

Flanagan

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

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Individual Interviewed: Mr. Mark Gordon

Position: Regional Director - Region I

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Participants: 1. Mr. Mark Gordon

2. Mr. Lou Wahrmund - Acting OIR - FETC-AID/UH

3. Mr. Larry Flanagan (Former Prov Rep on
Special Assignment here)

4. T. J. Brierton) Trainees
) for

5. Jody Strickland) Prov Rep
Assignment

Mr. Wahrmond: Present are Marcus Gordon, in transit from the United States to Vietnam and two of our Provincial Representatives in training at Ohana Nui, T. J. Brierton and Jody Strickland. Let me ask you, Mark, in your experience as a Regional Director of I Corps (or the First Region), where you are working with the provincial representatives, as well as the municipal representatives, what characteristics or traits of character have you found to be most desirable? That is, what should we recruit for and what should we train for, in your opinion?

Mr. Gordon: Lou, that is a rather difficult question to answer. I was asked the same question in Washington and had a long discussion with Mr. Kontos, the AID Director of Personnel and members of his staff. They were anxious to develop a set of criteria (guidelines to go by) in the selection of provincial representatives. I told them that it has been my experience that among the successful prov reps, there was a great variation of background, of fields of training. In some cases, a man's background may have been that of a lawyer; in other cases it may have been mostly military experience; or his background might have been in agriculture or education or sociology. In the recruitment of prov reps, I think there is no substitute for very sharp and thorough interviewing because what you are really looking for is a person with considerable intelligence, adaptability, very high motivation, interest in people, administrative capability, organizational ability and ability to handle men, money and materials. You are looking for a man who gets along well with people, who has the ability to put himself in the other fellow's position and understand his point of view and his problems. You are looking for a set of intangible personality qualities and attitudes, rather than a specific set of qualifications as far as subject matter is concerned. As far as I'm concerned in I Corps, I place a high premium also on maturity and seniority because the prov rep's job has grown considerably and will continue to grow. It will involve the supervision of sometimes fairly senior technical people because we want the provincial representative to be, in the province in which he is assigned, "Mr. United States Economic Aid". Therefore, he is the top man and he will

have under him a Public Safety Advisor working with the police; an Agricultural Specialist working with the Agriculture Service; perhaps several assistant prov reps, some of them dealing with refugees, others dealing with particular districts which have a heavy concentration of cultivated land and population. In any one province there may be as many as ten Americans for the prov rep to supervise, and a large number of local employees. The prov rep also must be able to deal on equal terms, not only with government of Vietnam officials but also with American voluntary agency personnel and with the U. S. Army, MACV Advisory Team and with the ARVN, Vietnamese Army Division Commander and with our own military commander in I Corps, particularly the Marine Generals involved. Consequently, he will deal as an equal partner with these other jurisdictions so rank and seniority does become important. Strangely the Vietnamese have a great deal of respect for a certain amount of maturity.

Professor Chi in Quang Nam commented to me recently when I suggested to him a person to be prov rep in his province for AID. I suggested this man because he was fluent in Vietnamese and I knew he was a friend of Professor Chi. But Prof. Chi was not happy; he shook his head and said, "This man is too young. I want a man of greater maturity." I said, "Well, Professor Chi, how old are you?" He admitted that he was only 31, but nevertheless he thought it was very important that we have an older man as prov rep working with him.

Mr. Wahrmond: That makes sense, and just in passing before we go on, I would say that the job as provincial representative has some of the similarities to a Chaplain in the Royal British Navy. They have no rank. They assume the rank of the man to whom they are talking at the time, whether it be an ordinary seaman or an admiral. This places a great deal of strain on the provincial representative sometimes. But could you give us (without mentioning names) an instance where certain characteristics worked against effective management in the province and how do you handle things like that. That is, provincial representatives for whom, as you mentioned, youth is sometimes a handicap; or a lack of professional training, or possibly too much professional

training in one particular line; or personality characteristics, such as the adaptability to the cross-cultural aspects of the job.

Mr. Gordon: The cross-cultural aspect is extremely important because you are out working intimately with Vietnamese officials. It is important to learn to understand their concepts which often are different from ours, that is, their concepts of work and life, and their concepts of ethics and government may differ from ours in some respects. Previous experience abroad, working with foreign peoples, is certainly an important asset for any candidate to be a prov rep. Having been abroad with a military operation doesn't necessarily mean anything, because such a person will have been abroad as part of a unit and will have been logistically supported. Somewhat like a little bit of the United States abroad. One who has been abroad with military organizations but has been involved in civic actions has the right kind of experience; the kind of experience we are looking for. Unless they had done so they will not have acquired the cross-cultural experience or the knowledge of how to deal with it. I don't think I can cite any examples of persons who were lacking in professional qualifications or were over-qualified in one field in my own experience in Vietnam with our prov reps. I can see where that would be a possibility. I have seen one or two instances where a prov rep has been overly disturbed about indications of some graft on the part of government officials (perhaps, I should say ~~overly~~ ^{must} moral). We have to recognize, I think, that while we ^{must} watch very carefully to make sure our aid gets to the people for whom it is intended, at the same time, we do have to recognize that in more countries of the world than not, it is customary for government officials to profit to some extent from their positions. As a matter of fact, it is expected by the constituents. This is true in most Latin countries; it is true certainly in Italy and Greece; it is true in most Asian countries. Government salaries are very low and they generally augment them in one way or another. An official has to issue permits and papers of all kinds and he often will charge 'under the table' a bit of money for that so he can make enough money to live. We have to be very careful to

make sure that our commodities are not diverted but, when we find indications of it I think we shouldn't be too shocked. We should simply step in and make sure that reasonable safeguards are set up so that the chances for opportunities to benefit from our aid are reduced to a bare minimum--kept within very narrow bounds.

Mr. Wahrmond: We have one gentleman here who had a unique experience of a little different aspect of military assignment abroad, in that he was an advisor to a military organization in a country in the Far East, Korea, and this puts it in a little different context. I think they have many more opportunities to get close to the people. I think that a great deal of this experience, assuming that a person can profit by it (I'm sure most do), can be transferred to the type of work that we are doing.

Mr. Gordon: I agree. The experience of the sector and sub-sector advisors in Vietnam is very relevant to what we are doing, as is the experience of the civic action personnel of which, incidentally, we have a great many in Vietnam. Any single prov rep will find that he not only has his own staff to supervise so they assist him in carrying out our objectives but he will also have a great deal of help from the MACV advisory structure, sector and sub-sector, and from Army and Marine civic action personnel. In effect, we have several hundred military people working for us in carrying out our program--or perhaps we're working for them--I don't care which way it is put since we're all interested in the same objective. They are interested in our participation in building dams, cleaning out irrigation ditches, building schools and clinics, helping with refugee problems, and so on.

Mr. Wahrmond: Let me ask you one question (I thought that I had the answer to this but I'm beginning to doubt it). If you consider the position of the province rep, I have always taken the traditional view when I was a province rep, that I and the MACV sector advisor had to line up our ducks ahead of time and be in perfect agreement before we presented anything to the province chief. In other words, we Americans should be aligned together. I have since heard some pretty good reasons for the contrary, that is, you can make the province chief feel that he is the victim of a power

play if everything that the Americans are confronted with that they always present a unanimous view. I suppose there is a middle ground there somewhere, but do you have an opinion on that?

Mr. Gordon: My opinion would be that it is a good idea for the prov rep and the sector advisor or the prov rep and the JUSPAO representative should, occasionally, have different views in the presence of the province chief; but I think that they should be aware of this ahead of time and agree that they will disagree in the presence of the province chief. I don't think you want to get into any arguments in the presence of the province chief where there aren't good reasons for your difference of opinion; you respect each other's opinion and you don't mind the province chief's knowing that you have a difference of opinion but, I think that this ought to be talked over between them ahead of time. They know that they are going to disagree and they deliberately do so, realizing that it isn't going to do any real damage. I think that this helps to avoid what you mentioned, that is, the province chief feeling that he is being ganged up on. I think, at all times, the prov rep and other representatives of American organizations should be aware of the fact that the province chief has to maintain his prestige in the eyes of his subordinates, his people. There is a certain amount of face-saving that is necessary; he has to keep his pride and certainly avoid the impression that he is just a tool of the Americans. This is part of the cross-cultural complex.

