

DEBRIEF OF A CHIEU HOI ADVISOR
GO CONG AND THUA THIEN PROVINCES
VIETNAM

1967 - 1969

The AID Organization

Personal Entry into AID

The sort of work I did as a Peace Corps volunteer in India appealed to me as a career and I made my application to AID while I was still in India. I received a letter from the recruiting section asking me to interview in Washington. I was accepted and I went directly from the Peace Corps into the orientation program for AID. I am interested in a career with AID and have just recently been accepted for the IDI (International Development Intern program) which replaces the old junior officer training program and involves the grooming of young officers for AID careers. I found out about the program in a USAID notice which said applications might be made through sending a memorandum endorsed by your supervisor. I was accepted and will go through a seven-month training session geared to a wide spectrum of world studies.

The Washington orientation for Vietnam lasted two weeks during which time, as I recall, we saw movies on Vietnam, had discussions, participated in role playing sessions and heard lectures from persons who had been in Vietnam, and persons in the AID organization. I think this Washington orientation was necessary. It was good familiarization program on the AID organization and on one's participation in it.

From Washington I came to Hawaii for Cycle VI training in Vietnamese language coupled with a cultural studies program. I think that the language training was very professionally done. I had gone through a Peace Corps language training program in Hindi for three months before I went to India and I think that this training program was better by far; it was well done and very well organized. The staff was always completely open to a new way to improve our ability to speak a foreign language, a language which we had never heard a word of before. That's why I think that after six months quite a few people came up with a 2, although I only had a 1+. By and large, I think the group did very well--from all ages, from younger people of 24 or 25 up to some of the people who were retired military officers, 45 or 50. It was a good program for everybody.

I think that there was probably a necessary orientation duplication in Hawaii due to the fact that not everybody in this group went through the six months language training program. The first part was for all of the people, not only in Vietnam but for all of the people going all over the world. Our group that was going to Vietnam was singled out at certain times for specific lectures on Vietnam. I think perhaps the fellows who lectured should have organized their programs more closely with their

colleagues. They talked of some of the same things. I think perhaps a better organization of the content of each lecture could have been accomplished.

In my specific case I would say the least valuable training was the assimilation program that we had on the other islands, mainly due to the fact that I had been in a foreign country before. I think this part of the program would only have been necessary for those who had no foreign experience. Perhaps the group could have been divided up. That three months, for a lot of people, was a duplication of experiences that they had had before. It was like going through three months in another foreign country where we were living out there on this plantation village in rather makeshift houses. I remember one of the Vietnamese saying that it couldn't even be this bad in Vietnam and he was pretty close to being correct.

We had a group of three psychologists conduct a sensitivity training and although some members of the group were violently opposed to this sort of training, I had no feelings one way or the other. I had had this kind of training before so I really had no strong feelings about it, although I do think it gives a good idea of the areas to which foreign nationals are sensitive. In these sessions, a Vietnamese would play the role of a government official; another person, his advisor. Afterward the group discussed what each member would do if he were the official or the advisor. I think it was valuable training in that it better equipped you to deal with your Vietnamese counterpart.

Language I think is the most important factor in training. As far as the other things--sensitivity and learning about customs--I think that you should have a very general knowledge of these but I have found that with a grasp of the language everything else comes easily. Vietnamese are very receptive to people who know their language or try to know their language and will try very hard to teach them more. I have seen government officials who speak fluent English speak Vietnamese with us in an effort to get us to use our Vietnamese more. If you are anywhere near proficient in the Vietnamese language, they won't speak to you in English. I would emphasize language training and some sort of motivational training. The Vietnamese are very lax toward any American who doesn't understand their customs but they try very hard to help an American who seems to be trying. If the person doesn't seem too interested in the culture in which he will be living for eighteen months or two years or whatever, he should receive some motivational training.

Recruitment for AID

I think AID has to look for the person who is well motivated, who is interested in foreign cultures and who is a sincere sort--someone who is genuinely interested rather than in it to go overseas for the first time or to make a lot of money or whatever. The person does not necessarily need a high degree of qualification; he needs rather to be interested in performing his job within his own capabilities. Many times I have seen persons with only two or three years of experience after college do a much better job than someone who has a lot of experience--say 15 or 20 years--but lacks interest in his work and motivation toward learning about the Vietnamese.

I think AID should cast its appeal on the challenge level: "You will be finding out about another culture, learning another language," instead of "You will be getting

so much money a year; your wife will be in Bangkok; you will get 25 per cent post differential." I think if you emphasize the latter you are attracting the wrong kind of people. AID should emphasize that this is a good job, that qualifying for it is a challenge in itself. "If you are interested in helping develop a Vietnamese province," AID should say, "please give it a try; if not, forget it." This way I think you would attract the person with well motivated interests.

I think AID has been quite successful already. I like to look back on our old training group who came through ATC here. By and large, most of the group were interested in doing the job. I think a good percentage of those who weren't interested either quit early and didn't stay the whole time in Vietnam or they are not going back for another tour. My group, however, was sort of an exclusive group in that it was picked for language training first. Those who didn't go through language training probably have a lower degree of interest in their jobs in Vietnam. I think anybody who has gone through ATC is more motivated, more interested in his job. Others with whom I've talked emphasize the language program as being by far the most important part of the program with the rest of the things sort of falling in behind giving a person a greater degree of awareness about Vietnam.

I would like to see AID de-emphasize age. I think a younger person who has had some experience overseas can do just as well as an older person. Again, from experience, I have seen a lot of older people who have already finished one career and are doing very well in starting a second career. There are a lot of retired military persons in AID who are very much interested in their work. I can cite many examples of this. Of course, with each year that goes by, any intelligent person should gain more awareness of what foreign work is and what he can do to help this developing country get on its feet. But, again, I think the type of person that AID should be looking for is, regardless of age, a person fascinated with foreign experience and dedicated and sincere in this sort of work, who feels that he can contribute something toward the development of that country.

I think AID offers a good tour--nineteen months is long enough to get your feet on the ground; improve in your language proficiency and make a contribution of some kind. However, I think the government would make more money out of a two-year man with language training. In other words it should contract for about thirty months with the first five or six spent on language training. I think the government could profit from this. After one year the person could spend maybe two or three weeks or a month back in the States. I think that would be an excellent idea as opposed to the R & R program to surrounding countries.

AID as Employer

The salary and benefits offered by AID are quite adequate and certainly any criticisms I have are not of a monetary nature. I have no really strong complaint against AID as an employer, but I do think a little more service to the employee could be rendered from the Saigon level. There could be an improvement in administering those things to which the employee is entitled.

The personnel office in Saigon is one of these areas where administration of employee benefits could be improved, although you have to consider that that

office sees a fantastic number of employees every day. Each time I have gone in there it has been slow and it doesn't seem like papers get from one desk to another. You may submit even simple things like R & R travel material to them a month to two months ahead of time but you still have to walk it through once you arrive. You probably spend two or three days in Saigon before you actually can leave for R & R. I am not sure that this problem can be overcome at this time. There are so many people going through there. This is the only thing I have disliked about AID as an employer. It may be that they are overworked already. I am quite sure that that is part of the reason. I really have no really strong complaint against AID as an employer.

Maybe a little more effective organization at Saigon would help. There should be some preprocessing. For example, when I went through the out-processing phase, I was given a long sheet of paper that needed 30 or 40 different signatures which simply answered yes or no to such questions as, "Had the language material been taken out? Were travel vouchers taken care of?" I think possibly that since all these signatures could have been gotten in one building, a messenger could have carried this sheet of paper from office to office. Perhaps a locally hired Vietnamese could have carried the paper to the travel section, the office of training, the ADFM section, etc. and the employee could have spent one more day working out in the field. All of this should be taken care of so that the employee could simply come in and pick up his voucher rather than have to go around for two or three days without knowing all that is needed to be processed to get out of the country.

What should happen in R & R travel, for instance, is that the employee should put in his application and be informed whether it is approved or disapproved. Then he could just come to Saigon, pick up his ticket and leave. In the last two instances of my R & R I had to follow up my application and find the person who had my forms in his office. This may be completely coincidental but I know of one other person who had the same problem--together we made two people to whom this had happened three times.

