DEBRIEF OF A CORDS OFFICIAL

QUANG TIN, VIETNAM

1967 - 1969

Employment with AID

Recruitment and Orientation

I spent two years in South America with the Peace Corps and it was at that time that I became interested in AID. I was familiar with some of the programs that they had there. And I thought it was a good opportunity to perhaps help some of these underdeveloped nations in a more substantial way than the Peace Corps. So when I returned to Washington, after completing my Peace Corps tour, I immediately went to the Agency for International Development and applied for a job. The only thing that was open at that time was Vietnam because I only had a bachelor's degree and I was told when I applied at the personnel office--that AID was not hiring anyone who did not have at least a master's or some other advanced degree, plus overseas experience. I had the overseas experience but only a bachelor's degree.

I was interviewed by three different interviewers in Washington the same day I applied for the job and, of course, filled out the Form 57. I think the interviewing process was adequate. The interviewers they had at the time did a pretty good job. The only complaint that I would have, if any, is that it took such a long time, six months, for them to decide finally whether or not I was to be appointed. Apparently the problem was that the letters that were supposed to be sent to my references were not sent out in August as they were supposed to have been. They got sent out around December, after I called Washington, D.C. and asked them what was happening with my application and if I was going to get the job or not.

After I was appointed I spent approximately two weeks in general orientation discussing personal matters and the AID program in the country to which I was going. I thought this orientation was adequate and informative. Many of the things that we were told at the time didn't mean too much to someone just coming into AID--I've probably forgotten many of them, but I later remembered and found useful some things that were taught to us in Washington. I don't believe I have any recommendations for improving the Washington orientation.

After the two weeks in Washington I came to Hawaii. What this program was going to be was explained to us in Washington before we came over, and it was generally what I expected it to be. I was in Cycle IV training for approximately five months. I thought that the language training was quite good and the language lab that is available in Hawaii is as good as any that I have ever seen. It worked quite well for learning the Vietnamese language, which is a tonal language, and requiring you to hear a great deal of repetition of tones before you can successfully recognize them or repeat them. Concerning the rest of the curriculum, I think that perhaps more history and politics of Vietnam could have been emphasized. Otherwise, I think that the training was very imaginative; and use of closed circuit television to show differences in American and Vietnamese approaches to social situations was quite good.

I thought one of the valuable parts of the training was over on the big island of Hawaii where we spent approximately ten days living in a community and trying to find out everything that we could that was happening in that community. That was a valuable exercise. I don't think when you go to Vietnam, you would automatically try to use the fundamentals that you learned during this training exercise, but nevertheless when you are trying to get information about a certain problem or a certain area these things come back to you in the type of questions that you ask, where you go to ask them and so on. This was really helpful.

There was one program, sensitivity training, that we had for one week that no one really enjoyed or found beneficial. I think it was a waste of the government's money and time. The people who conducted it did not, in my opinion, have the right approach for our group of people although this is something that I don't think that anyone could have determined until the people arrived. The program did not come off well and I don't think anything was learned from it.

I think even more concentration on Vietnamese language would be valuable. Many of the people who come out of these four or five month training sessions only have a rudimentary knowledge of Vietnamese because it is a difficult language, it quite often happens that when they get into Vietnam and they don't improve on what they have learned and depend mostly on interpreters and translators. The time that they have spent here is not as fruitful as it could be. If everyone could come out of here with an S-2 in Vietnamese I think it would certainly help the program in Vietnam.

I received a one-plus language rating and for me it worked out quite well. I was lucky, I had counterparts who didn't speak too much English

so I could practice Vietnamese with them, but I know many other people who have come from Hawaii, after spending about four months here, who really don't use their Vietnamese too much. Perhaps this is because they still don't have the fundamentals or the vocabulary to really carry on a conversation. They are not confident in their use of the language and thus they don't use it. Of course, if you don't use it you don't improve and you lose whatever fundamentals you have already picked up. Language training is of utmost importance especially for anyone working at province or district level. It could also be very valuable to a person at regional level although it is not as important here since regional people don't have counterparts.

I hope that the people recruited in AID continue to be the type who have been recently coming into USAID. These are young people just out of college with BA or advanced degrees. I think AID personnel should concentrate on recruiting young people and not so much on the retired military. One problem with retired military is that they come in at a pretty high grade and are thus not familiar with the basic programs. For instance, they may have no idea what is implemented at the province level, but are nevertheless expected to supervise the people who administer these programs. I think it is better for supervisory positions to go to people who work their way up through various positions. They get a better understanding of what the overall AID picture is. Also, in some cases--I don't even mean this in any specific case--it has happened that people with military backgrounds are less inclined to understand the civilian side of our operation in Vietnam, than someone who is younger and more flexible. Young people work better in a situation like Vietnam.

I don't think it is necessary for someone to reach a certain age before he is able to work successfully in Vietnam. I think many of the younger people I have seen have probably been more successful. Although this is not necessarily true in all cases, they have been as least as successful, if not more successful, than some of the older people in Vietnam. I think it's because they have more interest in learning new things and meeting new people and finding out what the undercurrent of life in Vietnam is really about. The Vietnamese, like anyone else, respond to this type of interest in what they are doing. I think young people are pretty successful in this. Concerning their creditibility in advising the government, I think anyone who is aware of what is happening in the province, who makes an effort to know the important Vietnamese, who knows the American and the Vietnamese government regulations concerning whatever program it is that he is advising (and he must know these well), he can be a successful advisor, no matter what his age is.

First of all, I think that the recruit should be quite well motivated and I think that most of the people who join the program are. He also has to be able to work with foreigners (who we consider to be foreigners) without looking down upon them. It is pretty hard to determine--whether or not a person has the ability to do this until he is put in the situation where he has to work with people from another country. He should also have an interest in learning the culture, the history and the politics of the country where he is going so that he has an adequate background upon which to base his advice to its government.

Employment Policies

AID of course has a certain number of personnel that they have to employ and after employment reaches a certain point, it has to be cut off. I think the decisions as to who should be cut off should be based upon the performance evaluation reports coming out of the provinces and I don't think this happens all the time. The situation could be improved, I think too much of this is being determined from the Saigon level in Vietnam or an equivalent level in some other countries. Recommendations as to what persons are going to be extended for another tour of duty and what persons are to be terminated after one tour, should in my opinion depend mostly on the information that comes out of the provinces--what the supervisors at province have to say about the individual concerned.

Another criticism I have is that single employees cannot return to the United States until the completion of their tours unless they pay their own ways. I think it would be a better idea to enable a single employee to return to the United States once a year, if he so desires, with government-provided transportation. In spending a two-year tour of duty in a place like Vietnam one, I think, has a tendency to lose his perspective concerning various things, when his ideas are focused on the problems of his own particular area of responsibility or his own district or province. It would certainly do him a great deal of good, I think, to be able to go back to the United States, look at his job from a distance and reconsider what he is doing. I think he would come back and do a better job for having been in the States as a kind of R & R vacation.

