

**U.S. Development Aid—  
An Historic First**

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND FAILURES IN THE  
TWENTIETH CENTURY

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## **WAR IN VIETNAM**

The word *Vietnam* evokes images of bloody warfare in a tropical country and antiwar protests at home. Not surprisingly, accounts of South Vietnam's development programs and U.S. development aid there are buried beneath the extensive literature on military and political issues.<sup>7</sup> From 1955 to 1975 America devoted a great deal of money and talent to strengthening South Vietnam's fledgling government and to helping it try to win the hearts and minds of its people. America's successive aid agencies provided South Vietnam with thousands of development specialists and nearly \$7 billion in economic aid, technical assistance, and food aid. This was one of the largest allocations to a single country in the U.S. aid program's history.<sup>8</sup>

Between 1955 and 1960 President Eisenhower's administration provided aid for a conventional development program plus emergency relief for refugees fleeing from Communist-controlled North Vietnam. Eisenhower also authorized a modest military aid program. From 1961 through 1963 President Kennedy continued the conventional aid program but gave priority in both military and civilian aid to support of an unconventional counterinsurgency strategy requiring patience and a low U.S. profile.<sup>9</sup>

Then, in 1964, an impatient President Johnson made his fateful decision to greatly expand America's military and civilian presence in South Vietnam. Aid was provided for both conventional and unconventional projects. Johnson's successor, President Richard M. Nixon, continued aid support and gradually withdrew U.S. military forces from Vietnam. In 1975 President Gerald R. Ford oversaw the end of U.S. aid to Vietnam along with the final flight from Saigon of American military and civilian personnel.

### **The Pre-Johnson Years**

South Vietnam, officially called the Republic of Vietnam, existed for 20 years, from 1955 to 1975. Before 1955, for about 75 years all of Vietnam (along with Cambodia and Laos) was part of France's colonial territory in Southeast Asia, generally called French Indochina. After World War II nationalist guerrilla forces engaged the French colonial army in Indochina. The Viet Minh, a communist political and military organization, led by Ho Chi Minh, defeated the French colonial forces, and peace agreement in July 1954 had the effect of dividing Vietnam at the 17th parallel into Communist North Vietnam and non-Communist South Vietnam. This followed the pattern of the 1953 cease-fire in the Korean War that split the Korean peninsula at the 38th parallel into Communist North Korea and non-Communist South Korea.

Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh gained control of North Vietnam. Non-Communist leaders and military forces assumed control of South Vietnam. A final political settlement was to be achieved later through nationwide elections, which were never held.

In June 1954 Ngo Dinh Diem became prime minister of South Vietnam. Diem had impeccable nationalist and anti-Communist credentials. Late in 1954 President Eisenhower pledged \$100 million in aid to Diem's government and in January 1955 agreed to provide training for the South Vietnamese army. By mid-year that army defeated the divisive military forces of several corrupt opposition sects in South Vietnam. In October, with long-time Vietnamese emperor Bao Dai widely thought of as a French puppet, Diem easily won a referendum to replace the emperor as chief of state and to change South Vietnam into a republic. Diem then assumed the office of president of the Republic of Vietnam.

### *Conventional Development Aid*

President Diem and his government appeared firmly in control by the end of 1955. A

new, stable sovereign nation was thought to be emerging. The U.S. government proceeded with a conventional, wide-ranging, long-term assistance program to help build development-promoting institutions and infrastructure and to train Vietnamese to run them effectively.

U.S. aid promoted local industry in urban areas, hoping to reduce the country's dependence on imports. The United States also helped to resettle 900,000 refugees from communist North Vietnam and supported rural reforms (especially improved land tenure for small farmers). A long-term program was launched to improve government administration in Saigon and rural areas and to strengthen village and hamlet self-government. Looking to restore rice production to pre-World War II levels, the United States helped establish an agricultural college and trained agricultural extension agents.

