

Police Advising in Vietnam
Recorded 22 November 2015 in Rockville Maryland
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Introduction:

My name is Lieutenant Colonel, retired, Clarence Bouchat. This is an interview on the 22nd of November in 2015 that is following an earlier interview that was given on the 16th of October 2015. The second set of questions follow the first set and both sets were composed by Penn State University – Harrisburg students under Professor Jennifer Gibbs. I'll let you each introduce yourselves. Col Nguyen, would you introduce yourself?

My name is Nguyen Tan Cong, Charles.

My name is Nam T. Chung.

Very good.

I. AID EXPERIENCE

1. 1:11. Lt Col (Ret) Bouchat: Let me ask the first question then. In the interview, the last interview, there was an interesting story about the United States giving you fire trucks. (AID Experience, question 2.) Because there was not a fire department in Nha Trang, was fire fighting a responsibility of the police?

[Pause]

Col Nguyen: You know, the police don't have the responsibility to fight the fire, right? But I use the offer, I take advantage of the offer from Mr Clark [USAID liaison] to give... to fire...

Bouchat: to fight fires?

Nguyen: fire trucks because I think the police can use this to render service to my people. I think that Nha Trang district... only police have use of the fire truck, the only one.

Bouchat: So you didn't just want to arrest people, you wanted to do something good for the people too. It was outreach.

Mrs Chung: Can you repeat the question?

Bouchat: That wasn't a question, it was a clarification. You didn't just want to arrest people, you wanted to help the people, so better community relations.

Nguyen: Yes, it is our responsibility to render service to the people.

Bouchat: Good, very good. So the fire trucks were used to fight fires, but did the policemen act as firemen? So in other words the police under you manned the fire trucks.

[Translation]

Nguyen: That is because of him, I have two teams to fight the fire trained by the Air Force, American Air Force. Thanks to Mr Clark he takes the teams to the Air Force to American Air Force to train.

Bouchat: Which air base?

Nguyen: Nha Trang Air Base. We have a big air base there.

- a. Were the firetrucks used to fight fires or did the police find another purpose for them? [Question not asked by the interviewer]
2. 4:30. Bouchat: Could you tell us about a time when you and Mr. Clark had a disagreement about changes recommended by the foreign police advisors?
Nguyen: We don't have a disagreement, we have a discussion. Like I tell you about the new jeep. Mr Clark ask me what I think to use the new jeeps. I told him I send the new jeeps, the new ones, to the remote district because they don't have... the terrain ... and

because they have only one jeep and they don't have a [maintenance] shop, and they need a jeep, a good jeep to patrol.

Bouchat: a reliable jeep, they need a reliable jeep.

Nguyen: Yes, because in Nha Trang I have a shop I can repair the jeeps, but they don't have a shop. Mr Clark he did not have an objection. What I raise that night we have to talk many times. He think I have reason. He don't have an objection.

Bouchat: Did you have any disagreements then with your CIA advisor Mr Neagoy, or with your military advisor?

Nguyen: It is the same thing. When we have an operation, I discuss with him the way to use the operation. He don't have an objection. When after the operation, after the operation go the good way, he collect that information and he don't give me objection.

3. 7:18. Bouchat: Besides equipment, what kinds of advice did the foreign police advisors offer? Did they offer advice on tactics? Did they offer advice on personnel? ?

Nguyen: To be frank, they don't, I ask them to discuss with me the way I used it, good or not. I ask them, they don't ask me. I intend to do like this and like this, and they don't have an objection... I mean we have discussion

Bouchat: OK yes discussion, but no arguments.

Nguyen: Discussion...

Bouchat: but no arguments

Nguyen: ... because if they have objection they tell me .

II. POLICE ADMINISTRATION AND LEADERSHIP

Management style and leadership strategies

1. 8:31. Bouchat: In the interview, you reported successful policing tactics because no terrorist attacks occurred in your territory. (Management style, question 1) Would you tell us about some of the strategies you used?

Nguyen: It depends. We use a tactic in general, the tactic differs a little bit, differs a little bit because if we are in Nha Trang or Saigon. Because in Nha Trang... in Saigon we have many eyes [to watch] and we have to be careful.

Bouchat: Friendly eyes helping you, or against you?

Nguyen: I meant you have the American press, the press, and the political operation and many people to watch over you. That is why we have to be more careful.

