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O B S E R V A T I O N S

O N

The Rural Development and Agricultural Programs Supporte

by

The United States Mission in South Vietnam

and

Related to the Political and Social Aspects of the War

Agency for International Development

State Department

Washington, D. C.

Stanley Andrews, Consultant

October 1 to October 29, 1965

*Hand Carried
to Bill White
11/10/65
John...
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Summary of the Stanley Andrews Report

"Observations on the Rural Development and Agricultural Programs Supported by the U. S. Mission in South Vietnam and Related to the Political and Social Aspects of the War -- October 21-29, 1965."

PURPOSE OF REPORT

"This inquiry was directed to the more effective use of our material and human resources" through agricultural and rural development programs, with special regard to their political and social effects. Hence the report is purposefully probing and critical in order to establish new points of departure so that the programs of USAID could become more fruitful. Indeed this was the reason for and nature of Mr. Andrews' consulting assignment.

The principal focus of Mr. Andrews' report was directed at the effectiveness of U.S. programs at the local level with special regard for measures to strengthen the lines of communication and assistance from high levels of government to the village and hamlet.

CONNECTING LINKS TO RURAL PEOPLE

At the time of Mr. Andrews' visit he stated that "The only groups working consistently at the village and hamlet level were the International Voluntary Service and Technical Mission Under the Republic of China (page 6)." USAID Provincial Operations essentially parallels the GVN or U. S. official channels with the lives of villages and hamlets. While the U.S. has been useful in helping to establish a basis "for rather solid institutions" in the agricultural sector, agricultural services are still planned and directed "mostly from Saigon." Mr. Andrews estimates that "probably no more than 10% of the farm people -- and these mainly the larger more prosperous land holders -- were consciously touched by government services. Statistics would probably indicate that a very high percent of the total rural population was touched in some way by the seed, fertilizer insecticides, credit, and other services distributed in more recent months-----. Probably the best contact of the government with the village and below is through its Extension and Home Demonstration Services..." (page 7). The continuing prevailing need is "more communication from bottom up" rather than from central government down. At the same time Mr. Andrews emphasizes the general plea for more careful planning at local levels. He also recognizes that because of exigencies of the war, transport of material support to rural development is severely limited and interdicted. However he seems to feel that an overhaul in the system of priorities to emphasize the more simple needs of local people, along with credit, should lead to "equal status" with military requirements in transportation.

SUGGESTED CHANGES IN PROGRAM EMPHASIS

To provide more effective assistance at the village and hamlet level Mr. Andrews seems to suggest the following:

1. The addition of practical agricultural generalists to the Provincial Representative system so that practical farming assistance may be spread more widely and realistically through local farming communities (this is currently being carried out).

2. Emphasize simple and uncomplicated material assistance which can be directly, immediately, and efficiently used by peasants.
3. Help to generate more communication from the bottom up (that is from the village level) with closer reflection of specific local needs. (Development of Rural Construction Cadre system is responding to this need).
4. Place greater emphasis on building up local Vietnamese government personnel, and in this way avoid dangers of too much unilateral (U.S.) action on the rural front.
5. Avoid over-proliferation of local and provincial programs placing higher priorities on the important simple elements that reflect needs within the vision of hamlet people.
6. Improve system of priorities for transport of material to meet local village/hamlet needs. (Air and coastal transport of AID commodities has been significantly beefed up since last October).

OTHER ELEMENTS

1. Refugees and resettlement-- "The men in charge of Civilian Action programs of the U.S. Army and Marines in South Vietnam have far more understanding of the importance of handling the civilian side of the war with humaneness and consideration than any Army we have had the privilege of observing in two major conflicts." (page 29).
2. "The general opinion expressed privately by the few officials who would talk stated that in their opinion at least 80% of the rural people were taking no sides at this time and more than anything else wanted peace to come.. (page 32).
3. In spite of unsatisfactory results from GVN rural credit efforts, additional support in this sector seems warranted, especially if management for this could be further decentralized to local levels of control.
4. The expressed wants of most farmers "were woefully simple" and thus their complaints about more complex methods of rural assistance seemed justified.

HCZ/YA-5/13/66

Mr. Charles Mann, Director
South Vietnam Mission
Agency for International Development
Saigon, South Vietnam

Sir:

The pages which follow carry our observations, comment and suggestions, growing out of our mission to South Vietnam during October to observe and assess the Rural Development and Agricultural Programs supported by the U. S. Mission in that country.

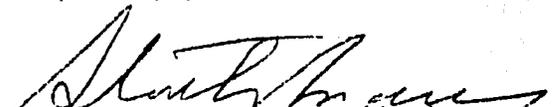
This inquiry was directed to the more effective use of our material and human resources related to the political and social aspects of the present struggle there rather than any evaluation of the present agricultural programs. Our brief survey covered individual farmers, hamlet, village, province and central government officials in some fifteen or twenty provinces ranging from Quang Tri on the North to Rachgia in the Southern Delta. No one can take such a trip and not be impressed first with the tremendous complexities of the situation in South Vietnam governments to rectify what at times must appear to be a hopeless situation.

This report is subject to all of the bias and error that a quite detailed look at this confusing picture always entails when there are so many ways at looking at the same situation and coming up with a different answer each time.

While I assume full responsibility for the errors and omissions in this report, I would be delinquent if I did not express my deep appreciation for the wise counsel and assistance of Mr. Horace Holmes, of the Agricultural Council of New York who accompanied me all of the way and helped dig below the surface in some of the situations we encountered. I am also indebted to you Sir for your willingness to permit us to make an absolutely unguided and wide open tour of the rural areas of South Vietnam and to the invaluable assistance of the Agricultural Division staff for assisting us in schedule appointments and more importantly seeing that our travel schedule was kept.

Again our thanks for all of the courtesies extended during our stay in South Vietnam and thanks to all of the busy people, both American and South Vietnamese, who gave unstintingly of their time and knowledge.

Very truly yours,


Stanley Andrews, Consultant

Agency for International Development
October 29, 1965

RESUME AND COMMENT

ON

Agricultural and Rural Development Programs in South Vietnam

Related To The

Social and Political Side of the War

PURPOSE OF MISSION (See Appendix I)

To assess the agricultural and Rural Development programs of the United States and Vietnamese governments and to seek out ways in which U. S. resources may be used more effectively to achieve the overall political and social objectives.

For the purpose of our inquiry specific areas in which the Agricultural Division and related agencies in U.S. AID have direct unilateral or multilateral responsibility are listed as -

1. Support of and the carrying forward, as conditions will permit, the basic long term agricultural program which has been developed over the past nine years.

2. Bilateral support of the U.S. Army in its zones of operation in Civil Action and refugee programs and assistance in the second phase responsibility of the Vietnamese government to resettle and relocate those temporarily displaced by military action.

3. Revitalizing and rebuilding of rural areas destroyed in the conflict once such areas have been cleared and made secure. (An Khe Valley as a very small example.)

THE SITUATION:

AID Mission Director, Mr. Charles Mann opened our first briefing session in Saigon with the remark -

"It is maybe a little trite to say it, but we are in a war out here." He then sketched briefly the physical situation as it appeared at that time. Some 80 percent of the territory outside the large cities and 65 percent of the population is under the control or are influenced by the Viet Cong during each 24 hour period.

The power lines out of the Central Highlands supplying the city of Saigon are cut and parts of the city are without power several hours of each day. A new power supply near Saigon is being rushed to completion. Railroads are about 50 percent operative and then only for short distances around the larger towns; roads are cut and a majority of the main highways are open only under convoy. A rice crop is cached in the Delta and is not reaching the cities so rice must be brought in from the United States or surrounding countries. Much of the sugar cane is not reaching mills in cleared territory for processing. AID Agriculture has been assigned additional responsibilities with the attendant counterpart organization of the Vietnamese government for land reform, assistance in refugees and particularly a coordinated effort in the Civil Action programs behind the major U. S. military operations.