One thing I do disagree with is the amount of preference given to married personnel. I think that the benefits each employee receives should by no means be determined by his marital status. Many of the married persons are able to visit their wives on separate maintenance travel every one or two months, whereas the single guy may stay for a year or more before getting out of the country. I guess you have to be there six months before you are even eligible for R & R as a single employee, whereas if you have a family you can leave every month.

I feel too that AID does too much in the way of providing creature comforts--air conditioning, nice houses, etc., although I can understand that people's opinions on this differ because of the kinds of living conditions they are used to in the States or in any other countries where they've been. People like myself would put more emphasis on getting a good assignment, a good challenge where something could be accomplished, than on getting good living conditions. I think that AID has provided their employees with more than satisfactory living conditions in Vietnam.

Although I am satisfied with the Personnel Evaluation Reports I received, I think that the most recent PER is a change in the wrong direction. It was supposed to check the employee's strongest and weakest points and explain. So you had to check four strong points and four weak points regardless and

this did not necessarily present an accurate description of the employee. And the rating officer had to say something, whether it was true or not. It was mandatory that the rating officer check off four strong points and four weak points which might not necessarily give an accurate description of the person being rated. Anyway, you can't really characterize people like that, that is my opinion. The previous PER, I think, was more accurate and gave the rater more latitude in trying to describe the work, the interest and the aptitude of the person being rated.

The rating officer feels that he has to rate four strong points and four weak points and then he has to justify them and really sometimes has to rack his brains to do this. He looks at the list thinking, "Oh yes, he is interested in his work and he gets along well with the host country nationals. Now on the weak side, yes, his writing ability, yeah, he doesn't write too well or have good inter-personnel relationships with Americans." So then he has to go down the list and say, "I checked this one didn't I, what do I say on that one? Oh, "he didn't drink at the bar at night with the rest of the Americans." Or when it comes down to writing ability, "I remember that time when he didn't put in the semi-colon in there in the right place, oh yeah, I had better put that in there." It is not necessarily accurate. The rating officer is being forced to put the person in a category like that. I think it should be on the rating scale as they had before, which said, "Relationships with host country nations, motivation, initiative" and so on. There was a scale from one to ten to be checked. The next page asked for a summary describing in detail why you gave the person an "8" on host country relationships, why you gave the person a "6" on motivation, etc. It was more accurate and gave the rater more freedom in making a decision.

Personal Adjustment

Adjustment to Position

We were met at the airport in Saigon by a representative of personnel and brought into that office for two or three days of processing. I was introduced to the chief of the Chieu Hoi division and given a briefing on the Chieu Hoi program. It was at this time that I was informed I would be going to IV Corps. I was sent to region after the briefing and after about five days in Saigon. Although there were some areas of the processing that could have been improved, by and large, I would say that it was adequate. The processing could have been faster, the briefing more organized, but as time goes on this sort of thing will just naturally improve. At IV Corps I was received by the deputy regional Chieu Hoi advisor. He continued to brief me about the Chieu Hoi program in IV Corps. He sent me for a week and a half so that I might get field knowledge of the Chieu Hoi program. After this I was sent to Go Cong province and was assigned there permanently.

The first thing that I did was read all of the operational memorandums put out by the Chieu Hoi division. Before going to field I had asked as many questions as possible of the regional advisor and of the various field Chieu Hoi advisors I visited before going to the province. When I arrived in province I tried as much as possible to get a feel for what the province was like security-wise by talking both to Americans and Vietnamese. I learned names of all the service chiefs and district chiefs and asked many questions in order to get a feel of what the province was really like. I wanted to know what sort of things I might be able to

push, what things certainly would be in that province--I wanted to become as much aware as possible of what the province was like. There was some written guidance also which was of help. After each directive comes out of GVN, a write-up on it comes to the Chieu Hoi division. Operational memorandums are sent out quite often and these give you a good idea of what the program is about. You might have a memorandum on prisoners of war achieving hoi chanh status and the translation from Vietnamese, the GVN document and an explanation on the front through the Chieu Hoi advisory division. It is very informative. Of course the Chieu Hoi advisors should know these memorandums by heart. They are like the Chieu Hoi bible; they give you a good idea of what is going on, what the Chieu Hoi policy is, and what the hoi chanh can and cannot receive. In addition, JUSPAO puts out quite a few research papers which are easily available through JUSPAO representatives.

I think that the orientation for my job was very adequate. I cannot think of anything that I would have added. The Chieu Hoi division had already developed quite an information system of various charts, graphs and summaries of the Chieu Hoi. These are included in a book indexed by little tabs. A look through this book can show you much of what it is all about. They say, "Read it. See what it is about. We will see you in the morning if you have any questions." You read it and if you have any questions then they discuss them with you.

I kept the many suggestions made through these sources in mind. Perhaps the ideas or suggestions made were not directly applicable to the local situation but could be adapted to meet our needs. I think anything that a person reads, any information that is available, taking this into consideration with the local situation, could be put to use. I think any person who is interested in improving his job and improving the situation will read anything he can get his hands on concerning the Chieu Hoi program.

Adjustment to the Vietnamese

In evaluating my tour in Vietnam I think I was probably more effective than a person who had no language training. I found my work very interesting. In both provinces I had jobs that I enjoyed and I developed several friendships with the Vietnamese. If the number of friendships that I have developed is any indication of effectiveness, I would say it was quite effective.

The attitude toward the war is certainly much different when viewed through Vietnamese eyes. One of the most frustrating things for me was the lack of concern about getting rid of the enemy. At first this irritated me very much but, as time passed, I realized that there seemed to be a balance of forces only to keep him down, not to eliminate him completely--this seemed to be the philosophy. Balance and counter-balance of forces seemed to be the way they went about getting rid of the enemy. As I can remember in Go Cong province, I knew the province chief knew very well where the VC were but he did not go out and destroy them. But then one day the VC attacked the city with mortar and killed a few people and the province chief really tore loose; he then started building bunkers around the city. They go so far and then that's too much. It doesn't seem to be, "The Communists are the worst thing that ever hit Vietnam, let's eliminate every last one of them then we'll have peace." It just doesn't seem that way.

Relationships with Counterparts

When I first arrived in Go Cong province there was no Chieu Hoi chief at all, only the deputy Chieu Hoi chief. The former Chieu Hoi chief had been removed by the province chief for reasons that I could not find out. After my arrival the province chief appointed a first lieutenant who was a young man close to my age, about 33 I guess. We hit it off real well in the Chieu Hoi program. We really liked working together and we developed quite a few things together. He was only there a month and a half when the Chieu Hoi Ministry assigned another man from the Saigon level and, of course, he had to leave. This disappointed me very much, as things were going well, we liked each other and we had been working well together.

The next man they sent was about twice my age. He was the shirt and tie type with cuff links, French glasses, the works. Although he spoke French fluently, he did not speak English and I could only communicate with him in my Vietnamese which at that time was only 17½ months along and not very fluent so we didn't hit it off at first at all well. It was of course difficult for him to have such a young advisor. I was pretty disgusted with the situation and I'm sure he was too. For the first two weeks there was complete lack of rapport and I was afraid this would go on all year.

This is the approach I decided to take: I invited him for dinner with wine and the whole works and we got pretty well snookered. I said to him, "Do you know the reason I was sent here? It was because Major Riddle wanted me to help out the Chieu Hoi in this province in whatever way I could." And Mr. Cat raised his arm and said, "Is that so? Why, that is the reason Minister Pham Anh sent me here." I said, "Most interesting, it looks as though we have been sent here for the same reasons to this province." He agreed and I said, "You know you can help me and I can help you." He looked back and said, "How can you help me?" I said, "I can help you get money. I can help you get the materials to improve your Chieu Hoi program which will in turn enhance your prestige. When you go back to Saigon the people will look on you at the good work you have done, even though it was my input. They don't have to necessarily know it. In return, when I need reports, you can give them to me and I will fill them out. This way we won't have any difficulties." He said, "Very good. We can work together." Being a long time civil servant, he was interested in promotions and in looking better in the eyes of his superiors.

