evaluation Officer" (a vestige of the Pacification Studies Group which ran the PAAS and had a number of country reports). This would call for a clear charge on these provincial officers of reporting rather than the other functions listed here as their primary responsibility, through the channels of the Consul, etc.
3. This position could be strengthened by your outlining a few matters on which Washington must have regular provincial-level reporting, e.g., monthly assessment of violations by either side, effectiveness of GVN machinery, activity of NLF, etc. These would require the reporting officers to keep in touch with GVN reporting through military, police, and administrative channels plus their independent observations and the results of conversations (a la General Timmes) with province chiefs et al.

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4. Your proposal called for at least one officer in each province. The attached does not give this kind of coverage within the numbers stated in view of the very real requirements for refugee and reconstruction advisory assistance. Perhaps a compromise would be possible by which you reduced the number you required for this function but they took out of their hide the people needed to implement it. Incidentally, I would recommend a considerable push to get young FSO's with language assigned to these chores. Some of the USAID and CORDS people are quite good, but quite frankly some are not.

5. As a separate item, I commend to you some attention to trying to retain the PAAS capability. This is a country-wide network of Vietnamese reporters who have been trained over several years in methodical public opinion reporting. Perhaps it could be Vietnamized, put under private cover or some other arrangement, but it would seem a very substantial tool which we should not let disappear if we could help it.



W. E. Colby

Executive Director-Comptroller

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