Concerning housing, I do not think as much emphasis is needed on providing good housing for overseas personnel as there is right now. I think the structures that have been built in Vietnam to house American personnel in some cases are more than adequate and actually something

that large or that comfortable was not really needed. We could get along with something considerably less comfortable and still get along quite well.

Overlap of AID and CORDS

Technically I am a CORDS man rather than an AID man. My understanding of this system is imperfect, but all personnel out in the field are CORDS personnel even though they are USAID employees, as I am. Generally USAID employees in Saigon are considered UDAID; anyone working in province or regional headquarters, CORDS. Now, there has to be someone working in CORDS personnel in Saigon since everyone out in the field is considered CORDS and there has to be a separate organization for CORDS personnel in Saigon. Also New Life Development in Saigon is under CORDS rather than USAID. Whether the people work in that office are CORDS or USAID, I don't know.

It is even unclear to me in some respects as to where a person from the field goes when he wants to get information. Once when I wanted information concerning payments or something like that, I went to the USAID office and was told that that was the wrong place; CORDS personnel handled that. So I went to the CORDS office and asked them and they said, "Sorry but that is USAID personnel and they take care of that." So if I am unclear out in the field, the people down in Saigon also seem to be somewhat unclear. I have yet to meet someone who could explain the entire setup to me that made any sense, really. I get paid by USAID, by the Agency for International Development. In fact, none of my personnel statements say anything about CORDS at all. The only place that you can really hear anything about CORDS is out in the provinces and the regions. In Saigon, to my understanding and knowledge, they have set up CORDS programs parallel to the USAID programs in Saigon (but not at region or province.) For instance, I believe--I am not sure about this--that they have USAID logistics plus a CORDS logistics down in Saigon. It is a little bit unclear as to just whom you are supposed to deal with if you have a logistics problem. The obvious thing would seem to be deal with CORDS logistics if, for instance, you wanted a reading on some paragraph in the pacification and development council memorandum as to just exactly what it meant and how it applied to your province. I would assume that the best way to get this would be to write to CORDS logistics in Saigon and ask them to see the Vietnamese, but now I am not actually sure because some stuff apparently goes to USAID logistics also.

I would say this confusion affected my job to a certain extent, because it was a problem to find out who it was that I should contact if I

needed to contact Saigon directly, say for clarification of some sort of government program, or if one of the advisors asked me how to get this clarified. Sometimes there were problems. Logistics problems especially come to mind right now for some time we tried to get a specific reading from Saigon from the Vietnamese concerning what Vietnamese in the province was responsible for all goods that came in through the various logistic channels--cement, tin, PL480 commodities, even, say, Chieu Hoi service commodities and so on. We wanted to determine whether or not one person, in fact, the accountable officer, the pacification and development council accountable officer, was the person that is responsible, or whether there were several people that would be responsible, whether each service chief would be responsible for the disposition of these materials after they arrived in the province. The DPSA handled this project more and more closely than I did, but I really don't know exactly who down in Saigon eventually came up with this information--whether it was CORDS logistics or USAID logistics.

Problems of Paperwork

The frustration of paperwork was the greatest problem I had. Sometimes working with the Vietnamese would be a problem--arguing back and forth over little problems--but this was not nearly so thwarting as the problems that paperwork could create. The reporting requirement has always been a problem especially at province level, especially when you are trying to do your job. If you are at province or district level your job should be to get out and find out what is happening, see what is happening and talk with the people at district headquarters and villages and hamlets, the various government representatives, or just the private individuals to see how these programs that we support are getting along. You waste a lot of time on reports, time which is not at all productive, and you at province are probably never going to ever see any results coming of the information in the reports. It is certainly true of a multitude of reports that I have written that nothing happened, no action was taken, and no policy changes were made that helped me at province level.

I spent in the neighborhood of 30 per cent of my time in writing reports and answering correspondence. I probably spent more time on this than most of the other advisors because quite a bit of information was required of me. If I couldn't pass it on to someone else, I had to do it myself. It quite often happened that I couldn't pass it on to anyone else, either because there wasn't anyone else or because I was the only one who had information.

Often you would get a radio message down with a very short fuse on it that such and such information was required not later than tomorrow or the next day. This wasn't information that we had in province headquarters files because he didn't keep files like that and we didn't have personnel for it. We kept files of monthly reports and other reports that we sent in but his was the best that we could do. We don't have all this other information, that, sure, would perhaps be helpful to us. So we'd get a request for information down and we'd have to go out and dig it up. If it was due tomorrow and the person it was addressed to wasn't available, if he was out in one of the districts for a day and wouldn't be coming back in, then someone else had to get started on it. Maybe that refugee service chief who wasn't in was the only person with this information, so what could you do. You'd run around and try and get the information as best you could then send another radio message saying it was going to be delayed; we had to get the rest of this information.

Periodically the people in the regions and in Saigon attempted to cut down on the reporting requirements from province and from district. What this usually meant was that they would send down the request by radio message requesting such and such information so that they could determine whether or not they could eliminate said report. So what happened was that you had to do an extra report to find out whether or not they could eliminate this other report. In some cases they did eliminate reports, although I can't recall any right offhand that they have eliminated. They made some of them simpler, I know this. The Highlander Affairs report has become quite easy to fill out. In other cases the refugee monthly report that I have only seen once or twice, the newest form, is quite extensive and it takes a considerable amount of time to get the information for the report. The problem is that the information that you get from the Vietnamese from month to month may vary in instances where it shouldn't vary and sometimes you kind of wonder about the accuracy of it. I would say many of the figures are probably fairly close to what actually exists but they are not always completely accurate. You can suggest in the monthly province report that you feel certain reports are unnecessary.

I can remember one report that we had to fill out after Tet. Although Tet did not affect Quang Tin province so badly, the reports that had to be filed on Tet were fantastic and never-ending. We had to make reports for Tet for a good nine months on project recovery type of thing mostly concerning refugees. I guess the information was required down in Saigon; I am sure it was, or else why would they ask for it. There

was a great concern over how many houses were burned and how many houses were rebuilt. This was basically to determine what commodities were needed. If you had five houses burned down, each family should get ten sheets of tin, and you should have given out 50 sheets of tin to five families. All they wanted in Saigon was for all of these figures to match up. This sounds like something that was pretty simple on the face of it. But there were a lot of problems involved in it. For one thing, right after Tet there were two or three changes in the services chiefs. Each service chief had different figures that he came up with so you in the weekly reports, you got such and such figures one week; next week you would go to the refugee office for the figures and he would come up with different figures because he was a different service chief. So you send this in and there was a discrepancy and then, poor Saigon and Da Nang, they didn't know which figure to go by. Well, they were not the only ones, you at province didn't know exactly which figures to go by either, but you were not that much concerned about it because you could go out and see that most houses that were burned were getting built back up and the people that were homeless had a place to live now, and you can go out and take a look at this. But this reporting thing just went on and on and on for about nine months and, of course, there were other problems.

