Flanagan

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Individual Interviewed: Mr. Larry Flanagan

Position: Provincial Representative - Region II - Darlac

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Participants: 1. Mr. Larry Flanagan

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

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Interview with Mr. Larry Flanagan - May 31, 1966

Dr. Holtzner: The purpose of this interview is for you to give us as much information about your experiences as possible, especially those experiences that you think might be useful in training people who are going out after you. I would like us to cover the whole time period of your contacts with Vietnam, your work in Vietnam and your departure. If you don't object, the most logical beginning would be to start talking about how you made the contact with this particular assignment and how you got to Vietnam.

Answer: That's very easy to start with, because I was in special forces with the Army at the time. One of the prime areas of interest in development, in terms of special forces training, was Vietnam. This was in 1961 and 1962. A great deal of the accent, in the unit I was with, was in preparation for eventual employment in Vietnam. We did area studies and my unit took language training, but as commanding officer of this particular unit, I was busy activating, developing and training it, so I never got to take any language training. We did a lot of sociological, cultural and geographic studies; at least as much of this as we could squeeze in to the bare hard combat duties that were our basic mission in training. After that, I was an instructor in the Special Warfare School, both in the Counterinsurgency Department and the Unconventional Warfare Department. While there, I became acquainted with a representative from the Agency for International Development. I was put in contact with him as they were not recruiting directly but they knew of my interest. The secretary of the Special Warfare School put me in touch with a man who was visiting and this was my initial interview. This developed into a loan or a detail of myself on active duty to AID with an assignment in Vietnam. I was offered full time employment and since I had over 20 years service I decided to retire from the Army and accept an appointment with AID. When I retired from the Army over two years ago, I went back to the United States for a period of a week--changed titles, not uniform since I was operating in civilian clothes in Vietnam.

Question: With a new hat?

Answer: Same hat. I had been in civilian clothes in Vietnam at the time, doing the same work.

Question: The fact that you had this training raises immediately an interesting question. Can you tell any aspect of that training that was especially useful when you went out into the field?

Answer: I had several years in the Far East previously, and also several years of experience as instructor-advisor. I spent three years with the Japanese before they were recognized as an army and afterwards when they were training their National Police Reserves that later became their Ground Self Defense Force and Air Self Defense Force. I had three years of very close daily contact with Asian peoples as an instructor and advisor. I had two years with our own Eskimos as instructor-advisor of an Eskimo scout battalion. They are quite similar, of course, in terms of basic temperament and outlook, and so forth. So I actually had over five years plus a year in Korea, in which we had in our division, mixed units of Korean and U. S. soldiers. How much of the specific training at Fort Bragg was, of itself, of great value, I have never stopped to really think in terms of this was good, this was not good; this I knew and this I learned specifically at Bragg and was therefore helpful to me in Vietnam. A great deal of the area studies and of the research I did for my work as an instructor at the Special Warfare School was of great value as well as the daily association with the many experienced people at the Special Warfare Center.

We were very busy during the years I was at Bragg. We were expanding tremendously. As you know, in October 1961, President Kennedy visited Fort Bragg, recognized the value and authorized the expansion of special forces. I was at Fort Bragg at the time, and from then on, things moved so fast that there just wasn't too much time to sit and think too long. It was busy every day in doing the necessary tasks for that day. To many of the boys who have not had any experience in the Far East or with other nationalitites of lesser culture (or not as advanced a culture) in terms of ethic studies it is important that they try to know a little about the people that they were going to work with, so that what they expected was realistic. Not something that was entirely impossible for the other people to achieve. Even right now, many of them still don't fathom the limitations of the Vietnamese or many other peoples of lesser developed cultures.

Question: When you first arrived in Vietnam what did you find? What stands out especially in your mind as important?

Answer: Are you thinking in terms of what was on the surface, either a hustle and bustle or an atmosphere or certain actions that were or were not going on?

Question: That's what I mean--all of those things. When a person first arrives in this kind of foreign setting what impressions stand out most?

Answer: Initially, you get the feeling of something sinister. I did. The first weekend in town, I was on my own. I arrived on a Saturday and, at that time, our reception wasn't one of the best, so far as someone to take care of you. I was met by a Vietnamese travel man who took me down and put me in a little guest house in the middle of the town, and he said, "We'll see you Monday morning." Even though I had been in the Far East before, it is a city in which there are terrorists and things of this nature. You don't know your way around, you don't know the neighborhood at night or any of these things. You get a certain element of caution and essential sinister atmosphere which is soon dispelled. Now I get a big laugh out of it and wander quite freely throughout Saigon without any particular worry. I don't even think about any danger that might be lurking, like we used to. We travel all around now without a concealed foreboding of the problems.

Question: Can you tell us a little bit about how you got oriented to your job and how you got organized in this work when you started your job with AID?

Answer: I had about ten days in Saigon, reading files on the particular area in which I was to go. It was not decided for a couple of weeks where I would even go actually. They had three possible areas to which I could have been scheduled. They finally decided where I was to go. I read files and talked to people, wandered around on my own. There was nor organized briefing or organized seminar as they have now. Now when a new arrival goes into our operations in Saigon, they are given formal presentations, introduced to everyone, given schedules by everybody concerned, that is, the program people, all the special project people and so on. Everyone comes in and gives them a brief idea of what is going on in their special area. These sessions are kept brief because you can only cover so much and still have it retainable and mean anything. If you don't have any idea of what they are talking about (an agriculture program or self-help or Chieu Hoi) it doesn't mean a lot to you except it becomes just a term. Perhaps, the next time you hear it, you know you have heard something about it although you are not able to relate this particular program to something specific in the field. When I arrived, there was no formal briefing; it consisted of talking to a few people if you could catch them at their desk; reading some files and sort of wandering around. That's just about how I got it. Finally after about a week, I got to a point where I just wanted to

get up and go, and agitated enough that they said, "Okay, go on." I got in an airplane and took off for the highlands. There was a fellow in the province at the time. I arrived and very shortly after I started working with him; going with him sort of like a shadow; talking; looking over some of the files; meeting people; looking around and seeing how things were going on the ground.

Question: How long was he there with you?

Answer: About a month.

Mr. Wahrmund: That was Earl Rhine?

Answer: Yes, that was Earl. Then I left and came back to the U. S. When I returned to Vietnam and the province, I got there the first of the week. On Thursday, Earl said, "I have to go to Saigon, I'll see you on Saturday." But he never came back. But by then, I knew enough about it that it was no real problem. We wrote notes when I needed some background information.

Question: So you just took over?

Answer: It was at the end of the month and, of course, monthly report time was there; this was the 27th of the month and this was a bit of a problem. He also took his assistant with him so I was alone in the office. The office consisted of a little two-room house that he had rented in town. He used the dining room table as his desk and office. It was a bit of a problem for awhile.

Question: How did you find an assistant?

Answer: I met a young lad who was an assistant to Dwight David. He had worked with Dwight up in Kontum and Pleiku. A young Vietnamese lad, very fine young lad, I was very impressed with him right from the start. I knew that Dwight was going to lose him because Dwight was going to move into a regional job and would not be authorized an assistant. So I decided I would simply hold off for two or three weeks, whatever was required, until I could get Hai. Which I did. He was assigned to me about three weeks later--then there were the two of us. He'd been in the program about a year or so. He was young but he was one of the hopes of the country. This is one of those areas (if I can digress a minute) where we don't measure success in terms of the people like this that we influence--that we change and remold their attitudes--but this is how it is going to pay off in many cases. These young Vietnamese who work with us--we end up treating them like the U. S. We give them hell, we give them a pat on the back, we give them a kick in the tail when they need it, we rant and rave sometime about the lack of reception, the lack of acceptance, the lack of progress. Pretty soon (I'm thinking in terms of Hai) he used to get so mad at his own people for these very things I used to gripe about to him (not to the people themselves). He was almost American in much of his thinking, in terms of his dedication, incentive, initiative, and his insight into things. He could see his own people as not many of them were willing to admit they saw themselves. In terms of young men like this, this is where an association with our people--it's the side effect but it is very vital. These young men can become leaders in their country eventually and they will have a more East-West mixture in their attitude. It won't be the old bureaucratic system that they've inherited; it won't be a typical Far East attitude in which nobody makes a decision, nobody wants the responsibility--always refer it to somebody else. These young guys are even saying, "Make a decision and be responsible for it."

Question: You were in that province during your entire tour of duty?

Answer: No. I was there fifteen months then moved in to the staff in Saigon. I became a project officer and after ten months there, I moved back out to a province for the last four months of my stay in Vietnam.

Question: The first province you were assigned to, could you give us a description for background?

Answer: It was in the central highlands. The largest province in the country is the province of Darlac. It's capital city was sort of the unrecognized capital of the highlands; but there is no capital as such. This had been the seat of the initial and basic and largest French interest in the highlands. As you know, they deliberately kept the Vietnamese out of the highlands. It was strictly the French and the Montagnard people in the highlands. Since this was one of the earlier, and one of the biggest French developments in the highlands, the tribe (the Rhade) that inhabited this area were able to become more advanced than many other tribes that had less association with western culture. We were fortunate in this respect; they were by far the most advanced in terms of comparison with many other tribes that were still as primitive as can be and had not advanced in a thousand years. But to look at these people, you would say, "Well, my gosh, they're certainly not advanced. They live in their same old longhouse and they still cook and farm the same way. They cut down the brush and they burn it and they plant for a couple of years and then they move on and do the same thing. They don't know fertilizer or good seed or good farming methods, and they're lazy and they drink a lot of rice wine. They chant and sacrifice their buffalos and they'd rather do this than get out and do a hard day's work." But, even so, this particular group, over all, were more advanced. We had two lesser tribes in the province that were more backward than the Rhade. This province was a beutiful place--almost unending timber--good land. When Diem took over in 1954, he forcibly moved the Vietnamese in to what we call "Land Development Centers". He created a special agency under his own control that cleared land, much of it of course, tribal land belonging to the Montagnard groups. He simply took it away from them. In most cases it was good; it was the better land, it was flatter, more suitable for farming; reasonably close to established highways, this sort of thing. This created a big problem and much resentment on the part of the Montagnards. Especially since, with the land development center came tractors, better seed and fertilizers and the agencies to back them up in terms of agricultural support, and road graders and bulldozers to clear the land. They got help in building houses and wells were dug for them. Right next door, there was a Montagnard hamlet and they were still grubbing away as they had for a century.

Question: How many Vietnamese did you move in?

Answer: Right now of the 200,000 people in the province, I would judge 45 percent are Vietnamese.

Question: That high?

Answer: Yes, they moved them in thousands, literally. Forty, fifty, sixty thousands have been moved in that way. Others have moved in since then.

Question: What are the most important groups among the Vietnamese?

Answer: Catholic. Diem moved his Catholic people in--although not all, most of them were Catholics. People he thought he could trust; that he thought would become his own little nucleus. Of course, it was to take care of a surplus of people on

the coast, in areas in which they were suffering from low productivity, insufficient water to irrigate, and not enough land to support them. There were a lot of problems involved, although they had greater success in that province then they did in others. We only lost, I think it was, two Land Development Centers out of thirty-three. This was because they were established late in Diem's reign, so when he was overthrown in November, 1963 they were not really sufficiently established to go on their own. The new government simply stopped that type of support that Diem gave them. As a matter of fact, right now, the Land Development Center Program no longer exists, as such. The hamlets and the villages still exist but they have been incorporated into the routine aspects of provincial life. They no longer have a special agency to take care of them alone; they don't get special equipment; they simply are now under the provincial services as are all the hamlets in the province.

Mr. Wahrmund: A great many of these Vietnamese Catholics were refugees from North Vietnam, too, were they not?

Answer: No, most of these came from Binh Dinh and Quang Ngai--that area. They may have come there first. I know of two or three independent hamlets that were led by their own minister or priest that came from North Vietnam directly there and hacked out a place in the jungle. These were not Land Development Centers; they were also very prosperous, extremely, in comparison to the others. One in particular had made provisions for years to come. For every newly married couple they had parcels of land reserved for them. It might be idle land now, but when they got married that was their piece of land.

Question: Something like homestead?

Answer: Tightly organized; they were very well organized.

Question: When you say they lost two of the Land Development Centers, was this as a result of the National Liberation Front?

Answer: No. This was a result of lack of further support to finish off the development of the Land Development Center. They were not sufficiently established to go it alone when the national government stopped the large amount of support they had been giving them.

Question: How active were the V. C. at this time?

Answer: They were active on a small scall--increasingly so--to a point where, in the duration of less than the year and a half that I was there, they had been making steady encroachment all throughout the province. In the Land Development Centers, as a matter of fact, we had seven out of thirty-one; seven were considered to be friendly. The rest, most of them had not openly gone V. C., but the V. C. had infiltrated to a point where they would not stand up with th e government. They were either neutral or they were actively supporting the V. C. Of course, there was another problem with the Montagnards. They said, "We had no V. C. until the Vietnamese came." This is not correct. The V. C. were making inroads into the Rhade years before the partition. They were very active before 1954 (in 1951, 1952, 1953) The V. C. had a couple of their own Rhade battalions organized. Many thousand Montagnards were taken to North Vietnam for training and eventual re-entry into the south. The Montagnard is prone to exaggeration, as are many of the Vietnamese. Speaking in terms of opposition, they would say, "Oh, we were attacked by a battalion." You figure, maybe it was a platoon or a company at the most, this sort of thing. The Rhade were superstitious; they are

not basically dishonest, they are basically honest, as a matter of fact. I was very pleased with them; I never lost a thing. I had Rhade in and out of the house; I had a Rhade houseboy; two of my chief assistants--one was a driver, bodyguard, handyman--very fine young lad; He was a Christian, raised in a Christian missionary school but he still had all the superstitions in spite of his Christianity. He had all the Rhade superstitions--all the signs and the symbols and all the fears and the taboos. He always had a logical excuse (to him) in terms of Vietnamese--caused by them, or by the V. C., or an act of the gods, something of this nature--but never caused by the Rhade themselves by a lack of aggressiveness or lack of foresight or lack of initiative or something of this nature--lack of know how.

Mr. Wahrmund: Some external force.

Answer: Yes. They always had stories. We used to sit in the evening, out in the hamlet or out in the village, and talk with them. They always had stories about exploits in the jungle, secret caves where the people would live that did not want to come in and be under the Vietnamese government; they were out there, whole hamlets underground.

Mr. Wahrmund: May I ask this? Were you ever maneuvered into the position that I was where you had to drink buffalo blood?

Answer: I've been through it. You discovered very fast that if you are going to be effective, you have to associate yourself with the people. You can't be selective--you can't say that you'll do this but you are not going to do that. When you go out and you are in their hamlet, you are their guest and they are willing to share with you whatever they have. Some of it is not very palatable.

Question: Could you characterize the groups you worked with, the Vietnamese and the Montagnards, in terms of the most outstanding characteristics they have, as you observed them?

Answer: You will hear all types of criticism. When I first went to Vietnam, one bit of advice that somebody gave me was "First of all," they said, "you consider everyone a thief and then you work from that point. If some of them prove not to be, then you feel that there has been a change because basically everybody's a thief." That's an extreme attitude in a way; they're not all thieves in terms of our thinking of thievery. Most of them will take a bit on the side from government funds--there's a lot of corruption. Yet the Vietnamese, to me, I can find many fine qualities as well as many things I don't like. I can get just as angry and frustrated with them as anybody can; but yet again, I also can look over their past 100 years and I am amazed that they are willing to do anything. I'm amazed that any of them will stand up and say, "Well, I'll try to do it," or that they are still going on and they have a government and they are doing work out in the provinces and in the hamlets, not to the extent we'd like to see, but in spite of 100 years of subjugation and lack of development and lack of encouragement for development; in spite of that, and in spite of twenty odd years of combat, they are doing pretty good. I think they are doing great in many respects. They are getting more educated; they are developing some of their systems; not in terms of the efficiency we'd like to see--their attitudes are not all we'd like to see; corruption is rampant and it doesn't seem to be getting much better, although you hear now and then of an honest one. We haven't whipped the system yet; we haven't established a system that will recognize initiative or will select the outstanding one and help him along the way and so forth. But the Vietnamese have a lot of patience. Many of them I think have a tendency to be hypochondriacs--they picture themselves as being physically weak--they laugh at themselves because they think they please you

by running themselves down. This is a point I had to make with some of my people who I worked with, "No, I don't appreciate you any better by having you tell me that we're Vietnamese so we can't do this. That's not the point. The point is that you are a human being and you can do it. You've got sense, you have two hands, two feet--the fact that you are Vietnamese doesn't automatically bar you from accomplishment. You should take pride in certain things and use it to accomplish."

Question: They just have the feeling of inferiority?

Answer: Yes. Especially in terms of physical ability and technical accomplishments. Some of them have an attitude of arrogance that just infuriates. It's an arrogance that's not backed up in terms of earned respect (earned or developed ability). You see this in many, many ways. You see it in terms of their driving, their dealings with others. The guy who is up can be a real s.o.b. He can be unreasonable and he can be haughty and he's got an attitutde that just infuriates you many times. They don't have (what I call) the old spirit of public service. Their reason for existence in the government is not to serve the people; in their case, their psotion in the government gives them a chance to enhance their own personal position and that of their families. They personally profit and if they do some good for the people that's incidental.

