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DEBRIEF OF A CORDS

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS OFFICER

REGION III, VIETNAM

1967 - 1968

No. 19681

PRECIS

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OPERATIONS OFFICER

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This CORDS Psychological Operations officer worked in information programs and in other areas during his tour of duty in Vietnam. Some of his observations are listed:

- A. U.S. Army training in PsyOps was excellent. It gave full coverage to problems that would confront the PsyOps man in Vietnam and gave a totally fine background considering the time involved in the course.
- B. The Psychological Operations efforts were to build a communications infrastructure so that the government could talk to the people and so that the people would know a government existed and had something tangible to offer them.
- C. The JUSPAO field rep needed guidance and information regarding overall objectives in Vietnam. This was not given. He had to create his own goals. However, the situation should improve under CORDS as there is now better awareness of the overall program by everyone.
- D. Although JUSPAO money is scarce, it is the best spent money in Vietnam because it is all turned into material and commodities.
- E. Americans have provided the Vietnamese with sophisticated equipment without teaching them to maintain or operate it.
- F. There are things which the Vietnamese feel are important and these jobs will get done with a little assistance--guidance, management, leadership.
- G. The American advisor should win the confidence of his counterpart, learn the situation and learn the background on the situation before he gives advice. He should also be sure of his backing before he commits himself.

- H. It is advantageous to commit in writing any agreements with the Vietnamese. There is an oriental habit of saying, "Yes" and ignoring the requests made of him.
- I. Filipino advisors were well educated and well-meaning, but they weren't satisfactory. They didn't have the same drive or the same background as Americans.
- J. VIS chiefs held the same jobs under many different national leaders and trends of thought. Under each they had to explain how good the government was.
- K. Low-level American ideas were rejected. The Vietnamese place emphasis on high level authority.
- L. People voted because they wanted to please the Americans; however, many did not know anything about the candidates they voted for. The election was too hurried; campaign time, too short.
- M. The election did prove to the Vietnamese that they needed to organize parties--develop strength in organization.
- N. The Vietnamese were more interested in Revolutionary Development cadres than in any other program generated by the Americans.
- O. Leadership needs to be identified in the RD cadre, and these leaders need publicity, prestige.
- P. The Chieu Hoi program needs more backing from the Vietnamese government. (January, 1968)
- Q. The Chieu Hoi Center needed guidance in processing the hoi chanh, a better definition of its responsibilities and more emphasis on indoctrination and teaching.
- R. The Chieu Hoi Center itself was well supervised but hoi chanh were often treated as slave labor or tortured or interrogated before they were turned over to the center. (January, 1968)
- S. Involvement or recognition of corruption was counter-productive psychological operations. JUSPAO time could be spent more wisely on productive matters.
- T. There are several degrees of corruption. Much of it was caused by Americans who created a new society of receivers in Vietnam.

- U. The Vietnamese have got to solve corruption themselves. One of the solutions is an elected government.
- V. There are extremely highly qualified AID people who ignore the psychological aspects of their programs. We have tremendous projects going on and no information about them. (January, 1968)
- W. Unless work we do has a psychological effect, it is not worth doing. The Vietnamese need to know what we do, why, plans and results. If we don't tell them what we are doing, we are wasting time and money.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS OFFICER  
REGION III - VIETNAM  
1967 - 1968

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## PREFACE

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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.

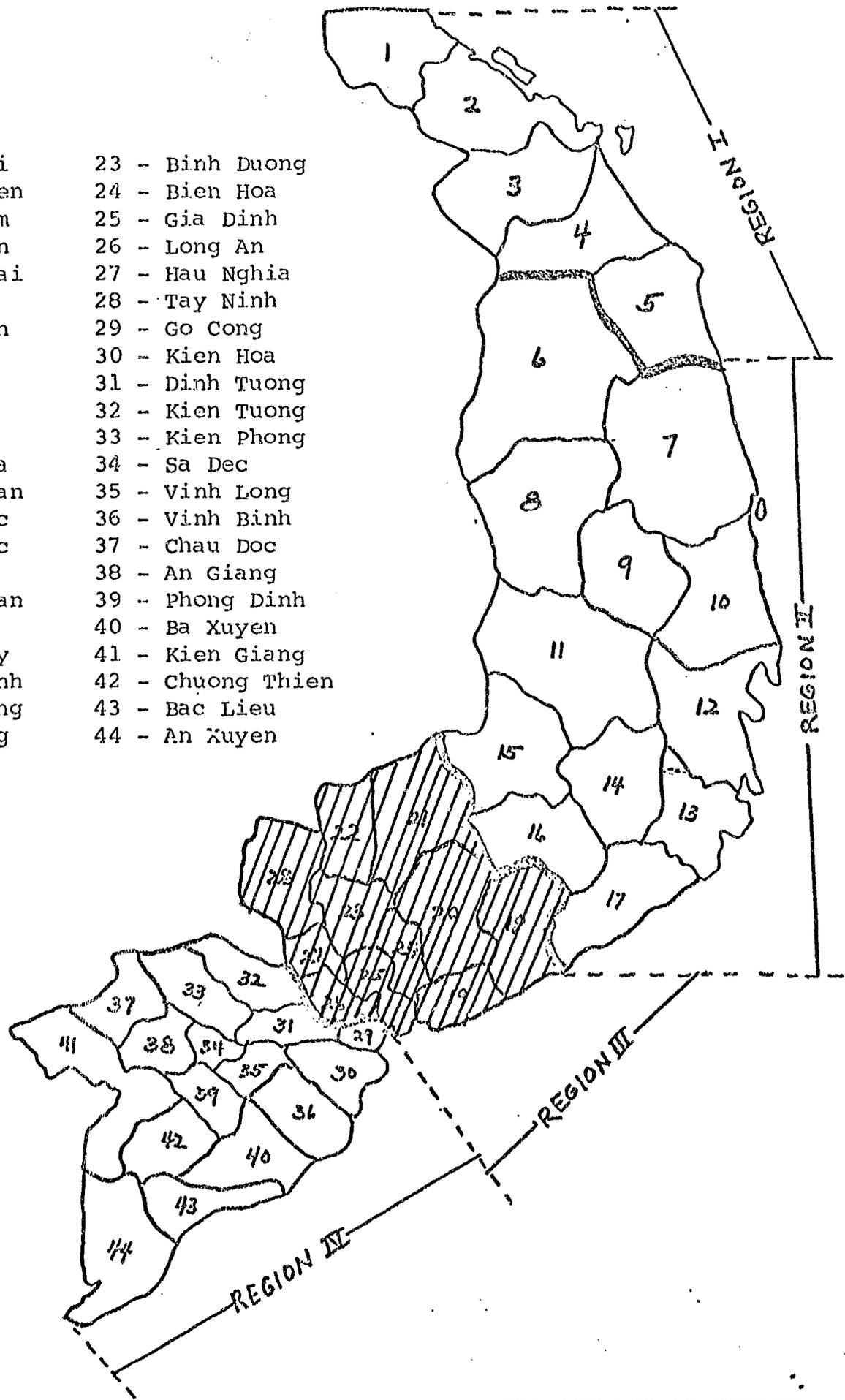
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REGIONS AND PROVINCES  
OF  
SOUTH VIETNAM