- o 10:01. Bouchat: If you did have a terrorist threat, or if there was a threat to a terrorist attack, how would you advise your police to respond? What did you tell your police:

Nguyen: If there was a threat of terrorist attack? How would you advise your police, what would you direct your police to use. You ask about the communist or the judiciary. You have to... you remember, to counter terrorist and to counter crime. You ask me, which?

Bouchat: Counter-terrorist.

Nguyen: That depends. Now, because I have a deputy for the mission police, he presents to me every day information about the activity of the communists and I discuss with him the way to counter. Because for some... some activity we have to wait because if we wait a little bit for a time we can arrest many people. And sometimes we have to act because if we don't act... like a Paris you see [refers to the just passed 13 November 2015 Paris terror attacks] you see for the

activity sometimes we are not sure we don't have the complete control. If we don't have complete control we have to act. To show our activity [unintelligible] checkpoint, government checkpoint and especially the mobile checkpoints quick, quick, because we have information about activity of the enemy, but we cannot arrest them because we don't know but the anniversary of the VC. We do many checkpoints mobile, mobile checkpoints like we have the jeeps and concertina [wire], and we have information about the activity of the communists, but we don't know where but we know they usually go this way [a known route]. We make the concertina and two or three police with the help of the police field force we make the checkpoint and make show the people to go around. For about one and one hour we replace to the other location, but we do four or five jeep [unintelligible] everywhere the mobile checkpoint...

Bouchat: So you enclose them

Nguyen: yes so we show people after we go out we, combine the fixed checkpoints and the mobile checkpoint all this activity to deter the enemy. With the help of God too.

2. 15:35. Bouchat: In the interview, you suggested that more diplomacy would be needed in Saigon City compared to Nha Trang City during times of conflict. (Management style, question 1) Could you tell us more about that? What was the difference?

Nguyen: The difference is because in Saigon I told my police to be careful when you show [present yourself to] people be more correct. Don't do like you do in Nha Trang, you have to ask politely, politely.

Bouchat: And that was because there were more politicians and more diplomats, and more media...

Nguyen: ...and that was because you have the press, the international press, and operation, political operation. If we don't have too much information we have to do the mobile checkpoints only with jeep and with bicycle too. We have patrol with jeep and bicycle. With the motor bicycles we insert into, you know, the narrow...

Bouchat: these are bicycles...

Chung: the motorized bicycles...

Bouchat: Ah the mopeds, the motorized bicycle, yes.

Nguyen: ... the narrow road because we have to calculate you know that one goes this way and one goes this way.

Bouchat: Your hands are pointing as they come together [hand movement of two forces converging on the middle]

Nguyen: Check, check, check. We have to, you know, [translation] we want to show everywhere that we are everywhere with mobile check.

Bouchat: A show of force. Ok, was this true also...

Nguyen: Except when we don't have information. When we have information we stay quiet. We let the communist come.

- 18:53. Bouchat: Was this true when responding to crime during peacetime, too? Before the insurgency, the Viet Cong started did you do the same things in peacetime? Was this true when responding to crimes during times of peace?
Nguyen: Yes... During times of peace? Yes, a little bit.
Bouchat: The same thing?
Nguyen: Yeah.

3. 19:37. Bouchat: In the interview, you described the police force you commanded. Could you tell us more about the special branch police persons? And can you make a distinction between special branch, civil, and field force what did each of them do?
- Nguyen: The police field force they don't arrest. They don't arrest, but usually when we have an operation, operation they encircle and the mission police they proceed into the house. But the field force police they surround.
- Bouchat: And the field force has the weapons, the big weapons?
- Nguyen: They do the combat, like a SWAT [Special Weapons and Tactics] team. But the police mission they go into the house they have information, they arrest.
- Bouchat: Did the field force wear uniforms?
- Chung: They have like a fatigue.
- Bouchat: ... a military kind of uniform.
- Nguyen: They like the ranger, like the ranger, [coughs] they have the ranger program [highly trained infantry soldiers, referring to police recruited from these military units] and recruit them into the program.
- Bouchat: ... and special branch was the infiltration but they also have the laboratories and things like that.
- Nguyen: Yeah, under the police, the mission police, they collect information. Where we get information, where we get our information by we pay, you know, we pay some people and we pay. We penetrate like in the dancing [clubs], and we pay our taxi girls to report their conversations. And the taxi, we pay the taxi [drivers] if they have something, or if they see something, if they hear something they report to us, and then we sent the police, the mission police, no uniform to do the infiltration.
- Bouchat: What was the third branch, the civilian branch in the police? The police in regular uniforms the traffic police.
- Nguyen: In Vietnamese?
- Bouchat: In Vietnamese, in French, or in English – any of the three.
- Nguyen: In Vietnamese, in American the mission police in Vietnamese *con sak na basis*, mission police. *con sak but da bek* is special.