Question: How does this arrogance jive with the feeling of inferiority?

Answer: I think that you find this applies in many other countries. I think in India, the people act quite arrogant, they act superior, but I think basically, they feel very inferior to the English people. In Japan, many of the people have done some tremendous things; yet you'll find many of them who are so busy copying the west; so I think it's a matter of feeling inferior. They feel inferior, yet many of them express a type of arrogant superiority--it's not really a superiority at all--because they're not original. They have done very few things that they haven't copied from the West. They may have improved on certain things but they have basic techniques and basic materials from the West. I think this is typical of most Asians.

Question: When you compare the Vietnamese with teh Montagnard, what would you say in terms of characteristics?

Answer: The Montagnard is proud. I don't think the Montagnard, in certain aspects are as complicated, yet in other things, such as taboos and old customs, they are; they are really bound up in some of these things. I think they're more pliable; you can change them easier in terms of getting them to do things, but it is much slower, it's step by step, it's got to be very well planned so that you can lead them step by step. You don't go in, in one day, and take them fertilizer and new seed and a new tool or a tractor and show them how to cultivate. You take the same old ground with the stumps init, maybe get a little better hoe, and you take them a little better seed, and you start from here, developing them slowly. Because, they are not convinced the change is for the best. They have to be shown step by step. If you can show a neighbor, convince him first, without them taking the risk of loss--loss of face or loss of time--they will watch somebody else, let somebody else try it. They are different people and they are proud they are different. Both the Vietnamese and the Montagnard. They're not the same, of course.

Question: Because you had this mixture there, and these fairly strained feelings between the two groups, how do you go about doing your job?

Answer: It was difficult because the provincial services (in most cases the leaders of the provincial government; the services, such as, agriculture, animal husbandry, public works, education) each of these aspects of the government, their basic heads were Vietnamese. Although, in our particular province they had the Rhade to the point where they were taking over some of the deputy spots and some of the active agent spots. We had in the agriculture program developed eighteen extension cadre (young men who had been brought in for limited training; while not in terms of agricultural technicians they knew quite a bit more than the average Rhade farmer, so they were better qualified). They went around on foot; hiked all over the province. They were Rhade and they had access to the hamlets, which was another of the problems in that the Vietnamese don't want to go to a Rhade hamlet because they're not accepted and they're not listened to; they're not welcome in many cases. Only now is the attitude slowly changing in terms of some of the hamlets who associate with Vietnamese more than the others, say around Banmethuot, the provincial capital. Many of the people worked intown and lived in their hamlets out around. They knew that to better themselves, they should listen, they should work and cooperate with the Vietnamese because the Vietnamese were the government--they had access to the materials and to the equipment and to the money. If they wanted anything at all, they knew they better listen and cooperate, but this was still not on any widespread basis. The Vietnamese were reluctant to take the government out to the people; this was one of the biggest contributions, I think, the U. S. people can make in a province. This is simply leading the way, pushing, arranging, anything possible. These are techniques that you develop for getting the Vietnamese out of the province capital, out of their offices, out to the hamlets.

Question: And that you think, is one of your objectives?

Answer: I think, to me, it became my main objective. I thought it was one of the main things I could accomplish. By hook or crook I used to do all sorts of things, devious things, to put the Vietnamese service chief on the spot, although not directly. I wouldn't go up and challenge him and say, "Okay, I'm going up here now, you have to go with me." Nothing like that. But we would arrange a trip. I'd have a vehicle; he would be out of gas, so I would say, "Well, I know you'd like to go out there, you haven't been out for some time, and we agreed--you and I agreed last time--that you need some help out there. So if I furnish the vehicle will this work into your schedule this week. How about a trip." And you leave a guy open. He may not go this week but he might say, "Well, how about Tuesday," or something like this, and then you go. Or sometimes, he'll beg off and send a subordinate. But I used to get a helicopter and say, "Well, okay, we've got a helicopter scheduled. Where do you think we ought to go this week?" Like it was all decided that we were going to go but the question was now, "Where are we going to go?" I would say, "So-and-so came back in from here last week and he said that they were having a little trouble with the school out there. Maybe we ought to go take a look there." There are many different ways of getting him to go from simply embarrassing him (you may have to do this to get some of them to get from behind their desk and get out). If we can accomplish one thing I feel it is one of the most important things and that is, getting the Vietnamese out into the hamlets--the government out of the provincial capital and out to the people.

Question: So that was your most important goal. Were there any other goals that you could see in that particular term?

Answer: Certainly. Developing a spirit of public service in all the people, a spirit of initiative; the desire to do something not just to sit and maintain a status quo if nobody demands anything of you, fine, you have another day made towards retirement. This was an attitude--don't rock the boat--be content with your position--shuffle the papers in the right fashion and you're not going to

irritate anybody and maybe eventually you will stay in civil service and you will, eventually, reach retirement. We're trying to overcome this bit; we want them to accomplish something, to have a spirit of initiative.

Question: Do you remember a particular case where you were particularly successful in this?

Answer: Yes.The case of the animal husbandry chief in Darlac. When I got there I was told that he was worthless. He wouldn't do anything; he wouldn't leave his office; he didn't care about his program; he had a year to go to retirement and he was finished. He had already retired in his own mind; he had quit a year before. We started off just by going to see him. Just dropping in and saying hello and talking to him a little bit, taking an interest in his shop, looking at his pigpens and his facilities, see it was rundown and offering a little help or some suggestions or some tools. Making some daily calls on him, getting interested, just taking him out for a stroll around his own yard, his own area of his animal husbandry service; then asking him if he would please show me some of the works they were doing in the hamlets nearby and going out. He would go out instead of sending me along with some of the others. I would ask him; I would say, "I know you're busy but I would appreciate it if you would take me a couple of times. I'd like to be seen out with you a few times. This would help me in getting acquainted and being accepted in the hamlet." We'd start working and talking of some of the problems he was having and all this and, by golly, in six months time, we had trained a whole bunch of new cadre; he had rebuilt his whole facility; he had people out. He, himself, was one of the most ardent goers--I always knew I had one guy to go with me everywhere, and this was him. He just took on a new life. I don't know if it was just the particular interest that we took. He had a young son who was interested in science. He would take some kind of a gadget and he would fix up a little device in his own room. He would build model rockets from a picture book; he would take a little electric switch and would fix up a little rig on his door--these things. I would take his boy little things. I might have an old transistor radio that one of my boys broke and I took him this. He came over to my house one day (I lived across the street and up a couple of houses.) I spoke very little French, not enough to even say hello, and I spoke no Vietnamese. He spoke no English but by signs and symbols, he took me by the hand, and over to his house and into the living room. As he opened the door, the radio came on--here was this old transistor with no case, just the workings of it, and he had this hooked up and fixed up. He just smiled and this was great because we took an interest in him. I took him a couple of model airplanes, then first thing I knew, he was out flying them. By taking an interest in the boy, as well as the father--right now, when I go back, they'll be friends for the rest of my life. They will welcome me sort of like a member of the family.

Question: Were there any people you formed this kind of social relationship with?

Answer: Yes. The man in public works. He was a little younger and quite well technically qualified. I was pretty close to the education man and a couple of his people, as well. The agricultural man became a very good friend; I used to work quite closely with him. As a matter of fact, for awhile, we practically ran the agriculture program from our office, because I had gasoline; we paid the cadre and got them all the support and supplies they needed. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Public Health almost quit for a period of a couple of years; they were not functioning.

Question: This is very interesting. Could you give us some details on that?

Answer: The Ministry of Health was torn from internal dissension in Saigon. Initially, they had the old malaria service that was functioning extremely well. Provincial health service was doing quite well. They established little hamlet health stations and trained some rudimentary health workers in three-fourths of the hamlets. Security was a real problem. They were very low paid and not too well trained but there was a semblance of government health service in the hamlet, but they were not prepared to sustain these programs. They didn't have the administrative backup; they didn't have the supply system functioning to sustain these on a continuing basis. They built a village dispensary fine (a maternity dispensary or district dispensary). The day the building was finished it started deteriorating and nothing was done to it until it got in such a shape that it physically was not usable. They didn't have a maintenance program--for next year you have to have $50 or $100, or you're going to need money for new screens or to fix up the doors or something like this.

Question: Why didn't you do this?

Answer: We did what we could with what materials we had. We had at our disposal access to building commodities, surplus paint and nails, some screening, hammars, paint brushes, all sorts of odds and ends in our stock catalog. We had people in Saigon who had priority access to surplus stuff the world over, and could get this stuff in. Clothes, a lot of building materials, such as, nails, ropes, odds and ends like this, we just kept after to keep this stuff in our supply system. If a door was falling off a place we could get a set of hinges. A little paint and a hammar out there and people on their own initiative could patch it up.

Question: You mentioned that they built a dispensary and let it deteriorate and fall apart. How did this first come to your attention?

Answer: Frequent routine visits were made on my own and I would always be sure to visit schools, dispensaries, markets, and other public facilities. Many times I would get reports through my assistants and their contacts. They are not going to come in from their own Public Health Service and say, "Our dispensary out here is falling down, can you help us fix it."

Question: What about the local people?

Answer: It's a government building and, as yet, in many cases as we are discovering, when the government builds something and gives it to the people, the people are not that interested in it, in terms of taking an active interest in its preservation, its operation and its upkeep. It belongs to the government and the government is something separate from them.

Question: What about the hamlet chiefs?

Answer: In the hamlet health stations this was a different story in many cases. The whole village lives in mud so you can't talk in terms of keeping a dispensary shiney and new with a concrete floor and painted. In their terms, it's not practical. They don't think in terms of maintenance or cleanliness, keeping the yard cleaned up, as long as they can wade over the trash or thru it, and the building doesn't fall on their heads while they are in it, then it's acceptable to them because this is the way they've been raised. You can go out and say, "How come these people can't clean this market place up?" Well why should they clean it up?

They have no idea of why a clean market is any better than a dirty market; it's just a market and leaving trash around has been a way of life for who knows how long. Cleaning it up is something entirely different.

Question: The dispensary needed some work, how did you go about doing it?

Answer: There were two or three ways. First, if I had someone from Public Health from the province with me (usually we tried although each trip didn't include everybody or else we would have had an unwieldy group because you couldn't take a dozen people along in one helicopter or in one vehicle,) I would be sure to visit all the health facilities and check the sanitation of the hamlet, also the water supply so that the province health official was certain to see something of each aspect of his area of responsibility. If someone from education was along you made the specific point of visiting a couple of schools. You looked and you pointedly said, "What do you think we can do about this furniture that needs to be repaired; or this building that should be fixed?" Then get the GVN official to indicate that something must be done.

You have to go out looking. I consider this one of the keys to the job because you will never keep up or even know what is going on by sitting at the province getting official reports or talking only to the provincial service chiefs. They are not going to come right out and say, "We're just not doing it out there." Not at all; if you listen to their reports, things are going along pretty well. It is only when you get out into the hamlets, yourself, that you discover things could be a lot better. Maybe they are going pretty terribly; maybe there is nothing going on at all out in this area. Then your problem becomes one of trying to get something going--not just on your own initiative because you can't run things on your own initiative except for a short period of time when it may be necessary; the urgency of the situation may require that you physically do something, lead it or plan it and carry it out--but in most cases, you simply must work through the provincial services. If you can't work out a system both in dealing with the people, getting things going, then you're simply not going to get anything done.

I used to take trips out to do this, of course, with the officials, and also on my own with my own staff. Or I would simply send out a couple of the boys in the office and say, "Go out there and take a look at this school and go talk to these people out in the hamlet and see what is happening. See if they got the fertilizer and if they're happy with the distribution of it. Do they think it was fair?" We had a free fertilizer program--we were trying to get it started--there is always favoritism and problems of this kind. There were several ways we tried to keep up to date and keep an accurate idea of what was going on in the hamlet. First by sending someone in who knew the people and who could be trusted. Another was going yourself, alone or with your own people. Third, was going with a representative of the provincial services or even the province chief himself. Of course, you got a different reception, you got a different outlook, a different perspective each way. Then you tried to tie all these things together into what you considered a valid appraisal of how things were going out in the countryside. Getting back now to this business of say, when you're out in the district, looking at a district school or a health facility with a member of the provincial services, one of the real techniques was in taking the things you saw and trying to convert them into making the representative of the province think it is his idea and that he, too, feels that something should be done and that he can do something about it with your help. I always made this the case. I never said that I'll do, I'll get this straightened out now, you just come along with me and we'll get this done. I'd say, "What do you think? Do you think you can get this fixed? Do you think we can do

something about this? If you think so, I think we're prepared to or can get some things to help you." Never, "I'm going to fix it or I'll fix it for you or we'll do it for you." We never tell the district chief this. In many cases, it was, "What do you need to fix this school or to fix this dispensary or what would you like to have? What do you feel you really need?" As we found, the more you gave away, you didn't buy anything with it; you didn't buy a thing with it if you didn't get their loyalty and their support. Many times you simply provided them with something that you were going to have to keep up; you're going to have to operate it and they're not going to take care of it. Making them a part of it (I say them speaking in terms of the hamlet people) and let it be their initiative or their energy that does something. Then, it is them--a part of them--I know many instances where the V. C. have come into a hamlet to burn the administrative buildings or to destroy a school or do something of this nature and the people say, "No. That's ours. The government didn't build that. We built it. If you destroy that, you are destroying our school. And you say the V. C. don't destroy and that you came here to help." Many times, the V. C. did not destroy. But in cases where the government goes in and says, "We're going to give you a school. Now what else do you want?" Not saying, what can you do for yourself if we help you. You need a school? Well, then, what are you prepared to do to get a school? If the hamlet people would say that they are not interested, you don't stand there and try to browbeat them into building themselves a school. You say, "Okay let's go out and try hamlet so-and-so, maybe they are ready to do something for themselves with our help." We dound, when you go into a hamlet and promise them a number of things and you don't come through, may times you simply can't come through because there are all types of problems. You can go out to a hamlet and see they need lots of help--and you're on the spot--you get to the point where you want to give them something concrete and you want to convince them that your visit that day means something to them. From then on things are going to be different. And you say, "Yes, you can have a school. You want a market? You bet! and so on." If you don't come through in a reasonable period of time, don't go back again because they may give you a cordial greeting but they are not going to listen to you anymore. You are just another government so-and-so who is out there talking and making a lot of noise and you don't mean a thing. But when you leave after an hour, they are still the same and they are going to be the same for weeks on end. They want to see something concrete. We made a point trying when we went out and agreed to something on the spot, you tried to make them a part of it and help them plan and give them enough help to plan a school or a market or a small footbridge or a road or something of this nature that was within their power to build and to maintain. Not something that you had to worry about maintaining for them after it was built--something that they could achieve with their own resources or at least, reasonable help. Maybe every hamlet didn't have a brick mason or a man who could make cement or a first-class carpenter who could put a roof on a school; in these case, you supplemented. The problem was agreeing to something that you could do and then getting something right away. What we tried to do would be to get some building materials out there very quickly and get something going.

Question: Can you give a specific example?

Answer: Many examples. We built some forty self-help classrooms in 1964 and early 1965 for hamlets that decided that they would not wait for the hamlet school program. Under the Ministry of Education we had a Hamlet School Program in which each year, each province was allocated funds and materials to build a set number of classrooms. At that time it was 50,000 piasters per classroom; this year it was 70,000 piasters with this you could build a single classroom. You could build multiple classrooms together in one hamlet if you wanted or you could spread them out, one in every hamlet. We had twenty-four one year and thirty the next. These were

programmed and the supplies were supposedly programmed and you selected what hamlet they were supposed to go in, and the government builds them. The people don't have to do a thing. At least, they didn't in 1963, 1964, and 1965. In many cases, the classroom built was inferior; sometimes the people didn't need it; they didn't want it; and were not prepared to support it. Many of them sat idle. This year, they don't get a classroom unless they really need it; they themselves feel they need it; they are convinced that they need it; and they are also prepared to help build it. In 1964 and 1965, we went out to many of these hamlets and talked to the people saying, "What do you think your hamlet needs most?" Some of them would say, "We'd like to have a hamlet administrative office." It gives them a little prestige for it is a place for the hamlet chief and his committee to meet and a little central place for them to run the administration of the hamlet. We said, "Okay, what are you prepared to do?" You'd sit down and you'd talk back and forth, "What is necessary? You have to have some timber, some gravel and sand, and some labor. Now what can you do? What is the most that you can do? Can you contribute some money?" Depending upon the attitude of the hamlet; depending upon how much they were going to contribute; you tried to make up the difference in funds. Our basic building commodities were of course, cement and roofing material. With the money perhaps you could buy some hardware, some nails if you didn't have any in stock or some timber for rafters, this sort of thing. Then if you agreed you would say, "Here are the papers. Fill out this little application and take this to the village chief and the district chief and he will send it in to the province. Now when are you going to do this?" He would say, "I'll do it today or tomorrow." Then we'd say, "Okay, we'll be looking for this in a period of a week" because the district chief had four days to get this thing through his own committee to us. He couldn't sit on it for thirty days, or two or three months or indefinitely. He had four days to get this through his district headquarters to the province.