DEBRIEF OF A CORDS PSYCHOLOGICAL  
OPERATIONS OFFICER  
REGION III VIETNAM  
1967 - 1968

Preparation and Orientation

I hadn't had any experience in psychological operations prior to going to Vietnam. Before I left, I was sent to Fort Bragg to the special warfare school and was there about five and one-half months. I went through a 10-week course on the psychological operations--that was a long course that was followed up immediately by a course designed for MACV advisors called Military and Training Assistance (MATA). The MATA course included language training.

I feel that training in the PsyOps course was the best training that I have received during my entire career in the United States Army--it prepared me for my job better than any other school I've been in. I can say that mainly because they didn't give us many solutions, but they certainly did make us aware of the situation and of problems that could arise and of ways in which you could deal with these problems. I can honestly say that, in Vietnam, I did not run across a single situation that I hadn't at least heard of at that school.

There was a considerable amount of cultural training in both of these courses which were specifically directed toward working in Vietnam; however, the psychological aspects were in the first ten weeks. Practically all of the instructors had been in Vietnam, as a matter of fact, I guess all of them had been. We had courses in college psychology and sociology and more specific courses on the cultural and historical aspects. As I remember, we had 36 hard bound books as required reading and we were required to make our own psychological operations analysis of a particular area in Vietnam (an area of our own choosing) based upon certain criteria. There had been a great deal of experience among the faculty of this school and there were a lot of open discussions.

We also had quite a number of visiting lecturers or visiting people who had had experiences in the areas that we were going to operate in. Having been in Vietnam for a year now and looking back upon the school that I attended, I feel that I

had a totally fine background considering the time spent at the school.

There's no question about the cross-cultural training particularly helping me when I arrived in Vietnam. The culture in Vietnam is so different from our own culture and I think that it is extremely important that this be stressed in our training institutions. I think that the history of Vietnam is less important than the culture. But even more important than the study of these two areas are studies of aspects of daily contact with Vietnamese customs, taboos, mores. I think that having the chance to talk with people who have operated in Vietnam in the areas you expect to operate in is extremely important.

The student, however, has the problem of not being able to ask educated questions. He hasn't been to Vietnam and he really doesn't understand the problems. The people who have been there can really point out the areas of importance I think. I think now, for instance, it is important in our training that we advise our students of the Americans' need to slow down around the Vietnamese, so they can recognize this problem when they are confronted with it.

I think the basic training I had in psychological operations was best conducted in the United States but I think a portion of that training could have been conducted in Vietnam--this would give you a chance to relate what you are learning in school with the people and their customs.

#### Opinion Regarding Language Training

I attended the MATA course for six weeks and we had four hours of language each day for six days a week. The language, however, was of conversational Vietnamese and the vocabulary was primarily designed for individuals who were to be advisors to Vietnamese battalion commanders or regimental commanders. We learned to discuss military operations primarily--such words as resupply, attack, counterattack, attack from the right flank, reserves, requisition.

The vocabulary was of little or no use to me in my job in Psychological Operations in Vietnam. It did give me a basis to say, "Hello," "Good Morning," "How are you?" "Glad to meet you," and things of this nature and I certainly think being able to say "Hello" is important. But this training wasn't even sufficient for me to talk in terms of social amenities. In my job the vocabulary we had had at the school proved to be of

little value. I did not know, however, that I would be detailed to JUSPAO until after I arrived in Vietnam. My training was directed at preparing me to be an advisor to the Vietnamese army---in psychological operations. But after I arrived in Vietnam, I was assigned to JUSPAO to work on the civilian side.