Believe it or not, from that day on we developed a working relationship. We sat down the next day and developed a plan for working together. I played the younger brother in the relationship telling him that he could call me anything he liked--advisor, assistant, whatever. We agreed that the office was only a facade and I was to sit there as Chieu Hoi advisor, he as Chieu Hoi chief. What could be done realistically we would talk about, but no one else need know about the actual discussions that took place in our office. We agreed that whatever happened in the Chieu Hoi business, we would consult each other before giving out information or taking any action. Whether an American or a Vietnamese wanted information, we would not give any answers unless we first consulted each other. We were both happy and it was a harmonious relationship. Somebody would come down complaining that something was wrong and we would just smile at each other and say, "No, we have no problems."

So the Chieu Hoi program did improve and it improved so much that my counterpart, normally a stand-offish type of person who rarely became involved in things, got very involved. I noticed a definite change in the man. As the program improved, we both took greater interest in it. He supervised improvement of the library, saw that latrines for the hoi chanh were dug, etc. The hoi chanh were happy. Officials from Saigon felt he was doing a tremendous job. When Saigon officials would ask what I thought of him I'd say he was Number One, he was a good man. I would tell my boss from region that he couldn't be better. The chief would tell my boss that I was a good advisor and that everything was fine.

My counterpart became so involved that one day he said to my boss, "Go Cong two months ago was the worst Chieu Hoi province in IV Corps and now it is close to being the first Chieu Hoi program in the Delta. I will make it the best in the country." He told my boss who is Major Riddle, an Australian major, "I will, in three months, make this the most beautiful Chieu Hoi program in the country." He lifted up the calendar and put a circle around the day in three months and said, "Major Riddle come back on that day and you will see a totally different program."

He was promising all sorts of things and I wondered what the heck we were going to do to get them. So after it was all over, that night we went to one of the local shops in the city and sat down for soup. He said, "Hey, how about some beer?" I said, "Good idea." So we started putting down the beer and pretty soon he takes off his tie, puts it in his pocket, rolled up his sleeves and said, "What did you think of that little episode today?" So I said, "Fantastic, but how are we going to get all of these things done?" And he said, "Yeah, I really did spout off there didn't I, but we must do it." We both agreed that it was something that we had to do. We had really committed ourselves to our bosses. I said to him that I thought we could do it and I said that I could get AIK funds and commodities and I will try to get more money from region and from Saigon. But that he must also press on the Vietnamese side to get everything he could out of the Vietnamese to improve the Chieu Hoi program.

We had to organize the cadre to improve center, repaint the center, rebuild the center. He called a meeting of the cadre and they became intimately involved in this saying things like, "Why, I can do this," or "I can do that" or "Let's try this." The cadre agreed that because we had told them we would do these things, they had to be done. My counterpart also called a meeting of the hoi chanh telling them that we had committed ourselves and that we would like their help in digging a fish pond, making a better fence, whatever. In essence, he said "As hoi chanh you are a part of Chieu Hoi as we are and we must make this look good to impress our superiors." The hoi chanh involved themselves as a part of this goal, as a part of something to do, and they very much improved the Chieu Hoi program.

Major Riddle and others were most impressed with the changes that were brought about in the three-month period that was promised. Six or seven months later my counterpart received a promotion and is now in the inspector general's office in Saigon. He received a Psy War medal, second class and also a certificate of appreciation from the Chieu Hoi ministry, and he now has the highest ranking job he has had in his life. Every time I go to Saigon I meet him.

U. S. Bureaucracy

Changeover to CORDS

When I arrived in Vietnam CORDS was a relatively new reorganization of military and civilian elements. When I arrived in Go Cong province, the province senior advisor was in the process of organizing the charts as to where each slot would be, who would be subordinate to whom and so on. Although at first everyone was a little apprehensive about the reorganization into CORDS, I think that CORDS has really proved to be an effective organization of the military and civilian elements which before were sort of going in different directions. It has put them on one team and put them to work effectively. I've seen this in Go Cong province and also in Thua Thien province up in I Corps. Some very good relationships developed through this team work. For example, the RF/PF advisor under CORDS could ask directly for the armed propaganda teams of the Chieu Hoi to work with the RD cadre.

Coordinating the civilian and military elements into CORDS has been a very good contributing factor to the improvement in the pacification program throughout Vietnam, I think. Everybody in support of the CORDS organization--USAID, the Catholic Relief service, military or whatever--has his supporting personnel division under CORDS. There is a technical chain of command as well as departmental so that the senior province advisor is the boss of the entire team. Although support divisions for coordination of the whole Corps exist at regional level, each person in the province is subordinate to the province senior advisor. Before he can contact his supporting division at region, he must go through his PSA to receive concurrency.

Although there were a number of complaints about the amount of paperwork involved under CORDS, I think that there has been a trend toward less paper work during this past year. I can remember that one of the first Chieu Hoi monthly reports was voluminous--almost like writing a book. The report we were to turn in last month was considerably more concise and I think this trend is in the right direction. The report form could probably still be more concise with a lot more things cut out of it. I probably spend 15 to 25 hours a month making reports and answering correspondence. There were required monthly reports and, of course, if there was a mass rally or mass hoi chanh returning this required a special report.

The statistical paperwork in Vietnam is something else again, and you really wonder if these reports, necessary things, required reports made up at province and sent to higher headquarters, are ever read at all. Even though something appears in a report, you may be questioned about it by someone in a higher echelon. The reports focus on charts, graphs, figures, and don't really focus on what these mean. They give the number of returnees coming in, for instance, without really asking what kind of returnees they are, why they came in, etc. Some of the more intangible information would give greater meaning about where we are going and how effective the pacification program really is. I think my division, Chieu Hoi division, has tried very hard to correct this but the statistics and paperwork seem inevitable.

The reports are fairly ineffective for other reasons too. Of course everybody likes to think that he is doing the right thing and even though things are not going so well, the reports indicate that they are. This happens especially when you have people in a province there just to put in their short time and get out again. They will never say anything bad or derogatory about the United States' efforts there. As a result you get a reservoir of good comment about how things have been going over the years.

Five years may inspire five favorable comments and on the sixth year somebody may say, "This is too much. Look at all these case histories. This isn't the situation at all." But by the time of the sixth person, things may really have changed and he may underestimate the situation. And of course by the time the report travels from grass roots to the top it has been edited along the line and the situation may have changed again. Throughout Vietnam there has been a fantastic phenomenon of reporting on things without a very conscious or realistic effort to make those reports accurate.

Hierarchical Differences with the Vietnamese

There is a Vietnamese line of communication from Saigon down to my counterpart and an American line from Saigon to me. These are pretty much different chains of communication as the Vietnamese place no authority at the regional level. It is from province to Saigon on the Vietnamese side, whereas on the American side, it is from province to region to Saigon that you must communicate. You can probably make exceptions to this but it would not be very well accepted by your regional boss. The Vietnamese would also probably make exceptions and go through the region level but this is not normal procedure.

The GVN official for Chieu Hoi at region is actually called the representative for the Ministry of Chieu Hoi but this is just a cover office as he has no authority and actually no responsibility. On the American side, the regional boss has much more authority and a little more responsibility, so where you might be getting the word from region, the Chieu Hoi chief would be getting it from Saigon, and the directions might be totally different. Something always happens in the time between something happening in Saigon and this information reaching province coming back through the American channels, and the Vietnamese channels. It always makes it much harder for us to go through one more echelon. When you mention region to the Chieu Hoi chief that means nothing more than lip service to him. Although the regional representative is supposed to receive all reports from the province, analyze them, and shoot them up to Saigon--the returnee rates and financial reports and that sort of stuff--province doesn't have to send anything to him. Province can go directly to Saigon. They can get by with it. They can ignore the regional delegate with no problem, whereas we can't do that. We report to our regional advisor and then up to Saigon.

I don't think that any problems have been caused by this on the American side. Even though we have to go through region we sometimes get a command or other such thing in less time than the Vietnamese get it directly from Saigon to province. Sometimes the directive comes faster through our channel due to our courier service and so on. They put everything through their own postal system.

