STATEMENT OF JACK VAUGHN, DIRECTOR OF THE PEACE CORPS
BEFORE THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,

September 19, 1967

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Annually the Peace Corps computes, analyses and restates for this distinguished Committee a set of understandable measurements. We try to supply the Committee with an accounting, an assessment, and a forecast.

I think our duty entails more than that. For the Peace Corps, an accounting is somewhat like a fossil. It hardly conveys the shape, and never, the spirit of the organism it purports to represent. The nature of our agency is constant renewal: We measure achievement abroad not only in significant performance, but also in positive changes of attitude. Each affects the other. Also, needs abroad hardly are static; the jobs Volunteers do are transformed, become more serious, more structured, more critical. The perspective of college people shifts - no less idealistic, yet much more pragmatic.

And, as an idea which was an experiment becomes an institution, we change too.

Therefore our annual presentation before this Committee must be more than a report of what the Peace Corps does; it

must afford as well, fresh insight into what it is, where it is heading, and where it is heading us.

The agency's work is people. It means much to us, that we are returning to the Treasury $5 million of last year's authorized $110 million, that last year's annual per-Volunteer cost declined $495. But such things don't mean much on a college campus.

We seek to grow this year by some 18%, to a Corps of 17,150 Volunteers and trainees. This will be of greater significance to our anticipated 50,000 applicants than the price we are asking their country to pay: $118.7 million, an increase of 8% over last year.

To Volunteers overseas, it is important that we built up their field support by increasing the size of overseas staff. But to us at home, it means just as much that the Washington staff will be no larger in 1968 than it was in 1963.

Yet not the "leanest" or smoothest of operations could in itself attract the serious consideration of two out of every three college seniors in America. Nor is the draft the answer, for applications continue to parallel the proportion of men and women in the college generation. Nevertheless, the Peace Corps is now the largest single "employer" of new college graduates in the country, despite the fact that we send abroad

only one-fifth of the total number of people who apply.

Seasoned staff members agree that those we do send unquestionably are the best we've seen, and we send them better prepared. Selection concentrates more than ever now on winnowing out unlikely investments before training, making training more economic and far more useful for those who are invited. And in training, we try to build in conditions which encourage self-selection. Such a system is tougher, but in the long run, fairer, both for the applicant and for the Peace Corps.

One dollar out of four pays for training. Therefore nothing receives more attention. Reality, and the even tougher emotional demand of adjustment to reality are injected by moving one-fifth of our training overseas; by applying our own experience directly at new Peace Corps training centers; by sharpening language requirements; and above all, by expanding the number and influence of returned Volunteers in every program.

Yet nearly 29% of the senior class of small Maryhurst College in Oregon applied to the Peace Corps this year - and hardly because they thought selection improved or training toughened. They couldn't care less; nor could 17.1%

of this year's seniors at Stanford, or 19% at Mount St. Joseph in Ohio or 20% at Iona in New York or Linfield in Oregon or 20.4% at Swarthmore in Pennsylvania or 21% at Knox in Illinois.

Rather, these young people are coming to the Peace Corps in 1967 because it is there, a proven idea; an exciting but working reality; not a novelty, hardly underway, but an organization, getting things done. Moreover, it is an expression of themselves - not so much a searching as an affirmation. Just as this nation, something was right about the idea all along. Now it has shape. The Volunteers' identity with the nation is unmistakable. They even seem to dismiss in their minds the idea of the Peace Corps as a government agency. They seem to skip the structure and identify with the spirit - a logically American outlet through which both they and the people they serve abroad "become the very best that is within them to become." In the words of one, "There really always was a Peace Corps. Only now it's tangible."

Results are tangible enough; Peace Corps students - public school children - winning prizes formerly the exclusive preserve of private schools in the Philippines;

a fishing cooperative launched in British Honduras with Peace Corps help, grossing nearly a half-million dollars <u>without</u> Peace Corps help; a half-million children learning through television in Colombia; day-to-day operation of virtually the entire public health program of Micronesia; credit cooperatives tripling in number and membership in Ecuador in just two years.

