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TO: General Lansdale
FROM: R. C. Phillips
SUBJECT: The An Giang Project

1. On August 24, I accompanied Bert Fraleigh and Leonard Chang and Y. K. King of the Chinese Technical Mission to An Giang Province to look at the program there.
2. The program as you know, consists primarily of accelerated and decentralized development in the social and economic fields. I was most interested in what was being done in the villages with the average farmer.
3. We visited one village area where a meeting of farmers was being held. Previously in this village, as in 28 of the 32 villages in the province, average farmers had been selected to grow soybeans and to plant paddy rice instead of floating rice. The soybeans which I saw had already been harvested and would bring the farmer 5 to 10 times as much cash as rice planted on the same number of hectares, while the paddy rice crop was growing well and presented a clear contrast to some floating rice next to it. Because of these successful experiments more than 100 farmers from the village had assembled voluntarily to learn how they could do the same. Many wanted pump adaptors for their outboard engines to permit double cropping the rice thus more than tripling rice production over the current floating rice methods.
4. All of this has been accomplished since April 1966 by six Chinese technicians working with the local GVN technical service. The Chinese say that the people of An Giang are quicker to adopt new practices than the people of Bien Hoa, where they are conducting a similar program. They feel that with proper budgetary support it will be possible to double the income of the average farmer in An Giang in less than two years. At the same time the plan of the Province Rep, Calvin Maillard, is to establish farmer's associations simultaneously with this agricultural revolution.

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5. One of the problems of the province remains land reform, with approximately 80% of the farmers being tenants. I believe this problem can be solved, provided the farmers can be given organizational strength through the farmers' associations, by a distribution of French lands, resettlement in the Kien Ha area and by some expropriation with compensation. Some of the tenant farmers are likely to be in a position to purchase their own land, if a reasonable price can be set and credit terms arranged. If the economic base of the average farmer can be radically increased, I believe the land problem may well work itself out in due time.

6. On the political side, the one activity which shows some promise is the establishment of farmers' associations. Since the overall program is not yet approved by General Thang, the organizing of farmers' associations has not yet started. In addition, I believe emphasis should be placed on hamlet-village elections, timed to begin some time after the program is underway and the farmers' associations started. The Province Chief told me he thought that such elections would not be dominated entirely by the landlords, on the other hand Calvin Maelert feels that they might be until the farmers begin to feel more independent. In any case it appears to me that if the program is carried out as planned with the US firmly behind we shall be generating pressures from the ground up which can be constructively channelized into institutions of local government, and in economic associations, which will provide a political structure capable of withstanding communism over the long-haul which does not now exist.

7. Despite the corrupt leadership of many of the Hoa Hao, An Giang offers a unique opportunity for the U.S. and the GVN to prove it can really reach the Vietnamese people. The Province Chief is cooperative and will allow the program to be carried out without too much obstruction. (He is primarily interested in the military security of the province, particularly the Hue Duc District, which is the sole unpacified area of the province and which is mainly protected by an RF outpost at Ba The which we visited with the US Sector Advisor). We have an excellent US Team in the Province. (I found Calvin Maelert, who speaks both Vietnamese and Chinese fluently, a particularly impressive provincial representative). And if



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Bert Fraleigh can be persuaded to stay on in Vietnam for at least another six months, and is given full backing, the program is likely to achieve startling results. I was also very much impressed with the Chinese technicians and believe they should be increased as Fraleigh has requested.

SLO:EGLansdale:pag
August 27, 1966

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