The United States began long-term support for a comprehensive program aimed at improving and expanding Vietnam's education system (notably teacher training, school construction, and Vietnamese language textbooks in place of French language texts).

By 1960 South Vietnam's initiatives in agricultural production and education were making progress. The promising land reform program bogged down in administrative complexities for a time but picked up later. Although U.S. advice on promoting private sector industrialization ran up against President Diem's preference for government ownership of key industries, overall, conventional development aid was helping South Vietnam.

#### *Unconventional Aid for Counterinsurgency*

Earlier, in 1955, a program called "Civic Action" was initiated in South Vietnam's countryside. With Ho Chi Minh's organization removed from South Vietnam, there was a need to set up an administrative system to connect the villagers with the fledgling government. President Diem's counterinsurgency plan was to (1) provide forces of local residents at the province, village, and hamlet levels to ensure hamlet safety from any guerrilla resurgence and (2) institute a complementary program of hamlet improvement. Civic Action teams would be assigned to work with hamlets on their "felt needs" for better health, education, agriculture, or transportation. (The term *felt needs* referred to what residents of a particular hamlet or village believed they had to have in order to enjoy a better life where they lived.) It was expected that in due course these teams would learn about Communist Viet Cong infiltrators from North Vietnam and would promote democratic elections of local officials. The hope was that the two-pronged strategy would provide a helpful government presence that villagers would feel and appreciate.

U.S. support and advice was directed by Colonel (later major general) Edward Lansdale, who ran a special CIA-financed group of Americans called the Saigon Military Mission. President Diem was keenly interested in the counterinsurgency campaign. Diem liked and trusted Colonel Lansdale.

Lansdale previously played a similar role in the Philippines, where he advised General (later president) Ramon Magsaysay's successful post-World War II campaign against rural-based Communist guerrilla forces known as Hukbalahaps, or Huks. The Counterinsurgency tactics in Vietnam and the Philippines, while different, were anchored in the same bedrock strategy, namely, to ensure physical security for rural people and help them achieve their felt needs.

Lansdale had assembled a team of young military and CIA officers to assist in various efforts to create popular and effective rural governance in South Vietnam. Their initial instructions were (1) to remain inconspicuous, (2) to listen and make suggestions, and (3) by their actions, to gain the trust of the Vietnamese. Rufus Phillips, a young Army lieutenant from Virginia, was a team member who was assigned to assist Kieu Ko Cung, President Diem's appointee to run the Civic Action program.

Cung had been a Viet Minh general fighting against the French but had refused to join the Communist Party. Threatened by the Communists, he fled for his life in 1952. President Diem's

nationalism appealed to Cung, who emerged from hiding in 1954 to offer his support. After his years of work with French officers, he did not trust white men.

In working with Cung, Phillips behaved as Lansdale had instructed. He assisted with training and with the supply of medical and other equipment. He gained Cung's confidence and helped put together the program's operations plan. The CIA contributed some funds to buy initial medical supplies and other basic needs.

Cung and Phillips asked the U.S. aid mission to provide a team of community development advisers plus funds for tools, medicines, and the like. They presented their plan to Leland Barrows, the aid mission director. Barrows objected to the plan, apparently on the grounds that regular civilian units of government should be strengthened to take on such work. Phillips countered that such "institution building" took a long time and time was short. Neither Barrows nor Ambassador Frederick Reinhardt were persuaded, however. The senior U.S. officials seem to have concluded that Diem's government was firmly in control and there was time to strengthen standard government ministries, which could promote rural development in due course. Thus, lacking funds and community development expertise, this first program was not effective. It ended after several years, following Cung's death from a heart attack.