The six-week training at Fort Bragg was supposed to give us a basis for the language. I believe our vocabulary was supposed to be about 500 words. I found also that you lose a lot of these words very quickly unless you use them right away. But the basic training we had made it very easy for me to pick up and learn many, many new words after I was in Vietnam. It might be better to give language training in Vietnam. It probably would have assisted me in learning the language. I could have left the classroom and been among the native inhabitants to use the language. It was a little difficult for me to learn a language by rote, but by association I found it much easier. I think being able to speak Vietnamese is extremely important to everyone who goes there.

#### Role and Function of Position

I was stationed in Bien Hoa and had previously been located in Phuoc Tuy and Vung Tau provinces, also in III CTZ. In Bien Hoa my primary function was to supervise JUSPAO field representatives, referred to under the CORDS organization as assistant provincial representatives for psychological operations. In my visits to the province---and I visited them quite frequently, averaging about three days a week---I dealt with our field representatives and their counterparts. I was to provide for them the guidance and interpretation of the overall mission in psychological operations for the country and also to provide for them a certain amount of logistical support---primarily in information and psychological operations materials.

We also monitored the Vietnamese personnel who work for the provincial representatives. We actually supervised them on a daily basis; we were in communication with them by radio on a daily basis; we could provide transportation and other material and resources that they needed. Generally speaking, my own function was to keep close contact with the people in the field, to keep aware of what their problems were and to help our assistants in the field with problems.

As I said earlier, I dealt in psychological operations--this is a technical phrase, but when you get down to the pick and shovel aspects of it, either at Corps or province level, it's really a matter of communications. What you were dealing with in

psychological operations in Vietnam was really the creation of a communications infrastructure between the government and the people. You had to create this infrastructure to the point where 1) the government could talk to the people; 2) the people could recognize that there was a government; 3) the people could recognize that the government had something tangible to offer them. We needed to do this by advising them, by giving them some equipment, and by guiding them to the point where they became experts in this particular area, so that the people would believe what they had to say. That was the basic idea of the psychological operations that I was involved in. We worked through the Vietnamese Information Service.

We conducted attitude surveys every day of the week in III Corps and we published an attitude report weekly. We had information research teams that went out to check on specific problems. They gave us a feedback and let us know how we were doing in our programs. They let us know when a program was successful; they let us know where we had fallen down; and they also gave us a clue as to what we could do to revive a program. I think it's important for me to point out that what the people thought was not necessarily true but it was the truth to the people who thought it. If it wasn't true, then it was our job to counter it with good psychological operations in order to get the people to change their attitudes and make them aware. It was basically an information program--we had to set out the right story to begin with before the wrong story got into the rumor stage.

One thing that I attempted to do after being assigned to the III Corps Tactical Zone headquarters was to place an emphasis on specific programs. This emphasis was my interpretation of how to accomplish the mission that we had in the country. I didn't really tell the field rep how to do a job, I just told him what we felt was important and the area we would work the hardest to provide material, backstopping, money, etc., for support.

One of the recent programs that we were pretty concerned with was the public television program. I found that when I got to Phuoc Tuy and Vung Tau that many of the television sets were merely handed over to the Vietnamese and that they were not, in effect, in front of the public--they were in private use by individuals. There wasn't any directive, joint, American or Vietnamese, telling us what to do with the television sets. Good common sense would tell you that the TV sets were issued for the Vietnamese public, large groups of people. When I left, we had a joint directive, signed off by the Vietnamese and the Americans, giving the criteria for the placement of television sets. With this directive, there was no question on the part

of the province chief or his VIS chief as to where these sets were to go, and our man in the province did have final say-so on the exact location where the television sets would go. Once we turned the television sets over to the Vietnamese, put them on a site in areas of large population, and spelled out what the population criteria should be for them, we had pretty well straightened that problem out. When I left, there were still many TV sets in our warehouse and there were still people dragging their feet, so to speak. But I think our progress was a step in the right direction and that shortly our TV sets will be out of the warehouse and where they belong. The Viet Cong watch TV as do the Vietnamese and in some districts the province chiefs would not allow us to set up a television program because they felt it would be insecure.

Another program we handled was the weekly newsletter--each of the districts was allocated paper by the Vietnamese government for the purpose of producing a weekly newsletter and we tried to improve this. We checked very carefully on the distribution of this particular newsletter: Did it actually get out to the people? If it did get out, to whom did it go? With the newsletter, we had a chance to give the people some emphasis and some ideas. The Vietnamese government allocated 2,000 sheets of mimeograph paper for newsletters in each district without regard to the population. We tried to improve that. It was a Vietnamese program: the Vietnamese at the district level had to be the people that actually produced that newsletter. This was a system which we could use to communicate with the people. We put guidance out to our people and we also made arrangements to get more paper where necessary. One of the most current plans was to be able to provide each province with an insert once a month of some pictures with captions on them.

There was also a province newspaper which came out once a month-- incidentally, in the past, a great deal of assistance was given to the Vietnamese on the province newspaper. We decided that perhaps the thing we should have exploited from the beginning was this weekly district newsletter which had current local, district, and province impact. The once-a-month newspaper had old or obsolete news and the Vietnamese had a tendency to print material that came straight out of Saigon. We gave ourselves a chance to say to our people in the province that this district newsletter was the thing that we were actually interested in. We wanted to have one of these district newsletters for every ten inhabitants in that district--the figure ten was an arbitrary figure, but it was based somewhat on the literacy rate. That gave our people a criteria--that told them immediately how many newsletters we should have in a particular district. We had district news in this, and this was a way the district chief

could get a message to the general public. This was also a way that we could get the story out to the people.