U. S. Goals and Goal Seeking

I think that our goal is to help the Vietnamese government become responsive to the needs of the people and to become a government which can function on its own note with outside help from the United States, in the form that we are now giving them. I think the Peace Corps phrase, "Help the people to help themselves," applies. I think our biggest goal is making the government of South Vietnam work, as it can work. I think AID's success in this objective probably varies from province to province and program to program. I can think of instances where I think we are being successful in this aspect, but quite often it depends and breaks right down to whether or not the individual Vietnamese you are advising is receptive to your ideas, whether he wants to learn, or whether he is just out to make as much money as he can.

I think that in working with the Vietnamese we have to establish a compromise between programs which we as Americans feel will best develop the country and programs which the Vietnamese want. This compromise is what usually takes place and this is probably for the best. In many cases, the projects that they requested did not seem to us as the best projects at the time for the particular villages or hamlets

which requested them. Where we would not particularly approve of a project the Vietnamese wanted, a compromise would be worked out.

We might legitimately differ on such a project as the construction of a temple. A temple is a kind of a tricky subject because some people worship at the temple and some don't. We would be pretty justified in saying that it was not a good project, but alos they would be justified in saying it was a good project because it was something that they wanted. We try to honor what they want. If a temple is something that is definitely requested by all or the majority of the people in the hamlet, then we will go ahead and honor their request. But at the same time we will encourage them to build the, for instance, wells which we feel they need. Maybe we won't give them all the materials that they need to construct the temple, but we can say that we will give them a certain amount of cement or whatever to construct the wells. Being good Vietnamese they would probably figure that all of the materials aren't needed for the wells; some of them can be used in the temples. This way, the temple gets built, the wells get built; everyone is happy.

It was not possible, not at province level, anyway, to say, "No, that is not good for you," even if we were sure that what it was the Vietnamese wanted was indeed very bad for them. In most cases it would be pretty difficult to stop the program anyway. You might be able to change the direction of it or you might be able to change the force or the impact of it, but to stop it completely would probably be impossible. So it was best to, perhaps, help it some way and at the same time try to encourage a program that we thought was better suited. But of course, you have to be quite careful to make sure that a program or project that Americans are convinced is not good, actually was not good, because there are so many things in the Vietnamese life that Americans don't understand (I am speaking about myself as much as anyone else) concerning culture, politics, history, the interrelations between the various people.

It is very difficult sometimes to realistically and logically evaluate a project or a request for project because you don't know all the details and the Vietnamese probably won't tell you all the details. You have to investigate as best you can, get all the information that you can and then base your decision on that. But if your information is not complete you have to remember that it is quite possible that there is something that makes this project a pretty good idea for the Vietnamese, and maybe it is a good idea.

Assistance to Vietnamese Programs

In my job I worked with a number of different programs. I had only one counterpart but the people I supervised worked with a variety of programs. I would say about half of these programs showed some improvement during the last year. Probably the biggest hang-up in taking action toward improvement of programs is the lack of understanding between U.S. and Vietnamese officials at the Saigon level.

It would simplify matters a great deal if, when directives come out, they come out in both channels, English and Vietnamese. The pacification and development council has many rules and regulations as to how programs are supposed to be carried out and one of the rules is that when official memorandas arrive in the province, it's up to the local Vietnamese government officials to interpret them and to act upon them. Quite often the American interpretation and the Vietnamese interpretation of these same official memorandas are different. Even though perhaps we have gotten instructions in English which explain to us exactly how they are supposed to be interpreted, the Vietnamese, nevertheless, are not convinced that we know better how to implement the policy than they do.

It is quite difficult to get them to change their methods that they have been using for years and years. They follow strictly what Saigon says; they do not wish to go out on a limb by using a different interpretation or perhaps the interpretation which we suggest. In many cases our interpretation would work out quite well with no problems at all from Saigon, but it would involve their making a decision to make what they consider to be some sort of break from the Saigon policy.

The memorandums are in Vietnamese, but we get the English translation of them. If an advisor has a counterpart, he must know the program as it comes out of Saigon and be very familiar with it before, we sometimes get directives from the American government from Saigon telling us how a certain Vietnamese program is to be implemented and telling us how to advise the Vietnamese on the implementation of this policy. And for some reason or another, in Saigon, the two governments have failed to get together and these instructions do not come up in Vietnamese. In almost every instance, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to convince a Vietnamese that this is the way the program is supposed to be run solely because of the instructions that we received from Saigon. They will come back and say, "Well, we didn't receive those instructions," and they are absolutely correct. It is not their fault; in this case it is the fault of one of the governments down in Saigon not getting together with the other one.

Agricultural Assistance

I feel that the agriculture program needs the greatest amount of assistance in Vietnam today, but it appears that this program is actually losing some of the emphasis that was once placed on it. I know that in I Corps there has been and there is now considerable discussion as to just how many agriculture advisors are going to be assigned. There are five provinces; there used to be five American agriculture advisors. There are, I think, only three advisors now and perhaps there are plans for cutting down to two. I don't really understand this because agriculture is probably one of the most important areas that we could be working on right now. Perhaps there are plans for an American to monitor the program. Filipino assistants or technicians that we have in the agriculture program are; in many cases, quite qualified and do a very good job, but this is the type of program that needs an American to push it through and to give certain areas priority and importance, I think USAID or CORDS out in the field would do well to increase the scope of this program. I think our assistance in agriculture has been more successful than in any other areas. Interestingly enough, it was not in the IR8 rice, which is what everyone seems to be concerned about, in agriculture, but rather in the area of Four-T clubs, which are just like Four-H Clubs here in the United States. The number of clubs that there were in the province two years ago has more than doubled. Putting this on charts, graphs, figures and reports and sending it in doesn't look as good as saying that last month we produced 100 metric tons of IR8, but nevertheless the young people of the province were really becoming interested in the Four-T clubs. They showed a good deal of enthusiasm. The older people in the villages and hamlets took a good deal of interest in their children and their interest was aroused, and it became a very good way of introducing various agriculture programs, such as the IR8. But the important thing was that the young people were organized and they were working together, perhaps to learn more together and to help themselves. I think this is a very successful program.

