

DEBRIEF OF A
VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

TAY NINH, VIETNAM

1967

No. 15679

DEBRIEF OF A VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL

TAY NINH PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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He was born in Kien Tuong province in the Plain of Reeds in 1925. His father was a wealthy farmer whose family was displaced by the revolution. He was educated in the village school which had been built only because of his uncle's influence with the French. His younger brother was killed by the VC while serving as a district chief in An Xuyen province. He is a graduate of the National Institute of Administration. Although he has served ten years of government service which is required of NIA graduates, he continues to work for the government because he feels his country and people need him.

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He is in the U.S. on a six month program in local administration at the University of Connecticut. Half of the program consists of lectures by urban government officials. The other half is on-the-job training in U.S. cities. He is attached to the city manager's office in Hartford.

The U.S. and Vietnam have many similar administrative problems. The difference is that the Vietnamese have few trained people to cope with the problems, as well as unfavorable conditions in which to work. NIA turns out only 100 graduates every year, when what they need is 500-600 right now. It would be best if some of the graduates could work for awhile and then receive additional training abroad. The men need some experience before studying abroad because often

the foreign schools who offer the training are not that good.

He runs the province administratively except for military and security affairs.

Role and Function of Position 4

In Tay Ninh he is an appointed deputy province chief for administration. He is responsible to the central government, but when there is a conflict of interests between the government and the people, he serves the people because sometimes the government is too far from the people. He quarrels often with his superiors because he is close to the people and knows their aspirations and enjoys their support. He worked closely with the Tay Ninh youth movement. Before he left for the U.S. 1,000 young people gave him a night-long farewell party.

Attitudes Toward Cooperation with Americans 5

He considers himself an exception because he understands the American way of thinking. He helps them behave the way they should and is able to work very closely with them. He becomes very nervous when advisors waste their time with useless tasks. Tay Ninh is a showplace for successful cooperation between counterparts. They work as a team, thinking and working together. He thinks his own success in working with Americans is due to his natural character, because many of his friends who have received similar training have not been as successful.

In Tay Ninh it is not true that the Americans want to get out to the hamlets and the Vietnamese want to stay at their desks. Americans never go into the countryside without a counterpart. When there is confusion between counterparts it means the counterparts do not understand each other. He advises Vietnamese trainees to study their counterparts very carefully, find out his weak and strong points, and then try to make good friends with him. If they fail to become friends it's because one man is not good. If the American finds that the Vietnamese is not good and can make a not-so-good man into a good man, that's the best thing he can do.

His best American friend started out being very hard to work with, but after about two months they came to understand and trust each other. Now they can reach agreement even on difficult problems that they originally disagree on. Many of his decisions are based on his counterpart's advice and his own experience.

In one early instance the counterpart did not believe him when he said the Vietnamese contractors were not cheating with cement in building schools. He got an American engineer to discuss construction with him but he was still unconvinced. When some American Seabees came to Tay Ninh he asked them to build a school and his counterpart found that Americans too can be guilty of faulty construction. The big mistake Americans make is that they trust any American but refuse to trust Vietnamese officials. The Vietnamese must be patient with his American counterpart, and the American must not openly distrust or have some bad preconceptions about his Vietnamese counterpart.

Recommendations for American Advisors

Public administration advisors should be made available to Vietnamese administrators at all levels. They can help conduct surveys and inspections, offer new ideas, promote planning and be a source of experienced counsel at every level. The advisors should be superior to the men they advise. They should be better trained and have more experience than their Vietnamese counterparts. They should almost be the masters of their counterparts. It is a waste of human resources if they are not.

An advisor can be any age, although it is best if he is middle aged. Unfortunately, men of this age group have families which they must leave to work in Vietnam. Many of them do not wish to endure such conditions and thus AID is forced to hire second-rate persons. Perhaps it would be better if AID spent more money on luring first-rate people instead of hiring more and more second-rate people. AID should emphasize quality instead of quantity. During the 80 years the French were in Vietnam they learned about the country, and they sent their best administrators there. The Americans would also do well to send talented

and experienced administrators to serve as advisors in Vietnam.

He himself thinks like an American, and often this is not welcomed in Vietnam. An American who thinks American won't be welcomed either. A well-trained American who can think Vietnamese will make the best advisor. Unfortunately most advisors don't have much opportunity except when on the job to learn how Vietnamese think. That's why advisor and counterpart should be friends, so that when they are not working they can get together and discuss things. American advisors still stay distant from their counterparts, maybe because they can't speak Vietnamese or because they have preconceptions about corruption which most Americans wrongly hold when they first come to Vietnam.

Many public administration advisors are not public administration men, and they are not prepared to give advice. Many Vietnamese administrators have had a good deal of experience and they need an advisor who is more experienced than they are. The Vietnamese has so many responsibilities that he needs someone who can stand aside and help him do some thinking.

American advisors should think of themselves as working for the Vietnamese, or for AID through the normal Vietnamese hierarchy. They should think in terms of clearing everything with their counterpart before doing it. One advisor planned a pacification project and tried to execute it directly with the RD cadre. It failed. He told the advisor frankly that he was wasting everyone's time and effort because he did not consult first with provincial officials.

In another case the advisor failed to consult closely enough with the Vietnamese and submitted a different set of figures for the 1967 province pacification budget. If he had worked closely with the Vietnamese it would never have happened. There should not be two parallel systems. The American should offer his knowledge and experience directly to the Vietnamese. He is important only to his counterpart, no one else. That's why the fewer people, and the most qualified, the better. Vietnam especially needs people to help in planning, people who can provide American techniques and brains to go with the Vietnamese way of thinking and way of doing things.

Corruption does exist but it is not as bad as people think. One way to cut it down is to make government more efficient so the people don't have to pay for the service they get. Another way is to pay civil servants a salary that they and their families can survive on.

Who creates corruption? The Americans, because they come to Vietnam with money and a high standard of living. They raise the cost of living for the Vietnamese, who become all the more underpaid. Many Vietnamese want American luxuries and they have to steal to get them.

Almost every single Vietnamese is a patriot. If they are given an example in the government from the top down, dishonest men will change to honest men overnight. The people need a purpose. In the revolution after 1945 everyone had a purpose, to help the government win independence. They willingly paid taxes to support that effort. Today government needs leaders who will give people such a sense of purpose.

Many dedicated people of goodwill get discouraged trying to help Vietnam solve its problems. If they just stay on someday they may have their say and get the chance to put it into practice.

Vietnam needs an efficient government that can foresee the needs of the people. In the United States you have dedicated and experienced civil servants and a literate citizenry that knows its rights and obligations. In Vietnam the people are not so active and involved and thus the burden on the government officials to give the people good service is heavier than the United States.

Now that President Thieu and Vice-President Ky have been elected it depends on who they pick for premier. Thieu and Ky are just a continuation of what was before, so it is important that they pick a good man. Even if the governmental organization is not adequate, if it has good men running it the needs of the situation will be met.

Since the pacification program has been turned over to the military it would be best if the men who are to run the programs are trained at the Asia Training Center. It won't do any good if the military men at the top are not properly trained and don't understand what their civilian subordinates are doing.

The military often moves too fast. They don't stay long enough to really pacify a place. They should go slow but steady, take their time, stay where they advance, and make every step a step forward. They want to win the war militarily with more troops, ammunition, rifles, etc. That is where the money goes. But the solution to the war is not military. Firm steps toward victory can be taken by improving the administration and civil operations. To do this there must be closer cooperation between AID and the Vietnamese government, because there are now two parallel governments (American and Vietnamese) developing and with less communication between them.

We must institute long-range planning instead of doing day-to-day work. It is possible to plan while the war is going on. Right now it would be good to work on some pilot programming tied to long-range planning, instead of setting up so many isolated projects.

Today in Vietnam the word "revolution" is abused. The people know that revolution is the key to success and victory and are waiting for the government to do something.

Recommendations for FETC Speakers 23

It would be good to have Vietnamese who have had extensive experience to speak with the trainees. It is worth the expense to bring Vietnamese officials to FETC to assist with training. These officials should be selected carefully; they should be people who tell you what they think and they should have a good deal of practical experience.

Language Training 24

We Vietnamese distrust interpreters, so it is very important for Americans to learn to speak Vietnamese. It is good even if they only get a basic introduction to the language in train-

ing, because once they are in Vietnam they will have the opportunity to practice and learn more.

Second-Country Asians - The First Philcag 24

The First Filipino Civic Action Group has been in Vietnam almost one year. When these 2,000 doctors, dentists, nurses, civic action people and support troops came there was already a master plan laid out for their activities. He himself convinced a Philippine senator who opposed the project to support the group in Vietnam. The Philcag does a remarkable job. After only five months they were constructing refugee hamlets, schools, bridges, dispensaries, and maternity hospitals; and already they had treated more than 1,000 people at sick call. Their success indicates that in addition to more fighting men we need more people who are working for the development and rehabilitation of the people and country.

As the Filipinos work with the Vietnamese they teach them skills. They also learn the Vietnamese language. Because they are Asians they are probably more successful than the Americans.

Opinion of R.D. Cadre 27

The cadre teams are doing very well in Tay Ninh. They have suffered casualties but their morale is high. Smaller teams that are better trained, better equipped, better paid and more dedicated would be better.