Deployment strategies; addressing with crime and war

1. 24:30. Bouchat: Moving to deployment strategies, how were your police used? How did they patrol the district and interact with people, the regular police. Did they go about in vehicles, did they walk through, did they talk to people, did they stay aloof?
- Nguyen: We pay some people, we pay some because were too much like... where we see have a correction for action information where there are no good people we pay people there to collect reports. We have to pay.
- Bouchat: How about the regular police, the regular police those who investigated criminals or those who directed traffic? What were their duties?
- Nguyen: Like I told you, we have two deputies. One in charge of communist activity the police mission. And the other deputy is police judiciary, judiciary police they have the right to go in the house. But the police mission they don't have the right to go in the house.
- Chung: Really?
- Nguyen: Yeah, when we are sure we can arrest someone we ask the *procurator*, the attorney, to give the warrant...
- Chung: The district attorney, they have the warrant to search or arrest.
- Nguyen: But, usually we use the police field force to back the police mission because the *procurator*, the attorney,
- Chung: ... district attorney...

Nguyen: use the warrant for police in uniform. the police in uniform that search the house and the police mission in no uniform come and collect because they know which information matters, they know where they hide the *plastique* [explosives], or the claymore mines, or the pistol, or the machine guns. But we use the police uniform [field force?] to back the mission to ask the attorney. The right to pack in some.

Bouchat: What you describe then, is that most of your police acted upon intelligence rather than just going out into the district, walking around and talking to people, so it was more intelligence based than just general interaction. Is that true?

Chung: He doesn't get your question.

Bouchat: What you describe is you would get information and then you send police out to something on the information. Another way of doing this is that your police just go out into the city or into the towns and villages and just talk to people. That is what we call community policing. Did you do any of that?

[Translation]

Nguyen: Repeat again because she doesn't understand.

Bouchat: Did the police ever just go, like walk down the street here, and just say hi to everybody, and stop people and talk to them and ask what is going on, and see who is in trouble? Did the police ever do any of that?

Chung: Oh yes they do, they rely of the community chief, they have the tipster,

Nguyen: because the police mission he live in the character [unsure of work] there. He lives and he has to be friends with the community.

Bouchat: He has to be friends with the community.

Nguyen: He sometimes asks friends to collect information for them. If you have good information they pay.

30:00 Bouchat: I had to ask because everything you said up to now is all based on information you bought, but you also did general policing as well, community policing as well. I didn't want to leave a wrong impression.

- a. Did they patrol the district and interact with people? [Not asked by the interviewer]
 - b. What were their day-to-day responsibilities? [Not asked by the interviewer]
 - c. Did this change when war started? [Not asked by the interviewer]
2. 30:20. Bouchat: From the interview last time, it sounds like you and your police got along well with foreign military forces in your district. (Deployment, question 2) When patrolling with those forces, what would happen if a crime was discovered?
- Nguyen: Where, when? [reads the question partially out loud] With foreign forces?
- Bouchat: Would it just be Vietnamese police that responded to it, or would foreign forces help you?
- Nguyen: They help when only when... like Korean they combine patrols. If we found military, or a Korean, they get drunk...
- Bouchat: Vietnamese and Korean would patrol together but the Korean would only get involved if it was a Korean soldier in trouble because he got drunk or something like that.
- Nguyen: But if they are in trouble they help...
- Bouchat: So if the Vietnamese were working with Vietnamese and they got in trouble the Koreans would help.
- Nguyen: But usually we use them for when the American soldier, American get drunk or Korean get drunk. If we are attacked by the communists they help also.
- a. 32:29. Bouchat: Could you tell us more about the multinational patrols? (For example, What were they looking for besides drunk soliders? What would they

do? What was their mission? Was there anything else besides looking for communists and drunk foreign soldiers?

