

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Viet Nam Advisory Group

GENERAL POLICE PROBLEMS

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Lecture given at the Civil Guard

High Officers School

by

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Saigon, Viet Nam  
June, 1957

## GENERAL POLICE PROBLEMS

### The Need for the Public's Thorough Understanding of the Police Function.

As I have repeatedly told you, a police organization operating in a democracy can be efficient only when it has the goodwill of the people. If you will accept this as a statement of fact then the points that I make, in this talk, will be extremely clear.

A democratic government is one that operates by the will of the people through free elections of the officials of the government and free elections of the law-making body of the country. Thus, the laws passed by this law-making body is a reflection of the needs of the people.

In such a country it is necessary that the people understand their police department - know its functions, understand its problems and realize its difficulties, if any. Further, the police department must, through well trained personnel, sell its services to the public. Let me give you an example: let us assume that in a certain area in one of the precincts in Saigon there have occurred and are occurring house burglaries at frequent intervals. It is only natural that the people suffering from this crime wave report these burglaries to the police, for where else can they report them. Naturally, the reports of these instances are made with the hope that the police can find the burglars so that the burglaries will cease, and so that at least

some of the stolen property can be recovered. If the police actually make careful investigation of the crime scenes, if the police show an interest in apprehending the criminals; if the police return several times to the complainants home and ask if further burglaries have occurred, or if the owner has further information to offer the police - the people begin to believe that the police are actually trying to clear up these burglaries. News of this is soon spread by the people themselves that the police are trying to do a good job. This is good. This is the type of publicity the police want to receive. This is good publicity for the department.

Think of the unfavorable impression made upon these people, however, if, when the burglaries are reported, a careless investigation is made. The investigator asks the homeowner if he knows who the burglar is, and when told that the homeowner does not know the identity of the burglar, the investigator perhaps says, "Well! if you don't know how do you expect me to find out?" or some such remark, leaves the house and never returns. With a procedure such as this the department can rest assured that never again will that citizen report anything to the police. The citizen has lost respect for the law enforcing agency and, the tragic part of this incident is, that news of the poor quality of police work and service spreads much more quickly than does news of good police work and service.

When a poorly trained, inadequately administered police department is functioning the Chief of this department does not

want publicity. This is only natural. He does not want the people to know how badly he operates the department nor does he want the people to know that he is not sufficiently interested in their welfare to properly train his men to work effeciently.

The excellent police administrator does his best to overcome the shortcomings of the department and personnel. When this is done he then, through the media of talks to citizens groups, clubs, etc; through newspapers and radio and by actions of all of his men, does his utmost to get the public to understand the job of the policeman, to have faith in the excellent job the policemen will do for the citizen. Thus, if the excellent administrator has trained his men so that they properly perform the five functions of a police officer:

1. Preserve the peace
2. Protect life and property.
3. Enforce the laws
4. Prevent and detect crime and
5. Arrest violators of the law, then the public must know of this good work. Only in this manner will the public gain confidence in their police and, once they have that confidence, a policeman's battle is nearly won, since with that confidence the people will go out of their way to be of assistance to the police.

### Selection of Police Personnel:

No organization has greater need for the careful selection of its personnel than do the police organizations. In no other business or profession are the demands greater in physical work, knowledge and contact with the public. That is, of course, when the policeman is properly doing his work. - We don't have a selection process if men are appointed politically despite poor physical condition or despite a low education. The selection of proper police personnel is a lecture all by itself. I will only touch briefly upon the needs.

A police department should have minimum height and weight requirements, and these minimums should be slightly higher than the average for your population. The basic thinking behind this is, that a big well-built policeman, trained to handle himself in difficult circumstances is better able to perform his duties than a small man, with equal training. Also, remember, people think twice before attacking a big man.

Thorough medical examinations should be given. Any doubt regarding the candidate's physical condition must be resolved in favor of the department. By that, I mean, if there is any question as to the man's physical condition (this also applies to character) then the man should not be employed as a policeman. Always remember that this man will be on your department for 20 or 30 years and if he suffers an ailment now perhaps one half of his time in later life he will be off-duty, sick.

A mental examination must be given in order to weed out those who do not have the intellect to be good policemen. One way to look at this problem is to ask yourself - will this man, 5 years from now have the capabilities to become a sergeant? If the answer is "No", then he shouldn't be hired as a patrolman.

Last, but not the least important, comes the character investigation. Every man appointed must be investigated thoroughly by men who have the interest of the department at heart. Any misdeed, any poor record whatsoever and the man should not be appointed to the department.