I also had some experience with obtaining returnees; however, my experience in that area should be considered very limited. In my province in 1967 we organized our own propaganda team and we gave them leaflets and little pieces of paper to be used in a manner that could later distinguish our influence from the influence of other methods of distribution. It should be recognized that around Tet is an ideal time to get returnees. In my province, as a result of using our own propaganda team in talking to the wives, mothers and families of known VC, we found that almost 50% of the returnees in Tet of 1967 were a result of our own propaganda team. We found here that there was nothing better than face to face communications when you needed results.

I was also fairly closely associated with the Chieu Hoi program at the province level where the pulse of the whole program was located. We had a Chieu Hoi advisor in all provinces except Long Khanh and the Chieu Hoi advisor was the field representative. Theoretically, the Chieu Hoi people in Phuoc Tuy province worked for the VIS people, but, in reality, they had little or nothing to do with each other. However, in our advisory organization, we found that the Chieu Hoi was under the PsyOps man--mainly because better than 50% of the efforts in the Chieu Hoi program were psychological efforts.

The PsyOps man in the province had an extremely broad field. The biggest problem we ran into was not finding something to do, but finding time to get it all done.

#### U. S. Bureaucracy

The reason I was at Corps headquarters when I left instead of still being down in the province was that after spending six months in the province, I found that, even in my own line of business, there was a lack of guidance and leadership--particularly in psychological operations. Perhaps I shot my mouth off a little bit too much, but when I had the occasion to give my opinion of what we were doing, I said that I wasn't sure where we had been, or what it was that we should be doing immediately, or what it was that we should be doing in reference to the future. I came up with some rather specific ideas and after shooting my mouth off I was told that these ideas were "very fine and good, you just come right up to Corps and do that."

Being of a military background, I felt that the JUSPAO field rep at the province level should get guidance as to what his objectives were and that he should get information which would lead to the future operations and plans. There are a great number of programs that the JUSPAO people are involved in and the JUSPAO budget is very small and I think that I should note here that, in my opinion, JUSPAO money is perhaps the best spent money in Vietnam because it's spent at the lowest level and is all turned into materials and commodities. I thought that it was extremely important that we spend the little bit of money that we had for common things throughout the Corps, or at least to achieve a common goal. I found myself in the province having to operate practically on my own. My everyday operations were based on my best thinking in the location where I was and were not based on overall goals and projects or programs. I can give you an example of the poor guidance that was concerning to me. I had materials which were ordered one year prior arrive in my province without my knowing about them until the day they got there. It seemed to me that if we had had good future planning that everyone would have known that this material was going to arrive, what it was to be used for, what we were expected to accomplish with it, and things of this nature.

I feel however that with the CORDS organization, in addition to some planning in our own specialty, our program in Vietnam is really going to be enhanced. I feel that this transition to the CORDS organization which ties together both the civilian and the military, made available to us some additional assets that have already enhanced our program. This especially affected me as I was in the military working for a civilian organization. Under CORDS, particularly at the province level, where we had all the civilians and all of the military working together, there was an awareness of the overall program by everyone. There was coordination which rubbed off, even if it was not specifically directed or organized. I felt that the CORDS organization was definitely a step in the right direction and I could see many, many advantages to it.

When I arrived in Vietnam, I worked for JUSPAO for about a month before the OCO organization actually went into effect. In tying together our efforts in Vietnam into the organization referred to as OCO, I felt that there would be better coordination and better awareness of the activities that we should become involved in and a better awareness of what was necessary to get the job done. I was under the OCO system in both Phuoc Tuy and Vung Tau and feel under the OCO system that this tie was not as close as it really should have been. I am not really sure that the OCO organization was a necessary step in the evolution to CORDS. If it hadn't happened, we might have progressed a little faster, but since I know the personalities involved, I think perhaps OCO was a good idea, in other words, that it was a transition into the present organization.

In my line of business we saw a considerable amount of improvement in just about every area after CORDS was organized. The coordination, the close working conditions and also the new people that became a part of our own organization under CORDS really improved the situation. I am a man in favor of the CORDS organization and feel that it was a step in the right direction. I feel that the OCO organization was only sort of a stepping stone to get to the CORDS organization. My personal opinion is that under the JUSPAO organization, prior to OCO, that there wasn't the natural tie that was necessary for a well coordinated job.

One of the mistakes the Americans have made in Vietnam, I think, was in providing sophisticated equipment with no planning to train people to maintain it or even operate it. I really don't know what all the problems are in this area but we ran into this quite frequently in Vietnam. We gave the Vietnamese beautiful, sophisticated steamrollers, steamshovels, dump trucks, printing presses, TV sets, mimeograph machines, X-ray machines, but somehow we overlooked the planning for teaching these people how to maintain these things, and in some instances even neglected to teach them how to operate this equipment with any efficiency. I'm afraid there was damn little the guy in the province could do to influence that too. What could he do, for instance, to teach a Vietnamese how to repair a TV set when there was no one in the province who knew how to repair one--civilian, military, government or otherwise. This was a problem which had to be solved at the Saigon level. But I'm afraid that it was the thinking and planning of the people either in Washington or Saigon that caused the situation to begin with. We should clear up these problems and we should do everything in our power to get the people lined up to take training. When I left, we were pushing and trying to get somebody, either JUSPAO or USAID or some civilian agency or contract, to come up with a pool of people who knew how to repair a TV set. My God, the TV sets are really getting bad.