Our agriculture advisor worked closely with the agriculture service chief. He was one of his counterparts and I don't know exactly how he did it, but he was able to convince his counterparts that more emphasis should be placed on the Four-T program. The American advisor suggested of offered to pay Vietnamese technicians to help organize Four-T clubs throughout the province. The agriculture service chief came back and said, he would also offer technicians. So they got about eight or ten technicians to go out and work with Four-T clubs. The secret behind it was that the agriculture advisor just turned the whole program over

to the Vietnamese, offering to help where he could. It became a completely Vietnamese program and it ran very well.

I think that quite often it is very difficult to get the Vietnamese to use the new fertilizer, the new IR8 or proper building procedures. I know that in the use of IR8 first of all, a good deal of propaganda was layed in the province to convince people that they should use the rice. After some people got the idea that perhaps this type of rice would, or could, produce better than the local variety, they were willing to use it, but only on their worst plot of land that was the most poorly irrigated--and they didn't want to invest a good deal of money in fertilizer. IR8 means a very productive rice, but one which is not any more productive and sometimes less productive than the local variety unless it is given proper care, proper irrigation and fertilizer. So this is still one of the problems that they are working with in trying to get the people who do use these new fertilizers, or the IR8, to use them properly. It is a big barrier to overcome.

The Vietnamese have faith in the local variety because they know that for the last 1,000 or 2,000 years it has produced and every year it will produce. IR8 is something that may and may not produce. So they are willing to give it a try but only on their worst crop of land so that, in case it fails, they have still got the local variety which they know is going to come through to fall back on. This is a very difficult hurdle to overcome; I think this happens in many other programs where we are trying to get them to use proper technological advances or proper construction procedures and so on.

I do not think agricultural programs are given high enough priority by the Vietnamese government. The self-help projects rank very high in priority in the Vietnamese government's point of view. I wouldn't give self-help priority over agriculture. I think self-help works real fine when it is done properly, but I think too much of it is a numbers game whereby the Vietnamese and the Americans put down so many projects started and so many projects completed and when it reaches a certain total or a certain average everyone is real happy. But just how they are being organized and work being done doesn't really enter into it. So my priorities would be different.

Self Help Projects

It is very difficult to get the Vietnamese to use new and different ways of doing things. Some people might say that it is easier to bring about technological advances than to bring about different philosophies and

ways of thinking. I think the two tasks are equally difficult. For instance, they have their own construction procedures which they consider to be quite adequate and it is quite difficult to institute change. You meet these difficulties in self-help projects.

They have built their schools and houses out of cement for I don't know how long and you cannot get them to make the flooring thicker than the standard 1/4 or 1/2 inch of concrete over gravel and rock base. They will make it thicker if you stand over them and tell them that they must make it this way, but if you leave and come back two or three days later, the project will be finished with at most a 1/2 inch of cement over the solid base. This is a fine floor as long as you don't treat it roughly. If you do, it cracks and you need more cement to repair it.

Our self-help program was quite successful on the basis of the number of projects started, completed and so on. However, the success of the self-help program really cannot be correctly measured by the number of projects started and completed. It depends on the different people that worked on the project. Did they understand why they were doing it and did they work together to get the project accomplished or did the village chief arrange the whole thing, or did the Americans contribute most of the support and so on? I really don't think that in many of these programs that we are working on, success can really be measured by monthly reports and statistics that we send in.

We have been working in the effort to get the people to organize themselves, express their wishes and become aware that they are capable of operating in an organized fashion. We have been trying in the past and are still working to organize hamlet meetings where the hamlet chief calls together the hamlet people to discuss problems they have. This enables the people to arrive at what they figure is a workable solution to these problems.

In many cases we have gone into areas where the hamlet chief would say, "We need ten wells, please give us the cement," but unless this request is the result of a meeting, we as Americans, don't particularly care to honor it. In the first place requests should come through Vietnamese channels. In the second place, there is the probable danger that the hamlet chief decided upon it as he saw the American walking into his hamlet. Whether or not he needs a well or whatever may not be a consideration on his making the request. Perhaps he just could, use the cement for his own purposes or some other purpose that would

help the hamlet. So we ask them to call together a hamlet meeting and discuss with the people what sort of projects they feel they need to improve their village. Is it wells? Is it dispensories, latrines? Or what is it? This works a lot better.

It doesn't work very well at all, however, unless we get the proper Vietnamese officials involved in it. In some cases the proper official would be the district chief or in other cases it might be the district representative of the pacification and development council. Although he attends the meeting, the people themselves decide what it is they want--what it is they want to request in government; what it is they themselves are going to contribute toward solving this problem. If for instance, the problem is a shortage of water, they decide how much labor they will furnish, what families will be working on what days and so on. In some cases, amazingly enough, this is the type of thing that they haven't been doing. Once they sit down and go through the process of deciding how they are going to achieve what it is they want and once they realize they are going to have to put up their own labor to get the project accomplished, then aid in the form of cement, tin, reinforcing iron or whatever is needed can help them construct the project, so they go ahead and build it.

When all of this takes place, it works out to be a pretty good project. The hamlet solves its immediate problem. It has built that school or that dispensory or it now has more water because it has built the wells. Most importantly they have gone through the process of getting it done themselves through the proper government channels. They have gotten together as a group and decided what it is they need and then made their request to the government. Before the request would have to have been through the hamlet, the village, the district up to the province headquarters but not self-help project requests will be considered at the village level, not at the province level.

The ratio of funded to unfunded projects, as far as I know, has not changed considerably over the last year. Of course, when I left I think we were more or less in the process of waiting for explicit instructions from Saigon, either from the Americans or the Vietnamese, concerning what sort of material aid we would be giving to self-help projects. The tendency now seems to be toward giving more monetary aid and less material aid to a project. For instance, as I recall a village that has already had elections has 500,000 piasters to give to each of the hamlets for self-help projects. Which hamlets are to get self-help projects is determined by a meeting of the village chief with

all the hamlet chiefs. They decide which hamlet has the most legitimate requests. At these meetings they can decide to allot 50,000 piasters, for instance, to one self-help project. The money can be issued and the people can go ahead and work on the project. As far as what sort of material aid the United States or Vietnamese government at province headquarters is going to be asked or expected to provide, I don't know because we haven't really seen any information of this. If it runs the same as it did last year 50,000 piasters plus all the cement and tin needed could be alloted for the construction of the school classroom. In the plans they now have for schools this would mean 33 sheets of tin and 90 bags of cement. We have received indications of plans to cut down the amount of material support we are going to give, but just how this is operating right now I don't know.