#### Training:

This class is attending this lecture for the purpose of learning. If you men need to learn, rest assured a young citizen wishing to enter a police organization, also must learn. It is essential that every man entering the police field be trained in basic police work before actually going on duty. This basic training, preferably done by an experienced group of instructors is also a weeding out and screening process. Men doing poorly should be eliminated at this point.

(Discuss according to time allotted)

#### Selection of Personnel for Promotion:

I am going to try, in as short a time as possible, to give you a picture of some of the procedures used in the United States

for the selection of supervisors and command personnel in the police field.

(Placed organizational hierarchy, below, on blackboard)

| <u>Department of Public Works</u> |      | <u>Police Departments</u> |
|-----------------------------------|------|---------------------------|
| Junior Engineers                  | 2000 | Patrolmen                 |
| Engineers                         | 130  | Sergeants                 |
| Senior Engineers                  | 20   | Lieutenants               |
| Associate Engineers               | 5    | Captains                  |
| Principal Engineers               | 2    | Assistant Chiefs          |
| Chief Engineer                    | 1    | Chief of Police           |

The example I am using applies to the United States. From the notes on the blackboard I have written the hierarchy of two organizations. The first, an engineering organization and the second a police organization. I have, for comparison only, made both organizations the same size with the same number of higher level positions .

Suppose we look at the problem of recruitment for these two organizations for the moment. Let us assume that there are now 200 vacancies in each department at the Junior Engineer and Patrolmen level. The minimum level of education for the Junior Engineering job is graduation from an accredited Engineering college and must pass a State Engineering certificate. This is the minimum requirement. There are 300 applicants for the positions, an examination is given to select the best applicants, and 200 pass the exam and are offered positions in the Public

Works Department. The jobs are filled. Among these 200 passed candidates there are men who have had as much as 10 years of practical engineering experience plus the minimum requirement of graduation from Engineering College and a State Engineering license. We feel that if these men with the many years of practical experience in Engineering wish to enter the Public Works Department, they must do so at the lowest level, since all of the higher jobs are filled only by promotion from the lower ranks. That is as it should be.

Let us look at the Police Department. There are 200 openings there also. The minimum requirements from the education standpoint are "Graduation from High School". There are 300 candidates and several candidates have college degrees in Police Administration and Police Science. Do these highly educated men in the police field have an opportunity to break into the police field at a sergeant or lieutenant level? Of course not. They must compete with the other applicants for the patrolmen positions. We feel that it is only fit and proper for everyone to start at the same place, the bottom rung of a ladder and work up the ladder. Now, promotion wise, in this same police organization, let us suppose that the minimum requirement for promotion to the first supervisory level, that of sergeant, is three years as patrolman. All of these men, whether they only have a high school education or have graduated from a college with a degree in Police Administration or Police Science, must work as a patrolman for three years before they have an opportunity to compete against each

other for the sergeant position. At this point everything else being equal, the man with the better police education can come to the front and beat the men with lesser educations.

One thing we have found out, though, that the above pattern does not necessarily always hold true. We have found out that many times, a man with only a high school education after three years of experience in police work, if he has applied himself to the job, if he has studied, if he has learned from experience, can compete successfully against the better educated man. Further, just because a man has a better education does not necessarily mean that he would make a better supervisor.

Again, looking at this hierarchy chart on the board. Some top level police officials in the United States are advocating that, in order to professionalize police, all men selected for police work at the entrance level should be at least college graduates or be graduates from a college with a Police Administration or Police Science degree. I don't agree with that theory. I believe that the lower positions in a police organization hierarchy can be filled by men who have a minimum of high school education and that, with proper training, they can very satisfactorily perform the duties of a patrolman as we do it in the United States.

This brings us to the main point of my talk this afternoon. Look at the Engineering hierarchy. How many of the men who passed the entrance level tests and were appointed to the first level position will ever become Principal Engineers? There are actually

157 higher level jobs in that hierarchy. At the best, considering deaths, resignations, retirement, etc., there would be, over a 20 year period, 500 vacancies. Thus only 500 men of the 2000 Junior Engineers can ever hope to be anything other than Junior Engineers. The same is true on the police department hierarchy. Perhaps, years from now, when the pay scale of police equals that of professional people, you can keep men in your police organizations, by keeping morale high and not have mass resignations, but until that is done do you think for one minute that you could keep men with a college degree in Police Administration or Science, happy doing patrolmen's work for the next 20 or 25 years? Of course not. A man with that background today, wants to get ahead. He has that opportunity now by passing promotion examinations and tests and his chances are better because of his educational background, but what happens if all recruits had to have that background?

