

Civic Action Meeting
November 21, 1955

Persons attending: Mr. Lavergne, USOM; Mr. Ladejinsky, USOM; Col. Lansdale, TRIM; Dr. Speer, USIS; Mr. Taylor, Embassy; and Mr. Mode, MSUG

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a reply to a cable from Washington concerning financial support for Civic Action.

There was considerable difference of opinion as to the exact policy to be followed on Civic Action; that is, whether it should be unqualifiedly supported or whether actual ministries should be prodded to do the job. The general conclusion seemed to be that the Civic Action program was necessary at this time because it was the one agency that was doing something at the village level.

Col. Lansdale had talked to President Diem about the program, and the President had talked with Mr. Barrows, who in turn met with Mr. Cung who is head of the Civic Action Commission. The net results, however, of these conversations were merely informative; and no action had been taken by Mr. Cung to specifically request funds from USOM.

Mr. Lavergne pointed out that the procedure of all ministries was to make a specific request in writing on a project basis and that this procedure must be known by Mr. Cung.

Mr. Lansdale pointed out that he didn't think that he knew the exact procedure; and the upshot of the meeting was that all the persons present at this meeting would meet at Col. Lansdale's home on November 22 to informally discuss the program and the possible request for funds.

My part in the discussion was to tell the group that we were planning to make a study of the Civic Action Commission and that we were actually going to work at the village level, and hopefully would have information which would be the basis for administrative recommendations.

After the meeting, I met with Col. Lansdale and asked him for an appointment, at which time Dr. Smuckler and Dr. Wickert could discuss our proposed Field Administration Project on Civic Action. He agreed to such a meeting at 6:30 p.m., November 25.

Walter Mode