Mr. Wahrmond: I have found, Mark, that sometimes, particularly with our younger men (I've very leary of even warning younger men about it), generally speaking they are quite idealistic. They get into a province and they assume a proprietary attitude toward that province. This is good. When things don't go as well as they should, they get extremely perturbed; they get the idea that the headquarters shed is always working against them. In other words, they lean so far toward the side of the Vietnamese sometimes, and see things so much through the Vietnamese eyes that they cease to be effective agents for our side. I don't see that too often in the older men.

They are just as sympathetic, but I think this is one of the things that comes with maturity (maturity doesn't necessarily go along with age). Have you encountered this not only in Vietnam but in other countries?

Mr. Gordon: Oh, yes indeed. This is probably one reason why we don't normally leave a man in the same country or in the same position more than two tours of duty. He becomes too much identified with the local problems and local officials, so that he does lose his perspective to some extent. He loses his ability to represent the USAID program as such, in many respects. Of course, people always fall into the temptation of blaming everything on headquarters, just as in the United States everything is blamed on Washington. I think that this gets down to the quality of being able to project yourself, to understand the problems of headquarters and to put yourself in their position. I remember a discussion with the Director of Personnel, way back in the 1940's when I was in the Department of Agriculture (The Director of Personnel in the Dept. of Agriculture). He stressed the fact that all Washington positions in our organization (where we had operating programs throughout the United States) should be filled with people who had field experience. That they would understand the field man's point of view. I disagreed with him because I had seen several examples of field people being very intolerant of Washington and very difficult to work with, transfer into Washington and within three months they were very intolerant of the field and very difficult for the field to work with. In other words, they weren't able to project themselves to see the other fellow's problem and his point of view. So what he was talking about was not x-years of field experience but a quality; sometimes you found that quality, that is, the ability to project himself in a man who had never been to the field. He was in Washington and yet he could understand the field man's point of view through field trips and simply because he was that kind of person. I think it is something we have to look for in screening people for these assignments.

Strickland: This is one of the intangibles that we were talking about before. If you identify so closely with the problem that you lose sight of the forest for the

trees' attitude--that's fine and dandy, as you, representing your government at the local position. It's just like here, there is no way to train for this in the training program. This is an intangible. You find this in the higher echelons as well as the lower echelons, this inability to adapt (and I hate the word 'adaptation' - these single words that try to cover up the mud of problems) but how do you train for this? What would you suggest to try to inject into the older fellow as well as the younger fellow in a training program? You can give all kinds of problems we can face, and at the time and place maybe we come up with the right solution, but you can't really train toward this goal.

Gordon: It is difficult to train for; it's a combination of an inherent quality (that some people have and some people don't) plus experience and ability to profit from that experience. I think most people will learn this after serving periods both in the field and in the headquarters. Some people will never learn it, and those are the people we will have to weed out.

Wahrmund: This might be a little sensitive, because I don't really know just what your views are, but in previous interviews with provincial representatives, we've had some widely divergent views with regard to the regional concept which is still quite new in Vietnam, (but, I think it's here to stay). In other words, you and I didn't have this problem up in I Corps and it wasn't because we were really that effective as leaders; we were isolated by geography, by distance; it was 400 miles from Saigon. There seems to be among some of our people a little bit of the antipathy of the field man who's been transferred to the regional level. We've had other prov reps in here who go perhaps too far to the other extreme. They said, "Yes, everything must be done, agreed upon, and settled at the regional level. I think the middle course that we

agreed on (or I don't know if we agree on it) is that the regional headquarters does serve a useful purpose, purely from the organizational point of view and management practices, that is, effective supervision of 43 provinces individually might be difficult. But I welcome your views on that.

Gordon: My views, of course, grow out of my experience in Region I. It is difficult to generalize from that for all regions in Vietnam because there are differences. Regionalism, I think, definitely works in Region I. It works more easily than it does, for example, in III Corps where the region is all around Saigon and tends to get all mixed up with the headquarters. In the case of Region I, Da Nang is the natural communications center, or natural logistics hub for the Region. Practically all commodities must come in through Da Nang and are distributed from Da Nang. We have good communications with all the provinces. We have only six jurisdictions to work with; it is manageable; we can get around to all the provinces on an almost daily basis. We have a strong Corps organization on the government of Vietnam side, and it is being strengthened all the time. All of our military commanders are right there in Da Nang and many voluntary agencies have regional representation there, so there is a real function for a regional office to perform both in coordination with other U. S. government and non-government jurisdictions and other free-world assistance groups; and in supervision of our own programs. I do not look upon myself as a field man. I would like to be able to spend more time in the field than I do. I am really an outpost of headquarters. I think it is a necessity for proper span of control reasons, simply because it is impossible for Saigon to deal with forty-three provinces plus independent cities from that distance. They do need to break down the supervisory job both technically and geographically. They do it technically through divisions, and geographically

through regional offices. It's a matter of team work. There has been a great deal of discussion between relationships between regional offices and technical divisions in Saigon. There is really no problem there, and in my experience, no conflict. We have the same interests as the chiefs of the technical divisions: we look to them for help on technical problems and technical supervision of their field representatives. It's a matter of communication and working together to keep each other informed and consulting when you have problems. The fact is, that in the field, the technical men really need little or no technical supervision. They are working so far below their level of knowledge that they don't really need any technical help. They have the technical knowledge and then some. Their problems are mostly logistical, administrative, and problems of relationships; in those fields they can best get their supervision from the region and from the prov reps. We can open a lot of doors for the technical people; they know it. They are dependent upon us for space on the helicopter, space on the Beachcraft, or all kinds of administrative support. It just naturally works out; we have no problem with that.

The regional office concept is as old as big organization itself. We have many examples in the United States in our governmental programs that cover the States action programs, like the Forest Service or Conservation Service or the Parks Service, and so on down the line, where you have technical divisions at headquarters, sometimes at regional level and you have geographic subdivisions as well. There is a lot of experience in this field, and I see nothing different or unique about the Da Nang structure at the present time.

Brierton: It would seem to me that ^{if} we don't have a regional set up which is functional, which has authority, which is decision-making, which can function, as I understand your system is, that we are not

teaching the Vietnamese anything. In other words, one of our primary concerns is to disturb, if you will, the bureaucracy that exists in the Vietnamese government that everything must go to Saigon. Now if we don't set up an organization within our own American set up over there at lower levels which appreciate and take into consideration, as you does here, the problems of the province--which has close coordination with the province--then we are only talking to the Vietnamese about doing something which we ourselves are not doing. I think that the value, of course, in getting things done is tremendous: but, I think that the value also in setting an example that it is possible to decentralize and still maintain control at the Saigon or the central government level and lose nothing, yet gain tremendous efficiency is an important factor in your regional setup. By integrating, as I understand from your talk yesterday, you let the Vietnamese into this structure, I think we are doing the most necessary thing for their governmental setup that we could possibly do.

Gordon: That's a very good point. I agree completely. For the first time, as I mentioned yesterday, we and the Vietnamese together are preparing plans for next year's program, calendar 1967 program. I think this is^{an} extremely good exercise both for them and us.

Brierton: I think that we provide a great deal of leverage for the local Vietnamese official, the province chief, by the fact that we have this organization, too. In other words, it gives him a tremendous crutch (if you will) to assist him.

Gordon: I think our main job (we are of course, dispensers of material resources which help the local officials do a better job. Some prov reps consider themselves too much simply dispensers of commodities.), our real job, most important job, number one job, is to help make local government work and work effectively; to stimulate more communication

between the people and government officials; better understanding between them; discussion groups; days of discussion out in the villages with local officials and farm leaders between government and local officials and farm leaders; improve the services of government to the people and develop more of a feeling on the part of the people that the government is interested in them and will assist them if they show that they are willing to do something for themselves. There are many, many ways in which we can do this and are doing it. One of them, I think, is this question of demonstrating what can be done through a decentralized operation. Unfortunately, as in most underdeveloped governments, a confusion develops at headquarters, a confusion as to what things you can let go of and decentralize without really losing authority. There is a tendency of high officials to operate far below their proper level. If you set up proper procedures and controls, you can delegate implementation and still keep the people on a string, so that you can pull the string whenever things begin to go wrong. You can monitor from headquarters at national government level which ought to maintain itself in a position of policy determination; laying out the general ground rules and guidelines; then monitoring performance rather than insisting on making every little decision or having them come into Saigon for every little decision. Actually, this occupies the time of the official in Saigon on things of lesser importance. It makes it impossible for him to concentrate on the broad basic issues.