In the meantime, while that was coming in, we would be all ready. We would know the thing was coming; we would have an adequate stock of material and get it ready to go. As soon as that paper arrived, the first load of the building materials would be on their way out to the hamlet. Within a matter of a week or so, here was the building they agreed that they would help build; it would actually be under way.

Question: They would be started when you are out in the hamlet and talking to them?

Answer: They could start clearing the ground. We would say, "Where are you going to put it? To do it you are going to have to do something. If you have rocks nearby why don't you start hauling some rocks up here to build a foundation? Bring some bamboo in to help make the roof--things like this." The people could actually start the work. They could also haul sand from the river a few kilometers away.

Question: What would the attitude of the province chief be, if you were out there and initiated this for this project?

Answer: I worked with four different province chiefs. One in particular didn't care what you did. His attitude was go ahead and do whatever you want to do; don't bother me about it. Another was very happy to see it done. If he was available he would be glad to participate; if not, please go ahead. His attitude was "I'm with you. I'll support you. Let's get something done." Antoher one was for the program but he had so much stubborn pride it was way beyond reason; much more than was necessary. He was new on the job, an upcoming young officer, very fine young officer. But if it wasn't his idea or if he didn't do it, it didn't get done in many cases, or it was delayed. We had a period of time to get this over with where he would

actually decentralize some authority to his committee to get these things done. The last one I served with, the last four months, was sort of a combination of each. He ran the province; nobody questioned it. He also wanted stuff done and he didn't want to have to worry about a lot of the details. He was quite happy to have our office take the initiative on many things because we got around far better than his provincial services did. The lads in our office covered the province much more than his own service people did. Quite often, we had the up to date information about how the school was coming, or the condition of this or that item in different parts, or who wanted what, what hamlet wanted what. They wanted a new road, or they needed a new bridge, or the people were upset and angry--they didn't want anything except to be left alone--this sort of thing.

Question: Didn't the province chiefs get upset if, in the eyes of the people, your office was given the credit for starting these things?

Answer: Yes. This could be and in many cases it is a matter of very delicate consideration. An absolutely essential point in getting things done in a province is to get it done in such a way that it is a Vietnamese project for which the province chief can receive the credit. It is always tempting to want to be given credit for accomplishments, but at all times, our AID officials must subordinate their own desires for recognition to that of their Vietnamese counterpart. I saw this when I was on the staff in Saigon. A young prov rep in his eagerness to get something done tried to be the province chief or tried to run things. This is not good. The exception is in terms of absolute necessity sometimes, on parts of projects should prov reps do these things. They must, I repeat, they must work with provincial services. You have to make them function because, theoretically, we are trying to work ourselves out of a job. When we do our job properly or have done it properly then we can get up and pack our bag and walk out, and everything will go on functioning well. It won't fall apart because we've taken the direction, the initiative, and everything with us when we leave. We're trying to build this into the Vietnamese system. I think a lot of our boys get so eager to count up the bags of cement and the sheets of roofing that they can dispense they forget that they are there basically to build government. If they don't hand out one bag of cement, if they can help build a governmental structure that functions in working out with the people and for the people and develop in them a sense of public service, then they are successful. I don't count up the number of projects,such as self-help wells they've dug, or anything as being the basic measure of success of our program because I've seen many places where they have a lot of figures on a chart and the government in the province has not improved a bit. The provincial services are not functioning any better; they aren't any more concerned about the people than they were before. When the province rep changes, things stop. This is now what we are trying to do.

Question: You said previously that you were practically running the agriculture department of the province. Why was that?

Answer: That's right, I was. To get it going because I had, first of all, a basic interest. I believe in an extension program; I believed that the Montagnard needed some help; need grass roots help. They didn't need to be brought into province to be given a three-day lecture on the merits of fertilizer, and the art of tilling ground with a new tractor. They needed to know how to fix a plow out of wood that they have in the forest to hook behind their buffalo, in a field that has a lot of big stumps. They don't have any dynamite to blast it out. They need to know how to grow a crop in this area when there is no irrigation. They don't have any insecticide or any fertilizer. They need to know how to use what they have to make it work a little better this year than it did last year. Only by taking men who were the same as they; improving them; letting them go back and teach their neighbors.

Question: How did you set this up?

Answer: We got some special funds through another agency. We recruited these men ourselves, from the hamlets and brought them in.

Question: You recruited them yourself?

Answer: That's right. I had several Rhade in my employ. We said, "Let's go out and find some of these men." I borrowed one man from the National Training Center; worked out an arrangement through Saigon and borrowed this man, he was a Rhade, a fine young man. He was detailed to my office. I said, "Let's create an extension. Let's get some extension people." It worked all right in a farming country, as in Washington state. The agricultural extension agent was a key man in the county. He was everywhere. He was dealing in lots of things and helping the farmers when they needed it. You can't bring these people to town--you have to take the improvement out to them, where they can do it on the spot. Many times, right now, many of the Saigon technicians who have never been out on a farm themselves, but went through a technical school, and are graduate agricultural engineers, think of everything in terms of a demonstration farm. The government comes in and sets up a nice farm and you put a tractor in here and build nice fancy pens and you bring the farmer in and show him how it should be done. Then you turn around and send him back. Does he go back to a demonstration farm? He goes back to the same farm, the same tools that he had the day before. His prospects or his potential are no different; you haven't done anything except frustrate him, or showed him that "that damn government, they don't care about me because I can't possibly do those things they showed me. I don't have the wire for that chicken pen; I don't have the roofing for that pigpen, or cement for the floor. That's fine for them, but I can't afford it."

Mr. Wahrmund: I'd certainly endorse that.

Mr. Flanagan: Our programs have got to be in terms of what is available locally and what this farmer can do now.

Question: You brought that man up from Saigon?

Answer: No. I got him locally. We had a National Experimental Center in the province. I borrowed him from them and he went out with a couple of other lads and we recruited eighteen young Montagnard lads, brought them in for two or three weeks of training, and then sent them out by foot. The province is 12,000 square kilometers and we started these guys out on foot. Each one had a little area that they went out on--sort of a circuit walker--we couldn't even get them bicycles. I got four motor bikes, eventually, for them so that the team leaders could get one and get around once in a while. And we started in. We started distributing a little fertilizer and better seed. We got quite a few in from the United States; borrowed some from other provinces where a pretty good agricultural program was functioning. We got some corn seed in; multiplied it at the little training center we had established (a little nursery we had established there) in the province and took this corn seed and gave it out.

Mr. Wahrmund: Was this Quatemala corn?

Mr. Flanagan: Yes. Quatemala Golden and Zorch. We had a fine batch of corn; several tons of it from the little area. We beat off the birds, the cows, and the poachers to get the stuff harvested.

Mr. Wahrmund: Did they ever taste the sweet potato up around there?

Mr. Flanagan: Oh, you bet! That was going big. We distributed more than a hundred thousand cuttings, and around fifty to sixty tons of sweet potato cuttings in the last year.

Question: What happened with that little extension service up there?

Answer: They went out and they made their circuit and they started helping the farmers. When they looked out they saw that half of this man's dry rice crop was being eaten by the mice and the rats then he would walk back into town or send a message some way and say, "I need some rat poison; or I need some spray and a spray can, the grasshoppers are starting to multiply." We would put it in the old jeep and off we would go and take a spray can with insecticide, or take some rat poison and simply do something on a small scale in that particular area. Or we would take a bag of fertilizer and throw it in the back of the Scout or the old jeep and away we would go.

Question: Is this service still being run by the province?

Answer: No, it quit. That is another story. We ran it up into early 1965; the 1965 budget was very late. We were still operating in April and May of 1965 with no money. In that particular province we were caught in the tragic circumstances of a Montagnard rebellion. The Montagnards rebelled in September of 1964. They killed about sixty or eighty Vietnamese. The Vietnamese government got very sensitive about the Montagnards. We never made a differentiation between the two. We said that all that we required was that someone had to be in need--Vietnamese or Montagnard--it's the same country; we're working for the same thing. All that they need is have the need of something and if we have it they get the help. But the Vietnamese government became very sensitive about the Montagnards. They really were putting the squeeze on us and were curtailing many of these programs simply by not granting us funds. An engineer came out from Saigon and said, "We consider the extension program to have accomplished its mission and therefore, it is being discontinued." I couldn't believe it. I said, "We're just getting started, really. Not only do we have a request in to double it this year, but I've got a budget all ready and it has been requested. Not simply to kill it but to double it, because this is the most effective means and the best results we have had are from these boys who go out into the hamlets and live with the people. They are of them; a part of them. They're trusted, accepted, and listened to." If one of these Vietnamese goes out in his white shirt and his pointed shoes and talks about fertilizers, he is wasting his time because nobody believes him. But if these young men go out barefooted as they are, and they walk out and get out in the field and they help the farmers, then you see some concrete results. But this is one of the programs that died.

Our well-drilling program died. I had thirteen Montagnards (barefooted and barebottomed, in most cases), and we were running three well-drilling rigs. The only source of water in that whole province for a period of two years was this well-drilling. The month I left--we gradually worked it into Public Works, although they didn't want it. We turned it over to Public Works and they promptly killed it. They stuck everything in a warehouse, discharged the men, and the program died on the spot, as did the agricultural extension program. The Montagnard training center was abandoned and it has still not been re-established.

Question: Because of the rebellion?

Answer: It was strictly the Vietnamese political retribution against the Montagnards. Unfortunately, it was against people who did not rebel. They said it was the Montagnards as a whole, and very few of the Montagnards really rebelled--very few of them. It was extremely unfortunate, the whole thing. I left the province at the end of April, 1965. We carried the extension program so it died the end of April. I was told later that the well-drilling died at the end of April; the team never went out again. The Montagnard training center quit for the rest of the year. They are trying to get it re-established now. They let the Montagnard school (the boarding school in town) close because they couldn't renew the feeding contract to feed the students.

Mr. Wahrmund: This, of course, reflects an antipathy and a fear of the Vietnamese toward the Montagnard, the minority oppressant. It also illustrates, I think in a larger sense, that unless you can sell the government on a program, it is dead.

Mr. Flanagan: That's right. I'm convinced now. We did a lot of these things. We ran the well-drilling program from my office, although we didn't do it alone. We ran it so that the province knew it. We worked a little deal to pay them from a different fund that wasn't supposed to be used for this but it was the only way we could get it done. It was an effective program. We got water to the people and they needed it. That and the agriculture extension were two of the best things that were going out to the people. They were actually doing something for them. When Saigon found out about it they said, "This is not authorized. You can't do these things." Even though we were budgeting for them for 1965, they effectively killed both programs, even the training center. Three things we had going they stopped. We were running the program but we were training Montagnards. We were working with Vietnamese and Montagnards together in the provincial services to support these things, and they all knew that they were part of it.

At the time I had better support; vehicles, gasoline, access to tools, access to transportation that many of the provincial services did not have. It really was sort of a focal point in the office there. I was right next to the province chief and his deputy. We all worked very closely on a daily basis. It was not like my actually running things in spite of them. I did discover that they were willing to carry it on.

Question: Were there any programs that they did take over?

Answer: I ran the province truck fleet also, for a period of a year. I turned that over to them. In a period of less than a month, of the eleven that I turned over that were operating (we had twelve), I think only one or two were operating.

Mr. Wahrmund: Usually maintenance.

Mr. Flanagan: It is. We hustled the parts. We had access to some surplus parts in Saigon that they got from Japan and Korea. I would call down and get a buddy to put them on an airplane and get them up to us. We would take them over to the garage where we would get the drivers and get some of the trucks fixed up. We needed those trucks. They were old World War II trucks (ten of the twelve); we were patching them up continually. You would have six of them operating in the morning and by afternoon you would have a broken spring or the clutch was haywire or the generator went bad--every day it was something--but in Vietnam, nothing moved. You needed these trucks. I had Montagnard drivers; men who would get up on the [illegible] their hunches and take the head off and tear the motor apart, put it back together and it would hum again. I always got a kick out of them.

During the rebellion, they brought the rebel troops into town, by truck. They captured the radio station and they were going to attack Ban Me Thuot. General Khanh, who was Premier at the time, made the statement personally to us (I remember this very vividly) that it must have been the Americans who did this because the Montagnards don't know how to drive trucks. Yet they are good mechanics and good truck drivers. I had ten of them. They may have been barefoot but those men drove those trucks all over rough country and they worked on these trucks. They did all types of work and they weren't mechanics; they were just old drivers that I had picked up who had a little experience here and there with a vehicle and we made truck drivers out of them. They did a very creditable job. We would junk a vehicle only when it became impossible to repair.

Mr. Wahrmund: Incidentally, we Americans have adopted the French term "Montagnard" for the mountaineers. The Vietnamese call them Moi or savage.

Mr. Flanagan: This is distrust.

Question: How about the Vietnamese part of your population, did any of the provinces over there continue.....

Answer: Of course, they were much better off. Most of them were Land Development Centers.

Question: Did you have anything to do with them?

Answer: Oh, yes. We did a lot of fertilizer work with them--agricultural extension crop protection. A lot of them also needed schools; a lot of them needed wells; the Vietnamese hamlets needed repairs on things that had been built two or three years before. We worked with them. They didn't need as much, or to the degree of necessity as the Montagnard hamlets but we made no distinction. We tried to do for the population as they needed it. Many of the Land Development Centers were carrying on projects along with the Montagnards. We had people in the office, both Vietnamese and Montagnard who traveled around and did these things. However, the Vietnamese hamlets overall were given better service from the provincial services than the Montagnard hamlets were. For a long time, I think our office carried the prime interest in the Montagnard hamlets, and were doing the most running of programs--pushing the programs that had the most effect, the most interest.

Question: What were the consequences of the discontinuation of these programs in the Montagnards?

Answer: Well, 1965 was almost a lost year in the whole province.

Question: There wasn't any reaction among them?

Answer: Yes. They rebelled. There was a great deal of dissent. They had a couple of minor rebellions in neighboring provinces, but basic discontent didn't really foment into any major outward display. The V. C. made further incursions into areas in which they hadn't been able to before. I know a lot of this was not that the Montagnards liked the V. C. because they are basically against them, but simply because perhaps it is the lesser of two evils in many cases. They are certainly not getting anything from the Vietnamese government--their own government, supposedly.

Question: In the beginning of our discussion you mentioned, several times, corruption. Did you have any particular cases which you had to deal with?

Answer: Quite often you know something crooked is going on but proving it is another matter. Peculiar patterns show, such as, on contract bids both for construction and for the supplying of commodities by commercial firms. You don't know, in many cases, what is appropriated for a project. You know what it logically should cost and who is doing it and when you go to find out that this contractor built it and only got so much for it; yet, so much is counted against it off the budget--say, 100,000 and he got 92,000 or 85,000 and so on. The system is such that unless you are prepared or have some means to meticulously follow through every lead and have the time to spend, and access to facts, you can just beat yourself to death and get nowhere. You can know what is going on; you can know to what degree; you can know who is doing it. But when it comes to concrete proof that would stand up in a court, or that you can take to some official authority; most of the times you can't--you simply can't. Then you backtrack. You say, "I can't prevent it this way." I knew three or four of the men in the province were in kahoots. I knew it in terms of the contractors who got certain jobs. I could almost predict who the next man was going to walk in for the materials that we had for this job because I knew who was next on the list. In spite of the fact that we did everything we could to block him because of incompetent work or inferior work on last year's contract, and so on. I used to go out to some of the projects. I made a habit of trying to go out when they first started, say a school, and sample the concrete. I would take a brick, I had a little tool, a four-way high-grade steel screw driver, I would pry and scratch and dig in the concrete to see what I could do with it. One day, I went out to a hamlet, and I picked up a block in my hands and just mildly squeezed, and I pinched off both ends of a cement block. Then I turned, and it slipped, and it shattered--it fell only a foot and yet it shattered. I picked up another one and I disintegrated that in my hand. After about three or four, I told my interpreter to tell him to stop work because he's not going to get a piaster, nor another bit of material, I don't care what. He is finished unless he makes good cement. He was given 75 bags of cement and he was going to try to build it out of 20 at the most. He would sell the 55 bags or use them to finish some of his own personal contracts for private buildings for some private citizen, and take the profits. On that particular day I was in the helicopter; this was up in the norther district. It was an area where they had no idea we would go out to. It was very remote but we used to try to make it a point to get to a lot of these places. By the time I got this brick back to the province chief, I didn't have very much left. I laid it right in the middle of his desk and sand fell all over his desk. He said, "What's this?" I said, "That is what is left of the building brick from the hamlet. I handled that very carefully all the way back in my hands in a helicopter. This is all I could get back." He reached for it and it fell apart, the rest of it, on his desk. He got mad. He got the Reconstruction Service Chief on the phone and told him to come up there. He showed him what was left of the brick and he said, "Tell them to stop their work. I don't want that man to build." This man had a contract to build nineteen out of twenty classrooms which would cost over a million piasters.

Question: Is that what stopped it?

Answer: That's what got it stopped. The province chief said, "Tell him to stop. If he doesn't build them correctly, he's not going to be paid."

