

DEBRIEF OF A FORMER SENIOR

AID OFFICIAL IN VIETNAM

ALBERT S. FRALEIGH

1962 - 1967

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After almost twenty years' service with the Agency for International Development, this advisor resigned. His views are controversial, especially as they relate to the effectiveness of the technical divisions within the mission, his emphasis on the desirability of young representatives, and on the value of transferring the Chinese experience to Vietnam. His account is historically significant as he was one of the two men who established and initially operated the Office for Rural Affairs in the AID mission, Vietnam.

He emphasizes the following points:

- a. Foreign assistance programs in underdeveloped nations must be politically orientated and must recognize the existence of insurgent elements, if present, by coordinating the various U. S. programs with the aim of strengthening the existing government.
- b. A considerable amount of time and money has been wasted by the U. S. in the administration of foreign assistance programs because efforts have been too heavily concentrated at the ministry level, and such assistance has not reached the population of the country.
- c. The most effective assistance we can render to a predominantly agricultural country, such as Vietnam, is to increase its agricultural productivity so that the individual peasant will reap a tangible benefit.
- d. The traditional method of providing technical assistance in such fields as public works and agriculture has proved ineffectual in Vietnam because efforts were uncoordinated and unrealistic.
- e. Decentralization of assistance effort and personnel into rural areas is essential. Effort must be responsive to the varying local needs.

- f. Young Americans, with a generalized background, are more effective in bringing about needed change in an underdeveloped country than are middle-aged, highly trained specialists because younger men are more receptive to change, are more energetic, and are more adept at improvising.
- g. The advantages of using other Asians such as Chinese and Filipinos in their special fields of endeavor have never been fully exploited in Vietnam.
- h. Had a Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) been established in Vietnam, similar to the JCRR in Taiwan, AID's effectiveness in Vietnam would have been (and even yet, would be) considerably enhanced.
- i. The agricultural phase of the An Giang National Priority Program is a success despite the lack of support and internecine squabbling which accompanied its prosecution. Furthermore, it could serve as a model for similar but larger scale programs in future Mekong Basin development.

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PREFACE

The material contained in this debrief represents the personal observations, experiences, attitudes and opinions of the party interviewed. The Asia Training Center (ATC), the University of Hawaii, the Agency for International Development (AID), and the United States Government in no way approve or disapprove of the actions reported or opinions expressed; nor are the facts or situations reported verified.

The purpose of debriefing personnel returning from Asian assignment at the Hawaii ATC is:

1. To obtain general information which will be of value to overseas trainees in their intended assignment.
2. To obtain specific information which will be of value to overseas trainees in performing in their specialties (agriculture, engineering, medicine, etc.).
3. To provide material for understanding the social and cultural framework of a country, and its particular and peculiar dynamics of social change. And, as a correlate, to discover customs, mores, taboos, and other relevant factors which affect interpersonal relationships between Americans and members of a host community.
4. To accumulate a bank of new or updated information for an institutional memory, for fundamental research and for application to future development assistance programs.
5. To record information which may not have been made a part of official reports on the functions, roles, frustrations, complaints, successes and failures of AID Field Operations Personnel.
6. To provide other information suitable for instructional purposes. For example, to identify problem situations of sufficient complexity and significance to construct case studies for use in ATC problem-solving exercises.

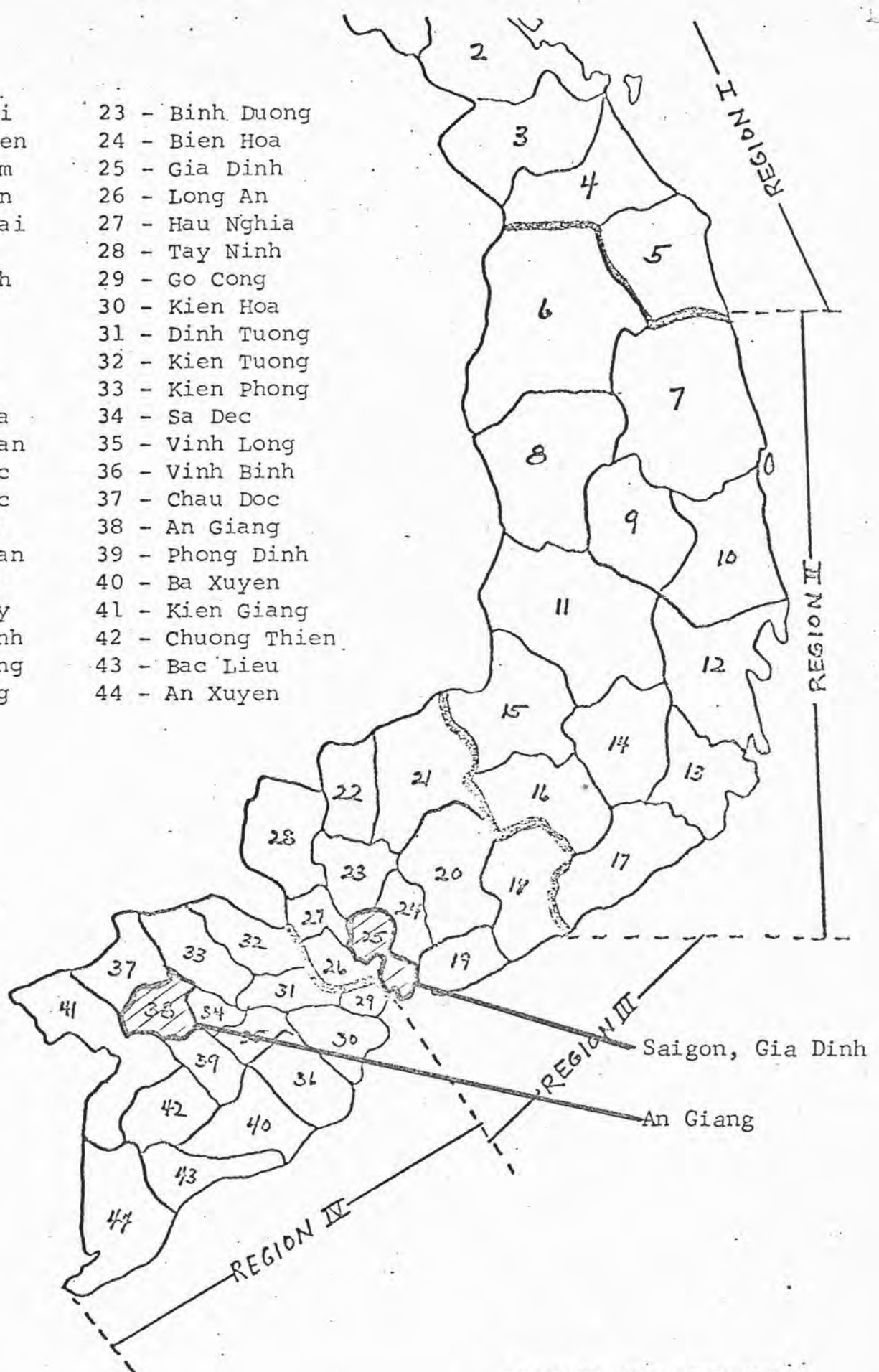
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REGIONS AND PROVINCES
OF
SOUTH VIETNAM

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Preparation and Orientation for Position

My first real contact with non-Caucasian culture came in working with Alaskan Indians, building an air field in central Alaska in 1942. I was also in the Aleutian Islands for eight or nine months in 1943. I enjoy rough and wild areas, which might explain some of my adventuresome spirit.

I began working in Asia, courtesy of the U. S. Navy. I worked in Navy Civil Affairs with both the U. S. Marines and a Navy Civil Affairs Team dealing directly with Okinawan civilian prisoners-of-war (on Saipan) who had not attempted suicide and who we had encouraged to come out of the hills. We helped to resettle them. We built a considerable civil support unit for them, and I worked directly with them, supervising them on construction projects.

At the end of the war, I was shipwrecked in a typhoon at Okinawa and lived on the beach there with some Okinawans for a while. I was impressed by the poverty and their very sad conditions; and since I had read about UNRRA in Time magazine, I decided that I would like to go to China to help the people there. I felt that we couldn't have these two very different standards of living--what we enjoyed and what the Asian peoples were forced to accept and have world peace very long. So, in Okinawa I wrote UNRRA, and surprisingly I got an offer to go to Shanghai with them.

In Shanghai I immediately went to work with the Chinese people and that started my involvement with China where I made numerous interesting contacts. In this job I was always working on operational problems and not very much with theory or things that required a pedantic bent. So, I was recognized as a friend, and I got along very, very well with the people. I also established a close friendship with many of the Chinese Nationalist leaders. After UNRRA closed down, I stayed on in China and became one of the first employees of the first U. S. AID mission to China. This was in December, 1947, and I remained there with AID until the Chinese Communists entered Shanghai. When this happened, I still stayed on and went to work as the manager of an American firm with about 400 employees operating bakeries and restaurants.

I had some real interesting experiences on this job during

the period of the Chinese Communist occupation. It took me nineteen months to get out of there, although I didn't really try to leave until after about eight months, when I saw that it was a hopeless situation. Then I tried to leave the country and finally succeeded eleven months later, but only after some hair-raising experiences that included a lot of brainwashing and all the rest of it. After I got out, I went back to the United States and worked a year with the Asia Foundation in San Francisco. I didn't like this job because it was very sedentary, and they were theorists--not action-oriented. I then applied to go back with AID. I went to Formosa with AID in June, 1952, and stayed there for nine and a half years, although during this time I went to other nearby Asian countries for short periods.

It was during that time in Taiwan that I married a Chinese girl, and I became--I think I can speak without too much modesty or immodesty--probably the foremost American authority on Formosa and also one of our most knowledgeable persons on Communist China. I know many of the leaders in Communist China, and I also know the Communists inside out--I've been "subjected" to them. I speak Mandarin fluently and can read it, although mostly newspapers. I learned the language simply by association, and during the Communist occupation period, I learned the Shanghai dialect because we had hours on end of indoctrination and meetings of different sorts. In Taiwan I worked on a number of very interesting programs; some of them were very complicated and difficult programs for AID. In doing this, I became known as, you might say, a great expediter and troubleshooter.

From my experience, I believe the most important qualification that a provincial representative must have is self-reliance. A quality probably directly related to his own self-confidence. I know, from experience in Vietnam that when we sent young men to the field, they often came back asking, "What are we supposed to do?" Our answer was, "You go out there and see what needs to be done, come back and tell us what needs to be done, and then we'll help you do it." We, of course, tried to give an overall concept to them. The overall direction that we gave was always to try to make the Vietnamese government more effective and able to respond to the needs of its people, so as to make it a genuinely popular and democratic government if possible, and help the people, at the lowest level, to develop economically, socially and politically. We sent these young men out with this overall focus, asking them to determine how best this should be done at the local level.