Brierton: I think from the American point of view, one of the things that has disturbed me initially coming into the program and seeking some kind of an overall direction of American program in Vietnam has been the statement often made that there are 43 different provinces. This means there are 43 different approaches, this means that when the province turns over from one individual to another that the emphasis

is completely changed. I don't think that this is a good thing; I think that the only way that we can avoid it is something similar to this regional setup where you can provide the continuity of effort, the direction, to achieve what I think are relatively simple objectives in our program in Vietnam. It no longer depends upon, necessarily, let us say the personality of each individual province chief, what he sees as the problem when he comes in completely cold. You provide at the regional level this blanket of directions to the total effort at the working level. I feel that the region is at the working level where of course Saigon will never be. If we don't have an echelon such as the region then we are still going to be talking in terms of developing Vietnam as forty-three different provinces.

Wahrmund: But, you know what he touches on is something that you commented on yesterday, Mark. What Tom says is true, of course, but this is part of the problem we are confronted with not only in Vietnam, and certainly in I Corps, but I think you find that in most underdeveloped countries, there is this reliance on personal leadership. This applies not only to the Corps commander but to the province chief. We see it up there in sharp differences between General Thi and General Lam.

As you mentioned, General Lam prefers not to concern himself with much of the civil administration throughout much of the First Region. However, General Thi made a special point of emphasizing the fact that he was charged as the civil administrator for the central Vietnamese lowlands, and consequently, he used that regional delegate he had up in Hue merely as a cipher, I would say, to perform protocol functions. I think perhaps this is a legacy of French colonial administration, too. A young man that I know who used to be in the Embassy out there whose name was Rosenthal, said one time that the French and the Vietnamese had an affinity for one another before they ever met. They are both

loathe to delegate authority. That's a problem. But, you know, we see that in innumerable ways out there. It's something we have to combat. Isn't it true, wouldn't you say, Mark, that at the extreme ends of I Corps, in Quang Tri and Quang Ngai, you have the problem that simply because they are farthest from Da Nang they assume certain prerogatives at times (I don't mean to put words in your mouth) that they shouldn't ordinarily assume.

Gordon: Yes, I think they have.

Strickland: I think this is the nature of the beast that I was going to ask you about. How do you key your new prov rep or technical man who reports to you to integrate them into this regional concept, which I agree with wholeheartedly with Tom that this is one of the bridges to gap this 43 provinces to one central government affair. How do you brief them? What are some of the things, for example, that you try to put across to your newly assigned man from Saigon as your prov rep or technical assistant to try to make him a member of this regional team that is really working toward the goal that you are evidently achieving in I Corps where they are not probably down in IV Corps where they are that much closer to Saigon.

Gordon: Well, remember that it is only 40 or 45 minutes by Beechcraft from our farthest province capital from Da Nang. We have constant radio communication and daily telephone communication with each province capital so that we have a fairly compact situation. When a prov rep comes in, he spends quite a bit of time in the regional office and becomes familiar with the logistics section and its problems, what it's doing; with the executive office which is there to serve the provinces and provide them with administrative support. We have, approximately once every six weeks, a regional conference in Da Nang where all the prov reps come in. We usually have a whole two day meeting. Sometimes

they are as frequent as once a month, sometimes we run two months between meetings. The members of the regional staff are traveling constantly, this applies to the technical staff as well as operations personnel. I try to get out to a province every week, by going out on the last flight to close the business of one day and have about a four hour general discussion in the evening with the province team--the AID staff, plus the JUSPAO province man, the Embassy man, and the MACV sector advisor and sometimes his G-5. We have a long evening bull session discussing their problems and what we can or should do about them at the regional level. Then I get the first plane back in the next morning, back to my desk. This helps establish a close relationship. Several of our prov reps have expressed the view that they do not want to have to go to Saigon and compete with 43 other provinces. They feel that the regional office can solve a large part of the problems that they cannot solve themselves; and we can, in fact, and do.

Brierton: I think your regional setup is becoming more and more practical logistically, because, as I understand the situation now compared to what it was before, your ability to receive commodities and everything like that is being distributed now in Da Nang, and you have other ports and facilities which are being developed away from Saigon. This demands a strong setup locally, regionally to handle this kind of stuff. Is this a true factor? In other words, when you get your commodities, I imagine most of them are coming direct from where they originated (Taiwan or something), direct to Da Nang, they are not being trans-shipped or rehipped from Saigon to you, are they?

Gordon: Most of them are being shipped from Saigon. We are hoping to get more direct shipments. This depends on whether we get sufficient barges because the ocean going vessel cannot come into the harbor.

We are in better shape than we used to be; we have^{received}/three new barges recently. As we get more barges and more competent personnel in the port to handle them, we would like to see more direct shipments because the port in Saigon has tremendous problems of its own. But so far most of our shipments come up from Saigon on coastal vessels and come into the pier. Logistics has improved. We still have some problems but I think that improvement will continue and will be a good deal better by the end of the calendar year than it has ever been. Coordination, of course, is always a problem where you have a very large civic action effort on the part of the Marine Corps, as well as MACV, Army Civil Affairs Company, and a growing and increasingly active program on the part of voluntary agencies, such as CRS and CARE (Catholic Relief Service and CARE) and the Lutherans and the Mennonites and other missionary groups. We now have an American Red Cross team of seven in Quang Ngai for whom we have to give some administrative support. We have other free-world assistance groups moving in, for example, twenty-six Germans comprising a team which is arriving in Quang Nam about now to work with the refugees and we are helping them with their housing and various other support needs. The Korean Marines have moved in just south of Chu Lai and are very active in the general field of rural reconstruction and civic action, as well; they are building schools and all sorts of things and we are developing a working relationship with them. Although our staff, itself, is small, we can multiply ourselves many times by working closely with these other groups and making sure we are all interested in the same things. One of the difficult things to do is to get them all to work through and with local government, instead of directly with the people, so that they are building up the prestige of local officials instead of making them look bad by comparison.

Mr. Wahrmond: That raises another question when you mentioned about the Korean Marines just south of Chu Lai. We, in AID, have rightly or wrongly been accused sometimes of taking a somewhat short-sighted view in that the military of necessity (the U. S. military operational effort) in I Corps and II Corps, as well as ARVN, must cross province lines or boundaries depending on the tactical situation. In my memory out there, we never really had too much of that problem, although the Quang Ngai-Quang Tin border is just south of Chu Lai. However, there have been problems in that regard, where tactical operations generate a flow of refugees and things of that sort. Provincial policies with regard, for instance to refugees were such that the province chief of Quang Ngai, at one time, was much more tolerant and much more effective in fact than was the province chief in Quang Tin. Our effort in AID is often tied into trying to make the province chief a better man, but we can't ride rough-shod over him, so sometimes we are caught in the middle. Some of the things we've done to try to solve this problem, I know; one of which is to try to assign a liaison man to operating units, let's say at division level. What are other aspects of this that you would like to discuss here?

Gordon: This has been a problem we've faced in connection with our efforts to develop a mechanism for coordination. We have the coordinating council at the regional level in Da Nang. We've worked in the voluntary agencies and expect to work in the free-world assistance groups into the coordinating council and its sub-committee structure. At the present time, they are organizing similar committees at province level. In the case of Quang Tin and Quang Ngai, since the Chu Lai Marine tactical area of responsibility overlaps the two provinces, they are thinking in terms of joint meetings cutting across both provinces. In other words, at division level where they have province representatives and American representatives from both provinces and Marine civic action representatives

on this coordinating council at that level. This will be an informal thing to exchange ideas and to exchange information about what they are doing and what they are planning to do, identify opportunities to work together, and to develop plans for joint programs and so on. Up north, they are thinking along province lines rather than division lines at the present time, but they don't have quite the problem of overlap in the provinces there that they have in the south.

Brierton: What is the size of the ROK Marines? Is it a regiment, battalion or what, that has moved in?

Gordon: I don't recall offhand. I believe I have it in my black book.

Strickland: Do you have any plan to include the ROK Marine representative in some aspect of your regional council?

Gordon: No. He would be included at division level in the council which would perhaps be shared on the American side by a senior Marine officer from Chu Lai. The American team would include province representatives from both Quang Tin and Quang Ngai. They are planning on including the ROK civic action team in that.