Nguyen: You mean the combined patrols?

Bouchat: The combined patrols.

Nguyen: I think really they did patrol with us, combined patrol with us, when they have an event. When the Korean or American do something wrong, but when attacked they would help.

Bouchat: Would you consider these multinational patrols successful? The patrols were successful, right?

Chung: Yes they were successful [translation].

Nguyen: Because we don't get involved with the American drunk, or the Korean drunk we want them [foreign police force] to intervene.

Bouchat: They take care of their own problems.

Nguyen: If we sometimes...before... the patrols, the combined patrols, we saw an American get drunk or a Korean get drunk we can arrest [them], but we don't take them to the police station. We arrest them, we call them [foreign police forces] to take care... we try not to do something, you know, something wrong... but we have the right to arrest them if they do something wrong, like they brutalize a taxi girl, we can arrest.

Police academy teaching experience

1. 35.10. Bouchat: When you went through the police academy, how long was your training?

Nguyen: My training?

Bouchat: Your training, when you were a young policeman.

Nguyen: My training with the French police, I was in the *Surete Federale* like the FBI here, the *Surete Federale*, Federal Surety. Federal means control in Indochina. We have a federal police, French police, not police in uniform, field force, special police, the federal police. They control Vietnam, the whole Vietnam before, Laos and Kampuchea [Cambodia]. But in [unintelligible] country they have federal police, in [unintelligible] country.

Chung: but in different chapters in different countries of Indochina. acting ... in the same do in Chochin China...

Bouchat: in Hue?

Chung: in south.

Nguyen: Cochin in Cochin China

Nguyen: I would train, I would train before, like in boxing, but like Japanese but before the Japanese... like Jiu Jitsu. Not Tae Kwon Do, Tae Kwon Do now we go, but in French boxing. and cord [translate] you [looking for words and motioning with his hands] have to...

Bouchat: Climb a rope? Climbing...

Nguyen: you know the drop

Bouchat: like rappelling?

Chung: yes rappelling!

Nguyen: I am exempt [from some police training]. I get a good note [grades] that is why they use, before ... before they train me for criminal investigation. I get criminal investigation. In French, *Investigation Criminal*. Before I was in the police officer, not the mission police. After the colonel, the French colonel you are up for the police reassignment. They assign me to the police mission ... the police investigation.

Bouchat: If you were not exempt how long would training normally take for other young policeman. Three months, six... How long would training be for other policemen?

[Translation]

Nguyen: It depends. If you training like a policeman, three weeks long. No, but for, the police you have to train for two months. But I am trained for commanding, not as a policeman.

Bouchat: You are trained as an officer.

Nguyen: Yeah, when I get the exempt[ion] I am, my nomination is as inspector, inspector.

Bouchat: How long did the field force train? How long did the field force train?

Nguyen: The field force train like the ranger. We put them in the rangers.

Bouchat: You take them out of the rangers, how long did they train as police?

Nguyen: After we train them for anti-terrorist, about two months. Anti demonstration, anti-terrorist, because they... you know the government ...

[translation]

Chung: Under the tunnel.

Nguyen: [writing] Yeah, and for me I became the commander. My nomination as Inspector, inspector jun la guerre. You are inspector, but you are not an inspector.

Bouchat: In training, Inspector in training.

Nguyen: You have to work one or two years, and if you are good they give you duty, you qualify. Because they can let you out [dismiss you].

2. What were the physical requirements before the training? During the training? (As reference, we're studying the police hiring process in the US, and applicants must be able to meet certain physical standards.) [Question not asked by the interviewer]
3. 43:17. Bouchat: As a police leader, how could you tell if someone was eligible for the academy? [pause] What characteristics or what traits?
Nguyen: Many, many, I don't know how many.
Chung: He was not in that field. He was not in that field.
Nguyen: They don't let me know about that.
Bouchat: So you weren't part of selecting. OK.
 - a. 44:01. Bouchat: Do you know, though, how many applicants made it into the academy and how many made it through the academy?
Chung: He was not in that field. OK.
4. 44:10. Bouchat: Could you make recommendations to change how the academy taught the cadets because you did some teaching as well. So are there any changes you recommended to the Vietnamese police academy?
Chung: He does that training often, but they are already policemen. But not the new recruits.
Bouchat: Ah, I see, so it was a higher level training.
Chung: He just gives courses in special police theory, but not the full scale teaching. Just one topic, you know.
Nguyen: Because you know even the police, before I come to the police mission I taught the *Investigation Crimnelle*, it means criminal investigation, police field force. Because you know I am trained for the commander according to the exempt[ion], they train me for command not for regular police. With the regular police you have to train for three months.
5. 45:45. Bouchat: You may not be able to answer question five but I will ask it and you, and you can say no. What were the differences in training between your time as a police

training lecturer in 1961 and in 1973? How did training change between your two times at the academy?