Transportation is at a premium and it is severely controlled and allocated to meet the requirements of the U.S. and South Vietnamese military and it is exceedingly difficult to move needed agricultural supplies to the areas requiring them and almost equally difficult to get supplies from the rural areas to feed the cities. New vegetable areas around Saigon, pig feeding programs and other efforts are being developed to ease the situation around the capital city. Food and building material prices are skyrocketing. On transportation items such as fertilizer it

costs more to ship a ton of fertilizer from Saigon to the Da Nang region, as an example, as the material itself costs in the United States.

The Director has taken administrative action to decentralize planning and operational responsibility to the Corps of Regional areas and personnel in the rural sections called in a few months ago are being re-assigned to the rural districts. Emphasis is on the closest cooperation in planning and operations between the civilian and military as increased military activity spreads out from the secure enclaves along the coast and part of the developing centers in the Central Highlands.

THE PROBLEM

The hamlets and villages and small towns of South Vietnam which represent probably 90 percent of the total population and which have over the past twenty years supplied the manpower and resistance center for the rebellion which started under the French, flamed stronger under Japanese occupation and finally captured by the Communists, fed the flames with their manpower and support which threw the French out are still the decisive factors in the long and bitter ideological struggle behind the present war. The villagers, first harassed by the rebellion to "line-up" and hammered by the central government forces to "stay in line", today in addition to these continued harassments, are experiencing the first real shock of what a modern war is like as the bombing raids north and south accelerate and as the ponderous military machines begin to crunch across the country to drive out the Viet Cong.

Always sensitive to the shifts and whims of power, today there seems to be a feeling that with U.S. help the battle against the Viet Cong will be won. When it comes to taking sides or making an outward show

of action or a spoken word of which side they are on is a supreme example of studied neutrality. Even the officials at the lower levels of government, administrative and technical, are determinedly uncommittal when it comes to political issues of who will or will not come to the top once the battle is won. There are those experts on one side of the issue who feel that with security established and the pressure and the harassments of the Viet Cong removed, these people will return to a normal attitude toward whatever emerges out of Saigon. There are others who argue that propaganda from the North has pretty well established in the minds of rural Vietnam that this is a U.S. war being fought on Vietnamese territory, that the bombings which they fear and detest are American bombings and that once the war is over most of the ills which brought on the original rebellion twenty years ago will still be there. Thus, the political direction the countryside may take is about as enigmatic and baffling as the famed oriental mask of fiction and fable.

The problem posed to our mission then was -

"How might the resources in manpower and money now being expended in South Vietnam in and for the rural sector be more effectively used in the pursuit of the political and social objectives of the Vietnamese war?"

THE RURAL PICTURE ON THE U. S. SIDE

There are at least eight more or less operative independent groups in the U.S. Mission with rather specific responsibilities toward the rural sector. They are, Agricultural Division, Office of Provincial Affairs, Public Health, Education, United States Information Agency, Civil Action section of the Army and Marines, International Voluntary Services, Chinese Technical Mission from Nationalist China but supported logistically

by the U.S. Mission. Additionally there are a large number of independent voluntary organizations plus a relatively large group of former Community Development workers from the Philippines who generally work with or under the American groups.

Most of these agencies or American groups have a parallel agency in the Vietnamese government with which they work and the Agency for International Development provides direct financial and material support plus advisory services. Each agency or group generally, either by accident or design, had more or less carved out a territory of work and responsibility, sometimes by the American "selling" his idea to his Vietnamese counter part or by the Vietnamese selling his idea and securing the assistance from the American sector. Which side really makes the decision is difficult to determine though occasionally a Vietnamese official when asked how or why a particular project or program was undertaken, will say that "they went along with the program because if they did not they would not get program support from the Americans."

Over the years since 1954 the Vietnamese government had developed from the rather sparse and limited series of services in the rural sector characteristic of most Colonial areas to a reasonably well staffed and financed series of ministries and services to the rural sector such as the Ministry of Agriculture with an excellent - for this part of the world - Extension Service, Home Demonstration agents, Cooperative Credit facilities, and a whole series of services from rice culture and developing research stations in nearly all fields to, livestock, small irrigation and plant protection. Likewise, Public Health has established more than 10,000 small dispensaries and clinics in the countryside and the mosquito

eradication program before the war intensified and closed the teams out from many areas, was one of the best in Southeast Asia. Schools have been built and are being built in record numbers and a growing corps of teachers are gradually being upgraded to man these schools. The office of Provincial Services on the American side reaches to the Provincial Capital level paralleling the administrative structure on the Vietnamese side. The International Voluntary Services and the Chinese Technical Mission are the only groups working consistently at the village and hamlet level and in our visits to hamlets and in conversation with the local residents as to some of their concerns and wants, one of the requests frequently made was for an IVS boy or a representative of the Chinese Technical Mission to come to their village and work with them.

The Vietnamese government has recently created the post of Minister of Construction and placed him in as Deputy Prime Minister indicating the emphasis and importance attached to the rural sector by the Vietnamese government. Education, Public Health, Agriculture, Economics and other ministries and agencies such as fisheries and cooperatives will be under this minister in a coordinated approach to the countryside by the Vietnamese. What this will suggest or require on the American side in the form of reorganization or coordination is yet to be seen.

The Agricultural Division of the Agency for International Development Mission working in parallel with the Vietnamese Ministry of Agriculture has over the years carried out about the usual long range basic agricultural program with each American specialist working with one of the specialized divisions of the Vietnamese ministry. The basis for rather solid institutions have been laid and from a long range productio

standpoint the program has been effective. The program has been planned, operated and directed mostly from Saigon and whether it has reached far enough down to develop any real consciousness on the part of the hamlet people that this is a service which their government is providing for them is another question. In our interviews with the village people, they did not seem to equate such services with government at all and as is expected government to them was the local district village or province chief. While the effort has been considerable, we would judge that probably not more than 10 percent of the farm people - and these mainly the larger more prosperous land holders - were consciously touched by government services and probably not that percent even know who the Minister of Agriculture is. Statistics would probably indicate that a very high percent of the total rural population was touched in some way by the seed, fertilizer, insecticides, credit, and other services distributed in more recent months but if as much as ten percent of the total rural sector was consciously reached by these services it would be a miracle. Probably the best contact of the government with the village and below is through its Extension and Home Demonstration services where agents are stationed at the province and district level in more than 30 of the 40 provinces in the country. Our own observations indicate that these workers are really getting out to the hamlets and villages where conditions permit.

There was criticism on the Vietnamese side at the Saigon level of some U.S. agencies and groups working in the rural sector trying to sell the minister on the importance of some particular program. At the provincial level one Provincial Chief after another complained not only about the Americans running out to sell some program but the pressures

from his own government services. The plea everywhere was for more careful planning and better agreement among all groups on what is really important. Strange as it may seem, while the general tenor of what concerns the countryside in South Vietnam was "security" the word was not once heard in conversations with village people. Our own impression here is that most of the hamlet people are so concerned with sheer day to day survival that they are not much bothered by what happens in the next hamlet and could not care less about what is going on in Saigon or any other part of the world.

SOME SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENT

While any suggestions based on observations such as our mission undertook are subject to over simplification and gross error, the foregoing description of the situation and the attached field notes in South Vietnam prompts the following suggestions as one approach to a more effective use of our assistance to win some support in the rural sector.

