

MEMORANDUM
RM-4482-ARPA
MARCH 1965

THE AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISOR
AND HIS FOREIGN COUNTERPART:
THE CASE OF VIETNAM

G. C. Hickey
With the assistance of W. P. Davison

PREPARED FOR:
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PREFACE

This Memorandum presents the results of a RAND study conducted in South Vietnam during 1964 under the auspices of the Research and Development Field Unit, Advanced Research Projects Agency, Department of Defense. Dr. Gerald C. Hickey spent ten months in the field. Upon his return, he wrote this report with the assistance of Dr. W. Phillips Davison, a RAND consultant.

The study in a sense was a victim of the war in Vietnam: while Dr. Hickey was gathering data in the field, he became an inadvertent participant in repelling the attack by the Viet Cong against Nam Dong on July 6, 1964. During the course of that bloody battle, many of Dr. Hickey's field notes were destroyed.

He interviewed several hundred American advisors of all categories during the year, both individually and in small groups. His conclusions on the problems and needs of advisors in their relation to Vietnamese counterparts are based on these interviews, on earlier visits to pre-deployment training sites in the United States and from his direct observations in the field and at various training centers.

This report is not intended to serve as a blueprint for reorganizing the selection and training of advisors. It is hoped that the findings will contribute constructively to ongoing efforts for increasing the effectiveness of the advisory program.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

American advisors in Vietnam include the roughly 30 per cent of the U.S. military stationed there who are assigned to advising designated Vietnamese counterparts in the performance of the latter's tasks. Their function, and hence the quality of their preparation for the role, are of vital importance to our interests in South Vietnam. The greater the advisor's professional competence and his ability to establish rapport with the man he is advising, the more likely is it that the counterpart will accept and act on his advice. One quality without the other will greatly diminish the effectiveness of the American. Professional expertise is a requirement both obvious and easily measurable, and it has not been the crucial problem in the advisor-counterpart relationship. A faculty for effective interaction with a foreign national, and the skills necessary to developing and expressing that faculty, are much more intangible. They play no part in traditional military pedagogy, and their great importance is perhaps not yet fully understood in all quarters that must concern themselves with the novel requirements of counterinsurgency.

The author's ten-month inquiry into the working relations between advisors and counterparts confirmed for him the growing evidence that, with many notable exceptions, these relations are not as close and productive as they need to be. After initial visits to pre-deployment training sites in the United States, he spent most of that time interviewing advisors of all categories, both individually and in groups, in virtually every part

of South Vietnam. From these interviews, as well as from direct observation and his knowledge of the curricula of the various training centers, he reached the following conclusions as to the major principles governing the advisory role in a country such as Vietnam, and the chief barriers to better understanding and cooperation at present. Included among the barriers are both the immutable problems, intrinsic to the role of the foreign advisor overseas, which one must recognize as such in order to learn to cope with them, and a number of present realities that may be within the American establishment's power to change. The author's findings are listed here without distinctions between these categories and not in the order of their importance.

o The amount of time that advisor and counterpart spend together has a direct and important bearing on their relationship and in many cases determines the advisor's success in winning the respect and cooperation of the Vietnamese.

o Nearest the operational level -- in the Special Forces A Teams, at battalion, in the River Force and Junk Fleet -- advisors not only spend all their time with counterparts but share their food and bivouac and even the dangers of battle. They show the highest incidence of good rapport and successful collaboration. They also have an obvious need, in their training, for the social and linguistic skills that facilitate direct communication.

o By contrast with the American in the field, the advisor at headquarters has other, nonadvisory responsibilities and rarely, if ever, sees his counterpart outside formal occasions. His linguistic requirements are correspondingly less urgent. Personal rapport, though always desirable, is less crucial to the execution of his tasks.

o Advisors at all levels are overburdened with paper work, including demands for data that could as easily, sometimes even more efficiently, be compiled elsewhere.

o The great influx of personnel in recent times has added to the bureaucratic chores of advisors in Vietnam, detracting seriously from the time they have available for their major task of working with counterparts.

o The enlarged military structure has the added effect of removing the field advisor ever farther from his superior officers in the military. Without easy access to them, he tends to feel that headquarters does not understand the nature of his role and its problems. A major complaint is that the advisor, though constantly reminded of the limits of his function, is held accountable for mistakes as though he were in command.

o Much of the advisory activity goes on at the local level, in conjunction with small military and paramilitary units, and centers in large measure on civic action, which concerns the welfare of the native population. Beyond a natural inclination and aptitude for this kind of work, the advisor, to be effective in this role, will need some familiarity with the social and cultural

environment as well as with the rationale and specific techniques of civic action. Yet a great many advisors are assigned to this task without prior training beyond their military and technical equipment.

o Many Americans, measuring the Vietnamese by their own cultural standards, are highly critical of their value system and some of their attitudes and behavior patterns. They are apt to accuse their counterparts and other associates of being lazy, unenthusiastic, without a sense of urgency about their jobs and the pursuit of the war in general, lacking in frankness to the point of deviousness, intent on ritual but uncharitable toward their fellowmen, lax about health and hygiene, wasteful with matériel. Often, they vaguely ascribe these characteristics to what they call the inscrutable "oriental mentality"; nothing in their training seems to have prepared such critics to look on these aspects of Vietnamese behavior as appropriate and legitimate manifestations of a foreign culture and tradition.

o The fact that not enough advisors speak Vietnamese remains the major barrier to communication. Especially important at the lower military levels, even a little knowledge of the language impresses and pleases the Vietnamese and enables the American to use his interpreter to better advantage.

o The demand for skilled interpreters has long since outstripped the supply. Many Americans, untrained in the use of interpreters, cannot spot the unqualified, or speak too fast and colloquially to be understood. Misunderstandings between advisor and counterpart arise

easily when interpreters, whether from ignorance or by intent, introduce inaccuracies that the American cannot catch and correct.

o The unique way and view of life of the Vietnamese results in needs and desires different from those of Americans. The failure of advisors to take this into account, their tendency to assume an identity of habits and physical requirements, has led to costly and wasteful errors in civic action programs.

o Lack of information on the society of Vietnam leaves many advisors unprepared for the ethnic complexity of Vietnam and for such cultural conflict situations as the enmity between the Vietnamese and the mountain people. By and large, Americans are indignant at the treatment the montagnards are receiving at the hands of the Vietnamese. When called on to arbitrate internal disputes, as they often are, they benefit greatly by some insight into these two major ethnic groups and their ancient conflict.

o Although mutual professional respect is a prerequisite for good collaboration, advisor and counterpart are not always well matched in competence or in the prestige of the military branch they represent. This is most strikingly true in the Special Forces: an elite group in the American establishment, the Special Forces of Vietnam are notorious for being poorly selected and trained and correspondingly lacking in motivation and morale.

o Americans are insufficiently prepared for the fact that the military concepts and practices of the Vietnamese diverge from their own in a number of ways. (a) French

influence is still strong among officers, and it tends to govern their tactical thinking, making some of them unreceptive to American approaches. (b) Individual military ranks may carry prerogatives and powers of decision different from their U.S. equivalents. In their highly structured establishment, members of the Vietnamese military must seek approval from their superiors before they can act, with inevitable and sometimes costly delays. (c) The principle of reward and punishment pervades military life and governs promotions. Field service often denotes a lack of recognition, as compared to headquarters service for those in favor who tend to advance more rapidly in rank, and this lessens the field officer's incentive to risk his life in battle. Also, fearing the punishment that attends losses of men or automatic weapons, he may be timid in operations, unwilling to engage either in hazardous missions. (d) The military's involvement in politics leads to frequent changes in the various commands in response to upheavals in Saigon. Political instability of the kind recently witnessed means uncertainty for present jobholders, who may become overcautious about showing initiative in the desire not to expose themselves. It also means that advisors often are compelled to deal with incompetent counterparts who owe their assignments only to political favor.

o Present tours of duty for advisors are too short, when one considers the time of learning and adjustment before an advisor begins to work effectively with his counterpart -- under present selection and training procedures.

- o Within the American establishment, advisors lack opportunity and the vertical channels that would permit them to inform their superiors of their experience and to consult them on problems. Similarly, more and better lateral communication among advisors at the same level would add to their knowledge and resourcefulness.
- o Successive advisors to a single counterpart, having no record of past experience, face a long exploratory period in the advisory role. They are apt to repeat their predecessors' mistakes both in the psychological approach to the counterpart and in specific suggestions that may already have proved impracticable.
- o New advisors departing from the United States, even after they know their assignments, often are not taught the requirements of their jobs. Particularly are they unprepared for the all-important function of planning for and participating in civic action programs.

Solutions to the problems here outlined could be approached, broadly speaking, through a more careful selection of personnel; improvements in their training; and a variety of administrative changes. Following are the author's main recommendations under these three categories. They are based on a combination of personal observation (both during his recent inquiry and in the course of earlier stays in Vietnam) and the suggestions most frequently advanced by the advisors themselves.

SELECTION CRITERIA

- o To ensure strong motivation for the task, it would be well to place advisory service on a voluntary basis if at all possible.
- o Whether service is compulsory or voluntary, a careful screening process should be devised to test a candidate's suitability from the point of view of (a) professional equipment; (b) adaptability to foreign cultures; (c) a temperamental disposition, especially in the case of prospective field advisors, to share dangers, hardships, exotic food, and primitive shelter with members of an oriental civilization; (d) existing linguistic skills or the ability to acquire languages easily; (e) the possibility of "culture fatigue" in a man who, though otherwise qualified, has had too many overseas assignments and is not keen on another.

DESIRABLE EMPHASES IN THE TRAINING OF ADVISORS

- o Language being the single most important factor in breaking down cultural barriers, language training far more intensive than at present should be given to all field advisors. Those in the higher echelons, with less need for direct daily contact with their counterparts, would be adequately served by a briefer course of instruction in the general structure and conceptualization of the Vietnamese language and in the proper use of interpreters. Those in whom screening tests reveal unusual linguistic ability should also be given all the

language training available, whether or not their daily task makes it imperative.

o In preparing personnel for cultural hurdles they will have either to remove or to bypass, training programs must insist on the importance of respecting the Vietnamese cultural identity wherever it does not go against the interest of the counterinsurgent effort, and must stress the patterns that are most strikingly different from ours: the preference for indirectness that is evident in the language itself and in the general style of discourse; the more relaxed and fatalistic attitude toward time; the importance of tradition and ritual, including the cult of the ancestors; a relative indifference to human beings not part of one's kinfolk and intimate environment; the importance of taboos; native attitudes toward health and hygiene, with special attention to folk-medical beliefs; and the most common criteria of the good life.

o To accomplish this kind of indoctrination, students in predeployment courses ought to have some instruction in the history, economics, government, sociology, ethnic composition, major religious sects, and general customs of the country as well as on the special characteristics of the region to which they are being assigned.

o American distrust of Vietnamese food being very common, and at times a barrier to good feeling and camaraderie between advisor and counterpart, training programs should attempt to break down the prejudice rather than reinforce it, and stress the excellence of the native food as well as the many examples of Americans who have learned to eat it without ill effects.

o In addition to acquainting students with the official structure of the Vietnamese military, predeployment instruction should contain important information on the informal, unwritten aspects of the system, its "real workings," as advisors call it. These would include, for example, the strong heritage of French military thinking among officers and their preference for French tactics and techniques; the decision-making mechanisms within the army; the status and prerogatives of the different military ranks; the principle of reward and punishment that governs promotions and hence conduct in the military; and a definition of a given counterpart's precise role within the hierarchy, with emphasis on the limits it imposes on his autonomy.

o Far greater attention than heretofore needs to be given to all facets of civic action. Prospective advisors must be impressed with the importance of civic action in the counterinsurgent effort; they must understand the principles governing it in order to develop specific plans and approaches for collaborating with local populations.

Among the prerequisites for informed civic action planning are, above all, an awareness of specific local needs and wishes (which may be quite different from what American standards would dictate and can be acquired only through familiarity with the region and consultation with the people and its leaders), and a number of local or economic variables that might make an otherwise attractive innovation undesirable (e.g., if it were to replace manpower with machines and thus create a form of technological

unemployment; if materials used created a problem for indigenous industry; or if its use ran afoul of religious taboos or folk superstition).

o In making their recommendations, advisors must learn to weigh the merits of an immediate objective against any undesirable side effects it might have. By successfully exploiting a temporary advantage, for instance, an advisor could permanently alienate a counterpart and thus lose his cooperation in more important ventures.

o Instead of the current practice of having recent advisors who have returned to the United States address prospective advisors at predeployment sites in this country (after their experience has lost some of its immediacy and before the outgoing advisors know their specific assignments), it is recommended that this kind of briefing take place in small three-day "exit-entrance seminars" in South Vietnam, and that the outgoing speaker address himself chiefly to new recruits who will work at his own advisory level -- battalion, Special Forces, sector, etc. -- and in a comparable capacity. Not only will his memory be fresh and accurate, but the particular information he has to impart will have more relevance and practical value to an audience so selected.

o Language and cultural training centers, similar to those that some missionary societies have found useful, might be set up as a pilot project within South Vietnam. In them, carefully selected personnel would live and study for several months in a community away from Saigon and without contact with other Americans, the instruction to be supplemented by frequent field trips to different regions of Vietnam.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS

The following suggestions are designed to maximize the effectiveness of the advisor and create the best possible conditions in which to use his special skills to full advantage:

- o Every effort should be made to reduce bureaucratic demands on the advisor, especially paper work, to the minimum necessary.
- o Because it takes several months for an advisor to work effectively with his counterpart, the possibility of extending the length of tours should be studied; the present six months for battalion and Special Forces advisors might well be stretched to nine months.
- o Professional equality and other bases for mutual respect being of great importance in advisor/counterpart relations, both rank and military occupational specialty ought to be matched wherever possible.
- o The team concept as reflected heretofore in the organization of the Special Forces A Teams must not be abandoned, as has been proposed, in favor of rotation of team members. Its proven advantages -- strong esprit de corps, mutual dependability among team members, and the high performance that comes of long group drill and firm morale -- far outweigh such dangers as the development of an inbred mentality or collective demoralization through one or two disaffected members. These dangers, moreover, can be controlled by a capable team leader.

o Vertical communication within the American echelons should be encouraged with the aid of better opportunities through which advisors can maintain rapport with their superiors by reporting to them and airing their problems as needed.

o Lateral communication would be greatly enhanced by the organization of periodic group sessions of advisors at the same level, preferably attended also by several representatives from higher echelons, in which experiences could be exchanged and common difficulties discussed and solved. The "group-process" technique employed experimentally and successfully by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in several series of meetings (designed primarily for sector advisors but attended also by a number of battalion and Special Forces advisors) may be a useful model here. Taping the sessions has the advantage of providing a permanent record and giving the participants great freedom of expression, as their voices will not be identifiable.

o Every outgoing advisor should be asked to draft, for the use of his successor, a brief, informal profile of his counterpart and a record of advice already given and either accepted or rejected. A new advisor who is prepared for the personality of his counterpart, his idiosyncrasies and his receptivity to advice, and who knows what advice has already been tried, will be spared much of the time-wasting trial-and-error phase of the uninitiated.

o On the basis of a careful survey, based at least in part on opinions of individual advisors, it may be useful to explore the wisdom of terminating some advisory functions and reducing others. Counterparts who have long benefited from the help of American advisors may turn out to have mastered their tasks or to need only sporadic assistance on some aspects of it, which conceivably could be supplied from an advisory pool upon request.

o In contemplating an administrative change such as the termination of the advisory function wherever a counterpart has been saturated with advice, U.S. planners must keep in mind that the field advisor also fulfills the invaluable function of an American observer on the scene who reports to headquarters on the progress of the war.