Another thing is that usually we Americans seem to get people out there who have a tremendous academic background or experience background in the United States. This means that usually we send people who are 40 years of age or over. It's been my observation in Vietnam that we get much more mileage and much more receptivity to change on the American side from our younger

people. The young men who have had some Peace Corps experience, or better yet with the International Volunteer Service, are more effective in improving agricultural productivity and local development in this type of country. This is the key to the problem, because almost 85% of the people are farmers or fishermen. Generally, it is much better to depend on young men to help Vietnamese get results. A few older people who have had a little more experience, but who are broadminded, can be used to energize these young men.

An Approach to Action in Vietnam

In late 1961, General Maxwell Taylor went out to Vietnam and made a study of the situation for the Joint Chiefs of Staff and also for the President. On his return to Washington, General Taylor stated that we Americans had to take some pretty quick and definite action out there in Vietnam or else we were going to be confronted with just what has since materialized. The AID Mission in Vietnam was not oriented in any way toward what was happening in the country.

One of Taylor's recommendations was to help the government of Vietnam decentralize and become effective and responsive to the needs of its people. In order to implement this on the American side, they looked around in Washington for someone to go out and do the job. In talking to people in the Department of Defense, including General Lansdale, Rufe Phillips was suggested by him. Phillips elected to do the job and subsequently went out, and since he knew me and knew that I knew AID, he asked if I could be made available to join him in his studies of the situation.

I didn't know anything about all this until I received a cable in Taiwan asking me to go on 48 hours notice to Vietnam; and on a patriotic basis, I went. I arrived in Saigon on the 11th of May, 1962. In early 1962 the AID Mission in Vietnam had approximately 120 people on its rolls, and of that number only three were actually stationed outside Saigon. It was pretty much a normal AID "business as usual" operation, although the Mission had already taken some steps to implement what they called a Counterinsurgency Program. But there was very little American representation throughout the country. We already had the MAAG Sector Advisors in most provinces. These were advisors to the province chiefs on military matters. There were these small teams of maybe five or six American military men in most of the provinces, but there were no civilians out there.

Meanwhile, at that time, Ngo Dinh Diem was already embarking on the Strategic Hamlet Program, and he had, in fact, tried a few operations like Operation Sunrise under this program. The first operations had been launched, and there had been some American

support from the AID side, but it was not really programmed or directed. Diem was anxious to move right ahead in that direction.

Phillips and I worked for about 23 days until early June analyzing the situation from all aspects. Based upon this analysis, we developed a report to AID Washington with recommendations. We suggested that it was necessary to orient the AID mission toward a counterinsurgency operation immediately (we were using the word "counterinsurgency" at that time) and get AID representation as rapidly as possible throughout the country. Almost overnight Phillips and I developed a framework for carrying AID to the provinces, including an organization, an administration, and a program for doing it.

We did this in concert with--not independently of others. Fortunately, the acting Director of the AID Mission in Vietnam had worked previously in Taiwan with the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) as a commissioner. He knew me and had confidence in me, so he was willing to listen to anything that I would recommend. Phillips was also accepted by him, and we got full cooperation from him. Had we gone into an alien situation, it would have been much more difficult. On the Vietnamese side, we were in constant and complete consultation and coordination with their plans for the Strategic Hamlet Program. We got the Vietnamese to agree to some things that ordinarily could only be achieved by very high diplomatic negotiations because we worked with them hand-in-hand and got their support in the planning stage, which is not the way the U. S. often works. With this entre and the personal contact that Phillips had (they trusted him), and as I, also, was able to express empathy with them, they agreed to our suggestions without any real diplomatic negotiations. An example of this was the placement of Americans in each province as advisors to their province chiefs, our first Provincial Representatives.

To get approval of our recommendations from the Vietnamese, Phillips would explain them, if necessary, to President Diem himself. Otherwise, he would explain them to the Secretary of State for the Presidency, a man by the name of Thuan, and he could usually give approval. It was a very unique situation--I think perhaps unprecedented anywhere--that we were able to do so much in such a short period--to get so many things going and done. This was because of Phillips' personality, his prior contacts with the Vietnamese government, and the fact that they trusted him. Phillips did not speak Vietnamese, but he did speak French. Also it might have been known that he was close to General Lansdale, who had the complete confidence of Diem. Another consideration was that there had been a cleavage between the Americans and the Vietnamese--a continually widening cleavage--and Ngo Dinh Diem was extremely happy to see Phillips arrive on the scene because he felt that here was an American he knew and trusted and who would work in the best interests of Vietnam. He was not always sure that other Americans

were doing this--not on purpose necessarily--but he felt that many Americans were opposed to him. In this way, I was coming up with many of the ideas and Phillips was handling the business of getting them bought on the Vietnamese side. He did an absolutely marvelous job.

At this stage we didn't discuss many of our proposals widely with other AID Americans or U. S. agencies before we presented them to the Vietnamese government. We did discuss at great length with the U. S. military what the problems were and what needed to be done. On some of the smaller matters, we didn't bother. We did get clearance from the U. S. side on the idea of sending people out as AID Provincial Representatives, and the military was very happy about that because they did not consider the work we proposed to do as their responsibility. They were happy to see the civilians step in for the first time and show some interest in taking responsibility and doing something. There was no jealousy of any kind at that time by the military toward what we were trying to do--we had their full support.

We came up with the idea of placing civilian Provincial Representatives as rapidly as possible in each province in order to carry through the decentralization of our AID activities. These provincial representatives would have the authority to work with the province chief and advise him on all matters of civil operations. We also decided to position resources directly at the province level through Vietnamese channels--AID resources, money, and commodities that would be utilized in plans developed at the province level by the province chief and his staff and the USAID provincial representative. This was a completely new concept. This was, in fact, decentralization. Formerly, if anything happened at the province level, it was something that had been planned and developed in Saigon. Very seldom had there been any kind of input or contribution from the province itself. It was a long, long way from some Vietnamese ministry or directorate in Saigon to the province in getting anything really down to that level.

These were our basic recommendations submitted by Phillips when he returned to Washington in mid-June and when I returned to Taiwan. Phillips also suggested that they (AID, Washington) set up an office in the AID Mission in Saigon to be known as the Assistant Director for Rural Affairs. This meant that there was a director of the Mission, a deputy director, and two assistant directors. (There was already an assistant director for programs and economic policy.)

When Phillips presented our report to AID, their immediate response was, "All right, we buy this. We want to set up what you recommend. Now we want to get somebody to do the job. Who can do the job?" What finally happened is they prevailed on Lansdale to prevail on Phillips. Phillips then prevailed on me, and so we both

went back together after some hesitancy. I arrived there first, about the twentieth of September, 1962, and Rufe arrived about a week later. I was really the first person on board with authority to implement the program fully as we laid it out. It was at that time that we went through with dispatching the first provincial representative; and as I recall, we dispatched the first one on the twenty-eighth of September.

In order to make our concept of decentralization really work, there was a little sweetener for President Diem. The United States agreed to provide the equivalent of ten million U. S. dollars in piasters. We actually imported and purchased from the Bank of Vietnam ten million dollars in piasters, and we put these piasters out in kind to be utilized at the province level for approved activities jointly developed and approved at province level according to the broad framework of the counterinsurgency program. We put this working idea up to Diem for approval. This was a key point and again we put it across without any negotiation whatsoever. We conceived this operational concept at, let's say, eleven o'clock in the morning; by three in the afternoon the Secretary of State for the Presidency had given Diem's concurrence by telephone; at five o'clock that same afternoon our instructions to the field went out.

It was just incredible, viewed in retrospect, that these piasters and the commodities could be utilized simply on the basis of a joint sign-off of the province chief or his representative and the USAID representative. This procedure gave us two things: it gave us considerable control over the way in which piasters were spent and commodities used, and it also gave us some assurance that they were not diverted. It gave the Vietnamese something, too. It gave them a chance to share responsibility for actually expending money and commodities at the local level. This was really one of the most important things, I think, that we ever did in South Vietnam.

There was something interesting about the joint sign-off, because when we actually first made our recommendations in May and June of 1962, we didn't really provide for this sign-off procedure. We did leave the framework and we left behind a man delegated from the AID mission to go ahead in this direction. We then went back and presented a report on how this program should be carried out; that is, by sending people, money and material to the provinces, by delegating responsibility at the provincial level, by having the technical divisions in Saigon give support as required; and finally by forming a counterinsurgency committee within the AID Mission and within the whole U. S. government mission in Saigon (which would include the military, the embassy, CIA, and the U. S. Information Service) to coordinate activities and to get things pumped into this counterinsurgency pipeline and out to the end.

One interesting thing happened about this time that related

back to our joint sign-off procedure. We couldn't find enough civilians to send out to all of the provinces, and Phillips and I had an argument over this. He thought that we should concentrate on eight or nine provinces and not try to cover them all. At the time I think there were thirty-five provinces. I held that since the military was already in thirty-five provinces, because the Viet Cong were operating in all thirty-five provinces, and because it was intended to carry out the strategic hamlet program in all thirty-five provinces, we had to make an appearance as rapidly as possible in all thirty-five provinces. Obviously, we couldn't find the staff to do this, so we decided that we would deputize the U. S. military MAAG sector advisor to be the acting USAID provincial representative until we got a civilian to take over the job. Phillips went over and talked to General Harkins, who agreed with this idea in about twenty minutes.

We drew up a joint message with MACV (MAAG at that time) and sent it out. Overnight these sector advisors also became responsible for the USAID program in provinces where there were no civilians. They also became responsible for signing off for USAID with the province chief for the disbursement of funds and commodities. They very much enjoyed this role and for the first time they had some hold over the province chief. In the past they could go to see the province chief, but they really had no business to conduct with him. The province chief wasn't very interested in their advice since he already had control over all of the required MAP equipment and supplies from the U. S. military that were available. These supplies had been turned over to the Vietnamese army in Saigon. Very often the Vietnamese military would have new vehicles and all sorts of good equipment while the sector advisor had nothing and couldn't even borrow anything from the Vietnamese because it was "theirs." Now, however, the province chief, in order to do something with the civil funds, had to get the signature of the sector advisor; so for the first time the sector advisors began to have a real role to play. This helped them out very greatly in their total responsibility.

The sector advisors, of course, were not initially chosen on the basis of any background they might have had in civil affairs. They were assigned pretty much by a random process and there was no way to make a selection or to reshuffle them around because they had been sent out by MAAG to be military advisors. When we sent out a civilian to take the job of provincial representative, the MACV people did not want to give up this sign-off privilege. We had some talks with them, and we then finally agreed that we would have a three-way sign-off. When we started the three-way sign-off, we were at first concerned that if the two Americans agreed and the Vietnamese didn't, they might consider this as a voting procedure. So we immediately stated that there was no voting involved; that if any one of the parties vetoed the expenditure, it would not be made. In effect, we had what was like a

troika. It was very interesting. The Vietnamese never once complained about this arrangement.