All the cadre are from the province. It is best if they come from the place they are sent to work in. But a good man can succeed anywhere; the people always react favorably to one's dedication.

Tay Ninh Province and the Cao Dai 28

Cao Dai is a 40-year-old religion whose major tenet is tolerance. It has incorporated many other religions. Members of the sect cooperate in the Tay Ninh pacification effort.

One Catholic hamlet composed of northern Catholic refugees has been particularly successful in Tay Ninh. Because this hamlet, Cao Xa, is so well organized it has been completely successful in defending itself and giving everyone in it a good prosperous life.

PREFACE

The material contained in this debrief represents the personal observations, experiences, attitudes and opinions of the person 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 to:

1. Provide AID with management insights suggesting alterations in current policies and practices and to identify patterns, trends and problems which, when analyzed, will provide guidance for future assistance plans and programs.
2. Accumulate new or updated information for an institutional memory, for fundamental research and for application to future development assistance programs.
3. Provide material for understanding the cultural framework of a country, and the dynamics of its mode 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. Provide material suitable for instructional purposes.
5. Obtain information which will be of value--generally and specifically--to American overseas personnel in their future assignments.

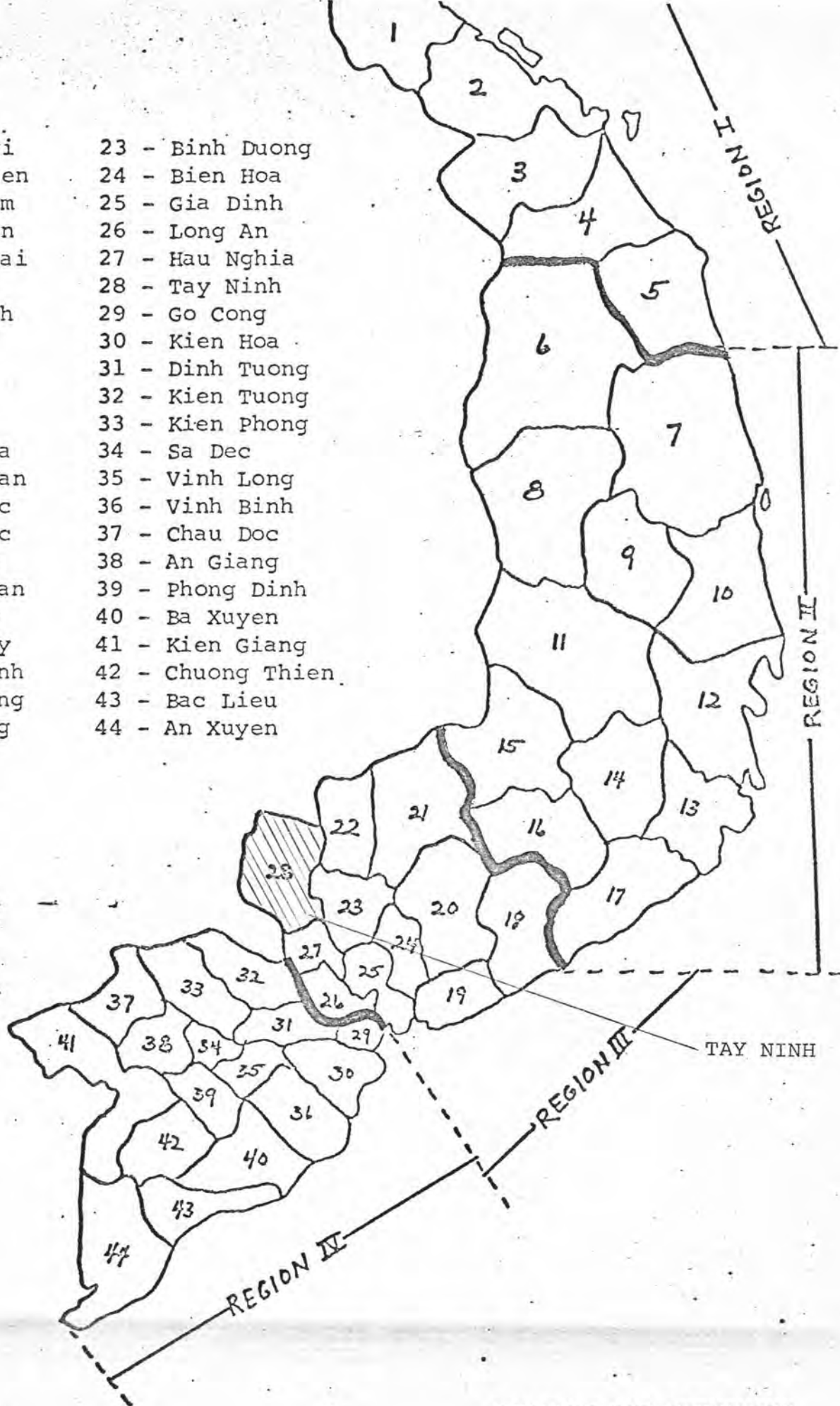
In order to obtain frank and open discussion, interviewees are promised that every effort will be made to prevent disclosure of their identity. For that reason, debrief reports are identified by a code number, unless explicit permission is granted to reveal identity.

In the event, for some legitimate reason, responsible persons desire additional information regarding material presented in this debrief, the ATC in Hawaii will attempt to contact the person involved to obtain the required information or establish

direct contact. Requests for additional information, or direct contact, should outline the reasons for the request and should indicate what use will be made of the information if obtained.

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| 3 - Quang Nam | 25 - Gia Dinh |
| 4 - Quang Tin | 26 - Long An |
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REGIONS AND PROVINCES
OF
SOUTH VIETNAM

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TAY NINH PROVINCE, VIETNAM

1967

Personal Background and Education

I was born in Kien Tuong province, which is on the Plain of Reedsland is a VC stronghold, on October 2, 1925. My father was a farmer who started with nothing and through hard work built up to 800 acres of land. I should have been able to enjoy that fortune, but the revolution and the war took us away from our land, and now it's of no use and nobody is living in that village except the VC. I was a graduate of the National Institute of Administration, which is the school for public administration officials. I was educated first at the local school, which was the result of a good struggle in the past of my uncle, who was at that time the provincial counsellor under the French. The village budget had the money but we could not get the French authority to allow us to build a school. So, my uncle, who had some power, used his political friends' power to fight to have that school in my village. And thanks to that school I got the education, otherwise I would be an ignorant farmboy today. So my uncle was very proud of that after he realized that I was educated and got a good education thanks to that.

My father and mother are still alive and live in Saigon. I have one brother and two sisters. My two sisters are alive--one is teaching school and the other is in business. My younger brother got killed while he was serving as a district chief in the Delta province of An Xuyen, which is the southernmost province of Vietnam. By that time he was a captain in the army and was on loan to the civilian government to act as district chief. He was very popular in his area. He was going out to look for a site for the elementary school and he got ambushed on the way back. There were some Viet Cong among his men. He was too nice to the people, and he trusted the people too much. I can give you an example of his popularity. He used to ride on a boat and he was a very good mechanic. There were some private boats going by--usually they ran like buses and took passengers. Sometimes these boats would have engine trouble and they were unable to repair them. When my brother passed by, they would wave to him, ask him to stop and to help them repair the boat. A private man who dares to ask a district chief to stop and help repair their boat means that he has some popularity among his people. When he was killed, I would say the whole district was very sorry about it. My primary, elementary and high school didn't

place me under any obligation to the government, but when I signed for the National Institute for Administration, when I passed the exam successfully I had to contract for ten years' service. I already have more than ten years. If the country wasn't at war I would quit because I might have a salary of three times my present salary. But I think the country and the people still need me so I just stay there with a very dangerous job. In 1963, for example, the VC just missed me. There were five of us in a jeep wagon; Mr. Melvin, who was visiting me, Mr. Navarro, my American counterpart, and Major May, the American senior military advisor. Two mines exploded maybe 80 or 100 feet behind our jeep. They hit the second jeep and killed all three of my bodyguards and the driver. One of us had been prepared to go in the second jeep, either Mr. Navarro, Major May or me. But, we decided that we could all go in one. Usually we take four in the jeep but this time we took five, and we were saved.

Public Administration Course - University of Connecticut

I came to the United States for a six months' program on local administration conducted by the University of Connecticut in Storrs, Connecticut, but classes were held at Hartford. It's very nice country there. The weather is all right with me. The people were very nice to me, too; the program was good. I took local government which included urban government, theory and practice of government, personnel, finance, tax administration, city planning, and a seminar about decentralization and development.

I have already been there 4½ months and I have another 1½ months to go. The program is composed of two parts: the first is a three months' series of lectures by people who were in this kind of work--city managers for urban government, people with assessment or taxation departments and city planners. The second part is on-the-job training where you gain insight into the theories that were taught in class and have a chance to compete in those subjects. I was fortunate to be given the city hall account course where I had some work with the city manager of Hartford and met with the City Council, and the various department directors and agency heads.