Educational Programs

I was once an educational advisor but just for a very brief period of time; however, I want to discuss education because this is an area in which we are not doing very much at all and this is unfortunate. Education deals with the young people and the young people are quite important in a nation like Vietnam. We do not have an education advisor in Quang Tin province. At region headquarters there is the head of the education department, plus an assistant. As far as I know of the rest of the region, the other provinces don't have education advisors either. They may have someone filling in the position, as we did at Quang Tin, taking it on as an extra responsibility but not concentrating on it. This generally consisted of just getting the monthly report in and as much else as could be done while you were trying to do your primary job--it was pretty difficult. I think we are missing a pretty good bet there too. We had an education advisor for awhile after I got a different job. This man was a Filipino who did a very fine job; certainly much better than I had done because he had much more experience. He arranged training programs and instructed in teacher education and was very successful. There is a good deal that can be done at the province level in education but we just don't have the personnel to do it. It is kind of an untouched field in a way.

Scholarship Program

There are scholarship programs for people to go to the United States to receive training in special fields, but no matter what happens, when scholarships are passed out, the majority of them go to people from Saigon. For this reason I have very little faith in this program.

Last year we got applications that were supposed to be filled out by qualified Vietnamese and sent up through USAID channels to USAID Saigon for this program. We were told that some four to six people from Quang Tin would perhaps be sent to the United States for long-term training--I believe it was academic training. Unfortunately, none of the people who sent in applications from Quang Tin were chosen. In fact, very few from Region I were selected, which often happens since people from Saigon are given priority.

I felt very badly about the fact that a representative told our province people that maybe four to six people from Quang Tin would be selected and then no one from Quang Tin was selected. I felt pretty bad about this and I am sure the Vietnamese did too. We never even heard anything more from Saigon and I didn't find out anything more about the program until I went down one day to Saigon, walked into the education office and inquired about it. I found out that the selection had taken place a long time ago and that no one from Quang Tin had been selected. I think it was a mistake to build up peoples' hopes. This year when the forms came around I gave them to someone else to pass out. I would bet money that no one is going to be selected from Quang Tin again and I wasn't going to waste my time recruiting people for this. A very extensive application that has to be filled out; it takes a good deal of time and so on. I wasn't going to get peoples' hopes up for this type of thing and then have the same thing happen again. I was against this program because promises were made that were not kept.

Participant Training Program

I don't think that the participant training program under which officials are sent to the United States for training is at all a good program. One of my counterparts, in fact the education service chief, had been to the United States on this type of thing. He had spent about 2½ months touring the United States, seeing all the fine educational facilities and he just had a ball, a great time. I hadn't known him before he went to the United States but I knew him after he got back and I certainly couldn't see that he put to use anything at all of what he learned. I would say, for instance, "Well, you saw what happened in the United States, what about giving that a try here." He would say, "Well, that is the United States. It is easy for that to take place there. But this is Vietnam. This is a different situation. It is very difficult in Vietnam; you cannot do that." That was the type of response I got to any type of new proposal that I brought out, if I first pointed out that this was the type of thing that we do in the United States. So I dropped that approach quickly and didn't suggest that anything be

done because it was something that was done in the United States. I just tried rather to bring up something on its own merits and not mention the fact that it was done in the United States.

I don't think that program is any good at all. It is probably a big waste of money. I have worked with several counterparts or Vietnamese who have wanted me to recommend them for this program. A couple who I think are the type who would benefit from it speak English quite well, are progressive and have good ideas, but those are people who are already doing a good job. I don't really see that what they can learn by just taking a look at the United States when they know quite a bit about it already, would help them specifically. I suspected what they want to do, going to the United States, is to stay there. I don't think this is a good program.

The Vietnamese themselves give a good deal of priority to training of government officials. They pay quite a bit of attention to the training of village, hamlet, district and provincial officials and in my viewpoint, this is an area in which Americans cannot do a good deal. We try to help with materials and training information and so on, but this is something that is run by the Vietnamese and since they are behind it, they do an excellent job. We can only help in getting everything arranged and our help in this is only sometimes needed.

Revolutionary Development

I think that the program we had concerning the Revolutionary Development cadre teams was not too successful for a number of reasons one of which was that the people who were advising the program were not able to work very closely with the Vietnamese who was in charge of it. I don't think they were ever really able to gain his confidence and this hurt their ability to advise him on the various aspects of his program.

I think one of the reasons the 59-man teams have been split into two 30-man teams was to make the program more flexible. I cannot say that I have really seen it put into action. In our province they did break the teams down from 59 men. They took each 59-man team and broke it into two 30-man teams, which is pretty difficult because you are going to come up with an odd number somewhere. When it came time to put them out into the villages they found out that the RF/PF support which was needed in some cases was either lacking or not available at that time, so they kept the teams together for their own military support and security. So what you have in some cases is two 30-man teams working

in one area, or an old 59-man team, actually. But I think this is something that will work itself out during the year as the disposition of security forces is coordinated with the disposition of the RD cadre team.

As far as I know they still have a para-military responsibility. I know they are presumably going to be carrying weapons and defending themselves but, since their force will be cut in half, they will be more dependent upon support from RF/PF and from the villages and hamlets they are living in. The original teams had an agriculture man and so forth and so on with them. As far as I know this is not going to affect technicial capabilities at all because, in many cases, previously, they would have two agricultural cadre per team. In this case, there would be one agriculture cadre. So they should still be able to do everything they were supposed to have done with the 59-man team with the exception that, of course, obviously, it is going to take longer for 30 men to do what 59 men could do, but I think that a 30-man team is a workable number. In some cases, I think, 59-man teams were perhaps just a little bit large for the area they were working in. But there is strength in numbers. It was a very good idea to have at least 59 or 60 people on a team if they needed to defend themselves, but as I said, since they are going to be depending on RF/PF, security should not be too much of a problem.

Another difference in the program this year is that the teams will be operating out of villages and not hamlets. Previously, they were assigned to a hamlet for a certain period of time--in many cases six months--and after they completed their objectives they moved on to another hamlet. This year, in some cases, two or three teams will be assigned to a village and the village chief, supposedly, will be the one who will determine which hamlet they will work in and for how long. The village chief will have some say as to where these teams will be working but, nevertheless, the RD cadre chief of the province will have the final say. If he agrees with the village chief as to where the teams should go, fine, there is no problem. I think they will probably work together fairly closely on this. The RD cadre chief will be the one to give the final determination unless the province chief wishes otherwise. He has the final say on this, if he wishes to step into the consideration. This year more emphasis is being placed on village government. Emphasis on moving away from working through hamlet, village, district and then provincial levels of government to get something accomplished. The idea is to bring the government closer to the people. I think it is a step in the right direction. It is an ambitious program and I think that it is certainly too soon to tell right now just how much success this program is going to have.