I. While administrative action has already been taken in the AID Mission to pull into a team the various elements of the Mission in the rural sector and regional planning in Corps Areas I and II has been authorized, there still remains the problem of the kind of informal and frequent discussions and consultations between the various groups on really what the total objective is in specific terms and what has real priority and what does not, as well as the role each might best play in the total picture. It is possible that the new Director of Agricultural Division will be able to take the leadership in this and bring about some sort of general understanding on the American side. Even with this accomplished, there is the problem of the total picture which includes the various

Vietnamese government agencies and groups. While there is a top overall coordinated U.S. - Vietnamese policy and planning group dealing with the total effort, interpretation of the objectives set out by this group varies with the agency or person receiving them. Dealing with the civilian and especially the rural side of a complex situation as it exists in South Vietnam cannot be solved by a military order. It takes a long, slow and patient process to achieve anything resembling unity and the bringing to bear of resources available on the really important issues and problems. Further, if real acceptance is achieved by the lower levels of the AID Mission as well as the Vietnamese government, more communication from bottom up rather than from the top down must be inaugurated and some effort must be made as to understand WHY certain decisions are made or not made. This is not to suggest a debating society but it is to suggest in this sort of a war a little more listening to the people who are familiar with the grass roots is needed, rather than so much theoretical high policy whether it be out of Washington or Saigon.

II. With the regionalization of supplies backing up Agricultural programs and the almost unilateral control of the supplies particularly in the active U.S. Army areas, it appears that from three to five regional agricultural officers, of field type and less specialized, should be recruited and carefully trained for this village and provincial type general agricultural work, with great emphasis on building up the local Vietnamese government people at the lower levels.

There is a tendency for Americans with our passion to "get things done quickly" and especially when we control supplies, transportation and means of achieving action, to brush aside and actually go between the local government personnel and their own people to the discredit of the

local official who should at least be built up. Time after time village or hamlet people when asked how they achieved a school or a community building or a market or a well replied, "USOM helped us or gave it to us". This same comment was of course forthcoming when some of the white elephants scattered around over the country were looked at and there were times when the local official was quick to point out that he was not consulted by his government or USOM about this or that particular project, especially if it turned sour.

This business of building up the local people, especially encouraging the good ones and there are a few excellent young Vietnamese taking hold in parts of the country now both on the military and civilian side, is a very subtle thing and very difficult for an American in our rather impatient way, to develop or as some would say, "lead while walking one step behind." This danger is multiplied when a large number of American personnel are introduced in the rural areas with certain specific unilateral responsibilities for work with the military and the refugee efforts which are in some sectors almost wholly American. There is danger under the pressure of winning the war and trying to "WIN the people" that there will be more and more unilateral action on the rural front. This would, in our opinion, be fatal no matter how well our bilateral efforts might look to visiting VIP's.

III. Regional and local planning responsibility should also imply local authority and responsibility for implementing plans. This problem can be fairly easily achieved on the American side but on the Vietnamese side at the Province and Hamlet level this will be most difficult since the French Central Administrative system upon which the present

Vietnam government is based, requires the proper order or piece of paper out of Saigon before anything moves. In visiting a number of Provincial Chiefs of some twenty provinces which we visited, we did not find a single province that did not have plenty of money budgeted for whatever program they had presented but many were waiting for the piece of paper from Saigon which would allow them to move. It, of course, is just as impossible to change a government system over night in South Vietnam as it would be impossible for the U.S. to change to a centralized system. This is something which must be partially solved by some assignment of local responsibility for action within certain limits without the piece of paper from Saigon.

IV. Planning, if possible, should be made from the bottom up and based on the genuinely expressed needs of people. No Vietnamese official interviewed would contend that a national plan for Agriculture could be made operative or effective in the present situation and that if planning is to be done and programs are to be implemented, they must be highly localized with fewer programs and higher priorities for those important things which are clearly reflected from the bottom as needs within the vision and concern of the hamlet people.

This then would seem to imply for the American side that -

a) a joint review of the national programs now in being with a sorting out of those which can be sacrificed for the present war period and the establishment of priorities for the remaining national programs such as Extension, Home Economics, Cooperative Credit, research and other institutional projects to the extent that resources can be provided to keep them moving.

b) building a new program confined to respond to the simple needs and expressed by the hamlet and village people as to what is important to them. These are woefully simple, so simple in fact that few have taken the trouble to find out how important these little things are to local people. They range from more land of course - not necessarily land reform though this is highly politically important in some sections - but more especially the ability to rent some more land, the right of a village to clear off some public land and to secure the necessary help for small irrigation pumps or projects in order to increase the number of crops per season. This is especially acute in Regions I and II, fertilizer, cement, fungicides, seeds, small tools, tin roofing, credit and basic livestock or poultry. While these are small it is exceedingly difficult to reach and fill these needs at a local level. As an example, two sacks of cement to seal in a well or build a platform to save water buffalo manure, not only is pretty expensive and scarce at the factory in Saigon but when this is borne by air for several hundred miles, then off loaded to a jeep or a truck and taken to a remote village, a very expensive operation has been undertaken. The commercial system: it exists in Vietnam with transportation severely rationed on all fronts and largely required by the U.S. and South Vietnam military, today simply will not move these small and important items to within reach of those who need and want them.

c) if as the situation described above has any validity and should evoke some effort to meet it, a complete overhaul in the present AID planning and program system would have to be made and if decision was made to respond to these small things against a larger or more ambitious

type of national program, priorities in transportation especially for these small things along with credit would have to have equal status with the military. The one thing in any new approach is "NOT to promise anything that is NOT sure of delivery." The almost universal comment was from the village people "we get nothing but promises out of Saigon".

NACO - THE COOPERATIVES AND THE FARMER ASSOCIATION

During the past eight years there has been developed in South Vietnam a government sponsored cooperative credit system which operates out of a National Cooperative Agricultural bank down to the provincial level through government sponsored cooperative and farmer associations. While essentially a banking institution designed to provide low cost credit for agricultural production - one percent per month - this agency from time to time has handled and continues to handle farm supplies. This blossoming out of a combined credit, supply and in some instances marketing agency, in its rapid expansion over the past eight years has brought on the usual problems characteristic of similar efforts in at least half of the underdeveloped countries of the world. While the situation from a pure banking standpoint looks black and there are demands on the American as well as some elements on the Vietnamese side "to clean up the situation of delinquent loans and get out of the supply business" the fact remains that this institution with all of its faults is about the only agency in South Vietnam private, commercial or government that even begins to reach the countryside with reasonable credit. It would appear therefore that rather than a massive reorganization of the institution at this time - which would probably stall all credit for from one to five years - it would be best to continue to experiment with the agency, seeking

if at all possible to fix responsibility for making loans and collecting them farther down the line, being careful about trying to make this a mass national supply or marketing organization overnight but testing these things only as the local organizations develop the capability. There are many now capable of this and doing it well - at the same time broadening the base for credit among the smaller people who still must go to the landlord, the Chinese merchant or the local money lender for their small loans which range from about \$21.00 to \$25.00. In some of the institutions in the Delta the rule is to loan only those persons handling 5 acres or more of rice land and this rules out many of these smaller people who must have a little credit for the simplest things they need in their small operations.

Our talks with local NACO representatives in the Delta Area provinces especially indicated they were ready to undertake experiments in decentralized credit with maximum local responsibility on the part of the hamlet people for not only making the loans but collecting them. This system in Taiwan, Iran, some parts of Thailand and two or three places in Africa under our observation has proved almost miraculous over the years in the high collection rate for their loans, often running 98 percent collections annually.

It would appear that the greatest service all elements of the U.S. Mission working in the rural sector would be to try to be as self effacing as possible and to build up and as much as possible, give confidence to the small local officials in themselves and to make that official look as good as possible to his own people. After all, it will be a Vietnamese who will eventually be elected president of that country.

SUGGESTED AMERICAN STAFFING

With the trend now in the American Mission toward decentralizing on all fronts, it follows that this will require some increasing of the local staffs through the regions and the provinces. Too many Americans will simply accelerate the more and more taking over responsibility, yet too few simply means with so much control by the armed forces, that things will simply bog down. So it would seem that one way to bolster the rural sector on the U.S. side without adding new personnel would be to try to have an agriculturally trained American assistant provincial representative in each of the principal rural provinces of the country.