Our course was composed of six persons--two from Uganda, two from Brazil, one from the Philippines, and one from Vietnam. The two from Uganda had to go home before the course ended. They just had the theoretical part. The Filipino girl had a special interest in the city manager program. She went to the Fels Institute of the University of Pennsylvania where she could do further research on that matter. The other girl wanted to specialize in parks and recreation agencies, so she was sent to Boston for

that second part of the on-the-job training. Only two persons--the other Brazilian, who is an architect and interested in city planning, and I stayed at the city hall of Hartford at the Department of City Planning. As far as I was concerned, I got the city manager himself and his assistant, and I covered as many departments as I could just to compare how things are done in the States with how they are done in my country. And I came up with very specific ideas for proposals for improvement upon my return home.

What we cannot adopt we can always adapt. And during my on-the-job training I realized that Vietnamese administrative structure and government are not so bad. Well, before I studied the theory of the American systems--mostly the urban government of the United States--I really was very sorry about Vietnam. Administration was slow, services inept, and things like that. But, I think, when I got into on-the-job training, I realized that we are doing many things in the same way, but we are much behind because our people are less well-trained, less well-equipped and we have less to work with and less favorable working conditions. Otherwise, Vietnam doesn't have administration problems and wouldn't have much trouble catching up if it is given a chance of favorable conditions or other environment to work with. By this I mean security, well-trained people and financial facilities.

National Institute of Administration (NIA) is a school that Vietnam really needs; but again one thing is that they turn out every year 100 graduates and what we need right now is an additional 500 or 600 administrators. Should we wait for five more years or should the government try to put some money in that so we can turn out more next year? Well, we had to start right now.

The people who are trained there in Vietnam are very useful to me, and after graduation they should be sent to work for a while. Then it would be good if they could have an observation tour and training program abroad. I stress this because I am not very happy with some of the programs they offer and some of the schools and universities who are granted this sort of contract. They don't really know the needs of the country, or else no one of the training staff has any experience at all with Vietnam. The people who conduct these programs are people of great good will, yet they do not understand the country and they don't have much enthusiasm for the job they are trying to do as best they can.

I was the only Vietnamese in my courses, and the only administrator. It would have been better if we all had had the same background. But the

chance to learn is good because I've been to the States three times; this time is my third tour. I have more experience in dealing with people, with Americans as well as foreigners, so I could make comparisons; I may see your situation as favorable or as unfavorable. But suppose that we have a new man--a Vietnamese--who is sent here for the first time. He has some trouble with English first. Secondly, he refrains from asking, from demanding, that he get a full education in the States. Then the man who is in charge of the training program doesn't know what he needs or tries to think for him, and most of the time he thinks the wrong way.

Role and Function of Position

Now, I'll tell you my tale. I am an appointed deputy province chief for government, which is like a vice-governor or lieutenant governor in the United States. I am appointed, and as an appointee I am responsible to the central government. Yet, I am a Vietnamese administrator who has the obligation to serve the people. But suppose there is a conflict of interests between the government and the people. What position should I take? I serve my people. Sometimes the government is too far from the people, and I'm close to them and know their aspirations. I used to dare to explain to my superiors. They used to understand and listen to me. Sometimes I took my stand and quarrelled with my superiors because I owed loyalty to both my government and my people. I enjoy mostly the support of my people and, less the respect of my superiors. I don't know if they like me or not because I keep quarreling with them and give them mostly a hard time, but they accept me up to now, which is very good. The best thing is that my people accept me, and before I departed for the States, all groups gave me a farewell party and asked me to come back to Tay Ninh if I could. What they said was, "We really hate to see you leave, but if it is for your future we will just let you go. Otherwise, we would send a motion to upper echelons to ask you to stay," which is a very big encouragement to a civil servant who has devoted most of his time to working for his people.

I don't think I would go back to the same province. My people also felt that after I get special training I'm supposed to move up, but I would prefer to go back there if I could. I told them that they have a present from me in the person of my friend and successor, and I won't dispute the place with him. "The only chance for me to come back here is to run for the province chief. Will you support me?" They said, "Yes, come back and you will get our full support." After I left I still got letters from them telling me of their good progress.

Another thing I'm most impressed with is the youth; I was encouraging the youth movement. Usually to organize a camp of 300 youths, the government has to pay per diem to them and has a hard time getting them. But with me, I just announced it, and, instead of 300 youths, 400 or 500 youths joined, and the 200 extra youths just share their per diem. Before I left for the States, 1,000 of those youths organized a one-night farewell party for me. They stayed awake for the whole night singing, telling me many nice things; and I was really very much impressed with these young people who are very sincere, very frank and not much distorted by the society and those kinds of things.

In Vietnam my main duties are to run the province administratively--everything except military and security. The police, when dealing with law and order, ~~comes~~ under my jurisdiction. I was lucky enough sometimes (as an extra job, because the circumstances arose) to deal with Vietnamese military officers, responsible persons and the American military, too. I was lucky to get their collaboration. Normally, the military will have no business with me, but as long as they want to do some civic action work--civil affairs--then they might deal with me. When they deal with me they usually get the answer, the solution or the necessary assistance. So I was lucky to get their close cooperation up till now. I hope that the same cooperation exists in other places, but that I really doubt.

Attitude Toward Cooperation with Americans

In my case, I am an exception. I understand the American way of thinking, the American way of governing and of approaching things. Any single American who has been to my place was a friend of mine--no matter whether he was good or bad. I made him behave the way he should, one way or another. All of them, up to now, have had a great deal of consideration for me and the reverse is true too. We deal as a team and have frank and loyal cooperation. They, at the same time, play the role of advisor, of supplier, and of controller, too. But, because they do more of their work of advising and supplying, they are so involved themselves, that they know and understand everything and no control is needed. Believe me, if they spend most of their time, especially if it's for a useless thing, it sometimes puts me on my nerves. I think up to now, we make a very good team, and I always authorize them to get access to anything in my place. Then I get almost the same thing in return, so we have no problems. In telling that, I think that is a showcase for a successful place.

I don't know if this is a part of my training in the States, but more likely it's my natural character. Many of my friends who were sent for training are not so successful. It was, I would say, a good understanding and credit should be given to both sides--the American side tries to understand me as I try to understand them. This could be possible anywhere if there is an effort in that direction, but up to now there are many places that are successful but not so successful as we are. I was told by American observers that we are the most successful as far as cooperation between Americans and civilians is concerned. What is good American military or civilians, and Vietnamese military or civilians--we make one team, one body, we think together, we discuss and work together. I think that's the key.

At the beginning, the Americans and I might see each other once or twice during a typical day, but afterwards, when we got used to each other's way of thinking, we just used the telephone. The American advisor works in a building close to our office, and his office is accessible to me at any time and his personnel ready to render me service at any time, as I was accessible to him and my people ready to work with him at any time.

In my province it is not true that the Americans want to get out to the hamlets and the Vietnamese want to stay at their desks. My boss, the province chief, used to go out. I did go out, and we always went out when it was necessary. If, for one reason or another, the province chief, his assistant for military or my staff couldn't go out, we had other people go out with American counterparts. In my place, we had a way of making our American advisor remain unfrustrated and patient. We used to explain, to analyze, and to reason, and after many checks he realized that the way we were functioning was good. So, we understood each other. We could speak and explain and discuss and make plans. If there is such a frustration, that means that the American doesn't understand the Vietnamese or the Vietnamese doesn't understand the American or both don't understand each other. In such a situation, people cannot expect to progress very well. That's why I used to advise each trainee I met to take some time to study his counterpart--know how weak he is, what his weak points are and what his strong points are--then make his own judgment. He might take the evaluation of his predecessor as a basis for appraisal, but should not give it full credit and should try to appraise his counterparts himself. From then on, he tries to approach his counterpart and to make good friends with him, and if he fails, it's because one man is not good. Perhaps the Vietnamese is not good and the counterpart tries to oust the Vietnamese

from the place. If he's not good I would prefer him to try to get out of the place or have the Vietnamese get him out. It should be two friends working together. The Americans who come to Vietnam should have that preconception: He will be working with a good man. If he has in mind that he has to work with a corrupted man, a dishonest man, an inefficient man, then that preconception may put him in bad condition to progress with his counterpart. He should come with the desire to serve and cooperate, and if the man is not so good, then try to correct him little by little. If you can make a not-so-good man into a good man, that's the best thing you can do.

My best American friend started out being hard to work with, I thought, when he first came. He just behaved in a way that made me think that I couldn't deal with him and that I might have to oust him. That was the impression we first got of each other. Maybe he felt the same thing--that I seemed to be a strong man and that I would reject all of his advice. And I thought that he was an arrogant person and probably would be uncooperative. Then we had some discussions and after about two months we came to understand and trust each other. He made some mistakes but he was willing to help, so I would just forget his mistakes. Now I just take his qualities. I don't know how he appraised me, but at least he realized that without my cooperation he could not do his job, and he realized that I was quite successful with my people and my job. When he realized that, he had much respect for me and became more confident with me. We became very good friends. Occasionally, but rarely, it would happen that we had just the opposite opinions. Then we had to discuss the problem. We always came to an agreement afterward.

I started out having daily conferences with him to explain what I was doing and why. Usually, the first time I would let him make his own appraisal and survey; I didn't interfere. When he first came, I just explained about the business, etc. Then I would leave him some time for himself to make his own appraisals. After that, we'd get together and work out plans; then we would try to meet the needs of the situation. It seemed that he had very good ideas and advice, and he appreciated my decision-making based on his advice and my experience.