There are other programs where service chiefs were not at all convinced that the people advising them could actually give any assistance other than commodity support. In our province there were a number of different refugee service chiefs who did not place any confidence in our advisors. In many cases it turned out that the refugee service chief, was new to the job and not really aware of what his responsibilities were, was mistaken and the American advisor had the problem of presenting his program in such a way as to eventually win the confidence of the service chief. I think one of the most important things, I don't think this can be stressed enough, is knowing the Vietnamese program backward and forward.

The refugee program, for instance, is quite extensive. It covers a broad area and there are many directives from Saigon concerning how the various phases of the programs are to be implemented, and unless an American really understands all of these memoranda that come down from Saigon, he is going to have a very difficult time convincing the service chief that he actually knows what he is talking about and that he is actually able to give good advice.

When I left the province the refugee situation had improved considerably over what it had been a year ago. There have not, however, been as many refugees coming in in the past six months as there were last year during the same period of time. This is probably due to a number of causes. One is that the military operations being conducted are conducted in areas where the refugees have already moved out and most of the people who want to come in voluntarily have already come in. The fact that fewer refugees are coming in has given the refugee service chief time to construct additional housing to move refugees out of overcrowded housing where they have been living for some period of time. So, in that respect, the refugee program is looking better.

Use and Misuse of Resources

With all the materials and commodities we bring into the country some of it does get diverted, there is no doubt about that. I think in each province and in each district the Americans working there do their best to insure that commodities are put to the proper use and are not diverted. But the successful distribution of commodities depends on a number of factors. One is just how much interest the American does take in making sure these things are properly used. Quite a bit of it would

also depend upon the Vietnamese that he is working with and just how much he is interested in helping the people rather than lining his own pockets.

Where the district chiefs are willing to accept the tin or cement or whatever, and in fact most district chiefs are more than willing to accept this type of aid, it is difficult sometimes to insure that the materials are put to proper use. Transportation problems present one of the biggest problems in determining that the tin, after leaving headquarters, actually does arrive at the district headquarters. In some cases you have to take the tin out of the warehouse and arrange for a Chinook helicopter to lift it into the district. The Chinook may not arrive on the day it is supposed to and if it doesn't the tin either has to go back into the province warehouse or it has to be kept in a secure area for the next day. If the Chinook arrives the day it is expected then it can be sent out, but if the helicopter doesn't arrive it will have to be kept around a couple of days. In the meantime this tin is exposed to a lot of different people and it is possible for some of it to disappear.

When this, for instance, tin arrives out in the district, in some cases there isn't an American on the ground or even in that general area. In this case, the district chief is free to dispose of it as he determines it is needed. It may have been sent out for a specific purpose of which the district chief will be aware; nevertheless, if he determines that he should sell some sheets for 500 piasters he can make a substantial profit and still keep enough to convince the Americans that he has actually put it to the proper use. This is something that he can easily do and it is pretty hard to determine if he actually has sold the tin. No one will admit buying it and unless someone actually sees him do it, you will probably never get any proof of the sale. Whether or not the tin gets to the Viet Cong is a debatable point. Surely some of the tin and some of the cement goes to people who would not be authorized to receive it. There are people, whose houses have not been burned down who are being issued the tin, but perhaps they have bought it from some unscrupulous official. They may or may not be Viet Cong.

I think Americans should do everything possible, everything that they can do, to prevent this type of thing. I considered it one of the important functions of my job to determine that the material requests that came in were, in the first place, reasonable and valid, and secondly that the release of the materials or commodity would in some

way benefit a program that was in the best interest to the Vietnamese government or to both the Vietnamese and American governments. When I first took this job, many requests were submitted which were not, upon close examination, legitimate requests. There were requests that could be justified under, for instance, Public Law 480 regulations which concern the issue of food commodities but they were not requests for commodities which were really needed. If the materials or commodities were issued, it would simply mean that profit was going to go into someone's pocket.

After a while the Vietnamese I worked with and the various Vietnamese service chiefs realized that when they submitted a requisition it wasn't going to get signed that day, but rather that either I or one of the other advisors was going to check it out along with our Vietnamese counterparts to determine whether of not the requests were valid. After a period of time, they submitted fewer requests that were not legitimate. The last counterpart that I had eventually came around to the point where when he would get a request that he considered not legitimate and knew that I wouldn't consider legitimate, he would automatically refuse it without even having them come over to see me. Whenever I would get a request I did not consider legitimate and would not approve, I would ask his opinion and almost invariably he would say, "That is not a good request." But, unless Vietnamese are aware that you take a very close interest in how this support is being used, it is quite possible, and it certainly does happen, that they will take advantage of it.

If an American advisor becomes aware of corruption he can either go through Vietnamese channels or through American channels. If you work through Vietnamese channels, it is always best, I think, to try and solve the problem at the province level. If a service chief or a district chief is corrupt bring this to the attention of the province chief in the form of a memorandum from the province senior advisor to the province chief. State the case and provide explicit details as to exactly what happened on such and such a date and how much of this and how much of that went into the hands of the district official or the concerned individual. This will sometimes bring results. Perhaps the person will be removed from the position, although of course, what often happens is that he will be removed from his position and transferred to another place, perhaps within the province, perhaps to another province.

A corrupt official can also be reported through American channels. The advisor who discovers it reports to the PSA who, in turn, reports this,

I believe, to the deputy for CORDS of the region. Just exactly what steps are taken after this I am not sure, but this type of thing has happened. Eventually our people in Saigon get together with the Vietnamese in Saigon and say, "Well, look, this guy is corrupt; it is obvious." Then Saigon will send an investigating team out to the province to look into it. Sometimes the Vietnamese agree. They say, "Yes, obviously he is not doing his job." So he will be removed and someone else will be brought in. But, as I said, in all the instances I have known of people being removed for being corrupt, they were simply moved from one job to another--probably to a job where there were less possibility of monetary gain through the unscrupulous use of money or materials, but nevertheless, they were still working for the government.

I think probably the situation is improving with respect to corruption throughout Vietnam; however, in our particular province Thieu's policy of removing province chiefs, replacing them and so on, has not really influenced corruption one way or the other. Our province chief who is a very able, energetic man and is quite qualified for the job he holds, has not changed any of his policies because of the fact they are going to oust the corrupt province chiefs. I don't think that this particularly affected him.

An anti-corruption committee has also been instituted and each province is required to have one of these committees. I don't think this is going to be effective because the people who are sitting on these committees are quite often the very people within reach of the funds and materials. If they are going to study corruption seriously, they are going to be telling on themselves and no one is going to do that. These committees have been in operation, I think, for at least three months and haven't seen any results. In fact, the Vietnamese just laugh about them. The anti-corruption committees to them are nothing more than compliance with a Saigon regulations.