At the regional level, four or five exceedingly mobile and well trained generalists who understand most of the simple rural problems which beset an economy like South Vietnam. These generally should have some training in general crops, livestock, familiarity with small irrigation projects and so on and their main job would be to keep contact with Vietnamese provincial agricultural officers and in effect "be supply jockeys" to see that the things which have been promised are delivered no matter how small and if not delivered be on hand to explain why.

Incidentally, small irrigation projects, small markets and small platforms for handling of produce, garlic, onions, etc. are probably some of the most sought after community or hamlet type projects and they afford an excellent opportunity for the widest sort of local participation by the local people, this latter item is important. Usually when the local people make a contribution to a project either in labor or money, they take care of it.

There is a Vietnamese agricultural representative in Region III but none in the other regions. The Vietnamese reports to the Minister of

Agriculture and the Minister of Construction at the very top of the government. While I think it would be unwise to insert another layer of bureaucracy at the regional level between the Minister of Agriculture in Saigon and the Provinces for the period of the war, perhaps a high level Vietnamese in the other regions would keep much of the effort more in Vietnamese channels rather than the single American channel.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

Report on interviews and observations taken during special mission to South Vietnam to observe the agricultural and rural programs and their relationship to the political and social problems in the Vietnamese war.

THE AID AGRICULTURAL DIVISION SAIGON STAFF. (See Appendix I)

Our first official contact after a brief meeting with Mr. Charles Mann, Mission Director, came with a staff meeting of the agricultural division AID - Saigon. A group of some fifteen or twenty highly trained and skilled specialists in various phases of agricultural development in South Vietnam ran down an impressive list of projects and programs which have been supported by the U. S. mission over the past ten years. These programs though heavily financed by the U. S. side and technically guided through the advisory system usually in vogue in such arrangements depended largely on South Vietnamese implementation with such technical advice as could be given on the American side and accepted by the Vietnamese.

The overall national program was generally in the production field with some institutional overtones in credit, land reform recently assigned to the division, and institutions of research and extension services. As one would expect, each individual gave a comprehensive report on the status of the project with which he or she was technically concerned and political implications of the program or project in question entered into the discussion only incidentally. From the standpoint of this group sheer security of the farmer in the tug between the Saigon government, The American army and the Viet Cong were the prime concern of the rural population with insecurity of person being the main barrier to more

effective work at the level of the individual farmer. Our view, after listening to the reports and later observing results in the field, was to the effect that from strictly a long time sound economic development and production standpoint the joint efforts of U.S.-AID and the Vietnamese ministry of agriculture represented as good an overall agricultural effort as any for this part of the world with the exception of Taiwan.

The staff was requested to return on the following day with their views on two questions posed in the Appendix of this report. What are the barriers to a more complete acceptance of your project or program by the rural population? In your contact with the Vietnamese rural people, what seemed to be their main concern at this time? The answers to these two questions varied with the individuals and the type of the program they were advising the Vietnamese government upon. Only four or five addressed themselves direct to the points raised. The security question seemed uppermost on the first question and lack of transportation to support with materials the programs in the field such as plant protection, livestock with secondary crop transportation to market. One specialist reported that the government policy toward pricing of new fibre production had created more Communists in the Central Highland area than the Viet Cong could recruit in five years. The struggle for simple survival and harrassment not only by the Viet Cong but of government agents and even Americans trying to sell village leaders on this or that program was given as another deep concern of the rural people; suspicion of anything which might come out of Saigon, failure of the government and even Americans to follow through on promises, building bridges, wharfs, digging wells, and even schools without any consultation of the local populace

and often the abandonment of the project before it is finished or understood ranked high on the list of the barriers to more complete involvement of the local people in national government programs.

COLLATERAL AGENCIES DEALING WITH THE RURAL SECTOR:

Office of Provincial Affairs, Psychological Section of USIS, International Voluntary Services, the Chinese Technical Mission, Representatives of the Philippine Government in the Community Development Service, Civil Action Section of MAGV, all represent programs bearing on the rural sector.

While each of the individuals representing a particular agency conceded that the National Agricultural Program was a good one and perhaps sound economically in the long pull, there was a question on whether it was sufficiently localized and flexible enough to meet the present situation. While the chief complaint of those of the Agricultural Division AID was that everything was handed down from the top and there was little or no consultation of what programs would or should be supported by the U.S., the collateral agencies generally complained that there was not sufficient horizontal communication on the American side between the various groups dealing with the rural sector let alone a clear understanding between the Americans and the Vietnamese on what programs or projects were deemed priority at this time. One agency comment was that the Agricultural programs were totally non-politically orientated at a time when the very outcome of the political situation may determine the final outcome of the war. Another agency representative argued that Americans generally were trying to do too much, that we are swamping a few hardworking Vietnamese officials with ideas and materials which they could not begin

to digest or handle and the rural people, having lived for centuries on the sparsest existence simply could not understand all of the rush of material and programs which the Americans were throwing about. He urged a more simple approach to rural people in terms of values in which they understand rather than what looks good to Americans in the 20th century. There was also a wide demand for a closer knit approach to the rural sector by all American agencies dealing with it and a decision, jointly arrived at on what is the important task to undertake at this time.

There was suggestions for regular informal get togethers on the American side dealing with the rural sector and the refugee problem and a demand that not only better horizontal communication between the agencies be maintained but better two way communication from the top down and from the lower levels up. "We are rarely if ever consulted on policy matters" was the common complaint and "we are called upon to make drastic shifts in projects or programs from time to time without any warning." More detailed notes and quotations on these points are on file in the Field Notes in Washington.

VIETNAMESE MINISTERS AND AGENCIES CONCERNED WITH THE RURAL PROBLEM.

Four main ministries and two principal agencies are deeply and directly involved in the rural sector at this time on the Vietnamese side. They are, Minister of Social Welfare, responsible for Refugees, Rural Health, etc.; Minister of Economics, dealing with overall trade and economic problems in what is chiefly an agricultural country; Minister of Rural Reconstruction, dealing with the rehabilitation of war torn areas and re-establishing people and institutions in cleared areas; Minister of Agriculture, dealing with the regular and old line Agricultural programs

but also responsible for land reform, resettlement and credit and a host of other items particularly covered by the other ministries but verging on his responsibility; Director of Agricultural Information of the Ministry, and responsibility for a lot of specialized services, extension, plant protection, home economy, livestock economy, interior fisheries, reaching his office to the provincial level.

Two basic questions were discussed with each minister in addition to the particular responsibilities of his office and details of various departmental programs. 1) How may U.S. resources, human, financial and material being placed behind Agriculture in Vietnam be more effectively used in pursuit of the social and political objectives of the war in South Vietnam? 2) What are the barriers which permit maximum effectiveness in the American and Vietnamese effort in the rural sector and what are the things which Americans are doing that seem to be less helpful or actually hindrances to a more effective program?

The answers to these questions were open, frank and sometimes blunt but always with a deep appreciation of the efforts which the United States is making to assist the Vietnamese in their present tragic situation.