After he became my good friend, I had some very hard times with him, but I refrained from quarreling with him. I'll give you a very good case. He was not an engineer, just a retired officer, but he wanted us to build a school and he wanted to control the cement and see that everything was well-used, which was very much welcomed by me. But he had in his mind the preconception that all of the Vietnamese contractors

(not myself, he believed me and trusted me, there's no problem about that) always cheat on what they can, and that is usually the case. So he tried to reduce the cement to the very minimum. The idea is good for one reason: That the man cannot cheat anymore, and if he cheats, the building will collapse afterwards. But there are some dishonest contractors who can still cheat. But, again, when you speak about engineering, you have a norm that you cannot reduce, and my friend took a norm which was under the technical norm. It might hurt the building. This man is a good man, but when he had some ideas it was really hard to convince him sometimes. I did it this way: I had an American engineer explain it to him (because the big mistake of the American is that he usually trusts any American, and refuses to trust a Vietnamese high official. But this is a mistake, and I want the trainees to try to avoid this mistake as much as they can.) I had the engineer come to my office and try to explain to him, and then sent him to my advisor to discuss the matter with him so we could get it started. He couldn't argue with the American engineer. He lost the argument, but was never fully convinced. It happened that the Seabees came to work in Tay Ninh about that time. Then I told my American friend: "Look, now we have the Americans, let's try to have the Americans build one classroom." The reason I wanted the Seabees to build a classroom was to get a norm which was much higher than the Vietnamese, because you cannot say the Americans are cheating and stealing. But after a while my American friend came to me. "The Americans are using too much cement and wasting it, so you've got me this time!" The American needs to be more patient, and the Vietnamese needs to be more patient in order to deal smoothly with their counterparts. I am rather a hot-tempered man and my counterparts are hot-tempered men too. That's why, at the very beginning, we were just the opposite. I don't want to take anything from him, and most of the time he has to take some of mine, because I am a professional, a career man. I know what I am doing, and he is only starting his career. He had some preconceptions which misled him in understanding me. I am not conventional; I am an efficient administrator, so he had better just cooperate. That's why I say it should be an effort from both sides, the American as well as the Vietnamese. Now the situation is much improved, I think, and the Vietnamese are more than ready to cooperate with the American counterpart, know how he is. But, the American should be friendly and careful not to openly distrust or have some bad preconceptions about his counterpart before he arrives in Vietnam.

Recommendations for American Advisors

Regarding American/Vietnamese cooperation, I'll just try to go from central down to the local level. In the central government we have,

on our side, the Vietnamese central government and, on the other side, the American Embassy with the AID Mission. I think there are some relationships between the various fringes of the Vietnamese government and the various fringes of the Mission, for example, the Minister of the Interior having connections with the AID Public Administration Division, but yet we have the Vietnamese government running the country in separate agencies and separate offices and the PAD people with AID in the AID office. I noticed one PAD man was in touch with the Ministry of Interior, which is now called the Special Commissariat for Administration. I'm afraid that the man who was in touch with the Ministry of Interior was just a liaison officer who played the role of communication between two agencies. So the cooperation is not very close. I wish that all the PAD people could be made available to the Vietnamese counterparts at central level and at all levels, so that they could make themselves available as resource personnel to the person or the agency that applies. They have less paperwork to do, they have some experience in the field they have specialized in, and they could make surveys. They could organize themselves with some Vietnamese officials to make up something like a task force to make surveys; to go out and inspect, to try to bring new ideas, new experiences--that's the way to improve. I notice now that there's a big output by the Americans in making surveys of their own, by themselves, separately. Then they come up and say it's a monthly report, and I don't notice any recommendations. I told you about some of the official experience I had because I'm just a local administrator, not a central official, but I guess I'm right because I see more cooperation of the PAD with the National Institute of Administration than the Ministry of the Interior, which is the one that is more directly responsible for the public administration. I would encourage the cooperation with the National Institute of Administration, which is the training agency of administrators of personnel for the government and mostly for the Ministry of Interior, but I would prefer to see more cooperation with the Ministry of Interior. When I think about the Ministry of Interior, I want to say that what is true with the Ministry of Interior is also true with other ministries. That means any specialty, any branch of the Americans--the AID Mission--should work closely with their counterparts at all levels. They make one team, they constitute themselves as the planning promoter and the source of experience in every level--at any time of any moment--to their counterpart.

The advisory role, if it should be successful, has no other choice than to advise. And to advise, I would like to see people who are better trained and have more experience than I, than we Vietnamese, than the Vietnamese counterparts. They should be almost their masters--the

advisors should be superior to the men they advise. Otherwise, if they are not better than the men they advise, how do you expect the advice to be taken? Without that it would be a waste of time and money, and therefore, of human resources.

Any age is all right for advisors. The middle age is the best--too old might mean he's too slow, or too remote. Too young might give the impression of lacking in experience. The middle age is the best. I'll tell you one thing again, now that we have so many Americans in Vietnam--we have more than half a million military, and several thousands of civilians. Again, another thing, with the number of American policies, dependents of the AID staff and members are not authorized to stay in Saigon, I'm afraid those mature persons, those major resources, those major talents are used to having their families, and they hate to live far from their families. I'm afraid that because of that handicap USAID is having a hard time recruiting very talented and experienced people. If they fail to hire them then they have to hire people at a lower rate, and people of lower rate, even if they are dedicated people, their experience or their talents sometimes cannot impress their counterparts. I would suggest that the Mission try to think about quality instead of quantity. More people means more money to spend on their salaries, more effort on their housing, on their supplies and other things. Why could it not be as good if you had a smaller staff--but everyone an expert?

Another thing I want to point out: Vietnam was under the French for 80 years and France sent most of her talented people to Vietnam. At least, after 80 years, they developed enough to be experts on Vietnam matters and administration. The Vietnamese have a high respect for French administrators, and for the sake and honor of the United States, which has very good administrators as far as I know, they should send their good administrators, who should impress the Vietnamese; otherwise, the tendency is to think, "Well, France is better prepared than the Americans." I realize that the American has just about some 20 years of experience about Vietnam, etc. But, I think that there are enough good, talented, experienced administrators in the United States to be sent to Vietnam and who would love to take their families to Vietnam, if they were allowed to bring their families with them. There are talents everywhere in the United States, but the one group who was successful in Vietnam was the Michigan State University Advisory Group. They were some people who had long experience on Vietnam. In the last few years, other groups have developed.

With me, there is no problem in being trained in America to face Vietnamese problems. As one of my friends used to qualify me when introducing

me to some of his American friends: "This man thinks American so that nobody listens to him!" I want to stress the second part which was more or less true. When I, as a Vietnamese, try to think American it is not welcomed in Vietnam. The American who thinks American won't suit Vietnam either, but the one who has a good background in Vietnamese thinking and has a chance to be trained as an American, like me, might make a very happy alliance to East and West, and I think some of my success is thanks to that good alliance--Vietnamese and American. That is one piece of advice I used to recommend to my American advisors: try to think Vietnamese, to reason like an American but think Vietnamese. You have a way of analyzing things which is very modern, scientific and rational; it's very good. It's better to try to get your counterpart used to that way of analyzing things scientifically and metaphysically. It would be much better.

The Americans want to understand how Vietnamese think, but they don't have much opportunity open to them. The person they have to work with is so busy. Anyhow, they learn through the work on the job, but if they had more time to speak to each other--maybe at lunch time, dinner time or out-of-office hours--they could discuss things and be friends with each other. Another thing I want to stress, too, is the advisor, besides being a master as far as the job is concerned, should be a friend to his counterpart. He should try to understand his counterpart, to like him and make him like him in return. So that they deal on the basis of friend to friend. You know as well as I do that people who have good feelings towards each other, people who understand each other, people who love each other, would take more easily the advice of the counterpart. It's really important. Up till now, I noticed that the American advisors are trying to help, but for one reason or another, they seem to be distant from their counterpart--maybe because of the communication problem in language and maybe the suspicion he might have in mind about corruption, because the preconceptions about corruption which most Americans wrongly hold when first coming to Vietnam give them the impression that every single Vietnamese is a man who will steal money from the public funds and mostly from the Americans. It's really tough on their relationship and their friendship, which is very important, because they are not PAD (Public Administration), for example, who have to do a PAD job. Then they cannot give up. The only thing they can do is maybe to do some special project and to put more emphasis on their watchdog role, which seems to me should be a secondary role instead of a primary role.