It is sometimes quite embarrassing for the GVN counterpart when the American advisor is always receiving his directives first. It sometimes causes some irritation. We usually pass them on to him if he doesn't have them. I personally haven't found it to be too great a problem. In fact, in some cases my counterpart acted on directives coming through American channels, sometimes a GVN directive coming through American courier channels. What they have been doing is sending a lot of GVN messages through Air America courier channels marked "Chieu Hoi chief, care of Chieu Hoi advisor." You just hand the message over to your counterpart and since it is addressed to him you don't open it. He can open it up and say, "Oh, did you see this directive?" This saves the embarrassment of having the advisor read it first and works out much better. There is no loss of face, so to speak, from having an American know about GVN matters first.

The Chieu Hoi Program

The Chieu Hoi Ministry to which all of the people in Chieu Hoi division are advisors has made very significant qualitative changes during the last 19 months. Many of these changes were brought about by the new Chieu Hoi minister, Minister Anh, who came into office about ten months ago. Very significant changes in staff have occurred. He has improved the staff; he has improved the organization; with the increased staff quality the performance of that ministry is greatly improved. There is now clear direction as to what the ministry should do. This has been most evident to me in the much faster rate in which a request sent by the province Chieu Hoi chief is given attention.

The Chieu Hoi program first started in 1963 under Diem's people. It was an American idea based upon our experience in the Philippines with the counterinsurgency against the Huks and it was reorganized to fit the situation in Vietnam. However, the Vietnamese have realized the advantages of such a program and have very much taken responsibility for it. Although some American advisory elements still exist, there is no command whatsoever by Americans. The Chieu Hoi program is an integral part of each provincial GVN program and the province chief has the responsibility for it.

The program has had some low points like right after the assassination of President Diem and during the Tet Offensive in 1968 when there were no returnees to speak of. I was in Go Cong province in 1968 during Tet when the city was attacked a couple of times. The Viet Cong controlled quite a bit of the rural area in the province at that time and we received no returnees. However, the Chieu Hoi program continued to exist and was able to fight back after the Tet offensive. No one said, "Chieu Hoi is out. What are we going to do now?" There was enough of an organization established already that they were able to reorganize and establish a new program to appeal to the enemy.

Since the Chieu Hoi program in Go Cong province enjoyed unusual success over a short period of time in 1968, the interviewee was asked by the Chieu Hoi division to prepare a write-up of the techniques used in inducing returnees. That report appears as an annex to this debrief.

I do feel that the Chieu Hoi program is definitely a success right now and that it is getting better. I can cite only a few instances of corruption--so far as the hoi chanh not getting his weapons reward or clothing allowance. These incidents were the exception and I know of no instance where the hoi chanh failed to receive the land that was coming to them.

The program can always be improved. I think that one thing undertaken recently by the GVN is very important. That is the training of the people they send out in the field. The ministry should concentrate on training and retraining by refresher courses. The first national conference was held in late 1968 in Vung Tau. I have found many times that the Chieu Hoi chief does not know about all aspects of the Chieu Hoi program. In the past he might have been taken out of the general populace and told he was the chief without being given any complete training. Not one of my four different counterparts was ever entirely clear on budget matters even though, on the American side, complete sets of instructions were given with explanations in Vietnamese and in English. We Americans had regular monthly, annual and semi-annual meetings to go over these things and I think they should be doing more of this on the GVN side.

The Inducement Phase

The Chieu Hoi program begins with inducement, a phase involving many factors, one of the most important being military pressure. Even though the hoi chanh may realize that the Viet Cong are wrong, he will not leave his land, home and family to which he is much attached unless he sees plainly that there is military pressure upon him to do so. Military pressure makes him see that any association with the enemy is dangerous for him and that he had better get things straight with GVN by rallying, going through reindoctrination and coming back to his village.

However, if he doesn't know about the Chieu Hoi program he won't rally even under military pressure. Because he doesn't know about the Chieu Hoi program, he will think that since he is with the Viet Cong he has had it so he might as well fight to the end. This is where Psy Ops, Psychological Operations, comes in. Psy Ops drops leaflets explaining the Chieu Hoi program completely, telling where an enemy can receive rewards for weapons, rewards for serving as scouts, or for leading allied forces to caches, Viet Cong bunkers and tunnels. Another aspect of the inducement program is letters written by persons who have rallied, to their friends and relatives in the Viet Cong ranks.

The Chieu Hoi program also has in each province an armed propaganda team and I would say that these teams are responsible for securing about 25 per cent of all the returnees in the nationwide program. The APT will range in size from a platoon to a company and some provinces have two companies. APT members, all required to be hoi chanh or ex Viet Cong themselves, go out into contested areas where they give testimonial accounts of their experiences, pass out leaflets and help the families in the contested areas to build their houses or plant their rice. The APT member uses his personal success story as an inducement, saying for instance, "I was with the enemy, I rallied and now I am fine and my family is fine and why don't you do the same. If you know anybody else who is with the enemy tell them to come in because siding with the Viet Cong is just not the way to do things."

For the inducement to be successful, the actual merits of the GVN have to substantiate the propaganda that is being passed out. If there is a corrupt province chief, if the Chieu Hoi program is bad, if the Chieu Hoi chief is corrupt, the returnees are not going to rally. You hear of the "Bamboo Telegraph"--I have seen the word get around fast enough that I almost believe it exists. If all the way around the GVN doesn't look so good, no one is going to rally.

So the military pressure, the psychological operations and the political climate all interact to induce the returnees to come in. Neither military pressure nor psychological tactics are going to work without the other or work in an area where the GVN is distrusted. For example: When I first arrived in Go Cong the APT was passing out leaflets and talking to families like it was going out of style but at that time military pressure was not very strong. We had a province chief whose search and clear operations were called the "search and avoid operations." Quite frankly he used intelligence to avoid the enemy. The new province chief, who is one of these gung-ho types, got the RF/PF and the main force battalions from the APVN 7th Division to clear out the enemy so that RD teams could come in. There was an influx of ralliers comprising the highest number of returnees in Vietnam in 1968. When these people came in they said, "Yes, we knew about the Chieu Hoi program before, we even knew who the Chieu Hoi chief was, but now that the GVN is obviously stronger and more powerful, we have to work for you." It is that sort of an affair. However, leaflets and other propaganda had not told about the Chieu Hoi program--this is what it is about, this is how much you are going to get for your weapons, etc.--they would not have rallied because they would not have realized the advantages.

Exploitation, Reindoctrination and Training

After the inducement phase you have the returnee coming into the Chieu Hoi center where he is exploited by intelligence personnel in the province. They ask, "Do you know where there are any weapons cached? Do you know where the Viet Cong are now? Can you tell us about your cell leaders or can you tell us about your district chief? What is his name? Where does he go? Who does he contact?" This sort of thing is for the elimination of the infrastructure. After this is completed, the returnee is assigned to a barracks, is given new clothes and starts with political reindoctrination.

Strangely enough, it is not very hard to reindoctrinate the Viet Cong. Very few of them completely believed what the Communists were telling them, or understood the Communist doctrine. I would estimate that 70 to 80 per cent of the returnees had no real awareness of what is going on in Vietnam. I would ask a returnee, "Why did you join the Viet Cong?" He'd say, "Oh, well, they were in my area and what they said sounded good," or "I was a young boy, I got a kick out of going around attacking villages and blowing up bridges and then pretty soon the gun ships came. I didn't like those gun ships. They get too many people killed, so I decided to rally." I'd say, "Do you believe in the Communist philosophy?" He'd say, "Oh, yeah, it's that fellow, Marx, isn't it?" I would say, "Do you realize that you were a part of a national or even international organization that wanted to take over South Vietnam?" He would say, "Oh, I didn't know that, I just thought I was in this village here." They are really very politically naive. You find very few, even hard core Viet Cong, who will argue ideology.

Since very few were really strongly motivated toward Communism, the one-month re-indoctrination period was actionally a political education period, making them aware of what is going on in South Vietnam--giving them a complete political picture. We start from the beginning--Vietnam, the Chinese invasion, the French colonial period, Communist insurgency, GVN counterinsurgency, the U.S. involvement. The course teaches them, "You are in this village which is a part of this region which is a part of Vietnam." It does not try to change them over by preaching that Communism will not work. Lack of education, really, is why most of them join the enemy in the first place and when these guys finish the course they say it is most interesting.