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I. AIMS AND SOURCES

Since the United States is engaged in South Vietnam in an advisory capacity, the term "advisor" has tended to be applied loosely to almost anyone among the American personnel stationed in that country. In the present study, however, we are concerned only with members of the American military for whom an opposite number has been designated (or is supposed to be designated) by the Vietnamese authorities, and whose chief task it is to advise the Vietnamese "counterpart" in the execution of his function. Our discussion thus includes the not infrequent cases in which for one reason or another the Vietnamese have failed to assign a counterpart to an American advisor, as well as instances where advisor and counterpart never see each other and a professional or personal relationship therefore cannot be said to exist. The number of advisors as here defined is about 30 per cent of the approximately 22,000 American military personnel now in Vietnam.

For reasons that the author will attempt to explore, there are great variations in the extent to which advisors and counterparts understand each other's personalities, motives, and problems, and therefore in the degree to which the Americans are successful in exercising their advisory function. The purpose of this study is to suggest ways in which the relationship could be improved, so that Vietnamese military authorities would be more likely than they are at present to understand, accept, and act upon American advice.

The author's analysis of advisor-counterpart relations and his suggestions for possible improvements are based largely on interviews he conducted with about 320 U.S. advisors in Vietnam over a ten-month period in 1964. His talks were spread over some seventy locations, ranging from Saigon headquarters to small team sites in the countryside, and from the 17th Parallel in the north to Panjang Island in the south. About two-thirds of the interviews were on an informal individual basis; the rest took place in group discussions.¹ In a few cases the writer had occasion to make his observations under battle conditions. (A large proportion of his detailed notes were burned during the Viet Cong attack on Nam Dong in July 1964 and had to be reconstructed from memory.) Most of the work took place in a more peaceful environment.

Under the terms of reference of this inquiry, the writer was not authorized to question Vietnamese personnel directly about their views and experiences of advisor-counterpart relations. However, his fluent knowledge of

¹The group discussions were organized by staff members of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR). Typically, about twenty-five U.S. military advisors would meet in an initial three-day session, followed by three one-day sessions, for an exchange of views and experiences and a discussion of common problems. Participants in the series of meetings so conducted included every sector advisor of every corps area, three senior advisors to the commanding officers in I, II, and IV Corps, a number of senior division advisors, and some battalion advisors.

the Vietnamese language enabled him to obtain a considerable amount of relevant information indirectly, through informal conversations on other subjects with Vietnamese and montagnard officers, men, and civilians. He has also drawn on his previous work on Vietnam, which extends over a period of ten years, four of these spent in the country itself.

As background for the inquiry, the writer visited several of the military schools that are training advisory personnel in the United States, examined those parts of the curricula that have a bearing on advisor-counterpart relations, and talked with a number of the instructors, both military and civilian. In addition, W. P. Davison prepared a brief survey of the published literature bearing on the advisory function and of the experiences of civilian agencies in selecting and training personnel for overseas duty. (This survey is included here as Appendix B.)

Throughout his investigations, the author received generous assistance and hospitality from U.S. personnel in Washington, Saigon, and the Vietnamese countryside. He was impressed by the ability of some of the Americans to understand the Vietnamese and establish a good working relationship with them, especially when one considers how short the training period and the tour of duty itself tend to be for most U.S. personnel in Vietnam. The suggestions made in this report draw heavily on the experience of those Americans who have been successful in communicating with the Vietnamese and motivating them to adopt improved techniques in both military situations and civic action.

II. THE VARIETY OF ADVISORY ROLES

It is impossible to give a single definition for the advisory role of Americans in Vietnam. Many types of advisors are required, and new advisory positions are constantly being added, each of which involves new and different problems. A brief survey of the principal categories of advisors and their assigned duties is given in Appendix A. Though the conditions under which they work may differ, American personnel in all these categories are faced with the basic task of developing a good relationship with their counterparts.

In most instances the amount of time that an advisor and his counterpart spend together is an important factor in determining whether they can reach a satisfactory working relationship and establish a personal rapport. The advisor's level in the hierarchy and his specific assignment determine to a large extent the kind and the extent of his contact with the counterpart. Generally speaking, the advisory roles of those low in the chain of command and those directly involved in counterinsurgent operations demand that advisors spend a great deal of time, and work very closely, with counterparts, for their task is primarily to "advise." By contrast, those higher in the chain of command have additional responsibilities to the American side of the counterinsurgency effort and can devote only part of their time to being advisors. Their contact with counterparts, therefore, is less frequent and intimate, and they usually find it more difficult to develop close rapport with the Vietnamese.

One example of the first category is the battalion advisor, who is bound to have a great deal of contact with his counterpart, the battalion commander. Not only do they plan operations together, but they jointly accompany the unit in the field for long periods at a time, sharing bivouac and food as well as rigors and dangers. It is a situation conducive to developing good rapport. As one battalion advisor put it, "Getting shot at together is the best way to develop close feelings."

River Force advisors also accompany their counterparts on operations, and Sea Force advisors share quarters and food with their counterparts when on sea duty. Similarly, the Junk Fleet advisors spend considerable time with the Vietnamese personnel, living near the bases or on the junks themselves. Like the battalion advisors, these Navy advisors sometimes share combat experience with their counterparts.²

Advisors at the sector level likewise have to spend much time working closely with counterparts. The senior sector advisor, for example, shares a variety of responsibilities with the province chief, who nowadays is invariably a military official. Both must respond to constant demands concerning the Regional as well as the Popular Forces. Moreover, together with the USOM province representative they form the Joint Province Committee, which is responsible for all civic action within its area, and this common membership requires cooperation and daily

²For details on various branches of the Vietnamese military and their subdivisions (including River Force, Sea Force, Junk Fleet, Special Forces, and Strike Force), and on the position of the advisor in each, see Appendix A, pp. 55-66.

communication. (The role of the subsector advisor, only recently created, is likely to involve a similar working relationship with the district chief.) A common complaint of sector advisors is that their ever-increasing administrative responsibilities, as well as growing demands from Saigon for reports and data of various kinds, prevent them from seeing as much of their counterparts as they should.

The A Teams of the American and the Vietnamese Special Forces, which operate at the village level and in areas remote from the capital,³ must collaborate in organizing the locally recruited Strike Force, establishing new posts, maintaining existing ones, and planning and conducting military operations. A close working relationship between the teams therefore is essential; the American A Team leader, in particular, must have daily contact with the Vietnamese camp commander, and good rapport between them is a prerequisite for the successful operation of a camp.

Regimental advisors and division advisors, though higher in the chain of command, continue to be relatively near the operational end of the spectrum. Hence they have frequent contact with counterparts in the planning of operations, and often accompany them on visits to the field. Corps level advisors, on the other hand, are further removed from operations and, in addition, have numerous responsibilities associated with American personnel in the corps. Their dual functions put them in the category of part-time advisors. This is true also of

³ See Appendix A for the organization of the Special Forces and the functions of the A, B, and C Teams.

Navy, Marine, and Air Force personnel at this level, and applies equally to advisors of the Special Forces B Teams.

At the MAC-V (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) headquarters, the advisors' is likewise a part-time function, with only periodic and sometimes infrequent contact with the Vietnamese opposites. Many Americans at this level report seeing their counterparts only at conferences, by special appointment, or at official gatherings. This results in formal, highly structured relationships, with little possibility of real rapport between Americans and Vietnamese.

The influx of U.S. military personnel has greatly added to the administrative responsibilities of advisors at nearly all levels, affecting the amount of time they can spend with their counterparts, sometimes to the point of absorbing it entirely. One U.S. general complained that he had not seen his opposite number in several months as a result of the added demands caused by the American buildup. At battalion level, the increase in the advisory personnel creates new tasks for the senior battalion advisor; at sector level, the addition of subsector advisors means that the sector advisor must concern himself with problems of communications, logistics, and security. And a 50 per cent increase in personnel has forced the U.S. Special Forces to create new headquarters, with a C Team and several B Teams, in each corps area.

III. BARRIERS TO COOPERATION

In order to establish satisfactory working relationships with their counterparts, American advisors at all levels need more than time and opportunity; they have to overcome a number of cultural barriers that initially make it difficult for them and the Vietnamese to understand each other. The first step toward overcoming these barriers is for American personnel to recognize that they exist, and that characteristics that may seem alien and irritating to Americans are a normal aspect of the Vietnamese personality. In general, the advisors who are outstandingly successful in working with their counterparts are those who learn to live with Vietnamese cultural and behavioral patterns and make no effort to change them unless they interfere directly with military operations.

In the following we shall try to analyze the cultural differences that are mentioned most frequently by advisors as causing difficulties in cooperation. In the author's view these also are the most important.

1. DIFFERENT STYLES OF COMMUNICATION

In spite of the fact that the Vietnamese have long had experience in dealing with foreigners, and even though most of the U.S. military advisors in Vietnam have previously served overseas, many of them in non-Western countries, inadequate communication continues to be the great cause of difficulties in their relations. Cultural differences are reflected in behavior, values, and attitudes, and are manifested in a wide variety of ways. A very general complaint of advisors concerns the frustration

brought on by their having to deal with what they call the "oriental mentality" of their counterparts. This term encompasses a range of Vietnamese ways that they do not understand. Some of those whom the author interviewed, including four advisors of Japanese ancestry, expressed the opinion that it was something unfathomable for the Westerner, and that it would always be a barrier to communication. When they elaborate on this problem and on their own experiences, advisors commonly cite examples of what they interpret as deviousness or lack of honesty in their counterparts. Some used the expression "sneaky Petes," and one intelligence advisor at corps level described his counterpart as "putting on the inscrutable mask" every time he was asked a direct question.

Most of these are cases where the Americans, who tend to put a high value on frankness, fail to understand the Vietnamese preference for indirectness. The latter tendency is reflected very strongly in the language and verbal style of the Vietnamese, who prefer veiled implication to direct statement, inference to direct question. In some instances, the seeming lack of candor will be merely reluctance on the part of a Vietnamese to admit that he does not understand a particular statement or idea or that he has made a mistake. In many of the specific situations that advisors cited, for example, the counterpart was being called upon to respond immediately concerning a course of action recommended by his advisor, and his response was vague and equivocal, suggesting that he may not have considered the advice suitable to the occasion and was too polite or embarrassed to say so, or,

simply, that he had not understood it. A number of the sector advisors who had received such unsatisfactory responses from their counterparts in connection with the pacification plans that were being implemented in their provinces suspected at first that this hesitation was due to objections to the plans which the Vietnamese were reluctant to voice. On discussing the problem among themselves, however, they concluded that, more likely, their counterparts had not understood the plans and were unwilling to admit it.

2. THE VIETNAMESE "TIMETABLE"

Another common cause of frustration for the Americans is that the Vietnamese seem to lack a sense of urgency, and do not display any enthusiasm for their tasks or even a desire to "get things done." Thus, they continue to take siestas (sometimes even during operations), insist on taking Sundays off, and observe their holidays. (At least one new national holiday was proclaimed in 1964.) The American personnel interviewed who expressed their irritation at this lethargy had various theories to explain it. Many attributed it to fatalism, an aspect of the "oriental mentality" that produces apathy. Others thought it was due to the fact that the Vietnamese have been at war so long. (As one battalion advisor put it, "Hell, we come out here fresh, all gung ho to fight the war, and then we find they aren't that eager. They have been at it long before we came, and they'll be fighting long after we leave.") A small group of advisors at corps level suspected that some of the Vietnamese officers

were in no hurry to end the war because "they never had it so good." And a few equated their counterparts' lack of motivation with laziness, which in turn they blamed on an inadequate diet.