I told you about the central level, now I want to speak about the local level. First of all, up until now, my advisor--who should be a public

administration man--was not a public administration man. So you might understand what kind of advice he might give to me. He tried very hard, so he was very successful most of the time on civic action or civilian operations, but he was not prepared to give me advice on public administration. The Vietnamese administrators are more French oriented, and quite different from American administrators. The gap is not too big, but I think it needs more explanation, more understanding, before we can make it more successful. Anyhow, a public administrator, no matter if he is French trained or American trained, can deal successfully because he has a common background. Maybe the Vietnamese administrator is specifically trained for the job and plans to be a generalist. He has covered many more areas than his counterpart. Anyhow, a good administrator and an experienced one is of much help to the Vietnamese administrator. Again, I want to put the emphasis on the experience of the man, because most of the administrators we have are trained by the National Institute of Administration. Maybe because I belong to that school, I think the training is quite good and they are prepared for the job. Now, if they have the assistance of an advisor who has the background of public administration and much experience, I think that most of the advice is welcomed by the Vietnamese administrator who, most of the time, doesn't have enough time to think because he is given so many responsibilities and he is such a busy man. The American public administrator who is assigned to advise him might have more time to think and to make surveys, and if he is used to methodical analysis of problems, he would be of much help. Furthermore, if the American administrator tries to behave like a friend to him and tries to make himself available to his counterpart, and comes up with very specific advice on what's best to do, discusses it frankly, and is friendly with his counterpart, he may help to come up with a very good solution, which is a Vietnamese one.

Another case: I would suggest that the Americans, when going to Vietnam to advise some people, should apply to the deputy for administration, the province chief or the division chief. I would suggest they cooperate with them and they work for them. They should think that they should work for the Vietnamese, thus, work for AID through the normal Vietnamese hierarchy. Otherwise, they would make a mistake and they would waste their time. I should watch them very closely for cooperation with their counterpart, and they should have to feel that they should clear everything with their counterpart before they go ahead and do something. I will give you a good illustration on pacification. The American advisor had come up with some very good ideas, but they forgot to let me or

the province chief know, and they arranged a project directly with the RD (Revolutionary Development) cadre. So they went ahead and started, and dealt directly with the team, and it was a failure. He came and complained to the province chief who told him that he should have told him before. He was very embarrassed, even though he was very good-hearted. He came to me and got from me the same advice with more explanation. "You have the ideas, the initiative, which are very good, but when implementing them, it should be the Vietnamese way, not the American way. You should make the best use of your friends and their experience--don't waste them. You're wasting your time and effort and my people's effort. We could make the best use of your ideas. So from now on remember to plan with us before any move." You see, we could just speak to each other very frankly and in a friendly way. Well, even this was delicate, but I decided to let him know that we should work together.

Another case was in preparing the pacification budget for 1967. We had specific norms. The Vietnamese government sent the memo through the Vietnamese channels, and the Americans through the American channels. So, my American advisor came to me and asked for information to prepare the budget. I told him to go to the pacification budget section and, if necessary, you contact various departments and try to work with them to come up with a figure, a plan, a project. But he just went out and somehow he came up with one figure and the Vietnamese came up with another budget. You see, if he would just go and say, "Well, what would be best to do that would meet all our needs?"--then try to combine all the figures and come up with one figure--that would be the best. If he feels that the Vietnamese are asking too much or are doing wrong, he should try to advise the technical advisor and the department head. Then if they disagree, I am the man to decide what position to take, but I don't know why they came up with two figures, which is really wrong. Anyhow, the budget which is the official one is the one I want, and if he is intelligent or he wants to use his skill more intelligently, he should just try to cooperate with the Vietnamese. This would hurry up the process of making a good budget instead of just gathering figures and making a report which will never be accepted. It's true that the American I am talking about was given the job of making up the budget immediately upon his arrival in the province. He became the most loved friend of mine because he came from the school where I had spent some time--Michigan State University. So I could consider him, not as a classmate, but as one who had come from that school, and we had a very good relationship. He started with a very disappointing experience. But if he had come to me, I would have told him, and he could have planned better. It's

good for him and it's good for our people too--that's why I don't want to see two parallel governments. I want the American assistance to the Vietnamese for surveys and advice. That's why I said that the Americans should be the brains, the knowledge and the source of experience of his counterpart. He just whispers to his counterpart what he thinks is best to do, and the idea comes from the mouth of the Vietnamese if accepted. The American should advise discreetly. He should not go out and give the order - never. He should try to be behind his counterpart, and just forget about himself. He's only important to his counterpart; he's not important to anyone else in Vietnam. That's why the fewer people--but the most qualified people--the better. If they are not good, I would prefer not to have any one of them. I would prefer to have one, two or three who would do a good job. I need, as I told you, people who can go out and make a survey on city planning, on master planning, and come up with a 5-, 10-, 20-year master plan. I want to stress something. We need a master plan. We need people who can plan, mostly those who are familiar with city planning. They have to go out and make surveys. In doing that, we want to use American techniques and American brains, but we still want to use the Vietnamese cooperation in that, which means the Vietnamese way of thinking and the Vietnamese way of doing things. I recommend very strongly that Americans be trained as advisors, not doers, as otherwise you will leave the impression of being a conqueror, a colonialist, or a capitalist, and it's really a very bad mark against the Saigon government and against the American government. In certain fields I would think it would be best to have other citizens than Americans, a Chinese, a Japanese, a Filipino or even a Vietnamese. You are very rich and we are very poor. We want to use less money. We depend on our money; we want to do more. That's what the Americans want anyhow, but in being willing to do that, they are getting impatient, they are spending more. They are making themselves more offensive. I have many, many cases where they wanted to save and they ended by spending more. I tell you, with specific cases--I don't want to illustrate it by example but I know from my own experience. At the last minute they recognize that it was a valuable experience to them too.

In agriculture, the techniques are not adaptable. They are not taking over--that's not what I am saying. I can tell you that, with few exceptions, every single American who is going to Vietnam has very great dedication. Maybe some are going there for money, but I can tell you that most of them, upon reaching the country, are always recognized as very highly dedicated people, and we want to compliment them on that. But, I want them to use their brains first and their hands or their other strengths after. I tell you they are lucky. Usually they are dealing with people who are more or less educated. It's not a big effort.

There is a big improvement among the Vietnamese who are ready to accept their counterpart, but the Americans have to learn about patience, about human relations, to accept a friend with his faults and try to forgive insignificant ones--correct the mistakes that are made and forgive insignificant ones. I, myself, am an exceptional Vietnamese, and I used to go out with my hand in my pocket. I speak very freely to my superiors. This is not the normal way the Vietnamese feel or behave, and some don't feel very comfortable with my attitude. I try to change some, but there are some I don't want to change because it doesn't help anybody. I try to appear more sympathetic, but I want to keep my independence. But I have another fault. I seem to be too serious most of the time when dealing with people. I tried to smile all the time, I tried to keep my temper; I was more or less successful with my temper. I do smile, but not all of the time. The American is a good man, but he is cold and distant, and he's still unchanged after six months. He's supposed to be the one to try to get the other to start or to stick to him, because most of the Vietnamese are not so outspoken as I used to be. So he tries to be outspoken and make the other speak to him--if you just stay quiet and the other man stays quiet, the atmosphere will be terrible. Anyhow, we accept the foreigner at a distance, but the relationship is not good. But what we cannot accept is the distance and the distrust. I cannot. Many of my friends cannot. See, you might not believe in a man; try to prove it. Don't say it before you can prove it. If you think that you cannot talk to this man about that or you don't have a factual way of telling him, you go to the other man behind his doors and say, "I have a feeling but I don't want you to let him know--just to check. I just have the feeling, but I don't believe it." That's the way. Everyone is trying to do his best, unless he's a corrupted man himself. And if he knows about one of his followers who is corrupt, he would try one way or another to check and correct if possible. It would be better to correct than to punish--to make a bad man into a good man in Vietnam. We have a big lack of good people, well-trained people, so we would like to see those people corrected and improved instead of just caught.

I want to give you an illustration: Mr. George Wood, who was a student in Honolulu in Cycle IV, was with us before he came to Honolulu to go through the course. Now he's back in Tay Ninh, and he's a wiser assistant prov rep, replacing my other friend, Edmondo G. Navarro, who had asked for a transfer to Thailand. His best success is that once in while he dropped into the province chief's house, had a chat with him, and the province chief had to offer him some tea or something. Then they talked about the family, the weather, sometimes the work. Sometimes he offered or rendered to the province chief a small service, which was usually returned. They became very good friends. Isn't this a big success? I'd

suggest the American try to reach his counterpart and encourage his counterpart to reach him. That's an inexpensive but efficient way to get a favorable response. Each party must try to make a personal effort to try to understand the other and to accept him as he is.

Corruption

There are people who are in AID who are good and there are those who are not, and I would very strongly recommend quality over quantity. And, on the American side as well as the Vietnamese side if you have a small staff and can afford to pay them a good salary, you can retain them in the job and you can encourage them to develop themselves, to stay in the service, and to do a better job. They don't have to think about their daily living conditions and mostly they would be free from what you call (and what the Americans and the world have said about Vietnam and some of the undeveloped countries) the problem of corruption. If a man is given enough to survive he might likely not want to be corrupted; and if he doesn't have enough to survive and raise his family, I'm afraid he cannot stay honest long.

The corruption that people speak about--they hear commentary on Vietnam--does exist. It's not as bad as people think. We cannot just go after everybody to stop him from being corrupted. We may reorganize things and arrange it so that they have less opportunity to be corrupted--that means make the organism more effective, more efficient so that the people don't have to pay for the service that they get. Secondly, the man--the civil servant--should be well paid--paid enough for him to survive and raise his family. I think he would prefer to stay with the job instead of trying to do something which is dangerous to him as well as to his family.