Discussions on the first question ranged all the way from "you Americans are too impatient, you are trying to lift the entire rural sector up to a high plane over night; there are too many programs and too many ideas of what should be done clearly beyond the capability of the Vietnamese people at this time". There was strong insistence for cutting down the number of programs and projects, emphasis on the need for more joint planning and implementation of programs and a demand that high priority be given to a few basic programs which can be carried effectively

to the whole rural sector. Two ministers questioned the validity of a National Agriculture Plan. One minister suggested that beyond regional planning should come exceedingly localized plans to meet particular situations in each part of the country with more decentralized planning and operations. To this end the Minister of Agriculture has called upon the Agricultural Chief in each province to present his plans and proposals for the coming year along with a projected budget. In later interviews with many province chiefs and agricultural officials we found NO province that lacked funds to carry out its listed projects but there was great reluctance to use these funds without a clear directive from Saigon and many programs were bogged down by the failure of this extensive authorization machinery to actually operate. It was suggested that a much closer working relationship as between the AID technical people and the Vietnamese technicians should be established, one minister even suggesting that the AID Agricultural technicians should be actually physically placed with their opposite numbers in the Vietnamese ministries. When it was pointed out that American technical personnel in agriculture were largely advisors and were supposed to be in frequent contact with their opposite numbers in the various Vietnamese ministries, the reply was that this system was not working very well except in a few cases and that at least one division had not seen an American in its offices for nine months. (We are unable to verify this or to identify the division.) When asked how often Vietnamese technical people visited the American side, it was pointed out that little of this was being done for the reason that under present security regulations all Vietnamese of whatever rank had to be searched at the gate by a guard before he is allowed to enter an AID compound. One minister said he would not undergo this indignity again. It was emphasized

by one minister that rural people did not equate material things with political issues and in a more or less free discussion which followed, it was emphasized that "the hearts of the rural people must be won before any war can be finally won". The minister stated that this was a matter of psychological warfare and that this should be expanded and carried out by Vietnamese rather than outsiders since there was a tendency for Americans to overdo the impact and create suspicion rather than loyalty.

The answers to the second question were perhaps a little more blunt - "we are being pushed by so many different people to support this or that particular project that we have no time to think for ourselves - further we are being swamped with material and ideas beyond what we can effectively use." The minister responsible for the Vietnamese side of the refugee program listed above said that while he deeply appreciated the materials and efforts which the Americans were providing in this instance, he would appreciate more consultation on the kinds of material and support that could best be utilized. He pointed out that he had just received a shipment of cloth - the landed cost being the equivalent of four million dollars. The cloth is woolen and heavy denim which are not useable in this climate. "Our clothing needs" he said, "are for thin cottons which break the sun and shield the skin from insects, we do not need heavy warm clothing." He further stated that much of the vegetable oils received by the rural sector ended up on the black market in Saigon because the rural village people first do not have the kitchen equipment to make the best use of this product and second, the fat needs are largely met by the fish, soy sauce and other oil based items used widely in Vietnamese food. Asked what he would have rather had in place of this to help him on the refugee program he said, "small hand tools for clearing

brush and preparing land and if big money was spent, bulldozers and heavy equipment to clear off an initial small space for resettlement of a refugee on new land." (We observed a large stockpile of heavy machinery in another region which apparently had been rusting away for several years.)

Another minister felt that closer cooperation between the Americans on the initial planning of a project and a program and a clear understanding of what was to be done and by whom would make for more effective work. Each minister stressed again and again the necessity for establishing priorities of a few basic programs and with a consistent step by step implementation of the program. Too many times we have started programs and when the American technician left the country, the program either was abandoned or proved to be too much for the Vietnamese to carry on. However, in all of this there was high praise for the assistance the Americans had given in several of the programs which have been originated over the years jointly by the Americans and Vietnamese such as the Extension Services, Home Economic programs, 4-T or 4-H programs, increased emphasis on spraying of rice and vegetables and increased use of fertilizer plus the establishment of an agent system.

OBSERVATIONS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL.

Perhaps for reasons of better planning and more effective coordination on the American side between the AID programs and the military efforts, operations have been largely regionalized roughly paralleling the military corps areas both on the Vietnamese and American military sides. There is a regional director in each of the four regions responsible for the Provincial operations through each province and for the overall cooperation and planning of the follow up and looking after refugees behind a military operation. There is an agricultural officer.

in each region, two in one region, but except for Region III embracing the Saigon area and a part of the Delta and Highland around, there is no Vietnamese representative of Agriculture at Regional levels. The Agricultural operations in Regions I and II from the American standpoint were largely confined to seeing that supplies and materials designed for use in the provincial agricultural programs were actually received and distributed. The agricultural officer, in addition to his responsibilities to cooperate with the Civil Action officers in the Marine and Army Corps, devoted nearly all of his time visiting each province each week and working with the American provincial representatives and the Vietnamese agricultural staff in the development and implementation of locally based programs. These visits often entailed special training schools in each province for hamlet level workers, distribution of garden seed, fertilizer, small tools and other items which were called for by the village people. His main problem was transportation to get the supplies needed to back up the many small projects under way throughout the region. The Region I officer felt that at least four province level agricultural men were needed to help out in the refugee, resettlement and rehabilitation programs which are required after a major series of military operations.

The agricultural officers, as well as the Regional Directors in Regions I and II were unanimous in asserting the need for more localized and regional planning and local responsibility with maximum flexibility at the regional level for implementation. Planning for military AID coordination has been decentralized to the Region on the American side and the Director of AID in Saigon explained that this implied maximum local flexibility and responsibility in implementation. The common complaint at this stage is still too much centralization in Saigon both on the American side

and the Vietnamese side. Region III was somewhat different since Saigon is almost in the center of Region III and the American agricultural officer as well as the Vietnamese agricultural man representing the Minister of Agriculture and the Minister of Rural Reconstruction are both in Saigon. Here the programs were much more easily coordinated and the problem of transportation of supplies and supporting materials was not as severe as in the two north regions. There seemed to be very close cooperation at the Regional as well as the Provincial level with the Vietnamese officials. There were excellent Corn-Pig, Self Help, 4-T Club, Home Economic, Agricultural Demonstration and Research Programs going forward in all of the cleared and secure areas of Region III and the closing of the highway and railroad out of Dalat denying the vegetables from that area to Saigon has stimulated a rather extensive and profitable vegetable crop farming in the general Saigon area. Several of the Chinese technical mission personnel are working at the village and hamlet level on the development of the fresh vegetable programs. This appeared to be very effective and well supported by the village and hamlet people. Region IV is the great Mekong Delta area and is an almost entirely different situation from the other regions where the American army is playing a dominant role. U. S. Army presence in the Mekong Delta area is largely confined to the helicopter support of the South Vietnamese army in this vast area with some naval patrols on the rivers. There is only one agricultural officer for the entire Delta region on the American side and his job is largely daily and weekly contact with the agricultural services and personnel on the Vietnamese side in each province with an occasional response to a technical question posed by the Provincial Representatives on the American side. With the wide use of the river as a transport, the problem of moving

agricultural inputs to farmers in these areas is not so acute as in the Northern area. As a matter of fact, this region is starting the season with something over 20,000 tons of fertilizer carryover and considerable stockpiles of plant protection materials. Farming in this area is generally on a more sophisticated level and is highly commercialized as against the subsistence farming characteristic of much of the other regions. While the Viet Cong seem to control relatively large areas in the Delta the war here except for small raids on installations occasionally is more or less at a stalemate, the Viet Cong seemingly unable to develop strength enough for a major push and the South Vietnamese army not quite strong enough to assault the major stronghold and secure them against future infiltration. Concerns of the rural people in this area as expressed by the Agricultural officer are the many small things which are important to village people plus land rents, rising cost of farm supplies, prices for rice, land rents and the cost of credit. We were unable to verify the report, but it was generally reported as a practice of the Viet Cong to demand that a certain percent of the rice of the larger landholders be handed over as a tax or special payment with the smaller rice producer being given double the government fixed price in South Vietnam currency. In many of the province towns some sort of an accommodation seems to have been worked out between the larger land holders with land in Viet Cong controlled areas whereby the Viet Cong required that a percent of the holdings be turned over for distribution to landless peasants with the landlord holding probably one third of his original tract for his own. In most instances the land owner fled to a secure area to reside but he was allowed to send his tenants into the Viet Cong controlled area to plant and harvest a rice crop. This seemed to be the system utilized by the larger land owners and plantation operators

in other areas.