At times they miss the mark - and when they do it's certain we helped them miss. In last year's School-to-School program, for example, we set out to raise $590,000 to pay for 600 self-help schools in countries where Volunteers serve. In fact, as of August 31, 1967, only $519,000 was raised here, and only 522 schools were either completed or were under construction overseas. Nevertheless, American school children from 567 schools in 42 States now are supporting school construction in 38 other lands. And overseas more than 42,500 villagers are taking part in this program.

We know by now that the Volunteers are good on the job. We also know that their prime skill is their attitude. I have said that our work is people. So is theirs. If they have any specialty at all, it is to convey a sense of the possible.

In doing so, occasionally they confront old ways head on - a mistake, for bureaucracies everywhere regret having more help while enjoying it less. It will be our own job to supply Volunteers with more sophisticated techniques for improving systems from within.

Since we appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last Spring, the Peace Corps passed a critical milestone: On August 31, 1967, the total number of Volunteers overseas or in training was 14,452. But by that date, 14,573 had returned. From this time forward, our alumni will forever outnumber our field strength, and the impact of the Peace Corps idea will have to be reckoned at home, as well as overseas.

Right now, 94% of all returned Volunteers say they would have joined the Peace Corps, knowing what the next two year would entail. Knowing, as I do, just what those years entail, it is clear that some very high grade, high gear and highly motivated talent is becoming available in the U.S. in increasing number. For these same people who saw in Peace Corps service an expression of themselves are finding the same opportunity at home. Our nation will be the better for it.

Over a third return at once to continue their education, enriching the nation's most critical resource in the process. Nearly 19% teach; and I am told that when part-time teaching or teacher-related work is counted, the total is about one-third of all returned Volunteers.

With a shortage of 170,000 teachers in the nation, States and cities are recruiting them for teaching, and no holds barred. In an unprecedented move, the Philadelphia Board of Education is hiring them now by mail from overseas. A total of 200 ex-Volunteers are being sought, most for ghetto elementary schools. New York State has a full-time Office of Peace Corps Affairs, and the State will hire returned Volunteers with or without Peace Corps teaching experience, who are not even certified on a temporary certificate. California has waived normal requirements and grants credit for Peace Corps teaching experience. Requests from many cities became more urgent late last Summer. From Newark, the reasons were unmistakable. "We need them in urban schools," officials said, "and we need them now."

There is more than a paradox to the Peace Corps' direction, yet I would not depart from it: The same spirited people who

hardly acknowledge us as government - who perhaps could not care less for "Washington" or "the bureaucracy" - those very people are becoming a vital force in the achievement of goals "Washington" and the rest of the nation wish so desperately to attain. Time will judge them, but we who have served near them know how to place our bets.

And so long as Peace Corps continues to attract people who see in it, themselves; who serve in it with tangible results; and who leave it, convinced that the idea was right in the first place - in brief, so long as the Peace Corps Volunteer continues to be good news for people overseas and at home, we shall give him his head, reserving our own for costs, contracts and the risks supporting the young inevitably entails.

The Volunteers' own attitude toward risks was evident again recently. Adhering to the fine tradition of Dominican Republic Volunteers who served between the lines, aiding and in turn respected by both sides, Volunteers in disputed regions of Nigeria stuck it out last month until it was just impossible to be of further value to the people they served. Hardship failed to cool their idealism, however: Of the nearly 250 who were withdrawn in recent weeks, over 79% of those with

useful service time ahead elected to continue in other African countries.

Volunteers arriving overseas in many lands this month will enter a variety of new programs designed to make the most of Volunteer potential. In every region, Volunteer jobs have been assessed in terms of relevance to each nation's needs as well as the unique leverage a properly placed Volunteer can supply.

In that light we find programs in Teacher Training and Agriculture particularly attractive; increased host-country interest is developing in those directions. Whether it be the training of secondary level teachers in Tunisia, Botswana, Thailand, Ghana, or Brazil, or primary teachers in Ethiopia, Uganda, the Caribbean, or Nepal, or math-science teachers in Afghanistan, or rural in-service teachers in the Dominican Republic or Honduras, teacher training enables Volunteers to enliven and enrich education for students in numbers they could never hope to reach before. And such programs are clear recognition by officials overseas the Peace Corps Volunteers can be expected to perform well at influential assignments entailing a good deal of sophistication and sensitivity.