What creates corruption? The Americans. Because the Americans are coming with money. They are coming with a very high standard of living. They are coming with much money of their own; they are very highly paid and the dollar is 118 of our piasters. They lead a very luxurious life and the Vietnamese are living on a poor standard. The cost of living, they think, is very high because of the presence of the American army and the added presence of the American civilians as well. So, the Vietnamese are underpaid and become more underpaid and have new demands because Vietnam didn't have air conditioning and all the luxuries that the Americans enjoy. So they might wonder--and think the way to get those is to steal from where they came. Another thing is the trouble within the Vietnamese

government; they are underpaid there. If they don't have enough to survive, they have to steal somewhere to survive and to raise their families. But there is a group of people who steal to live very luxuriously--I mean Vietnamese--maybe high-ranking civilian or military officials. Most of those are business men who deal with Americans and who get a lot of profit and live a life that really makes the average people ambitious or jealous and want to be equal. That's the development of corruption.

How to stop corruption? Prevent it by setting a specific norm, and improving the efficacy of administrative services so that people are not willing to pay bribes for a faster paycheck. For example, after the vouchers are produced--after maybe ten days--the contractor should have his check. If you have no date on that, the check might stay there for one month or three months or six months before the contractor gets it, and he has no other choice but to go and pay the government official in charge to get him his check tomorrow. So you start reorganization--administrative reorganization in every sense you can, and so, until the next time, you stop corruption--that's the first thing. Secondly, if that is the example that ought to be from the top to the bottom, then everybody lives the Vietnamese way and not the American way--just forget the Americans. In regulating the economic life, not in paying an adequate salary, you might have more honest persons and more honest civil servants. If you try to run after those people to stop corruption, you don't have enough men, and they are clever enough not to let you catch them because they have always a way to comply with the law and regulations. They might make an arrangement called a "combine" of three persons who go along with each other. And they can always defend the respectability you are trying to work on.

Sometimes even if you have the impression or the feeling that a man is cheating or stealing, you cannot prove it. So, to me, let's try to reorganize the situation better and we might have it; and mostly, you should try to give the people a purpose. Almost every single Vietnamese is a patriot, a good man who loves his country and wants his country to be free from Communism. He wants to win over the Communists and if the example is given from the top down then you can change their minds, their way of thinking, and they will change, just like that, overnight, from dishonest men to honest men.

I'll tell you one case, very specific. In 1945, we started the revolution--a real patriotic movement. Everybody felt that he owed loyalty to his government and had to help the government one way or another. By that time, after I could not work with the resistance movement because of

family conditions, so I was in business. I was captain of a boat of 50-ton capacity. I bought 500 units of paddy. Every unit was taxed at one piaster. I prepaid 500 piasters for the tax. That meant I wanted just to buy 500 units, but it happened that my seller had one extra unit--one only. He wanted me to take it. I was reluctant to take it because I would have had to pay just one piaster more. He insisted that I must, and so I took it and I took time to go and to pay one additional piaster for the tax. I could easily have forgotten to pay that one additional piaster for the tax, but I feel that I have the obligation to myself to control myself and to help the revolution, and many Vietnamese would have the behavior I had if they felt that they had to do it for the best and the benefit of their country. And I have that feeling. I'm just a common Vietnamese--I'm not an exceptional one. That means having a purpose is very, very important. Everybody in Vietnam has the same purpose; the independence and prosperity of Vietnam, but the government doesn't seem to serve the purpose the people want. Every Vietnamese wants to end the war and to win over the Communists and wants to see Vietnam free and prosperous--that's our reason. And someone who tries to move in that direction, no matter how he gets the office (elected, appointed, or self-imposed), is always welcomed. To the Americans, an election is the best way, and I am used to the democratic process so I agree with them; but in Vietnam for the time being, election doesn't mean much. I would like to see the Americans who are going to Vietnam understand that. That doesn't mean that I am against the elections; I favor the elections. To me, the elections we had were a good start in the process, a basic step forward, but not an indispensable one.

An Approach to Action In Vietnam

I would say almost all undeveloped countries have similar problems. Inefficiency of the government, of its civil servants, corruption, lack of communication from top level to lower level. In Vietnam, many local administrators would not listen and could not reach the right person, or if ever reached, some of the top people who have the responsibility do not seem to be ready for reform. So most people of goodwill or very dedicated people sometimes get discouraged. Still there are some who just stick on, and, I think someday they may have a chance to have their say and to put it into practice.

We need an efficient government to run the shop, and we need a government who tries to foresee as much as it can the needs of the people. And, you see, suppose we compare Vietnam with the United States. Here you have a well-developed country where the people are well-educated. You have in the government as well as the private sector, men who are well-trained

and experienced people, and almost every citizen knows his rights and obligations so that most of the branches of government in the States--these local governments or state governments--get very good cooperation from their people. The situation is indeed worse in Vietnam where our people are less well-educated. Illiteracy is still a problem, and the culture I would say be mostly Confucianist, where the citizens are accustomed to refrain from asking for what they really need from the government. It would be very lucky if the local or central government could foresee what kinds of needs they might have. Their people barely can imagine what they need. And, secondly, even when they know their needs, they are embarrassed or they have a hard time putting it concretely to make it clear to the administrator. So the job of the administrator of the government of Vietnam is heavier than it is here--the administrators of government have to foresee, to think for the people, about what kind of services their people might need.

Here, most of the time the city manager or the local government is well-equipped in terms of personnel and finances. Secondly, his staff is mostly well-trained so they can perform a good job. The only thing they need is to ask the people what they really want and then try to adjust and direct their effort to that direction. That's why it's easier here to run an office than over there. Here you have everything--materials, personnel, finances, technology and equipment or tools. Over there you lack almost everything. The only thing we may have is our good will and our dedication--dedication to the work. That's why I don't blame the Vietnamese officials--not all, but some Vietnamese officials--if they are not very successful.

I would say every government up till now--the Diem government and the successive governments after that--were trying to do as much as they could to serve their people. But, under Diem, the security and political situation was better, so it seemed there were many long-range programs and there was steady control of the various levels of administration and the work was well done. The last few years, there has been so much instability that even though the effort was greater, the result was not so encouraging; but with the elections, at least we have a legal basis for a government to survive long and give more confidence to the man who gets the office--the President now, for example--to devote more time, more effort of his own to the service of the people. If he just gives more to his people, I think he can do more.

The most important thing now is the job of picking a right premier, because now, you remember, President Thieu and Vice-President Ky were both elected, but to the people, it is just the continuation of what was before.

So, in the mind of the Vietnamese there is not much change, but the change, if there is any, depends on how they behave now and who they pick to run the administration. If they make the right choice, that's a good start. If they're not lucky enough to pick the right man, I'm afraid they'll need some more time before we can get things going smoothly. Anyhow, when the new men come in there will be some changes. If this change is for the good, that's good. If the change is not for the good, it's not so good. I might say, and I might be subjective on this--I try to be as objective as I can, but because I have a background of public administration--I strongly believe that a country might do well if the public service is well set up and composed of good, well-trained people. To me, I think that the administrative, political, social organization is the main strength; the environment and the people we have to work with are very important.

Another thing that, to me, is very, very important is personnel. You have a good set-up and you should have the right man to run it. If you have a good set-up and don't have the right man, your good organization means nothing and won't work very well. In the reverse, suppose that we had a poor set-up and a good man, the right man to do things, to know how to organize and to run this thing. He might be able to take the best advantage of the existing situation. He still can do a good job even if he can't do the best job. If he is a good man, strong enough to propose certain regulations, he might bring about improvement of the structure of the organization so that it will fit the needs of the situation and circumstances.

When I was deputy province chief I conducted in-service training in my province. I cooperated with the regional office to organize an in-service training center for the whole region that was composed of 12 provinces. I think that was a very good thing. I don't know what will be reserved for me when I go back home, but I think, if I can do some in-service training or make some recommendations in that area, I think I have some ideas that might make some contribution to the program.

The pacification program has been turned over to the military to be handled. I would recommend that the one who gets that command be trained at the Far East Training Center (now the Asia Training Center). I would say the FETC is doing a very good job in preparing the civilians and the military who have to deal with the American civilians, and the Vietnamese should learn as well as the American civilians while doing their job. How do you expect the boss to run his shop composed of civilians when he's ignorant of the job that his subordinate is doing? It seems that such a thing could be brought to a higher command to think about. I'm not

military so I cannot tell about the results; but again the military support might conquer the place, but we civilians keep it, maintain it, improve it, and have it forever. I would say that this should be the understanding, the main thought. Just doing it militarily only, or with too much emphasis on the military for quick results, won't last very long.

We have such a case. There are many places in which the Vietnamese did the same and the Americans did the same. We come and occupy the area, clear it; we tell the people that we have come to pacify the area; we stay with them; we build outposts and we secure the area--"so cooperate with us now." We try to organize an election--at least appoint some people to run the hamlet or the villages. With many promises they bring in troops to give the people the feeling that they will stay and secure them. But often, not always, before the village is strong enough they move to another place because they are understrength and have to move their troops, leaving the village to the VC again. After such an experience, you can never expect to be successful if you come back the second time. I, myself, am a civilian administrator--I know the problem of the military, which is that they are understrength many times. The reason they withdraw is they have no other choice, no other alternative; but the people are left, and how do they expect the people to believe them anymore? That's the problem. I would prefer to see the progress go slow but steady. Then you advance and you stay there, only you should not go back. Take your time if necessary, and anywhere you step is a step forward.