Nguyen: You know I am not specialist about the training. I am not for training. But there is training for my time. I don't like training. I don't like professor. I don't like it, I like to work in the field.

Note from interviewer: Col Nguyen is stating that he was exempt from basic police training since he was selected for an inspector's track and was therefore exempt from formal police training. As an inspector in training most of his education was on-the-job training. As an academy instructor he taught seasoned policemen higher level topics, much like the US military teaches established senior leaders at its war colleges.

Chung: What is the deviance?

Bouchat: Next question then, deviance is the difference. This normal, this is deviance, it goes out to the side, something different. So let's ask the first question about police deviance.

Police deviance

- 4- 47:05. Bouchat: How did the Indochina war affect police corruption? In other words before the Viet Cong started, how was corruption different or was there corruption?

Nguyen: You know, when I was in the police, French police, not too many corruption. You know why, because in peacetime, under the French we have... I have a good salary...

Chung: ... and standard of living of the normal police.

Nguyen: Not too much corruption.

Chung: It was pretty good, you know.

Bouchat: Even for regular police, it was pretty good?

Nguyen: After the occupation, after World War II, the French were very [unintelligible]. The French is the power. Before the World War II the French were the power. Like the British.

Bouchat: like the British in Malaya, like the franc. So while the police were well paid there was little corruption. Then as the war came the police were not as well paid relatively so there was corruption.

Chung: Cost of living rising. Life was tougher. You know, he remembers that some American mentioned that [translation]...

Nguyen: An officer, an American he said if American police get the salary of the Vietnamese police they would...

Bouchat: They would be corrupt too.

Chung: They would kill their father!

2. 49:53. Bouchat: While having foreign military agencies in Vietnam during the war, did you witness any police corruption from the foreign military police officers? Was there also corruption in the Korean police or the American military police, the MPs?

Nguyen: No, I did not witness, really I did not witness this, but [pause]

Chung: No, none. Because the foreign service, the American foreign service pays well. Really well, yeah, so there is no reason for corruption.

Bouchat: Even the Army police, the Army MPs?

Chung: The police, the military or anything. They had a very good standard of living. Life was so good for the military or the foreign service or civilians, you know. The cost of living in Vietnam is so low. In my example, I got a chauffeur, a guard, two or three maids in my house. And you know how much I pay for the maids? Around ten dollars per

month. So, cost of living there was so low, life was easy, gasoline was cheap. But it stopped in [19]72, gasoline jumps up like that.

Bouchat: During to the oil crisis [the global Arab oil embargo].

3. 52:06. Bouchat: Did your military advisors have any strategies to offer regarding police corruption and/or police deviance? And what was it?

Nguyen: It is difficult, difficult. I tell you one story [translation] you know...

Chung: Draft to avoid the draft, you know, the military draft?

Nguyen: You know, when we patrol, when we patrol we find young man because... I ask them to go in the army, they don't go in the army -- they skip. The police arrest them and because they are from a rich family they pay 200 *dong*, Vietnamese dollars, to the police and the police accept.

Bouchat: So, they bribed them.

Nguyen: Yeah, but it happened money like this [makes a motion of slipping money into someone's palm]. I told my Mr. Do Kien Nhien [Chief Judge or Magistrate of Saigon] the prefect. I told you about him, Do Khien Nhien, you remember?

Bouchat: Yes, I know who you are talking about, yes.

Nguyen: I told him, the prefect. In the jeep are the [civilian] police only, you have to ask the military to put the military police in the jeep with the police because in order if the [civilian] police take money from the young man, they want to skip the army, you have the military police. He [the prefect] accept the use of military police on my jeeps. He [the prefect] tell to everybody, Commissioner Cuong [Col Nguyen] good, everything is good because if we [the civilian police] take the money, you have the police, the military police, takes it away -- he, you know, he praised me, Commissioner Cuong he has a good idea. Two months after he [the prefect] tells me you don't have a good idea.