By late 1959 Viet Cong infiltrators were becoming dangerously active. Young men who had been taken north for training in 1954-55 (as the Viet Minh forces moved to North Vietnam in compliance with the peace treaty) were returning. Their families and hamlets in South Vietnam provided them invisible bases for insurgency. Assassinations of local leaders began to mount, as did widespread fear in rural areas. Concerned, President Diem kept asking for the return of General Lansdale, who had left Vietnam late in 1956.<sup>10</sup> The U.S. government continually dodged the question. Diem began to rely increasingly on his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu, who was not interested in democratic reforms or in distributing power. Nhu reinforced Diem's autocratic tendencies.

As rural insurgents became more active, Washington finally sent Lansdale back to South Vietnam in early January 1961 to assess the situation. Lansdale prepared a report for Eisenhower's outgoing secretary of defense, Thomas Gates. A few days later Kennedy was inaugurated president. Walter Rostow, Kennedy's newly appointed deputy special assistant for national security affairs, somehow received a copy of Lansdale's report, read it, and handed it to President Kennedy, urging him to read it. Kennedy was impressed by the report and called in Lansdale to discuss it and U.S. strategy toward the growing Viet Cong insurgency. Kennedy decided to make Lansdale's counterinsurgency proposals the focus of U.S. action in the struggling young country.

Suddenly, counterinsurgency was a fashionable term. It was touted as the administration's overall strategy for dealing with Communist-backed "wars of national liberation." However, few of its new supporters grasped the essential need for a patient, people-first approach in winning such a rural struggle.

U.S. support for the Diem-Lansdale counterinsurgency campaign gained momentum. In Washington, USAID leaders listened to Lansdale and, on his recommendation, succeeded in recruiting Rufus Phillips as head of the country aid mission's new Office of Rural Affairs. That office was to provide and direct U.S. civilian support for a renewed counterinsurgency effort. Phillips chose Bert Fraleigh, whom he had worked with in the 1950s, as his deputy. Fraleigh was a career USAID officer with 15 years of Asian experience.

The basic idea behind the Office of Rural Affairs was to provide decentralized support for South Vietnam's counterinsurgency efforts on a province-by-province basis, rather than trying to work everything through the central government's ministries, which was USAID's standard practice. The South Vietnamese government had underway a Strategic Hamlet program, which became the vehicle for supporting both self-defense and economic development efforts in the countryside. Phillips recognized flaws in that program, notably some forced resettlement of families, but concluded that its basic principles were sound and USAID's involvement could improve it.

Phillips and Fraleigh put together a varied team of volunteers to serve as provincial representatives (prov reps). They would serve on provincial tripartite committees with the Vietnamese province chief and the local U.S. military adviser. Those committees were given considerable latitude to decide how aid was to be dispensed.

Many prov reps were inexperienced but promising young idealists. They were recruited mostly from among new foreign service officers (FSOs) and young college graduates serving in Vietnam with the USAID-supported International Volunteer Service (IVS).<sup>11</sup> Most of the Office of Rural Affairs team members had studied the Vietnamese language. Among them was new FSO Richard Holbrooke, whose distinguished subsequent career included the prized post of U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Phillips put into effect an operating approach that, he believed, would be consistent with Lansdale's guidelines and with the realities of South Vietnam's government administration. As Phillips explained.

Above all, the idea was to insert our Rural Affairs representatives unobtrusively into the mainstream of the Vietnamese government. Here we would be in a position to act as a catalyst to get things done and to serve as nonpartisan participants who could help the Vietnamese channel their efforts in constructive directions. We would work with the Vietnamese as equals and as friends, not as superior advisers....We would try to take the best Vietnamese ideas of how pacification should work and help these ideas spread. And we would help the Vietnamese and particularly President Diem at the top become more aware of who were the best province chiefs and who were not so good and should be replaced. This would be done ...simply by reporting the facts as we saw them.<sup>12</sup>

Phillips told his provincial representatives that they had the most important American jobs in Vietnam. A province was roughly comparable in size to a U.S. county. It contained some villages and many smaller hamlets. Provincial representatives were to help make the Strategic Hamlet program valuable to rural Vietnamese by helping them achieve their aspirations for a better life. If successful, the program would become important to rural families; even, it was hoped, to the point of their risking death to defend their hamlet from Viet Cong insurgents.