When we first wanted to send men out as AID ProvReps, we asked for volunteers from the existing 120 AID personnel in Vietnam, but nobody would go. So, we then deputized a young IVS man who had been in the country for some time. He went to Phu Yen province as our first representative. We sat down with him before he went out and gave him sort of a broad charter of what he was supposed to do, what his job was. I still have copies of a letter summarizing our discussion with him; incidentally, historically this is rather interesting. I would say that what we authorized him to do, and the way he was to do it, has not changed particularly from what the men are still authorized to do today. This pattern, incidentally, has subsequently been copied in AID operations in some other countries.

Phillips was able to recruit people he had worked with previously in Laos and in other countries. He put together (in Washington while he was getting ready to come out in September) about twelve or fifteen fellows that he knew. Almost all of them were young and energetic. A few were people who had worked with Lansdale in the Philippines, and these were more of a senior type who could, in a sense, give direction and inspiration to some of these younger men.

We also attracted a number of young people to us already in Vietnam. Many of these people had been sitting there for a number of years feeling very frustrated. Not many of these came from within the AID Mission, although a few did. They were more from within the military setup and other people whose military duty was nearly up. Of course, we also got a lot of the people who had two years service with IVS and spoke pretty good Vietnamese. Then a few other people throughout the world heard about our effort, and they all wanted to get in. These fellows came over and they formed the first group of men that we sent out to the provinces. Some even hitchhiked to Vietnam. That's why our first people were so highly motivated.

Phillips and I had a rough model of what we wanted for provincial representatives. It was not something that we thought up on the spot. When we were up in Laos, previously, we had attempted to do something like this, but we got bogged down in bureaucracy. We had done some thinking on what should be done, and in Laos we actually had some people out who we called USOM representatives, but they didn't have authority to work at local level and develop the local area, nor did they have resources to respond immediately to local needs.

About this question that comes up repeatedly as to what kind of a person is best equipped to do this job--what kind of a

person should we send out; I recall that when Phillips came out to Vietnam, he was only twenty-nine years old. I, myself, have always been oriented toward young people and I have always thought that younger men are the best. I think they need a little bit of experience in the country but they do have motivation; they are also willing to accept direction; they are not so troubled with theory; they are able to go out and learn quickly; and they have the energy, health, motivation and empathy with the local people and can push things through.

A lot of people say that the Asians respect age and you can't get anywhere unless you are old. The people with whom we were dealing generally were young province chiefs and young district chiefs. On the Vietnamese side the officials were quite young; that is, the senior officials, not the technical service chiefs at the province level, who were mostly old, old line civil servants so like our own oldsters. In a sense, what we were trying to do was to hit these older officials with young ideas, too. If Vietnam is a failure today, it is because, I think, of this old mentality, or as we call it--"the lycee mandarin." So far I have seen no reason to change my views.

In picking our people we did take a number of Filipinos, but most of them were Filipinos who had acquired American citizenship--men from the Philippine Army who had opted for American citizenship. We took about three men in that category and some of them are still in Vietnam. The requirement for American citizenship was something that neither Phillips nor I cared about. It was an unnecessary qualification.

We didn't necessarily agree that this job could be done better by Westerners. In fact, even to this day, I would prefer that most of the work be done by Asians. This is especially true in the agricultural field. We brought some Chinese agriculturists down from Taiwan, and they were infinitely better than most of the Americans in this field because they understood tropical agriculture and Asian agriculture--both of which are different from what most American ex-county agents and professors are used to. We also brought in at a very early date, through contract with a Filipino firm, a number of men who had worked with President Magsaysay in the Philippines. They served with us as civil affairs advisors, and subsequently in the Chieu Moi program.

Living Conditions, AID Personnel

From the beginning we had a concept of operations that was different from anything the United States normally does. This was more or less of a "gung ho" Special Forces type of thing--an esprit de corps idea. We told our people that they were going out to the

provinces and we were going to give them per diem. We expected them, as a result, to manage the rental and obtaining of their own house, their own food, and everything else. We were not going to utilize our limited support aircraft to carry out butagas (butane or propane in cylinders) for their stoves or refrigerators, or any of that sort of thing. In other words, they were going to live off the economy out there, and we were not going to spend all of our time with administrative back-up or housekeeping details.

The kind of men that we recruited loved that idea. There was, in other words, a Peace Corps type of feeling among these people. They were so fed up with the traditional AID way of doing things that they didn't want to have any part of it. They wanted to go with the pendulum swinging over the other way completely. We capitalized on that. And, of course, we also wanted to keep our organization very small, tight and hard hitting. We wanted to keep our organization very, very close to the Vietnamese side. That's why we wanted to keep only one man in each province, if possible, plus picking up young Vietnamese to work with our people, and not merely as interpreters. We called them area specialists or area assistants. Actually, one of their main functions was interpreting for many of our people who had not been in Vietnam previously, but in addition we wanted them to feel that they were involved in a revolutionary effort, too, and to feel as part of the group and team. All of these things were different concepts from what had previously been utilized. We wanted to give maximum responsibility to these area specialists and make them feel free to move. We also emphasized their working with the local Vietnamese in the province, even though we foresaw that both the area specialist and the American representative might encounter some difficulty in coping with, say, the older, established civil service hierarchy--especially among the chiefs of the technical services in the province.

The American Image

We gave our people a lot of briefings on this. We told them that they had to do their very best to get along; and because they were young, they had to be especially careful, and they had to earn respect from performance. Most of our people did gain great respect, largely through performance. They were such a different breed of cat. From the Vietnamese point of view in the province, the typical American that they had seen before would arrive at around ten o'clock in the morning, get out and look around a bit, drink a little tea and shake hands, and then they would have a big lunch (really a huge lunch) and some beer. Then maybe at two o'clock in the afternoon they would go out and look around a little further; and after that, the American would get into his airplane or car and drive on. This would be the usual

visit of an American technician to a province. There were very few Americans who went out and stayed for any length of time.

So, when these Vietnamese suddenly saw young Americans get into working clothes and actually work with the people, when they saw how knowledgeable these Americans were, that they traveled throughout the province and did so without fear, when they saw this sort of spirit, this thing rubbed off on a number of these Vietnamese, and we had much closer contact with them. Our people went to places in the province where our own U. S. military would not go and could not go. When our military would say, "It's impossible", our people said, "It's our job--we go."

Another thing that we told our people was: "When you get out there, you don't have guards, you can't hire them, and you don't need any police around your house. You'll live in a very simple fashion. You must not rent a house or arrange quarters that are ostentatious. If any of you gets a house out there that is even half the size of the province chief's house, he's had it!" At that time we were among the first American civilians out there and it was very easy to rent spacious accommodations at very low cost, but we discouraged that sort of thing. One of our men did rent a big house and we had him out of the province in twenty-four hours.

The U. S. military, of course, lived in barbed-wire compounds. The average Vietnamese did not wish to enter these compounds because he was subjected to what he considered indignities of challenge, search, etc. But we had American civilians out there living simply, available and accessible at all times. We immediately had much better local contact and rapport with the Vietnamese than the U. S. military did. This is the background of how this whole thing got started.

Vietnamese Bureaucracy

Our people immediately ran into the traditional Vietnamese bureaucracy. It was a highly inbred system and it was very much the government of the lycee mandarin, a government in the French tradition with the typical viewpoints of the French civil servant with a feudal mandarin overlay. This idea includes a highly centralized government, an official at a local level who does not wish to do anything without higher instruction, and a communication system which guaranteed an answer only ten or fifteen per cent of the time and within a time-frame of maybe months. We were dealing with people who had been educated by colonial administrators away from their own people. They were not really interested in looking downward, but rather in looking upward and carrying out an overall directive from the central level, conceived by people at the central

level who had scarcely been out in the countryside and do not know their own people (this was especially true on the agriculture side). Consequently, you had, in fact, a government ignorant of the actual people at the end of the line who are supposed to be helped. Finally, they had the grave fear of all bureaucrats, (which is pronounced in Vietnam)--the fear of taking responsibility. If you took responsibility, you made mistakes; and if you made mistakes, you got into trouble; whereas, if you didn't make mistakes, you got promoted--and not doing anything means not making a mistake.

Then, too, we also had tradition. We had people out at the end of the line, the technical service chiefs, trying to execute programs that may have been dreamed up years previously and for which support may have come down two or three years after the program was dreamed up. As a result, they were working really in a great vacuum so far as getting something done which was practical and worthwhile. The service chiefs tended to develop programs and present them to the central level, asking for much more than what they really needed in the belief that the central level was going to adjust their requests downward--if they were approved at all. Programs, therefore, often had little relation to the local need or situation, and they were not based upon dependable local studies. They lacked vision and dynamism--it was a stagnant situation.

USAID Organization

In setting up our field organization in 1962, we visualized four regional representatives (one for each of the regions or corps tactical zones). The regional representative's position was not as a director and not as a man living in the field, but as a man quartered in Saigon who spent four days a week traveling through the various provinces in his region where he picked up all the problems, talked to the fellows and, if necessary, to the province chiefs to help smooth out problems. The regional representative was an older man and not a new hand in Vietnam. He would come back to Saigon and sit down with us on Saturdays and Sundays, going over the problems and acquaint us with what was needed in the way of support. He would help solve problems, and his role was essentially that of a troubleshooter and expediter.

I must say that this worked very, very effectively. We did not have any regional offices and no regional staff. In Saigon each regional representative maintained one backstop officer and one secretary, who could be either Vietnamese or American. When he came back to Saigon, he had somebody available to put things on paper if this was necessary. The Saigon backstop officer would sit in at our meetings with the regional representatives when

problems were discussed, and he would be directed to solve this or that. While the regional representative was in one of his provinces and some real problem came up, he would cable directly or he could telephone directly into Saigon.

When we set this whole thing up, I felt that we would probably have about a year and a half to two years of effective operations before the bureaucratic hardening of the arteries set in and everything would be slowed down from above Phillips and myself. That's about what happened--that's about the amount of time that we did have. In order to keep our organization small and hard hitting, we purposely provided a very small back-up staff in Saigon--no more than six Americans--but with a considerable Vietnamese back-up staff together with some Filipinos. We also established a command, or operations, center in Saigon which would manage this provincial effort.