Strickland: Do you find that after the trouble in Da Nang, that regional headquarters has had any effect on ARVN and integrating them more strongly with the civic action that would be along their lines of operation? All the material I've read so far shows that the ARVN all over Vietnam seem to be reluctant to become involved to any great extent. It's been the third country or U. S. forces and Korean forces and Australian and so forth who have identified with civic action more strongly than the indigenous armed forces.

Gordon: We, as AID, would have little direct contact with ARVN. This is a job for our MACV colleagues and one which they are very much aware of. We did get involved in two or three occasions jointly with the

MACV and with the Corps commander and his staff in soliciting ARVN's help. They moved in with enthusiasm in one large project in Quang Nam involving the rebuilding of a very critical irrigation dam in a rice producing area. The dam was rebuilt by ARVN engineers. They did a very good job. I think that this was the single biggest civic action project they had taken part in in I Corps to date. They do have civic action personnel of their own. We and MACV together are trying to help them be more effective by giving them some assistance.

Wahrmund: You know what was important, as I got it yesterday, this civic action project that ARVN undertook in Quang Nam to rebuild the irrigation dam was one in which a little pressure was there. There was a built-in time factor. They had to rebuild this dam before the onset of the rainy season, did they not?

Gordon: Yes, they had to build it in a hurry to save the rice crop that was already planted from total loss. This would have required someone to provide assistance to from two to five thousand people had the rice crop failed. There were two reasons for speed; to save the rice crop and to get it done before the rains.

Wahrmund: Speaking of civic action, as Jody did, it's been my observation with regard to ARVN forces that their regimental commanders and division commanders certainly realize the importance of civic action. However, it is performed in such a perfunctory, casual manner at the lower echelons that it sometimes has an opposite effect. In other words, when the regimental commander decides out of MILCAP, or some other means at his disposal to render assistance to some displaced people or refugees, and he tells his subordinates, "I want you to make a 2½ ton truck available and carry x-number of things and carry them to this point." If they go up there and just throw the things on the ground

and drive off, very often it creates the opposite effect. This has been my observation and biggest complaint.

Gordon: I think there is definitely a need for more and better training of ARVN in the civic action field. There is need for developing greater feeling on the part of ARVN of concern for the villagers, for the people. Recognition that if they are going to win this war and make it stay won, they are going to have to win the hearts and minds; that the attitude of the local people toward their own army is important in this whole thing. I think a lot more needs to be done and our own MACV needs to double its effort in this field of indoctrinating the troops. If they go out in the hamlet and act just the way the V. C. act, they are not gaining anything for the government.

Brierton: I find that it's just the opposite of the way the V. C. act, because the V. C. recognize very strongly the need for winning the hearts and minds of the people in the area in which they operate, especially the northern cadre who are coming out.

Strickland: Speaking of cadre, Mr. Gordon, do you have much contact with rural development teams in the First Corps area? The Vietnamese RDP teams?

Gordon: Yes. We do and we will have closer and closer contact as time goes on because, as you probably know, the plan is for AID to take over responsibility from the Embassy for this project. The newly trained 59-man teams, generally, seem to be working out fairly well. I think the concept is good; the Vung Tau training program is good. I don't think we've adequately followed through in local implementation. There are problems of relationships that haven't really been clearly worked out. One problem is how to effectively integrate these cadre into the local governmental structure. It varies, of course, a great deal--province

by province, district by district. It varies with the personalities involved, the strength of the district chief, and so on. In some cases, the cadre are sort of regarded as an external force; they are not really 'their' people; everybody knows that they are being paid by the Americans, and this makes a difference. They are being paid better than other cadre and this makes a difference. So there is first of all the problem of really integrating them into the local governmental structure; making them responsive to the district chief, to the village chief; secondly, there is another problem which has not yet been worked out and that is relationships with other cadre of the technical services. I've brought this up on a couple of occasions. One was to the coordinating council. My embassy colleague expressed the view that we should get all the new cadre trained and get them working well and worry about coordinating them later. I think this is wrong; I think we need to worry about the coordination right now. You've animal husbandry cadre in each province, agricultural extension, health, education--they ought to be giving technical support to the 59-man teams. The 59-man team goes into a hamlet or a group of hamlets in a village and they decide that one of the things they are going to do is promote vegetable production or gardening. They need to go back to someplace for technical guidance, for seed, for fertilizer. They may concentrate on irrigation improvements; they ought to have a close relationship with the irrigation staff at province headquarters. This has not really been worked out. They scarcely speak to each other in many cases. Of course, at province level we have this problem of coordination even among the technical services themselves, in addition, to the problem of coordination between the technical cadre and RD cadre. For example, in every province in the field of agriculture you have animal husbandry as a separate entity

reporting directly to Saigon, the Ministry of Agriculture; you have the Ag Extension, a separate entity reporting directly to Saigon; Fisheries, Forestry, Irrigation, NACO (Agricultural Credit), Cooperatives. You don't have one 'Mr. Agriculture' on the GVN side in the province; they are all separate. One of the things that our prov reps and our AID Agricultural representative are doing is getting these people together; getting them to talk to each other; getting them all together in a helicopter and going out to a village or to a district and sitting down and talking about what the agriculture problems are and how they can all do something to improve it. This is one of the contributions we are making to the problem of how you make local government work more effectively. I talked to several province chiefs about the need for somebody to be in charge of all agricultural activities. They all acknowledge the need but they say that they could not put anyone of the present chiefs in charge--they would have to have a new man. The new man just can't be found; he doesn't exist.

(BREAK)

Mr. Larry Flanagan joined group. Mr. Flanagan is a former prov rep, here at Ohana Nui in a TDY status learning the language.

Mr. Wahrmond: Mark, we touched on something briefly a while ago that concerned the relationship of the provincial representative with the Vietnamese and the other Americans in the provincial country team. One thing that I would like to get your views on that has a bearing on this is tenure. We have an initial advantage there in that most of our AID people seem to be on the job longer than most of the Vietnamese province chiefs, as well as the many members of the American team in the province, and especially MACV. This is generally an advantage, but there is the possibility of disadvantages, so I'm curious to see what your views are on that.

Mr. Gordon: It is true that AID personnel in I Corps have tended to have longer tenure than both our military colleague^s and then province chiefs on the GVN side and Corps Commander. However, the technical service chiefs and the subordinate personnel at Corps level, doesn't have as great a turnover; at that level there is greater continuity. I don't think we have any problem about too long a tenure. I've seen that problem in some countries where we've had AID people stay in one country on one job from three to four tours of duty which gets to be a little too long. It's been my experience in most countries that the second two-year tour is far more profitable than the first but the third tour is almost invariably a declining tour; a man becomes less effective, his frustrations seem to build up, his mistakes begin catching up with him. He's not as good on the third tour as he was on the second tour. We haven't had that kind of problem in Vietnam. I don't think I know of any instances where I felt a man had been there too long unless he simply doesn't have the competence or ability needed in the first place. I don't think we've had any instances where a man has been in a job so long that he tends to identify himself too much with the local officials and forgets his role as representative of the American government.

Mr. Wahrmond: One thing that I had in mind there, Mark, was when it imposes a little bit of an additional task on the provincial representative if he has been there for a long time, some of the other Americans especially, tend to regard him as what we used to call a plank-owner in the Navy aboard ship. That he assumes certain rights and it really behooves him to go about this very carefully so that he doesn't antagonize the 'new man on campus' who is apt to be a little sensitive about the fact that he is there only recently. This same thing has had quite

an effect upon the Vietnamese. They tend to (in fact, they've been a little disappointed about some of the MACV sector advisors, they barely get to know them and they are forced to get acquainted with another one.)

Mr. Gordon: That certainly is a point. But if the prov rep has the qualities we were talking about earlier, if he has an appreciation of the cross-cultural problems, and if he has the quality of empathy (being able to put himself in the other fellow's position and understand him) he will recognize this. As a matter of fact, I am probably one who falls in this category myself. We had the first meeting of our coordinating council in I Corps on August 30, 1965; we had our first anniversary meeting on August 30, 1966. I was the only charter member left, even though I had been there only fifteen months.

Mr. Flanagan: Also, you have the problem of a new province chief arriving--depending upon the way the old province chief left; a normal transfer or step-up because of competence, is good; but if he was removed then there is a degree of doubt. I was very close to one prov chief and he was removed on very short notice, as a matter of fact, one day. The next morning a new one was there. He was very wary of myself and the sector advisor who had been very close to the old province chief. It was some time before he really felt that we were his team instead of a hangover from somebody else's team: and were going to look at him as though he were some sort of upstart or somebody who really had to prove his worth. We never tried to give this impression at all. As far as we were concerned he was the chief and from the moment that he stood up and took the oath. But in his own mind, for some time he wasn't sure.