I am also critical of our government's use of Filipinos in Vietnam.

We used Filipinos in advisory capacities in our work with the Chieu Hoi ministry, and I'm afraid I have a personal opinion of them that's not very good. I feel the Americans should have been down there--Americans who could speak very good Vietnamese. I feel that the third country nationals just did not have the same drive or interests. I just don't feel that the Filipinos that I have come in contact with are as interested in the American dollar as we are. These Filipino men were quite well educated they were well meaning but they just didn't have the kind of background that we had and they just didn't satisfy our own

requirements. On too many occasions, I've seen a very beautifully written report with a flowery vocabulary and it wasn't worth a God damn. The province senior advisor would just "x" it out and say "so much b.s." I know very little about other third country nationals we are using in Vietnam.

### GVN Officials

I was closely associated with VIS chiefs in the two provinces and I talked on a daily basis with my VIS groups in each of the districts. Also, at the Corps level I had a counterpart, but I didn't really see him frequently. I had the feeling that my counterpart was there simply because we existed at Corps level. He had very little power or responsibility and in my visits to the province, I dealt primarily with our field representatives and their counterparts.

In one province I had what I considered to be the best VIS chief in Vietnam, Ong Ba from Vung Tau. I personally felt that I could have full confidence in Ong Ba. I could almost say, unqualified, that if Ong Ba wanted to do something, I would certainly go along with it and provide him with any and all assistance that I could. I felt that strongly about this particular individual. I saw many, many results that were in the right direction, very well-organized and very well-executed from this individual and with very little effort on my part. He has very good leadership and the people respect him and work like dogs for him. I sometimes wonder why he hasn't been put up into a higher position. I did not know any other chiefs of this type personally. I knew Ong Ba simply because I worked closely with him for six months. There were other good VIS chiefs in our Corps; though, the VIS chief in Bien Hoa province was also doing an excellent job. I don't know his name though. But there's no question in my mind that of all the Vietnamese officials that I knew personally, Ong Ba is by far the best. I'm not the only one who thinks this way, others do too, Vietnamese included. The VIS chiefs faced difficulties in that over a period of time they held the same job in the same province under many different province chiefs, under many different national leaders, and under many different ways of thinking. As a VIS chief, one of your jobs was to explain to the people how good the government was after you have just told them how good the last five were when they didn't turn out very well; it didn't give the chiefs very good reputations. I did think that VIS was capable of doing a very fine job.

I think difficulties in negotiating with the Vietnamese probably arose from personality differences. My experience was that there were some extremely fine Vietnamese who were very competent in their jobs and with a little bit of assistance and relatively little advice, they could really do a job very well. Many of them were very well motivated. At the same time, I found some that were exactly the opposite. I really didn't run into any particular situation that was a complete balk but did run into the situation many, many times where I was ignored, where the answer was "Yes" and that was all that ever happened. I think that's a very typical situation. In many cases overcoming this was a matter of orienting yourself rather than trying to orient the Vietnamese. There were certain things that they felt were important and when they felt they were important and had the guidance and management and leadership that they needed, there weren't really any problems. With a little assistance, the job would get done.

I think that one of the most important things for any advisor in Vietnam to do is to win the confidence of the man he is dealing with. One of the first things you should do is learn what the situation is, learn the man you are working with, make yourself aware of the background of any particular situation before you start trying to advise the Vietnamese on how to do things. I think that there were a lot of Americans who went to Vietnam thinking they had learned everything they needed to know about a situation. This kind of American would barge right in and tell the Vietnamese they were not doing something right and that his own way was the best way to do it. The Vietnamese saw a new advisor every year and this kind of advice sort of rolled off their backs like water off a duck's back.

It was extremely important that before you really started to push on something or tried to influence the Vietnamese that you made yourself aware of what the situation was and what factors would be considered by the Vietnamese. They have a very bureaucratic system of getting things done. If you examined the situation you might find that the way to get it done was to do it gradually rather than trying to get it done right away. If you took the approach that it had to be done today, you would probably be ignored. One of the signals that shows the well-intentioned American that he is in too much of a hurry is the oriental style of listening inattentively, of saying, "Yes, yes, yes." You walk in and you have some big program that you would like to put across to your counterpart--he uses the oriental style and says, "yes, yes, yes," but then he doesn't really bother to dig in and get the details from you about exactly what it is that you want to do. I think all Americans have a tendency to be in a hurry and I think that each of us has to learn this the hard way. I really don't know of any way to

condition people of it other than to make them aware of the fact that you have to slow down. Practically every one of us found himself trying to push the Vietnamese too fast, I think.

I think there is a feeling among some Vietnamese officials that Americans don't keep their word; they have the feeling the Americans say, "Yes" and then don't produce. The Americans do have a tendency to commit themselves when they are not really sure of their own backing. This is one thing you had to be extremely careful of. Of course, we must also recognize that there was a language barrier and there was always the chance for misunderstanding. You might have said to your Vietnamese counterpart, "I'm going to try to do this for you," and he would interpret that as a statement of the fact that you were going to do it for him.