I think punishment for corruption is a step toward reducing corruption to tolerable limits. I understand that some province chiefs have been given pretty stiff punishments for being corrupt, and I think this type of thing should be increased. A corrupt service chief or district chief should be punished quite severely or at least removed from office and the reason for his being punished should be made public. If a district chief has done something wrong and is put in jail for five or ten years, I think everyone should know about it, I think one of the biggest deterrents to corruption would be the fact that, if you got caught, would pay very dearly. The government in Saigon is increasingly putting out

propaganda that the people are going to be punished, but this applies mostly to the province chiefs. I have not seen it happen in the case of district or service chiefs.

I think we do make a mistake in issuing so many commodities to the Vietnamese. More could be spent on training programs if less were spent on materials such as cement and tin and commodities such as those given out under PL480. Under the present system PL480 commodities can be handed out to help complete a self-help project, and, I think that in reality these commodities are quite often unnecessary. I have always discouraged their use unless they were absolutely necessary to get something done or unless the people were too poor to be able to work on the project and support their families at the same time.

I think some serious consideration should be given to eliminating PL480 type of support entirely. I think at least it should be limited to refugee relief and aid to widows and orphans. I would hold it within those boundaries and can't think any other areas to which it should be extended. I know for a fact that many of these commodities are sold, bartered or exchanged.

For instance, the bulgar wheat we ship over to Vietnam and probably to other countries is a food that the people actually won't eat. Some people, but certainly not very many, will eat it, and the bulk of it is sold or exchanged for use as hog feed. This works out all right because the hogs get fat and the people eat the hogs, but if this is what it is going to be used for, we should not pretend that it will be used otherwise. Obviously, when you give a person a bag of bulgar each month when he doesn't eat bulgar, he is going to sell it so he can buy something to eat or wear. Wholesalers, after a distribution at a refugee camp, will come down and buy up the bulgar and sell it for animal feed. Perhaps food commodities could be brought in which the people would eat themselves. This, I think, would improve the program and perhaps eliminate some of the waste that takes place when these various products that no one has much use for are brought in.

Construction of a Chieu Hoi Hamlet

During 1966 the Chieu Hoi Ministry in Saigon approved the construction of 100 living units in for hoi chanh in Quang Tin province, but for various reasons this program never got under way. There were a number of problems involved--how much material was going to be issued, how the houses were going to be built, etc. During 1966 lack of interest on the

part of the people involved in the program was probably the major reason that the hamlet did not get underway. During 1967 much of this disinterest continued and in addition there was heavy commitment to other government programs in the form of material support which meant a shortage of supplies for the Chieu Hoi program. In 1968 both the disinterest and the commitment of materials to other programs continued. I don't know all of the history behind this Quang Tin Chieu Hoi hamlet but it just never got off the ground. I believe there was also some problem at one point of getting funds from Saigon--after it was decided that the project should be started, Saigon renegged on making funds available.

In the latter part of 1968 it became increasingly apparent to several of us, namely the Chieu Hoi advisor, the DPSA, the PSA, myself, that the existing Chieu Hoi center was becoming too crowded to house all of the hoi chanh and their dependents who were coming in. We could not delay construction much longer.

We met numerable problems in getting this underway, not the least of which was the land given to Chieu Hoi by the province chief which was a meter too low and under about two feet of water during the rainy season. Fill had to be brought in, so the Chieu Hoi service chief contacted someone in the engineer outfit who agreed that when trucks were not being used for other purposes the engineer would bring in fill. Although this was not an official engineer project, they would do it on the side. However, they had to be paid for delivery of the fill and the bringing of the ground up to proper height took 8,000 of the 10,000 piasters allotted by Saigon for each of the proposed 100 hoi chanh family living units.

Once the land was ready to use, we faced the problem of finding building materials. Saigon had directed that CORDS would provide building materials or rather that the Chieu Hoi service chief should contact the CORDS representative for aid in building these houses. The directive was entirely too ambiguous. The Vietnamese should have resolved how much support would be needed through their own administrative channels and then present the request to the CORDS representative. Ordinarily there is no reason for the Chieu Hoi service chief to contact the CORDS representative whose information usually comes from higher echelons of administration. Also the directive failed to specify how much and what kind of supplies would be needed. There were no dimensions for the units given and it left the responsibility for determining how many supplies would be needed to the service chief and responsibility for judging the request entirely up to the American representative. Little basis for making these decisions was provided to either persons.

The Chieu Hoi advisor and myself got together with the Chieu Hoi service chief and my counterpart, the Pacification and Development Council representative, to determine what we thought at the time would be a reasonable amount of material to be issued for each living unit. We agreed to somewhere in the neighborhood of 35 bags of cement per house plus tin needed to roof the house after it was completed.

However, when the Chieu Hoi service chief filled out a requisition he requested about twice the amount of cement that we had agreed upon. We naturally did not sign the requisition and were forced to call another meeting. At the meeting we found out that the Chieu Hoi service chief had, immediately after leaving our office, gone to the reconstruction service chief, and told him the amount he would be getting. The reconstruction service chief had said in essence that more cement was needed to pay the contractor who would build the houses. According to the Saigon directive, the hoi chanh were to build the houses themselves and no contractor would be necessary to the project. Naturally we did not feel that the Americans could provide cement to pay off contractors and especially when it did not seem necessary to have contractors. Although my own counterpart agreed that this would not be a legitimate use of commodities, the Chieu Hoi service chief and the reconstruction service chief would not be reconciled to any other method of construction. This second meeting broke up with no agreements reached.

So we were still left with one major problem of getting the houses constructed. We considered a number of alternatives, one of which was to forget the problem in hopes that the Chieu Hoi service chief would eventually agree that the units could be constructed with the materials originally designated. We discarded this idea however as the program had already been delayed for nearly three years and since we felt that the Chieu Hoi service chief might let another considerable amount of time elapse before pushing the program.

We talked the program over among ourselves in independent and informal conversations--the Chieu Hoi advisor with his service chief, I with my counterpart. What, with suggestions from our superiors, we finally decided to do was to draw up an agreement between CORDS and the province chief as to what materials GVN and CORDS would provide and draw up a similar agreement between my counterpart and the Chieu Hoi service chief with no Americans involved. This protected the province chief's dignity so that his authority and not that of his underling, the service chief, would be officially responsible for the construction. At the same time it would commit the service chief to carrying out the construction by

his signature on the second document. Since the service chief is more responsible to the Chieu Hoi Ministry in Saigon than to the province chief he would be under no obligation to fulfill orders signed by the province chief, so both documents were necessary. Once the Chieu Hoi service chief realized that he was not going to get more materials from GVN and CORDS, he signed the document.