Another thing is that the military provide the security. They should have the outside covered first, then they should try to get the local people to stand up, to take their responsibilities and defend themselves. They should be convinced that we come with only goodwill and we intend to keep our promise. I remember that President Johnson has repeated many times: "We are in Vietnam and we should keep our promise and commitment in Vietnam just to give the Vietnamese confidence," which is good. I wish our responsible people would say and do the same--that when they step into any area, they stay there. By all means they should not go there and withdraw after a while.

I'm very much afraid they want to win the war militarily. They will put in more American troops, more Vietnamese troops, more ammunition, more rifles, more plans and things like that--most of the money available for Vietnam will go to fill these areas. What is left will go to improve the administration and the living conditions of their servants. To me, the solution to the Vietnamese war is not military. I may be

wrong, but I strongly believe, after more than 20 years of effort of the military, we are not winning the war. After almost two years of bombing the North, we are not forcing Ho Chi Minh to the bargaining table. Maybe from now to the American presidential election, Ho Chi Minh will try to stick on so that he can bring some change to the American administration. I don't think that there will be negotiations soon. I would mean by that an honorable negotiation unless we accept almost a defeat by negotiation under any conditions, then we might have it any time. But, I am sure that we will be able to win soon enough--within six months, nine months. We are not really winning, but we show some real signs of winning a definite victory. Very firm steps toward victory would be putting in more money, more effort in the direct way and the right way by improving the administration, the civic action, the civil operations. Now, in Vietnam, there are two governments: the American government and the Vietnamese government, going parallel and with less communication. I would like to see a closer cooperation between AID and the Vietnamese government instead of gathering data to make reports which don't serve the purpose.

Another thing that is lacking in Vietnam: There is no city planning, no master plan, no long-range planning, and we just are doing day-to-day work. I don't believe, either, that this lack of planning is due to the war. In any situation we can do long-range planning and we can split it into steps. Why can't we make a 20-year planning--let's say 5-year planning blocks. Then we split it into 1-year units. Then in one year maybe we have quarterly plans. We should have people now who would program a long-range plan. Program planning should be in the direction of the long-range planning, so you have a smooth direction towards progress. So far I haven't had the specialist to do a good plan. Even when I requested it, Saigon failed to provide me with the right person, and the Americans also failed to provide me with the right person. If we cannot do it everywhere in the country, then why don't we try to work on some pilot programs, for example, where you put into effect some good project that other provinces might copy? That would be a field of experimentation. I would say even in the cadre of the An Giang program it's just a single project here and a single project there, not one of the overall plans like I mean. And before we can speak of planning, we have to make a land survey of land use and everything. That's what they have to do here in the U.S. before you can work out a master plan--a 20-year master plan, for example. I think, in Vietnam, up to now, nowhere is there such an attempt. The French here did some surveys, and under Diem's regime there was an attempt, but now they hope to solve their problem by coming up with some projects. Those are, as I told you, isolated projects that don't fit in an already-planned long-range program.

It is not correct that when the French left in 1954 they destroyed whatever information that they had about the land surveys. There is a transition from 1945 to the day the French really left. But there was some destruction of those documents when our resistance movement started in 1945. You understand that when there is a revolution, they destroy almost everything to start to rebuild again. It was not the French who tried to destroy them but the revolutionary people who didn't know really what should be kept and what should be destroyed. The hate they had toward the French made them behave as they did. It's very regrettable that many valuable documents were destroyed, but with the American money, human resources and potential experience, we can make anew. But, I'm afraid that we're not trying very much in that direction or if we do, it takes too long a time to do it.

Now in Vietnam, you hear about revolution, revolution and revolution. When you mean revolution you mean a practical change, and up to now the word "revolution" was abused, and now people are becoming more suspicious when you speak about revolutions. I'll give you another example about revolutionaries: The Americans call the pacification program "Revolutionary Development." The Vietnamese call it "pacification"--the word "revolution" is not used perhaps because they know that the people are tired of revolution. Yet, they want revolution really. They know exactly what revolution has meant--change from bad to worse. It's not construction. The people in Vietnam, after 22 years of accent on revolution, know what revolution means to them; they know what they want, they know that revolution is the key to success and victory in Vietnam. You cannot change the mind, the plan, the feeling, the concept of the people if you are not doing something drastic or dramatic just to bring about a psychological shock and show the people that here is the government. The government should work really for the happiness of the people of the country. They are not doing it for themselves and they are not doing it for the Americans; they are doing it for Vietnam. And it is time for them to join the common effort. That's the only way that will be effective. There may be an overnight change of attitude, and the situation will be improved.

All this doesn't mean I have lost my hope. I believe very strongly that we will win the war finally. But how long? How soon? That is the question I ask myself and I can tell that we will win the war soon, if we wish to and if we know the way. We should know the way and we should try.

Recommendations for FETC Speakers

The FETC is trying hard to find the way we should go to solve our problems in Vietnam. I wish that they had some people who have had some experience in Vietnam (I mean by that that some Vietnamese would have some chance to speak to the trainees) to speak enough to be ready to answer any questions that might be raised in the mind of the trainee so that the trainee will go to Vietnam with more confidence. These few days that I've been here I have been privileged to speak to the trainees who asked me very embarrassing and involved questions. I think that if I had more time I would be able to answer most of their questions. I might not be able to give them all of the answers, but I would, through my answers, direct them to some person or some sources where they get the right answer. I could say that almost nobody can have all the answers, but some might give you some help on that. I think the Center is trying to do the best it can.

You have a hard time getting language teachers and speakers. You want them permanently and you won't be able to have them. If you just want them to be here for one week, ten days, two weeks and just to help the people who are going to Vietnam, I would say the Vietnamese government would be more than glad to send their best men. If I had the privilege, I would delay or postpone any work of mine to be available to 60 persons who would be 60 of our advisors to various provinces. My idea is that they would be spread out more widely. I don't think the Vietnamese government or any Vietnamese official who has some experience would be reluctant to accept that privilege to really serve his country. I think the cost of transportation is not too expensive, and it is worth bringing them here.

I think there is a need to have experienced people on government matters speak to the trainees here. I may be wrong--this is a personal opinion--but I think you could have really highly placed people come to the Center, and it would be a very good opportunity for the trainees to hear them. But what I would suggest is to bring in people on the job, people who have some real experience, who really deal with the troops to tell what they live with. The people from NIA, for example, are mostly academic people. I would say that they think from the academic point of view; but if you want experienced people, I'm afraid that they are not the ones you would need. Dr. Chi is a good man on these assignments. He's a graduate of NIA and has been a province chief in the province of Quang Tri. But I would like to see a district chief speak to you, or a province chief, or a deputy province chief for administration who might tell you something of his own experience.

Another thing is that there should be a very careful selection. By that, I mean that you can't pick everybody. Everybody is almost as good as the average, but there are people who would tell you what they think--who dare to tell you--and there are people who would not dare to tell you. It's not worthwhile bringing them here.

You see, you have here some very experienced people about Vietnam problems, like Mr. George Melvin, for example. He knows almost every Vietnamese who might be of some value. Mr. John O'Donnell, I suppose, knows enough Vietnamese who can share some of their experiences with the Center. It's not so difficult. The difficulty is to think that here we need experienced persons--not academic people--we need experienced people at any level, not just people with a title. I might be wrong, I respect my superiors very much, but I'm just afraid everybody with an academic background and without practical experience is not of value. We need practical people. It would be ideal to find someone with a title or additional academic training.

Language Training

If you have an American who speaks Vietnamese, it would be best; but I'm afraid that it takes a long, long time to learn Vietnamese. Anyhow, the more Vietnamese you have, the better it is, because in Vietnam we distrust interpreters; we have a very low consideration of interpreters. For the time being we have to accept it. But the more education and the more training in language, the better. I would suggest that you give them a basic training in Vietnamese, then once there they will have more opportunity to practice and to learn more.

I would love to speak to the Americans in my province in English and have them answer me in Vietnamese. That would be a big change. But, up to now, because the program of Vietnamese teaching to the AID members just started very recently, the ones who used to serve with me didn't have much chance to learn and to speak Vietnamese. Yet, after a while, they spoke some Vietnamese. Dale Pfeiffer, FETC, Cycle I, started to speak some good Vietnamese. He's still very shy, but he's doing very well. I think that if he goes to Saigon he will lose the opportunity.

Second-Country Asians - The First Philcag

Let's speak about the First Philcag, which stands for First Filipino Civic Action Group, which has been working in Tay Ninh province for almost one year now. It was a group of military people--about 2,000

men and officers. Eight hundred fighting troops who are given a mission to protect the engineers, the doctors, the civic-action people who are working. They are given the mission just to secure the area and to refrain from shooting at the enemy. If they are shot at not terribly then they should not shoot at the enemy. They are not for a military purpose--just to be used in case. The others are composed of doctors, dentists, nurses, civic action people, engineers, and technicians of all kinds. They were sent to Vietnam on that mission of mercy and rehabilitation and civic action. They came with very good intentions, and we worked out a plan for them before they came. A master plan for their main activity was prepared and another list of secondary activities was preplanned.