As it turned out, we had an almost incredible operation. It was one of the only operations that I've ever been in where there was no backbiting and nobody seemed to be jealous of anybody else. Everybody was pointed in one direction and that was toward doing the job of helping the Vietnamese government help its people. We had, I presume, an operation--and you can ask any of the men who were there at the time--with incredible morale. Some of our people almost worked themselves to death; we didn't encourage this, and we didn't want this, but they were so dedicated in what they were trying to do--they were extremely effective.

We found when we got our operation started that we needed someone to streamline the Vietnamese accounting procedures. We had heard about Paul Borreson, an experienced AID accounting expediter, and we knew that he was working in Laos. So, subsequently, we brought in Borreson, and he came in with the sole purpose of helping the Vietnamese to keep the records straight, help them streamline their bookkeeping, and to break up any money roadblock that got in the way because of paperwork. This paperwork often roadblocked the money we needed to keep going.

We also set up one other important function in our headquarters office. For the first time in USAID Vietnam we set up a small logistics staff. We did this because in the past AID's procedure had been to procure commodities for whatever they were trying to do and then assign these commodities to the particular Vietnamese government ministry concerned, after which they forgot about them. When the commodities arrived on the Saigon wharf, that ministry would be responsible for clearing the customs, taking delivery, and sending them out to the province. It was a hit-or-miss, hope-and-a-prayer, type of action, and most of the ministries just let the stuff pile up.

One of the first things I did when I got to Vietnam was to

make an inspection trip of Vietnamese government warehouses and walk around the wharves. In one particular place I found about five million dollars worth of medical supplies that had been there on the wharf for maybe three years and nobody had moved out. I also found great quantities of educational supplies and other types of commodities. I came back to an AID staff meeting and pointed all of this out. I was not very popular. I got all the usual answers from the usual technicians--that this wasn't their particular responsibility because the Vietnamese themselves didn't have the money to move the stuff and all this sort of thing. I didn't want arguments over who was responsible. I wanted the stuff used by and for the Vietnamese people for whom our taxpayers had bought it.

In order to break all of this up and to assure that the stuff got out to the provinces where it was needed, we set up in our office (Rural Affairs) a small logistics staff consisting of four Americans, thirteen Vietnamese, and five Filipinos. We budgeted for this staff to work with the Vietnamese government, and we got the Vietnamese government to appoint one single agency to be responsible for receiving and distributing commodities. We allowed sufficient leeway in the budget so that we could hire civilian truckers, trucking agencies, railway, and civilian shipping lines so that we could move the stuff to the provinces and people as fast as it hit the wharves. In the first year we moved about five hundred thousand tons of cargo--more than AID has ever moved since as far as I know. We did this in spite of all the military logistics mess. We did it with a very small staff, and we did it by working through the Vietnamese--we knew how to do the job.

The fact that military cargo and the military demands for available space took precedence over civilian cargo was only part of the explanation of why it was difficult to move AID commodities before we changed the system. For example, after we had changed the system, the U. S. military was trying to move seventy-five thousand tons of barbed wire for its compounds and the strategic hamlets, and it was trying to use ARVN's (the Vietnamese army) inefficient channels, but they couldn't move it. Therefore, we moved their wire for them through our civilian channels. Very interesting, but true. It was also true, of course, that there were more surface routes open than later. The railways could still be utilized most of the time all the way up to Quang Tri, and we could also truck to Quang Tri from Saigon. For example, we moved 20,000 improved piglets this way.

U. S. Bureaucratic Relationships

In our early period of operation in the Saigon AID

Missions Office for Rural Affairs, we checked over the existing AID programs to see how they would fit into what we were trying to do in the rural areas and whether or not these existing programs were really getting down to the people. We designed one type of comprehensive program which has now become the Revolutionary Development Program and which was originally designed to support the strategic hamlet effort. Then we took a look at all of the other old AID programs and tried to focus them on the rural people. We organized what we called the counterinsurgency committee to coordinate the efforts of the various technical divisions in AID and spell out their role in focusing programs on what we considered to be the rural population. We introduced such new programs as Self-Help, Village Development and Leader Training, Hamlet Schools, Fertilizer and Improved Rice Seed, Pig-Corn, and many others.

This was terribly difficult because we had good cooperation from only one of the technical divisions and that was AID's Education Division. We actually started the hamlet school program at that time with them. They were very pleased that we were interested. They were never jealous or felt we were perhaps interfering in their business because we had some new ideas and suggestions. From the start they were willing to let us finance the hamlet school program through our new simplified, direct province channels. This was the only national program we financed by sending money to the province as the schools were built and the teachers trained. This financing did not go down to province through Ministry of Education channels. Consequently, this was the only AID Technical Division Program in which Vietnamese workers in the field were paid on time. Salaries were often a year late in other programs.

The Minister of Education was cooperative and willing. We tried to do the same thing with the Public Health program, and got it through for one year, and it went much, much better. That was the only year that the village health workers ever got paid on time. We tried to do this with all of the existing programs, but by this time the AID bureaucrats were closing in on us. The mission director backed me, but it was difficult because he was getting playback from the technical divisions to the effect that "these Rural Affairs guys are taking over the mission; they're running things here and they don't know what they're doing. They forget about cross-cultural patterns and this and that"--the usual stuff.

Actually, these technicians didn't know much about "cross-cultural patterns," but they were using all sorts of reasons and theories to try to shoot us down. Of course, one thing we in Rural Affairs were doing was playing up the fact that the people in the technical divisions never got out into the field and because of that they had not been effective in the

past. We were trying to do this diplomatically--we weren't out looking for fights--we had enough trouble fighting the VC. Our way of operating was so alien to anything that they had ever seen, or done, before that they just felt that what we were doing was wrong, and they couldn't stomach it. Many of them were men who had been working with AID for a number of years, and many of them were pretty advanced in age. These people were out to get us in any way possible. This was especially true with the agricultural people in our priority An Giang Program started in early 1966 as a result of the Honolulu Conference.

Our USAID agriculture division in Saigon tried to block us at every step of the way. How would they do that? For example, in processing the documents and the failure to process them--the failure to approve things. What we were doing was a 21-different-fields-of-activity program in An Giang Province, ranging from public works, rock quarrying, vocational education, secondary education, hamlet education--you name it, we had it-- 21 different disciplines. We tried to run this through our technical divisions; to get them involved; make them responsible; get them to go out and work. I was coordinating the whole thing. USAID's agriculture division did detail some men to the province.

Back in Saigon, reaction was mixed. People were either tremendously enthusiastic or just bitter as can be. They were bitter because this program was being done by non-agriculturalists. It was being done completely against their traditional ways of doing things, which was to try to work from the top down. In Saigon we had a problem again with this business of a lack of continuity. We were always changing people. You get one man to agree to do something and when you go back to Saigon, you find he is either away visiting his wife somewhere or he has already left and his successor has arrived and doesn't agree and won't honor the first man's commitment. So, in effect, to carry out anything like this, you have to have one person who is almost a dictator for this program. To get the technical divisions really involved and carrying their share was almost an impossibility. It probably wasn't worth the effort, as they were concerned with forty-five provinces, and as they do not generally get down to the province level. It's good to try, although you probably waste more time pushing them to get something done than if you were to do it yourself.

I'm referring to people in the technical divisions because they had to sign-off on some of the supplies, the procurement documents, and some of the program documents. A number of activities which should have been initiated in An Giang have not been initiated to this day. This whole priority program was fairly sexy in Saigon for a couple of months--something that everybody was interested in. Then, of course, another program

would come up and another and another, and they have now taken much of the glamor from it. Meanwhile, we are plugging away at this program.

So far as cooperation from within the mission is concerned, we always had pretty good cooperation from our Education Division. We got good lip service from our Public Works Division but not much action. That involved signing contracts, and they were very reluctant to do much contracting. The only out and out opposition that I encountered in the program came from our Agriculture Division and some of it out of our regional office--nowhere else.

The type of American we assigned to An Giang province was very important. The man who we put in as provincial representative was a young foreign service officer, 37 years old, who was a most unusual person. He was not a standard foreign service officer. He wasn't afraid of anything. In An Giang he moved forward to a place in his relationship with the Vietnamese where he was a real key in the civil government there on the social-economic side. He was also so dedicated in his desire to really do something and get something done that he was just too energetic, I suppose, for the American bureaucracy out there at the regional level. Also, he was very impatient with them. They did not support the program because they considered that this was an intervention from Saigon in their region. They did not particularly hinder us though, because there was too much steam behind this coming from the Ambassador's office. The Ambassador was the man who put the real steam in it--plus myself.

I had been gone from Vietnam two months when this man was removed from the province. He was called to Saigon and told by somebody in OCO that he was going to be transferred to a different province, and that the reason was that he did not get along with the Americans nor the Vietnamese. He was told then to go back down to the region and see the Regional Director. He went to the Regional Director who told him, "You don't get along with Americans or Vietnamese; you've just got too many problems and complaints, so you have to be moved." He asked, "Well, who is complaining?" And they named three Americans. Then he said, "Well, and who are the Vietnamese?" "Oh," they said, "obviously there are no Vietnamese. That's a mistake, no Vietnamese are complaining." It would be very obvious to me that no Vietnamese would complain with the possible exception of that old agriculture service chief.

Later I received a letter from the Deputy Province Chief in An Giang who was absolutely shattered and stated that the removal of this man was an indication of why the United States was not winning in Vietnam. I could have protected him because they

would not have dared, I do not think, to remove him if I had been there. I would have taken it up immediately with the Deputy Ambassador, and they were afraid I would take it up in Washington. I think they waited until they thought I was sufficiently out of the picture. Our man, after going back to the region, disabused them of any trouble with two of the three Americans named.

I presume there was trouble with the American military man because we had been very strong on wanting to keep American military presence in this particular province to an absolute minimum. The province was pacified. We had extremely good relations with the local MACV sector advisor, but they had moved 200 U. S. Navy men into this province and this was a pacified province. In a sense, the little provincial capital is an absolute Garden of Eden, a much nicer city than Hilo, Hawaii, for example--a beautiful place, almost a paradise. The 200 Navy men had a very disruptive influence on the culture of that town. We had drawn this to the attention of the Deputy Ambassador--so much so that Westmoreland sent his deputy down there to investigate the situation and had confirmed that what we were reporting was correct. Normally, no one reports on the U. S. military and their behavior, so they did not appreciate this I'm sure. I think this is what must have been at the bottom of it.

I believe that we can't do anything in these underdeveloped countries unless we increase their agricultural productivity and the income of the farmer. After all of my years in Taiwan, I knew exactly what to do based upon our success in Taiwan. We had one of the only real major successes in increasing agricultural productivity anywhere in the world. I immediately attempted to import successful ideas from Taiwan. These were transferrable because the climate is the same, the crops are about the same, and the way of farming is about the same (relatively small plots, farmed intensively). The values and outlook of farmers in Vietnam and Taiwan are also very similar and compatible. I also worked to bring in Chinese working level technicians to help. Every step of the way I was opposed by our Agriculture Division people.