Chung: Double, double pay!

Nguyen: Because when to the police take the young man offer 200 the police and the military police, he has to pay 4.

Bouchat: So what happened was you put military police and civilian police together to catch draft dodgers, and instead of paying a 200 dollar bribe they [draft dodgers] now have to pay a 400 dollar bribe [200 to each police in the jeep].

Chung: Yeah, that is why I was laughing.

Nguyen: You know, the military police and the civilian police they are the same. They are men. They need money to live.

Bouchat: Ok, I understand.

Nguyen: You understand me? Yes? It is my idea.

a. If so, what? [Question not asked by the interviewer]

b. Were these effective? [Question not asked by the interviewer]

Violence against police

1. 56:42. Bouchat: Were there any notable incidents of violence against the police before the Vietnam War (by the citizens or anyone else)?

Nguyen: No. No, I don't know when. But everywhere violence against police, no.

Chung: The Vietnamese people are very, very *pacifist*.

Nguyen: I think I have the blessing of God. The police, the police under my command and the police chiefs are good, good. Everything is OK. Before I come to the capitol police, many *assassinats* [murders], and like [translation]... Many incidents, many incidents.

Bouchat: ...and no violence against police before the war.

- 58:17. Bouchat. What about during the war, violence from extremists, terrorists or communists?
 [Pause]
 Nguyen: I think generally by terrorists and communists, not the population.
 Bouchat: What kind of acts...
 Nguyen: But during the precincts, nothing happen.
 Bouchat: What did the terrorists and what did the communists do against the police?
 [Translation]
 Nguyen: Before me, they the communists, they use grenades, Molotov [cocktails], yeah, [translation] but I don't know why. That is why the policemen they say chief commissioner [referring to himself] they are in good hands. Nothing, nothing happens.
 Bouchat: Very fortunate.
 Nguyen: Like Mr Clark during my two years with him in Nha Trang, nothing happens.

- 1:00:23. Bouchat: Throughout Vietnam, when the police did experience violence were there certain places more prone to violence? [repeated]
 Chung: Oh yeah, yeah, in the center, in the center.
 Bouchat: Why, what was the difference?
 Chung: Because the communists stay there for a long time, you know. Lots of communists.
 Nguyen: Yeah, in Region 2.
 Chung: Region 1 and 2...
 [Translation]
 Bouchat: and Da Nang in Region 1?
 Chung: and 1 and 2.
 Bouchat: Is that because that is where most of the military was?
 Nguyen: Because, you know that is why I told you [in the first 2015 interview]. I am not part of any political party. It did help me. Because you know when I receive the application to Nha Trang, a commissioner, my friend, he told me you don't go, because if you go you will fail. I ask why. He told me, first you are Catholic, because at Nha Trang during the Ngo Dinh Diem [first president of South Vietnam ruling during much religious tensions], you know, Buddhist, you know Catholics are for Mr Diem, they fight against the Catholics, and you are Catholic and they won't like you. Second you are a citizen, French citizen. They don't like, because before they are against the French. Third, you are from the south. Here in Nha Trang always the commissioner of the police is from there. I received the orders, I have to execute [transfer to his new assignment in Nha Trang]. I got there and nothing. Because this time the Buddhist like me. Because each time the Buddhists have a feast and they invite me, I come. I come.

- 1:03:40. Bouchat: Let me ask that question another way. Was the violence ... when the police did experience violence were there certain divisions that had more violence than others? Did the field force have than special branch or than the uniformed police? Did special branch have more violence or did field force have more violence against them?
 Nguyen: Usually the violence with the police in uniform. Because the police in uniform they have to arrest. Like you, the demonstrations against the human the

police field force, you know, have to repel not to arrest, usually with the police in uniform. That is why I ask them, the police in uniform when you did disperse the demonstration the tear, *des grenade lacrymogenes* [tear gas], when you go out [when they flee] don't pursue them more.

Bouchat: So the uniform police had most.

Nguyen: Yeah.