USAID's Rural Affairs team under Phillips and Fraleigh also included members (especially those with university degrees in agriculture) who provided specialized assistance across several provinces in partnership with Vietnamese technical personnel. One was Harvey Neese, who had earned a degree in animal husbandry from the University of Idaho's College of Agriculture. Neese had arrived in Vietnam as an IVS volunteer in 1959.

Fraleigh knew from experience in Taiwan and the Philippines that better pigs could mean better incomes for poor farmers. A survey of farmers showed that they would welcome a better breed than their small, slow-growing native pigs. But pig merchants in the low-lying delta had failed in efforts to supply these more northerly farmers on higher land with better pigs because those pigs died soon after being moved into the cooler climate. When Fraleigh asked Neese if he could be helpful in dealing with the pig problem, Neese said yes. He was then hired by USAID and began working with Dr. Vu Thien Thai, the national head of animal husbandry.

Thai assigned a young specialist named Nguyen Qui Dinh to work with Neese on a daily basis. Dinh had recently returned from the University of Arkansas with a master's degree in animal nutrition. Dinh and Neese started the pig/corn program. They were a full-time action team. For security reasons and to help maintain low profiles, Dinh and Neese wore conical hats and *ao ba ba*s, Vietnam's traditional pajama-style rural clothing, as they rattled from village to village in their old jeep.

Fraleigh described how the pig/corn program worked.

Rural Affairs provided each farm family who applied, in completed strategic hamlets, with bags of cement and corrugated roofing sheets (for pigpens). Each participating farmer would receive on

credit three Yorkshire piglets (about 20 pounds each) and 200 pounds of U.S. surplus corn on credit. The piglets were bought from Vietnamese producers in the south....

Technical advice in the provinces was given by local Vietnamese animal husbandry agents on building a standard, sanitary pigpen and compost pit and on caring for the piglets (one male and two females). Neese and Dinh traveled the countryside continually offering assistance [to help agents and farmers solve technical problems as they arose]. In less than two years, 15,000 farmers had joined the program and repaid their loans. White, improved hogs weighing up to 300 pounds could be seen everywhere, descendants of the 25,000 handled under the pig/corn program. The program must have impressed the North Vietnamese...because they started a similar program...even copying the cartoon characters Dinh and Neese had used in their extension pamphlets.<sup>13</sup>

Farmers enthusiastically called Harvey Neese *ong heo*, or Mr. Pig.

Hamlet security against the growing Viet Cong presence was to be provided by a four-tier military system. At the base was the hamlet's unpaid militia, drawn from local residents. They were to operate within the hamlet defense perimeter, consisting of a wide moat around a mud wall studded with bamboo spikes and topped with barbed wire. Wooden lookout towers were placed at some corners of the wall.<sup>14</sup> Similar structures were used in an earlier, successful 10-year counterinsurgency campaign in Malaysia.

Each hamlet's unpaid militia was to be reinforced, if necessary, in a skirmish by regular forces reporting to village chiefs (Self-Defense Corps), provincial governors (Civil Guard), and national army commanders (ARVN). Pay was irregular for these forces, and their morale was low, at least at the village and province level. By the close of 1962, prov reps reported increasingly that the hamlet militia would fight well while calling for backup support, but that village chiefs' Self Defense Corps, the provincial governors' Civil Guard, and particularly the ARVN units would not respond, at least not effectively.

USAID's Rural Affairs leaders knew that if village security could not be assured the Strategic Hamlet strategy would fail. They urged a low-profile infusion of specially trained U.S. military, such as Green Berets, into those village and province forces that needed strengthening. In addition to their military role, the Green Berets would ensure that these forces were paid and received their rations. Apparently such an approach had worked among the Montagnard forces in South Vietnam's highlands and, years before, in the Korean War, where it helped to stiffen the fighting resolve of South Korean forces.<sup>15</sup> Nothing came of the proposal, possibly because the U.S. command was not enthusiastic about such unconventional warfare.