Let us assume that your police organization has been functioning well for the past five years. All of your high level positions have been filled for that length of time. There have been no deaths, no resignations, no retirements. In other words everybody has remained in their same job for five years. Suddenly, a man of Captain rank dies. There is a captain vacancy. I am sure that all of you agree that the men who are lieutenants and who have been doing their job well should have an opportunity to get that job. If it is done promotion wise you are creating vacancies down the line. There's a vacancy in the lieutenant ranks, because

a lieutenant was made a captain. A sergeant is promoted to lieutenant, a patrolman is promoted to sergeant. Each one of these has been hoping for the opportunity to advance. That is human nature. Suppose however, an outsider is appointed. Perhaps he is a very capable man who even though he knows nothing of police and command work can quickly learn his job. If he is appointed from the outside, you have stopped promotions at three different levels of your organization. Three different groups of people who are bitter because of the lack of promotional opportunities.

I have been working with police in Saigon for the past two years. I know the turmoil that your department has gone through, the past few years. I know that up to 8 or 9 years ago no Vietnamese policeman, no matter how smart or efficient in police work, could ever rise above the rank of Sergeant. Things have changed. The past year has seen a radical change in your police organizations. As Viet Nam's economic condition changes you will find it harder and harder to compete with private industry and business, for personnel. When this happens you will have to give promotional opportunities to the men who are at the bottom of the ladder. You won't be able to place a man, because of either a higher education or some business experience directly into a police supervisory or command position, for, as we see it, how is it possible to give a man a job in the higher levels of police ranks without that man knowing anything about police work.

Many high-ranking police officials in the States have said, and I agree with them, that the position of sergeant (outside of

Chief of Police) is the most important job in the entire police organization.

Let us develop the background of the work of patrolmen, and show you why the sergeant's work is so important.

A police organization is a quasi-military organization. It normally has similar ranks or grades of positions as a military organization. However, proper supervision over patrolmen is even more important in a police organization than in the military since it is seldom that a private in the army works alone, unsupervised. He usually works in a squad of several men constantly supervised by a corporal or sergeant.

This is entirely different in the police service. In police work the majority of men work alone, or, even if working in pairs are not under the watchful eye of a supervisor at all times. Thus, the supervision that must be given the police is of the "spot check" variety. As the sergeant supervisor makes his rounds of his assigned area and checks the men under his supervision, he has a number of tasks to perform.

First, a sergeant has direct charge of the movements of men and material within his jurisdiction. He coordinates the activities of all men under his command so that best results can be obtained. The sergeant guides and interprets the relationships between his superiors and his men and makes sure his men understand what is expected of them. He molds attitudes and actions of his men by explaining department policies and procedures. He explains orders carefully. He is a trouble shooter. By this we

mean that he takes action on the problems and grievances of his men as they arise, or refers them to his superior with suggestions for their solution. He discourages rumor among men by providing full information concerning departmental policies. He conducts preliminary investigation of citizen complaints regarding patrolmen under his command and forwards his recommendations to his superiors. When complaints are unjustified he points out the injustice of the charges.

He builds morale - he enforces discipline among his men. He creates good will among the public by impressing upon his men the importance of securing the cooperation of the public - the people all of these things, and many more, the sergeant does as a matter of course. To do these things well requires the sergeant to have the neck of leadership.

The selection of men for police service at the entrance level, is of great importance to a police department. It is from these men that eventually the departments supervisors and leaders will come. Therefore, careful recruit selection is a basic necessity.

In the selection of patrolmen to be promoted to the supervisory level great care must be exercised to choose only those men who possess the greatest potential qualities of leadership - not necessarily those who have displayed the greatest proficiency in their everyday tasks as patrolmen.

What do we look for specifically when searching for good supervisory material?

Well! Leadership qualities may be considered to fall in 4 distinct categories:

1. Physical qualities:

Appearance, voice, energy.

2. Emotional qualities:

Stability, dependability, self-confidence, initiative, willingness to learn, ability to delegate authority, ability to get along with people, persuasiveness, sympathy, lack of prejudice, interest in work.

3. Mental qualities:

Intelligence, sound judgment, resourcefulness, alertness, decisiveness and the ability to do the work required and courage.

4. Ethical or moral qualities:

Loyalty to police organization, integrity, morality, fairness, willing to accept responsibility. Willing to accept blame. Willing to back subordinates and to give credit wherever it is due.

It must be understood right now that appraising the abilities and qualities of policemen for the selection of a sergeant, is a very difficult thing to do.