The returnees are in the Chieu Hoi Center for two months. One month is devoted to reindoctrination, the other to vocational training, if they so desire. At the two centers where I served as Chieu Hoi advisor, they were offered tailoring, carpentry and masonry. At one center typing courses were offered and some pretty good typists were being produced. Up in Thua Thien province they had hat-making and basket-weaving and were turning out some fairly proficient semi-skilled laborers.

Resettlement and Follow-up

After the vocational training the returnee is released, receives his release papers and becomes a regular citizen of Vietnam. Many of them go to the larger cities. In Go Cong many went to Saigon--especially the younger ones. There are greater employment opportunities in the cities. The returnees who cannot go back to their home village, due to security reasons, are offered a plot of land by the government of Vietnam. The government gives them subsistence for six months and also a few sheets of tin and some money to buy the rest of the framework for the house for those who cannot go back to their home village. For the five or ten per cent of the returnees who cannot go back, the government sets up a Chieu Hoi hamlet of 100 family house units.

The follow-up phase, which is very important in determining the effectiveness of the Chieu Hoi program, is largely undertaken by the police. They find out how the returnee is doing, if he is still on our side, if he's communicating with the enemy. A copy of each returnee's release papers is sent to the police station in whichever district he may be residing. The district police officer is supposed to have a copy of the release paper for checking purposes and it has been pretty well left up to the discretion of each district police officer as to how often he wants to check up on the returnee. It varies from each district. I have seen where each district police officer knows where hoi chanh are in his district--there is one here, there is one in that hamlet, there is one in this village--whereas in other districts the officer might be delinquent and not know where any of them are. I think it varies quite a bit.

Everyone in Saigon is subject to regular police checks. It's usually a random stopping of people. If a returnee happened to be stopped, the police would say, "Why are you here in Saigon now," and he would say, "I work at such-and-such a place." The police would contact his employer and the Chieu Hoi center in that province and ask if we could give him any more information about the returnee, as a matter of routine investigation. I think, of course, the follow-up part

leaves something to be desired but I think they are on the right track and from what I can see very few people have defected. As I remember in Go Cong province in 1967, out of about 900 returnees for the year we had about six defections. In Thua Thien in 1968, out of 1,281 returnees about ten redefected.

I think one of the greatest needs for research at this time would be in the area of follow-up. We need to know more about how the returnee is being reintegrated into society, what he is doing once he is out of the Chieu Hoi center. Somebody who is familiar with social research techniques could gather a lot of information if he had the time and interest. This would make an interesting thesis or dissertation.

Acceptance of the Hoi Chanh

Since the program's inception in 1963 under Diem's people, the Vietnamese have found it pretty hard to accept a fighting enemy who has rallied as a regular Vietnamese citizen. For several rough years the returnees had a hard time getting jobs. But with improvement of the ministry staff there has been subsequent improvement in the preparation of the hoi chanh for jobs. In the past nineteen months there has been improvement in the initial interview for intelligence exploitation, the political reindoctrination and resettlement and follow-up procedures. As a result the Vietnamese have found the hoi chanh more worthy of acceptance. Some of the Vietnamese also view the returnee with a humanitarian eye--they want to offer the enemy a new life.

Too, the Vietnamese people have begun to realize that the hoi chanh is a person with information on the enemy--what better way is there to find out about the enemy than from a voluntary rallier? There is a tremendous capacity for intelligence here and the Vietnamese can see this. With each bit of new information garnered from a hoi chanh, the Chieu Hoi program gains in acceptance by the Vietnamese people, I think.

Although many times they might not be too happy about the fact that a person who a few months ago mortared the city is being brought into the community, they accept him. I can remember one very, very interesting instance out in Go Cong province. A hoi chanh had rallied and was at district level going through S-2 interrogation. Just a few weeks before he had been part of a squad that had mortared that district capital, and at district he was brought into contact with one of the guys in the S-2 section who had received a fragment in his leg from a mortar round. The hoi chanh being interrogated was sitting there and I remember this guy saying, "So you were with that mortar squad," and he said, "Sorry about that, yes, that is right." The injured man said, "Well, it looks like my leg will be better. It's a good thing you are on our side now." They both smiled and I could see no apparent anger. They both joked about it.

I think the Chieu Hoi program has done a good job of placing high ranking people in similar positions throughout the government and this has had a tremendous psychological impact on our getting more high-ranking returnees. In one snowballing rally in Thua Thien we received people who had been working with the government for ten or fifteen years. One example was the district secretary in one of the districts in Thua Thien. I asked him why he decided to rally and he said, "The GVN is strong and the Viet Cong cause is a lost cause." They asked him what he

thought he would do now that he had come over to the GVN. These people are professionals and highly trained, even though they are working for the enemy; they have had to work hard to get what they have, so many of them might feel loss of position.

I notice one thing as far as the military returnees go, all due respect is paid to rank. Both in Go Cong and Thua Thien when a returnee would come in from a local force unit, he was called by the title he had had with the enemy. They would call him Mr. Platoon Leader and continue to call him Mr. Platoon Leader. A second lieutenant was Lt. Manh and they would always address him as Lt. Manh, or by captain or whatever his rank was. They continued to call him by his rank, so that he wouldn't feel that he had lost anything through his time and effort and attempts to try to move himself up.

Surprisingly, the NVA regulars who rally are much more warmly accepted by the Vietnamese than are the Viet Cong. I think this is why: They look upon the NVA as a person who came down the Ho Chi Minh Trail and infiltrated South Vietnam to fight for what he thought was a just cause--to fight for what he really thought was true in order to liberate South Vietnam. When they find out this is not the case, then many of them rally. They are, by and large, accepted warmly, whereas the Viet Cong in the province are not so warmly accepted. The Viet Cong is thought of as a man who is on the fence. He is right there; he is maybe just a couple of miles away from a GVN outpost but it took him a while to rally. So they consider the NVA regular as a person who was committed to something he didn't completely understand. They think of the Viet Cong as someone who should have known and shouldn't have stayed there this long.

Many of the NVA regulars have taken up significant jobs with the government. I know of three specific instances where NVA unit commanders of a company in Thua Thien had rallied. One now has his own home and is going to be commander of APT company. In another instance, a young fellow rallied and was married to a South Vietnamese Hue girl who was not a hoi chanh herself, just from the general population five months after rallying. Most Vietnamese can't even marry in a year or two years because of formalities and so on. Two of these months he had spent in the Chieu Hoi Center and the Chieu Hoi chief had to vouch for him in front of this girl's parents saying, "Yes, he is a good boy, I think he is good. He did well in the Chieu Hoi Center." We went to the wedding and she was a beautiful girl and it was really something. This fellow at this time is in charge of the vocational training section at the Chieu Hoi Center. Another North Vietnamese who is now an APT member, was married to a Hue girl and is doing pretty well for himself as this family is quite wealthy.

This goes against all the communist propaganda which says in essence, "Don't rally; don't get away from us because if you do, you've had it. You will never be able to reorganize and resettle yourself in South Vietnam." They drop leaflets and make speeches to this effect. When the North Vietnamese sense that they've been deceived, very often they are ready to get out and go home. Obviously they are not allowed to go back and so they rally.

I remember one fellow who rallied just recently in Thua Thien. He was a second lieutenant and he was with the special force unit that led the attack on the

city of Hue and escorted a CT group into the Citadel they lost and went out to work in a nearby district. He had finally said, "It is all wrong, what we are doing is all wrong," and he had rallied. I met him at the Chieu Hoi Center and he opened up his billfold and showed me a picture of his wife and two kids. I asked him if he thought he would ever see his wife and children again and he said he doubted it. Why did he decide to rally? Because he said it is all wrong and he didn't want anything to do with it. I asked him if he would try to reorganize himself here in South Vietnam and he said that he would try.