During 1963 South Vietnam's counterinsurgency program provided development support to increased numbers of Strategic Hamlets. Hamlet safety improved in some provinces. However, in many Delta provinces the hamlets' defense problems remained severe.

President Diem's powerful brother Nhu wanted a rapid increase in the number of Strategic Hamlets. To please Nhu, some provincial governors forced hamlet residents to work on perimeter defense walls and moats when they needed to tend their crops. The crops suffered, and the villagers received no offsetting compensation. Rural Affairs was able to stop this approach in many provinces, but in some the damage had already been done and support there for the central government declined.

In May 1963 Buddhist demonstrations began in central Vietnam against President Diem, who was a Catholic and viewed as autocratic. The demonstrations spread to Saigon, and the Diem government began to lose political support, notably from the army. In November 1963 Diem was overthrown and assassinated in a military coup. President Kennedy had supported the coup but not the assassination. Both proved to be mistakes.

After Diem's death it became clear that despite his autocratic image in the Western press he had been respected in hamlets and villages. Later analyses suggested that he had been the glue holding together the fragile new government. The problems flowing from Diem's overthrow were

compounded later that month by the assassination of President Kennedy. As a result, Vice President Lyndon Johnson became president.

### **The Johnson Years: Resurgence of the Conventional Military**

The U.S. government's strategic preference for unconventional warfare declined after Kennedy's death. As President Johnson took on the nation's leadership, conventional military thinking regained dominance. The leaders of the coup that overthrew Diem were proving unable to govern and the Viet Cong were gaining strength. Lyndon Johnson, a talented "can do" leader, was determined not to be the first American president to lose a war. Johnson and his principal advisers, plus key members of the Senate, were alarmed by the Saigon government's strategic and operational disarray in 1964. Morale remained low among the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Forces as the Viet Cong gained ground. Internal reforms were essential but would take time, and their achievement would require patient support and pressure from Washington, the U.S. embassy in Saigon, military advisers, and the aid mission.

President Johnson was not a patient man. He soon became frustrated by the poor performance of South Vietnam's military forces in the provinces. He wanted better results quickly and concluded that more U.S. troops would help. Realizing that winning rural hearts and minds was essential, Johnson was convinced that having more U.S. civilian advisers would help. He is reported to have demanded an increase in the number of USAID's advisers in Vietnam from about 300 to 1,000 in 60 days, concurrent with a huge American military buildup. Mission director Joseph Brent, members of the embassy's counterinsurgency coordinating team, and Rural Affairs chief Fraleigh protested to Washington that the proposed buildup was "totally against counter-insurgency principles, wholly counterproductive, and bureaucratically stifling." The appeals were fruitless. To Fraleigh, Johnson's orders marked "the beginning of the end of a meaningful, unconventional, civilian counterinsurgency response."<sup>16</sup>

America's new high-profile, assertive aid strategy brought a new mission director to Saigon and started a scramble in Washington headquarters to find additional personnel for the mission. Both initiatives provided some unwanted results. USAID/Vietnam went through a year or more of turmoil and damage to careers before the mission director was replaced.<sup>17</sup> Washington headquarters instituted an unofficial "Vietnam draft" to obtain the additional development generalists and specialists required by the country mission's revised mandate. The draft process did not improve agency morale, despite attractive career inducements such as graduate training at universities.

In 1968 USAID personnel in Vietnam reached a peak of 2,300. Americans in that huge country mission represented all of USAID's important skills. The agency sent experts to work in agriculture, health, public administration, education, economic policy reform, project planning, supply management, program administration, and other areas.