Question: And then what happened?

Answer: The man put a little more quality into his cement.

Question: But he continued to have the contract?

Answer: Yes. He finished up the contract but I never got back. This was in early 1965, either February or March, and I was not able to go back. When I left the end of April, they were about finished. We used to spot check as many as we could with the idea of trying to check the quality of the building and to try to head off things of this nature.

Question: You said in this construction program you knew three or four men were in kahoots with each other.

Answer: Yes. The Finance Chief, the Land Development Center Chief, the Reconstruction Service Chief, and for awhile one Province Chief was involved. They had all the contracts tied up in their own little fingers.

Question: Did you do anything about it?

Answer: The only thing I could do was to try to make them build quality buildings, and to be sure the project estimates were within reason. I don't care if anybody gets a decent profit if they make a good building. The terms of building were hazardous. It was a real problem getting materials out to these sites, and so on. It was hard to get workers to go out; I recognized all these problems. Simply getting gravel and sand was a real problem, I recognized it; I never objected to anybody making a reasonable profit if they did a good job. Therefore, all we could do was try to keep it on that basis. If they made any money, if they cheated, it was going to be within acceptable bounds. You can't prevent it; you don't have access. Certainly, the finance clerks would tell my assistants many things. They knew the manipulation was going on.

Mr. Wahrmund: I might add, that we progress very often in tacit approval to this, and we did it this way. The contract prices were based on a price index which was way out of date, so we would willingly add more material, up to a point. For instance, cement is a medium of exchange; it was worth a great deal, and this was sort of a subsidy for the unrealistic price index.

Question: I understand that this return is the only way of dealing with them, otherwise, you can't get anything done at all.

Mr. Flanagan: A lot of them would say, "All right, I'll take ten bags more of cement and ten sheets of roofing and we will do the job." Knowing good and well of course, that they intend to sell it or it is used on something else to make a profit for themselves. This year I refused for the last four months--I absolutely refused--to do this. Before I had given a little extra in some cases, to get a job done if they built a quality building.

Question: Why did you refuse the last four months?

Answer: Because our price index had been revised and the method of working was a little different with a contract. In some cases, as in schools and self-help projects, there are no contractors allowed, the people must do it. There was one case in which we gave material for a school and it was just enough. Then they got the school half way built and came back for some more material--almost equal to their original request. I went over and looked, "This has tile on here. We gave you metal roofing. Where is the metal roofing?" "Well, we sold it to buy tile." "Where is your cement? You had enough cement to build all this," I said. "Well, we sold that to buy timber." Well, you know, you get furious; you raise hell, and we did. I went to the province chief and he called the PTA (there was a PTA

in this school). We discovered there was nobody personally making a profit. They built a nice school. They were building two classrooms and they were nicely constructed classrooms. What we did get angry about was, supposedly, the PTA was contributing certain things to this school, but in fact they were trying to take us for everything. So we said, "No. We'll do this much to get those two classrooms finished, but the PTA is going to have to do certain things." They came through with 80,000 piasters and the rest of the labor. When it was all over with we had a dedication. They dedicated two very nice classrooms and everybody was reasonably happy. They did come through. Nobody made a personal profit out of it but they were going to work it so that they would sell this extra material to get timber because it took more rafters to put tile up than it does the sheet metal. You have to have almost twice the rafters; it has to be heavier. This was the seacoast and it is windy and ho, so they wanted tile instead of a metal roof.

Mr. Wahrmund: Not only that, but this is a fascinating subject. The Vietnamese generally have a real fine developed sense of asthetics. For a school building or a public building they absolutely don't like corrugated roofing. They want tile.

Mr. Flanagan: In this particular area, along the seacoast, they also would say that it is too hot and that it would deteriorate faster than the tile roofing. In this particular case, it was an addition onto another school Several classrooms were already built and they were tile roofed. You can't argue with their logic. But my biggest point is, "When you come in with a request, simply be honest. All you have to do is tell me what is the true circumstance."

Question: Would they have had any chance if they asked for tile in the beginning?

Answer: We would have worked out a little extra in funds for the rafters. We have a leeway of 30,000 to 60,000 piasters to play with, and this goes even double. We could have gone up to 80,000 piasters with them instead of 50,000 to buy the material. I'd rather do this than encourage them in fudging or in manipulating something. Everything they do--you simply can't do something or take them at their word--you've got to dig and talk and pry and look out and follow up--twice your time more than necessary is spent on a project simply preventing corruption or stealing or manipulation. I used to get so disgusted at this particular aspect. I said that I would love to conclude one honest deal where the facts presented were true; where the people would follow up and do the job they said they would do, and the end result would be what we expected to begin with. We are starting to get a little of this now in this year's school program. We were building forty classrooms in the 1966 program and we had forty of them underway by May. We had a good Education Service Chief and an excellent Public Works Chief so that the quality of all of this year's classrooms is good. Our public works projects this year were some of the best I have seen in the country. What I used to do when I went there was to take the little tool I carried in my pocket which was very high-grade steel. If concrete will scratch, this tool will scratch it. The public works chief in the province I just left was very proud. He is also very good and pretty sharp. When I first visited him, I said, "You are going to find out, so it is best you find out right now, that one of my pet peeves is poor concrete. My dad was a building contractor. I cut my teeth on a hoe, a wheelbarrow, and a hod on my shoulders when I was a teenager; I used to clean bricks when I was a sub-teenager. I'm not a builder as such, but I know some of the basic rudiments, and I know that good concrete is easy to make. You don't have to settle for one centimeter on top of a bunch of sand and call it a concrete floor. The kids are going to walk on it every day and it is going to break up in a month. One thing you are going to find is there won't be one

bag of cement issued in the province (because it didn't come in unless the prov rep ordered it), and there won't be one bag of cement ordered at the first sign of poor concrete." He didn't think we were serious. He found out right away that we were. Of course, he personally believed in quality work, and he was getting quality work from his own projects. We also wanted him to get into the school program because of no contractors; we also wanted him into the self-help program, mainly as technical builder. Instead of public works being concerned only with public works, and education only with classrooms, we wanted everybody to be concerned across the board. We had a couple of instances then, in which we were trying to get each public service to recognize that they are not separate entities within themselves. That they are all part of the national government in service to the people. So the public health person was concerned that every school had a toilet and some water, and so on. The education man was concerned, perhaps that the road leading into the school was passable for the kids, and so forth. So that everybody recognized their requirements, not just in terms of their own narrow area, but in terms of everybody else's concern as part of this. This is why, this year, we were finally seeing some positive results by forming what we called a Provincial Revolutionary Development Council in which every service chief was a mandtory member, and in which every decision made was discussed in front of everybody, in terms of implications for everybody concerned. When the education man went to hamlet X, he didn't go just to look at the schoolroom, he also was looking for perhaps, a public works man or the public health man; he also walked by the dispensary to see how the health station looked. So that when he came back he could tell the public health chief, "Look, the place is closed, or there are no supplies, or ti is awfully dirty, or something like this." It wasn't working to the degree yet, but it was starting to, in which everybody was not thinking strictly in terms of their own area; they were thinking in broad terms of the national government or the provincial government--serving the people across the board and how it tied in, how each coordinated their own activities with the others. We were inspecting schools and I stuck my little gadget in a crack and chipped out a great piece and here was a quarter inch of cement on top of a foot of sand. Everybody shook their head and we sent a letter to the province chief. In this particular case, I said it was a national disgrace. The school had been built by the government for the people; it wasn't built by the people; it was built by a contractor who accepted the full amount of money and yet it is not only inferior work, it is an absolute crime. I said, "It is criminal what that man did, or what he didn't do with that building. The people see it as a government accomplishment out there. I think that something should be done, and I am prepared to help you in any way you think you need some help in getting it fixed up." And it worked. He called the district chief in, he got the village chief in, he called his education man, and his public works man and said, "I want that school fixed. You have two weeks to fix it. I want the contractor and I want them to tell me why that school got to be that way to begin with. Also, I want everyone to tell me why an American had to find out that that school was bad." This galled him too. He is very proud and he doesn't want the Americans to find out all the things that are wrong; he wants his own people to tell him. This irritated him more than anything. That he had to be apprised of this by an American for something his own services should have told him.

Mr. Wahrmund: Can you think of anything you want to add to that? For instance, in your province what was the relationship between the reconstruction chief and the public works chief? Were you able to knock their heads together; get them to work together?

Mr. Flanagan: In one province they were separate and the reconstruction chief had something on the province chief, I felt; he was in kahoots with the finance chief and the three of them were working with the profits.

Question: A little syndicate of their own?

Answer: Yes, I'm sure.

Mr. Wahrmund: What I'm getting at though, Larry, and this is quite interesting; I have found that in many provinces, the reconstruction chief is the man who does things that I would ordinarily think the public works chief was interested in; the public works chief would confine himself purely to irrigation dams and public highways.

Mr. Flanagan: In the first province I was in the public works chief was concerned basically with national highways, his part of the national highway program. The reconstruction service chief was a mile away; he was an entirely separate service and they did not work together too often. The second province I was in, reconstruction was part of public works; the public works chief was it. He directed the reconstruction service, he was his boss and it worked much better. In this particular case, our public works chief was outstanding. He was one of the finest civil servants that I've seen over there. We had originally sat down across the desk with initial animosity because he is proud; he's an operator; he feels that he doesn't need any advice or help. (I have found few of them that don't need it, that can't use some help, that don't need monitoring.) So, initially, we were fencing. He spoke good English but he had enough of a sense of humor (I did too) and I think, basically, he was convinced that I was not going to "nit-pick" with him. This is bad; you can advise people to death by picking at little things. Save it until something is really wrong. I didn't run into his office every time that something was a little out of line. You try to work with his deputies or with the service chiefs on some of these things. When you really want a punch, then save it for when it really concerns something significant. This public works man, though, after we made several trips together and he saw that we really were concerned with quality, we were not going to "nit-pick", we weren't going to tell him how to do his job at all. I'd have to rate Khoi as a fast friend from now on. We were able to kid and to work closely, and do all these things together. I was very pleased.

We had a regional public works man in from Saigon to inspect the projects. He inspected all the projects. We had our 1966 program well under way with several projects completed; a big new fish market, big public toilet, new seawall, sewer, roads, all these things were under way. The highway, Route One, was being repaired for several kilometers. The inspector gave him a 100 percent excellent on all these projects. They were some of the best they had seen. Last week, the 25 or 26 of May, he was to be decorated by the Prime Minister for his outstanding work.

Mr. Wahrmund: May I ask you something? I find that with many of these prov reps (and I know that it was true with me) that you have the various services within the province--sometimes it is a matter of what needs to be done the most, as to whether or not you will concentrate on animal husbandry or on agriculture or education or public works, and sometimes even something like public safety, a police advisory function. I, myself, found that I always seemed to concentrate more on public works and agriculture. I notice in your case, you probably do the same. Up in Ban Me Thuot you were concerned with agriculture, whereas, in Phan Thiet you were more concerned with public works.

Mr. Flanagan: Right. Because we had a good agricultural service chief in Phan Thiet, and there was little I could tell him. I could help him get commodities; I could do things to help him do his job; but technically he was well qualified. His program was moving. In Phan Thiet our basic problem was cadre, rural construction cadre--pacification--because this was the key to 1966 success in terms of the hamlets.

Public works could build the sewers, the roads, the seawalls, but it had very little effect on the hamlets (most of it), unless the road directly connected them and made access to market easier, or something like this. The new cadre concept that we went into the first of the year, they were the key. If they were not funtioning then you simply got nowhere this year in terms of real consolidation of the people for the government at the hamlet level which is necessary. I don't care what we do in the capital city; until you get the countryside back we still haven't improved anything. There we were this year, with a new concept of cadre, a new training program, but the environment had not changed--the working environment had not changed. Now the point is, how much good are you going to do by changing the operator and not changing the operating conditions? I think this is one of the things we are facing now. The first classes were graduating in May, they weren't really in operation. We were still using old cadre, reorganized under a little more active leadership, and this sort of thing, keeping the better ones working. We sent a lot of them off for training. Now comes the real test as to whether the performance is going to be. Again, I'm afraid most people jump on this as the real answer. You know, in 1964 it was strategic hamlets; this is it this year, we're going to win now; in 1965 it was new life hamlets, we're going to win this year; strategic hamlet wasn't really the thing--they weren't done--now we're going to do it this year. Every year it is a new term. They end up the year having blundered through something else. Well, the new life hamlet program just didn't work out right and this year it is revolutionary development with a new cadre system. But the district chiefs were the same; the condition of the village was still the same; the condition of the hamlets is still the same; ARVN, the military forces, are still operating the same, they are not thinking in terms of supporting the revolutionary development.

Mr. Wahrmund: And manpower, the source of these cadre is even scarcer than it was.

Mr. Flanagan: Right. It is still not a complete package until you can change the environment that these people have to work in--conditions and support. But they are getting a better start. I am more encouraged this year than I have been in three years. I saw the tail end of the 1963 program, all of 1964 and 1965, and the beginning of 1966, and by far it is in better shape this year. Much ahead of the other years across the board

Speaking in terms of certain things in the country--agriculture, it's an agricultural country and they are way behind in agriculture. Public works in terms of communications, roads, bridges, canals were very poor in 1963, 1964 and 1965. They thought in terms of national highways only, and the V. C. had blocked most of these and blown a lot of the bridges. There is no significance to the national highway. It run for seven kilometers in a province one hundred and sixty-eight kilometers long. It is ridiculous to even think in terms of Highway One. What we need is these feeder roads--the dirt feeder roads to get to these little hamlets and give them access to the market.

Mr. Wahrmund: What is literally called in the United States in many areas as a "farm to market" road.

Mr. Flanagan: That's right. Little country roads is what they need. They need some irrigation canals; a few more dams to keep the scarce water from running away in the rainy season and store it up for later.

Question: How did you work with the other Americans?

Answer: In the first province, we had a group I thought were extremely compatible. I felt very fortunate. We instigated a system of weekly meetings and coordination.

Frankly, we didn't do too much coordination to start with. Everybody went their own merry way and ran their own programs. They were not really inclined to coordinate because this might mean someone else getting in your business or knowing too much about it and this sort of thing. Sort of a childish approach but this was basically it. You kept to yourself and they kept to themselves. The sector advisor, as part of the three-man provincial committee and the province rep were very close. The sector advisor I had was very much concerned about the military problems and not too interested--he just sort of went blank when you started talking about economic development. He said, "Oh, well, that's your area. I don't know anything about it. If you say it is okay, I'll sign on the project." So this was it. The other people who worked in the special police in these areas would say, "Well, I'm not free to disclose any of this information." Then one day I was getting into a helicopter to go to a couple of hamlets when one of these special police advisors was coming in. He said, "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going out to so-and-so." He said, "What!" I said, "Yes, we're going to build a dam out there." He said, "For those bloody V. C.? Those people are one of the worst bunches around the area. The next hamlet down, the next land development center is all V. C. Those people will take whatever they can get but they are a bad bunch." I said, "Now wait a minute. What do you mean?" So we started comparing things and, sure enough, he was operating in that area in the special police, and the V. C. were all over the place and infiltrated all of those land development centers, and so forth out there. Then we started getting together on a weekly basis and exchanging information. We discovered that he was working in another area and struggling because he had no support. I had all the support he needed, and I could have made his program complete, and had him act for us in that area. We provide the materials and he can do a lot of the work; the end result is the same. We discovered that we were working areas which we shouldn't. We had support that we could give him that he didn't know about and so on. We worked out a fairly voluntary system of coordination and cooperation. Then, in terms of someone as spokesman for his key area of interest in this particular arrangment, if it was economic development, I had the primary interest and was a spokesman for the group. If it was military then the sector advisor was the spokesman; if it was intelligency or security, one of the embassy people was the spokesman. We didn't appoint a leader as such and say, "Okay you are the authority."

In the second province, it was a different matter because I was sent there designated by the Ambassador as the U. S. team chief. This was an experiment we were conducting to see if this should be adopted countrywide. So everybody was informed officially that the USAID representative in this province is the key U. S. man in the province and he is the authority; his decisions will govern. We had mandatory coordination and cooperation. Fortunately, everybody was of such a nature that there were no problems in this.

Mr. Wahrmund: Let me ask you a loaded question. In retrospect, would you say that the fact that you were a retired Army officer inhibited what you did or did it help you? Was it good or was it bad? And I say the question is loaded, Larry, because you aren't a retired captain or warrant officer; you are a retired lieutenant colonel and you are senior, probably in age as well as former rank held (retired rank) than the sector advisor.

Mr. Flanagan: No. In both cases I was younger than the sector advisors. Two out of three cases of them I was younger but yet senior (senior to them in the Army and was senior to them then). I think past military experience was definitely an [illegible] because I knew their business [illegible] they didn't know mine. I knew both. I did not act as a military advisor to the province chief, yet, I could certainly see, in terms of military coordination or military support to some of our economic development that other additional things were necessary and could point some of these things out. Other than, in terms of

a little friendly persuasion occasionally, in which I could encourage more small unit action, some night operations, some offensive operations in certain areas it seemed like they were sort of pulling back inside the district fort, this sort of thing. I never came out and marched in to the province chief and said, "Your whole damn military thing is botched up, or how come you don't straighten it out."