Agriculture offers a very fruitful opportunity for Volunteers to work closely with people exactly where needs are

greatest. Lacking large numbers of agricultural graduates, however, we have had to develop a strategy of our own, turning unskilled university graduates into genuinely useful agriculturists overseas. Briefly, the strategy entails specialization in every aspect of the one or two crops comprising the critical agricultural target in the country of assignment. Sugar beets in Iran, wheat in Afghanistan, potatoes and onions in Ceylon, rice in Sierra Leone, Nepal and the Philippines - these and other crops in 30 nations are the objective of approximately 2800 Volunteers working in agriculture and agriculture related assignments. Wherever possible, hybrid high-yield crops are being introduced: for example, hybrid corn in the State of Mysore, India; the International Rice Institute's new I.R. 8 in the Philippines. The latter, incidentally, holds promise of 8 to 10 times traditional harvests.

Volunteer jobs in agriculture and Peace Corps objectives are well matched: Skilled and unskilled Volunteers start from scratch overseas, working at very primitive levels of agricultural development, introducing the crop, teaching the use of fertilizers and pest controls. They do so at the

lowest useful level - invariably, the farmer or the farm agent. They live in the villages, with the farmers - an ideal arrangement in which human relationships essential to Peace Corps work can flourish.

In just such conditions Volunteers everywhere have proven worth the trust - and, worth the investment. New countries need them. South Korea, Guyana, Paraguay, Chad, Botswana, Mauritania and Libya joined the list of Peace Corps countries last year. Programs are getting under way now for The Gambia, Dahomey, Tonga, Fiji, Upper Volta, Ceylon, Western Samoa and Lesotho.

Expansion for the Peace Corps, however, is hardly a process of adding new nations. Rather, it is a process of regulating momentum - seeking orderly growth to take advantage of hard-won experience. Last year, for example, the Peace Corps obligated approximately $5 million less than was authorized by the Congress. A great portion of that sum is in response to higher selection standards set last year, requiring 7% fewer trainees to meet program needs. Another portion represents shifts in operation to take advantage of changed conditions overseas, allowing programs planned for Program Year 1967 to begin in 1968 instead. And another portion represents country

programs reduced or discontinued. Such changes are inevitable as we learn how better to prepare for growth.

And growth - momentum, taking useful advantage of hard distance travelled - such merited growth is uppermost in our minds as we come before this distinguished Committee with but a single line of legislative proposal this year. That is: To amend the present bill which would authorize $115.7 million for the Peace Corps, by adding $3 million to authorize the President's request of $118.7 million.

Simply, we need that $3 million for orderly growth - not just for the sake of growth alone, but for sound building on footings already in place. When I began today, I said that the nature of our agency was constant renewal. That is the heart of the matter: the more than 7,000 Volunteers sent abroad in 1966 have done their work well enough to merit that the work be continued. Training for their replacements must begin in Fiscal Year 1968. Volunteers are getting somewhere; they ought to continue.

But a share of the $3 million is also needed to continue to grow - to afford a modest increase in the training input this year. Without it, there is just no question that we will be dealing with a new set of decisions about the Peace Corps -

a settling down, a leveling off.

For if we lose funds from the President's request, we have no other way to absorb the impact except in the size of the Peace Corps.

Ours is a deliberately lean business - not only because we just ought to operate with care, but also because it is the most visible way we can remind trainees and Volunteers alike that we share the discipline we ask of them. We have sliced and pared and carried costs down to a level where further economies and cost reductions, even if they were possible in any useful degree, simply would not add up to enough cash to make the difference required for increased training strength.

At stake are approximately 1,000 new assignments overseas. Moreover, as we have learned that Peace Corps Volunteers are articles of enduring value, it means a leveling off of service we are just learning to appreciate at home. I urge that what the Congress and the nation have so well begun ought to be allowed to flourish; and what we sought, to work in other lands, continue to grow in value for our own land.

On both sides of the ocean, I think we can agree with sentiments I heard in a small seaside town in Jamaica. I

I met the president of a small fishing cooperative flourishing with Peace Corps help. In the soft tones of broad Jamaican, he said,

"You sen' mon from United States, an' he make us united. You sen' mon from Peace Corps, an' he give us peace. This is firs' time anybody come to work for us in 350 years."

Thank you.