3. ATTITUDES TOWARD PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The wisdom and economy of prevention, as manifested in preventive medicine and preventive maintenance, is an unfamiliar concept in Vietnam. The ordinary Vietnamese believes that so long as a thing works it is in good condition, that there is nothing anyone can do to ensure its continuing to work, and that when it stops it must be replaced. This attitude causes problems for advisors at all levels, from those in the field to personnel at corps level who are concerned with logistics. Those interviewed complained that the Vietnamese were constantly requesting replacements for equipment that had deteriorated solely through lack of maintenance, and that attempts to persuade a counterpart to educate and discipline his men in this regard usually resulted only in strained relations. Most of them interpreted this indifference to prevention as wanton wastefulness; several advisors thought it grew out of the conviction that the rich Americans would always replace equipment as requested.

4. HYGIENE

Social practices diverge sharply in matters of hygiene, to the distaste of many Americans. Toilet training among the Vietnamese is very casual; in city or country, children may relieve themselves almost

anywhere but in the house, and most adults therefore are similarly relaxed in their habits. For Americans, the use of the latrine is one of the basic tenets of personal and group hygiene. In Special Forces A Teams and in training camps for other paramilitary groups, the U.S. advisors always recommend the construction of latrines as necessary to camp sanitation, but they encounter problems in getting the Vietnamese troops to use them, as well as in persuading the camp commanders to resort to disciplinary measures when they don't. One American A Team leader in I Corps, for example, recalled his sense of frustration as he quoted his Vietnamese counterpart who, in answer to repeated complaints that the troops were using the available latrines only part of the time, had said with some annoyance: "What difference does it make? They have the whole jungle to use."

The American concern over hygiene extends to food preparation, and wariness about native food creates another barrier in the relations of advisor and counterpart. Warnings concerning diseases that may be contracted through the consumption of local food and water are included in the orientation given to all advisors shortly after they arrive in Vietnam, and one widely-used manual about the country makes only scant mention of the good quality of its cuisine. Most advisors are reluctant, and many are actually afraid, to eat Vietnamese food, particularly nuoc mam, the fish sauce served as a condiment with all Vietnamese meals.⁴ Knowing this, many

⁴In one orientation program, American personnel were given a hypothetical situation and asked to act out the

Vietnamese counterparts are hesitant about inviting their advisors to dinner lest both sides be embarrassed by the Americans' distrust of Vietnamese food, and thus forego a good opportunity for improving personal relations. This was confirmed to the writer by a number of sector, battalion, regimental, Sea Force, and Junk Fleet advisors who had learned to eat with their counterparts and had found that it helped create a closer relationship. It should be noted that advisors who frequently ate Vietnamese food (some of them had done so exclusively for periods of weeks and even months) recalled very few occasions when this had made them ill.

5. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The cultural distance between the two nations is evident in differing attitudes toward members of the larger society. Whereas the Western concept of charity is based on the assumption of one's responsibility to other human beings in general, the Vietnamese tend to feel responsible only toward those with whom they have close personal relations, such as kinfolk and intimate friends, and do not identify themselves with the problems of people whom they do not know. As a result, they can remain quite indifferent to the needs of their wounded and at the same time be almost obsessed with their obligation to provide properly for the dead, as tradition demands.

role of an advisor who gets ill during a Vietnamese dinner given by his counterpart. It is questionable whether training programs should be used to reinforce a stereotype such as this, which has at most only a slight basis in fact.

6. DIFFERING MILITARY PRACTICES

The gap between the two cultures is reflected also in the differences, both social and spiritual, between the Vietnamese armed forces and the U.S. advisory organization. Not only are the two systems differently structured, but roles and relationships within the structures vary considerably, as does also, for example, the attitude toward reward and punishment.

In the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), French influence continues to be strong. All members of the high command at the Joint General Staff (JGS) are French-trained. Some of them are graduates of St. Cyr, and most of the officers served in the French army during the Indochina War. They tend to cling to the French concepts, techniques, and tactics, and advisors at all levels, when trying to introduce changes, face the problem of their counterparts' deeply-rooted military ideas and habits.

Moreover, the advisor must learn to recognize and evaluate the relative role of his counterpart in the Vietnamese military's social structure, his freedom of action and of expression, before he can develop a useful working relationship with him. Relations between subordinates and superordinates are quite different in the two military establishments. Generally speaking, the U.S. advisor is much freer to approach his immediate superior with suggestions than is the counterpart, and he is able to make decisions not only in field tactics and the like but also in the planning of such things as civic action programs. The Vietnamese, having to seek approval from

above on important moves, therefore are often reluctant or slow to respond to situations demanding quick action. Battalion advisors and Special Forces advisors told the author of occasions during operations when they had had an opportunity to contact the Viet Cong but the counterparts refused to move until they had the permission of their superior officers. In one such instance, the regimental commander was taking his siesta and could not be disturbed. By the time his approval had been secured, the Viet Cong had evacuated their position and vanished. Sector advisors encounter a similar situation in the Joint Province Committee, where the province chief's inability to approve new projects or the allocation of funds without authorization of his superiors delays many of the programs.

Another aspect of the Vietnamese military system that has considerable bearing on the response of counterparts is the principle of rewards and punishments. Under the Diem regime there were strong sanctions against the commander who suffered casualties, and the effects of this policy continue to make themselves felt. Battalion and regimental advisors told the author that their counterparts still feared punishment in jail if they lost any troops; moreover, because the number of weapons lost had become an indicator of the war's progress, the Vietnamese tended to be overcautious in the use of automatic weapons and sometimes left them behind at the post to avoid risking their loss. Sector advisors encounter the same reason for timidity among the province chiefs, particularly in financial matters. The Vietnamese counterpart, in weighing an advisor's suggestion, assumes that the risks are

greater for him than for the American, and the consequences of a mistake more painful. One of them was quoted as saying, "If we do anything wrong, you'll be reprimanded, but I'll go to jail."

Field advisors who have sufficient rapport with their counterparts to be in their confidence report that lack of rewards is another factor in the reluctance to go out on operations. Many of the Vietnamese field officers have become demoralized by the fact that they have held the same rank for eight to twelve years while most of their colleagues in Saigon or at Corps are being promoted rapidly. They invariably attribute the promotions to favoritism rather than merit, and assume that their own actions, however meritorious, will not be similarly recognized. As the advisors point out, this leaves the counterpart in the field with little incentive to risk his life in combat.

The involvement of their military in political affairs inhibits the Vietnamese counterparts in a similar way. Upsets in the central government invariably result in changes in the military commands, and these set off a chain reaction that reaches down to all levels of the armed forces. (Although all the corps are affected, the most drastic changes seem to occur in III Corps, undoubtedly because of its proximity to Saigon.) Advisors report that, whenever a political upheaval begins, their counterparts become completely inactive and adopt a "wait and see" attitude. In a period of frequent political change at the top, as in the past year, there will be a succession of personnel changes within the military, often the expression of political favoritism. Advisors then not only

have to adjust themselves to a series of new counterparts, but, they point out, those appointed through political favor frequently are not qualified for their positions.

7. LOCAL PREJUDICES

In addition to the cultural gap between the Vietnamese counterpart and his Western advisor, there are conflict situations among the various groups within Vietnam that can affect their relationship. The most general and serious is the hostility between the Vietnamese, who inhabit the lowlands, and the montagnards, or upland people, which puts a strain on relations between the U.S. and Vietnamese Special Forces. After a long history of discord between the two groups, the struggle has become acute in the past decade, with uprisings by the montagnards in 1958 and again in September 1964. In the A Team sites in the highlands, montagnards constitute most of the Strike Force, while the Special Forces that recruit and control them are, with rare exceptions, Vietnamese.

Most of the American Special Forces advisors resent the attitude of the Vietnamese toward the montagnards and what they consider their mistreatment of the Strike Force. The author was told of numerous examples: The few Vietnamese in the Strike Force were served before the montagnards. Some Vietnamese medics refused to touch any montagnards, and the latter complained to the advisors that, when they were hospitalized, the Vietnamese staff neglected them and even charged them for drinking water. In one camp the Vietnamese commander insisted that a montagnard always be point man on patrols; he claimed that the bullets

bounced off the mountain people, whereas they penetrated such more highly developed species as the Vietnamese and Americans. In another camp, where the camp commander, a captain, was a montagnard, the Vietnamese Special Forces enlisted men ordered him about and openly belittled him.

By and large, the montagnards have good relations with the advisors, and, when difficulties arise with the Vietnamese, they look to the Americans for support and arbitration (as they did during the 1964 uprising). In such a situation the advisor has to know the situation and both parties well enough to be able to effect a solution without offending either side.

8. ASCERTAINING LOCAL NEEDS

Sector advisors all agree that a major difficulty in civic action programs, which are conducted so as to improve the welfare of the local population and gain their support for the government's cause, is to determine the needs and desires of the people. The mistaken assumption that the Vietnamese or the montagnards want the same things as Americans has led to some useless projects, and has caused advisors much frustration as well as friction with counterparts and local leaders. Thus, the pigsties constructed for a montagnard group as part of a Special Forces civic action program went unused; when asked why, the villagers explained that there was no reason to pen the pigs since "they had always run around loose." In a similar case, Vietnamese peasants received wheat under an agricultural aid program; they fed it to

their pigs, because wheat was not one of their staples. Medical programs often encounter difficulties because many Western medical concepts are incompatible with folk medical beliefs. Taboos must also be considered. One sector advisor, for example, was puzzled when members of a montagnard group did not use tin roofing for its intended purpose; their reason was that "you can't make babies under tin roofs."

9. LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

Although it is possible to gain rapport with a counterpart without speaking his language, advisors have found even a little knowledge of Vietnamese an immeasurable aid in understanding the counterpart and his cultural milieu. It is difficult to appreciate the local value system without some acquaintance with the local language.

An ever-growing number of Vietnamese, particularly among officers, have been learning English, and those who have spent time in the United States speak English well. Also, more and more advisors are receiving instruction in Vietnamese prior to their assignment, but this does not enable them to perform the advisory role without the assistance of an interpreter. With the exception of those who studied Vietnamese at Monterey, advisors whom the author talked to complained that their instruction had been too brief and cursory, and usually had formed only one part of a demanding training schedule. They generally agreed, however, that even a little language study had given them added insights into the host society, and that they learned something about the Vietnamese people through their association with the language instructor.

The language problem is aggravated by the difficulty of finding competent interpreters, as the demand for them has long since outstripped the supply. Having to settle for whatever interpreters they can get, many advisors have trouble in communicating through them. They complain that often the interpreter does not understand what is being said in English or does not know how to translate from the Vietnamese. Some Americans suspect that interpreters frequently express their own opinions instead of translating those of the counterpart.

10. MUTUAL ESTIMATES OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Respect for each other's professional military competence is essential to a good working relationship and rapport between advisor and counterpart. Many advisors report that the first thing a counterpart wants to know is the extent of their training and experience, particularly combat experience; he wants to be sure that his advisor is likely to understand the kind of war that is being fought in Vietnam. (This is becoming more of a problem, as there are now relatively few World War II and Korean War combat personnel who are still available to act as advisors to ARVN or paramilitary field units.)

By the same token, the Vietnamese counterpart's performance as a soldier affects his relationship with the advisor. Frequently, the training he has received determines how much respect he can command from Americans. ARVN paratroop units, for example, are among the elite of the armed forces. Their officers are well trained, and they have a good deal of esprit de corps. Airborne

advisors tend to speak highly of their counterparts, of whose competence in combat they will cite numerous examples. They take pride in the paratroopers and are happy to be associated with them. Much the same is true of the ARVN Ranger units and their advisors. Americans also have high regard for the "junkies," or Junk Fleet personnel, even though the Junk Fleet does not enjoy the reputation of being an elite body. Here it is a matter of an underdog organization which presents a challenge to advisors and counterparts alike, all of whom work for the goal of attaining the status and recognition that they believe the Junk Fleet deserves.

In the Special Forces, on the other hand, lack of respect hampers relations between advisors and counterparts. The U.S. Special Forces are an elite group of highly trained personnel with a strong pride and sense of identity. The Vietnamese Special Forces have never been anything like this. As some advisors put it, recalling their use during the Ngo Dinh Diem period, "they were organized as a palace guard." They are not specially selected or trained, and their teams are organized haphazardly. Advisors complain that Special Forces officers in the A Team posts view their assignment as a form of banishment and consequently lack interest in their work, and that the Vietnamese teams are full of enlisted men who are not really qualified in their specializations; they are said to include poorly trained medics and weapons sergeants who are unable to strip weapons. Inevitably, the disparity between the Vietnamese and the American Special Forces tends to impair both personal and working relations.

IV. BRIDGING THE CULTURAL GAP

Most advisors experience difficulties that are due to these barriers to cooperation, but only a minority among them recognize the cause of these problems and attempt to resolve them by cutting across the cultural gap. Advisors who typically are successful in establishing good working relationships with their counterparts are those who have made the effort to learn something about the Vietnamese, their way of life, and at least a little of their language. Once they begin to understand the social environment and come to feel at ease in it, they are prepared to respect, even if they cannot share, the value system of their counterparts and the behavior that follows from it, and they are thus able to achieve the needed rapport. As a result, the working relationship improves, and the advisor finds himself learning how to motivate his counterpart to accept and act on advice.

The experience of one Junk Fleet advisor whom the author interviewed is illustrative of the enormous difficulties that attend some of the advisory jobs as well as of the extent to which dedication and initiative on the part of the Americans can transcend these problems. The advisor, on arriving with his assistant at an isolated Junk Base, faced a situation that many would have found hopeless. He spoke no Vietnamese, and Saigon had misinformed him about the situation. To begin with, there were far fewer junks and personnel than he had been told there would be. To make matters worse, the sailors had no barracks, uniforms, or blankets. Most of them slept on the beach; those with dependents were crammed into

thatched huts. Their pay was chronically late, and they were totally without medical attention. Many already had deserted. The counterpart, who was the base commander, was demoralized. He was convinced that the paramilitary Junk Fleet, which then was newly organized, was being neglected because the Vietnamese Navy considered it a mistake and had decided to ignore it.