Mr. Wahrmund: No, of course, not.

Mr. Flanagan: We have had some province reps that have done this. They have gone in and started to act like military advisors. Of course, sector is very much upset at this. The province chief also has a military advisor.

Mr. Wahrmund: Nevertheless, the situation exists now. You made the interesting comment that you know your job and his job, but you are certainly aware of the fact that now a great many of the sector advisors feel equally that they know your job as well as their own.

Mr. Flanagan: They don't and they prove it everytime you sit down and talk about anything. They very quickly show that they don't know your job; what you are talking about; they don't know how the commodity import program works; they don't know where the stuff comes from; they don't know how it is done; in what fashion the budget is provided; any of these things--how the budget is to operate; what amounts for legal expenditure or otherwise; how you go about getting commodities; they don't know these things. Except, I agree, that there are more incursions into our area, unfortunately, by people who don't really know what they are talking about. They don't know what the programs are. I found, of course, military experiences have taught me many things of value just as a prov rep--initiative, ability to work on your own, to deal with people, staff work, supply work, command work, all of these things that make you sort of an all around individual. I'm not a technician in terms of building a dam, or constructing a bridge, or an agriculture man.

Question: You are just a generalist?

Answer: That's just what you are and this is where your greatest contribution can come. It should be in working with people and being able to look at everything broadly and trying to coordinate many things at once. I think this is one of the greatest benefits of military experience. Also, it does gain you a degree of acceptance that the younger non-military experienced prov reps did not get. They were likely to be bulldozed by an aggressive sector advisor.

Mr. Wahrmund: Overawed.

Mr. Flanagan: Certainly. In many cases they ahd an aggressive lieutenant colonel or major that took some of our younger field representatives and ran rough shod over them; left them impaled on their spikes, you might say. It happened.

Mr. Wahrmund: There is a tendency, Mr. Holtzner, it's unfortunate, in the military mind that if we have a young man who is a former Peace Corps or IVS man and he spent, perhaps three years in our army and he was an enlisted man and never got any higher than corporal (if that high) that forevermore, if he is in that province and they found out he used to be a pfc, no matter what he has done since, he is still a pfc. It's dreadful.

Question: Isn't there also on the other side, a tendency on the part of these younger people to have a certain prejudice against the military?

Answer: Yes, of course, you will find prejudice against the military. You take the same guy who was a pfc in some cases, you know, he doesn't like the Army. They didn't do any favors for him, he doesn't think they are doing their job properly over there now, and he knows better, and so on. It does work both ways.

Question: What is the relationship of the prov rep with the province chief? Could you also think of some examples of ways of handling this that lead to problems or difficulties, or that lead to particularly good results.

Answer: The basic thing that guides (describes) the relationship, obviously, is the personality of the people that are involved. That is why it is different in every province in the country. It is very obvious. The effectiveness of the prov rep depends first of all, upon the interest of the province chief. Does he want assistance; is he the type who is enlightened enough, or dedicated enough that he will accept or understand or foresee that he needs advice and assistance? Secondly, he also has to have confidence in the prov rep; he must first of all be convinced that this man from the United States who has been put there as an advisor to him is, in fact, competent enough to give him the advice he needs. And, of course, all of our people are not competent and so, you have this as an additional factor. You have the things that are influenced by the local environment; how remote is this province? What is really practical in terms of its program and what is not. You can have the greatest advisor and the greatest province chief but, frankly, if they don't have any means to do the job, or the people are not anywhere near ready, or the security situation does not permit, then nothing gets done. There are so many, many things that influence the relationship between the province rep and the province chief. I have seen situations where they practically live together. They mix socially almost daily; they do business almost daily; they travel about constantly together. There are other cases where the province rep will hardly recognize the province chief because he never see him. He probably doesn't get to see him or talk to him for five minutes in a month, yet he is supposed to be his chief advisor in the development aspect.

Question: You said you worked with three different province chiefs?

Answer: I worked with four different ones.

Question: How did it work with these four?

Answer: A little different with each one because each of the four was an entirely separate person. I had difficulty initially with only one. The only difficulty was that the man was new at the job; he was an up-coming young officer who was obviously marked for greater things. At the present time he is sitting in a very important position in Saigon with the real number two man in the government, General Co. He is his chief assistant right now. We have since become quite warm friends. I associated with him a great deal in Saigon after I left the province.

The first province chief was a nice gentleman, very sociable, likeable; but he didn't do much. I think he stole a lot, but he was a very nice, very likeable person, a very disarming sort of individual. Yet, very sly and very cunning. He had an insight into many of the problems but he simply didn't have the drive and determination it took to do something about it. The man who replaced him was of an ethnic minority himself, and he also inherited many of the security problems, but he was extremely easy to work with in terms of being openly friendly, extremely friendly, very cooperative. He sought our assistance.

Question: From what group was he?

Answer: He was from the northern area. I really don't recall. He was a mixture of two or three different groups from what is now North Vietnam. He had trained in China in querrilla warfare against the Japanese in the early 1940's when they infiltrated back into North Vietnam. He was then involved against the French; then against the Viet Minh and now, of course, he has been in the Vietnamese army for many years fighting the V. C. He is quite an experienced soldier. He was very intense and seemed to be a very dedicated individual. Some of his techniques--well, the Vietnamese didn't particularly take to him--I think this was part of his downfall in the province. He stayed from June until October in this particular province. As part of the aftermath of the rebellion he was replaced. Actually, it was not his fault. I think his own personal integrity, his own personal interest and courage, prevented some real problems that could have become pretty bad. I think that he, himself, was one of the key elements in getting it settled, although, he was not given credit. He was made the goat along with a couple of U. S. people. The Vietnamese got out of that very nicely, although they were basically at fault. The relationship with him was very close. How effective we were, I don't know. The time was relatively short in terms of seeing real effectiveness. He was a man of the people. He believed in them, got out and associated with them. Associated himself as one of them. He went to all sorts of degrees of trouble (personal hazard, personal discomfort) to get out and try to see the people. The old system finally wore him down; he got tired, he got sick, he got discouraged. In Saigon, during that stage, everything was going backward (this was in 1964). Things just literally stopped. There was no money; the budget wasn't out even in October--we hadn't received our 1964 money. Supplies were not coming. The Ministry of Health had literally quit; Public Works ceased to function, and so forth. Things were really pretty sad and we were trying to carry on. Losing ground steadily to the V. C. because we just didn't have the resources to combat it. Then we decided that we simply could not do what we were trying to do. We could not hold ground. It was ridiculous. We agreed upon a plan to consolidate hamlets--give ground to the V.C. --let them use it--They couldn't use it any more--it was no value to them or the people. He was just getting started in this program when he was removed. Then a political appointment was made to a Major Vinh. Now he came in and openly professed....

Question: This was the third one?

Answer: Yes. He openly professed cooperation. He declared openly among all assembled that he and I were going to be like brothers and he needed me. He needed advice and all the assistance he could get. Then he has this immense power that he had. It became appartent to him, for a province chief is literally god in a province of 200,000. He also discovered, of course, the little pressures in terms of the old line bureaucrats, the old civil servants, that he had to play ball a little different way to get their cooperation. This he found was not always in keeping with the things that I thought were best or would advise him on. Many of the provincial services were pretty well bound to old thoughts and pre-set programs that were not practical in terms of the need of what was practical to attain. They were not flexible at all. They didn't allow any flexibility and he wanted to be flexible and so did I. You have to be; you have to sort of shift with the wind as often as you need to keep going. Then, for awhile, he became adamant about the advice. One of the key problems, one of the points that I've learned is you can be more effective by not being so obvious because you have to realize the position the province chief is in. He is the authority and he represents the Vietnamese government and he can't maintain respect or support if it appears that he is simply there to do your bidding

or be a U. S. mouthpiece. So anything you do, it has to look as though you are supporting him; as though he makes the decisions; they are basically his ideas, and so on. Unless you do this, you cause him many problems and you reduce your own effectiveness and his also. I learned this. In fact, it was very valuable to me in my relations with the fourth province chief. This was a very pertinent way and it was a most successful way of getting advice across, and getting things done--things that I thought should be done and couldn't do myself. They had to be decided and pushed by the province chief. Back to the third one again, of course, he too, soon became a victim of the system. He was tremendously overburdened. He would work until two every night and get nowhere. He would simply be farther behind the next day. It seemed like he always had stacks of papers because the province chief had to do everything. He thought he had to do everything. He wanted to review every bag of cement that went out and he simply had to do everything. I kept telling him that he simply could not do this, that he would find as all the others have found that you simply have to delegate. He said, "But I don't know my deputies." I said, "You've got two of the best that I know of. Your deputy of security has been in this province five years. He could run the province if you would just let him. He knows everything. Everything is routine and all set. He doesn't get upset. He could run this show if you would just let him run it. Set up a procedure for main decisions. Delegate. Let your people do things." He wouldn't do this. Finally he decided that he simply couldn't function as he was going unless he did start to delegate a lot of his authority to his deputies. He had three deputies.

Question: But he had to discover this on his own?

Answer: He did, and he finally got so tired; almost of the verge of complete exhaustion. His family was very upset. He was never able to spend any time with them and he was always busy--always going. He finally had to start delegating his authority. Give some to his deputies; make them do their job; not simply be "yes men" to him. For awhile, he was a little resentful of advice, of suggestions, and I discovered it was a matter of his own pride. Again, you try to word these things, your advice. You don't say, "We'll do this, or we'd better do this or else." You suggest, you advise, you bring out in them a discussion that helps put out in the open points that you yourself, were thinking about in the back of your mind but you don't want to come out and say, "How about this and this?" You try to lead into it where one of them comes up with it and realizes a shortcoming or realizes a problem area, and comes up with an openly discussed solution. You give your version. You all get together this way. It's very tedious, very tiresome. I've come out of some two and three hour meetings this way. You feel almost exhausted and you don't want to talk another word to anybody. You don't want to make another decision. You don't want to have to hedge or be devious or anything else. You simply like to be open and above board but you can't. Of course, you also lose in interpretation, through the interpreter. No matter how careful, how diplomatic or thoughtful you are, in terms of saying something or suggesting something or pointing out an error or pointing out a shortcoming, it often does not get across in the translation in that fashion. I noticed a couple of times, one in particular, after a certain thing was done, that there was almost a hardness on the part of the province chief or some of these people. I knew it wasn't because of anything that offended or was said to offend. I discovered, in time, it was simply how the interpretation was given. It came out abrupt and authoritative, and really, in effect it was not at all. From then on, I was very careful to take only this one young interpreter with me. He understood me and I understood him. We lived daily together for a year. He also had an insight into the shortcomings of his own people. A couple of times, the province chief made statements in Vietnamese ot his staff that he was simply not

going to be told by the U. S. what he was going to do and he told the interpreter, "Now don't interpret this back." This province chief was so immature in some respects.

Question: Which was that?

Answer: Number three. My interpreter was furious because he knew that the province chief didn't understand. He knew that what we were trying to do was right--good for him and good for the province. I finally went to the province chief one day and said, "I don't feel that I'm being of any value here. I'm really about to suggest that we withdraw. Close our office here or reduce our office here. (I was overdoing it) I just feel that we are not on the same track at all. I don't feel that we understand each other, or that we are really thinking about the same terms. Let me re-establish my position. Why I am in the province. My interest is in the people and in helping you. I have no intention, no desire, of running the province at all. It is your job, your responsibility, you are the one who has the authority, the one who has to stand up and take the consequences."

Question: May I ask what was this move of yours?

Answer: An apparent lack of acceptance of advice. A tendency perhaps on his part to be stubborn, to delay programs that should be going on, things like this. For awhile he discouraged his service chiefs from having direct contact unless they had his permission first. This went on just a short time because I didn't let it go on long.

Question: This was an accumulation of a number of little things?

Answer: Yes. It was simply a point of his being afraid that he was appearing to be U. S. dominated. In which case, he was not really. Many times, the province chief (and again I found this true with this last one, even though he is one of the most experienced province chiefs in the country) was that he put himself on a spot from which you had to extract him many times to save his own face.

Question: That was number four?

Answer: Yes, three and four.

Question: In terms of how did this happen?

Answer: Well, in terms of a staff meeting. You get to a point in a discussion and he would openly turn and say, "Well, what do you think?" or "Do you agree?" or "Will you agree with me?" or "Will you okay this?" Things of this nature. Or we would go out to a hamlet and there would be a problem and instead of him standing there and telling them that we were discussing possibilities, he would turn to me and say, "What can we do for them?" As though, I'm the one standing there, the only U. S. in the middle of the Vietnamese, to decide what the government of Vietnam can do for the people. I finally had to go and say, privately, and also in writing, suggest certain procedures, so it could not possibly appear as though I was running anything, which in fact I was not. We did control the supplies and we could push and get money loose quicker than they could themselves through our own influence, our own office in Saigon. Both with number three and four, I finally had to talk with him. One night I was in the office and finally felt that the time was there. I looked out and saw that he was still in his office so I simply walked over and walked in and sat down. We talked for over two hours. We talked pretty good that

time. I was simply honest and frank. We got along well personally, there was no conflict there. I'm sure he flet that I was qualified. I knew that he was qualified miliarily. He was very green administratively, this was one of his short comings. What he didn't know, thenhe just sort of stopped progress until he could try to find out, and he never really had enough time to really find out for his own conviction that he could go ahead with something. Iused to say, "Yes, we could do it this way, it's legal." Until he got to know me, he was always hedging; he was never quite sure because as I told you his finance chief and his reconstruction service chief were crooked. He still had the same old finance chief who was a real headache. The finance chief was continually trying to shoot down everything and cause delay. He would come up with all kinds of reasons why he could not do something. An interesting case study when you are dealing with personalities is the fifteen months I dealt with the deputy for administration. Finally, a month before I left, I noticed a change in his outlook. This is a separate story but I think it is very pertinent. An old line, French trained bureaucrat and how he changed his attitude.

But to go back to the situation where the province chief sets himself up for criticism. This happened with both number three and four. Finally when number three and I talked for two hours or so and put it on the table, we ended up, I finished with a complete understanding and it proved so later on. He didn't put himself on the spot. We tried to discuss things in advance of certain meetings. If we went out into a hamlet, I said, "Here are the broad things that you know you can do. Now the little techniques of doing it legally are something your staff can do for you. You simply decide that within the framework of the regulations we think we can do this. You know without turning to me in a hamlet; you don't have to turn to me or if you would like some sort of a little unrecognizable sign that the other people don't realize, if you want some sort of sign, all right. We'll do something, say thumbs down or thumbs up; go ahead." And it worked out much better this way. He could stand and talk to the village elders and say, "Yes, we can do this."

Question: Did you agree on a sign?

Answer: Yes. We finally came upon a way of "Okay, we can do it," or looking doubtful, highly doubtful, or just not possible. It worked out; it was a much better arrangement. I had to go through this with the last province chief. It exploded one day. One of his service chiefs accused him of listening only to the Americans and not listening to his Vietnamese.

Question: That was number four?

Answer: Yes. This was number four and this was in another province. Three of these province chiefs were in one province.

Question: In the Montagnard?

Answer: Yes, up in the highlands. But we ended up very close friends. The first province chief, incidentally, is back in. He was reappointed after a year and a half's absence, back into the same province.

Question: He was the one that didn't do much?

Answer: That's right. He still isn't doing much. He's not moving too much.

Question: How did you get along with the service chiefs in this province?

Answer: Very well. You simply got the province chief to let you go ahead and work with the service chiefs. You simply got his agreement to let you go ahead and do certain things. That's why we had been running the well-drilling, the trucks, the warehouse, the agricultural extension and the Montagnard training center and the provincial nursery. We were running all of these things from my office because he and the provincial services weren't really interested in doing these things. They were necessary. We turned the nursery over to the agricultural service when they agreed that they would like to run it; we turned the trucks over to the province when they said they would like them; we turned the warehouse over to the province, they had a couple of people trained that they thought could run it; and, of course, we turned over the well-drilling to public works but they were not prepared, they were not interested.

Another incident to show a complete change in the attitude of the number three man. I really feel that upon his arrival in the province--he came on very short notice, one day and he was there. He knew that I was close to the old province chief and I think he professed to the necessity to cooperate without conviction because it was the thing to say. It took him awhile before he was actually able to practice this. He came in the middle of October and I left the end of April. In March, the V. C. attacked a northern district and they were stopped short of the district headquarters. In retreating they burned out some 3,000 refugees along the road and they went back to the Montagnard hamlet, burned it down and kidnaped over a hundred of the people and took them back into the woods with them. This happened about three in the morning. The province chief went up there very early, about 5:30 or 6, then about 7 a.m. I got a radio message and they called me over to the radio shack. It was the province chief on the radio. He said, "Can you come right away? The helicopter will pick you up in a few minutes, and I want you to come up here and help me." He told me briefly what had happened. I went back to my office, gave orders to start loading certain items in anticipation of what we would need. He had said they burned out two or three hundred houses, they kidnaped people, and so on. Then I went up and he met me and he was exhausted and pretty well down-cast. Quite a few people had been killed and things were pretty much of a mess up there. This V. C. outfit was supposedly just over in the woods a little way waiting to come back, regroup and try again to overrun the district. He said, "I am so busy with the military, what can you do to take care of all these people?" He didn't call in any of his own staff. He had a social welfare man, a deputy for administration, deputy for security, anyone of whom could theoretically have done this. He called me, so I told him very quickly that they were already loading the trucks and that we would be up there by ten o'clock and that we would have relief and that we would go to all the services. I would get the medical people and the social welfare people to help distribute the stuff, and so on. This is what we did. We had relief up there and these people who had been burned out at three in the morning, were rebuilding by noon. They had food, clothes, and medical attention.

