

Proposal by Bo. for a study
tour in March 64

Mission: To observe USOM, and especially Rural Affairs, participation in the counter-insurgency effort in Vietnam, and to discuss areas for improvement.

II. Narrative account of trip:

(Should include significant provinces visited, such as Phu Yen, Tay Ninh, Ba Xuyen; significant individuals in provinces, such as Burns, Navarro, Holbrook, del Prado, Reasonover, Melvin; conversations in Saigon with Stilwell, Cao, Williams, Walton (?) etc.)

III. Discussion:

1. Rural Affairs people doing outstanding counter-insurgency work; are virtually only people making significant effort to win the support of the Vietnamese people, which is essential to winning war.

2. RVN in general, ARVN in particular, should be profiting from this effort, but get relatively little benefit because:

a. Vietnamese, especially military, do not understand importance of popular support, do not understand or accept ~~mix~~ actions required of Army if they to win it. (Tell Phu Yen fertilizer)

b. US military advisors often understand, but virtually helpless to make their advise heard for lack of command back-up.

c. General lack of command emphasis on good military-civilian relations.

3. Saigon level American effort less effective than it should be because of:

a. Intimate working relations with key Vn officials. (Only one, an old, but unnamed friend, has appropriate relationship.)

b. Close coordination on a daily basis between US agencies, made by persons having:

(1) Intimate knowledge of operations going on
(2) Understanding of the Vietnamese, and of effective advisory practices,

(3) Knowledge of counter-insurgency

(4) Top-level backing

4. Miscellaneous:

a. Civil Guard - present status - should be receiving constabulary training - revert to constabulary duties under civilian (MinInterior) control in specific provinces as they are freed from VC - maintain separate identity, suitability for military as well as peace maintenance duty.

b. Oil spot - idea of stabilizing situation outward from secure areas sound - but only small part of job - no areas should be left to undisputed VC control - all should receive government benefits to maximum extent possible - no VC should have trouble finding a fight.

c. Tendency exists in some quarters to underestimate the necessity for civil government and importance of civilians in govt. This is especially unfortunate because VN military low regard for civilians in or out of government service.

d. Most Rural Affairs people realize civilians must be protected by government forces - must not be shot at unless they are actually shooting at you - but few others seem to. (Eagle Flight story)

e. Complaints & Action step forward, USOM role.

IV Conclusions: This war can be won, but it will require better top-level coordination by people who understand and are highly backed. It will also require, and such people will know how to get:

(1) Better military action

(2) Better civic action

(3) Better intelligence

(4) Better psy-war

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