Mr. Gordon: This is part of the problem that Lou mentioned earlier. This is not peculiar to the Vietnamese by any means. It is a fairly

common characteristic of all underdeveloped governments. They tend to deal on a personal basis. It is very difficult for them to understand the British or the American who deals on an institutional basis, not a personal basis. To us, the position and its responsibilities, the organization and its objectives are the important things. We deal with whoever is on the other side of the table on the same basis as his predecessor. This is difficult for them to understand. In Vietnam, everything is personal.

Wahrmund: May I ask you another question? I'd like to get your views on something else. This is going to come up more with our younger fellows. They've already expressed considerable concern to me, to Larry, and earlier to Jerry French. This is the relationship of the assistant province rep and the staff assistant to his boss, the province rep. I'll tell you first what my views were when I was a province rep. There was so much to do and so few people to do it, that I would take a look at this young fellow and if he was obviously interested in education, I would give him his head and put him in the hamlet school program; or if he was a sodbuster from West Virginia he would naturally concentrate on pigs or the pig-corn program. As your organization gets more complicated, and as you get more people, and as the provincial rep has more young fellows assigned to him, that is, more than one assistant, how does this generally fall out now? Is there a division of labor, is there any formal way that you go about this?

Mr. Gordon: I've left it pretty much to the provincial representatives and it varies with the province. In some cases, we have an assistant prov rep full time on refugees. We are going to have assistant prov reps/management in most provinces; in at least three provinces in I Corps to begin with because we find today that there are so many problems

involving housing and utilities; landlord negotiations where you have eight to ten pieces of real estate in a province capital this takes a lot of time on somebody's part; real estate, vehicles, local personnel salary administration; and some aspects of logistics. They will all be wrapped up together and the assistant prov rep in management will handle those things. Some of our prov reps feel that they need a full time assistant on logistics, warehousing, and we are getting some of those. In the most populous districts where there is intensive agriculture and where the district is fairly secure, we will assign an assistant prov rep at district level to work with the sub-sector advisory team and the district chief. We recently prepared a projected staffing pattern (which I have in my briefcase) through calendar year 1967, where we envisage about or up to 150 Americans direct hire in I Corps from our present level of about 85. This will include more people at regional level in technical fields who will work out of Da Nang, spending about two-thirds of their time in the field. It will include assistant prov reps at district level for about fourteen provinces, some build-up in logistics and in all of the technical fields, and additional personnel on liaison with military civic action.

Mr. Wahrmond: I suppose it is inevitable; this is actually the application of Parkinson's Law. You're going to have Americans in the province who are actually supporting other Americans. My point is that individual differences being what they are, some of these young fellows work better with the Vietnamese than others. I wonder--we know, for instance that some of the young fellows that we would send out will vary widely in their language proficiency. There is no correlation between proficiency in language, however, and in effectiveness in dealing with host-country officials. I was wondering, if without mentioning names, you could

give us your views on that? I can think of a few up there for instance, who were very effective in language, very good in that, but didn't particularly like to employ it. How do we handle that?

Mr. Gordon: I don't know. I think proficiency in language is a great help but not a substitute for ability in other respects. Sometimes, I think, perhaps we give too much credit for language proficiency, but it is certainly useful along with other qualities. Your question was about the fellow who has the proficiency but hesitates to use it. I suppose this is due in part to a realization that he isn't really fluent and he is afraid of making mistakes. You have that type and then you have the type who wade in without caring how poor their language is, they use it. I don't know how you would handle it. I was interested by one view expressed by a province chief to me recently. He was concerned about one of our men who was proficient in Vietnamese but he thought he was a little short-tempered sometimes and sometimes tactless; he would really have preferred that this fellow did not know Vietnamese because the interpreter could smooth things out for them. This man could be tactless not only in English but also in Vietnamese.

Mr. Wahrmond: That certainly makes it seem that proficiency in language with some people simply gives them another means to put a foot in their mouths.

Brierton: Going back to the question of the assignment of the individual at the province level, I think it's sort of a comparison--the same thing in any organization--as in a battalion, say a second lieutenant is a comparable position that some of the assistants have and they think that the battalion commander assigns them according to his judgment of what the job requirements are, what the man's capabilities are, what he can do. I don't see how it could ever be otherwise. You, at

the region summed it up in the manner that you selected the prov reps, for example. I think that it's the impression of the job requirements, and everything else that your individual judgment at the time.....

Mr. Gordon: You might be interested in hearing how I dealt with the four Marine officers assigned to I Corps some months ago. The four arrived together. I spent about an hour with them in my office and I got very little response. At the end of the hour, I was very much concerned. They had no feeling of enthusiasm for the job, I wondered what I had gotten. I started a conversation along a number of different tracks and didn't really, except for one man among them, there was no feeling that they were enthusiastic about what they were going to embark upon or really interested. I didn't say anything; I simply asked my deputy if he would set aside an hour or two that he would spend with them, and then let me have his judgments. So I turned them over to my deputy, intending to compare notes with him later. Then I decided I'd like to have a look at them outside the office in a social atmosphere, so I invited them all out to my house for an informal cocktail-buffet and invited two or three other key members of my staff to join in. We spent about three hours that evening at my house with them in a relaxed atmosphere. I was still a little bit concerned. One of the more senior of the four didn't seem particularly interested in any subject of conversation; he sat looking out the window while we were talking. My deputy was shaking his head; he said, "I don't know." But I still wasn't satisfied. I decided my first impression must be wrong; that these fellows were probably a little bit shell-shocked from all the briefings that they had and all the travel and so on. The next day I scheduled a half hour each with them alone, just me and each of the officers. I got a completely different impression. They had a good

night's rest, they were relaxed; and after the half hour with each of them, I looked over the possibility for assignment on the basis of this very brief exposure to them; I decided on their assignment and I threw it at each one of them for their reactions. They accepted them with enthusiasm and they are working out very well.

Strickland: You know, Mr. Gordon, you've hit upon a real close subject so far as I'm concerned. We're sort of fish out of water in this program and it has been sort of a cultural shock in this respect. There is not the direct line--chain of command--always identifiable. Sometimes I can appreciate totally your position of trying to make a value judgment as a group. Whenever you receive a group of people of this nature, as a group, none of them (I know in my experience none of us have been very exuberant in trying to say what you really feel inside that is so accepted to yourself that you feel it is not necessary to let it out, especially when you are in this group.) On an individual basis this can be brought out so easily. I think this is a real important key to any other recruiting program along this line. If you had ten civilian engineers come in, I imagine the same atmosphere would be generated, that they would be reluctant to talk about themselves to each other when each other knows the other so well. Whereas, on an individual basis, you can clean all the scum off the top and get to the main point more easily.

Mr. Gordon: On this question of Parkinson's Law, Lou, I know the point you make very well. I'm an old O&M man. But today, we have people who ought to be spending their time on substitute matters; devoting their time to all of these administrative details and it has become a full time job for an assistant prov rep, at least, in three of our provinces.. The other thing is, our headquarters in Saigon has come to

the conclusion that to do the job that they envisage, they need to expand their total staff in Vietnam by about 700 people. Along with that they want to decentralize and get as many of them in the field as possible. We're going to have a much greater role to play in program planning as well as in program execution than we have in the past. There is going to be more delegation to region and province; there is going to be a bigger job to be done. That is one of the factors. Another is that (maybe this shouldn't be surprising; it rather surprised me)--all of my colleagues on the MACV side tell me (and many of the Marines feel the same) that they think it is imperative if we are going to get this job done that AID have representation at district level. They think that this is extremely important. The province is too high a level--you have to get down to the district, particularly in the more important districts. We've identified, I think it is, fourteen districts in I Corps (we wouldn't get all fourteen at the one time) but we ought to have a fulltime assistant prov rep in the district.