Question: They were actually starting to rebuild?

Answer: Yes. They were tearing down their old shacks that they had built previously and were trying to rebuild. To me it was a real turn around. Originally, he would not have done this and then finally in the end, he just said, "Here--what will I do? Will you please take care of this whole problem? I've got my hands full with the military part of it and I want you to do this." I think it took a while for him really to understand that we were sincerely interested in the people and in the province and were prepared to go to any extent of personal discomfort or danger or otherwise to simply bring some help to the people in the area. He was very dedicated to the people as well. He was a fancy boy in a way. He was very sharp. As close

to being a product that you expect from West Point as any--personal appearance, personal conduct, dealings with subordinates, and so on. Now his deputy for administration had been some twenty years in the government system.

Question: But not always in that province?

Answer: No. He had been in several provinces. He had been a petit functionaire and had risen up to a certain level. He had some training at the National Institute for Administration. He was so set in his ways; he was trained in the old system in which the procedure was the thing; not the end result or the need. It was how you did it that was really important. If you didn't do it right, then you couldn't do it.

Question: How old was he?

Answer: I think old Sat was around forty, perhaps the early forties. He was a very likeable person, very friendly, straightlaced in some respects. We dealt with him on many of the committees and on many other administrative things. After awhile I always knew that the first twenty minutes were going to be a list of all the reasons why we couldn't do something and all the problem areas we had to face, and all the things that would go wrong. I would very politely listen then in the end would agree that, yes that will be a problem and all these kind of things, but we have to do it. We have to try. They would argue again; argue and argue why we simply couldn't do it this way. In one particular case, like in the self-help programs, the program started with U. S. financing. Direct piasters purchased by U. S. dollars. So we did have some authority, some push on this and we wanted to get this program going. It was designed to get money into the hands of the hamlet right away; no red tape; no months and months and years delay. They need it; here it is. It's a good legitimate project, by golly, go. Well, they took that procedure from the point of two or three papers that were required to where it required 96 forms.

Question: Nine-six forms?

Answer: Ninety-six forms. I got them all together, counted them and sent a bundle in to Saigon to show them what was going on. I took the original directives and I went over to Sat, and I took the bundle and I said, "This is how this program started; this is the philosophy behind it; and here is what this province has turned it into. So far as I'm concerned we can forget the self-help program. It is one of the best we have going but it has become so burdensome now, that if the people want something today, they get it six months from now if they are lucky. The idea of the program is to give them something today to help them work. To encourage them, you build them up and get them excited enough and interested enough to do something for themselves and you help give them the means to do it for themselves."

Question: Who decided on all these forms?

Answer: In the province, Old Sat had decided to be legal and to cover every possible auditor or every possible criticism or every possible thought of criticism. Of course, it was a maze. You could never have waded through these things. It was impossible. Twelve copies of acceptance of materials and twelve copies of something and twelve copies of the intent to do something by the hamlet committee--it was ridiculous. So, he looked at me, and we talked for awhile and he said, "We'll speed up the process." We went through this for sometime, different committees, not just self-[illegible] to distribute pigs, [illegible] with some elaborate system for selecting the people, the recipients, and on and on. It got so complicated that to administer and to follow it up they just didn't have

the capacity to do this. I used to ask, "Why do you make it so complicated?" They assumed that this was the procedure; the more complicated the procedure, the more it looked like they were doing, the more important the administration looked, and so on. It didn't simply matter a great deal to their own prestige, in terms of it would appear that they were doing a tremendous job in the administrative aspects of the government when in fact, they were creating problems themselves by a lot of these things. Of course, a lot of it also was coming from Saigon. A lot of their administrative requirements were from there, too, and these affected some of their procedures on money. But the last month, we went in with a list of projects and some of them were things that the boys in my office had been the main ones who had been out--we were the main ones in the program. We did have them create a small Vietnamese office and we got them to travel with us and become used to the self-help program. We would run it and do some of the administration while they were learning the program. I knew that there were going to be the usual arguments. We started in and old Sat started off by giving me a half a dozen reasons, difficulties, then he stopped and he turned and grinned and said, "But we'll try. We'll do it." I didn't have to argue; this was his attitude from then on. He finally changed his attitude after fourteen months of continually trying to convince him that the paper in itself was nothing unless it enhanced the program, and suppeded things up and made it easier. Sure, we had certain procedures we had to go through because there were funds involved. We were also fighting a war. A war for national survival. You could not get all tied up on the program because of the paper. You adjusted your administrative requirements to help facilitate the program. After fifteen months, the last month before I was to go, I think he did this finally (at that time I didn't know I was leaving so it wasn't a false indication). He simply got to the point where he finally understood the purpose of administration in terms of program support. It was not the program itself, it was simply something to keep track of things and help make the program work. When he finally turned to me and grinned, I considered it one of the most significant things that happened. He developed a good sense of humor and we had become good friends socially. I lived two houses from him and I had to pass his house on the way home. I usually worked late at night and he would call me up and we would have a glass of wine or something. I would go in and sit down and talk for a little while with him. He was trying to learn English and I was trying to learn French and Vietnamese.

Question: Social contacts seem to be very important.

Answer: They are extremely important, because this can help set an ease of conversation and association that you don't get strictly from business. A lot of times in your business, there are other officials around. You can't backslap and poke a guy in the ribs with your elbow and be buddy-buddy. There must be a reasonable amount of reserve. You have to treat him with the respect that his position is due. You can't act as though you're it and you're going to tolerate him around because of your big Uncle Sam and this sort of thing. He simply has to be it. There can only be one chief and he is the man appointed by the government to be the chief. You have to do you can to make this obvious that you accept it. You are there to support him and he is the one that makes the decisions and takes the consequences. He and you and the other Americans can sign these agreements, but if they are wrong you don't get hacked, neither does his military advisor; the province chief get it in the neck. If you know this--he knows it--and if you understand it and respect it then you can see the position that he is in. A lot of our problems involving relationships between prov reps and the province chief stem from first of all, a lot of our people are not matured to where they are accepted from the standpoint that they [illegible]. You would be surprised. Age means a great deal over there. Also then, in terms of background, if you at least act as though you are there from

your own desire and you have an interest and you are willing to put out everything that is required of you personally. If you are willing to fight to the end, in terms of getting your own organization in Saigon to support you and you can convince them of this to start with, this is a big step along the way to being accepted--accepted as a full member of the provincial team.

Question: To show this kind of enthusiasm and concern and ability to deal with the problems, how about the significance of a military background on the part of the prov rep? Against let's say, a college graduate who maybe went to the Peace Corps and got some experience in some other parts of the world or in some other programs like that. Would you compare these different types of prov reps?

Answer: The province chiefs are military people. He has military advisors. Otherwise, it can be two against one. I have seen this played. I have seen it try to be played in a couple of instances, in which the sector advisor because he is military and because the province chief, also military, devotes more thought and effort toward the military problem than he does toward the administrative or civilian aspect of the thing. It can be a problem to the prov rep if he has no military background or knowledge in this fashion. I think it is a definite asset to have had military experience because, as I said, I not only knew my own job, I knew theirs. They in turn did not know mine. Not that you use this to try to do theirs, not at all, but you are in a position to help plan your own work and to help coordinate their military efforts in terms of support of this development program. You understand the security situation in the province; you understand their military problems. In so doing, if you understand their troop limitations and why they have to keep this regional force company in the district--why they can't go on an operation to secure this hamlet that you want to go out and build this dam in, or to build a road in, or a school, it all helps. They are not always having to try to tell you why they can't do something, or why they did something else. In turn, you can also, in knowing, it also works the other way. When I got to know the sector advisor better, I used to say, "John, can't you get them to get out here to get this battalion and get on it and run some small operations in the area. There doesn't seem to be that many V. C. There are enough to harass our civilian workers but there don't seem to be enough to stop us if they put a little security in there. Can't you encourage them to get something going? How about some routine patrols over a period of a month in here?" This sort of thing. You are in a position to know that they are not doing their utmost. They could do more. In many cases, what they are doing is running around in the woods, chasing V. C. that are shadows. They don't catch them and really, they have no business out in that particular area anyway. Let the V. C. have it. Let's go somewhere else where we can use this manpower to provide us some extra security. A military background is very valuable and I think it is appreciated more by the province chief, and certainly by the sector advisor also, if you don't try to run his program for him because he is as resentful of intrusion as I am of the sector's trying to run our area of operation. Of course, this is happening more and more.

Question: In the case of young people who do not have military background, what kinds of practice could make for their effectiveness?

Answer: They have to recognize what the nature of their job is in terms of the other people that they have to deal with, that is, the province chief and the sector advisor. They have to make up for it then, in terms of additional displays of [illegible] or interest and also an indication of interest in the military program, in [illegible] support what you can, such as the dependent housing, or taking an interest in the widows and the disabled veterans and trying to work them into some of your programs. Take an interest in that aspect of it but also show them by your

own confidence and your own knowledge of your own program that you, in your own right, are qualified in your area as they are in theirs. For the younger person, I don't know of any other way in which you can do it except to show by the things he does and his sound advice in his own area that he is knowledgeable, that he is competent, and at the same time, try to develop in his own mind an understanding of the military problems involved so he can show very shortly that he understands these things. He does have understanding of the military problems and he is willing to help adjust to them and to help them adjust as well.

Question: This goes over into the second big problem area we want to talk about. That is, the general roles or cases in U.S.-Vietnamese relationships. It would be useful to us if you could remember cases of ways in which Americans behaved that proved expecially good or bad; especially successful or especially bad failures, aside from the relationships of the prov rep and province chief that we discussed.

Answer: There are many instances in which the prov reps have attempted to make certain decisions or to do things without first having the complete concurence or planning acceptance by the Vietnamese. There have been difficulties involved with the province people finding out second hand that certain things have been recommended through Saigon or things like this. There have been cases of sector advisors trying to become military planners in the provinces. I know a couple of provinces where there was no relationship at all finally. The sector advisor stayed in his little compound, the province chief stayed over in his, and the prov rep stayed down in his little house. They hardly ever spoke and never got together. Yet the three of them were supposed to be running the province. The province chief did as he pleased. He bought the supplies, he locked the warehouse. The prov rep couldn't get near the warehouse, yet he was the one who was supposedly the key man in getting the stuff in (the commodities in). The three of them were supposed to be the ones who actually approved of its use.

Question: How did that situation come about?

Answer: I don't know how that particular one developed. I was appointed to go up and investigate it. In so doing, the outcome was the relief of the province rep and recommended transfer, of course, for the sector advisor. The province chief, himself, was the key problem. But he was the one in authority. He has since then been removed. He was not removed for a while because he was a political appointee. It was up in the northern area and the appointments of the province chiefs were political appointments. They weren't strictly military or the best man for the job.

Question: You mean appointments made in order to exert Saigon control over the area?

Answer: No. In that particular case, it was an appointment made to assert Corps control. The Corps commander makes appointments. In theory, the Prime Minister for the Ministry of the Interior makes the appointments, but in fact, the Corps commander appoints his own boys even down to district (province chief and district chief). He is the one. There are many instances, a lot of them you hear about; you take reasonable cognizance of those, at the time; you have your own problems, your own work. Things that happen in other areas, you've heard about them, and so on. In the two provinces that I was in during this period of time, I know of no major conflict or difficulty in terms of the sector advisor, province chief or the sector advisor's subordinants. I do know of certain conflicts in which one popular forces training center commander was relieved, finally after several months though, of continual ineffectiveness in which the U. S. military sector finally said, "We can no longer support this because this guy is not doing it; he's ineffective; he's upsetting the

whole program; he's disorganized; misusing commodities, and so on.

Question: Things have to get pretty drastic before this?

Answer: They do. They get very drastic and, I think in many cases, the sector's are reluctant to advocate strong measures until they have gone a long way because we don't want it to appear that the U. S. is telling them who they can appoint and when they will put them in and when they won't. Many times there has been cooperation between sector and our agency in getting rid of inadequate district chiefs. But again, it has been after months of obvious unsatisfactory performance of duty in all of these things (corruption, misappropriation); the people themselves were complaining about it. By then it is very obvious. Then the guy is transferred--shifted somewhere else. Not often is he punished; he is simply moved to perhaps a less lucrative position.

Question: Did you have any contact with French people still in Vietnam when you were out in your province?

Answer: Yes. We had some up in the highlands. There were quite a few French and Italians. They still had several plantations they were running. They were in some of the cultural areas, some of the religions and some of the churches. But the French did not openly seek U. S. friendship. In many cases, they were rather resentful and were rather arrogantly spiteful. They tried to act above the U. S. We used to get a big kick out of it. It was kind of pathetic in some ways.

Question: Do they still have influence with the Vietnamese?

Answer: Yes, they do in some ways because the Vietnamese speak French as their second language. English is fast replacing it but French is still the second language. They still have the French educational system. Their medical system is slowly changing from French to U. S. style. Their administrative system is based upon French system but this is slowly being changed. A lot of their cultural background is French. They still send their children to school in France. Many of them now are thinking in terms of sending their children to the United States, but still, it's much easier to send them to France. And, of course, the French are still involved to a great extent in cultural activities. They have remained in trade and in cultural activities; I think, probably deliberately. In the school system, in the universities, in additional cultural affairs in Vietnam, the French are still there.

Question: You didn't find it useful to try and capitalize on their experience or their knowledge?

Answer: No. I made no point of trying this at all. We became friends with the Italian plantation people. They were simply nice people. We also wanted some support and some cooperation from them in terms of helping employ some refugees and in getting a plot of ground for a training center, and also a plot of ground to establish a commercial venture for an exporter in Saigon who was collecting certain agricultural raw materials. This would in turn help create some worker demands. There was not a great deal of association. We used this one coffee plantation as one of the points of interest to stop for VIPs on tour, you know, people coming through, ostemsibly on a political tour but still they wanted to see a little bit of everything. There was one big coffee plantation, a big rubber plantation, and you took the men through the processing plant and you showed them what happened, how things are done.

Question: Did the Viet Cong try to harass those plantations?

Answer: Yes, they did. They extracted a pretty good tax from them. Those that wanted to stay in business paid a pretty good fee to stay in business.

Question: Did not the government use retaliatory measures to get the people who did pay this tax?

Answer: No. You didn't know; you were really only guessing in many cases. You can't retaliate against people who are earning a livelihood and pay. If you want to take a trip on a bus anywhere, if you have to go and if there is no way to go by air, you pay the V. C. tax. If you want to send some things by truck you pay the V. C. tax. We pay the V. C. tax on our U. S. fertilizer to get it through.

Question: Is this right?

Answer: Sure, I have many receipts that used to come into me. Truck after truck of fertilizer coming in from Saigon used to go through a V. C. check point. They would say, "Oh no, this is commercial fertilizer. We're going to sell this. This is not governement stuff." Of course, the V. C. knew better but let it pass when the driver paid 500 piasters for the load. The driver would pay the 500 piasters, he would get a lecture, maybe be held overnight, be shown a propaganda movie, and then he would be permitted to proceed. Everybody puts up a front and the fertilizer gets through. We needed the fertilizer, we could care less about the 500 piasters. Really, when you come right down to it, I regret that we had to pay; they can use this money to buy medicine and rice but we also needed the fertilizer.

Question: The last problem area is the relationships between the prov rep and the central government in Saigon. When you think about that are there any particular issues that come to mind?

Answer: There is always a tendency, any time a man is in a subordinate level he talks about "them"--those people--you know, "them" in Saigon. They're not human beings; they are a mass of something back there.

Question: You have heard such stories but you have seen both sides.

Answer: In the field, in headquarters, then back in the field. Of course, I know better. Many of my friends on the staff in Saigon and also those in region say, "Well, you have seen both sides. You're fortunate, but you know how it really is." That is true, so I always try to temper it in our meetings--regional meetings --which I go to with other provincial representatives. We try to temper this attitude more realistically. You know the people in Saigon can't indicate every day, "Here we are to support you. We understand how it is out there." They are working hard; they are working darn hard in Saigon and they are doing good work and sound planning. They have to make demands on the field for information. It's the same guy in the field who gripes that the man in Saigon doesn't know what is going on out here. But then, the man in Saigon sends him a questionaire to learn what is going on. "Those darn people back there. Here they harass me every day with another report." It's the same man who is sitting here, on one hand, decrying the fact that he doesn't hear from Saigon, that they are not interested, and they don't know what is going on; on the other hand, when they try to find out he says, "I wish they would get off my back and leave me alone. Send me the cement but don't send me these report forms."