Achievements in Agriculture

I dreamed up the so-called "Pig-Corn" program. This was the program that we were going to put in hamlets in pacified areas to produce a rapid increase of income for the farmer. This involved the pig-corn program plus improved rice seed and fertilizer. These programs all came off the top of my head based upon experience that I had in Taiwan. For instance, we went into the ten central lowland provinces. When we went there, I found that there was no fertilizer being used and there was none for sale. Chemical fertilizer had not previously been used even though AID

had been in the country more than ten years! We drew up a program. To show you how fast we worked, we drew up this program in the first few days of September, 1962, after I arrived. We programmed the immediate import of twenty thousand metric tons of fertilizer to be given out as compensation for building fences for the strategic hamlets. Enough fertilizer was given to accommodate one half hectare of rice land for every family that worked in building the fences. We increased rice production for that particular crop an average of 35% on over 200,000 hectares of land the first time it had ever been used. For the second year, we planned to introduce and sell it at half price; the third year it would be sold at full price. We went ahead with that program. The second year we imported forty thousand tons which was sold at half price. This last year I am told that there was a demand for one hundred thousand tons but they couldn't get it. They couldn't land or move it--they had already dismantled our Rural Affairs logistics office. That goes from zero use to a demand for a hundred thousand tons in just three years.

We never used commodities as a throw-away gift. This fertilizer was given to people and families who participated in building the fences for the strategic hamlets in Central Vietnam. The second year I extended this program nationwide. First, we started with the ten central provinces and operated through the NACO or National Agricultural Credit Office. This fertilizer was distributed largely through cooperatives. We tried commercial channels and some did go through commercial channels (maybe more than through the cooperatives), but the commercial channels were very unreliable because they adulterated it and mixed it with dust and everything else. There are all sorts of problems in handling it through the commercial channels.

This was one thing that the farmers associations, cooperatives, and the National Agricultural Credit Office did a good job on. They also did a good job on our Pig-Corn program. When we got there, we found out that there were very few improved pigs in the country. We wanted, as I mentioned, to give the farmer more cash in his pocket immediately, so we developed this program whereby we distributed three improved pigs to every family who signed up for the program on a loan basis. We also gave him corn as the basic feed for these pigs, and we gave him seven bags of cement with which to build an improved pigsty according to our design. We introduced this first in Central Vietnam. There was not one white pig in Central Vietnam when we got up there. This program was introduced by two young Americans who had come over to us from IVS. They were two of the most dedicated young men I've ever met in my life. These fellows lived and worked in those hamlets for more than one year, and they got this program going. Today I'm told that 40% of the hogs sent to the slaughterhouses in Central Vietnam are white pigs. You

can see the tremendous impact that these programs had on the people. We distributed approximately fifty thousand of the improved piglets in the first year of the program.

Every step of the way I was fought by our agriculture division--every step! They wanted trial demonstrations--they wanted this--they wanted that--we couldn't do this--but we did it! I remember I promoted a program in November of 1963, here at the Honolulu Conference that year to increase rice production one million tons in South Vietnam by fertilizer and improved seed. Someone said, "We can't do that; we haven't got the money." I stood up and said, "It is imperative that we try. I think in this situation we have to think in large terms; this is a war out there." McNamara stood up and said, "That man is right. If you haven't got the money in your budget, I'll give him the money from the military budget." Then I got sick with hepatitis and after that the whole thing collapsed because nobody else was interested on the American side in Saigon. We got some of our fertilizer, although we didn't get the whole business. It did come in and it was introduced in most of the country. Eight provinces around Saigon had traditionally used fertilizer but the rest had not. Today, fertilizer is a big deal in Vietnam. Even so, they probably only use about one-fifth of what they could.

The VC and Overthrow of Diem

Until the coup that overthrew Ngo Dinh Diem there wasn't too much VC activity in the central areas where we were working, which were primarily the ten coastal lowland provinces except for Quang Ngai and Quang Tin (and here they were in deep). But in reaction, the VC started their own pig program. They couldn't duplicate the fertilizer, so they merely put out a lot of derogatory propaganda. Normally the VC didn't interfere with these types of programs because they benefited the people, and the VC were very careful not to do things that had the appearance of hurting the people.

All our programs were carried out completely through the Vietnamese government. We not only omitted the clasped hands insignia from the fertilizer bags, but we substituted instead the red and yellow of the Vietnamese national colors plus some anti-communist slogans. We had a lot of opposition from Americans in even doing that. We had all these people who just weren't with it.

We had a very, very effective period in our operations from the fall of 1962 until November 1, 1963, and then came the coup--the overthrow of Diem. That destroyed security in Central

Vietnam because Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Canh, ruled a fiefdom, and he had a tremendous apparatus, the Force Populaire, stretching down to every hamlet. Some people might have called them his "bully boys," but on the local scene they prevented the VC infrastructure from really getting started. They were known as the Force Populaire. When Diem fell, that force melted overnight and left a vacuum. This was in Region I and part of Region II. The VC filled this vacuum very rapidly--they and the Buddhists--but the Buddhists didn't have any ability for reorganizing from the bottom up--no real cohesion--and the VC moved in. That's literally how we lost Central Vietnam. The same thing happened in the Chinese community in Cholon when all Diem's Chinese supporters, who were also the traditional Chinese family-group leaders, were imprisoned.

Reorganization in the Vietnam Mission

Our organization (Office for Rural Affairs) went through some rapid changes in personnel at the top, beginning late in 1963. We had already suffered quite a bit of sniping from some of the technical divisions, especially agriculture. Rufe Phillips left about the first of November, actually a little earlier (although he kept the title) because his father was dying. I became assistant director and held office for about three months when, unfortunately, I got hepatitis. I carried on working despite the hepatitis until it finally almost killed me. I was knocked out of action for about six months. I was followed by Len Maynard, Oggie Williams and finally George Tanham in rapid succession. George Tanham was appointed as Assistant Director for Rural Affairs about early July, 1964, and Sam Wilson was appointed as a deputy. When I recovered from my illness, I returned as Tanham's other deputy. A short time later, the Mission Director was replaced by a new Mission Director.

This new director had made up his mind before he ever got to Vietnam that he was going to destroy USAID Rural Affairs because, he said, it was a mission within a mission. It was his view that the Office for Rural Affairs was also doing too much for the Vietnamese and that the Vietnamese were going to have to do more things for themselves. He was going to make the Vietnamese government work; he was going to cut off all aid if it didn't. This, of course, was exactly what we were not doing. On the other hand, if any people were ever aware of the necessity of having the Vietnamese do the job, it was ourselves.

One of the things that our new director was most adamant about destroying was our procedure for the joint sign-off in the province. As I mentioned before, this was where USAID provincial

representatives and the province chief, together with the MACV sector advisor, jointly authorized the expenditure of money and commodities from the Revolutionary Development budget. He said that this was an affront to Vietnamese sovereignty and was not done anywhere else in the world and had to be stopped immediately. As soon as he raised this issue, the Vietnamese, having been told by the Americans that it affronted their sovereignty, had no choice but to say, "Yes, it does. Let's stop it." This was wiped out. When this was wiped out, the USAID program--yes, the entire American effort in Vietnam--suffered a serious defeat.

The new director began almost immediately to change our operating procedures in Rural Affairs. Up until this time the regional representatives were reporting back to Saigon with no bureaucratic structure at region. The province representatives always looked to the regional representative for direction and came into Saigon themselves. We held frequent meetings with the provincial representatives. We would call them back about every three weeks. We had tremendous interplay. In other words, with either Phillips or myself, our door was never closed and our houses were never closed, so these men, and the prov reps, were always with us. We knew exactly what was going on and they knew what was going on in Saigon. We all had a common concept at that time, although there wasn't too much time for thinking. We spent much time in discussions with them, and we maintained good relations.

The new director maintained that we had a bunch of people in the field who were non-professionals and who were too young and immature. He said, "The first thing I am going to do is get this thing under control and I am going to appoint regional directors who have been former AID mission directors in other countries, and they are going to report directly to me." That is where the idea of regional directors came from. Then he said, "We are going to appoint provincial representatives who are FSR-3 in rank or above and they have to be over 36 years of age, and they have to be experienced AID professionals." His requests went back to Washington and started procurement of a lot of people. All of the men who were already out there and doing such a bang-up job were suddenly overwhelmed by these people of higher grade. Of course, the people in these higher grades were rigid in their approach. We pointed out that according to the standards he had set, Bobby Kennedy and Bill Meyers wouldn't even be qualified as provincial representatives. This made no difference in the AID bureaucracy in Washington. Washington was not about to take any action on changing things out there although it was apparent to everybody what was going on and that a successful program was being destroyed.

At the time he attacked this troika or sign-off business, he also attacked the business of our giving per diem to people in

the field. He said, "We have to set these people up in positions in the field so that people will respect the way they live and we have to give them all regular AID support." So, he just changed everything around--the whole concept. From that day on, when you attended meetings in Saigon, within AID, you would find that most of the time was spent by province representatives or regional people talking about how to get the buta-gas cylinders out and getting the prefabricated houses built or getting the kerosene refrigerators, generators and commissary and PX supplies out, etc. Time, people and aircraft were all tied up with supporting personnel rather than with the program.

This director was replaced in about a year. However, once you get something like this going, you don't turn it off, especially when you bring in as your regional directors people who had been former AID mission directors or deputy directors, because Parkinson's laws are immutable, unless you are really tough. I understand, in Region I, the latest programming calls for almost two hundred civilian Americans on the staff in Da Nang alone and similarly very high staffing elsewhere. It is just out of control. Now I am giving you just one side. There is, when everything is said and done, always some justification for the other side, but I have not seen any justification for many of the actions in this case.

One thing that went by the board was the system we had for coordinating all U. S. agencies in the country in the rural effort. In our most effective period we had a coordinating committee that was chaired by a minister from the embassy, a fellow by the name of Bill Trueheart. This committee usually met every week at USAID. On this committee sat the actual people involved in operations--Phillips and myself representing USAID (occasionally the then USAID director would come if he were interested); the head of the USAID Public Safety Division; the working level man in JUSPAO and often the director of JUSPAO; the working G-3 or G-4 from MACV, and for a long while the G-3 was General Richard Stillwell (who later became the JUSMAG in Thailand), the head of our American Special Forces, and the people from CIA who were in charge of their field operations.

