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Dear Mr. Lee Gibson, Joint Economic Office

The position of Regional Economist is a matter of interest and importance. Lawrence M. Flanagan, Regional Economist, is currently on leave and will be returning to the JEO in the near future. The position of Regional Economist is a key position in the JEO.

Attached is a draft of material necessary to establish the position of Regional Economist.

It should serve the purpose to establish the position and can be refined or changed as time and experience indicate.

When the position has been established, a memorandum request will have to be made to Personnel to have us place for duty in the Regions though remaining assigned to the Joint Economic Office. This is all of considerable importance to me because I am sort of hanging suspended in no-man's-land until a position has been established.

no-man's-land

General Statement:

Establishment of the position of Regional Economist is a logical step in the development of the US Mission capability to better serve the needs of the Government of Vietnam and the U.S. Agencies. It is a recognition of the increased emphasis on economic matters and accents the closely interwoven connections of economics with all other aspects of the U.S. involvement in Vietnam. There is a need for better economic reporting and the valuable data it can provide that is essential for planning and policy decisions. Increased attention should be directed toward provincial economic problems. This will require a greater responsiveness and more detailed knowledge and familiarity with field conditions.

This can best be accomplished by positioning an Economic Officer in each of the four Regions.

The position of regional economist covers a broad area of interests and activities and can well be said that it is concerned with virtually all aspects of the Vietnamese society.

Duties and Responsibilities:

(1) Acts as the Special Assistant for Economic Affairs to the Senior U.S. Military authority and to the Deputy for Civil Operation and Revolutionary Development Support for the Region and as such is the advisor to both of these and their staffs on a ^wwide range of economic matters affecting the Corps/Region.

(2) Reviews development project proposals for all pertinent factors such as marketing, processing, available labor skills, raw material supply, transportation, etc, and makes recommendations concerning the proposals. ^{as} A part of the review process he may have to make a feasibility study.

(3) Assists in the program planning for the field programs within the Region and in the evaluation of the programs as they are carried out. He is responsible for the evaluation of the economic impact and considerations of all programs for which U.S. support is provided.

(4) Maintains close contact with and acts as an advisor to the Government of Vietnam corps Government Delegate and his appointed Economic Inspector.

(5) Advises and assists the Provincial Economic Services in the expansion and improvement of their functions. This may include the collection of data, development of reports and the training of personnel.

(6) Responds to requests from the provinces for assistance and acts as an advisor-consultant to the U.S. Senior Province Advisors and their staffs on all matters considered to warrant review from an economic standpoint.

Prepares guidelines for field use in development project planning.

(7) Conducts field studies, surveys or other special studies as directed and as he feels necessary and useful in furthering the economic development of the Region.

Many of these studies are designed to develop better information about the structure and operation of the Vietnamese economy. These studies will include, but not be limited to such things as production functions in agriculture and industry, flow of commercial activities, labor supply, skills and mobility.

He must be prepared to follow up on all promising avenues for further research and to develop own techniques of investigation.

(8) Develops new report formats or revises existing formats so that essential economic data is collected from the provinces. These are for recurring reports and special reports.

(9) Prepares the economic portions of recurring reports required under the Field Reporting System. These include overviews of the economic conditions within the Region and an assessment of progress of the Field Programs from an economic viewpoint. Included in these reports might be an analysis of problem areas and recommendations for the solution of the problems.

(10) Plans and supervises the work of a local staff consisting of clerical personnel, interpreter-translators and economic assistants.

(11) Must develop close and harmonious relationships with Vietnamese officials in several agencies and at several levels. These include at the national level, Ministry of Economy, Agriculture Development Bank, National Institute of Statistics, Industrial Development Center and Handicrafts Center. It includes command and administrative personnel at Corps, Division, Province, District, Village and Hamlet levels.

To have the most effectiveness he must be knowledgeable in considerable detail with the structure of the GVN and how it functions at all levels. This includes funding, taxation and administrative procedures.

(12) Must develop a broad range of contacts in the private commercial sector to acquire and maintain a detailed knowledge of the economic status of the private citizens and of the functioning of the commercial system. He should be alert to ways in which to help develop the private sector to replace the government in those activities where the private sector would normally be involved.

(13) Utilizes all available information to determine past and current performance of the Vietnam economy and the relationships and effects of the HSAID and Military Assistance Programs to such performance.

(14) Recognizes these areas in which additional technical assistance is needed and takes steps to be sure that the appropriate authorities are aware of these needs.

Guidance:

Receives guidance from the Senior U.S. military authority in the Region and from the Deputy for COMUS for the Region. The Regional Economist is considered as a special assistant for Economic Affairs to the Deputy for Comd and is intentionally not subordinated to any staff section or division but is given a great measure of freedom and is encouraged to use initiative in carrying out his duties with minimal supervision. The Regional Economist is considered with special interest and provides additional guidance and advice him for performance of special tasks as necessity requires.

Other Guides.

The Regional Economist must be guided by his understanding of the unique set of circumstances that have made Vietnam the complex area that it is.

These include political, ethnic, religious considerations as well as the effect of 100 years of western colonial domination. To all this is added the most serious aspect of all and that is that it is a country at war fighting for its very survival at the same time it is striving, with a broad range of U.S. supported activities, to move from its position as an under developed nation into a stature of development where it can take its place as a fully viable nation.

Position Requirements:

Should be a well trained economist with knowledge of statistics and experience in the collection and interpretation of economic data.

Past research experience is desirable. Graduate training or past experience in development economics in an undeveloped country is essential.

Must be physically capable of withstanding the rigors of frequent field travel under hazardous conditions and be willing to live austere in unhealthy surroundings. Should be effective in oral and written communication. Needs the temperament to be able to deal on a repetitive basis with local officials often under frustrating and unpleasant circumstances and through it all to maintain a sense of direction of balances and an environment in which he and the Vietnamese can continue to work constructively together.

(15) Works in close coordination with U.S. military authorities in special areas of activities such as Rome Plow road-clearing, defoliation and crop destruction, Special Forces lumber cutting, and ~~rice lines of communications~~ procurement, rice harvest protection operations.