Mr. Wahrmond: That's true. You made a comment earlier that was interesting and illustrates the problems that we've had in the past and that we shall have here. You mentioned that among agricultural experts and engineers (civil and general) that out in the country (and this is true in any underdeveloped country) they are working considerably beneath their professional skills. They don't really need technical supervision, that's true. The precise problem, as I see it here, is we are now formulating a curriculum for engineering trainees, and according to people who know--and I agree with them--much of this practical training will be "training down." In other words, when I think of public works projects, they have to learn to employ clay brick pillars instead of reinforced concrete building forms, because that's the way they do it out there. Now the problem out in the country is that very often, this

sort of thing causes considerable frustration among the technicians who have been trained on a much more sophisticated basis. Everybody just can't adapt to that sort of thing. We find that among our technicians. The problem here in the University very often is that we rely on them to provide the technical training on such subjects as engineering and agriculture. There again, much of it is on such a sophisticated basis that it has no profit to our trainees. These are problems that we are still encountering. Among your technicians, do you see any of that sort of thing, where the fellow feels a little frustrated because he has to use some of the crude materials in construction, he has to go through the ridiculous procedural and administrative business before he can get anything done?

Mr. Gordon: This is a problem. I remember back in 1951 when we were first getting the point-four program organized. We had an advisory committee, chaired by Nelson Rockefeller before he got into politics. One member of the committee was a North Carolina farm newspaper editor; he made a statement at one of our meetings; he said, "You know, a leader ought to be out in the front, but he hadn't oughta be out of sight." We have a problem here in that in the United States we have developed to the point, for example, an Ag Extension man is a white-collar man--he never gets his hands dirty; he advises the farmers. I spent last Sunday on a farm in Minnesota with my brother. He has at least a \$10,000 investment in machinery. Farming has become a highly technical business. He happens to be in sugar beets, corn and beans which requires a lot of complicated equipment. He has to be an engineer; he has to take a refresher course every year to know how to run and maintain this stuff. You can hardly buy a walking plow anymore in the United States, but that's what you need in a country like Vietnam,

very simple tools; and you need people who know how to farm the way we farmed forty years ago. It is hard to find these people in the States anymore. Something of the same thing applies to other fields. This is one reason we have employed a lot of people from the Philippines, Korea, and other places where there is a little less of a gap. At the same time, we can and have found people who manage to adapt and can work at this more practical level. The things we are trying to achieve, after all, are fairly simple. In agriculture we want to get more efficient use of water for irrigation; spread the appreciation of the value of fertilizer and the use of fertilizer; encourage some crop diversification, get away from the one crop (rice) economy by developing the cultivation of vegetables and other crops like soy beans in rotation with rice; in general, to get more efficient use of the land. Most of the land (cultivated land) in Vietnam can be two cropped, a lot of it can be three cropped; it's a matter of speeding up the planting and harvesting process in part; it's a matter of more efficient use of water and fertilizer in part. We have people and we can get people who know these things and work at the elementary level without too much difficulty. I don't think we have quite the comparable problems in the health field. We do to some extent in education. I think you do have a job of step-down training.

Mr. Wahrmond: That leads up to two remaining topics that I would like to get your views on. One is, just between you and me I don't think we often agreed on this, but there is a point at which we want the provincial representative to be aware of all the political implications of what he does. However, you are aware, I know, of some of the people that we had who went completely overboard on that. It's asking a great deal of a man to be a generalist to the extent that he should realize

his limitations in all of these technical fields and yet still be able to knit them together in such a way that they will be effective politically. What are your views on that, Mark?

Mr. Gordon: I'm not sure, Lou, if I know what you mean by being effective politically. He must, I certainly agree with you, be aware of the political implications of everything he does; the prov rep must be aware of the political forces that are at work in the province.

Mr. Wahrmond: What I had in mind specifically--I can give you two examples. An agriculture expert with AID was interviewed in the paper and according to him, all of Vietnam's problems lay in more efficient water management. What he disregarded, in his case, was an appreciation of the political factors, that is, why in the case of the peasant, he is reluctant to see beyond the subsistence level in agriculture. That is, he can, he has the skill, he may even have the money for fertilizer to go into commercial agriculture but he, nevertheless, doesn't do it because he is not assured of any profit accruing to him. In other words, it would help the country as a whole to raise the GNP, but why should he be involved if there is so little return in it for him. That was one of the things that I was pointing out.

Mr. Gordon: One of the most important parts of our job in the next several years is going to be agrarian reforms; part of it is land reform and part is agriculture credit. These are very sensitive political subjects. We are going to have to be very much aware of the political aspects. The prov rep's role is an extremely important one. He is probably the key man in our program, without any question. I think it is increasingly obvious that the specialist has to be on tap not on top in our operation.

Mr. Wahrmond: I agree. The last topic that I would like to have you stress again. How do you teach people to be more efficient? In this case, the example rests with agriculture. I'm concerned with the attitude of the people themselves who are supposedly being helped. Do you recall, this comes up when Americans very often don't realize how outdated certain methods are, and this relates to this business of teaching Vietnamese peasants more efficient farming methods by running an experimental farm. I know you have some good ideas on that. In other words, we found (as I recall) that the experimental farm generated more problems than it did solutions, and it generated a considerable amount of jealousy. What are your views on this?

Mr. Gordon: I think a model farm, run by the government or an experimental farm run by the government, is not nearly as effective as actually getting out and working with natural leaders in the farm community right on their farm; and assisting them to use better farm practices under practical conditions. The government farm may produce a model crop of rice, a model crop of vegetables, but the farmer takes a look at it and he says, "Why, of course, the government can do this, they have unlimited resources; they don't need to worry about profit and loss, and so on." But if you actually work with the farmer himself, and he tells his neighbors that he made so much more money on this hectare because he did so-and-so; this is much more meaningful. The government farm or the government experiment station tends to become a kind of showplace to bring visitors; a plaything for government politicians; a place where they can go and buy good eggs cheap or get some good beef at a reduced price, this sort of thing.

Mr. Wahrmond: Another illustration, of course, is this pig-corn program that we got started on out in Vietnam in late '63. Despite what we hear, it was not an unqualified success, at least, not initially. One reason it wasn't was that we Americans let our feelings, our sense of Anglo-Saxon Protestant justice sometimes becloud the issue. In this case, we felt that it was only logical that to carry out this experiment we should give the poorest--the absolutely poorest farmers--the chance to carry

out this program. That is, the chance to make loans with NACO for three pigs (one a female); give them credit for feeding them with corn; initially the program failed in many areas because it's that very type of farmer who couldn't compete with the other farmers who would not carry out the program. He ate the corn himself; he killed the pigs. We found out that he was not the most deserving man. If we wanted to spread the word, we had to go nearer the middle, the fellow who ^{had} made it and was making a profit from his farm was the fellow we used to conduct the experimental pig program. He did what he was told; he nevertheless, took a calculated risk in credit. But once having done that the word spread.

Mr. Gordon: I think you have to identify the fellow who is looked up to by the community; whose example is liable to be followed. Everything we do, we have to look at what will be the multiplier effect. To what extent will what we do be capable of multiplication among the people under practical conditions. If it can't be duplicated or can't be multiplied then it isn't worth doing. In some cases, for example, we have gone into an area and provided cement for a drying platform (a drying area for rice and other crops). We used up to twenty bags of cement for a drying area. The average farmer can't afford it; most of them get the kind of clay that compacts nicely and they build it up and have drainage and they have a perfectly good drying area from just clay. Or we used one part cement and ten parts clay, instead of, pure cement. We've made mistakes of this kind; we've done things that are simply impractical. The corn-pig program is one of them. We've designed a very fancy pig-pen where, I think, the pigs live better than the people do in some cases. This program was not designed by an agriculturalist; it was designed by a community development type.

Mr. Wahrmund: The only other comment I would like to make, Mark, and I'd like to get your views on this. There are times, for instance, when the province rep as a generalist, must see political implications, and is expected to see them a little more clearly than is the technician. An example that I'm always reminded of is in

the distribution of textbooks. The technicians, the educators, see the textbook for what it is literally, a device to teach the children to read. However, it is much more than that, it's a very potent propaganda weapon. I do feel, that with the concurrence of the regional director, the prov rep should have the latitude sometimes to influence the province chief or, if necessary, by persuasion or cajolery to manage this on his own. Sometimes, to distribute textbooks in contested areas, in V. C. held areas, because of the value as a propaganda weapon. This, of course, goes counter sometimes, to ^aplanned program. It's not allowed for in the plan of the program very often.