It would appear that at least four or five province level field type agricultural technicians could well be used in both Regions I, II and perhaps III but until there is a definite government plan and program for the Delta as a region, and this depends on when the hold of the Viet Cong is generally broken in this area, it is the opinion of the agricultural officer of Region IV that placing additional men in the provinces would be a waste of manpower. He suggests instead that the Deputy Provincial Representative in each province be a man with an agricultural background. This would, he thinks, serve the situation until some more definite plans can be undertaken by the Vietnamese government to support the development of the Delta beyond the present predominant rice and fish economy.

REFUGEES

While the problem of refugees was in evidence in each of the Regions, both the Vietnamese and some of the local American personnel did not view this as serious as the official numbers quoted and the statements by visiting firemen and the press would indicate. One high staff officer of the U.S. Army, while admitting the potential with the advance of more extensive military operations might be enormous, the refugee problem now was confined to probably a hard core of around 200,000 real refugees and possibly 300,000 temporarily displaced persons. It was contended that in the Central Highlands, especially when the cleared areas extended out from the central bases over the countryside, that people would come into the secure areas and create a problem. The Agricultural Division of AID, while responsible for backing up the Army Civil Action effort in the initial phases, comes into more extensive responsibility when new lands are sought out and the permanently displaced persons are settled on new lands. The

U. S. agricultural personnel along with the Vietnamese participate closely in the planning for the rehabilitation and resettlement of newly cleared areas such as An Khe Valley. Though this is fundamentally the responsibility of the South Vietnamese, Army impatience with the slow moving Vietnamese could well force unilateral action on the AID side in this problem. However, it must be said, based on our own experience in civil affairs and refugee problems in a previous war, that the men in charge of Civil Action programs in the U. S. Army and Marines in South Vietnam are far more understanding of the importance of handling the civilian side of the war with humaneness and consideration than any army we have had the privilege of observing in two major conflicts.

PROVINCIAL CHIEFS AND AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS AND STAFFS

The Provincial Chief in each province is a military man, usually buttressed by the Deputy Chief who is a civilian and trained in public administration to a limited degree. Under the Province Chief are a host of purely local functionaries and a large group of services, Public Works, Public Health, Education, Special Agricultural Services, Veterinarian and Livestock, Plant Protection, Rice Service, Extension, Home Economics, Irrigation Services, Fisheries and what have you. All of these services, like the Province Chief himself, have their base and authority at the top level in one of the Ministries or agencies in the Government of Saigon. They go down a vertical line each from its particular agency department or Ministry. There is little or no actual local coordination except to the extent that the Provincial Chief can affect it. Recently all of the special services in agriculture with the exception of the Livestock and Veterinary Service and the Cooperative Credit or (NACO Bank) have been grouped under an Agricultural Chief at the province level. This at least provides a base

for coordinated planning at the province and operational level. The first real operative responsibility of all of these agencies seem to start at the province level. The multiplicity of agencies in the Vietnamese government plus the many agencies or segments of the American mission in South Vietnam bearing down on the Province Chief for a particular action on some pet program has brought loud protests from some of the Provincial Chiefs that there must be more systematic handling of the many things which come down from the top with little or nothing ever going up from the bottom to the top. This was reportedly discussed in some detail at the most recent Provincial Chiefs' meeting in Saigon.

Our inquiry and observations in visits to the some fifteen or twenty provinces were directly concerned with the agriculture and rural sector. The line of questioning tried to develop from the people, that is extension workers, home economists, livestock specialists, rice specialists and others, what the main concerns of the people with whom they come in daily contact seemed to be; further what this reflected in terms of the attitude of people toward the Saigon government. The technical people were noticeably neutral when it came to any comment on their present government or previous governments or even any comment one way or the other on the Viet Cong. They were willing to talk extensively about their particular program and its acceptance or non acceptance by the people and why it was not or was succeeding in general terms. Strange as it may seem, the security was not mentioned as one of the problems. The people themselves were going about their work or play with helicopters and planes buzzing overhead, bombs shaking the earth and flood lights breaking over the night sky seemingly completely oblivious to the operations going on almost continually at some place during the day or night. Asked what their people

talked or complained to them about or asked them for in their daily contacts - their answers generally ran along the lines of seeds, fungicides, fertilizers, and in the recently flooded regions more water buffalo, small tools, cement and credit. There seems to be little concern for prices and it appeared the sheer availability of a needed item was the chief concern rather than the money to pay for it. In each province there appears to be a rather systematic training program for the rural workers and the recently inaugurated Home Demonstration Club movement was receiving widespread support. These clubs meet two or three times per month in the hamlets with the Provincial Agent supervising anywhere from four to twenty district level women workers who ride bicycles to the meetings. It appears that discussions verging on political questions are more frequent at these women's meetings than similar meetings of men. There was considerable distrust at the lower worker level of the promises of visiting firemen out of Saigon, both American and Vietnamese, who make promises that somehow are never kept. The Province Chief is often on the spot with his people when some extensive program of some sort is proclaimed out of Saigon but somehow the authority and the means to implement it is not always forthcoming. The general tenor of comment of the province level workers in Agriculture was, "fewer promises but more performance." It is difficult for an American agricultural officer or a Vietnamese technical worker to explain that the reason the pigs were not delivered for the Corn-Pig program was that hauling pigs in coastal shipping is difficult since there are no connecting rail or truck roads open yet to most areas from the South, that this program had to be washed out because there was no suitable shipping to handle the 200 pigs being held down at Saigon for the program." They could not quite understand why Americans were willing to give them four bags of cemen

with which to build a feeding platform for the pigs which never came but were unable apparently to allow them to BUY four bags in order to place a cement floor in their bamboo roofed house. One provincial representative of a cooperative which was handling the Pig-Corn program in his area said they had built more than 100 cement feeding floors but no pigs and that some of the village people were moving parts of their houses over the platform to use it as a kitchen floor.

From the Provincial Chief right down to the people at the district level working with rice or plant protection or extension work including extension volunteer workers, there was complete reluctance to discuss any side of the political issues. Those who would talk just a little took the view that what happened in Saigon over the next few months rather than what happened on the military front would largely determine what the eventual attitude of the rural people would be toward a free election. The general opinion expressed privately by the few officials who would talk stated that in their opinion at least eighty percent of the rural people were taking no sides at this time and more than anything else wanted peace to come and relieve them from harassment of the Viet Cong on the one hand and American bombing of their homes and villages on the other. (We must emphasize they said American bombing though the Vietnamese are also bombing constantly.)

The one government sponsored credit organization is NACO or the National Agricultural Cooperative Organization. It is essentially a banking organization and it provides direct loans to farmers as well as operating two government sponsored farm organizations, the government sponsored cooperative enterprises and the Farmers' Associations. Both of these organizations are government sponsored and have about equal membership and

the NACO Bank is represented in each province by one of the other of these organizations. A couple of years ago these agencies in addition to supplying government credit, were called upon to handle farm supplies which were bought and distributed by the government or supplied by the AID agency and under considerable pressure, credit in kind as well as very liberal cash loans were provided. Many of these loans, for various reasons, proved to be uncalled and the agency as a whole has come under serious criticism not only from the financial side of the Vietnamese government but concern on the American side that there should be a major overhaul of the whole machinery. Since the bank depends on government to advance funds which it in turn loans to farmers, the whole operation at this time is in something of a stall at the very time when demands for credit for planting the first rice crop and needs for fungicides and veterinary supplies are highest. Local representatives of the NACO set-up interviewed at the provincial level were critical that funds promised for local lending were either slow in coming or were not sufficient to meet the demands, further the local bodies were hampered by regulations which prevented them to command or secure the transport necessary for them to carry out their responsibility. Farmers, as will be reported later when discussing credit needs, argued that the regulations were so strict that only a few could qualify and those who really needed credit were still in the grip of the money lender. Those who did get loans were irked at the long delay between the application and when they actually got the money. The average is about three months from the time of the application until the money is received. Managers in at least four of the provincial offices visited during our tour indicated the necessity and desirability for more local responsibility in granting or refusing loans with greater responsibility of the people in a given hamlet

for the collection of the loan when it is due. There were other suggestions that small loans for such things as fertilizers, seed, and fungicides should be made in kind and repayable if possible in kind or at least repayable when the crop on which the material was used is harvested. They felt that the actual lending of water buffalos for farming purposes would be feasible and would provide many who had lost their buffalos in the war operations or floods with a means of planting a crop.