But we are talking of two different things when we speak of Americans saying yes and then not producing and the Vietnamese saying yes and then not producing. The two parties look at it a little differently. The American says, "Yes, we'll do it," with good intentions. I think, in my own experience, that the only reason it wasn't done was that I wasn't able to get the commodity, backing, money or something of this nature. I think there is a tendency on the part of the Vietnamese, however, always to say "Yes," and never to say "No." They do this with good intentions also--this is their custom, their way of life--never to say "No." Then they just let it slide off. When you said an American official was going to do something and it did not get done, there could be various reasons for it. Maybe he hadn't thought it out well or researched it well enough to know that he was actually going to be able to do it. But you saw quite frequently that when the Vietnamese official said he would do something that was the last you ever heard of it.

I found it very advantageous to make some of these agreements with the Vietnamese in writing--I would actually write the man a letter stating all the agreed promises in my previous conversation with him. I found that this system worked very well. It didn't give them as much of a chance to forget about it. I just sat down and wrote him a letter--of course, I got the Vietnamese to help write this letter because there was a right way to do it. You had to always pay him some compliments; you had to always review some of the things that had gone on in the past; you had to tie in what you had going in the future. In many cases, if you'd commit him in writing, you'd have a better chance of convincing him that it was a good idea to begin with. He didn't have the chance to give you the oriental smile and say "Yes."

I really didn't experience too many real pitfalls in negotiating with the Vietnamese but there were a lot of minor things that happened. There was a great deal of politics in some of the projects with which I was concerned. Our successes were partially dependent upon the cooperation of the province chiefs. The province chief would say, for instance, the security was not good enough in a particular hamlet or village to have a TV set--what his thinking behind that was, I'm not sure, but there were some province chiefs who could use the word "security" to get out of doing anything. There were other province chiefs who would say, "I don't want a TV set. The one you've allocated for me you can give to the people and put in the marketplace." I can also say this, unqualified, that where the province chief thought the Chieu Hoi program was a good program in his province, it was a good program; where the province chief did not care about the Chieu Hoi program or objected to it, the program was rotten.

#### Observations of Leadership Among the Vietnamese

I think the Vietnamese themselves were probably more interested in the Revolutionary Development cadres than in any other program that has been generated by the Americans. I saw quite a large number of RD cadre teams operating in the villages and with good leadership, they had a good team with a good program. I do think, however, that the leadership aspects of this particular program needed more concentration. I didn't think the system they used of electing their own leaders and giving them the same amount of training as the rest of the team had was the way to go about it. I would suggest that we single out leaders and give them the training leaders need--they do need more training than the rest of the team.

In talking about Vietnamese leaders, we're talking about a bunch of 18 or 19-year-old kids fresh out of high school in some hamlet or village. Now they had the basic qualities for leadership but they also needed guidance and background to be leaders. I'm not a professional instructor who has professional ideas on how to select leaders, but I think we face basically the same problems we have in selecting leaders in the United States Army. (However, we've found more leaders per capita in the United States than in Vietnam.)

In addition to identifying leadership, we needed to give some publicity to the leaders that existed in our programs, to give some prestige to the hamlet or village chiefs. God only knows that they needed it. These projects that we conducted were not American projects, they were only American assisted. When we dealt with the village, hamlet, or district chiefs, one of the

things we could have done was closely associate with these projects and programs with the Vietnamese authorities at the level where we were working. This was not necessarily a way to select the leadership--although, sometimes leaders would emerge if they were offered publicity, prestige. Sometimes the ag man or the engineer would get out there and organize a bunch of people and right away there would be someone in the crowd who would be the leader. It might not have been the guy who was the official leader, in fact, it might well have been a guy who just stepped up from the ranks. But at any rate, offering publicity was a way in which we could not only bring leadership to the foreground but also give the leaders the prestige they needed.

### Vietnamese Bureaucracy

I was in Vietnam during the last elections and the elections were the subject of many, many attitude reports made by our research teams that checked in the field on specific problems. My observations on the elections were: The people felt it was their duty to go vote. Most of them chose at random the candidates they voted for. There was a great effort on the part of the Vietnamese to please the American public, to do this right, but at the same time, they did it on the time schedule that we asked of them. Here again, I think, we were pushing the Vietnames

I am sure that the elections were free and open. I'm not sure that the nominations were, but the election itself was. But I don't know that that means a hell of a lot, to tell you the truth. The people voted because they felt it was their duty to vote. You had to start somewhere, but, I think, that the election was a little hurried. The time that candidates had for campaigning was relatively short and there were relatively few people in Vietnam who even knew the candidate they voted for or had any idea what his background was. In many cases, the people voted for a candidate as the lesser of evils.

Many of the comments of the people during, before, and after the election were that some particular individual got up on the soapbox and made promises, but after he was elected he did something that he didn't talk about to the people. The people were very much concerned about that. Some candidates said they were going to do many things--mostly very broadbrush things--but after they were elected they came up with some very specific things that they were going to do. The complaint from the people was, "Why didn't they tell us that that's what they were going to do before they were elected?" When I left, for instance, there was some talk about closing the bars in Saigon. There was a feeling among some officials that the people were living too

high in Saigon and that they should lower themselves and be more conservative while their country was at war. This was one of the subjects that caused a great deal of stir. Another one was the changing of draft laws. Neither one of these issues were mentioned by candidates before the election, and there was a great deal of concern on the part of the people when these issues came up after the election.