USAID's expansion in Vietnam was modest compared to that of the U.S. military forces. After Johnson's determined Americanization of the war via the Tonkin Gulf Resolution in August 1964, U.S. military troop strength increased from about 20,000 to over 500,000. South Vietnam's forces doubled in size to around 1 million. Troops arrived from South Korea and other Asian nations. General Lansdale's strategy of long-term low-profile counterinsurgency tactics responsive to villagers' military and development needs simply disappeared.

### **Arrogant Errors**

President Johnson, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, and their military advisers never seemed to grasp the essential merit of the low-profile approach. Further, there is no evidence that President Nixon or Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had any interest in it during the 1970s. John O'Donnell served in USAID's Rural Affairs office as prov rep in Kien Hoa province. He recalls briefing McNamara and General Maxwell Taylor, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, plus other

Washington officials in Saigon early in 1964, O'Donnell writes:

I tried to highlight the importance of providing security for the inhabitants of strategic hamlets, including rapid reaction by provincial and AKVN troops to Viet Gong attacks. I also stressed the importance of issues such as land tenure and the honesty and re-sponsiveness of government officials.... McNamara listened attentively and asked questions. But his questions were not about the attitudes of the strategic hamlet residents and what was important to them, the performance of the military or civilian officials, or the tactics of the Viet Cong. Instead, they were all related to logistics— numbers of this and numbers of that and whether things were arriving on time and in good condition. McNamara displayed absolutely no understanding of, or interest in, the political and psychological nature of the struggle or of what needed to be done to win the rural population over to the side of the government.<sup>18</sup>

Previously, in Washington, McNamara abruptly terminated what appears to have been his only briefing on counterinsurgency by General Lansdale. Decades later, McNamara's memoirs include only one short dismissive reference to the innovative Lansdale, despite President Kennedy's enthusiasm for the man and his approach.<sup>19</sup> In Vietnam, General William Westmoreland had cut short a briefing on counterinsurgency by a successful Vietnamese practitioner whose views were consistent with General Lansdale's preferred strategy.

O'Donnell, his fellow veterans of the Rural Affairs program and associated Vietnamese military officers are convinced that McNamara, Westmoreland, and other senior officials exhibited a fundamental flaw in strategic thinking by failing to realize that political, psychological, and developmental issues were central to a winning military strategy. Their unyielding conviction that the problem was military and logistical, writes O'Donnell,

led McNamara and other high-level U.S. officials on a path to the militarization and Americanization of the war and the eventual defeat and abandonment of the Vietnamese people. If McNamara and other decision makers in Washington and Saigon had stood by President Diem, provided strong support to the [USAID-assisted] pacification effort, and assisted the Vietnamese in restructuring and strengthening the military forces at the local, provincial, regional, and national levels to provide security for the strategic hamlets and to keep pressure on the Viet Cong during the critical period from 1962 to 1965,<sup>1</sup> I believe that the Vietnam War as we came to know it might never have happened.<sup>20</sup>

During those years USAID continued to fund IVS and its volunteers. The volunteers provided technical assistance in the areas of education, agriculture, and community development. Many became deeply distressed with the disastrous effects of the military conflict on the Vietnamese people. They faulted both sides. Forty-nine of them signed a letter to President Johnson in September 1967 setting forth their observations and pleading that the U.S. government seek peace in Vietnam. The letter was delivered to the American embassy. Fearing it would be "buried," they released a copy of the letter to the *New York Times* in Saigon. Four of the IVS volunteers, including one who had served in Vietnam since 1958, resigned to return to the United States and state their case. The volunteers' letter was picked up by much of the world's press. It made a deep impression in the United States and internationally.<sup>21</sup>

Johnson left office in January 1969 when Richard Nixon was inaugurated as president on January 20. The U.S. government began to reduce its military and civilian personnel in Vietnam. US AID's American personnel in Vietnam declined from about 2,300 in 1968 to about 800 in 1971. USAID/Vietnam remained a large mission, carrying out conventional projects, a number of which had positive impacts. Successes were evident in the Vietnam government's economic policy reforms, in higher agricultural production via the spread of new rice varieties, and in rural equity via a "land to the tiller" program. Longer-term progress in education also was helped by U.S. aid. Teacher-training institutions were established and children enrolled in elementary education increased from 600,000 in 1954 to over 3 million in 1975 (or 96 percent of the relevant age group). Public technical schools, especially for agricultural training, increased from three in 1955 to



