

9 October 1968

MEMORANDUM

To: Dale Clark
East Asia Tech/ AID
2851 New State (Dudley 3-7324)
Washington, DC

From: Ed Lansdale

Subject: The Tribes

This is a follow-up on our luncheon today, when you mentioned the 20th century "uprising" of the American Indians to help us out in Viet Nam, IVS, JVS, the successful visit of tribal folks from Laos on the Apache Indian Reservation, and the start of some small private ventures by Americans who want to carry on in foreign countries beyond what they did in IVS and the Peace Corps. As you will recall, I mentioned a number of operational people who are and were do-ers in Asia along these lines, as well as my old dream of Americans starting a Tribal Center in Thailand, perhaps at Chieng Mai in the northern uplands of Thailand, which could become a focal point for the advancement of tribal people from the whole Southeast Asia region, including Viet Nam, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, and even China and the Philippines.

You have the makings of one of the most exciting undertakings of this particular period of history, if it is keyed into the events of our time and into the idealism and do-able size of the individuals who can become involved. I'm sure that our next President will find such a private venture of considerable personal interest, if brought to his attention, and would give it some healthy encouragement.

Since there are so many ingredients involved, and you are so aware of the need for sound planning even when starting off in a small way, perhaps I can help you best at this point by doing a little "thinking out loud". I'll put down these thoughts in this memo. Along with sending it to you, I also will send it to several others, asking them to get in touch with you for further discussion about your ideas. Thus, even though I will be taking off soon for the University of Hawaii and hiding out to write a book, you and these folks can get together and perhaps develop something which I feel deserves much success.

If I recall our conversation correctly, you now have the following ingredients in the pot so far. Perhaps there are more, which we didn't get around to talking about. But what there is already make up quite a mixture. I'll list them this way:

a. Intertribal. You have the Chiefs of five American Indian tribes desirous of working together towards some worthy end. The Apaches recently hosted a group of tribesmen from Laos, showed them coop endeavors, had them sit in on tribal councils, gave them an unusual view of Americans. It was an eye-opener for both the Apaches and the Lao. Now, the first Indian graduate of West Point, a Sioux who has retired from the US Army (I gather from you that this was for reasons of wounds sustained) and found himself facing life on the reservation again, is ready to make a trip to Viet Nam under auspices of World Neighbors. In Viet Nam, he will visit tribes in the High Plateau, get acquainted, look into opportunities for their starting a handicraft industry, perhaps tip them off on how to do this. The Indian tribes had been thinking of some sort of joint venture in the U.S., but the thought of doing something abroad is attractive. The latter might give them a real boost in getting things advanced for them here in the United States. If some lively things were started, other tribes might well want to join in with the present five tribes making up Intertribal. (I gathered from you that the Battle of Wounded Knee is more memorable to them in some ways than what happened at Little Big Horn; there are some bitter memories and a need to find a place as first-class American citizens, not second-class).

b. The Bright-Eyed Group. There are a number of Americans returning home from tours abroad who have come to you seeking a way to start in a small business in an area where they have served and have become close to the people. So far, these are mostly younger Americans who have served at low pay as volunteers with IVS and in the Peace Corps. Their idealism remains untarnished, but they want to try a private venture of their own, one that will help a people for whom they now have affection, while making it fiscally worth while for themselves. (As I told you, I know many younger Americans like this, along with Asians, notably some Filipinos, as well as Leonard Chang and Tommy Hsu of the Chinese Agricultural Technical Mission in Viet Nam. There are some truly outstanding folks in the free world, usually 'way ahead of a government bureau or other organization that opens the way for them to work abroad. When they bump into that frustrating moment when they can no longer afford to continue in a foreign area, for financial or spiritual reward, due to

their need to grow into something freer and better, there should be some natural next step — such as a private venture at which they could succeed while helping their fellow man. Chang and Hsu have this in mind, just as did Frisco Johnny San Juan of Eastern Construction back in the old days when it was the Freedom Company of the Philippines and as did Oscar Arellano of Operation Brotherhood.)