We would all get around the table and we would call in two or three provincial representatives and sector advisors who would brief us on their provinces and what was going on. We would give them directions; anybody who wished could present a program at this meeting or a suggestion, which would then be discussed. The meeting would usually last about four hours. They were really good because it was the only time in Vietnam that I ever saw things laid on the table. There was some analysis of what was going on, decisions were made on the spot, and if a decision was made, you could be sure that it would be carried through because the people who were responsible for carrying

through the decision were present and would report the following week.

As soon as Ambassador Lodge arrived, however, this committee was suddenly escalated to a level above the working people. A new man came in as the "mission coordinator" and for a while the committee was only for the heads of the mission. The mission heads were not sufficiently in touch with actual operations to deal effectively with problems as they arose. From that day on, down to the time when I left Vietnam, there was no real coordination within the U. S. program. We suffered very, very gravely because of that. General Stillwell told me later that, in his view, this was the single most serious weakness in the whole U.S. effort in Vietnam. I saw him after he went to Thailand, and he said that he still felt that way.

In our regular weekly committee meetings we invited Vietnamese once in a while and occasionally someone like Sir Robert Thompson, the British expert in Malaya. He was there frequently.

From the very beginning I opted for a joint operation with the Vietnamese. I wanted to take the USAID building and set it up as a joint operation, that is, Vietnamese and American, because I had worked with the Joint Commission for Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) in Taiwan. I felt that this was the only way to operate. Phillips supported this and so did our mission director at that time, who had been in Taiwan. We had just got this idea sold to the Vietnamese before the first Buddhist incident in Hue--I think that happened on May 7, 1963--the thing that put Diem on the toboggan. Through long persuasion we had the Vietnamese about willing to try something like this. Had we set this up on a joint basis, it would have been an infinitely more effective effort. Even today, if we were to put it on a joint basis, it would be more effective.

If we were to set up a joint commission today in Vietnam, it would include the Minister of Revolutionary Development and some of his people and certainly a representative of the premier's office. I drew up and submitted an overall plan and program for a joint operation and exactly how it would work down to the organic laws, and I had some good names for the thing, too. It would be VARDO, Vietnamese American Revolutionary Development Organization. Anyway, it did not come about. Subsequently, after the first coup, I got the Vietnamese to buy it again. Then, I'm told that the idea went back to Washington and ran into so many roadblocks there that the United States was unwilling to enter into it at that time. I do know that wherever we have tried throughout the world to set up something parallel to the Chinese experience, we have run into objections, especially from the U. S. Department of Agriculture. They have always had this

phobia about surrendering any kind of sovereignty to a foreign nation for the management of agricultural-type efforts. Our Department of Agriculture is a parochial organization and has never truly liked the JCRR in Taiwan.

Because I didn't yield to the pressure of the Mission Director, he finally simply ordered me out of Vietnam. He just sent a note to Washington saying, "Call Fraleigh to Washington immediately." I got the cable from Washington to proceed there for thirty days' consultation. So I left, leaving my wife in Saigon. I had talked to _____ because I wanted to take my wife with me, since I thought it was very obvious--I knew what was going on--and even _____ said, "It's obvious you're not coming back. He doesn't like you." I said, "How well I know!" It's my opinion that he didn't like me before he ever saw me, as he didn't like the rest of our people. I was promised I could return and pick up my wife, but this didn't happen. Altogether, he threw out about 32 of the original group of what is known today as the Tigers.¹ They were the best men that we have ever had in Vietnam because most of them had high Vietnamese language capability plus experience and dedication.

So, I got on the plane and went to Washington. I knew the vice-president very well from earlier contacts with some of his staff in Taiwan in 1960. So, whenever I went to Washington they asked me to come in and have a talk with him when he was a Senator about what was going on in Asia. I had briefed him in 1962 and told him, incidentally, that the problems they might have in Vietnam would be most serious. I told him at that time that I envisioned Vietnam would be the biggest single problem the United States had ever run into in Asia. I said that we had to do things properly and we had to do them quickly. I also mentioned, just after the election, two days before he was sworn in as vice-president, the same thing. I put it all down on paper as to what the dangers were, what was happening, and what the issues at stake were. The vice-president had heard from Phillips that I was coming to Washington. When I got there on January 4, 1965, I was summoned to his office in the afternoon at four o'clock. We stayed in his office until nearly eleven o'clock that night going over the problems together with myself, Phillips and a couple of others. I told him what was happening to the USAID effort out there. He indicated that he was already aware of them. He had by this time taken a considerable interest in Vietnam.

¹Mr. Fraleigh used the catchy phrase "Every man a tiger" as a morale device. It is reported that when a province man came to Fraleigh about a problem in a depressed and dejected mood, Mr. Fraleigh would say, "You can do it, Tiger!" Hence, those associated with the Office for Rural Affairs at that time became known as the "Tigers."

An Giang - An Experiment¹

On February 6, 1966, at the Honolulu Conference when the U. S. and the government of Vietnam made pronouncements about what they were going to do in the civil field, we, in Vietnam, chose An Giang province as an area of concentration because it had very good security as a result of the presence of the Hoa Hao people in the province. These Hoa Hao comprise about 85% of the population, and they had sufficient spiritual conviction within this group to prevent the Viet Cong from building an infrastructure. Without such an infrastructure, the Viet Cong couldn't operate except in force. When they did operate in force, they had to do so without local support. The result was that GVN or U. S. forces could move in and get their units. So, they didn't choose to commit large units to operations where they had no infrastructure formed. This is why we chose this area.

We wanted to show what the free world had capacity to do, given a situation where there was physical security. I had worked in tropical development in Taiwan, in China, and in other countries, such as Laos, for a total of nearly 15 years. Fortunately, this was really good experience because it was work done down with the people, and I had gotten results in similar conditions. I went down to An Giang and based upon experience in similar areas with similar types of crops, we were able to determine immediately that there were tremendous possibilities which were not being utilized. Based upon actual field studies and a check of statistics--knowing the territory, so to speak--we were able to see some of the things that could be done. In addition, we had help available from JCRR Chinese technicians from Taiwan who had been through similar development programs.

We went out and talked with the farmers. I physically went out as did the Chinese technicians. We talked to local farm union leaders (a tenant farmers' union). We talked to the local Agricultural Services and held meetings with them. We brought our own technicians from within the AID program, and we set up meetings where we reviewed with the local officials what they were doing, what they thought could be done, and what they wanted to do if they had unlimited, rapid assistance. We poured all of this into the mix.

The kind of response we would get from the provincial

¹After his departure from Vietnam, the interviewee remained on assignment in Washington until mid-1965, at which time he returned to Vietnam with AID, following a short sojourn in Laos and Taiwan.

agricultural people would depend upon the individuals. Some of them were excellent. One of the great hopes in South Vietnam was that there was a considerable sprinkling of young men who had not yet been drafted and who were still in fairly responsible positions. For instance, we had a chief of animal husbandry in this particular province who, I think was 27 years old, a graduate in agriculture from the local university, and I think he had had a tour abroad (an observation tour). He was idealistic and he wanted to work for his country. Also, he was willing to listen to outside advice. Although he was partially a lycée mandarin, he was still pliable clay; he could be molded, and he was perceptive. We found a man who wanted to do something, but had felt that the bureaucracy in Saigon had never really helped him as it might.

We found when we got there that the hierarchy consisted of the Province Chief who was very militarily oriented, a Deputy Province Chief for Administration who was a graduate of the National Institute for Administration where he had had long contact with Americans from Michigan State University. This official was fairly receptive to new ideas, although he was quite suspicious of us when we got there, because I think he thought, "Well, just another American talking--nothing is really going to happen." After a while, by playing tennis with him and working with him for about a week, he soon determined that we meant business, and that we were going to do something. His original skepticism turned slowly to support and then enthusiasm. This initial skepticism was something that was felt rather than necessarily expressed. For instance, we would ask him to set up a meeting, and he would set it up and then arrive thirty minutes late or something like that. It was obvious that he was going through the routine as we had requested, but he didn't really believe that this was much use. But when he saw that we meant business, he really came around rapidly and gave us support. The thing that convinced him we were serious was that we didn't get discouraged. We would schedule meetings for, say, two o'clock in the afternoon in a building where the temperature was about 100°--very hot. We would show up; we would be very persevering. If his people didn't show up, we went out and got them--literally that is what we had to do. The people who were supposed to come didn't come so we went and grabbed them and got them. We also showed great enthusiasm--a sustained enthusiasm--and we stayed for a number of days. It wasn't just the usual trip where a man would fly in and stay for two or three hours--a beer, coke and tea--and then fly away.

All of this was a part of developing what was known as the An Giang Priority Area Development Program which was to be done with the people and for the people. This was, in fact, the overall program. That's why we were dealing with the deputy chief

for administration. He was positioning the various technical service chiefs. There were twenty-seven service chiefs in An Giang province. It is a very complicated bureaucratic, or organizational, structure. Although the service chiefs were nominally under the province chief, in fact, each of them reported directly to a parent ministry or bureau in Saigon which also paid them. We tried to have the Vietnamese government give strong authority to the province chief to control the service chiefs which would include the power to hire and fire them. On paper this had been done, but in practice this didn't exist. The service chiefs still felt that they could do nothing without reference to their ministries in Saigon. Slowly we motivated the Deputy for Administration. We dealt through him. As soon as he had made the introductions to the service chiefs, we then dealt directly with the service chiefs. We found differing reactions among them.

An Giang - GVN Officials and Interpersonal Relationships

We found resistance in one man who was responsible for what is known as Agricultural Services in the province. Under Agricultural Services you had the Rice Service, the Statistics Service, the Extension Service, the Plant Protection Service (pesticides and disease control) and the Fisheries Service. The man we were dealing with, however, the head of all of these branches, was not responsible for such functions as land affairs, agricultural machinery, or livestock (animal husbandry), but he was responsible for all of the other services. He was a long time French civil servant, about 45 years old, and he let it be known that he just didn't believe that anything was going to happen (although he appeared to be cooperative), he didn't believe that anything could happen; this whole project "obviously was not approved by Saigon," although we had people from his ministry in Saigon with us.

I neglected to mention that when we made our first trip to the province and announced this plan, we also took representatives of the ministries with us--all who would come. In the Ministry of Agriculture, the man who was supposed to come didn't show up at the airport. We expected to have about fourteen different people from the ministries, and only about five showed up for the trip. We arranged for a special airplane, gave special invitations, and made personal visits--we expected this, however. That was an indication of lack of enthusiasm in Saigon or the unwillingness of the people in Saigon to go to the provinces. We were undaunted by this reaction. We laid this visit out so that it would last five days in the province. During that five days, our individual technicians broke down into groups and made individual studies of their plans and also what they

thought could be done. We took field trips throughout the province and talked to the local people and the farmers. When we actually got into the format of our plan, the agriculture service official said that he, of course, would be very happy to discuss things with us, but that he could not decide anything because it would have to be decided in Saigon. He could not take any action without formal approval. His program was already made up, and he did not have sufficient people to carry out an additional program. He said he was very busy with what he was doing. In short, he gave all sorts of excuses.