We had requested these people, and we had to fight for them by many means. They first were asked to be sent to Vietnam and to Tay Ninh, but we have another province that wanted them. Then it seemed that they were to be sent to the other province. There was a dispute in the Philippines as to whether they should send that group of people to Vietnam or not. There was much opposition from the Congress and the Senate of the Philippines, from the press, from the students and from the people. It happened that one lady senator who was against that and who had been to Red China wrote some article against it. It happened that she paid a visit to Saigon and to my place. I was the man to show her around and she was impressed. When she returned home she wrote an article for the project. So we got the First Philcag going instead of going to the other place.

Maybe because they are Asian and their experience is there--I don't know--they seem to cooperate very closely with the local people, the local authorities, and they do a remarkable job. I tell you they have only 2,000 people, and during the five months before I left for the University of Connecticut, they were at the same time building, erecting a house and tents for themselves, and working on projects such as clearing out 500 hectares of forest to build a modern hamlet for the refugees, which they did perfectly. In the meantime, they were doing other secondary projects, and they were building more than 30 miles of road. They were building a bridge across the river to take away the congestion of military traffic. They were building many, many schools, dispensaries, maternity hospitals. They were giving sick call to the people, and when I departed after five months, they had treated more than 100,000 cases. They were successful in their work as engineers and also in civic action. They got some Vietnamese returnees; some Viet Cong ran back to them with rifles. They got many good civic action results, mostly on health. They did a marvelous job in engineering.

They are protected by another American brigade. Because they are not fighting they need protection. They asked to be protected as one of their conditions before they came, because although they bear weapons they do not want to fight even though they are good fighters. But they want to be protected and don't want to use their rifles. They want to use their brains, their hands, their hearts, and their medical equipment, and bulldozers. This makes them successful and loved by the people. In the meantime, the 2,000 Americans were fighting diligently to protect them. In telling that I want to put the emphasis on the success of the civic-action program of the civil operation, and if we put more in there we might lower the number of casualties and we might win more people to our side. You see, there are 2,000 American fighters who take the risk to protect another 2,000 Filipino military men who are working hard too, but who have less risk and who get all the credit. That's what I want to point out.

Another thing--that doesn't mean that the Americans cannot do that. We have one company of Seabees, which is an engineer unit of the Navy. There are just 12 people, with bulldozers, roadgraders, and engineering equipment. Then, within three months they were working with us; they were doing a very good job too. They were building more than 12 kilometers of road and other buildings. They tried to remodel a public swimming pool and were helping to build schools and other things. They were also very welcome by the people. That's why I think we still need some military units, some fighting people, but I think we need more doctors, more engineers, more people who are working for the development and rehabilitation of the people and the country.

The Filipinos work with the Vietnamese to teach them these skills and also do the work themselves. Technical work they do, but in doing that they take trainees. They take Vietnamese and try to train them how to drive bulldozers and other heavy equipment. They train them how to work on carpentry and other things. At the same time they work for them; they try to get the cooperation of the people, with great success, and they do the work and train the people, too. That is what is good. They are trying to work with the people and that's the key to their success. If the Filipinos were coming as advisors, I would say the people would be reluctant to have them. But here they are coming just to help. The way they help is just to ease the Vietnamese people's sufferings and to improve their condition of living, for which the Vietnamese must accept them.

They learn the Vietnamese language very fast. They speak Vietnamese; they impress the Vietnamese as well as impressing their people and,

naturally, Americans. I would say they are more successful than Americans because they are Asians, I suppose. Well, the culture and traditions are more similar. I am saying that they have more of an advantage than the American, but the Americans are doing well, too. They are learning, trying to help, but maybe it's because they are from the country that is giving the aid. They think they are responsible for the aid, they want the aid to be well used and sometimes the excess of zeal in controlling a thing might make them behave not as they should. But, believe me, they are very good people.

Opinion of R.D. Cadre

The cadre teams are doing very well in our area. They are not well secured in some places I'm told. There were occasions when morale is high and we are trying to take advantage of any good opportunities. Yet, on this I may be wrong, but I have the feeling that they are underpaid. Their training might be fairly good, but not good enough, according to me. I would prefer, instead of a team of 59, a team of perhaps 12 persons, much better trained, better equipped and better paid. They would be well-trained people, more dedicated, knowing the people and the area and able to inspire confidence and respect. Those two things are very important in Vietnam, and I would think it would be very important anywhere in the world. And again, if you have a smaller number of people who are specialized in their particular jobs, then you may expect better results, fewer supply problems, fewer transportation problems, etc. I am certain they could get more cooperation from the villagers if they were more respected. If you pay them well, then the requirements for that job would be higher. So you could expect to get better people. If you pay them low wages, then, as you say, "You get what you pay for."

In my province I think most of my teams are up to strength. There are a few who have left or who are sick, but theoretically they are full strength, and usually they have some on leave, too. Normally, 40 or 45 would make up a good team. We do make them work, and we have a way to check them too. We have a specific assignment for them, though we give them some flexibility to work with, and we watch them very closely.

In my province we use local people (I mean people from the province if not from the place). The people are not from the place we move into, but they might be from the area or from the province. He might not know the place, but then he's not from the place itself. There are men who would prefer to come back and work in their own hamlets; there are men who would not prefer to work in their hamlets because sometimes they

think they better not because they know the area and the people. Sometimes they are not able to do a better job, an impartial job, if they are working with people they know. Sometimes it becomes very hard for them to make a decision. I, myself, think it's much better if the man comes from the place, and if he doesn't fit that means he's not good. If he is working at a place where people know him, he has to be more responsible for his actions. That's why I think it would be good, but it's not feasible nor practical because often we are moving into a place where the security situation is not so good. We should accept those things. A good man can succeed anywhere. Let's take my case--I'm not from Tay Ninh. I think that's the place where I have been the most successful. Once in there maybe some of your qualities of cooperation or convincing the people or making the people cooperate with your work, will help you to do a good job. Your dedication is always noticed by the people. The people would react very favorably to your dedication, your desire to explain and to show them.

Tay Ninh Province and the Cao Dai

Tay Ninh is a very rich province on the border of Cambodia. It is well known as a province where the Cao Dai have a great deal of influence. Cao Dai is a 40-year-old religion newly created in Vietnam by Vietnamese. Their doctrine and philosophy are a mixture of all of the existing religions, and is the main religion, I would say. That means Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Catholicism. Their philosophy is tolerance. They try to tolerate other religions, to take them and make them understand each other and try to incorporate them into their religion. In their temple they worship all the leaders of the other religions: Buddha and Christ, Confucius, Lao-Tzu--and even Victor Hugo--were recognized by them as leaders of religions or as saints. They are well known as an anti-Communist group, and they were cooperating with us in the province of Tay Ninh towards the pacification effort.

I want to stress one case in one hamlet--I would say a group of four hamlets--which to me is a success and should be a showcase for the entire country. We should have a case study of the hamlet of Cao Xa in Tay Ninh. Mr. Melvin knows the place very well. It is an area of about 4,000 people led by a Catholic priest who came from the North with his followers. These people are Catholic refugees coming from the North in 1954. After settling there, they organized their own defense. Then they got the government support in rifles and ammunition. They were the first area to start what we called the strategic hamlet and later the New Life Hamlet. They just started because they had some experience in the northland of Bui Chu and Phai Diem where they had the experience of

fighting against the Communists. They were established at Cao Xa, thanks to their very good leader, Father Du, who took care of them spiritually and took time to organize them. Militarily, socially, economically, educationally and everything--it was a success. Militarily they organized themselves, and every man and woman, from the age of 18 up to maybe 65, had the duty of sharing the responsibility of guarding their hamlet. They have the hamlet fenced all around with a central gate and other specific exits. Then they check everybody who wants to get in, so they control their hamlet fully, 24 hours a day. They were attacked by the Viet Cong many, many times, and every time the VC were defeated. After so many disastrous experiences, the Viet Cong gave up and didn't attack them anymore. I feel very secure when I go to that hamlet and spend the night there. Under the leadership of Father Du, they first organized their security, then they tried to work and improve their living conditions. That's why it's a very prosperous hamlet. They have agriculture, they have handicrafts, they have animal husbandry--well, any means to help them economically. They always think of new ideas or take any new ideas that the government may offer, and they have the most prosperous hamlet among the refugee camps. They allow trade and encourage trade, and they maintain good relationships with their neighbors. This priest is a good priest religiously speaking and is a good organizer and leader and is very trusted. Any words he says mean a lot to his people. They stick together so that they make one law, and they're doing a good job.

We have two other groups of hamlets besides the one I just mentioned. The others are successful, but not so successful. One reason is that the leaders in those places are not so well equipped as leaders. There is another place where the security situation is very bad, so they have a very difficult time. Yet, they try to maintain their faith and have much courage to survive. That they stay there is, to me, a credit to Father Man, their leader. If there is no such leader, they would have already left the place for other areas.