c. JVS. You and the folks running the affairs of IVS have been working to launch a companion organization called "JVS", which I gather to stand for Joint Venture Service. I presume this would be a private enterprise undertaking, jointly run by Americans and foreigners in each small venture. I gather that the linkage with IVS stems primarily from the thought that some of the IVS folks on returning home, finishing their education, and looking around for what to do next, have suddenly found themselves longing to get back to folks abroad where they had served — and have an idea about a business there of their own. JVS, I take it, would be an undertaking to encourage them in this and perhaps to arrange some financing. There is some question, as expressed by you, about locating JVS headquarters next to IVS headquarters, or in the Mid-West.

d. Chinese. Leonard Chang and Tommy Hsu, of CATM in Viet Nam, have had remarkable success with young Chinese volunteers from Taiwan in helping Vietnamese farmers get money crops from their paddies and hectares in Viet Nam. They are practical folks, getting their hands dirty in helping farmers, but shrewdly selecting markets for best prices, and introducing new fruits and vegetables to increase production and income. They have had their fill of bucking bureaucracy, want to start a private enterprise of their own, but still help the farmers in Southeast Asia, where their hearts are. They are hoping to do so by ventures of small canneries in the provinces, and already have scouted out markets for canned fruits, etc, in Europe. They also would like to improve truck gardening around major cities of Viet Nam and Thailand, as a commercial venture, but in shares with local farmers.

e. "Carlisle" of Asia. As a participant in "people's wars" in Asia during the past quarter of a century, I have long thought of what might happen if the free world ever recognized the tremendous human resources existing amongst the many tribes of Southeast Asia, whose cousins now live in Communist China and Communist North Viet Nam. If these tribes ever became awakened, given some real chance to make a go of things for themselves through

education and some assistance in starting their own "free enterprise", they would revolutionize life in an immensely rich, too little known, strategic inland area of Asia. An accessible, peaceful location, such as Chieng Mai in Thailand, might prove ideal for an American-initiated, Asian-shared institution which would be devoted to the advancement of these tribes. Such an institution could start small, perhaps initially giving brief training courses in handicrafts, agriculture, or other income-producing activities to a handful of young tribesmen who could return home afterwards and spread the word. Step by step, the institution could develop into a tribal center for the safekeeping of tribal lore and customs, for higher education, and for promoting a meaningful entry of tribal people into first-class status where they are now treated as second-class citizens in their own countries. Enterprising tribesmen could be encouraged in starting private enterprises, such as Dangwa did with truck and bus lines with the Igorots in the Philippines, coupled with truck gardens in the highlands near Baguio producing fresh vegetables for the hot lowlands. Senator Manuel Manahan of the Philippines, who has striven so hard for minority tribal people at home, and who has worked with tribes in Viet Nam and Laos, probably would have much sound, practical advice for the shaping of such a project in a workable, small-start form.

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Here are some of the things that strike me as needing attention. I'm sure that you have thought of most of these things already. However, it might help to see them as another person lists them. Doing this rather hurriedly, I'll probably leave out some things only to think of them later. Anyhow, here are some thoughts on what needs attention:

1). Parent. You are right in your thought that one of the first needs is a "papa" for such a private program. JVS, from the little I know about it, sounds as though it could have just the right amount of flexibility, responsibility, and know-how to be "papa". I trust that it will include some way for investors to take shares, to participate fiscally. Also, it would require a brokerage function, to match up some of our well-motivated entrepreneurs with folks who have an idea of starting a business of their own, as partners. There are a lot of Americans who retire rather early in life and who might be exactly the right sort of participants you seek — who could put up some money and give a hand in such enterprises in lieu of trips to resort areas abroad. It will take some respected parent here in the U.S. for them to deal with initially. Since Washington is the

center of the world for development projects today, it might be useful to think hard before setting up shop in the Mid-West instead of Washington.

