

Director/USOM

May 14, 1963

Assistant Director for Rural Affairs

Location of AD/Rural Affairs Office

1. I have been subjected to considerable pressure from the Executive Office to move our office to another location. The latest proposal is that we occupy the new space over the Snack Bar.
2. The reasons given are that space must be provided for the Special Assistant to the Director and for Mr. Hagberg.
3. To meet this need, I suggest the following:
 - a. That Mr. Welbert be moved to the new space over the snack bar to which Mr. Gottlieb proposes to move us.
 - b. That Mr. Hoskins and Mr. Hagberg be moved into the space currently occupied by Mr. Welbert.
 - c. That Mr. Williams occupy Mr. Hoskins office.
4. I strongly object to the Rural Affairs Office being moved for the following reasons:
 - a. It is absolutely essential for good communication and coordination with you and the Deputy Director that this office be across from yours. On an average count, I or Bert are in and out of your, or his office, or the front office an average of five - ten times per day. When we are making an extra effort to keep you informed and when we are headed into difficult times which will require constant consultation to keep the program going, it seems particularly inappropriate that our office should be moved.
 - b. The Rural Affairs Office should not, I believe, have other offices or personnel concerned with counterinsurgency interposing themselves between the Director and Rural Affairs, which is your most direct contact with the pulse and main thrust of the USOM program at its most critical levels - the provinces and hamlets. Such an interposition becomes inevitable if Rural Affairs is not in close proximity and readily available.

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- 2 -

c. Another consideration - perhaps the most important - is the need of Rural Affairs personnel in the provinces to feel that they have top level backing within the Mission. Any move of the Rural Affairs office at this time - no matter what might be said to explain it - would have an adverse effect on morale. It would inevitably be connected with rumors already current in the Mission that we are responsible for the failure of the Joint (Commingled) Fund and with operational difficulties which we will shortly undergo, the successful resolution of which depend to a great extent upon maintaining high morale within the Rural Affairs organization.

5. Under the circumstances, I cannot agree with Mr. Gottlieb's proposal and request your concurrence to retain Rural Affairs in its current location.

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