Snowball Effect of Returnees

It is like mud in the eye of the enemy to have a returnee reintegrated into Vietnamese society. Propaganda on each returnee after he is released is very effective. You take a picture of him and his family and incorporate it into a leaflet. You ask him to make speeches saying, "I was on the other side. That was bad news. I'll never do that again." This development of a reservoir of people who were with the enemy but are now convinced that GVN is on the right track is really what is needed for the people of Vietnam for it induces more enemy to rally and reinforces the existing loyalties.

With each day that goes by GVN puts more into the countryside, constructing more bridges, more schools, etc. The help of the returnees in this gives something more and more tangible to the doctrine that the GVN is really improving the Vietnamese standard of living. All the Viet Cong can give is force and only by instilling fear in the villages can they develop a following. The Viet Cong really haven't done very much for the people of Vietnam at all as far as development goes. The returnee stands as a representative of the GVN who, though once pulled in by the sweet-talking Viet Cong, realized that there were better things to come with GVN.

Because of the great degree of control, the only chance the enemy soldiers in the main force units have to rally is when they are dispersed in battle. So the number of returnees depends in part upon the success of the GVN military forces in dispersing the enemy, making a large blow toward their efforts.

If a main force unit came in and was almost totally wiped out, it would also convince the indigenous personnel to think of their future in South Vietnam, realizing that the Communists are getting weaker. This has sort of a snowball effect as it did in Go Cong province in 1968 where suddenly GVN occupied the whole province. Members of the infrastructure said, "Well, we wanted to be with you all along; we really didn't like the enemy; we are ready; we will work for you. Take down this flag and put up the other flag." Conceivably there could be a school house out in the countryside with a Viet Cong flag of long-standing and if suddenly the GVN is all around running up the GVN flag where the other flag had flown, school officials would just say, "What can we do for you?"

There is an interesting case in Thua Thien province where this sort of thing happened. Thua Thien has had a long history of political instability and has traditional leanings towards the Communist cause. During the late months of

1967 the Communists recruited a lot of young university students, high school students and other young rural personnel throughout the province. Their plan--Tet offensive. They were told that victory and success would be their's and the National Liberation Front would control the province after Tet. It sounded good to them, and like other young people around the world they liked excitement anyway, whether it was right or wrong. So they launched the offensive and lost. It was a great demoralizing factor for all of these young fellows. This was the first time they had ever seen combat in their lives. They had had little or no training. They had been given weapons and told to "fight." After the offensive Chieu Hoi received an influx of all of these young people who said, "Well, you know the Viet Cong are really bad news. They captured us and made us fight with them and we really didn't want to do that anyway. Now we're all ready to help the GVN."

I don't know how true their reasons are for going with the Viet Cong in the first place, but their rallying had a good impact on the Chieu Hoi program. It created a snowballing effect. Many people came in with them deciding to get themselves a clean slate and start over. We received people who had been working with the enemy for as many as ten or fifteen years in that snowball effect in Thua Thien.

Progress of the GVN

South Vietnam is really taking off and moving ahead. I think they are doing very well in carrying out their programs--very well indeed, and furthermore I think that President Thieu is doing a good job and that the GVN has improved quite a bit under his leadership.

Every day the government of Vietnam survives as a government it is going to get better and stronger, for the Vietnamese will rally to the side that offers them the best opportunity. In Vietnam the family is first and the province second and whether GVN or Communist government, the government ranks somewhat less in importance. They like to stay in their homes; they like to stay with their families. They will tolerate up to a certain point one government or another if they can stay where they are and save their land. If this becomes too difficult, they will switch their allegiance.

What happened in Go Cong recently was that several villages under VC control suddenly came under GVN control. What causes this is that some VC officer comes stomping down the Ho Chi Minh trail from Hanoi with an order that a city has to be mortared, saying, "Why aren't you doing anything? Mortar that city!" They don't want to mortar the city but they may do it anyway. Then the GVN says, "You guys weren't supposed to do that; now we're going to give you some more of the taste of blood." That seems to be the way it works--one way or the other. The stronger government gains the Vietnamese loyalty.

Many times in the organization of an effective government, the fact that there were Communists around was not the problem. Sometimes it was just by in-decision, lack of organization, lack of unity that the Viet Cong were ever able to grab any vote of confidence at all from the people, especially up in

I Corps. As you remember, when the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Cultural Center were burned down in 1966 and the I Corps commander there said to the central Vietnamese, "The heck with Saigon, the heck with anybody else, we aren't with anybody. We are central Vietnamese and we don't want anything to do with anybody else." They sort of took on an anti-American, anti-Saigon flavor at that time, which gave the Communists all kinds of opportunity to get their foot in the door and they did.

There has not been a representative government in Vietnam before and they haven't had much experience in developing one. By tradition there is a guy at the top who might or might not be benevolent, but the grass roots individual has had to be primarily concerned with his own needs.

From my point of view, the highest priority needed in Vietnam is the development of a grass roots government receptive to the needs of the people and able to act quickly to meet these needs. Suppose, for instance, that a bridge is needed drastically at "X" location. If the village and hamlet chiefs could see the province chief and get approval for the bridge in a short time, it would have a great psychological impact on the rural people. It would be a chalk mark on the GVN side.

By and large I have been pretty impressed with these hamlet and village chiefs. Most of them are elected, while the province chiefs are for sure appointed. The communication between Saigon and province is bad enough but there is an even greater gap between province and hamlet. I would bet that many a good hamlet chief says to himself, "What am I to do? I request things and I never get them. I am just a figurehead."

The Vietnamese government is primarily concerned right now with pulling the loose strings of government together and I really don't think it is to the stage yet where it can recognize what the real needs are. It is coming; you see traces of it now and then, but officials are still much more concerned about barbed wire entrenchments around district headquarters than they are about getting out and winning over the people. I guess it is sort of hard core Vietnamese that the family comes first. Service to the family is the greatest good you can do. That they should be of service to the people--out tending to the needs of the people--is something that hasn't come across completely yet.

Now and again I have seen the Viet Cong let up and the GVN let up too. They say, "Okay, it looks okay," without getting out to see and let the villagers know GVN exists. One of the reasons I really admire the Go Cong province chief is that he would send his troops around the province every week, not to look for VC necessarily, but to show the presence of the GVN.

Effect of the Tet Offensive

Before Tet there were a lot of people going in their own directions thinking that Communists are good people, interested in the welfare of all of South Vietnam and trying to do good. Many thought they should be accepted as a political entity. No one on the government side would ever dare say that, as you can understand after the imprisonment of Dzu the presidential candidate,

than friends or relatives, it takes time to organize even a hamlet government. First they have to grasp the concept of a hamlet government, then the village government, provincial government and the large concept of a nation. It is difficult for them to know what a nation is and what it means to the Vietnamese himself. They are having to develop consciousness that working together in your own area is also a contribution toward your whole nation.

Revolutionary Development Cadre

When I first arrived in Go Cong province, the RD teams did not have very good reputations. Initially this was probably one of the least successful programs, largely due to the fact that the people recruited into the program, mostly draft dodgers, were not really interested in anything at all. But that is not the only reason. Again I think much of it was due to the training of these people and their leadership. The VC called the RD team the "Black Crow Gang" and tried to induce the people in the villages to call them the same. That is about what they were--long hair, dirty, all had different sorts of hats on and they thought they were the world's most privileged characters. They used to be quite obnoxious as they went by the Chieu Hoi Center; they would be drunk and they would scream at the hoi chanh and tell them they were about the worst thing on the face of the earth. The RD cadre were really pretty bad news. I watched these guys just sit on the side of the road and fish with their weapons hung on the side where anyone could pick them up. They certainly were not coming up with any information on the infrastructure.

Meeting these very same people a year later, I was very much impressed with the new leadership, the new way they had developed. I remember a year ago meeting RD team members who really showed no respect for me at all. They were swearing all the time, were unconcerned, had no interest in their work. But five days ago I was out in the same villages meeting some of the same people. As the RD team commander would drive down the road they would stand at attention and would salute him and when they would speak to him it would be in a very respectful way. This wasn't just for me but for anybody, and they were also showing respect toward the villagers in that hamlet.