When I was confronted with these excuses, I would sit and discuss things with him. I'd tell him that if he didn't have the personnel that we would help him get the personnel. He did, in fact, need additional personnel. I would also tell him that it was very easy for us to get the additional approval in Saigon and that wherever he had problems, we would help him solve them. He didn't particularly appreciate this kind of pressure. Subsequently, when we actually got into program operations where he was involved, he would often fail to take the action which he had earlier promised to take. For instance, he delayed getting certain commodities and certain support from his ministry. Then we would be confronted with an emergency, because he hadn't done what he was supposed to do and we would have to jump in ourselves with emergency support gotten by us directly from his ministry or elsewhere.

A specific example of this was when we first got to the province, we found that he had scheduled a considerable program to plant soybeans. We made our first visit in February, and it was important that the soybeans be planted by the first of April. They had fresh seed in rather considerable quantities so we didn't pay much attention. We asked him if everything was all right and he said it was, that he would have the seed. He was going to get it in such-and-such a place. Then about the 10th of April, we found that he had taken no action to buy the seed. Well, in his own view he had taken action; that is, he had written a letter to his ministry, and once he wrote the letter, his responsibility was finished. He wrote to his ministry and asked his ministry to get the seed, and having done that, he made no follow-up whatsoever. When the seed didn't come, he just sat there and folded his hands. His responsibility was over because he could produce a copy of a letter; he was no longer responsible when the seed didn't come.

An Giang - A Problem in Agriculture and Corruption

The problem here was that nobody had ever gone to see if there was seed at the supposed source, including our own AID

Agriculture Division technicians. They accepted the ministry's word and the Agricultural Service Chief's word that there was seed. On April 10 when no seed had come, I personally paid attention to this problem. When I got back to Saigon, I immediately went to determine if, in fact, there was seed available. I found out that there wasn't any seed available in Vietnam. An assumption was made by everybody that the seed would be grown in a different province, and that after it was grown, the farmers would be willing to sell it to the Ministry. The fact was that they grew some soybeans in another province, but the farmers were not willing to sell any of their seed because they wanted it to replant for another crop. So there was no seed available at any price. Immediately, I drew upon my friends in Taiwan and went right out on a limb (I really stuck my neck in a noose, if anybody had thought to pull the noose), and I ordered the seed by telephone from Taiwan. I arranged further with the U. S. Air Force to fly sixteen tons of improved seed from Taiwan to Vietnam. I promised payment from USAID funds because I had been told earlier that this program would get the highest priority and nothing was to stand in the way. I had been told this by our Deputy Ambassador and also by the Mission Director. Based on this assurance, I committed our mission in Taiwan to buy the seed and told them we would send the money. This was about the 11th of April. Our mission in Taiwan was very small and worked with the Joint Commission of Rural Reconstruction. They bought brand new seed, had it cleaned, treated, and tested in Taiwan, and shipped it so that it arrived in Vietnam in five days--this really was a miracle. Sixteen tons is no small amount of seed. We flew it direct to the closest large airfield about fifty kilometers away from An Giang, and then trucked it in from there. Of course, it was much better seed than we could have bought in An Giang. Once those people saw that seed arrive and knew the story, the dramatic effort impressed the Vietnamese officials to no end. (Incidentally, among the bureaucracy within our mission, a lot of people were offended that I had gone ahead and committed them to pay for this, but I pulled out the assurances of our Mission Director and the Deputy Ambassador, so they went ahead and paid it.)

After all the trouble of getting the seed into the province, we ran into other typical problems in putting it to use. We already had a list of farmers who were supposedly participating in the program. We had done this in cooperation with the Service Chief--partially with him. We found out that his lists were faked. They were made up by the usual bureaucratic method. The Service Chief had sent letters out to the village chiefs and said, "Now we are going to have soybeans coming in. Please send in a list of who wants soybeans and how much they need." (He had done this five or six months earlier.) So these lists had come back up and in certain cases, it was a shadow list; that is, there were names but there were no people there. Possibly,

the village chief had expected to get some seed which he would say that he had distributed, but would probably eat or sell it.

By the time the seed arrived, we had been able to verify about half of the list. We were in such a bind--it had to be planted by April twentieth--that we were really working night and day getting this out. We helped provide the trucks. We had to push the Agriculture Service Chief, because he never believed the seed would come in the first place. This Service Chief had one truck but he was reluctant to use his own truck, so we borrowed trucks from the police and from other sources; we also borrowed boats. We literally took this seed out to the villages and then called in the village chiefs who would call the hamlet chiefs and supposedly the people on these lists. We actually had enough seed to plant 550 hectares. We actually got about 450 hectares planted with the improved seed. There was slippage because their lists weren't accurate and the whole thing was so poorly planned on their side--it got confused.

This is often why things go astray in Vietnam. They not only won't believe it when things really happen and are not ready, but everybody continues to do everything by letter or by document. This is often done with full connivance. For instance, there were plenty of soldiers on the payroll who were dead. We called them "ghosts." They draw the money for these people and it went into the commander's pocket. It is the same thing in any kind of program. The village chief would send in a list of which half of the people named were ghosts.

Our Agriculture Service Chief was concentrating his program in only one small part of the province. We immediately expanded it to all the districts because we wanted to introduce soybeans on a broad scale. He said that they wouldn't grow or thrive in these other areas. We asked him for reasons why not. He had no plausible reasons. We had checked this with our Chinese farm technicians, and we had already lined up model farmers in these other places.

Our relationship with the service chief was difficult. Every time I came down to An Giang, I brought gifts to him, and in order to keep him fairly happy, I always gave him great face. Everything that was ever done, I always did in his name. In other words, if we sent out anything, we always asked him to go. All of our people did this; our Chinese were always very cautious about this, too. We never did anything directly; by that I mean that if we did things directly, we always did it with Vietnamese along with us. We had Vietnamese doing the job and getting the credit, although by our presence, especially that of the Chinese, I think we gained the confidence of the farmers. We had found that the Vietnamese civil servant is bankrupt in the eyes of the population because the people don't expect anything

good from their own government officials. In fact, they hardly ever expect to see them. When these officials go out, it is traditional for them to stream up in a great whirling cloud of dust, and get out of a black sedan to a military review. A dry speech--drink a bottle of beer or a cold orange--back in the car and away--that's it--it is very feudalistic. I think we gave these officials much more credibility because the farmers saw our people getting down and actually beginning to work with them.

An Giang - The Agricultural "Package Loan Program"

How the farmers were supposed to pay for the soybeans is an interesting point. Originally it was supposed to be a loan and they were to repay beans from the crop. When we got the seed, we found that the Agricultural Service Chief had not made any provisions for this whatsoever. This was merely on paper. In fact, we had insisted that he do this. He had assured us that this was done and that it was done through the village chiefs. He even had signatures to show that this was done. But later when we had all the seed planted and had harvested the first crop, we went out to collect, and we found out that the village chiefs had not done this. We only got a very small amount back--maybe a few hundred kilograms--when we should have gotten back 16 tons. There was nothing to do but try to see to it in the second cycle. For instance, our plan was to plant 550 hectares in the first phase, then get the repayment seed back, and hold the seed for replanting. The balance of the crop we were going to buy.

They had, in earlier years, planted about 15 hectares and they had had a phenomenal result. The yield was two or three times the yield of the local variety. This was an improved U. S. (Palmetto) variety--it had been introduced previously to Taiwan very successfully. We had, as I said, very ambitious plans. We were going from 15 hectares to 550 hectares to 6,000 hectares in a year. In the future, then, we wouldn't be dependent on imported seed but would rely on seed locally produced. This was not in the Service Chief's original plans. The Chinese had talked to him and helped him develop a 550 hectare plan, and he had put it on paper, but concentrated his effort in only one small part of the province. He planned only eight hectares the second cycle. We came in and moved this thing upward, and gave him assurance that we would have the funds there to buy sufficient seed to do this. He said that this was impossible. When we asked him how much he possibly could expand, the most he wanted was 1,500 hectares.

The Service Chief continued his own parallel programs, of course. The programs that he had on his books and with his

ministry, once we became so interested in An Giang, his own ministry became more interested in us. They had programs on their books for An Giang, too, and they began to send the money down because they knew that we were looking so hard. Even though he continued to do his own programs, and we knew fairly well what they were, he would not intermingle his programs with ours and did not want to cooperate--we had to force him to cooperate.

We forced him by going to him and having an absolute showdown. We would go physically to his house and call on him and say, "Now look, this is your program and you are going to have so much seed produced in a certain crop, and over here is this priority area program and we need this seed, and we don't think there is any need to buy it anywhere else if you are getting it from here. We want this used here." He would say, "Well, maybe, I have to ask Saigon." We would say, "Don't worry. We will ask Saigon for you." or "If you are going to ask, we'll send a cable for you." He wouldn't like that. First we might give him a chance to send a cable and usually he wouldn't. We knew his stalling tactics, so he eventually knew that we were not going to tolerate any of his stalling. Then, too, we had long since gotten the Province Chief on our side in this case. In fact, the Province Chief told us after he had been there for about a month or so, "If you have any trouble with some of these people as I am sure you are, you just let me know, and I'll crack the whip over them." He had called in these people several times and told them to cooperate.

After the project was well underway, and when he saw the scope of the operation, the Service Chief in the province complained that he had had a heart attack and had high blood pressure, and he finally asked to be transferred. He was transferred. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Agriculture people in Saigon, although at first skeptical about all of this, now realized it has been a big success. They are giving it good support on the ministerial side now--initially not much, but now it is coming along. They never did really try to block it. It was just indifference, mostly. Initially, many of the people in the Ministry were opposed to this project but subsequently they came around. We again tried to get them to adopt it as their own program, and we arranged many, many plane flights for them. We accompanied them down to make them feel it was theirs. Because I worked in Vietnam for four and a half years, I was very familiar with most of the ministerial people. Very often, it happened that I actually had more cooperation from the ministry than from my own people in AID. For this reason, I did most of the "back-stopping" at ministry level personally. There were, according to our estimates, about 60,000 hectares that could be planted, if we had tractors and the understanding of the farmers. Our goal was 6,000 hectares.

Nowhere else in Vietnam had anyone in AID undertaken a goal like this. In AID such projects are usually on a demonstration basis and not on a broad extension basis. We drew up a whole program for every crop--soybeans, watermelons, vegetables, and rice. We were also going into a complete change in the rice pattern. We were moving out of floating rice, in the areas where it was possible, into the paddy rice, which has a yield of about three times that of floating rice. This is a tremendous cultural change.