2. 1:05:22. Bouchat: In the interview, your last interview, you said that the police know the danger of the job. How dangerous was the job of the police? [repeat]

Nguyen: I think not too much. Because when I was a police chief I don't see too much danger. Don't be extremist, the extremist, you know... difficult... I don't know why, where I go nothing is wrong.

Bouchat: How about other police up in District 1 and District 2 were those dangerous jobs? [repeat] The other districts outside of yours, were those dangerous? [repeat]

Chung: Region or district?

Bouchat: I'm sorry, Region 1 or Region 2.

Nguyen: Region 1, yes, because they have nothing. They have only the market but it is just one [in the village]. You have the palace, Presidential Palace...

Chung: No, *Ba* [father], Region 1...

Nguyen: I think Region 1, ah,

Bouchat: Region 1 was more dangerous, was it very dangerous?

Chung: Yes, it was closer to the DMZ [Demilitarized Zone].

Nguyen: the border.

Bouchat: Because more Viet Cong were in Region 1, and that made it more dangerous.

Nguyen: More Buddhists, more Buddhists.

3. 1:07:57. Bouchat: In the interview, Mrs. Chung mentioned that the police are never popular. Did public attitude toward police change during the war?

Nguyen: No. The police were never popular everywhere. In the United States, in France, everywhere.

Bouchat: Did it get better or did it get worse as the war went on?

Nguyen: I think, you talk about Vietnam?

Bouchat: In Vietnam, in Vietnam.

Nguyen: I think in Vietnam it is better, better before I leave Vietnam [in 1975].

Bouchat: Better than the United States? From 1962 to 1972 was it better or worse?

Nguyen: In Saigon, nothing, nothing happen. You see you have many demonstrations at the Congress. Because in the first president you have many things at the presidential palace, office of the prime minister, congress, all the embassies, French embassy and American [all under Col Nguyen's jurisdiction in Saigon]. But when I was there, nothing. You have many demonstrations, but I tell my police not to pursue. Not to arrest because before me the commissioner comes from the Army and they arrest many people. They arrest one or two especially the leader not the mob too much, the students.

4. 1:10:05. Bouchat: In the last interview, you stated that you agreed with the French ambassador's wife that tear gas [Col. Nguyen used the word 'grenade'] was used too often by the police from your story. Do you think that was because the Vietnamese police were prevalent because the Vietnamese police were a militarized field force? [Translation]

Nguyen: The police repulse the demonstrations. You know, they have to go, even the family in the hotel, they have to go. You know because too much *grenade lacrymogenes*, tear gas. That is why I ask the commandant, my commandant, he

command the police field force. When you disperse, don't use too much. When you shot only three pieces shot. If they don't go, three more. If they go, let them go. I see I want him to see in the video [of the event] before I come. They use tear gas they must go, everybody shot this is why people mill around they [can smell it].

Bouchat: Why do you think the field force commander used so much tear gas, though? Was it bad training?

Nguyen: No.

[Translation]

Bouchat: Bad training.

Nguyen: That is why...

Chung: The French ambassador...

Nguyen: When he says when your police disperse the demonstrators, we injure the Caravan Hotel we have to go out here, we cannot stay there.

Bouchat: You said then the police were not trained well enough, not because they were too military-like.

Nguyen: No, because before me the military the colonel, the general they become, you know, the police chief: The colonel, the marine colonel, the paratroop, they don't know they ask the police to shoot, you know, to show they are for the government. They...

Chung: They overdo it.

Bouchat: They overdo it because they are thinking too much like a military force and not a police force.

Chung: Yeah, they use the military mostly military air force to be police chief.

Nguyen: And the Marines too.

5. 1:14:06. Bouchat: So that actually is a good lead in for question 5 then. Do you feel that a militarized police force results in a bad relationship with the public?

Nguyen: Yes.

1:14:45. Bouchat: OK, then the follow on question is because the Vietnamese police used a more militarized approach to policing, did you experience any direct confrontation with the adversaries of South Vietnam the Viet Cong for instance? Did the police fight against actual North Vietnamese forces? Because the North Vietnamese would infiltrate regular units.

Nguyen: There was no direct confrontation between the police and the North Vietnamese military. We confront with, not with military, but with...

Bouchat: guerillas...

[Translation]

Nguyen: Terrorists, yes, terrorists from the north. Not the military.