The advisor, together with his assistant, settled in a small thatched house, ate Vietnamese food exclusively, and began to learn the language and to familiarize himself with the surroundings. In a variety of ways, he set about obtaining the needed materials. U.S. Navy channels in Saigon sent him black cotton material for uniforms, and Navy doctors brought medicine to the base and spent their free time treating the ill. The advisor also appealed to several private sources in the United States and in response received funds from church groups, blankets from weaving mills, and candy and movie films for the dependents. The dai uy (captain) and his assistant were soon welcomed in every household, and they shared many meals with the base commander.

Having won the confidence of the commander, the advisor then was able to convince him that the best way to gain the attention of the Vietnamese Navy headquarters was to demonstrate the potential of the Junk Fleet by conducting a series of operations along the coast. Together they planned the operations and accompanied the junks. The success of the mission drew praise from the U.S. and Vietnamese high commands, and it marked the turning point for the Junk Fleet, which now is being integrated into the regular Navy.

In discussing this experience, the American advisor attributed his success to the good rapport he had achieved with his counterpart. As he put it, "If he [the counterpart] had not appreciated my genuine interest in them and their difficulties as shown in my sharing their life and its problems, he wouldn't have listened to me."

There are many advisors, however, who are not prepared to try to understand this or any other foreign society. For them, Vietnam is just another country in which they are compelled to spend an overseas tour. They do not expect to learn anything useful from the experience, and with time tend to become more alienated from their surroundings rather than less so. It is easy enough for them to withdraw into an American environment and seek only the company of compatriots. They count the days remaining in the tour, scrupulously marking them off on the calendar. Throughout, they and their counterparts remain strangers.

An advisor at one of the corps headquarters was typical of this group, with its intransigent, unsympathetic attitude toward the Vietnamese mentality and customs. He advocated "using the stick" with the Vietnamese in order to get them to do things "our way." (He recalled with disgust that, when he arrived in Saigon the first things he noticed were "the traffic mess" and some young men urinating against the wall of a building on a main street.) Except for official dealings with his counterpart, his contacts with Vietnamese society were few. His quarters, a private room with a refrigerator, were in the advisor's compound, he had his meals in the

mess, and a vehicle was provided to take him to corps headquarters, where the U.S. advisors occupied offices close to their counterparts.

Though at first impressed by his counterpart's experience, he soon found him to be "lazy, sour, and dirty"; his uniform usually rumpled, he slouched and showed little interest in his job. The advisor regarded him as no different from the other Vietnamese, whose persistence in observing the lunar New Year and other holidays and taking time for a daily siesta annoyed him. He also thought the government at fault for not mobilizing everyone, "including those crooked taxi drivers and cyclo drivers."

In the end, he concluded that the Vietnamese simply lacked discipline, and that he might as well give up trying to do anything with them: "I said to hell with them. I put in my time, then went back to the room to play my tape recorder and write letters." Several weeks before his departure, however, the advisor's opinions were shaken when, after a political reshuffle in Saigon, he noted a change in his counterpart, who suddenly "began to look alive and act like a soldier." The Vietnamese then confided to him that he had previously been in political disfavor and afraid of being jailed, but that with the new regime he was now hoping for a promotion.

As these examples suggest, overcoming barriers to cooperation is a highly individual matter, and the successful advisor is one who is able to analyze a situation correctly and adjust his behavior accordingly. It would obviously be impossible to anticipate all possible

situations and responses to them. Yet past experience has shown certain techniques to be widely applicable. For example, advisors who had come to appreciate Vietnamese indirectness resorted to indirect approaches as the best way to get their counterparts to accept advice. One advisor said: "I found it was better to use the expression, 'Wouldn't it be a good idea if someone did . . . ?' rather than, 'You should'" Others found demonstration an effective indirect means of getting across their ideas. This was borne out at several Special Forces A Team sites, where the Vietnamese watched the Americans construct their GI shower and followed their example. Health measures, including the use of window screening, improved kitchen facilities, and proper waste disposal, were introduced by the same means. And several Special Forces medics reported that their Vietnamese counterparts, though they did not come to ask advice, would visit the dispensary on some pretext and linger there, all the while observing techniques or physical arrangements which they would then imitate.

In seeking to induce their counterparts to accept their recommendations, advisors must be able to see beyond the immediate and narrow objective, to make sure that its realization will not entail undesirable developments or endanger future efforts. Sometimes, a temporary situation will offer tempting leverage for motivating a counterpart, but, if exploited, could prejudice the long-term relationship. One such case was reported by a Navy advisor. He had had two counterparts, who were in competition and disliked each other, and had been able

to get things done by playing one off against the other, rather than winning the friendship and trust of one or both. He lost his leverage, however, when one of the counterparts was transferred and his relationship with the other remained poor. The "goodies" approach, with which some advisors ingratiate themselves by making purchases at the U.S. PX or obtaining helicopters or vehicles and other amenities for the counterparts' personal comfort, has its own dangers. Though it may give the advisor useful leverage on occasion, it also may cause the counterpart to develop what is best described as a "mendicant" mentality. Once this attitude has become entrenched, the advisor is dependent on bribes if he is to retain any influence.

No specific set of rules can be written for bridging the cultural gap and overcoming the barriers to cooperation that arise in the highly diverse relationships between U.S. advisors and their Vietnamese counterparts.* The effectiveness of the advisory group as a whole could be substantially increased, however, through three basic endeavors: improving the selection of U.S. advisors; devising training programs that will make advisors sensitive to a variety of possible situations; and providing an administrative setting that will allow individual advisors to use their skills to best advantage. The remainder of this paper will deal in turn with the problems of selection, training, and administration.

*The author hopes to prepare a paper which deals in greater detail with problems and experiences in bridging the cultural gap.

V. SELECTING ADVISORY PERSONNEL

Professional competence in his specialty is the most important qualification for an advisor. By itself, however, it is not enough. Even an expert advisor cannot motivate his counterpart to act on his advice unless he is highly motivated himself. Furthermore, the skills necessary for working with foreign nationals can be taught only partially. Training can heighten motivation and sharpen skills, but only if the motivation and skills are there to begin with. And the most successful advisors tend to be those whom life experience and personality have qualified for the role. Throughout Vietnam, the men who have established outstandingly good working relationships with their counterparts and have overcome the cultural barriers to cooperation have been what could be called "natural" advisors. This means that they like their work and have the right personality for it.

To ensure a high degree of motivation on the part of American personnel it would be well if, insofar as possible, duty in Vietnam were placed on a voluntary basis. Moreover, within the ranks of such volunteers, those who showed the greatest potential for the advisory role should be selected for assignments that involved close working relationships with counterparts, while those with high motivation but lower crosscultural skill or background should be assigned to jobs involving fewer contacts with the Vietnamese.

A careful screening process would eliminate those, even among volunteers, whose motivation was low or who were basically incapable of adapting themselves to another

culture. It would also permit spotting some (and they are numerous among advisors today) who, though well qualified by personality and experience to do the job successfully, never adjust to the environment or to their counterparts because they have become tired of foreign places. They include many World War II and Korean War veterans, now nearing retirement, who talk nostalgically about Japan or Germany, but now want only to reach the end of their somewhat precarious tour and return to the United States. "To settle in some place where I can hunt and fish" is the aspiration many of them express.

A number of U.S. agencies have developed techniques for selecting personnel who show outstanding qualifications for working with foreign nationals overseas. The literature describing these techniques, some of which might be adapted to the selection of advisory personnel for assignments in Vietnam, is summarized in Appendix B. Without doubt, finding the officers and men capable of becoming outstanding advisors is the single most important step in improving advisor-counterpart relationships.

VI. TRAINING PROGRAMS

In addition to the MATA (Military Assistance Training Advisor) course at Fort Bragg and the Monterey language school, the U.S. Army has several orientation courses for personnel assigned to duty in Vietnam, and the Air Force has a special course in language and area study administered by the Foreign Service Institute. But there are a great many advisors who receive no training for their prospective role. The Navy, for example, provides no orientation for its advisors; the Survival Course at Coronado that most of them attend has nothing to do with preparation for the advisory task.

Most existing orientation courses are not designed to take into account the specific prospective function of the individual advisor; indeed, the student usually does not know at that stage -- though he sometimes surmises -- to what role in the large and diversified advisory system he will be assigned. Any training course so conceived is apt to be too general and superficial, or to include irrelevant and unnecessary information, for the man who, upon arrival in Vietnam, will be sent to a specialized job in a small, remote area. A common complaint among U.S. personnel nowadays is that the orientation they have been given does not apply to the part of Vietnam in which they are stationed. (Some materials widely used in training courses, for instance, actually refer to customs in North Vietnam instead of those in the south.)

Not only should training programs be examined with a view to their modernization, intensification, and

extension to larger numbers of prospective advisors, but it would be desirable to have the individual advisor's functions known and defined beforehand, so that orientation and training could be more nearly tailored to his needs than is possible at present.

Among advisors interviewed who had received predeployment training, the majority thought that their courses ought to have given them better preparation for the advisory role and more information on Vietnamese customs, religion, political institutions, and current history. They also expressed the need for a more intimate knowledge of what they called the "real workings" of the Vietnamese military.

The training institution that is to help equip a student to work in a foreign culture has two broad tasks. One is to provide him with a background of knowledge and techniques that will be useful in the country to which he is assigned; the other, to reinforce skills and attitudes that will enable him to continue his education while on the job.

The most obvious category of useful knowledge that can be taught is that of information about the geography, history, economics, government, and customs of the country of assignment.⁵ For Vietnam, for example, this would

⁵For detailed information on Vietnamese beliefs, social practices, and motivation, see: G. C. Hickey, Village in Vietnam, Yale University Press, New Haven, Connecticut, 1964; James Hendry, The Small World of Khanh Hau, Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1964; Special Operations Research Office, Area Handbook on Vietnam, American University, Washington, D.C., in revision; Bernard B. Fall, The Two Vietnams, Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., New York, 1963.

include instruction on the importance of the family in social relations, on the cult of the ancestors (and the related concept of death) and their place in Vietnamese life, and on aspects of Buddhism, with particular attention to two "reformed" Buddhist sects, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao. (Sector advisors in areas where these sects predominate all expressed to the author their need for more information on them.)

The advisors interviewed believed that they would have understood their counterparts better if their pre-deployment training had acquainted them with the informal aspects of the Vietnamese military structure. This kind of instruction would seem to be highly desirable. It ought to include such important factors as the responsibilities and prerogatives associated with individual military ranks, which in the formal structure appear to be equivalents of U.S. ranks but do not necessarily correspond to them in powers and status; an introduction to the Vietnamese system of promotion and punishments; and also perhaps a discussion of the part of the Vietnamese military establishment in the political life of the country.

Training programs cannot, of course, prepare an advisor for every specific situation that he may face in relation to his counterpart. They can, however, make him aware of the barriers to communication he is likely to encounter, and point out possible solutions by describing ways in which other advisors have either overcome these barriers or learned to work effectively within and in spite of them. All training programs should emphasize, in particular, the importance of continuing language study

for those who work in close association with their counterparts.

Again, as with selection methods and criteria, a number of the nonmilitary U.S. agencies have had extensive experience in training personnel to work with counterparts overseas. The literature on their training programs is summarized in Appendix B. It might be profitable to review their experience from the point of view of its applicability to training courses for advisory personnel assigned to Vietnam.

Whatever added insights such a review might yield, however, it is evident from the present author's observations that the advisory program would benefit by the intensification or introduction of the particular kinds of preparation that will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

1. CIVIC ACTION TRAINING

Civic action is a form of community development that introduces socioeconomic changes with a view to meeting the people's needs and winning their support. In Vietnam, it is carried out, on the military side, by the Special Forces and the sector and subsector advisors. Most of these men either have no preparation whatever for civic action or have received instruction only in engineering and other physical techniques, not in how best to work with the civilian population. Yet it is with this last aspect that an effective civic action program must primarily concern itself.

Training for civic action should aim at acquainting the student with some of the variables that can have an

important bearing on whether a projected change or innovation will benefit the people without disrupting the society they live in, or whether it is likely to cause more difficulties than it is designed to solve. A well-meaning American, for example, might favor introducing the labor-saving, cheaply-constructed windmill for irrigation. But a little insight into the economic structure of the Vietnamese village would reveal to him that such a device would result in increased unemployment -- a major problem in Vietnam -- by diminishing the demand for teams of four laborers to operate the present, foot-powered water wheels. Similarly, it is easy to imagine the damaging effect on the thatch market that would be caused by the distribution of free tin-roofing.

Determining the real needs of the populace is the first step in a successful civic action program, and it requires some familiarity with the local society. If the advisor simply assumes that the Vietnamese farmer wants the same things as the American farmer, he may end up, as pointed out earlier, with empty pigsties, unused latrines, and wasted wheat. Moreover, within Vietnam, regional variations are considerable and must be taken into account in the over-all planning of civic action programs. For example, the Vietnamese are mainly wet-rice cultivators, but their techniques vary: chemical fertilizer is used in some areas and not in others, and water control is a problem only here and there. Also, in a transition zone such as the area above the Mekong River Delta, rice is only a consumption crop, while the cash crops are tobacco and peanuts. Economic variations are compounded by ethnic differences in the determination of popular needs. Thus,

the montagnards practice swidden, or "slash-and-burn," agriculture without fertilizer and with little or no water control, and have only begun to develop the commerce that is widespread among the Vietnamese of the lowlands.