Unfortunately, I left the province just as these things were being signed and as the materials were being released, so I don't know the outcome of the project. I do think that it was successful in that after a long period of time we were able to get the materials issued and everyone to come to an agreement as to exactly how the construction was going to be done. We also eliminated any problem of the Chieu Hoi service chief saying in the future that more materials are needed, because everyone understands now just exactly what is to be issued. My counterpart and I had agreed that this was a good idea and the service chief finally did agree. The Vietnamese like to have things on paper and I think this was a workable solution.

Materials Distribution After Tet

Immediately after Tet, the province officials of the Vietnamese government reacted very quickly and admirably to the stress situation. As soon the next day as it seemed secure, they took all the tin from the warehouse and distributed it as it was needed. They gave three sheets to one family, four sheets to another who had a bigger house, maybe five sheets where there was major damage, two sheets where there wasn't too much damage. This got the job accomplished and it showed the Vietnamese people that the government was responsive to their needs, that it really had their best interest in mind. Sometimes only a little tin was available, but straw could be and was used so that reconstruction took place quickly.

However, this was terrible as far as Saigon was concerned because it didn't agree with established procedures. If a house was 30 per cent burned or destroyed, a certain amount of tin and money was allotted to reconstruct it; if it was 50 per cent destroyed, another certain amount was allotted, etc. Naturally, in Saigon, the records of what had been distributed did not match up with the records of what should have been distributed. The people had had no problem at all, but Saigon was not satisfied. Saigon directed that all tin that was supposed to be issued be distributed. In other words, if five houses had been destroyed, 50 and not 48 sheets of tin would have to be distributed. That meant that

we had to additionally requisition more than 7,000 sheets of tin, which in my opinion were definitely not needed. Although the people had long since forgotten about Tet and the homes had been entirely rebuilt, we had to give out the tin.

The Vietnamese went through a farce giving out the tin to supposed Tet victims without any way of knowing at this date who the Tet victims were. A lot of the people who had to pick up this tin certainly did not look like Tet victims to me, but who could take time to check a list of 5,000 names to see whether or not these people were registered as victims during Tet. I was very unhappy about this program and explained clearly to our region headquarters that it wasn't necessary, but my advice was not taken.

Cement distribution was a similar problem after Tet--cement had to be given out simply because Saigon said that cement had to be given out. We simply refused to distribute all the cement because it would have meant that we wouldn't have enough for the other building projects. Where the cement that was distributed went, I don't know. I suppose some of the people who got it, used it but I am sure a lot of the other people just sold it. This was a ridiculous program and it showed that both the U.S. and the Vietnamese governments could not be nearly as flexible or responsive to stress at the Saigon level as they could be at the province level. At the province level there wasn't any problem. Tet was forgotten two months after it was over and everything in Quang Tin province had been repaired.

Refusal of American AID

The district chief in Tan Binh is very progressive, very energetic and a fine district chief. He is a North Vietnamese and, in many cases, the better, more energetic government officials are North Vietnamese. I don't know what the reason for this is but it quite often works out this way. I suppose his past has a lot to do with the way he is running his district. I don't know that much about his history but I do know that he hates the Viet Cong and he does everything within his power to destroy them. He is ruthless if he decides that an area out there more than likely has Viet Cong and will call in an artillery strike or whatever he may have. It is rather difficult to define just exactly what it is that makes him so much better than the other district chiefs except that he is honest, just unbelievably honest, more honest than anyone, I think I have ever met, including Americans or Vietnamese. He doesn't pull any punches at all.

He will tell anyone what he thinks, including the province chief. And, of course, there is a little bit of friction between the province and district chief because of this. He runs his district as what we would call back here as a tyrant, a dictator and he is. But he is a benevolent dictator and has the best interests of the people in mind.

He is one of the finest Vietnamese I have ever met and he does not like American aid. In most cases over the almost two years I have known him, he has refused American aid. A refugee camp would be attacked and, say, 100 houses will be burned down and immediately, Americans wishing to get their Vietnamese counterpart to respond to emergencies would say the refugee service chief, "Let's go up to Tan Binh and find out what we can do to help these people whose houses burned down." Well, automatically, the refugee service chief would have ten sheets of tin to replace each house that had burned down and be, or course, willing to distribute this tin as long as the Americans go along with it. The Americans would be very anxious to help. But what happened when you got to Tan Binh district was that you would find that the district chief had already organized the people into working parties to clean up the rubble. He had sent out security forces into a, perhaps contested area to provide security for villagers and had sent other forces out to cut the bamboo and the rice straw for the roofs. He would say, "We don't want your tin. We will build our houses ourselves." Within a week he would have his 100 houses repaired and completely rebuilt and his people living just like they've lived for the last thousand years. The fact that they didn't have a tin roof didn't really bother anyone one way or another.

In one instance up in that district, a substantial bridge was blown up on one of the district roads. The next morning the American Army engineers, wishing to react quickly to this type of thing, moved a Caterpillar out to clear away the rubble so they could start rebuilding the bridge. About 9 o'clock in the morning, as soon as they arrive, the district chief pulled up on his Honda and said, "Take your Caterpillar and get the hell out of here," and the Americans, of course, left. The district chief said, "I am going to have the people rebuild this bridge."

It so happened that the bridge was in an almost contested area. Just little ways beyond it was a contested territory. Through his sources he knew who was responsible for the blowing up of the bridge so he taxed the people living in this contested area and made them contribute money and labor to repair the bridge. They had to buy the cement and

the reinforcing iron, furnish the labor, bring the sand and the gravel and rebuild the bridge. Within about one month he had the bridge rebuilt and it has never been blown since even though it is in an area with limited guard where it could easily be blown. His philosophy was that if the Americans rebuilt it, it would be blown the next day, which was probably correct, but if the people rebuilt it, they would not let it be blown again. A man isn't going to go out and blow up a bridge if he knows that the next day his wife is going to have to go out and work to repair it. This is the type of philosophy this district chief has used all the time in that district and he has done very vell, without American aid.

If you ride through the district with him, say, on the back of his Honda, you see the people of the road bow to him and remove their hats and so on. He has made sure that the old customs and traditions continue and that the people rely upon themselves when they want something done and not upon the Americans. He is very proud and independent and this is the type of thing that is needed. The people there haven't received outside support but, still, they are building more roads than anyone else. He will go out with a stick and mark off a length of road maybe two yards long. One family has to build a road for that length of two yards, and another family has to build the rest. You can go out and see 500 people, sometimes, working on a road. I have never seen that in any other district in Vietnam. He makes the people self-reliant and proud of what they are able to accomplish themselves, which is what we are trying to do through self-help projects and so on. But he is doing it his own way without U.S. support and if all district chiefs were like this major, they certainly wouldn't need AID over there. There wouldn't be any need for AID.