2). Plan. You will need not only a plan for the immediate needs of your place in the US Government structure, but you also have need for a prospectus that can be used to explain your concept to folks in the private sector. Suggest that an early order-of-business for you would be the getting down on paper of this concept, in terms understandable by all who would participate, not only Americans, but by Asians and others as well.

3). Apples & Oranges. You have been thinking of enterprises with tribes in Viet Nam and Laos. Yet, the first step of IVS into such a field apparently is a pig-raising enterprise in Laguna Province, the Philippines — in a non-tribal, lowland area, not too far from the urban center of Manila. This suggests that you actually are not limiting yourself to tribes, but to enterprising individuals whether they are tribal folks or not. So, your ingredients are really a mixed bag of "apples and oranges" which you are trying to add up. It can be resolved organizationally perhaps by having a division concentrating on tribal affairs, another on agriculture, another on processing plants, and so on. This could help in orderly development of your parent organization in the US, even if it is made up of part-time folks.

4). Indians. What do our Indian tribes get out of this? There is need for a well-thought-out part for them, in private enterprise terms. Could Intertribal (or is it Intertribe?) go into the consulting business commercially? Perhaps the US Government could contract with them to handle visitors to Indian reservations, such as the Lao tribesmen who visited the Apaches. Also, they might be a manpower agency, to furnish skilled and experienced persons to visit tribes abroad and act as advisors on developmental projects. Or, they might become participating partners in private enterprises abroad.

5). Carlisle in Asia. A Tribal Center in a place such as Chieng Mai might well start out as simply a house there, with a resident manager for Southeast Asia. He could be the JVS representative for the area, get out and visit tribes, get a hard fix on some practical first steps to take. Chieng Mai is so pleasant a spot to live that you might well find some retired American businessman who would love to take a crack at such a task, as a voluntary contribution of his own.

6). Elsewhere. Although much attention is now being paid to Viet Nam and Southeast Asia — and I'm sure that our next US Administration is going to be increasingly, painfully aware of the needs in Thailand — there are, of course, other places in the world offering similar opportunities. Americans who spend time in Latin America and Africa get similar glimpses of opportunities, and affection for local folks, as do the Americans in Southeast Asia. There are also tribes appealing to Americans in many other areas of the world. Thus, any program of private enterprise such as you envision will need some way of acting universally eventually, even though you might find it prudent to start with a bite-size beginning in one place.

7). Americans. I trust that you will not overlook the American military man, as a potential participant. Our military establishment is perhaps the hugest tourist organization the world has ever seen, having sent millions of Americans from all walks of life to foreign countries. They, along with IVS and the Peace Corps, and along with Americans in the private sector, include a number of individuals who want to do more with their lives than just go after a buck, and would find some private endeavor abroad in which they could do something constructive, along with making a good living. There is undoubtedly a rich vein of Americans who would find it most appealing to combine the idealism of voluntary agency work with a fiscal pay-off.

8). Need. What is there next for an idealist who has given years of his life at low pay and amongst hardships to serve a cause he believes in? I feel that there is a definite need for a place that he can turn, eventually, for some good remuneration for his efforts, along with a way of putting a fair share of the profits back into endeavors that he can believe in as worth the doing. It is the essence of our private enterprise philosophy, which too many Americans and other free people have let slip away from themselves and into the hands of governmental organizations. Thus, I believe that the program needs some fair way of turning back funds into further developmental enterprises.

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These rather hurried thoughts are just a starter. I know that I will be intensely interested in how you progress with this, and would like to help as feasible for me. After about mid-November 1968, I plan to be at the University of Hawaii for a year. Then I plan to return to the Washington area. My address in Hawaii: c/o Asia Training Center (SORF), University of Hawaii, 935 15th Street, Honolulu, Hawaii, 96318, (tel: Honolulu 400-521).