Projects designed to meet collective needs at the communal level, whether the community be the hamlet, the village, or a group of villages, might be anything from dispensaries, schools, maternity centers, or market places, to a new canal or a new bridge. Whether any of these are actually needed, and in what order of urgency, is best determined through study of the local situation and contact with local leaders and knowledgeable villagers. An example of a very successful community project that the author encountered was a market place organized by a montagnard group and financed through the Special Forces. The A Team leader had consulted with some of the montagnard leaders, who, after conferring with the villagers in the area, recommended building a market place with small shops. It was constructed with the approval of local officials, and loans were made to montagnards to enable them to open small businesses. The project has proved a financial success, and has been the more welcome as it has marked the first instance of montagnard-operated commerce in the area.

Some individual needs are common to more than one group, with due allowance for slight regional variations. For example, refugees and resettled villagers alike require shelter (which must be constructed on piling for montagnard groups), food (rice for all, with salt for the montagnards and fish sauce for the Vietnamese), clothing, blankets, and so forth. Beyond these basic requirements,

however, individual need can be determined only through inquiry, which may yield unexpected responses. One sector advisor who had inquired into the needs of a group of montagnards and expected requests relating to agricultural activities was surprised when one villager expressed a wish for simple barbering equipment and another wanted a foot-powered sewing machine. Both men wanted to set up shops.

Civic action training thus should be designed to equip advisors not only to teach the construction of simple equipment and facilities but also to make informed appraisals of specific local needs. A substantial body of literature is available that would be useful in such training courses.⁶

2. IN-COUNTRY TRAINING

At present, area and language training is given in the United States, usually as part of a larger training program, and weeks or even months may elapse between the end of the program and the advisor's arrival overseas, during which time the student is bound to lose some of his scant and hastily acquired knowledge of the language. Moreover, his receiving the training while still in the United States has all the disadvantages of its being removed from the environment in which it is to be applied.

⁶C. Arensberg and A. Niehoff, Introducing Social Change, Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1964; Ch. Erasmus, Man Takes Control, University of Minnesota Press, 1961; G. Foster, Traditional Culture: Impact of Cultural Change, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., New York, 1962; W. Goodenough, Cooperation in Change, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1963.

He does not actually use the language as he learns it, nor is he able to relate the information on Vietnamese culture to surroundings that would make it meaningful and real. The material he is asked to absorb may strike him merely as exotic, and this will affect his motivation to learn.

A possible solution may lie in the institution of in-country language and culture training, which many missionary groups have found useful for their new members. The technique could be tried experimentally in a pilot course with selected advisors who already have had their technical training. In addition to offering intensive training in the Vietnamese language and instruction in aspects of Vietnamese culture, the course could include field trips throughout the country to familiarize the students with its geography, ethnic composition, and administrative and military organization, as well as with the functions of the U.S. military and civilian agencies active in counterinsurgency. It should last a minimum of three months, and, if possible, should be conducted outside Saigon. Students assigned to the school should have no responsibilities outside the course and should live apart from other Americans.

3. EXIT-ENTRANCE SEMINARS

It is customary now to use advisors who have recently returned to the United States and have them address, instruct, or meet informally with members of predeployment orientation courses. One of the problems that this entails is that, by the time it happens, the advisors

have been away from the scene for a while and the sharpness of many meaningful experiences has diminished in their memory. For some of them, selective remembering includes a tendency to dramatize past experience and indulge in "war stories," in which a sniper may become an ambush and a few Viet Cong be transformed into a company or a battalion. Another problem lies in the fact that, as already pointed out, the present courses are large and include candidates for a wide variety of advisory roles, and only part of every audience will ultimately have practical use for the particular lessons to be learned from the experience of the returning advisor. Thus it may happen, for instance, that a former battalion advisor addresses a group of listeners most of whom will be going to the MAC-V or corps staff.

Both these problems could be overcome with relative ease if orientation of this kind took place in seminars in the field, in which advisors about to depart were brought together with those newly arrived who were slated to play the same role (though not necessarily to fill the same positions). In such seminars, of two or three days each, which could be held in Saigon, outgoing battalion advisors, for example, would meet with men about to become battalion advisors and, in an atmosphere of informal discussion, would analyze the advisory role and the particular problems likely to await them. The new arrivals would benefit from the very fresh experience of the veterans. They would gain some understanding of what their new roles involved and of the difficulties they might encounter in relations with counterparts, and they would at the same time learn of some of the successful solutions that their predecessors had found.

4. LANGUAGE TRAINING

Vietnamese is a difficult language for the Westerner to learn, and it is estimated that the average person requires 800 to 1000 hours of intensive study to attain some fluency in it. Even for those nearest the operational level, it may not be practicable or necessary to invest quite that much time in language study, but it is essential that they be given enough -- and that means more than present training courses provide -- to enable them to communicate directly with their counterparts. All field advisors interviewed who had some mastery of Vietnamese had found it an invaluable asset. It is recommended, therefore, that regimental, battalion, sector, subsector, and Junk Fleet advisors, at least two members of every A Team, as well as other advisors who have regular close contact with their Vietnamese counterparts be given sufficient training in the language to permit them to speak it with reasonable ease, and that they be urged, as part of their indoctrination, to continue studying Vietnamese once they are in the country and on the job. Language training should be extended, furthermore, to those advisors in other roles, regardless of the closeness of their daily contact with Vietnamese, who manifest an unusual facility for the study of foreign languages. (Recently-developed language ability tests might be used to determine such special aptitude.)

For advisors working in the highlands in close touch with the montagnards -- this would include some Special Forces A Team members and subsector advisors -- it would be desirable to organize courses in the montagnard

languages. These are less complex than Vietnamese and easier to learn. Also, basic information on their structure and sounds is readily available, having been collected by the Wycliffe Group from the University of North Dakota Summer Institute of Linguistics.⁷

Above the regimental level, there is less need for advisors to use the Vietnamese language. They tend to spend less of their time in the advisory function, and an increasing number of Vietnamese officers speak English. Moreover, some of the advisory roles involve little contact with the counterpart. In these cases, it would be sufficient for advisors to have a basic vocabulary, of perhaps two hundred words, along with some awareness of the general character of the Vietnamese language, its structure and its conceptualization. Even such limited instruction in the form and composition of the language will afford the advisor added insight into the country's culture, and the Vietnamese as a result will feel that he is interested in them. Advisors with little linguistic training, however, should be carefully instructed, as part of their orientation, in the selection, training, and use of interpreters, in methods of detecting and removing misunderstandings, and in the significance of nonverbal signs and expressions.

French continues to be useful, both for advisors higher in the chain of command and for those working with

⁷ Affiliated with the Christian Mission Alliance, the Wycliffe Group is composed of trained linguists, who usually go to remote areas of the Vietnamese highlands, where they learn the local languages, collect word lists, and analyze the structure and sound patterns of the languages.

some of the highland groups (the Rhadé, Jarai, Bahnar, and Sedang, in particular), and its study therefore should be encouraged. Also, some advisors who are not greatly interested in acquiring Vietnamese are more motivated to learn French because of its universality and the possibility that they may be assigned to a French-speaking country in the future.

VII. IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATIVE SETTING

Nearly all advisors interviewed reported that their working relations with counterparts were made more difficult than necessary by certain factors relating to administration and personnel policies and practices. They offered a variety of ideas for removing some of the hurdles. The following recommendations reflect both the complaints and the suggestions that were made most frequently.

1. PAPER WORK

All the sector advisors, among others, comment on the growing demands for reports and other kinds of paper, which cut heavily into the time they can spend working with counterparts. As one example of unnecessary paper work they cite requests for information on such things as Viet Cong-initiated incidents, weapons losses, and number of strategic hamlets in the province. The typical sector advisor, who does not have the time or staff to conduct research or collect basic data, simply obtains this type of information from the Vietnamese. It would be much simpler, therefore, if those who desired such data would obtain them directly from Vietnamese sources in Saigon. This would reduce the burden of the sector advisor and give him more badly-needed time to spend working on common problems with his counterpart.

2. DURATION OF ASSIGNMENT

"We know we may be cutting our own throats, but the tour in Vietnam should be longer if we are going to win." This was the comment of a spokesman for a group of sector advisors, and it was echoed by very many advisors at all levels. In their estimate, it takes an advisor from six to eight months to know his role and the situation well enough to begin working effectively with his counterpart. Most of them also described what they called the "end-of-the-tour slump," which results in a relatively unproductive final month.

The duration of the relationship between advisor and counterpart is an important factor in whether or not they develop rapport. It takes several months before the average advisor is able to work effectively with a counterpart, and too-frequent rotation of American personnel puts an undue burden of adjustment on both sides. If the advisor's tour could be lengthened, the productive period of advising would be correspondingly longer, and administrative pressures at all levels related to the replacement process would be reduced. The current six-month assignment of battalion advisors, for example, might well be extended to about nine months. (A full year with a battalion would perhaps be too long, given problems of health and other hazards, including that of isolation in a small group.) The same goes for duty with Special Forces A Teams, where the advisor's tour likewise could be stretched to nine months, though probably not more than that.

3. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE TEAM CONCEPT

The new plan to rotate members of the Special Forces A Teams so as to make it possible to extend tours from six months to one year will have the effect of destroying the team concept as it now exists. The advantage of the team is that it contains the elements of the primary group, as defined by the sociologist Cooley.⁸ Since the members of a group train together and each has his role defined for him already at that stage, necessary adjustments are worked out before the team begins to function in the field. Above all, the members develop a sense of group solidarity as they come to rely on one another. In the successful defense of a post, such as that at Nam Dong on July 6, 1964, the importance of this team training, coordination, and interreliance was amply demonstrated; in spite of the overwhelming odds, the team members responded as they had been trained, and contained the enemy attack by a coordinated effort. In a team whose membership is constantly changing, group spirit and a

⁸"By primary group I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face associations and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideals of the individual. The result of intimate association, psychologically, is a certain fusion of individualities in a common whole, so that one's very self, for many purposes at least, is the common life and purpose of the group. Perhaps the simplest way of describing this wholeness is by saying that it is a 'we': it involves the sort of sympathy and mutual identification for which 'we' is the natural expression. One lives in the feeling of the whole and finds the chief aims of his will in that feeling." (Charles H. Cooley, Social Organization, The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., p. 23.)

sense of mutual dependence and cooperation are more difficult to develop than in a team with stable membership. Not only, therefore, would it be desirable to preserve the team concept in the Special Forces, but it might be well to extend it also to the newly enlarged battalion advisory group and the recently implemented subsector advisory body (see Appendix A).

Admittedly, the primary group in the A Team, battalion, or subsector setting has certain potential disadvantages against which one must be on guard. Thus, the individual member's identification with his group may be so strong and satisfying as to interfere with his ability or willingness to develop a relationship with his counterpart. By the same token, the group can provide an easy refuge for those who are temperamentally disinclined to establish rapport with the Vietnamese. It is, of course, up to the leader of the team to see that this does not happen.

Still another danger of such strong group feeling is that the disaffection of one or a few members can demoralize the entire team. This occurred, not long ago, when members of a Special Forces A Team thought that several of them had been treated unjustly by higher echelons after an incident involving some of the Vietnamese Special Forces. As a result, they lost interest in their responsibilities and started taking long sun baths, their attitude being summed up by one man, who said: "We might as well get a tan; it's the only thing we'll get out of this tour." Yet when a new B Team commander reviewed the case and acted in favor of the team, their attitude changed once more. They undertook new projects

and enthusiastically trained a new Strike Force company, which carried out a very successful operation during its first week of activity.

4. MATCHING RANK AND MOS

Vietnamese society is very conscious of status, and military rank is assumed to reflect, among other things, the holder's professional competence. Great importance, therefore, attaches to whether the advisor's rank matches that of his counterpart. Inequality in rank is easily interpreted by the Vietnamese as an indication of unequal professional competence; if the advisor's rank is the lower, it may be thought to reflect badly on the counterpart or to reveal the Americans' low estimate of his qualifications. It is desirable, therefore, that the advisor be of the same rank as his counterpart, for it will enhance the chances of their establishing a good professional relationship.

Almost as important as the matter of rank is the advisability of matching, wherever possible, the military occupational specialty of advisor and counterpart. Not only does having the same MOS involve a community of interest that creates rapport, but it also makes it possible for the American to demonstrate his professional knowledge as a colleague and equal, which is likely to increase his effectiveness as an advisor.

5. IMPROVING COMMUNICATION, BOTH VERTICAL AND LATERAL

Many field advisors have expressed the opinion that those higher in the chain of command, particularly staff

officers at MAC-V headquarters, do not understand the nature of the advisory role, let alone the specific problems involved in relationships with Vietnamese counterparts. On the one hand, they point out, the field advisor is constantly reminded that he is indeed only an advisor; on the other, he is held responsible as though he were in command. And they cite numerous examples to show that, whenever anything goes wrong with the program -- be it at battalion, regiment, province, or A Team site -- the advisor is held accountable. If, as is often the case, the particular failure is due to the counterpart's not having taken his advice, he is adjudged a poor advisor and is presently transferred to another post, with great damage to his career.

A marked lack of provisions for vertical communication within the American establishment limits the advisor's performance and thus affects his relations with his counterpart. For there are few, if any, advisors who do not experience some problems in dealing with their Vietnamese opposites. In the case of field advisors, many such problems concern operations, and their solution may be of the greatest urgency. There are instances of unit commanders reluctant to make contact with the Viet Cong or bent on using tactics that their advisors consider disastrous; and there are commanders who will not discipline their troops for failing to do their duty or for such infractions of the rules as being noisy on patrols and thereby betraying their presence to the Viet Cong. Some Special Forces A Team leaders have had problems with camp commanders who refuse to improve poor sanitation or inadequate camp defenses. The advisor lacks any convenient

means or established practice for bringing these problems to the attention of the higher echelons. If he could freely admit and discuss such matters with them, his superiors might be able either to provide him with guidelines or, in some cases, to try solving the difficulties through consultation with their own counterparts. Such a free exchange would have the added benefit of providing those high in the chain of command with realistic insights into the situation in the field, for the frank opinion of the field advisor is one of the best indicators of the progress of the war.