Question: Is this something that is really quite understandable? It is communication between the local Vietnamese authorities and their own central

government is very bad--as bad as it can get. Now the local American representative I think, might come to identify with their counterpart at the local level and then begin to share their feeling.

Answer: This is certainly possible but, to me, this was not a pertinent point. Our communication in terms of physical communication, in many cases now, is very good. We had radio contact with our region and we can monitor Saigon almost any time. We have telephone communication most of the time, in many of the provinces.

Question: This is your own organization?

Answer: Yes. We have telegraphic communication through the Vietnamese system. The U. S. military is connected by radio up through the system. Many times they have a telephone system. So it is not like you were isolated and had no contact at all. Of course, you can't always pick up and dial in Saigon. You may have to go through a dozen switchboards and may try half a day to get a call through and have to shout and hope you can hear. But I don't think the main problem is between the American field representative and Saigon headquarters, both military and our own mission. It is more one of the people in the field thinking that the people in Saigon have a lack of understanding of the real fact of life in the field. That they are not really interested--if they were they wouldn't make some of the decisions that they make--they wouldn't demand some of the things they demand, and so on. Or they would really come out and find out what things were like before they do a lot of the things they do. Well, that is an extreme attitude and I found this out by being on both ends. I was frankly glad not to be bothered by Saigon because there were few things that came up the first fifteen months that I had to yell for help on. I didn't call Saigon for every little decision that had to be made. The directives at the time were not really adequate but they left you enough flexibility that you also knew that after awhile there wasn't some guy who was going to jump down your neck if you did do something wrong. Sure, if you went out and built a dam, instead of building a school, then obviously it is wrong, we all knew it. There are certain procedures for planning major projects. If you take a self-help project and twist it a bit, so long as you come up with something the people want and the people help build, okay, you have satisfied the basic concept of the program.

Question: We had a number of examples of Vietnamese people not getting paid; money not coming through; one or two of the ministries in Saigon practically stopping.

Answer: The health workers haven't been paid in eighteen months; teachers have not been paid in six months and they are still teaching.

Question: In these instances, were you asked to use your connections with your headquarters in Saigon to help the local Vietnamese situation, and what did you do?

Answer: Yes. I did two things. I put it in writing, and I went personally to Saigon.

Question: You traveled?

Answer: Oh, yes. I used to go in once a month or every six weeks. I would go in on a Friday night or a Saturday or maybe a Thursday night and have Friday and Saturday to do business, and come back Sunday or Monday. Or go in on Friday or Saturday, and use Monday for business and come back to the province Tuesday. Sometimes I liked to spend a couple of days because at that time, we didn't have a regional setup. Now you can do a lot of business by radio with region and not have

to go in. But, then, my only contact was with Saigon. They were our backup people. In many cases, it was much easier because there was no staff. You could call in for something but when you stopped and thought, "Now who is going to do this for me in Saigon, there is nobody there to do it for me; I have to go do it myself." And quite often you could. You would go in and you would make the rounds of the volunteer agencies--you would go to Catholic Relief and get a commitment for supplies--go over to the Mennonite Society and get another commitment--you would go to CARE and get a commitment. You would go out to agriculture and scrounge up a couple of pieces of pipe or some parts for your water pump. You would go out to public health and get them to release a load of soap. Then you would go back and make arrangements with all the paperwork to have it shipped or to fix up delivery. We were doing a lot of this work for ourselves in Saigon. You could accumulate a lot of problems in the field and then make a trip into Saigon to get it arranged. In so doing, we would go in and talk to our technical people; as an example, public health where they haven't made health records, we would take a list of the names in, or take the Vietnamese official in and go the rounds of USAID and GVN. The only problem there was that there was no system. It wasn't a matter of making the system work; it was a matter of no system being established in the ministry itself, so our public health people had to start from scratch on a lot of this. There was a tremendous division in public health in Saigon; they would not cooperate. You would have two rooms...

Question: In the Ministry of Health?

Answer: Yes. You would have two rooms. One might be empty and one might be full of supplies that the other needed but you are from a different office so the heck with you. It was terrible. They were running their supplies to each branch of the same ministry. They had their own people; their own vehicles. They could not use each others vehicles and so on. It was a real mess for awhile. Now, our public health division, after a year of working very hard and talking in trying to influence their planning, now finally in the last two months, they have shown more progress than they have in the last two years. They have agreements now that are joint. They have training going again, national courses and provincial courses. For the first time in four years, there is an agreement between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Revolutionary Development, establishing lines of authority on basically who will build new buildings, dispensaries, and who will repair the old ones, and who will staff them and who will supply them. Before, this did not exist. Nobody knew anything. Where we were, I as the prov rep, was repairing old dispensaries, building new ones, trying to train people and trying to help them get paid without any regard or knowledge or agreement of right or wrong in terms of doing all this construction and repairing of facilities. It was proved that it was not wrong because there was nothing to prohibit it. This year there are certain provisions. On our rural development fund we will not build administrative buildings; we will not build district dispensaries. The Ministry of Interior must build administrative buildings. Last year we built them; we built many hamlet and village administrative buildings. It was approved. It was all right. It was not prohibited, so we did it. But now, one thing revolutionary development is trying to do is make the ministries function in their area as they should function. The Ministry of Interior must conduct training for public officials; they must provide administrative buildings for the government, out in the hamlet, village and district. The Ministry of Public Health must provide certain facilities; must pay; must train; must supply, and so forth.

Question: Do you recall a particular case in which your province chief may have asked you to do something for him in Saigon?

Answer: Many times. We had a regular system. This is oen of the things we always worked on; we always setup and established a system.

Question: What was your province chief's relationship to Saigon?

Answer: Seeking our help, communicating and getting things done. We had established a system whereby on key items where it might be anticipated either the Saigon ministry might not act in favor of what we thought was very important, or there might be an extended delay which we really couldn't afford. Then we would parallel. I would get copies of Vietnamese documents. I would send these with a cover letter to our headquarters in Saigon for the ministry counterpart of our office in Saigon. They would then go across to the ministry and say, "I understand that you received certain requests that have been indicated by our representative as worthy of our attention. We feel that this is a very important matter and we would like to urge your consideration and that we talk about it." If both sides are interested this has paid off and we got what we needed. Just recently, there was a Chieu Hoi center for the returning V. C. and it was to be repaired. They didn't get it started until it was too late and the money from 1965 had been turned back. Province requested an extension of time to spend the money and was refused. This was about the time I arrived in the province and looked at the old center. It was deplorable. The place was a mess and not worth patching up. It was an old school on the beach and it had literally fallen apart. It was a shame to put any money in material. I said, "Why don't you build a new center?" They said, "Well, we asked for an extension of the money and we were refused." I said, "Let me see copies of the correspondence." We got copies of everything, so I said, "Well, actually we can do something about it." It so happened that our Chieu Hoi man in Saigon and I had shared a house together. I knew that something could be done. I wrote out my impression of the whole thing, what we really needed and why, and sent all of it to him. In two weeks we had a half million piasters to build a new center.

Question: So it worked?

Answer: Yes, it worked fine, and the province couldn't believe it. I said, "We can do it if we work together and if what we are going after is worthwhile. If we can prove it is worthwhile."

Question: Are there differences in the treatment of different regions by the Saigon government, so that it might be more difficult for you to help a certain area?

Answer: Certainly. You have different corps commanders; you have different province chiefs who may have friends or enemies in Saigon.

Another example and a more recent one is that every year the high school students take a series of examinations called "First and Second Baccalaureat". These have been very closely administered; it is almost a top secret affair. It is probably one of the best guarded secrets in the whole country. They are held on the same day throughout the country. We faced the problem of being isolated by road, by rail, by very limited air capability which is already overtaxed by supply problems and essential traffic, and sea transportation is very, very poor. We had 700 students to move to examination sites. They established Saigon and Nha Trang, a hundred and some miles in both directions as examination sites.

Question: For your students?

Answer: Yes, for students in our town, in our province headquarters.

Question: Wouldn't it have been simpler to ship the exams out?

Answer: I thought so. We started talking about this and I said, "You mean they expect us to move 700 students out of this province? Never! Impossible! I would never request diversion of that kind of transportation. Why don't they establish an examination center here? Give them here." They said, "Oh, we can't do that. They don't do that. They have a commission that comes from Saigon to administer the exam, and they are scheduled, and so on." So I started writing to our regional education man through Saigon education. In less than two weeks we had a commission established in town for 500 of these 700 people. They were going to administer the exam right there in the province capital. It was the first time it happened in the history of the country. Why? Because we asked for it. We simply decided that we could not move these students. They (the examiners) had to come to us. They got permission. But this only included Baccalaureat One; this was only 500 out of 700 students. I said, "Well, now, if they can give us permission for Baccalaureat One why not Two? I don't understand the difference. Why can't they do it for both?" They gave us some reasonable explanation why they could not. I said, "All right. Fine. I accept, I appreciate the effort that went into getting what we got. At least, 500 students don't have to travel. We'll put up with traveling the balance." So I got one airplane to come in--bring a load of cargo in--take a load of students to Nha Trang--bring a load of cargo back to us and take the other half of the students into Saigon. In half a day we could get this accomplished and also get two loads of cargo into the airport. I don't mind diverting aircraft on that basis to make it count in all directions. This is the way the setup was when I left.

Question: You got the students back the same way?

Answer: They were still going; they were going next week. We had these arrangements made. The point was, for the first time in the history of the school system, the Ministry of Education in Saigon actually agreed to do this. It was basically through the intervention of our own education division in our AID mission that did this. They took data, we provided them with the facts, and they went over. In another respect, with the same people, I failed, so far. I have not received an indication, except verbally, that it was being considered. We were to establish a rural trade school in the province. A prefabricated building was allocated to us; however, it was a couple of hundred miles away in a warehouse and had been for a year or close to it. We had a site picked. I worked through the education and supply people up in the region. We got this thing on some junks (coastal vessels) and got it down and then the contractors backed out. The fellow who was going to lay the concrete pad and erect the building decided that the elapsed time since he accepted the contract a year ago had caused prices and conditions to change drastically so that he could no longer fulfill the contract and asked for release. He was released from the contract. So there we sat--we had the building but no funds.

Question: His claims were true?

Answer: Yes. It was logical; it was reasonable; we didn't fight it. He was quite reasonable about the whole thing. So there we were. We finally got the building on hand but then we didn't have the funds. They were looking around for another contract. We said, "No. Don't worry about another contract. Release the funds to us, as you released the other funds to the province. Let us do the construction on forced account." If you don't find a contractor within a reasonable time then the government becomes the contractor. In this case, we would have appointed public works as a negotiator or supervisor of the construction. You go [illegible] laborers; you contract for delivery of gravel and put them under the [illegible] public works officials and build the building, probably half the cost and get a better building besides. This is what we were after. By

the time I left, we did not have an answer. I used to follow-up periodically, every couple of weeks and say, "What's the current status?" They would say that they had the request, they are sympathetic but they haven't gotten around to doing anything about releasing the money. Then the next time, they are thinking positively and it looks pretty optimistic, so maybe in a couple of weeks you will get the money. This is the way it has gone for a couple of months. We are trying to get this building erected. I think eventually they will get the money released to the province. It was simply a matter, in that case, of having to incorporate the procedures to transfer the money and to get the accountability back. We are noticing a gradual change in attitude on the part of many of the public officials, in terms of bending, being flexible to get the job done. Not in saying, "No, we can't do it that way because we don't do it that way." Many times this was the only reason--we just don't do it that way. You say, "Why? You want to build a building and you have the money, why not? How else are you going to do it?" "Well, we don't know, but we don't do it that way." This is what frustrates me. We like to get the job done, to think in terms of being flexible, to change in order to get a job done. Some of them are getting there. The province chief ask now--in almost every key issue since we had success with the Chieu Hoi when he had been turned down twice on his own--every key issue he automatically provides us with copies of their paperwork and we, then in turn, parallel it to our people to try to get action or consideration. It works. We win a few; we lose a few. We gain more than we would had we not tried. Now you do run the risk, in some ministries or with some key officials, of antagonizing them with what they would call interference (undue interference of undue pressure) when in fact they will assure you that they have your interest at heart and they are going to be favorable anyway. Why are you harassing them through U. S. channels. I don't know if they are true or not; we don't know. Maybe the man would have eventually gotten around to satisfying you. We didn't push everything. This was the same as my dealings with the province chief. I didn't run into his office everytime we got a nail out of place in one of the buildings, and so on. You saved the really important things for the important people. In this last area, I learned enough in the first province, I went back, I walked in to introduce myself, and I tried to establish, at least, my method of operation, an element of understanding between the province chief and myself. I knew this fellow. I had worked with him before and he was a good man. He was understanding. He had certain characteristics that you had to be careful of, but basically he was a good man and one of the more progressive and more understanding of all the province chiefs I have known in the country. So it was really fortunate never to have a real knuckle-head to work with or a real obstinant person. Some of the province reps were completely frustrated, were getting nothing done because the province chief simply would not permit anything to be done or would not let them do anything. I was fortunate in most respects. I had some problems but none of them really killed or stopped the program. But as I said, with this last one, I worked from this premise, "You are the province chief; I'm not. I don't intend to be. I have no authority to be; no desire to be. You have your responsibilities to the government and mine, and I also have responsibilities to you and your government. I'm going to fulfill them to the utmost of my ability. How successful I am depends upon you and your acceptance of me and what I can offer you. If you don't want what I have to offer, you say so because I will simply go somewhere else. I'm not the type to sit and do nothing and collect my paycheck. I want to be contributing or I'm going to go elsewhere." He said, "Fine. I am the province chief. I will be the province chief and I will make all of the decisions. I do need your help; I do want your help and we will work closely together." Then, some of the problems were created from the fact that he would put himself on the spot in front of his own staff. It took about two months to where we finally worked out these procedures whereby it was not obvious. It looks bad when there are three of us traveling and two are Americans. It looks like two-thirds of the interest is

American; it should be Vietnamese. In these areas to which we would go out together I would be sure that the province chief was the prominent one. I would stand in the background or sometimes not go or sometimes be very obviously in the background to let him know to lead the way, to be the one to talk to the people, to look and make decisions. We had a basic agreement, I said, "There are times when the official government document says the three of us make a decision, the three of us must approve every expenditure, every allocation or obligation of commodities. This is ridiculous. I must fulfill the obligation to my government to see that the commodities are used properly but, we know. You have been here long enough. We know what can be done and what generally cannot. You must feel free on the spot in those areas and times when it is necessary for the impact of the moment to make decisions to impress the people and to put a point across that the government is responsive. You go ahead; we will back you up. Maybe we will have to find a way to do it in some cases, but we will agree. We will back you up." And it worked. He said, "In the same way, when you are out, I expect you to do the same thing. If needed, you must make a commitment on the spot, to make a psychological point or to impress a point or to show the government is there, go ahead." The three of us agreed that in those cases where we could plan and talk about it first, we would. The last thing we did before I left was to establish an advance informal get together on all the things to be brought before the provincial committee (The Revolutionary Development Committee) which was the main body that coordinated all the plans and all the activities. In many cases, I would sit here and the sector advisor would sit there and he would be in the middle, and he would have to stop and turn to both of us for an okay. This is bad. His whole staff is there. He should not have to turn to us for an okay for these things. So I said, "Let's talk about these in advance, if you can. If a last minute presentation comes in okay, you may catch us by surprise." Now we have started talking about them in advance and anything that might be controversial, we either iron it out before hand or we delay it for a week until we can all look into it and discuss it informally and reach some concensus before it is put before the final board for final approval. This was starting to work. We weren't caught flat-footed and we didn't have to ask for delays, and we didnt have to ask for more information and we didn't have to say, "I'm sorry, I can't agree with you on this, it is not legal." The last two weeks that I was there, I objected to four main projects for reasons--he kept telling me on all four of them, "All right, I felt we could try to do it this way, but I agree it's not right and we can do it another way." In most cases, there are other ways. It is not just saying, "No. Forget it," but "We shouldn't do it this way, but let's try it by the other means." They appreciate this more than a closed mind that says, "You can't do it." You can't afford to be dogmatic.

Question: We have covered quite a large area. Is there anything that you think might be important for our purposes that we haven't yet put on the tape?

Answer: Well, we couldn't cover the whole area there if we sat here and talked for a week.

Question: I know. But what would be particularly important?

Answer: One thing we didn't discuss--this is in terms of personal integrity and personal example by the U. S. representatives. I have seen some good men who have completely neutralized themselves by their conduct.

Question: [illegible]

Answer: Lack of discretion; lack of personal example in certain things as meeting schedules, meeting commitments; over indulgence in terms of alcohol; also in not too

discreet associations with the local women. One thing I advocate without one bit of deviation (there can be no deviation) in the province. What every Vietnamese official can do and do with approval, or people will turn their eyes aside, you cannot. There can never be an American in a high position as a prov rep is, who can be completely effective unless he is spotless. I know of no alteration or deviation from this that is acceptable. I swear by this. You are expected to be spotless.

Question: You are scrutinized, I suppose?