ATTITUDE OF INDIVIDUAL FARMERS AND HAMLET PEOPLE.

The hamlet is the smallest and lowest echelon of government in the French system which is used in Vietnam. The Hamlet Chief, usually one of the more influential farmers in the hamlet area, is the only official directly selected by the people he serves. All other government officials directly above him reaching to the top in Saigon are either directly appointed by the Central government or the Central government controls the selection of them. The Hamlet Chief therefore stands as a sort of a symbol of authority for this hamlet and more importantly a pleader for his hamlet and his people in the higher court of centrally appointed government officials.

Our mission visited several hamlets in each region, attended at least four hamlet meetings where people were called out by their chief in regular monthly meetings or on a special occasion, such as distribution of small tools and garden seed. On each occasion and in several instances simply traveling among the countryside we talked with these small farmers - none of whom operated over five or six hectares of land most of them less than three hectares. Our line of inquiry here was to try to determine how these people related such government programs as school, health clinics,

self help projects, community buildings, bridges, wells, seed and fertilizer materials to an attitude toward their government either at the province or National level. Secondly, we attempted to determine what were the things the government might do that would be important to the individual hamlet dweller.

It was hoped that in more or less indirect questioning and general conversation one might detect some attitude or indication of how they felt about the present political situation in South Vietnam. The sum of most of our probing would seem to add up to about this attitude toward government. When government is discussed the hamlet dweller seems to directly relate the Army man or rural policemen who comes to the village to settle a fight, draft the eldest sons or otherwise push them around along with the tax collector who comes to collect the tax, as government. They do not seem to relate schools, dispensaries, roads, bridges or wells to anything the government provides or has anything to do with. When we asked one small hamlet dweller how they acquired a handsome community house they said "USOM gave us the cement and we built it ourselves". On another occasion we asked how a wagon bridge across a small stream had come into being and they said, "USOM did this but we don't need the bridge because we have nothing to haul and no cart to haul it in". In one hamlet the Hamlet Chief complained - and this was a resettled hamlet in existence about two years - that there were 70 families now in the hamlet, 40 of them newly arrived refugees from the North, and for two years he had been asking the Provincial Chief and the Saigon government to provide a dispensary for the hamlet but that he had nothing but promises to date and here he was with more than 350 people to care for and not a sign of any medical services for several miles and no transportation to even reach that.

The Hamlet Chiefs when asked what they most needed for their people, replied generally with rather simple things barely above what they now possess. A little more land, either renting of public land or some land division which would give each villager a little more to cultivate - in most villages it averages less than two hectares per family - an opportunity to buy small power pumps to increase their crop production, fertilizers, seed, cement, paint for the temple, small tools and the right to clear off and try to cultivate public lands were among the questions raised at the hamlet meetings we attended. In no instance was there a hint that such things should be given, they were merely asking for an opportunity to acquire. In one discussion with a fairly alert farmer who had been out of his province on several occasions and once as far away as Saigon commenting on the vast amount of American aid that has gone into South Vietnam, said this assistance was like a leaky funnel, a whole lot was poured in at the top at Saigon but very little ever reached the hamlet. Our own observations would conclude that probably statistically the figure would be relatively large but actually probably eighty percent of all the AID materials and effort on the American and Vietnamese side stopped with the top ten or twelve percent of the rural population and the twenty percent that filtered on down is so diluted that hamlet people are barely conscious of it. As an example in one village - that is a group of 19 hamlets, representing 2500 people, three families had received loans from the credit bank, none had received any animals and the widely touted Corn-Pig program, less than five percent had received any garden seed and none had received any small tools. In one province one of the several hundred Singer sewing machines which had been imported was found and the young home agent was teaching a sewing class with it. The complaint of the village women was the simple fact that they

did not have any cloth to practice sewing upon except the clothing they had on their backs. In another province the fact that they had run out of thread for the machine was a major catastrophe.

Coming down to talks with the individual farmers with the exception of the Delta, the expressed wants were woefully simple and their complaints seemed justified. For instance, in nearly all cases one common plea was for just a little bit more land, either common, public land, communal land or individually owned lands. There was not much talk of land reform as such, the mere ability to have a little more land to farm at any price seemed paramount. As one example, we talked to a little better than average to do farmer. He lived in a cement plastered three walled house with an open front on a cement rice drying floor. He farmed his ancestral one hectare which he had inherited as an eldest son. He grew sweet potatoes, onions, some fruits and forage for his one water buffalo. He farms rice on an additional two hectares of rice land on a one crop per season basis which he rented on competitive bid from the provincial land office. He was paying 4000 piastres per Vietnamese hectare rent on the land, this was about \$20.00 per acre for one rice crop. Asked if this was not a pretty high price for land to use, he replied that he must rent it because it takes this two hectares of rice to feed his family of nine children and the older folks living with him. Asked what he would like in the way of a land policy on the part of his government he said he would like best of all a long term lease so that he would know that he could farm this particular for as much as one year and perhaps three years without having to bid against someone for it. Asked what other items he needed for his farm, he said cement, fertilizer, fungicides, tin roofing, and credit in about that order. Asked where he got his credit now he said, "from a neighbor".

Asked what he wanted with cement which he would buy if it was available, he said he wanted to put a cement floor under his water buffalo so that he could save the manure for his fields. In the wet season the manure is tramped in the mud and lost.

Throughout the visits to the hamlets and with individual farmers their wants and needs were so small and simple that there is little wonder that they have been passed by in all of the big impact programs and massive efforts which have been made in this country.

On the political front only one small farmer stated that he felt he was doing better under the Saigon government than he did when the country was under French rule. Another farmer admitted that he had joined the Viet Cong for one year a few years back and had since gotten out of it but even though he said two of his sons were in the South Vietnam Army fighting the Viet Cong his identity card had been taken up and he could not leave his hamlet without fear of arrest by the authorities.

In nearly every instance there was the widest sort of distrust of anything coming out of Saigon and we have a suspicion that our own efforts in trying to help these village people are under considerable distrust. Having lived for centuries under a dominance from the outside in which they have to give something for every favor granted, they cannot understand the American willingness to shower them with things and attentions without asking something in return. There seemed to be a general feeling that with America's help the fighting war would be won but at least two district chiefs with whom we talked and who expressed an opinion, felt that Vietnam trouble would just begin once the fighting stopped. None during the entire trip which ranged from near the 17th parallel to the last province in the South bordering Cambodia, save one district agricultural worker, would vent

a prediction on what would happen if any election were held. This chap who had lived long in this Delta territory said that though the ills which brought on the rebellion are still rife in South Vietnam, the religion of the people was solidly against the election of a Communist government except under the most extreme duress from Saigon. Another provincial official commenting on the overall situation said, "I think with America's help we will win the battles but the war could well be lost in Saigon."

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APPENDIX No. 1

REPORT ON

Mission to South Vietnam October 1 to October 29, 1965.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

See Walter Stoneman letter (Appendix 2) dated September 27th, 1965.

QUOTE

"How we might make AID and the Government of Vietnam agricultural activities more meaningful and effective in our short run counter insurgency operations, this generally means making our agricultural programs more responsible to the needs of political and social development in the fairly short run but wherever possible making allowance for the longer run considerations and sound development".