Mr. Gordon: I feel very strongly on that subject, Lou. We have developed a set of paperback textbooks for elementary schools in Vietnam, jointly with Vietnamese specialists in teaching material production. An American team and a Vietnamese team worked together in the preparation of these books. They are very good, well illustrated. The expensive part was the development of the book; once developed we can run off another million or five million copies without too much additional expense. When this was done, I think we used resources as far away as Australia to print these books. So far something like six million have been turned out and we could easily print ten million. What I found in area after area that I visited, when I went to a school, I didn't find the textbooks, I found that they were locked up in a cabinet; or I found that the Education Chief at province level had held back sixty percent of them, he had them locked up because he wanted to save them, instead of giving them out. I've spoken in rather strong language on most of my field trips and now, I have most of our province chiefs every time they make a trip they ask the teacher, "Where are your textbooks? Why don't you have them out?" I think we are going to get a better distribution of them. I also express the view that you just expressed that we shouldn't worry too much if there are losses of textbooks; if kids take them home and don't return them, this is good. They are not going to eat them and I don't think they are going to burn them. If they take them and keep them at home, that

means they value them; they are going to be using them a lot more and some other people are going to be reading them. I've also expressed the view that we shouldn't worry if the V. C. get ahold of them because they are interested in the education of their children and these books are well done. They are not U. S. propaganda; they are simply addressing themselves to social, economic problems--to education: civics, arithmetic. Unlike the Communist textbooks when they pose an arithmetic problem they don't say, "If the brave Communist soldiers met the Imperialist in battle and they killed a hundred of the Capitalist enemy and lost two soldiers, and so on." (you can figure out a problem.) These are worked out in free society language, democratic language without any obvious propaganda involved. The Vietnamese educators that I've talked to say that they are very well done. I would like to see us saturate the market with them. What many of the Education Chiefs have done, and the Ministry of Education is partly responsible for this, they have said that each teacher, for each book that is lost is going to have to pay fifteen piasters. So this has led them to lock them up. I think we have pretty well convinced them that they are not going to have to pay fifteen piasters. We do want them to take reasonable care of the books, but we can provide more if they need them.

Mr. Flanagan: There is one point I would like to ask your opinion on, Mark. That is now, it seems that not only in AID but on the military side and other U. S. agencies, I'm sure that they are thinking actively of increasing their staff in the province. This then confronts one Vietnamese province chief with many parts, all assuming they have equal rank, responsibility, and so forth. So far, I think, American coordination has been on a voluntary or a desired basis. I saw recently that even the language wasn't much stronger in requesting the people to get together in doing things. Do you feel that there is some necessary element now in which, in many cases Americans simply speak through one voice, one person in each province rather than have six Americans confronting the province chief with U. S. policy? Do you feel that it is going to be necessary eventually, or do you feel we can rely upon good old U. S.

natural tendency to get along--to get together?

Mr. Gordon: I really don't see how you could have one man in a province as Mr. United States, both military and civilian. Our Information Agency has its own objectives, its own legislative background, its own administrative pattern, personnel policies. We have our own responsibilities to the Congress, we have our own legislative mandate. I think each has to speak for his own agency, but I don't think the problem of coordination is at all difficult as long as they are talking to each other every day. I remember in my own experience when I was an O&M working in the Department of Agriculture back about 1940, one of the big topics for discussion was whether we should have regional and state representatives for the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Each big bureau of the Department had its own field organization. We discovered that in the city of Chicago there were thirty-five offices of the Dept. of Agriculture with each reporting independently to Washington. We wondered why there shouldn't be a Dept. of Agriculture office in the city of Chicago to pull all of these together. We went into this subject very thoroughly and we came up with the conclusion that if we had to do this we would only be laying on another layer, bureaucratically, another delay; that the district system has worked perfectly well; each office had its own technical, supervisory office back in Washington. While it looked horrible on the surface, if you tried to change it you would have been adding more bureaucracy and not contributing anything. There is the problem of coordination that you work on all the time. A lot of it depends upon the personalities involved, but I don't think that one man can really represent all of the U. S. government agencies.

Mr. Wahrmond: I think it is true though, Mark, that when these fellows go out there, they will encounter this most likely from the Army, from MACV, which would still like to sell the package that Mr. America in the province should be the MACV sector advisor. I don't know if they have changed their mind on this, but this was their idea, perhaps a year and a half ago, Larry, when they started these three experimental provinces which we had alternating in one, a MACV sector advisor who spoke for all Americans;

in another, an Embassy man did; in yet another, in which Larry was the prov rep, the AID man spoke for all of them.

Mr. Gordon: I'm not intimately acquainted with the results of that experiment; but I would doubt very much that we had a more effective provincial operation than we do today in Quang Ngai or Quang Nam where each is independent but they are working harmoniously together. I want to make sure that AID people have a voice in the province. If I can accomplish that, I'll be satisfied. I don't want divisions having their own people reporting directly and ignoring the prov rep. I think it is extremely important that the Agency speak with one voice through the prov rep; if we accomplish that, and hold the line there, I think we'll do all right.

Mr. Wahrmond: This relates to what Brierton said a while ago.

Mr. Gordon: Brierton was in consensus. I think AID has got to have one voice.

Mr. Wahrmond: Yes, but we Americans must teach by example. An illustration very often is that if we send them an advisor, say in Public Works, to the Ministry of Public Works in Saigon. This man is a civil engineer, let's say. He is to be the advisor to the Director of Highways; now, the Director of Highways in Saigon feels that he owes no protocol requirement to notify the chief of the province when he goes to visit it. When his advisor sticks to him like a Siamese twin --accompanies him--very often our province rep finds that he has this man wandering around in the province and making commitments that he doesn't know about. This is the sort of thing that would be desirable to change; and, I think, it is being changed. Is it?

Mr. Gordon: Oh, yes, definitely.

Mr. Brierton: Along these lines, this is something that has concerned me since I came into the program in Washington and it hasn't really

been clearly up too much since then. I got the feeling there and I suppose it was based on movies that I saw that were produced by IVS, for example, that the IVS representative (and I recognize all the benefits of these agencies) seems to be a pretty free-wheeling type of individual, able to make commitments with no real authority able to be exercised over him, let's say by AID. In other words, he seemed to be able to commit AID resources and so on down the line as he saw fit and I have not had a satisfactory explanation, other than, you coordinate with these people (which of course we worked many times) but I believe that without some sort of an absolute requirement of clearance, coordination or whatever you want to call it, that this is an area that as this thing expands could get to be quite a problem.

Mr. Gordon: The IVS?

Brierton: And other voluntary agencies. In other words, if you have people out regardless of what their intentions are (and I certainly believe they are all very high), and they are able to commit resources, able to make decisions, then I believe that they must--prior to this--have an absolute requirement to coordinate with the provincial representative. The feeling I get is that this is not a firm type of thing.

Mr. Gordon: I think we can handle this problem (the IVS) because they are AID financed; they have a contract with AID. This year we are being asked to give IVS more support than we have in the past. They are sending larger numbers of people and they are finding that the government of Vietnam cannot provide the housing they need and other support that they need, so they are looking to us and we are beginning to provide housing and some transportation. They are more dependent upon us. I think, at the same time, we have to recognize the need on their part of having their own identity. I think this can be done and

is working out. I think we have more of a problem with some of the other voluntary agencies.

Brierton: I used IVS just as an example.

Mr. Gordon: Yes. These other agencies are not being financed by us, nevertheless, they are relying on us for logistic support because they don't have their own capabilities.

Brierton: And over whom we don't seem to have too much of a rein.

Mr. Gordon: This again, points to the key role that the AID prov rep has to play. He has to get all of these people working together as reasonable persons; working to achieve a common objective.

Mr. Wahrmund: It has its humorous applications. I remember one province in which I was the prov rep. The province chief and I hit it off very well. He issued an order that no American could come to see him (he was a busy man) unless he cleared with me. That just really irritated a few of the bag men from one of the agencies that didn't like it. I can understand their point of view, but I can also appreciate the province chief's point of view.

Strickland: This is exactly what we were driving at. I'm sure Tom wanted to say that, in so many words if you boil it down, there is a definite understanding from all of the various agencies working within that province, that the prov rep from AID is the key man; and that it is a necessary function that he know what they are doing and they be totally organized almost with 'chain command' concept. Then it can be effectively put out in the field; everybody's effort can be effectively accomplished. Otherwise, if there are five different little chains of help, a little bit of help is often not beneficial, whereas coordinated, it would be.

