

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

January 29, 1971

SUBJECT: Visit to III Corps Headquarters, Bien Hoa,
Approximately January 11, 1971.

A. Conversation with Ambassador Funkhouser.

He agreed to provide copies of the 1971 Province Plans directly to VTC. He saw the role of an advisor in the same terms as Ambassador Colby, namely, shifting to a monitoring role. He recognized the problem of over-staffing and pointed to a chart on the wall which gave the proposed plans for personnel reduction in III Corps. He cited the need for returning the U.S. advisory effort to more traditional AID activities. I was told that MAT teams in III Corps would be cut 30 percent this year and 100 percent by a year from June.

Ambassador Funkhouser showed me a copy of his letter to General Davison in which he rejected the proposed suggestion for placing CORDS totally within the MACV organizational setup. He stated to me that Davison accepted his position and concurred with it. Funkhouser's letter was a beautifully articulated rationale for greater civilian control of CORDS.

B. Conversation at Province Level.

The PSA (Cliff Nunn) pointed out that the regional staff had substantially no Vietnamese counterparts and were not useful to the Provinces. Susan Crane (CORDS XIX) said that language ability was very good for rapport. As regards Saigon's view that the American role should be one of monitoring, and referring to her own job of political reporter, she said it is done because Saigon wants it, but the reports are in fact watered down and therefore of questionable value. Despite this, she was obviously delighted with her situation in Bien Hoa, for whatever reason. LTC Gardner mentioned the difference in the life style of military and civilians at the Province level. Many civilians live in a reasonably sumptuous apartment building (Franzblau Apartments) with its own club and restaurant, while the military have to live in a restricted area and are not even allowed in Binh Tuy after hours until they can demonstrate official business. We discussed the regrettable fact that the military province CORDS team is required to wear a uniform at all times, when in fact it seems no longer desirable. I also met Major Tilden Latham who had requested the 18-month program for DSA's but has been turned down by OPO. Copy of a letter requesting reconsideration by OPO will be forwarded to Colonel Spinelli for any

action he can take. Latham loves his work and is apparently highly thought of by the Province Senior Advisor, Clifford Nunn.

C. General Observations.

Traffic on the Bien Hoa highway was as heavy as ever at 9:30 a.m., but this time all Vietnamese. One could observe a bad air pollution problem and also a rapid buildup of industrial activity on the left side of the road heading north. It was obvious that Viet-Nam is developing some economic roots.

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