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523

September 27, 1965

Mr. Stanley Andrews
Box 52
AA R# 1
Alamo, Texas

Dear Mr. Andrews:

Mr. Mann, Director of USOM/Vietnam, and I are delighted that you could favor us with a brief consultancy in Vietnam for two to four weeks for the purpose of advising Mr. Mann on revisions in our agricultural program there. This letter is to confirm our conversations to the effect that you should report to Mr. Mann upon arrival in Saigon and secure more detailed terms of reference from him. As I mentioned to you earlier, I understand that some reorganization and recasting of our agricultural activities has already been undertaken.

In general terms it is my understanding that you could be of most help to us by bringing your rich experience to bear on how we might make AID and GVN agricultural activities more meaningful and effective in our short run counter insurgency operations. In the political type war in which we are engaged in Vietnam this generally means making our agricultural program more responsive to the needs of political and social development in the fairly short run, but wherever possible making allowances for the longer run considerations and sound development.

You and Mr. Mann may find it desirable to exchange observations with Ed Lansdale and his team regarding the relationship of our agricultural activities to political and social development.

As a collateral issue we hope that it might be possible for your trip to even further strengthen the bridge of understanding between Vietnam and the International Voluntary Services regarding the role and requirements for IVS personnel and, particularly, that this will assist the International Voluntary Services in providing the additional personnel needed in Vietnam.

- 2 -

No formal reports are requested except as they maybe stipulated by Mr. Mann. We will, of course, be anxious to see you upon your return to the U.S. for informal discussions of our observations.

Best personal regards.

Sincerely,


Walter G. Stoneman
Deputy Assistant Administrator, Far East

SCOPE

There are three distinct areas of concern in the present situation on the rural side in South Vietnam which logically suggests responsibility on the part of the Agricultural section of the AID mission and the Vietnamese government.

1. The continuance to the extent possible under present conditions of the National Agricultural program and projects which have been supported over the past ten or twelve years.

2. Once temporary assistance of refugees and displaced persons by the Army in the combat zone is effected, immediate effort to resettle or facilitate the return to their former lands once security is achieved, as a responsibility of AID Agriculture and the Vietnamese government.

3. Long term rehabilitation of rural villages, homes and establishments destroyed by the war and the redevelopment of areas liberated after long domination by the Viet Cong.

The first of these has been and is the joint responsibility of the USAID mission as advisors and financial supporters and the Vietnamese government.

The second implies a high degree of bilateral activity since the U. S. Army has more or less assumed direct responsibility for refugees and displaced persons in direct line of its operations.

The third item is again a joint effort on the part of the USAID mission and the Government of South Vietnam.

It must be pointed out that a mission to study the possible more effective use of American agricultural assistance in the winning of the political and social war in South Vietnam is considerably different from the approach that may be required in promoting and implementing a sound long range economic development program in Agriculture. So it is necessary to read this report with direct political affects of our AID in mind rather than whether it is economically sound or not.

METHOD OF APPROACH.

Government structure in new countries originally under colonial rule develop programs and initiate innovation from the top down through a more or less total government line system to the level of the hamlet. Programs are handed down and not built from the bottom up, as is the theory in the older countries. This is especially true of the French system of administration.

In later talks with the four top ministers in the Vietnamese government concerned with Agriculture and rural development, they attributed the almost total neutral and passive attitude of the rural population toward the Vietnamese war as a lack of understanding on the part of the rural people as to the meaning of the conflict and a failure of the rural population to grasp the aims and objectives of the Saigon government against the National Liberation Front and the Viet Cong. This then is a matter of communication and basic to any communication is to find some point of interest and concern at the lower levels on which the beginning of an understanding can be based.

On the assumption that if the rural population was to be actively involved in the political war during the present struggle - certainly

after some sort of cessation of hostilities - it is paramount that the concerns of the people at the lower levels in the villages and hamlets be taken into account and these concerns cannot be assumed from the top. They must be expressed by the people themselves. Therefore, our mission undertook to start at the top and work down to the small farmer in the hamlet to try to find some common concern on which to start from the bottom.

The first session on the American side came with a regular staff meeting of the Agricultural Division of AID South Vietnam during which the various specialists working with Vietnamese specialists, reported on the status of their programs. It must be said that from the standpoint of the typical agricultural development program generally sponsored and assisted by the U. S. in many parts of the world, the Vietnam story is an excellent one and has to its credit solid overall accomplishments in the general agricultural development field. The session on the status of Agricultural programs was followed the next day with a session devoted to each specialist undertaking to answer two questions in connection with his program.

1. What are the barriers which you see that prevents a wider acceptance by the rural population of the particular project with which you are concerned and what might be the political implications of such a project at the people's level.

2. In your contacts with Vietnamese officials and particularly with hamlet and village people, what seems to be their main concern?

The same questions were posed to other American groups and agencies concerned with rural development and Agriculture. These included the Provincial Affairs Offices, Civil Action Division of the Army, The

United States Information Service, the International Voluntary Services, the Chinese Technical Mission and General Lansdale and his group working at the very top level of the government on the American side.

Following the round with the American side, contacts were made with Vietnamese ministries and other agencies including the cooperatives. A series of questions were posed to each of these which included among them the Minister of Social Welfare, the Minister of Rural Construction, the Minister of Economics and the Minister of Agriculture and one Regional Agricultural representative of the Minister of Rural Construction and the Minister of Agriculture. The questions posed to these gentlemen were about as follows:

1. How in your opinion may the United States' resources in money and personnel now being utilized in South Vietnam be better used to help you win the political and social struggle which must be won in South Vietnam if the sacrifices of the fighting war are to mean anything once some sort of cessation of hostilities is achieved?

2. What are the Americans doing that they should not do and what are the things that make your task of carrying out your responsibilities in your government more difficult?

All persons were asked to speak as persons and not officially with the understanding that no person would be quoted by name in any report.

From the Saigon interviews our mission went to the Regions and from the Regions to at least four Provinces in each Region and then from the Provinces to Villages and Hamlets and to individual farmers in each of the regions with a series of questions with some regional variations

to each group of officials or individuals.

Since there are no Vietnamese representatives at the Regional level which conform roughly to the Corps areas of the Army, and only four agricultural officers in the entire four regions, our questions were generally directed at the Regional Director and the Agricultural Officers. The questions dealt primarily with the contacts and cooperation with the Army in handling refugees, planning with the Army's Civil Action officers and the backing up of military operations in their initial stages of action with the cooperation and support needed by the Vietnamese at the Province level for rehabilitation and resettlement of people displaced by the military action.

Vietnamese provincial, district and village level officials are all directly named and controlled by Saigon. These were interviewed as to their own concerns and problems with as much bearing on the political implications of the problems as possible. Similar questions were put to those responsible for various segments of the provincial Vietnamese agricultural programs, such as extension service, plant protection service, home economics, livestock service, rice specialists and others. In addition to their general programs and services, each was asked what he thought the main concerns of those in the rural sector with whom he was in daily contact with happened to be at this time?

The next step down was the individual farmers in the hamlets and the attendance at regular meetings of the people in the hamlets which we were able to visit in each region. Here we tried to find out from indirect questioning and conversation just what seemed to be irritating or pleasing the particular group or individuals in relation to

his conception of government and particularly to try to determine what expectations the individual or group had of the government and then to draw out what the immediate concerns and problems were at the level of the little farm. No farmer with more than five hectare of land was interviewed.

Summary of the broad answers to the questions indicated above to all categories of persons contacted during the some four weeks in South Vietnam are discussed in the narrative summary of interviews in this report. It was upon these direct interviews with people that we based the bulk of our report and the suggestions on what might be done to make US AID in agriculture more effective in the political and social sectors of the present conflict.