My first counterpart, Lieutenant Trieu, is now the RD cadre chief in Go Cong and I attribute these changes to him because I know that one year ago the RD cadre were entirely different organizations. There are sixty teams now in Go Cong and I just recently visited him and they are fantastic. He really hammered hard on serving, assisting, training and, as with any program, I think leadership. I think right now at this time the program is very effective whereas it was not the case a year ago. Their reputation has improved tremendously too from what I can see, and he has been promoted to captain. He is always driving along with them, and took me out with him when I visited Go Cong before I came here. They were building bridges and assisting the farmers in such things as repairing their houses. He seemed to be very happy and the villagers liked the RD teams that were there.

They have a dynamic leader who has an iron hand control on these guys and impresses upon them that they have a duty to perform. They must assist in the

developing of a country. If they don't they had just as well forget about it. The Captain let it be known that they might go join the enemy if they liked, but if they wanted to do something constructive, they would stick with the cadre. This is the way he brought about the change, I think. He said, "Okay, you guys want to fool around? Okay you are not going to be on my team. Do you want to do something? Do you want to do something that you will think about years later, helping the building of a country? Okay, you are with us and you can work with us." Those who would perform well would receive awards, receive medals. If an RD team member was wounded some night in the village he would receive a wound medal. Captain Trieu was very conscious of putting medals on people at the right time and of saying the right words at the right time to enhance their feeling that they were doing something worthwhile.

The Go Cong province's RD cadre are an exception, however, as I see it. I think--and I really don't know that much about it--the program has been over-rated in some cases.

Phoenix Program

Another program which I think has been a great success in Vietnam is the Phoenix Program which was initially an American idea and initially included a lot of Americans on the staff. The Phoenix program, which was started around May of 1968, sponsors a central collecting agency for all intelligence on the Viet Cong Infrastructure. Information is collected and given to the appropriate persons for action. Before, police, military security, Chieu Hoi intelligence, S2 or G2 (if there was one in the area), had its own little reservoir of intelligence.

Under this program a Phoenix committee comprised of a representative from each intelligence-collecting source met to compile information and make assignments as to who could take care of what. The committee essentially would say, "This is what we have; you can act on this, you can act on this, etc." For example, the provincial reconnaissance unit could act on the night capture of Viet Cong Infrastructure or police could act in the city on some intelligence about a lady that picked up fish and information at the corner market. A villager who saw a cache in a rice paddy might tell the police and the police would in turn tell the provincial sector who would go out the next day and pick up the cache. It has been a very successful program.

American Participation in GVN

I think that South Vietnam, as a nation, is getting strong enough now that the Americans could be withdrawn. I think that in all areas the Vietnamese are more and more taking the ball in their own hands and, in many cases, the American presence is a detriment. One thing that I think is a very important factor to the political psychological climate, is that each time the Vietnamese start to do more we should take more out right away. The Viet Cong really make a lot of propaganda about the American presence. Young males may be induced to follow the Viet Cong by the Viet Cong posters of the American soldiers taking out Vietnamese girls. The posters read, "This is what happens to our females," or some other saying. It is hard many times for the South Vietnamese government to combat this, or to counter-react it. It seems that the less the American presence is noted, the more psychological and

political the GVN is going to get from the populace. All the way around when the American presence is less obtrusive the GVN will be better off.

Work by Americans

When a Vietnamese can do something, we don't need to put in an American to do it. For example, I noted the reaction of a Vietnamese driver when another American, a Vietnamese and I rode from Thua Thien to Hue. This was a new look at how Vietnamese feel about American presence. Since the other American and I could speak Vietnamese, we could understand what this civilian touring car driver was saying during the trip.

The guy was driving down the road and here came an American truck around the corner and out in the middle of the road. He had to pull way off to the side of the road and he said, "God damn." He was really angry and grinding his teeth all the time. He came up to a GVN check post, and stopped and waved at the Vietnamese MP, who in turn waved him on. Then we came to an American check post and the MP stood out in the middle of the road and says, "God damn it, stop that car. Get that son of a bitch off to the side of the road." The driver pulled off and next the MP said, "Open the trunk." So he opened the trunk and took everything out. We were sitting inside and the MP said, "Well, what are you guys doing in this vehicle?" We were civilians so there was no problem. This driver was probably a real good-hearted GVN type but if he is driving down the road and he comes across something like this, wouldn't he wonder who is in charge. Who is in charge anyway? Is the GVN really in charge? In as many cases as possible, where the American presence could be taken out--perhaps only Vietnamese should check these Vietnamese vehicles and Americans only check American vehicles-- There would be much greater psychological impact.

Of course, many times American presence is probably necessary and maybe the Vietnamese military police force is not up to the quota yet, maybe we are a necessary part. But from what I saw of this one guy's reaction which is probably true for other Vietnamese, I think. When a Vietnamese can do it, we shouldn't put an American in there. The Vietnamese can do it and he should be doing it.

The Paris Peace Talks

If in the Paris Peace talks President Thieu could have announced, "We are going to give Hanoi a chance. If they want peace they can have it," it would have been of greater psychological significance to the Vietnamese than having a big power which was supposed to be in the background speaking for the whole world to hear.

I was up in Thua Thien during the whole time the peace talks were being started. During October of 1968 the returnee rate in Thua Thien had been the highest for that year. Some 281 enemy had rallied in this month--there were from five to ten a day coming in. During October there was sort of a whisper of the peace talks, but at this time nobody was really paying attention to them. However, on November 1, starting with the bombing halt, the returnee rate went way down. For three days, November first through third, there were no returnees in Thua Thien. One, two or three came in each day after that. We interviewed the returnees and asked them why they thought the returnee rate had dropped so severely.

They said that the Communists had increased their propaganda almost threefold on the Paris Peace talks. The Communists had been saying all along that the GVN was a puppet government and by default the facts of the Paris talks had lent credibility to them. They were pointing to President Johnson and saying, "Is it not true? There he is; he is out in front; look at him." Everybody all over the world sees him saying 'Let's have peace. Let's talk about it.' If it isn't true that the GVN is a puppet government, then why is President Johnson doing all of the talking with Hanoi? Why isn't President Thieu doing some talking?"

The talks could have been done with more subtle American intervention. There could have been a little American pressure in the background, but it did not have to be a big blast for the whole world to read in the newspapers. President Thieu's participation could have given a lot of favorable propaganda for GVN. Instead the big power in the background, speaking for everyone to hear, created a lot of free propaganda for the Communists.

I think I am basing this on good authority. Several people I talked to in the Thua Thien province said that I was absolutely correct, that if President Thieu and not President Johnson had done the talking with Hanoi, the returnee rate would most likely have increased rather than decreased. This is only one of the Vietnamese opinions, however. The returnees questioned revealed too that some thought only a loser negotiates and if the GVN was indeed winning, why should it want to talk to anybody? They have good grounds to believe this. When the French finally lost in 1954, they wanted to negotiate. So from past experience, how could the Vietnamese believe otherwise?

Others of the Vietnamese do believe that even though they support the GVN, they are really supporting our puppet government. I asked questions such as, "What do you think about President Johnson and our administration now initiating the peace talks?" And they would answer, "Yes, they can do that; that is all right. We are accepting money from the United States. You are the big man and a big person must always go out in front." I said, "No, that is not the deal. What about honor?" And one Vietnamese answered that honor was something else again, "We have lost our honor."

American Image

I think the American interest in developing countries, not only Vietnam but countries around the world, into economically stable and viable nations is very much respected. The efforts we have made in trying to improve the economic standard of living for the Vietnamese people are certainly appreciated. But if we want to make a lot of money in Vietnam, figuratively, and do the best job possible, we should not let the Vietnamese come in contact with Americans who will make bad impressions.

I think an emphasis should be placed on this. The more Americans in Vietnam who are of the type who are only concerned about chalking off each day on the calendar, or going out to the local bar and getting drunk, or going to the local brothel, the more difficult it's going to be for a person who's sincere and wants to do a job. It's strange in that, for example, a whole CORDS team could work for a whole year and yet in one day what some soldier does when going down the road in a jeep may just negate the whole thing. For example, there are some troops going down the road in a jeep

and there's an RF soldier on the side of the road and they whisk off his hat or there's some old lady carrying some fish and they throw a rock at her. There are numerous incidents like this, not down in the Delta where the troop concentration is small.