Was there any direct confrontation between police officers and North Vietnamese Military operatives? [Question not asked by the interviewer]

Police stress, suicide, and morale during peace and wartime

1. 1:15:35. Bouchat: You said in the last interview that the police had a high morale. How were they able to do that? How?

Nguyen: I don't know how. But the police Vietnamese had a good morale.

Bouchat: They weren't paid very well.

Nguyen: They pick in Vietnam, they pick off because of the military. The military has to fight to protect the border, but the police order were in every city and many good.

Bouchat: So the fact that they were living at home, and the fact they were not in the military...

Nguyen: In the city was very good. Nothing happen. But we have different in the forest, not in the ...

Chung: Not the town but in the city.

Bouchat: We keep everything in order. But when the division, the army, they have to fight the division from the north they have to come and they can do.

Bouchat: Was morale different in the villages and in the rural areas for the police?

Chung: That depends on customs and tradition. Because family ties are very good and they support each other. That is why the morale is high. That is not like in America where people live by individuals -- by individual lives. That is why, especially during the holidays, you people have blues, blues you know... [singing] blue, blue my world is blue...

Bouchat: The song [Love is Blue by Johnny Mathis, 1968].

Chung: No consolation, no family ties. But in Vietnam we have friends and we live closely, you know. This is very, very helpful.

Nguyen: You know, even during the Tet offensive [January to February 1968] all of the police stations were attacked, but nothing, they [Viet Cong] can't capture any, except in the Phuoc Tuy [former province in South Vietnam, now Ba Ria-VungTau Province], they were to penetrate... they occupied half of the police station, but I ask the Australians [the Australian Task Force was based there] and two battalions of Australians come to the defense.

Bouchat: Where was this?

Chung: Phuoc Tuy in Region 3.

Bouchat: What was the name of the town? [repeat]

Chung: Phuoc Tuy.

[translation]

Chung: [spelling] Phuoc Tuy

Nguyen: It was a province in my Region 3. But they were to occupy this. But we ask the Americans and ask the Australians because the Australians were near, and they send the battalion...

Bouchat: to help.

2. Were there some officers who struggled with keeping a high morale? If so, what was done to help boost it? [Question not asked by the interview.]

Added Miscellaneous Questions about Media Relations and Military Relations

1:20:30. Bouchat: Earlier we had talked a little bit and you had said that police relations, that your relations with the press, was very good with the media. .

Nguyen: Yes.

Bouchat: Tell me a little more about that. Did they report much about the police? Was all of the reporting good? How did you maintain good relations with the press?

Nguyen: I give orders to all of my officers. When the press comes and the press asks for information you have to talk gently, because before they [the police officers] didn't talk gently. When the press comes they [say] go on go on.... [he motions the press away with his hands], but you have to talk gently. Now, right now, I can't give you information. Maybe in two or three hours or tomorrow, you come and I can give you information.

Because they come and ask for information. It is their job. We have to know this, and try to help them. Don't repulse them, don't tell them something that isn't correct. Now I can't give you [information], because we don't have the complete situation. Maybe tomorrow you come and we can give you. Because some police, you know, they have

idea. They think like the press comes to spy on them. They [the press] come to complete their job. They come to get information. We give them information right now. We have to talk gently.

1:23:13. Bouchat: Another thing you had mentioned that I thought very interesting, was the one thing that American generals asked of you. What was the one thing that American generals asked of you as a police commander?

Nguyen: In Nha Trang, the General Commanding mission forces he asks the police to keep the roads safe for our troops.

Bouchat: Is that because there use to be land mines or attacks on the roads?

Nguyen: Yes, ambush or the mines or grenades.

Bouchat: So that sounds actually very much like what American troops had to worry about in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Nguyen: Yeah, because fighting the enemy is our [military's] job, but keep the roads clear is your [the police] job.

1:24:25. Bouchat: Very good, is there anything else you would like to say? [repeat]

Nguyen: They did my success, I have... I always think about God. God bless me. But, [unintelligible] with everybody... Because I know that certain police chief they are too arrogant. Arrogant.

Bouchat: Arrogant?

Nguyen: Yes, arrogant like this [writes down word to confirm it]. Why? Because we have to know people they are facing their job to have information. We can give them information now or maybe tomorrow but we have to say gently. Not to, that is why I am being gentle with everybody. That is why I think I have success with everybody, with the Army, and everything and no incident.

Bouchat: Excellent, Thank you very much.