Lateral as well as vertical communication needs to be improved. Field advisors encounter many identical or similar problems, but most of them have few opportunities for discussing their common difficulties and working out common solutions to them. Sector advisors now are fortunate in being able to meet periodically in Saigon. These meetings, although convened for other purposes, offer them an opportunity for such discussions, which they have described as very useful. But for most field advisors the occasion arises only through chance encounters, when several of them happen to be at headquarters at the same time.

Consideration might be given to a system of incentives and methods for on-the-job improvement. Advisors might be encouraged to seek assistance in overcoming difficult and recurring problems in their relations with counterparts. A small team of consultants or "trouble-shooters" might be constituted for giving such assistance on an "on-call" basis.

6. BUILDING ON PAST EXPERIENCE

When we take the long-range view of the conflict in Vietnam, it becomes particularly important that there be provisions for continuing evaluation and for feeding the lessons of past experience into future planning, selection, and training processes. New and better ways must be devised, therefore, in which advisors can pass on the experience they have gained in the field both to their successors and to higher headquarters.

A precedent for an effective method of recording the experiences of advisors and improving communication among them may be found in the "group-process" technique that has been successfully employed by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR) group in Vietnam. It is designed to bring about a rapid sharing of pertinent information and opinions when the group addresses itself to a problem, or a set of problems, common to all participants. One or two moderators trained in group behavior have the specific task of reducing extraneous details ("noise") to a minimum and keeping both form and content of the information elicited in focus. The method permits group members to participate fully in the highly efficient production of information and the delineation, sharing, and solving of problems, and it renders them sensitive to specific social, cultural, and behavioral concepts of the foreign nation. It has been the experience of WRAIR that in the course of this process participants become less and less aware of the differences in rank and status among them and therefore tend to express themselves quite freely.

Group sessions such as these would improve lateral communication among advisors. Furthermore, if representatives of the higher levels of command were to participate in the meetings, they might gain an insight, not available to them at present, into advisory activities at lower echelons, the problems they entail, and in general, the realities of the counterinsurgency situation. The sessions should be recorded on tape. This would have the advantage not only of placing the valuable experience of the field advisors on record but also of ensuring a certain degree of anonymity for the advisors, who could speak their minds more frankly in the knowledge that their voices would be impossible to identify as the data accumulated.

7. ESTABLISHING CONTINUITY WITH THE COUNTERPART'S
PREVIOUS ADVISORS

Nearly all advisors in Vietnam are working with counterparts who have already had one or more advisors. This fact has considerable bearing on their relationship, for the good will, or bad feeling, that existed between the new advisor's predecessor and his counterpart does much to determine the climate in which he embarks on his functions. An awareness of the predecessor's experience would therefore be a most useful part of every newcomer's orientation. There is as yet no institutional way of providing such information. The overlapping of advisory tours would offer an opportunity for the incoming advisor to learn about the outgoing one's relationship with the counterpart, but it is standard procedure only in the Special Forces. Theoretically, also, a new advisor

might obtain this knowledge from colleagues who knew his predecessor and had a chance to observe him in his work with the counterpart. In practice, however, rank differences among colleagues could easily inhibit free discussion. And, if the relationship had been poor, the other advisors might be reluctant to comment on it.

Not only would the new advisor benefit from knowing how well his predecessor had got along with the counterpart, but he might also gain in effectiveness if he knew what specific advice the counterpart had already received. At present, for example, advisors often unwittingly duplicate suggestions that have already proved unworkable. When this happens, the Vietnamese usually is unwilling to say so, lest this be construed as criticism of the advice or as a reflection on relations with the previous advisor. Rather than make explanations, the counterpart in such a case will merely fail to act, the advisor in turn will feel frustrated in his attempt to motivate him, and the effect of this will be to put an unnecessary strain on their relationship.

Every outgoing advisor could be asked to write, for the use of his successor, a brief profile of his recent counterpart. It should include his appraisal of the counterpart's performance and receptivity to advice, as well as a general outline of the kinds of advice already given him. If kept short and informal, it need not add appreciably to the advisor's paper chores. Such a profile would be a useful addition to the new advisor's preparation for assuming his role.

8. TERMINATING SOME ADVISORY FUNCTIONS

There are counterparts in Vietnam today who might be described as "overadvised." Some have had advisors for eight to ten years and by now know enough to carry on without their help. In extreme cases, they are resentful of the advisor and unwilling to listen to what he has to say, so that the advisor begins to feel useless. In other instances, as advisors pointed out to the author, counterparts need advice only from time to time. Thus, several advisors dealing with supplies felt that their counterparts knew the job well enough to do it without assistance, while a number of battalion advisors reported that their counterparts had mastered the techniques but still needed advice on when to use them.

Perhaps the time has come for the U.S. advisory mission in Vietnam to undertake an investigation that would reveal which Vietnamese military personnel no longer needed advice, with a view to the possibility of suspending it in those cases. The opinions of advisors who have worked with their counterparts long enough to determine their proficiency would be very valuable here, and a survey of this kind might be conducted with the use of questionnaires. It could also be a first step toward deciding in which areas of specialization -- supplies, for example -- advisory roles could be abolished entirely.

It might be possible to test the feasibility of such a plan by removing advisors from certain field units experimentally to see how they performed subsequently without assistance. Also, a pool of advisors could be established to provide specialists who would serve temporarily as needed.

In considering the termination of a given advisory function, however, one would have to bear in mind that some advisors do more than advise. Battalion advisors, for instance, also are reporters who keep headquarters informed on the progress of operations as well as on local situations. And only recently, it will be remembered, Special Forces A Team advisors were the first to report unrest among the montagnards and to give warning of the impending revolt.

The ideal end situation is for the advisor to work himself out of a job; that is, to work toward a situation in which he is no longer needed. It should be to the credit of the counterpart, and recognized as such, that the relationship is terminated. Likewise, recognition of a job well done should be extended to the advisor by appropriate measures.

Appendix A

DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADVISORY ROLE
IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

"Advisor" has become the generic term for all U.S. military personnel serving in the Republic of Vietnam. As used in this report, however, it is restricted to those who have, or are supposed to have, an opposite number on the Vietnamese side -- a "counterpart" -- whom they are to advise on matters connected with the counterinsurgency effort.*

In the past ten years the over-all advisory function of the U.S. military in Vietnam has undergone considerable changes. Following the partition of the country in 1954, the primary responsibility of the United States Military Assistance Group (MAAG) was to aid the South Vietnamese government in the formation and development of the newly established Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). As the Vietnamese armed forces expanded, members of the U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marines joined this advisory staff. With the growth of the Viet Cong insurgency, the Vietnamese armed forces became operational and thus required new kinds of advice, and additional advisory assistance was needed for the paramilitary units formed to rally local populations to their own defense. Finally, the military also assumed responsibility for social and economic programs designed to win the support of the

*In practice, some of those who have counterparts never actually have contact with them, while in other cases the counterpart position remains vacant for lack of qualified personnel.

rural population. The result of these developments has been an increase in the size and complexity of the military advisory program, as well as the redefinition of existing advisory roles and the creation of new ones. The program in Vietnam is unique, for it is the only instance in which the American advisory role is being performed in a counterinsurgency situation.

Early in 1962 the American effort increased considerably, and the Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MAC-V) was formed to consolidate the various advisory and support groups. At present the roles of the advisors vary greatly, the major variables being an advisor's level in the chain of command, his military occupational specialty (MOS), branch of service, geographical location, and the circumstances of the war. Generally speaking, the advisory roles of the MAC-V staff in Saigon and of the four corps area headquarters have evolved from the earlier MAAG structure, undergoing whatever changes the situation demanded. The commanding officers have their counterparts in the Vietnamese Joint General Staff (JGS). Below them are the "J" staffs (concerned with personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, planning, and communication), some of whose members serve as advisors to the comparable staffs in the JGS headquarters. In addition, a U.S. Air Force Advisory Group and a Navy Advisory Group both have advisors in their respective Vietnamese headquarters. Others may be found in various offices of the MAC-V; for example, some members of the Joint Research and Testing Activities Branch have Vietnamese counterparts with whom they cooperate on research projects.

The four corps headquarters have similar staff positions (G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4, G-5), but some of the commissioned and noncommissioned advisors at this level have more specialized roles and are dealing with particular aspects of logistics or intelligence. Within each corps area, field advisors are attached to ARVN units. At division headquarters there are staff advisors as well as advisors assigned to the individual regiments and battalions. All field advisors are involved in operations along with their counterparts, and their work includes more tactical responsibilities than do the functions of other corps advisors.

At the regimental level, a senior advisor with a staff of several assistants helps the regimental commander in planning and conducting operations, and he is available for advice on tactics when operations are under way. He and his counterpart visit field units and observe operations, reporting back to their respective superiors at division headquarters. They also serve as liaison between division and battalions. Often, a counterpart will call on the regimental advisor for logistical support (usually helicopter or air transport).

The battalion advisor performs functions similar to those of the regimental advisor, but on a lower echelon. He works closely with the battalion commander in planning operations, and he accompanies the unit into the field, often for periods of six to eight weeks. In addition to being available to assist with the many problems a battalion faces while on operations, the battalion advisor serves the useful function of being a reporter on the scene for the U.S. chain of command. He may be

called upon to request helicopter support or a medical evacuation. When he goes into combat with the unit, he may find himself playing the additional role of cocombatant.

In the past, battalion advisors numbered either two or three: usually a captain, a noncommissioned officer, and, in three-man teams, a lieutenant. Recently, however, the number of battalion advisors has been raised to five: the senior advisor (a captain); the assistant advisor (a lieutenant); and three noncommissioned officers, two of whom deal with light weapons and one, with communications.

The Vietnamese Sea Force maintains coastal surveillance as one of its major responsibilities, and U.S. advisors divide their time between working with their counterparts at naval headquarters on the various problems of ship maintenance and ship deployment, and accompanying the Sea Force on sea duty, where they live on Vietnamese naval vessels and furnish advice on ship operation or patrolling techniques.

The Vietnamese Navy's River Force has several functions. Its primary task is to support the ARVN in operations by transporting troops, weapons, and supplies. Occasionally, it takes an active part in operations by lending artillery support. Patrolling and surveillance of the major rivers crossing the Cambodian border are secondary functions. U.S. Navy personnel act as advisors in all these activities. During operations, they also play an important part in coordinating the actions of the River Force with those of the ARVN and related U.S. advisory units. In addition to being equipped to advise on

administrative, logistical, and operational matters of a naval character, they must be well versed in the U.S. Army and ARVN chain of command, as well as in the structure and functions of the Vietnamese Navy, so as to be able to coordinate successfully the activities of these agencies.

In 1962, as part of the intensified counterinsurgent effort, three new categories of advisors were created:

- (1) Sector advisors were appointed to assist the province chiefs, all of whom at the present time are military men;
- (2) U.S. Special Forces advisors helped the Vietnamese Special Forces organize the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program; and
- (3) U.S. Navy advisors were assigned to the newly-formed paramilitary Junk Fleet of the Vietnamese Navy.

(1) According to the Table of Distribution, the sector advisor is either a lieutenant colonel or a major, and his staff consists of the assistant sector advisor (major), an intelligence officer (captain), an operations and training advisor (captain), a psywar/civil affairs advisor (captain), a Regional Forces-Popular Forces advisor (captain), an intelligence sergeant, light weapons advisor (E-6), an administrative specialist (E-5), and a communications specialist (E-4). The TD also provides for augmentation of the staff by the following: an air liaison officer (USAF captain), an assistant Regional Forces-Popular Forces advisor (lieutenant), a senior infantry sergeant, typist (E-3), an Air Force communications specialist (E-4), and a medical specialist (E-5).

In many respects the sector advisors have a broader range of responsibilities than do other advisors in Vietnam, and they play an important part in the

implementation of pacification plans, which aim at rallying the civilian population to the government side. In addition to advising the province chief on things military -- use of Popular and Regional Forces, security, psychological warfare, cooperation with ARVN operations -- the sector advisor with the province chief and the USOM province representative form the Joint Province Committee responsible for all civic action programs. The committee decides on projects aimed at meeting the needs of the local population, and all three members must agree on and sign the financial arrangement for implementing each project. They then oversee its progress and approve its completion.

Involvement of sector advisors in socioeconomic civic action programs is something new in Vietnam. For the first time, an American military advisor has to be aware of the needs of the local civilian population. To perform effectively as a member of the Joint Province Committee, the sector advisor not only is called upon to judge the efficacy of a proposed project, but he also must be prepared to suggest useful projects himself. In addition, he assumes the role of comanager in arranging for the financial support of projects, seeing that funds are expended efficiently, making sure that those involved in the project are dealt with equitably, and, with other members of the committee, guaranteeing the successful completion of the project. Finally, the sector advisor differs from other advisory personnel in having not only a Vietnamese but also an American counterpart -- the USOM province representative.

Very recently, subsector advisors have been added, who are to serve at the district level. The subsector advisor (a major or captain) has a four-man staff consisting of an assistant subsector advisor (captain or lieutenant), an intelligence sergeant, a communications specialist (E-4), and a medical specialist (E-6). Subsector advisors are under the administrative control of the sector advisor and the operational control of the Joint Province Committee, and their function was created to relieve the sector advisors of ever-growing responsibilities in the implementation of various pacification programs. According to the official Terms of Reference, the subsector advisor will:

- A. Monitor all US/GVN programs with the subsector; report program status, evaluate program effectiveness, identify problem areas; recommend program improvement to the Joint Province Committee or other US/GVN personnel directly concerned. Specific responsibility for US/GVN programs will be determined by the Joint Province Committee and may include but not be limited to:
 - (1) Expediting the flow of US/GVN resources to subsector, village, and hamlet level.
 - (2) Serving as an official member of the district reception committee to pass on the acceptability of completed projects which were built with funds and materials provided by the Joint Province Committee.
 - (3) Following the activities of joint US/GVN-financed cadre teams working in the subsector to give advice and make recommendations regarding their support, deployment, utilization and conduct.