As strange as it may seem, troops are needed there for security because of large enemy concentration; but, at the same time, their presence there negates other things that other Americans might do to try to gain the hearts and minds of the people, to try to gain the respect and trust of the Vietnamese people. They accept this sort of thing, but it's not going to win us a lot of friendship. They accept it in that they realize they will be taken over by the enemy if our troops aren't there. They regard this as necessary and accept it, but they're not happy about it and have no good feelings toward this type of American. I would guess that we are trying to do as much as we can in controlling this type of person from getting in contact with the general Vietnamese population and raising a lot of hell. I think a greater degree of control is certainly very necessary.

Americans, by and large, are more aggressive than Vietnamese; lack of consideration sometimes unconsciously happens--I've even found myself doing it. For example, you go to an office where the American counterpart is and the Vietnamese counterpart also. The first thing you do when you enter is to go right up to the American and begin talking--by and large, Americans forget to go over and greet the Vietnamese counterpart. Mutual respect is very important.

ANNEX

SUCCESS OF THE CHIEU HOI PROGRAM IN GO CONG

There is no simple explanation or special formula to account for the unusual success which the Chieu Hoi program in Go Cong Province has experienced during the past month and a half. To a very great extent it is the result favorable conditions created by concurrent achievements in virtually every area of military and civilian effort by both the Vietnamese Government and American advisory elements. These favorable circumstances have been complemented by an awareness on the part of nearly everyone in the Vietnamese and American establishments of the purpose and value of the Chieu Hoi program and the active participation by many of the people in these establishments in promoting the Chieu Hoi theme. The favorable conditions and excellent interservice cooperation have been ably exploited by the Chieu Hoi Chief through an aggressive inducement effort which emphasizes face to face contact with VC families and between Hoi Chanh and their comrades who remain in the VC. All of these factors are important. Taken alone, no one of them would be sufficient to produce the results which have been achieved. Together they have complemented and supported each other to create what can best be termed a snowball effect.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAVORABLE CONDITIONS

Beginning in the middle of April a series of successful military operations throughout Go Cong Province have contributed to a steady decline in the morale of the VC. Both sector military units and the PRU have been particularly effective. Information gained from Hoi Chanh suggests that the work of the PRU has been especially important in striking fear into VC village cadre and guerrillas.

These military successes have been exploited by the psychological operations agencies in the province with all the means at their disposal. A particularly noteworthy instance occurred on July 21, the day after Go Cong City had been mortared, when a Hoi Chanh led a military operation which captured the mortar tube used in the attack on the city along with an arms cache. The weapons were displayed in the market place that evening for all to see, an event which undoubtedly produced a significant decline in VC confidence and prestige.

During this entire period since mid-April there have been no instances of VC success of any importance. The trend during that time has thus been distinctly and unmistakably unfavorable to VC interests in all respects.

Another aspect of the favorable environment which has been developed in Go Cong over the past several months is the intensive psyops activity which has taken place, the great bulk of it emphasizing the Chieu Hoi program. This effort has served to create an awareness of the Chieu Hoi program in all areas of the province and at all levels of society. The psyops effort has included:

1. Frequent leaflet drops and aerial broadcasts over nearly the total area of the province.

2. Psyops activity by S-5 during military operations.

3. Weekly broadcasts about the Chieu Hoi program by VIS over the Go Cong speaker system. The tapes for these broadcasts as well as those used by the speaker plane are often made by the Chieu Hoi Chief and his staff.

4. Chieu Hoi banners and signs erected throughout the province in all major towns and in most villages.

INTERSERVICE COOPERATION

A second major factor in the development of a successful Chieu Hoi program has been the high degree of awareness by both Vietnamese and Americans of the potential value of the Chieu Hoi program and the active participation by several agencies which would normally be thought of only as users of the end product in inducing Hoi Chanh to rally. This is particularly true of the Phoenix Committee, which has encouraged its agents to actively promote the Chieu Hoi program because of the great intelligence value to them of Hoi Chanh. As a result since 1 July, 18 Hoi Chanh have rallied directly to the Phoenix Committee and there is information to indicate a prospect of more in the near future. Employees of JUSPAO and S-5 have been similarly active, one person having produced a total of 30 ralliers over a longer period of time.

Both NLD and the local Seabee team have been helpful in obtaining vocational training for Hoi Chanh and finding employment for them. The Seabee medic has regularly visited the Chieu Hoi Center to hold sick call. American military and civilian advisors frequently visit the Chieu Hoi Center to get haircuts, have furniture made by the vocational trainees, play volleyball, or just to spend time talking with the Hoi Chanh and the Chieu Hoi staff. The Chieu Hoi Center is, in short, well integrated into the local official society and the program reaps the benefit of a great deal of advertisement and attention by persons who have no official attachment with it.

EXPLOITATION BY THE CHIEU HOI SERVICE

The existing set of favorable circumstances has been seized upon by the Chieu Hoi Chief and his staff who have worked tirelessly to improve conditions at the Chieu Hoi Center and to create a positive psychological atmosphere while at the same time pursuing an aggressive personalized inducement program. The Chieu Hoi Chief greets each newly arrived Hoi Chanh personally in his office and over a drink or cigarette welcomes him to the fold. From this time on he is part of an efficiently functioning organization which reindoctrinates him and cares for him and offers him opportunity for rest and recreation all in a highly spirited atmosphere and by people who make no secret of their concern for his welfare. The Chieu Hoi Center in Go Cong is a place where a Hoi Chanh can find both comfort and satisfaction in the knowledge that he is part of a group which is together doing something of value.

Because life at the Chieu Hoi Center is so congenial, those who come in are usually very satisfied. It is here that the Chieu Hoi Chief's special inducement program makes its beginning. He selects from among those at the Chieu Hoi Center Hoi Chanh whom he believes to be trustworthy and, on a voluntary basis, sends them back to

their former comrades to persuade them to rally. Usually these Hoi Chanh who are sent out as agents have been in the Center for several weeks, but on several occasions he has sent a newly arrived rallier immediately back out to bring in some of his friends. There is no accurate record of the number of Hoi Chanh during the past month and a half who have been induced to rally by this method, but currently there are 72 Hoi Chanh out in the field on operations of this sort. While in the field these Hoi Chanh agents are under the supervision of the Chieu Hoi District Cadre to whom they report each day. The length of time in the field varies from several days to three weeks, those who are least successful in persuading their targets to rally being forced to stay longer in order to carry out their mission. Those who are unable to bring in anyone within three weeks are recalled to the Center.

In addition to controlling the Hoi Chanh agents in their districts the Chieu Hoi Cadre are also actively engaged in developing contacts with potential ralliers. This is done largely through the employment of intermediaries, usually a prominent citizen of a hamlet in which a family with a VC member is known to reside, who, without compensation agrees to speak out for the Chieu Hoi program and attempt to persuade known VC to rally. The Chieu Hoi Chief maintains close liaison with the district cadre in their efforts, visiting each district about once a week and holding a monthly staff meeting of district cadre in Go Cong City. At such times he endeavors to instill in the cadre his enthusiasm and sense of mission and to resolve any problems which may have developed. Although no money for the payment of rewards is available, commodities gained from various sources in province are frequently presented as gifts to Hoi Chanh and Chieu Hoi Cadre who have been particularly successful in attracting ralliers.

CONCLUSION

From the evidence available there can be little doubt that it is face to face contact, whether by a newly arrived Hoi Chanh, a Chieu Hoi Cadre, or the agent of another agency, which has been the most effective in persuading potential Hoi Chanh to rally. It is, however, the relative success of the GVN and American efforts in all areas both military and civilian which has provided the security which makes travel and contact with VC cadre possible and which has created the sense of futility among VC ranks that causes them to consider the possibility of rallying. Although the Chieu Hoi Chief and his staff must be given a great deal of credit for the outstanding job which they have done and continue to do, the success of the Chieu Hoi program in Go Cong is to a large extent the reflection of the similar successes which have been achieved by all agencies on a province-wide scale.