The result of deploying the soybeans from Taiwan proved to be very, very dramatic. We actually checked on about 230 hectares of the 450 which were planted. We had an average yield of 1,430 kilograms per hectare of beans against the average yield for the local variety of only about 600 kilograms. We didn't use any fertilizer because the Agriculture Chief, who supposedly had it all lined up, had not followed through, so no fertilizer got there. We did use insecticide, though, which we got primarily through Chinese sources. We also used new cultural practices and new planting methods. The Chinese went out with his extension agents and put on about 100 model demonstrations on the farmers' own lands. In a sense, we actually caused a revolution in the province. With 1,430 kilograms per hectare, and the price at 50 piasters per kilogram, the farmer took in 70,000 plus piasters. Whereas, from a hectare of rice he only got 15,000 piasters from a yield. The farmers were really ecstatic about this. When we announced what we called the "Package Loan Program" they were eager to apply.

Now the "Package Loan Program" went like this: we asked the farmers who wished to plant soybeans to apply and to tell us how much land they wished to use. Then we would physically go out and inspect their land and determine if during the dry season they had a water source. If they had a water source, and if the land was suitable, we measured how much of the land was suitable. Then we gave them each the required fertilizer for that particular area of land, plus seed, insecticide, a sprayer, and if they needed it, a water pump. That is what we called the "Package Loan Program." Then we signed an agreement with them to buy the whole crop at the market price, but if they took good care of it and produced it as instructed, we would buy the whole crop at ten per cent above the market price. This would then be deducted from the amount of the loan. If this works, and it is now going on, it will be the first time that anyone has made a loan to large numbers of farmers in South Vietnam and gotten their money back.

We were doing all this through extension agents. We completely revolutionized their extension agents there. We went to every village, and there are 38 villages in this province. We took the farmers who had been our model farmers before. We then asked the Agricultural Service Chief to nominate one; the

people in the village to nominate one; and the Chinese and USAID to nominate one. We also asked the tenant farmers' union and the Hoa Hao religion to nominate candidates. Sometimes they would all nominate the same person. Then we got these people in and had interviews with them. These were selected as the best farmers. We would then pay them a salary at the same rate as a man drafted into the local militia. This man was to work half a day on his own land and a half day as the extension agent. He would be the man carrying the program to his own village. In addition, we were going to send him to Taiwan for one month's observation. This would be the first time in Vietnam that any local, real farmer-level man, who probably never had a pair of shoes on his feet in his life, would be going out of Vietnam to have his eyes opened to what can be done in his own area.

In comparing the new Agriculture Service Chief with the old one, I don't anticipate that there will be much problem with the project because he is going out physically and explaining things. It was obvious that the old Agriculture Service Chief had no intention of replacing the seed, whereas this new man has every intention of replacing it. There hasn't been time to judge yet, but we are quite confident that things will work out in this respect.

A new deputy chief for administration arrived midway in the program, who became the greatest supporter of this program. This new man is just outstanding and a great leader. The province chief as well as the deputy province chief considered the Americans in AID as workers in his province (the few of us that were there) and he didn't differentiate between Americans and Vietnamese. Rapport was achieved and everybody was inspired to move ahead in the program.

An Giang - Second Country Asians

We had a very interesting experience with the agriculture extension cadre in the province. When we got to the province, we found that there were supposed to be about 17 on the payroll but there were actually only nine working. The others had resigned, and they couldn't find anyone to take their place at the low salary offered. We found that of the nine actually working, only two or three ever went out in the province. However, the Chinese attached themselves to these cadre and would go to the cadre's house every morning, pick them up, load them in their car and take them out. They had not been very interested in their work, but when the Chinese started taking them out with them, they developed a considerable interest in this type of work. The cadre's excuse for not having gone out earlier was that they

didn't have transportation; and secondly, they had no facility for paying for their lunch, no per diem. The Chinese got a per diem and invariably, day after day, they would invite the cadre to eat lunch. So they overcame these problems.

Once they had given some inspiration to the Vietnamese extension cadre, about seven of the nine shaped up into pretty effective field men. Now they are recruiting the cadre on a village basis, so they have no excuse in the future for being out of their area at lunchtime. There are enough cadre now to cover this province.

The peasants' reaction was also interesting to us. For instance, when we called a meeting in one village to ask people to come and discuss the second phase of soybean planting, we asked how many would come. The village chief said that about 60 would show up. Actually about 800 farmers showed up--this shows you the interest in this sort of thing. We had other successes in other crops in which we are deeply interested.

The thrust of our agriculture program in An Giang will continue, I think because, as far as we know, the Chinese technicians are still there. In tropical countries I think we should use definitely the third country nationals--the Chinese are perhaps the best in tropical agriculture; the Japanese in small industry such as agriculture processing (Chinese are good at this, too), and Filipinos in social work, medical work, and that sort of thing.

Some of our new provincial representatives looked at Filipinos and other third country nationals as an inferior type of help--someone who should be assigned to the boondocks to work--not as a full colleague. This is an unfortunate tendency and owing perhaps to a failure of some provincial representatives to understand aliens--to understand their potentials and get the most out of them, and therefore, they spend as little time with them as possible rather than trying to understand them and delegate responsibility to them.

It doesn't seem that the Filipinos have learned practical things from their academic achievements, their law degrees, or their university degrees, or their certificates for community development training. That is a great problem with Filipinos. They have achieved practically nothing in rural development in their own country. In fact, the situation in the Philippines is worse than it was some years ago. I think they have had some fairly good education in agriculture; I don't know how practical they are. I do know, from firsthand experiences, that they are tremendous in the medical sciences. I have had experiences with them in Laos in the Operation Brotherhood and also seen them in

Vietnam and the Philippines.

The Filipinos have another problem, that is, they are extremely fluent in the English language, and they tend to imitate Americans. In fact, in imitating Americans they don't get as much respect from the Americans as they would if they followed their own culture because they look like a second-class American, which is unfortunate. The Filipino is always out looking for what he can get out of the situation; in other words, he is often more interested in what he can get from a PX, or in following the American system; whereas, the Chinese technician has his own dignity, is much more self-reliant, and goes his own way. I have a great respect for the Filipinos, and although a number of our provincial representatives do not, I think they are excellent. I think it is a matter of management. They were outstanding in our Rural Affairs logistics work.

An Giang - Corruption

There are certain things that if you harp on as an issue, you probably waste more time and effort than they are worth, and you lose sight of the bigger goals, the bigger objectives. Our objective, of course, is to have a better, improved, efficient and honest government, and that also means on the village chief level. Our overall objective in this particular program with soybeans was to have soybeans introduced on a scale which would prove successful, and sufficiently successful to convince thousands of farmers to plant a second crop because these soybeans are planted during a season when they normally don't plant anything. So our objective was to increase productivity. We weren't going to lose too much time on the side issues, but we were going to protect ourselves in the future to see that local weaknesses in the first soybean loan program did not happen again. We get too many Americans who are concerned with small points and small details.

In this respect, I have been to meetings where the question of honesty was discussed with Secretary McNamara while he was in Vietnam. He has said the same thing that we have told our men--that you have to understand that the Vietnamese standards of morality are different from ours and you cannot reshape them according to American morality--which sometimes may be a little puritanical. We have to expect some loss, some slippage in Vietnam. The thing to do is to do your best through example and through the oriental concern with face and loss of face. This is the advice I always gave to our people. If they are going out there on a white horse, and if they are going to have everything done the same way that it is done in Allentown, Pennsylvania,

they are not going to be very successful.

The farmer at the end of the line is inclined to be a fairly honest individual in Vietnam, a man who is willing to repay his loan. He considers it an obligation, a traditional responsibility, a matter of face. If this is explained to him adequately--what he is getting into--that he is actually going to make a profit in what he is doing--there is probably a higher percentage of people there who are willing to repay than there would be here in the United States. He does know about things disappearing at other levels. This is why he has no faith, in many cases, in his own leadership or government. This is the great problem in Vietnam. This goes right down to the village chief and it goes down lower; it goes down to the hamlet chief.

When we, for instance, were confronted with an obvious case of fraud such as the case with the soybeans in this province, we made an issue of it; we pointed out that we thought that this was very bad, and we also pointed out that in the future there would be no such chance for slippage. We would design a simple program in which there wouldn't be any slippage, and that is why we were getting into the Package Loan. We explained our point of view on this to the district chiefs and the province chief. They, of course, held the Agriculture Service Chief responsible because he had assured us that we were going to get this seed back. But in this particular case we figured that there was just no way we were going to make the village chiefs pay for it because they had no funds to pay for it. We were just wasting our time over that particular seed. We also figured that the sixteen tons of seed had actually been extremely successful because it had succeeded in convincing the farmers in this province that soybeans were really worthwhile.

Observations on the Vietnamese

As far as the An Giang program is concerned, I feel it is extremely important because it is to my knowledge, after having been associated with AID for the best part of twenty years, the most concentrated and comprehensive effort ever undertaken by USAID to bring about rapid development in a tropical underdeveloped country. I believe it has tremendous importance because it serves as a model for the whole Mekong Basin type of development. I think it also can be successful as a model for other areas whereas other AID efforts in tropical underdeveloped areas have not been very successful, with the exception of Taiwan.

I say that it can serve as a model but there was one factor there that was different. The Hoa Hao are a somewhat

different people from others that we work with. We find among the Hoa Hao a people who seem to be somewhat harder working than most other Vietnamese. I also found a second qualification which was more important and this was the receptivity to change. Certainly the Hoa Hao are extremely receptive to change and improvement. I think this is also true of most other Vietnamese I have seen.

This is not true of the Montagnard, but even with the Montagnard we have had some really good results. The Vietnamese, I believe, in this particular respect, are probably way ahead of possibly the Thai, and surely the Lao, and also the people in India. There do not seem to be any cultural or superstitious reasons why they won't increase productivity, or why they don't want to improve things. This makes it a very easy place to introduce improvements.

The Chinese all say that the Vietnamese farmers are more willing to change than the Taiwan farmers. They are very impressed by the Vietnamese farmers.

One other plus factor in the Hoa Hao area, which was not present in the rest of Vietnam, was that they still had a considerable amount of manpower. In the other areas there had been such heavy manpower demands because of the war--drafting by both the Viet Cong and the government. There was a reluctance by the army to draft Hoa Hao. They were a little bit afraid of the Hoa Hao, and I think that could be the explanation, but let me say this--going back to the question of receptivity to change--AID programs in my opinion have not (I repeat this because it is really very important), they have not gotten down to the people in very many countries. We go in and we assume that we must work through the ministries--the existing local government structures--so that getting down to the people is often neglected.