- B. Advise and assist the subsector commander (district chief) and his staff on all matters dealing with the conduct of the counterinsurgency campaign in such a manner as to improve all phases of activity in the subsector and hasten the successful conclusion of the conflict.
- C. Make recommendations to the sector advisor on the employment of U.S. military resources in response to requests from the subsector commander or designated responsible subordinates.
- D. Accompany Regional and Popular Force units engaged in operations in order to give advice, evaluate their effectiveness, and make recommendations leading to improved capabilities.
- E. Prepare and maintain basic data on the subsector, to include information on population, ethnic groups, religious groups, friendly and enemy military situations, crops, handicrafts, education and health facilities, etc.
- F. Keep informed of the total situation in the subsector in order to bring advice and action to bear on those critical problems that may be slowing or preventing successful prosecution of the counterinsurgency effort.
- G. Report through U.S. channels on prescribed matters or other matters vital to the U.S. interests.
- H. When visiting or stationed in a subsector, maintain communications on a schedule to be established by the sector advisor.
- I. When designated as team leader and stationed in a subsector, act as area coordinator and assume responsibility for the safety of all U.S. military personnel in the subsector, unless there is a higher-level headquarters in the same subsector.

(2) The CIDG program is administered by the Vietnamese Special Forces with the advisory assistance and financial support of the U.S. Special Forces. As it was organized in 1962, the Special Forces chain of command was as follows: A U.S. C Team, or headquarters staff, included some who served as advisors to the Vietnamese Special Forces C Team. Each of the four corps areas had a B Team for both the U.S. and Vietnamese Special Forces, and under their command were the A Teams, who worked at the local level, usually in remote areas. Duty for the U.S. Special Forces in Vietnam was voluntary, and tours of duty were one year for the C Team members, and six months for B and A Team personnel. All of them were on temporary duty, received a per diem, and had to provide for their own food and quarters.

Recent regulations have altered this arrangement. Service continues to be voluntary, but all U.S. Special Forces personnel in Vietnam will now serve one year on regular, not temporary, duty. Whereas, in the past, A Teams remained together as a group during predeployment training and duty in Vietnam, the present arrangement calls for the periodic rotation of team members.

The primary function of the A Teams (both U.S. and Vietnamese) is to establish camps in remote areas and recruit units of the Strike Force from the local population. In the highland camps, most Strike Force members are drawn from the montagnard groups; in camps in or near the lowlands, the Vietnamese predominate. The Special Forces teams train the Strike Force members and then lead them on operations in their area. Strike Force personnel are paid a monthly wage from funds provided by

the U.S. Special Forces. The U.S. A Team advises the Vietnamese Special Forces on the construction and maintenance of the camp and its defenses, on the training of the Strike Force, and on operational tactics.

The advisor's role in the U.S. Special Forces is unique in that it takes place entirely within a team context; the advisor is recruited, trained, and expected to perform as a member of a team. Each A Team is composed of the team leader (captain), an executive officer (lieutenant), a team sergeant (master sergeant), two medics (who have received extensive training, including limited surgery at the Dog Surgery School at Ft. Bragg, N.C.), and specialists in intelligence, communications, demolition, and heavy and light weapons. All the men are trained in at least one specialization other than their own. One team member assumes responsibility for supplies, and one medic is placed in charge of the mess. The camp commander, who is head of the Vietnamese Special Forces team, is the counterpart of the American team leader, and, at least in principle, each member of the U.S. team has an opposite number in the Vietnamese Special Forces.

In addition to carrying out military operations, the A Teams conduct programs intended to aid the local populations. Some of these, like the projects of the Joint Province Committee, are of a socioeconomic nature. They may include the feeding and housing of refugees or resettled populations, school construction, and efforts to improve water control, crop production, and livestock care. Team medics conduct sick call for the military and their dependents, make house calls to civilians in the

surrounding villages, help organize dispensaries, and train local nurses.

(3) The plan for a paramilitary Junk Fleet was first proposed in 1959. It called for construction of motorized wooden junks in indigenous styles, recruitment of local fishermen to be trained by Vietnamese Navy personnel, and establishment of junk bases along the coast. The aim of the project was to give the Navy a greater role in counterinsurgency by introducing locally-based units that could operate continually within a given radius, patrolling the coastal waters and river mouths. Smaller than regular Navy craft, the junks could reach places theretofore inaccessible, and their appearance made them less easily identifiable as military.

By early 1963 a number of the junks had been constructed. Bases were established in each of the four Navy coastal districts, and U.S. Navy advisors were assigned to the district headquarters in Danang, Nhatrang, Vung Tau, and An Thoi on Phu Quoc island. Since the very concept of the Junk Fleet was new to both the Vietnamese and the Americans, the role of the Junk Fleet advisor was not well defined. Construction, maintenance, and defense of the junk base demanded his attention and that of his counterpart, as did the training of the sailors, most of whom were not local fishermen but rural or urban Vietnamese unaccustomed to the sea. Once the base and the fleet had become operational, the advisor's responsibilities would include the planning and carrying out of patrolling operations.

To this day, the role of the Junk Fleet advisor has remained more fluid than that of other advisors in Vietnam.

Given the wide range of responsibilities, the typical U.S. Navy man, with skills and experience in weapons, base defense, ship maintenance, and even clerical tasks, has been of great value, and, since such a variety of skills in a single man is not easily matched on the Vietnamese side, many Junk Fleet advisors have more than one counterpart. Because of insufficient logistical support, both the advisor and his counterparts have had to be skillful at devising ways of coping with the myriad problems that faced the Junk Fleet in its formative period. (One advisor arrived at his base to find the personnel without blankets, uniforms, or barracks, and without facilities for routine medical and dental care. He successfully appealed to private sources in the United States for some of the needed commodities, and he soon found himself practicing limited medicine and dentistry.)

Appendix B

A SURVEY OF LITERATURE RELATING TO THE ADVISORY FUNCTION

Following is a brief overview of social science research bearing on relations between advisors and their counterparts, with particular emphasis on the selection and training of advisors and the evaluation of past experience.

Nearly all social research bears in one way or another on the problems faced by American military advisors. Ideally, existing knowledge in such fields as small-group behavior, mass phenomena, attitude formation, cognition, social change, and a multitude of others should be made available to them in a form that will assist them in their relationships not only with their counterparts but also with indigenous populations and others with whom they work or come into contact. Some materials are, of course, more relevant than others. Most directly related to the advisors' tasks are studies concerned with communication and cross-cultural communication, social analysis of foreign societies, related cross-cultural programs, and counterinsurgency and internal war. Even if attention is limited to these four categories, however, the number of potentially useful works is enormous. Those on communication and foreign areas are numbered in the thousands; those on related programs and counterinsurgency in the hundreds. A few examples will illustrate the nature of the material in each category.

There is no adequate summary treatment of what is known either about communication in general or about intercultural communication in particular. One valuable reference is The Process of Communication, by David K. Barlo (Holt, 1960). An older book that gives a popular version of experience in the commercial world, much of which is transferable to other situations, is Is Anybody Listening? by William H. Whyte, Jr. (Simon & Schuster, 1952). A well-known volume on communicating with people of other cultures, which is currently used in most courses for orienting overseas personnel, is The Silent Language by Edward T. Hall (Doubleday, 1959). A bibliography of published works could run to any length, depending on the patience of the compiler and the reader. In addition, a substantial amount of research on communication is being conducted by organizations under contract to various government agencies. Much of this is designed to apply to foreign areas. For example, the Special Operations Research Office of American University has current projects on influence processes in crosscultural interactions and on informal communication systems in selected countries.

Area studies are even more extensive. The most comprehensive source of information on foreign societies is the collection maintained at Yale and associated universities known as the Human Relations Area Files, which has served as the basis for area handbooks compiled by the Special Operations Office. Data on current attitudes and opinions in foreign areas are collected by the U.S. Information Agency, and are included in several series of reports issued by the Agency. Among the many published

monographs, perhaps the most widely-known work on Vietnam is that of Bernard B. Fall, Street Without Joy: Indochina at War (The Stackpole Company, Harrisburg, 1961).

The experience of public and private bodies engaged in programs of international aid, international education, or international communication offers a rich store of information that still remains to be collated. The American Council of Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, Inc., under a contract with the Agency for International Development, is currently collecting and classifying information about the technical assistance programs of voluntary agencies, missions, and foundations. The Peace Corps and the National Institutes of Mental Health, in March 1963, jointly sponsored a symposium entitled "The Peace Corps and the Behavioral Sciences," which summarized much of the experience of the Peace Corps in using social research up to that time. The operations of the U.S. Information Agency in various parts of the world are described in scattered reports and occasional documents, while the exchanges conducted by the State Department under the Smith-Mundt and Fulbright programs have given rise to a substantial number of books, articles, and reports. One of the most comprehensive of these is the volume by Claire Selltiz and others, Attitudes and Social Relations of Foreign Students in the United States (University of Minnesota Press, 1963). The Agency for International Development has contracted with the National Planning Association for an extensive study of techniques for dealing with social and economic development problems in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and Syracuse University is conducting another massive project

on administrative methods and techniques of technical assistance, also under an AID contract. A very large number of books, articles, and reports on the U.S. economic aid program have been written in recent years.

Studies of experience in counterinsurgency and internal war are somewhat fewer in number, and the better ones are well known to personnel concerned with military assistance. One of the earliest systematic analyses, and still one of the best, is Lucian W. Pye's Guerrilla Communism in Malaya (Princeton University Press, 1956); another excellent study of insurgency in Southeast Asia is George K. Tanham's Communist Revolutionary Warfare: The Vietminh in Indochina (Praeger, 1961). Extensive bibliographies on this subject have been compiled by the Special Operations Research Office and a number of other organizations, and a substantial amount of research in the area is under way. Some of these studies, such as the Internal War Project of Princeton University's Center of International Studies, are under private auspices. Most, however, are being done under contract with government agencies.

An effort to summarize for the use of prospective advisors the volume of research that bears in some way on the advisor counterpart relationship would result in a compendium that was either quite incomplete or unwieldy. Existing and ongoing research will be most useful when it is examined with very specific questions in mind, and especially so when the examiner already has a comprehensive knowledge of the problems faced by military advisors in a particular area.

SELECTION OF ADVISORY PERSONNEL

If the principal categories of jobs to which advisors are assigned are clearly defined, the extensive literature on selection, training, and administration of personnel for overseas service can probably provide at least some assistance in improving current procedures. This literature covers the experience of private institutions, government agencies (including the armed services), and international bodies. Among several bibliographies of relevant studies these are the most extensive:

Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange
Between East and West, University of Hawaii,
"Symposium on Development of Research on
Effectiveness in Working Abroad," January
5-7, 1963. The Center has collected what is
probably the most comprehensive bibliography,
consisting of over 600 references, on the
selection of personnel for crosscultural
service. A selected list of 340 titles from
the periodical literature has been compiled
by Allan A. Spitz and Edward W. Weidour, in
Development Administration: An Annotated
Bibliography, East West Center Press,
Honolulu, 1963.

Elliott McGinnies, "A Review of Selection
Methods for Overseas Assignment," prepared
for the U.S. Peace Corps, June 1961 (unpub-
lished).

Society for Personnel Administration, Selecting
Employees for Overseas Assignment, Washington,
1961.

Clarence E. Thurber, "Literature in the Field
of Personnel for International Development,"
Pennsylvania State University, July 1962
(unpublished).

Mottram Torre, The Selection of Personnel for
International Service, World Federation for
Mental Health, Geneva and New York, 1963.

Some of the available literature deals with the question of selection from the point of view of specific types of organizations, and some approach it without reference to particular agencies. Among the most useful general treatments are Working Abroad: A Discussion of Psychological Attitudes and Adaptation in New Situations (Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, New York, 1958), and Harlan Cleveland et al., The Overseas Americans (McGraw Hill, 1960). The experience of United Nations agencies is discussed in the proceedings of the Conference on Recruitment, Selection and Training of Technical Assistance Personnel (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Rome, February 1962). This conference was of particular interest in that it brought together specialists from various underdeveloped countries as well as from Europe and North America. An Agency for International Development study, entitled "Report and Recommendations of the Task Force on Recruitment, Screening and Selection for A.I.D." (Washington, March 1962), contains both recommendations for personnel policies and identification of research needs. Several industrial enterprises have undertaken studies on selection of personnel for overseas service. One report of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey claims a 20 per cent increase in selection efficiency, measured in terms of satisfactory completion of assignment, as a result of using six standardized psychological tests during the selection process. (Standard Oil Company of N.J., Social Science Research Reports, Volume II, "Selection and Placement," 1962.)