68 in 1975.<sup>22</sup>

Douglas Pike writes that, in many fundamental respects, South Vietnam's government was increasingly effective until its deterioration in 1973 after North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and the United States signed a peace agreement in Paris. Pike cites four achievements: "a sense of nationhood, a modern government, a broadened political base, and a functioning educational system."<sup>23</sup>

But the war was lost and the achievements of the government of the Republic of Vietnam seem, politically, for naught. The question remains, would the outcome have been different if the U.S. government had patiently maintained President Kennedy's strategy of steady low-profile military and civilian support?

## NOTES

1. See William and Paul Paddock, *Famine, 1915! America's Decision: Who Will Survive?* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967) for a popularized presentation of the issue and the alarm that it created.

2. U.S. Agency for International Development, "LBJ—Humanitarian," *War on Hunger* (March 1973): p. 2.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Lester R. Brown, *Seeds of Change: The Green Revolution and Development in the 1910s* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 6-10.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

7. Much has been written about the tragic Vietnam War. This book's brief consideration of U.S. development aid to South Vietnam draws particularly on Edward Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991); USAID, *United States Economic Assistance to South Vietnam 1954-15* (Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development, 1976); Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking Press, 1983); Douglas Pike, "South Vietnam: Autopsy of a Compound Crisis," in *Friendly Tyrants: An American Dilemma*, edited by Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991); Harvey Neese and John O'Donnell, eds., *Prelude to Tragedy, Vietnam 1960-1965* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001).

8. USAID, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945-September 30, 1994* (Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development, nd), p. 144.

9. See Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*. This book provides essays by three former high-ranking Vietnamese military officers, two American directors of USAID's Rural Affairs Office and four officers who served in that unit. All were participants in the Vietnamese counterinsurgency program. Their essays constitute a strong argument that the failure of American policy in Vietnam was not inevitable. Top-level arrogance among Vietnamese and Americans plus avoidable U.S. ignorance seem, arguably, to have been at the heart of the failure.

10. Lansdale, p. 360.

11. International Volunteer Services (IVS) is a nongovernmental organization begun in 1953. Apparently at the urging of John Foster Dulles, Eisenhower's secretary of state, IVS was founded by a group of Protestants as a nonprofit, secular, nonpolitical organization. Its operational approach provided a model for the Peace Corps, established in 1961. IVS attracted volunteers from the United States and from several European and Asian countries.

12. Rufus Phillips, "Before We Lost in South Vietnam," in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, pp. 31-32.

13. Bert Fraleigh, "Counterinsurgency in South Vietnam," in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, pp. 108-9.

14. John O'Donnell, "Life and Times of a USOM Prov. Rep.," in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, p. 221.

15. Fraleigh in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, p. 111.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 116. Fraleigh had become head of the Office of Rural Affairs after Phillips resigned because of family illness.

17. See accounts by Fraleigh (pp. 116-24 passim) and Neese (pp. 267-74 passim) in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, describing top-level mismanagement in USAID/Vietnam and the inadequate response from USAID headquarters.

18. O'Donnell in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, p. 231.

19. Robert S. McNamara, *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam* (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. 32.

20. O'Donnell in Neese, *Prelude to Tragedy*, pp. 231-32.

21. Two of the four who resigned were Don Luce and John Sommer. They wrote a book about their experiences and conclusions: *Viet Nam—The Unheard Voices* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1969).

22. Douglas Pike, "South Vietnam: Autopsy of a Compound Crisis," in Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle, eds., *Friendly Tyrants: An American Dilemma* (London: McMillan, 1991), p. 50.

23. Ibid., p. 47.