These people talking were people who hadn't been exposed to this form of government before, and it showed you immediately that they were beginning to think about it, and to figure out who they should have voted for and to wonder what questions they should have asked. I think there is going to be a tendency in the future in Vietnam to require candidates to establish their platforms and stick to them. Actually, I look forward to the next election. One thing that this election did was prove to some of the Vietnamese people--the Buddhists, the Catholics, the pro-government and the opposition--that they needed to organize their own parties and develop strength in organization. During the last election, they were really just kind of grouped together by different means; none of the parties had very much power. They've made a start now and I feel that although there may be a lot of problems before they get the elections solid-- I mean problems that will come up over the next two or three years--we'll see some results of our efforts by the next election: the development of some kind of party system; the emergence of leadership in political circles; better selection of candidates; and more competition between candidates.

As I explained before, my primary duties under the Vietnamese government were through VIS, and I worked with VIS chiefs in the provinces. As I also explained before, I felt that these VIS chiefs faced reputation difficulties in the existing bureaucratic structure because they had had their jobs under different province chiefs, different national leaders, and different trends of thought, and under each of these their job had been to explain to the people how good the government was.

There was also occasionally animosity between the province chief and the VIS chiefs, and where there was, the VIS chief could be ineffective, afraid to do anything he wasn't told to do by the province chief. I found that most of the VIS chiefs at the province level had very little prestige. In most cases, they were a little bit afraid of the province chief. In many cases, they probably wouldn't do anything unless they were told to. They were a little bit afraid to stick their necks out on anything that the province chief hadn't ordered them to do or the Ministry of Information hadn't ordered them to do. I did find that when there was good leadership and good management, particularly on the Vietnamese side, the Vietnamese Information Service was extremely capable of doing a very fine job.

There were some ideas, relatively low level ideas, that the Americans came up with--here again, at province level, where there was a great deal of resistance on the part of the Vietnamese to the American. I think the Vietnamese place more emphasis perhaps, on high level authority.

I have also mentioned the province chiefs' influence in the Chieu Hoi program, that where a province chief approved the program, it was generally a good program, where he objected to it, it was rotten.

I think the Chieu Hoi could stand a little more backing from the Vietnamese government. There was a feeling that the Chieu Hoi program was completely American and, as I understand it, all the money involved is American. I was fairly closely associated with the Chieu Hoi program at the province level. We had a Chieu Hoi advisor under our field representative, The Chieu Hoi is now a separate ministry in Saigon and this created some problems. We had a separate direction from above and a theoretical organization at the province level--I mean theoretical even during the last year. Theoretically, the Chieu Hoi program was under the Vietnamese Information Service, but in reality it was not. We were concerned with psychological efforts. Beyond the psychological efforts was where we ran into some real problems; what kind of indoctrination course would be conducted at the center; where would the material and commodities come from to provide necessary housing and decent living conditions; how would the hoi chanh be held between the time he turned himself in and the time he arrived at the Chieu Hoi Center.

About a month before I left, we discovered that there wasn't any document that explained how the hoi chanh was to be handled between the time he turns himself in and the time he arrives at the Chieu Hoi Center. We found that in many cases, the hoi chanh would turn himself in and it would be as long as two or three weeks before the province Chieu Hoi chief even knew that he had turned himself in. In the meantime, he had been used as slave labor by the district chief or had been interrogated by many different organizations below the province level and in many cases the interrogations included beatings and torture. This was a problem that we recognized and we looked into some of the details.

We found that once the hoi chanh got in the Chieu Hoi Center, that the organization was quite well supervised. I'm not, however, saying that it was good; I'm not saying that the Vietnamese indoctrination program was a good program; and I'm not saying that the Chieu Hoi Center was any great paradise or any beautiful place to live; although, there were a couple that were pretty nice. I think the problem areas were: 1) the need for guidance

in processing the hoi chanh between the time he turned himself in and the time he arrived at the Chieu Hoi Center; 2) the need for a better definition of responsibility for the Chieu Hoi Center itself; 3) the need for more emphasis on the indoctrination the hoi chanh actually got while in the Chieu Hoi Center. They needed some improvement in teaching trades and skills to hoi chanh--teaching them how to sew, how to make cement blocks, carpentry work and that sort of thing. I feel that there was no real program for the hoi chanh after he graduated from the Chieu Hoi Center.

I wouldn't say that we should have had a parole system on the hoi chanh but I do think we should have had some system to check on the man after he left the center; where he went, and what he did; where his family was. Maybe some effort should have been made to get him and his family together. I do know that we had some Chieu Hoi villages in some of the provinces and there was a reluctance on the part of the hoi chanh to accept a deed to property in the village because he wanted to go back to his original village. He would live in the Chieu Hoi village temporarily until things settled down and then he was ready to go back. I know a lot of hoi chanh went back to their original villages and were shot by the Viet Cong.

The Chieu Hoi Ministry has had a fairly limited amount of money but recently there was more money allocated for its purposes. Chieu Hoi advisors were Filipinos in III Corps.

### Corruption

In my personal dealings with the Vietnamese, I found very little corruption. JUSPAO money is scarce and it is all turned into material and commodities. I found very little corruption in the Vietnamese Information Service other than that the VIS have been known to sell some of our publications. (That, however, told us there was a demand for the publications.)