Mr. Gordon: I don't think we can support the other U. S. government agencies today in the province..

Strickland: Well, that might have sounded stronger than I intended. The idea of the IVS or the Mennonite, or whoever comes up into the area that is not directly within the AID team have this clear understanding that it is a coordinated function, a necessary part of the whole program, a completely necessary part; rather than going off on a tangent on your own and building your own castles, so to speak. And you don't get this feeling that in one area the personalities may mesh to the point where there is never going to be a problem; in another area, a very strong-minded IVS old tiger could go out there and have forty different projects going, and the AID man is doing nothing but dispensing commodities to him for his program. Never really coordinating their effort.

Mr. Wahrmond: Jody, I think Mark should have mentioned that in I Corps this problem was nipped in the bud by this coordinating council which gave representation to the voluntary agencies. Having an example set at regional level, it went on down to the lower echelons and it worked very well.

Strickland: That's why I think we are getting a clearer picture of regional functions than we ever had before. It was 43 provinces before. Now with a better understanding of the regional functions, this can nip a lot of this in the bud.

Mr. Gordon: The very fact that the coordinating council does exist and they know their problems are going to wash up to it has resulted in greater cooperation at all levels all the way down.

Mr. Wahrmond: Any concluding remarks, Mark?

Mr. Gordon: No, I don't think so. This has been very interesting to me. We have a very challenging and complex job. A lot is going to depend on what happens on the military front and what happens on the peace negotiations front in the next few months. I would hope that

the battle against the main forces--both NVA and V. C.--would soon be over, but the battle against the guerrilla is going to go on for many years. The need for economic assistance to secure a victory, build up the strength of the government, improve standards of living and so on, is going to go on. When the main military battle is over, I think, there is going to be even a greater need for our kind of program than there has been in the past. I think without any question, the United States is going to stay with it. We've got a long-term job ahead of us.

Mr. Flanagan: I do have one more point, Mark, and it does concern you as regional director (it concerns each regional director), in terms of this course. Whether it is you, as a field commander, or as a man who receives these people (will continue to feel it is necessary--really you haven't made up your mind yet whether it is necessary--you haven't had a chance to test the product). First of all, I don't think there is a clear definition of what the product should be; what you expect a man to be able to do when he reports into you for duty; how much confidence you have in him that he knows what is going on already; what you then must feel (as in the past) that you have to provide him with a great deal of information and guidance on the spot before you felt that you could turn him loose. Somewhere along the line you may be asked to define what you feel are the minimum qualifications of the man who reports in for duty; where you assume he is, at what level of competency. Then some system of evaluation (qualitative) to report input back here whether you feel the program has or has not been a success. It's really a hard thing to define.

Mr. Gordon: I think it would be a hard thing for me to do. Do you have any plans, Lou, for getting from the graduates of this training program, after they have been on the job for a while, an evaluation of

the training program in retrospect?

Mr. Wahrmond: I do. The way I propose to do that is this: I want them to be on the job, preferably between three and six months. I not only want their evaluation, I will make up a questionnaire to assist them and solicit any other comments they desire to make. But then I want to know where they are, and I also feel that I should do this as a matter of courtesy, I will send these through the chain of command and I will have them come back the same way. In other words, I would send the request to Field Operations in Saigon, who in turn would send them to the regional offices, which in turn, say in the case of an assistant prov rep they would go to the prov rep. Then the young man concerned would fill it out and know that his boss was going to see it too. I want responsible answers to these things. We haven't had our first group on the scene long enough yet; but I am going to generate these things. I have the rough material ready and the manner in which we intend to carry it out.

Mr. Gordon: Of course, we never know how good a man might have been if he hadn't been through the course.

Strickland: It's all relative, really.

Mr. Gordon: Well, what do you fellows think of the course so far.

Brierton: There's no point in asking Lou to leave the room, because he can listen to the tape later anyway.

Strickland: I'd like to open up one. I think the language is outstanding, but there is a weakness involved in the lack of technical terms which appears, to be, (Larry told us the other day that there was a meeting about trying to crank in more technical terms, more usable terms now at the province and regional levels) In other words,

as many different factions as possible. Generally speaking, the language is outstanding. Can we be blunt on this, Lou? I think your

educators should fall back and regroup, and knock off this theoretical approach to some of the areas of instruction, that is, the University people. I think this is a waste of time to people, to all of them. If we can get it more meaningful, that is, to hash over some of the problems that we have facing us there, from each region, unique to that region, and come up with a ^{case} study, a reference, a brain-storming session type thing, as to this is so-called school solution but it may not work the next time you do it, but identify this as such. I think this would be a lot better than finding out that, as an example, the word for water came out of another word a thousand five hundred years ago from a dynasty that I could care less about which has no relevancy as far as what I am going to be doing in Vietnam. This is some of the approach. This doesn't give a total picture of the program by any means, it's just picking out two examples. I think the school is going to be ultimately outstanding. It has all kinds of potential. Right now it is in the growing stage, so there are all kinds of mistakes to be made. I think field people and educators have to come to a common meeting. Mr. Gordon: Have the educators, any of them, had any experience in Vietnam?

Mr. Wahrmond: Yes, some have.

Mr. Gordon: How many Vietnamese do you have on the faculty?

Mr. Wahrmond: We have no Vietnamese on the faculty, as such. The only Vietnamese that we have are the language instructors. Then we have had some lectures which weren't too effective from resident scholars at the East-West Center. We also have had transiting Vietnamese officials. We were much luckier last session than we were with this one. The only one in prospect for the next few months--we hope to be able to get the province chief from Quang Nam, Professor Chi, through here.

Mr. Flanagan: C. and G. S. graduated a short course in December. There are many good Vietnamese, some of them former province chiefs, who attend these courses. They use their job as province chief to be recognized, to learn English, and they've been selected. They are being returned to Vietnam from Fort Leavenworth. No reason why you can't get them--and from Bragg also, the senior officers who report there coming back through. And Gordon--even young district chiefs, captains, who come through here. They are a good source of continual back and forth travel of Vietnamese officials. Most of them are military, sure, but there still are many of them who are a possible tap of future representatives.

Mr. Wahrmond: That's very true and we're aware of that, Larry. But let me just say (here I am playing Devil's Advocate) we made a contract with the University; we, nevertheless, advise them and we monitor everything they do. Where things are inadequate, we try to correct them. At the same time, though, we can only stuff so much sausage into a casing, and that's what we are doing now. What it amounts to is establishing priorities. That is more important than anything else. I agree that we should have more Vietnamese officials, particularly, province chiefs and former province chiefs, coming through here. Very often these people have strings attached to them. They are traveling on DOD authorizations. These are not insurmountable obstacles, but they will be met.

Mr. Gordon: I get the impression, Lou, that you could have a better flow of information coming to you from our operations in Vietnam than you do. I'm going to make sure, hereafter, that you do get copies of our regional summary monthly report and I'll send you these briefing papers for each province which are quite thoroughly done.

Mr. Wahrmond: It will be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Gordon: I think I'll also send copies of each of the minutes of our coordinating council meeting. They are done more professionally than they used to be. We have a Marine colonel as recording secretary and he does a very conscientious job of writing these minutes. I think this will give you a little bit more of a flavor of the operation.

Mr. Wahrmond: It certainly will.

Mr. Gordon: I would certainly commend to you Steve Ledogar when he finishes his tour which will be in December. He'll be in a hurry to get home for Christmas but if they can move up his departure date so that he can spend a few days here. He was a very successful prov rep; he is fairly junior grade, but a very mature fellow; he is a natural leader of the American team in the province, in spite of his fairly low rank. He did an extraordinary job as prov rep. He's articulate; he's a thinker. He was pulled into Saigon and played a very key role in the task force on "Roles and Missions". They did a thorough study on Roles and Missions and the report should be out now. He was retained in Saigon in Field Operations. He is now in Mark Huss' job until Mark come back; then Steve will be ready to go. I think a fellow like that could be extremely useful in a couple of seminars in the training group here, as well as the debriefing.

Mr. Wahrmond: That's true. I might add, Larry, in the earlier portion of this interview, Mark gave us in response to our questions a pretty clear run-down which would relate to your question of what he expects and what he prefers in a province rep who is just coming out. He also made the statement that it is a little hard to put it down as just 1-, 2-, 3-, and 4-. This is the problem we have had with recruiting that type of person. I think it was covered pretty well and that we would agree upon that.

END OF INTERVIEW