The qualities that the various organizations are seeking to discover through the selection process

naturally differ with the particular needs of the agencies. All agree, however, that the first qualification for anyone serving in an intercultural context is professional competence; linguistic and social skills do not make up for a lack of professional and technical know-how. The pool of those from whom selections is made should therefore be limited to individuals who have the necessary professional competence or who can be taught it in a short time. The quality that is usually judged the next most important is "cultural empathy" or "cross-cultural sensitivity" -- the ability to understand and adjust to a very different social situation. This ability is usually found among people of particular social backgrounds, such as those who come from minority groups or from groups with a strong tradition of involvement overseas, or whose families have intermarried with foreigners. Other qualities that are nearly always mentioned as desirable are high motivation and intelligence, social ease, communication skills, adaptability to different food and customs, and organizing and leadership ability.*

A large number of selection techniques have been devised in efforts to discover and measure desirable and undesirable qualities. Most common are interviews, self-report inventories, psychiatric screening, and batteries

* An informal survey of foreign officers with whom U.S. military advisors have been working revealed the following as the qualities most often mentioned by counterparts as being desirable in U.S. advisory personnel: (1) Professional competence; (2) language ability -- ability to get ideas across; (3) respect for the local culture, as shown in efforts to use the language, interest in local history and geography, and the quality of being

of psychological tests. In addition, various experiments have been conducted with group-interaction situations, in which a person's behavior is observed while he is in an environment that closely resembles the one he will encounter on the job. Some group-interaction situations are known as "house party" tests, in which the subject lives and works with a small group for several days in an isolated location. The Peace Corps and several other agencies have experimented with using nationals of the country to which a person is to be assigned to help determine whether he is qualified for the job.

In spite of experimentation with a large number of selection techniques, there is still relatively little solid information on how well they work. This situation is improving rapidly, however, as evaluation studies are being completed that will make it possible to compare predicted performance with actual performance.

The work done on selection thus far suggests a number of general observations that would apply to most organizations working overseas. One is that skill cannot be separated from motivation. Most people, unless they have severe personality disorders, can learn at least some crosscultural skills if they want to -- and if time is available. The rate of learning and the ability to benefit from training vary widely, however, especially in the case of linguistic skills. Older people sometimes

a good guest; (4) empathy; (5) enthusiasm; (6) adaptability; (7) patience; and (8) humor. (Memorandum by Maj. Gen. Edward Lansdale, "Through Foreign Eyes," October 7, 1963.)

find it almost impossible to unlearn speech habits that interfere with acquiring a new language. Another general observation is that many individuals, especially if they are of senior rank or are volunteers, object to being subjected to selection procedures and therefore cooperate poorly. This difficulty can be partially overcome, however, if emphasis is given to "placement" rather than to "selection." Few people object to tests that are likely to result in their being assigned to the jobs that they can do best. A third observation is that, whenever possible, the selection (or placement) process should be continued at least through the first stages of training. A person's performance in training may indicate his suitability for a given job more clearly than any number of preliminary tests. In the Peace Corps and a number of other agencies, some individuals are "selected out" after several months of training, when there are indications that they will not perform satisfactorily overseas.

The degree to which the military establishment can benefit from experience with selection techniques in other agencies is limited by several factors. One limitation is its sheer size and complexity, combined with the necessity for rapid action and the primacy of military skills. Another is the fact that most members of the services have already survived extensive selection procedures, and it is not necessary to start from the beginning as is the case with an agency recruiting new personnel. Nevertheless, a hard look at the possibility of introducing additional selection procedures for overseas military advisors is desirable. The present military screening process is rigorous when it comes to

physical toughness and technical competence, but it provides few indications with regard to cultural empathy and aptitude for crosscultural communication. Observers overseas have frequently been impressed by the tremendous range of differences among American military personnel in the ability to adapt to a foreign environment. Some show an almost incredible facility for learning other languages and understanding other peoples, while others are highly ethnocentric and find it difficult to deal successfully with any foreign nationals. If it were possible to screen out the personnel with the least cultural empathy without lowering professional standards, the efficiency of military activities that require association with foreign nationals would be substantially increased.

THE TRAINING PROCESS

Training for officers who engage in advisory functions abroad is given at a number of schools, at other military installations, and by organizations under contract. Most advisors who are assigned to Vietnam attend the MATA course at Ft. Bragg, but some receive orientation at the Military Assistance Institute of the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, and some receive predeployment training at bases prior to assignment. The standards of the major training institutions are high, and instructors are usually in touch with a large part of the research that bears on the advisory function. In most cases, civilian specialists are also invited to lecture or take part in seminars. Nevertheless, the various training

centers do not appear to share a common approach to their task, and the interchange of experience among them seems to be limited.

The literature on training, most of which deals with the experience of civilian agencies, suggests that the most obvious category of useful knowledge that can be taught is that dealing with the geography, history, economics, and government of the country of assignment. More subtle, but essential, categories include social organization and customs, and the prevailing psychological patterns and attitudes among members of the host population. When a specific assignment has been given a student, it is sometimes possible to provide him with orientation about the group in which he will be working, about the resistances he is likely to encounter, and even about the individuals with whom he will be associated.

Among the most important techniques that can be taught are communication skills: an ability to use the language, and a capacity to communicate in the face of a language barrier. Learning a difficult language such as Vietnamese is a time-consuming task, however, and only a beginning can be made in brief training courses. It is therefore of particular importance that students be given as much orientation as possible in the selection, training, and use of interpreters, in methods of detecting and dealing with misunderstandings, and in the significance of nonverbal cues.

There is a need for more research on how to make the most of the limited time that can be devoted to language instruction in training courses. The process of learning a language seems to parallel closely the process of

learning to understand another culture, and it is possible that the two subjects could most profitably be taught together. The example of one experiment may be useful here in which Tagalog was taught together with instruction in the way that Filipinos behave toward each other (F. X. Lynch, Understanding the Philippines, Ateneo de Manila, 1961).

More research on the side effects of language teaching would also be desirable. There are indications that some knowledge of a language is of great help to an advisor in determining when a counterpart is confident or not confident, when he understands or does not, and when he is telling the truth. It has also been suggested that even a relatively slight familiarity with the language of a country on the part of a foreigner greatly improves the attitudes of the indigenous population toward him. But just how much language teaching it takes, and under what conditions, to produce given results must be determined by further investigation.

To operate successfully in another society, a person must have a good understanding of his own culture and nation. This will enable him not only to answer many inevitable questions, but also to view with some objectivity the differences between his own "natural" way of doing things and the ways of the people with whom he will be working. If differences among cultures are recognized, they can be made conscious and objective, and hence manageable. Without such an awareness, a person is in danger of attributing his own expectations to people who do not share them. Training courses therefore usually

include material on American society as well as on the nation of assignment.

As important as teaching knowledge and skills is to develop attitudes and aptitudes during the orientation process that will help a person to continue his education and to function more efficiently in the country of his assignment. Among these it is essential to cultivate the ability to discriminate among people of another culture as individuals, so as not to run the danger of treating them as undifferentiated members of a foreign society. "The ability to like or dislike the individual member of another culture with the same discrimination that would be displayed in one's own culture is one of the surest signs that . . . no irrational, stereotyped prejudices, either positive or negative, are interfering with a free flow of cross-cultural communication."

(Margaret Mead, "The Factor of Culture," in Mottram Torre, The Selection of Personnel for International Service, pp. 18ff.)

Equally important is a sensitivity to the responses given by people of other cultures -- the ability to prevent chain reactions of misunderstanding. A training course cannot describe all possible bases for misunderstanding in advance; the individual must be prepared to observe both himself and others when exchanging ideas in a foreign culture, and should be ready to introduce self-corrective measures when necessary. He must behave a little like a psychiatrist in a psychiatric interview. (Bryant Wedge, M.D., "Toward a Science of Transnational Communication," in Application of Psychiatric Insights to Cross-Cultural Communication, Group for the Advancement

of Psychiatry, New York, 1961, pp. 387ff.) Closely related is the desirability of being able to realize that a person must be a learner before he can be an advisor and hence cultivate a habit of inquiry and interest with respect to another society. (George M. Guthrie, "Preparing Americans for Participation in Another Culture," in Peace Corps and Behavioral Sciences, p. 398.)

Accompanying the spirit of inquiry should be a willingness to experiment, be it with new food or with techniques. In short, training courses should endeavor to develop what social scientists sometimes refer to as the multicultural personality: a personality that enables a person to operate comfortably in two different cultures.

Finally, it is important that training courses enable an individual to understand his own reactions better. Many officers, in describing one-year tours abroad, have noted that after eight or nine months one tends to slow down on the job and to think about reassignment. This experience seems to parallel that of foreign students in the United States, who often become disillusioned toward the end of their first year of study here and lose some of their motivation. If they stay for another year, however, their motivation tends to rise again. (Margaret L. Cormack, "Three Steps to Better Orientation," Overseas, September 1963.) Perhaps the "slowing down" sensation that advisors have noted toward the end of their tour is not so much related to the length of their assignment as they think, and, instead, is a reaction that almost everyone experiences after several months in another culture. Further research into

the extent to which this is true would be desirable. Meanwhile, orientation courses might warn advisors to be alert to the danger of diminished motivation toward the end of one-year tours, so that the individual will be prepared to deal with it.

In general, military schools have had more experience and are better organized than the schools run by civilian agencies. Nevertheless, the volume of experience in nonmilitary contexts is now such that it merits close attention by those conducting military orientation courses. Also, research sponsored by civilian agencies and private bodies will frequently be helpful. For example, the State Department research study on overseas adjustment problems, presented at a conference in Washington on May 10, 1963, summarizes much of the experience in this field of the State Department, the U.S. Information Agency, and the Agency for International Development.

The Peace Corps, private universities, and individual researchers have experimented with a number of training techniques, some of which have been tried out in military schools as well: role playing, group dynamics, simulated field environments, establishment of bicultural situations in the training program, the use of native instructors, and so on. In one case, it was found that native instructors were defensive about their own society and its inadequacies, and tended to make area study unduly difficult. (Herbert B. Fowler et al., "The Iran Project - Peace Corps Training in an Unusual Environment," The Peace Corps and the Behavioral Sciences, p. 564.) In other cases, using native instructors yielded very good results. A mechanism

for a continuing exchange of experience among major institutions training personnel for overseas service would be beneficial to all concerned.

Military and civilian agencies might collaborate in developing certain basic training aids for schools preparing for overseas service, the existing training aids being, in the opinion of many scholars, far less good than they ought to be. In some cases, materials prepared for one agency might be adapted for use by another. For instance, a pamphlet prepared for the International Cooperation Administration (Arthur Raper, Some Points for Consideration of Technicians Working with Villagers, Washington, 1960), which has been called one of the briefest and best training aids available, probably would have applications for military advisors. The same is true of the Peace Corps handbook (Working Effectively Overseas, Washington, 1961).

The effectiveness of training courses for military advisors could be increased by additional research among graduates of these courses. In this way, for example, one might learn to what extent training can develop the multicultural personality, reinforce cultural empathy, and provide a basis for accelerated learning in the field. Why do some advisors continue language study after reaching their post while others do not? Why do some attempt to shut themselves up in a simulated American environment while others learn to operate effectively in the local society? Since most of the necessary learning must take place on the job, the extent to which training is able to provide the needed motivation and facilitate this learning

process will make a significant difference in the effectiveness of the entire advisory operation.

Research to strengthen the political component of training programs would also be desirable. Military advisors are one of the most important channels for the communication of political information between the United States and the host country, and they are in touch with segments of the indigenous population that are not reached by any other U.S. personnel. How can they help the personnel with whom they are working develop a sense of national purpose? What training would assist them in doing this? The existing literature on psychological operations scarcely touches such questions as these at all. Furthermore, such questions must be answered largely from the field rather than from headquarters. The experience of military advisors is one of the major resources of national policy, and ways should be found to make the most of it.

No matter how much thought is given to the selection and training of military advisors, however, the brevity of orientation courses that can be given them and the short tours of duty of the advisors will limit their effectiveness. Several things might be done about this. In The Overseas Americans, Harlan Cleveland and his collaborators point out that special courses given by the agencies involved in overseas operations should not be expected to do the whole training job. Even before the personnel concerned reach these specialized courses, colleges should have laid the groundwork for overseas service by emphasis on subjects relating to international affairs. A corollary for the military establishment is that greater emphasis

on training for overseas duty might be given by the whole system of military schools. It is probable that an increasing proportion of military personnel will serve in capacities that bring them into close contact with foreign armed forces and civilian populations. A broad base of international service training would benefit not only military advisors but a wide range of other specialists as well.

EVALUATION AND THE CUMULATION OF EXPERIENCE

Officials concerned with foreign aid programs have sometimes observed with some annoyance that each project seems to start at almost the same level of ignorance as those that went before. Administrators have not learned how to cumulate the lessons of past failures and successes, and little time or money has been budgeted for this purpose.

Nevertheless, the problems of collating experience and assessing the success of both individuals and programs overseas have been given extensive attention by civilian agencies and individual researchers. Some of this work is transferable to the military context. For example, a specialist on intercultural communication has suggested a number of specific questions for use in evaluating the social and psychological component of a person's field experience: Describe the persons you got to know best. Why was this? Were they compatriots or foreigners? How free were you to discuss personal problems with these friends? How was a friendship formed? What were the strengths or limitations of the person involved? On what

matters did you agree or disagree? What persons did you find it most difficult to deal with? What must a consultant do to get along with people in _____? (Mottram Torre, Selection of Personnel for International Service, pp. 102-103.) A large proportion of the currently available evaluation studies are summarized in the following sources:

Albert E. Gollin, "Evaluating Programs and Personnel Overseas: A Review of Methods and Practices," Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, February 1963 (unpublished).

Gordon MacGregor, "The Experiences of American Scholars in Countries of the Near East and South Asia," Conference Board of Associated Research Councils, Washington, 1957 (unpublished).

Hollis W. Peter and Edwin R. Henry, "Measuring Successful Performance Overseas," International Development Review, Vol. 3, No. 3, October 1961.

UNESCO, "Evaluation Techniques," International Social Science Bulletin, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1955.

In addition, evaluation studies of the A.I.D. participant training program are currently being conducted by the Bureau of Social Science Research in Washington, and a number of research projects to evaluate Peace Corps performance are in progress. To the degree that techniques for evaluating and cumulating experience in military assistance programs can be developed, a spiral of improved performance and effectiveness can be expected.