Qualities of leadership are not necessarily brought out by length of service, nor do acts of heroism necessarily reflect leadership abilities. Therefore length of service, or seniority as we call it, and acts of heroism should not be considered in

selecting officers for promotion except when all other factors are equal. Seniority, of itself can never justify the promotion of an individual. One man who has served 10 years in a police position may have 10 years of increased experience. Another with the same 10 years on the job may have gained only one year experience in the 10.

Beside the service ratings, we use objective type, forced selection written tests. Where, at the entrance level to police service the tests are designed to test general intelligence, reading comprehension, judgment, and aptitude for learning; promotion examinations are set up to test the factual knowledge of the candidate about such things as Penal Law, Court Procedures, Traffic laws and traffic enforcement, criminal investigation, modern practices of police methods, supervision and basic police administration.

Thus, the basic processes are, restricting the eligibility to promotion examinations to men who have a high service rating, using the mark obtained on the service rating as a portion of the final mark on the total examination. When a list is prepared showing the standing of the candidates, after they have passed the written test, they must then pass an oral review board consisting of 3 to 5 men selected, if the men to be examined are for 1st position, from men holding the rank of lieutenant and captain. If the examination should be for captain, for example, the oral board would be composed of men of higher rank, and so on. A physical examination is given to ascertain that nothing is physically

wrong with these men. This examination is, of course, not necessary, if all men are examined physically, each year, which many of the departments are doing at the present time.

When the results of the written examination, and service rating, the results of the oral board and the physical examination are all appraised, you have then selected your supervisor with the greatest care possible with the tools we have on hand to-day.

#### In-Service training:

Basic or recruit training is necessary in the police field in order to give the patrolman that basic essential knowledge he requires for the proper performance of his duties. Naturally, it is impossible for this recruit training to do more than skim the surface of all the knowledges that the patrolman requires. Thus we have in-service training to fill the gap - after basic training.

In-service training offers the opportunity for further training and is usually conducted on a patrolman's "off duty" time. This type of training affords the instructors to answer questions relating to actual problems encountered by the students while actually doing police work. Experience thus, becomes a wonderful teacher. The class is no longer working on distant problems, but are actually able to relate particular situations which the instructor can use to great advantage to illustrate good and bad police practices.

### Efficient Police Administration:

Without efficient administration, a police department will fail in its objectives despite careful selection of personnel, careful and thorough training, despite in-service training schools and the efforts made by the men at the lower echelon of the department.

I believe integrity is the greatest attribute a police administrator can have. Just as long as all of the men know that the leader is untouchable regarding graft and corruption they will emulate the leader and refrain from those practices which give a police department a bad name. Further, if the leader has the courage to resist political interference in the operation of the department in any way he then receives the highest regard and loyalty of his men.

The police administrator also needs to be abreast of all the new, advanced methods of performing police work. Police work is such that it cannot remain static. If advances are not made, there is a general decline, therefore it is necessary to always advance, to improve, to try new and better methods, not only in the mechanics of police work but also in the personnel factor - the modern methods of supervision of personnel, the modern methods of command. All of these have their effect upon the whole.

### Need for Efficient Records and Rapid Communication:

An efficient department uses the best methods available to it, to transmit crime news to all its members, since old crime

news is of no value. If all members of a department are alerted to the fact that a gang of men traveling in a green Peugeot license number AB 1692 NG are committing numerous robberies about the city, or province, it is quite a simple matter to find this car. However, if this information is withheld and is known only to several investigating officers the chances of the apprehension are practically nil. Thus, the rapid transmission of crime news to all men is of the greatest importance.

Records can be made to furnish police with the approximate place where burglars will strike again, and even the day they will commit the next burglary can often be foretold by proper records systems. Traffic hazards can be eliminated by careful analysis of the intersection where many accidents have occurred, if proper records have been kept of these accidents and properly tabulated so that the information contained in these records is not lost.

We have found that a good records system, employing the modern techniques used by efficient police departments can greatly assist the police in their work. However, there must be the desire to do these things and not merely pay lip-service to these methods.

#### Modern Society and Modern Policing:

Education is sweeping Viet Nam. There has never been so many schools, so many students seeking opportunities for a more advanced education. This is good. This makes a country healthy

and well-balanced. As the people become educated they expect better things both materially and spiritually. They expect better treatment by their officials, by the police, therefore it behooves the police departments to give better service, to constantly improve their service to the public.

Never forget that, in a democratic country, the people, in the final analysis, run the country. They will stand inefficiency only so long. Then they grow tired of such inefficiency and a growing resentment occurs. This is a bad relationship between police and the public and should never occur.

Thus, the responsibility of keeping the public's respect depends on modern, efficient and humane policing.