Answer: You don't go anywhere or do anythig that you are not known. I had been out in this province fourteen months and the V. C. blew up a bar in town. One of the two or three bars that were in town. I happened to be in the office and I got a call from my assistant. As a matter of fact, he had gotten there that day, and he was downtown with two of our local boys standing across the street at a hotel when this thing blew up. He called me immediately. I was in the office and I brought the vehicle down and we started bringing out the bodies. Seventeen were killed and forty-two wounded in this little bar. The chief of police was there and after things settled down several hours after we got everybody out, he said, "This is the first time you have ever been in a bar in this town." I said, "That's right, how did you know?" He sort of grinned and said, "We know. We know." My next door neighbor was a deputy of security (and has now been appointed province chief in another province). He is an extremely fine man, one of the finest people I have known anywhere. He finally said the same thing. "Why don't you do some of these other things?" I said, "I don't believe in it. First, I don't because I have a family in town (up until February, 1965). No matter how much I might want to, and I'm human like everybody else, I simply have learned--I learned with the Japanase--you simply cannot go native, you simply must not go native." There are two aspects of this, but now in terms of personal integrity, it is something else. You can't indulge as they would and be accepted. You are not permitted to indulge. You are expected to be spotless and you must be to be effective. That is one thing. The other part of going native, you have two extremes. One is the type of person who is so abhorred at the idea of eating, drinking or associating in any fashion except as necessary with the Vietnamese, or the Montagnards. This is bad because they are offended. They have very little to offer but they are willing to offer you what they have. And it is all they have to offer. To them, it is part of them. They are offering you what they have, their food and their drink and their lodging, and you must not offend them by being unrecptive. This si a problem. Some of the stuff they put before you they say would gag a goat. Still you have to do it. At least, enough to satisfy their face. They are not unreasonable where they expect you to gobble every bit of anything that they put before you, they know that but you still certainly have to give it at least, a token acceptance. Then there are those who go completely native and they don't respect this either. You have to reach a happy medium where you respect their customs, you respect their limitations and how they have to live, and you participate in those things that you feel are worthy of participation. You accept the others; you know they are there but you don't go native. You don't have to put on their clothes; you don't have to go out and live with them in that respect; and you don't have to get down and do some of the things that they might condone in their own society. These are two very key points. This is one of the things I will stress in the next couple of days with this class, if I get to talk to them.

Question: This also extends, I suppose to matters of dress?

Answer: Yes. You can do it two ways. You can become untouchable by wearing a suit which would be one ridiculous extreme in the field; or you can look like a

country boy who ought to be out plowing, instead of an effective advisor in terms of economic development or an equal rank, or in terms of the province chief and his depty. There are two extemes. You can be too sloppy, as some of our people are, and yet you can be too formal and sort of relegate yourself to not having the touch with the common problems of the province. Agains, here's a matter of adjustment, and happy medium. You must be decently dressed but you can't be overdressed, and you can't look like a country plow boy who has no background for giving the type of assistance and advice that they expect from a technician from a highly developed country.

In terms of training, the language is important and it is extremely valuable. Some of the recent graduates of the training--I got one of them as my assistant and I think he must have been the pick of the bunch. A very fine boy, ex-Peace Corps; but he was having problems there in one respect and that was simply associating or speaking, not in terms of one classroom as a teacher, or in terms of one field of beans as an agriculture man, but speaking in terms of the provincial problem, in terms of a thousand classrooms and 50,000 students; in terms of 30,000 or 50,000 acres of rice, sugar cane and beans and so on; speaking in terms of overall problems. You've got to be oriented towards not localizing their thoughts and their interests. For awhile he was not convinced that learning the language was the thing because he didn't think he had enough to be effective. He could talk in terms of a group of school kids where you stop and talk by the syllables, very slowly; but when he talked in normal conversation to some of the provincial services he just didn't have the comprehension. Finally, after a couple of months, he was discovering that the benefits were enough, at least, to establish among the people that he had a knowledge of them that other people did not have. So the language training pays off. It is in a sense an accomplishment to have actually learned some of their language. First of all, they get a big laugh from it, they get a big kick out of it, but you also will find that they do appreciate it and they do respect this interest in their language. You will find also that they have a high interest in your own and they are eager to learn English and they are eager to help you to learn their Vietnamese. There are a lot of these things that are hard to teach in a classroom. Again, I feel that sometimes that it is more valuable to a prov rep than being able to build a bridge from an engineering standpoint or to create a model farm from an agricultural technical standpoint. Simply the personal techniques of being able to deal with people of different origins, different cultures; yet being able to adjust to it, being able to take the better part of yours and the better part of theirs and help them improve theirs. I did a lot of briefing when I was in Saigon of the new people coming in. A lot of trouble-shooting, that is going around the country. I was sent out from our operations checking into reported problem areas and people with problems, such as province reps who were having difficulties either with the other Americans or with the provinces and so forth. One thing I used to tell everybody, and also the province chiefs, is I am not trying to create a little America. We do not need a fifty-first state in Vietnam. We would like to see Vietnam stay Vietnam and Vietnamese. We don't want to tell you that everything we do is just right for you because it's not. What we would like to do is to help you do the things better; to modify some of those things that need to be modified; perhaps, to adopt some of our methods which are adaptable and which we find successful. But to simply say, "Well, this is the way we do it at home, now how come you can't do it like this here. It's the best thing for you." Not at all. You don't want to make a little America out of Vietnam. A lot of our people get so wrapped up in doing soemthing their way that they don't realize that they are there to help develop the Vietnamese government; to help them develop something that they can live with; that is part of them, not alien to them. Many western things are alien to them; they don't trust them; they don't want any part of them. But it is our goal to help them

develop and improve Vietnam with the best of our technology that we can give them. How do we put this across in the classroom? Do you describe techniques of how to save the face of the province chief or his officials? How to get something out of them without making it obvious that you are putting words in their mouths or giving them ideas that you want to be their ideas.

Question: Would talking about it and telling people about it help?

Answer: It would. It would help in pointing out the problem areas and giving them some things they might think about. Many times, these are only developed by doing it on the job.

Question: This is the case history of the program that failed?

Answer: That's right. It started off with the Chieu Hoi program and after fifteen months, that I know of, it ended up still an extremely dismal failure, in spite of the effort that I could devote to it, not full time by any means, but often. I had an interest in it because I thought it was a failure and because I thought it was an essential program. It involved the reclamation of human beings who had voluntarily come back from the Viet Cong ranks. It was decreed in Diem's regime that each province would have a Chieu Hoi center. It would be an amnesty program, therefore it was built. The center was thrown up with mud walls and a metal roof and some thatch. It was very hastily done and not too well. It was painted and had a big sign and there it was. When the people from Saigon were to come they had to have some Chieu Hoi. So they went out to a hamlet and picked up forty men and took them into town and said, "You are now returnees. You will come in and stay for a couple of weeks and we will give you certain things and then you will be released." And this is how the program started in the province. They were not genuine returnees at all. They were just brought in from a hamlet and told, "You are now returnees." The people didn't know what this meant. They had two weeks of food and got a few clothes and then they were sent back home. The province chief had no interest in the center to begin with. It was a big headache to him to have to build this center. He was not prepared to do anything with this program; he wasn't convinced that anything except a dead V. C. was worthwhile, anyway. So the thing was left. They appointed a service chief but he was a very inept individual, no desire or drive; just somebody who happened to be handy and wasn't particularly needed anywhere else. Some genuine returnees did come in. The center was out of town. It really was not too secure, very lonesome, nothing out there near it; no government functions and the office was in town but the center was three or four miles out of town. We heard that some of them were back and went out there and found the people squatting inside these buildings with no food, no clothes, nobody out there, no interest at all. We went back to get the provincial officials and said, "We've got some returnees. How about them? What shall we do?" "We have no funds. We don't have anything." So we went to the warehouse and got some food, some clothes, some blankets and some mosquito nets and (the boys in my office) went back out to fix these people up. We said, "How about a training program?" Well, they scratched around and not really much can be done. They fiddled around with a couple of hours of lectures and a bunch of theory and these Montagnards didn't know theory from anything. This was way over their head anyway. Some guy standing up there talking for a couple of hours. They didn't relate anything down to the level that these people needed to relate them to their country, and why they and their support are needed. They did not put them in a relationship with the country at all. After thirty days, they just wandered off. They weren't prepared for anything; they weren't rehabilitated; they weren't trained. This went on group after group. We would go out and then go to the province chief, and he would say, "Oh, yes, I know but I have too many other

things to do." He was not interested--period. If he was not going to push it, the very weak service chief who had no initiative was not going to do it. As it ended up, anything that was done, we did, month after month. As the building deteriorated further and further, the mud started falling apart, the roof started falling off, and the floors were dirt all along, anyway. We dug a well so they had water and we tried to keep the building patched up a little bit as we could. We tried to keep them fed and tried to find jobs for them. We employed several of them in the provincial nursery where we developed seeds and plants; grew fruit trees for distribution, and things like this. We employed a couple of truckdrivers; a couple as self-help cadre in the self-help program; and we got several of them into the political action team, a special U. S. established program, recruiting the local people into combat platoons to sort of be involved in political action in their own hamlets. From the provincial standpoint, they still after months and months of our interest and our efforts to push for something, they still did not have a training program. They wouldn't feed them or clothe them; they had no follow-up system; no training program of any kind. Yet, a lot of sharp lads came through there. We went out there and found this boy who had been a political cadre, a V. C. political cadre, and he was a sharp lad. He could have been taken by the Vietnamese information service, put on the radio, put on leaflets, put on a loud-speaker system; he could have been taken to help develop a program to go right back in to where he came from, in terms of government propaganda to have others come out, these other people he worked with in these hamlets. They didn't do a thing with this man. He finally got so disgusted, he took his wife and just disappeared. We don't know where he went. He may have gone back to the V. C. All he wanted was an opportunity. We never did get one of these boys into a national training program. The province would not initiate the action. Not one of them was ever really rehabilitated to a point where we felt that he was a better person or a better citizen, or felt that he got a square deal by having come back in. Most of them left in complete disgust. They never got the money they were supposed to get; they never got the support. Most of them, if they got fed at all, it was because we fed them from our office and got them clothes or forced it. Only one thing they finally did after the center got so bad and it was inconvenient for anyone to go out there. The province got an old dirty room behind the provincial office that they converted into a little barracks for these returnees. We took some old G. I. canvass cots over and some blankets and mosquito nets and helped establish this little place. We took some cooking pots. Of course, this was very unsatisfactory, but they were in town and they were within a hundred feet of the provincial office. At least, they were obvious, they couldn't be ignored, they were there physically and they got to play volley ball once in a while. Their needs were better known. They got fed a little better than they did before. After fifteen months, this was the only thing that had happened to improve the program that was supposed to have national interest and national push and great U. S. interest

Question: The reason for the failure was simply lack of interes?

Answer: The province could care less. They just didn't believe in it to a point where there was no push.

Question: Why wouldn't they believe in it?

Answer: They didn't consider it big enough, I guess. The point was, it was not bigger because they didn't exploit it. They let people come in and sit in idleness instead of utilizing them to go right back to appeal to others in the same area or to utilize them for propaganda purposes, or utilize the information they had and what they could give in terms of how to get to the V. C. What got to you, so what will get to your buddy; how can we go back and get your buddy to come in? None of this was ever done. They simply ignored this whole thing. The center was finally

turned into a refugee area. As far as I know, to this day, they still have not fixed up any place for these people to stay. I'm sure, that if they come in, they still give them the same old treatment. They lay around for thirty days because the regulation says you can support them thirty days, and then they have to be released. They are not interested in training them. In the second province, we had a much more enlightened province chief. A much more enlightened and interested Chieu Hoi chief, and yet, we had problems there. The center comprised of old buildings which were clean; they had been patched up but the training program was inadequate; they have never yet sent anybody to a national training program. I asked about literacy training. "Well, we only have two or three who can't read and write." I said, "Well, isn't that worthy of some training?" "No, we don't think it is worthwhile." I said, "If only one of them can't read and write, you help him." They said, "We can't do anything in five or six weeks." I said, "Why not? You can teach a man, an adult, a great deal in five or six weeks about reading or writing, if you want to. He can at least write his own name when he is through and he can do some rudimentary reading. Why not?" We went down and looked at the little room they designated as a library and it was bare. I said, "Where are your books?" "Oh, we put them away, just put them away." I said, "Where are they?" "They're locked up in this cabinet." Then we looked and I said, "Where is your volley ball?" "We play volley ball out there." I said, "There's not even any pole, what do you put a net on? There is no pole." "Oh, they just came down." It was obvious. There hadn't been a pole out there in months. The men sat around and then they went to class. They got harangued for five hours a day. They sat in this private classroom which was hot and they got harangued about political theories for five hours a day and that was it. After a few eeeks of regular visits, I used to drop in with no notice; maybe at noon, maybe at eight in the morning, maybe later in the afternoon; just go out and drive over and drop in. One day went I went over, I said, "Okay, let's play volley ball. "We have no net and no poles." I said, "I will be back tomorrow afternoon and we'll play volley ball at five o'clock. I'll bring you a net." The next day when I went back, they they put the poles up and I took them a net and a ball and in about ten minutes we had eleven of these men and myself out there playing volley ball. They had a big time out of it. They appreciated it and while I was there, Bob (my assistant who spoke Vietnamese) was over on the side and he had twenty of these men just crowding around him, eager to talk to him. Some American had taken an interest in what they were doing. Then we had gotten them funds for the new center. We got the VIS (Vietnamese Information Service) to go over and run movies and distribute some literature. The education man, as soon as he found out that thay had a need, dispatched a teacher over there to teach them English. The next thing we were still trying to do was get an interest in sending a few of them, at least, to the national training center to be a mechanic, a welder, or some other trade.

We lived in a town of 80,000 people. The Chieu Hoi chief said, "Nobody wants to go. They don't want to go to Saigon to train. If they do, what will they do? There is no demand." You can go downtown and they need mechanics; there is a shortage of skilled labor. A carpenter or a mason can almost pick his job, there is that much of a shortage. I said, "What do you mean? You talk to the public works man; he is crying for skilled carpenters or cement people or brick masons. He would love to have all these men if they were trained. Yet you say there is no demand for them. Go talk to the economic man and let him give you an appraisal or go talk to labor." I used to get the labor man to come in to the office and talk about once a week, or we would go down and visit him. We were finally getting invitations to the union meetings, the cyclo drivers union and the fishing unions. We would get invitations to go down to their monthly meetings. He was delighted that someone would take an interest in union activity and try to turn them into something more than just

manipulated by the union leaders themselves; but something to turn back some benefits to the union members; to help improve their conditions or make them responsible. Teach them that a union is not just something to exploit the people but something that will benefit them if they in turn give something more in service to the people. I found that so much of your effectiveness is simply based upon your interest in them. Most of them are so surprised--usually they are flabbergasted--that someone knows something about their areas. Usually, I would prepare a little bit in advance; bone up a little bit, at least, to make a surface (not to bluff) to show them that you know something about labor or you know something about their program. You just do not walk in and say, "Now what's this, and what do you do here?" You go in with the idea of knowing something about them; what they have done and what they can do; and then you talk in terms of how they can do it better. We always say, "We have an interest in you and you can play a key role in this country in the development. How do you think you could do it better? What are some of your problem areas? What areas do you need some help? Either advice or physical help?" And you get them thinking. Pretty soon, they come back.

Question: What was the difference between the two provinces? In the first province the Chieu Hoi program flopped completely; in the second province it picked up and became a success.

Answer: Two things. The province chief's interest. Without the interest of the province chief you have to have a very strong service chief to carry the ball in spite of the lack of interest from the province chief. In that one particular case, there was a very eak service chief and a province chief who had no interest in the program. In the second case, the province chief didn't give us that much interest, he didn't have the time, but it was enough token interest that the service chief had some encouragement. He could go ahead; he was just a little limited in his own positive thinking; he was a little bit negative and he didn't have the initiative he should need. At least, he was agreeable to every suggestion that we made. He ultimately did it. He opened up the library; he got some athletic things going; he was thinking in terms of technical training; he was thinking in terms of building a new center; he improved the facilities that the people had. He had forty new cots in the storeroom and the men were sleeping on the floor. He said, "First of all, I don't have the money." I said, "I know you have 50,000 piasters you can use every day of the week, and all you have to do is voucher that or account for it in a rudimentary fashion, and you will find that you will get another 50,000." When he knew that I knew it, then he changed his tune. He said, "We have certain problems about spending it." Then he finally agreed (in two or three weeks) that he could spend it, he would spend it, and he did spend it. He had these forty new beds in the storeroom.

Question: He didn't let the people sleep on them? Why?

Answer: I don't know why. Part of the wealth of his service was the fact that he had some things in his warehouse. You will find that many of them will have supplies sitting in the warehouse for two or three years. Many times, they will let it disintegrate into unusable status rather than issue it out and have an empty warehouse. They feel left out; they feel that they have lost if they don't have something that they can look at and count. I say that the value of supplies is, if they are used; not if they rot in storerooms and show on an inventory card. If you use this, you will get more. But the way it is now, you have no usage factor. You will never get another bit of this or that because you haven't used any. You can't show [illegible] you should get more. Use that justify it; and prove [illegible] and you will get more.