My knowledge of corruption among the Vietnamese government officials may match that of other Americans in Vietnam, but, one of the things that our organization had to do was to stay aboveboard with the Vietnamese. We had information teams that went out into the provinces to conduct surveys basically to determine the attitudes of the people and when we found that the people were talking about corruption, we put it in the reports. One of the reasons we had to be completely aboveboard was that we wanted to be able to provide to any and all the Vietnamese the information that we collected. We felt that when we sent the team into the province or the district, we had to be aboveboard with the

chief and we had to provide him with information that he was looking for. We actually guided our information research teams to stay away from big time corruption. We didn't feel that we could or should try to influence it one way or the other. We thought that we could spend our time more wisely on subjects that we could influence through psychological operations, productive psychological operations. In other words, corruption was counter-productive psychological operations. In our particular business, corruption was a matter of--you can't sell something that people won't buy and you can't change day to night or make gold out of lead. There were other agencies that were interested in corruption but the whole matter was so political and involved so much influence that the guy down in the province couldn't handle it.

I think practically every American is interested in the end use of the American dollar, in seeing that it is not used corruptively, but I don't think that it is the money we're talking about when we're talking about corruption. I really don't. At the province level there are some commodities which were controlled by our people and I feel that some of them ended up in the wrong place, but the majority of them, with the good intentions of the American involved, ended up where they belonged or where they would do some good at any rate.

There were several degrees of corruption, but I think much of the corruption they are most concerned with, we created. I think we have created a new society of receivers in Vietnam.

Questions of corruption are very difficult and I'm not sure that I have any good direct answers to them. You could always say they could increase the pay of the army, but then the next thing would be that prices would go up; you could always say that we were going to convict all the people who had been guilty of corruption--if we did that, there would be no leaders left in Vietnam; we could always also say that corruption was a way of life in Vietnam or was a custom in Vietnam, but if we looked into it deeply, we would find that it was not a custom in Vietnam. I really don't have any solution for corruption. We could always say also that we should put more American advisors to supervise Vietnamese and perhaps keep them from corrupting, but my God, we've got to let the Vietnamese do this themselves. I don't know how the problem can be solved, but it is going to have to be solved. We're going to have to recommend some solutions but the solution itself is going to have to start at the top with the Vietnamese themselves. I don't think it's going to come about overnight or even in five years. I think one of the solutions to the problem is an elected government and elected representatives and I hope that the elected government will be able to alleviate corruption.

## The American Image

I think there is another very important point and that is that we must try to recognize that this is a psychological war. Anything that any man or woman working for AID becomes involved in has a psychological effect. I can say without qualification, that if what we do doesn't have a psychological effect, then it is not worth spending money or time on in Vietnam. It is extremely important that everyone working on our team, military or civilian, in Vietnam recognizes the psychological aspects of whatever it is that he is doing. On many occasions, I found extremely highly qualified AID people who ignored the psychological aspects of their program. Let's take for example, an individual in agriculture who was really wrapped up in his program of raising chickens or pigs, etc, wrapped up to the point that he spent all his time working with the Vietnamese. What this man failed to do was recognize that there was a psychological effect to his work. He was looking for the end results of more chickens, a higher percentage of chickens alive at the end of a certain period of time, etc. What he really needed to look at was what the psychological effect would be.

The psychological effect is a pretty simple thing. One of the things we needed to do was to inform the people of what it was we were doing, why we were doing it, what we planned to do, and what end results should be. In psychological operations we normally put this in a little different context than "Hometown Boy Makes Good." What we needed to do was say, "What is the Vietnamese government doing for you?" "What tangible thing does this government have to offer you?" It might well have been two chickens per family.

I found that in the province that the agriculture man would go out to the district, village or hamlet and really work at a project and fail to recognize the fact that he had a responsibility to talk to the PsyOps field representative in his province. It really didn't take a lot of effort--all he really needed was to give him the basic facts and we would have professionals come down and take pictures or movies and write the story. This would have given the PsyOps man in that province a chance to put it in the newspaper, to inform the people in the province what it was the government was doing for them.

We needed feedback on programs. We had the capability to go out and talk with the people informally--not taking a checklist. We sent guys out who were strangers and they could learn from the people how effective programs were. It was this feedback from the people that was most important. If there was something about a program that was not effective and was not working well, we

needed to know before it got to the point where we really couldn't do much about it. We needed to know as it was going on and we had the capability of providing that kind of information. I really can't stress the importance of this enough. It made my job easier in the PsyOps business to get some leads. All we really needed to know was who was in charge, what it was, when was the best time to take a look at it, etc. PsyOps was not something way up in the clouds; PsyOps was getting the information and getting it out to the people. Of course, we were bound to tell the truth; if it was not worth crowing about then we just didn't crow.

In many cases you would find that there were some tremendous projects (I don't like to pick on the ag men, but they make a good example) going on in the province and the only people who knew about it were the people within 500 yards of where it was taking place. I think they were missing the boat. When we conduct small projects of this nature or even large projects countrywide, we must be sure that the people know what is going on and why it is going on. You must know why it's going on yourself before you get involved in it. You need to know what the psychological results will be, not the materialistic results. The materialistic angle is very easy to figure out. For instance, we might have wanted 30 chickens in each family. That was not the point. The point was: Why did we want 30 chickens? Who was going to get the chickens? What system were we going to use to distribute the chickens?

In most cases, we had something to sell--my God, anyplace you went you could find something that was really outstanding that we were doing for the Vietnamese people. But unless we told the people what we were doing, we were wasting our time and money. Unless we considered what the overall objective was--the overall objective was not the number of chickens we bring in.