

## CHAPTER X

### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRAMS

Economic and social development programs in Vietnam since 1954 have been numerous and varied. This chapter is concerned with rurally-oriented programs developed or amended to speak to the peasant situation in the atmosphere of mounting insurgency. Many other significant projects for economic and social development in Vietnam, not addressed to the rural areas, will be omitted.

The provincial technical services of the government endured greatly increased administrative burdens as enormous amounts of materials and money arrived in the provinces for economic and social programs. When the counterinsurgency buildup began in 1962, many technical services had only one or two men as their professional staff and perhaps a few clerks. There had never been enough budget for gasoline and automobile maintenance. Many unused vehicles could be found stored in garages, waiting for next year's maintenance allowance from Saigon so they could be put in operation again.

Security conditions further weakened the rural operations. Many officials were reluctant to travel in certain areas. Rural development programs were not new to Vietnam. The national Civic Action Commission, allied by 1962 with the Directorates of Information and Youth as the Secretariat of State for Civic

Action, had been promoting community projects on a shoestring budget, without the influence of United States advisors.<sup>1</sup> However, the Civic Action cadres had been spread thin after the intensive efforts in the former Viet-Minh areas and Land Development centers. The local Republic Youth organization was regularly utilized for volunteer labor in these rural community projects.<sup>2</sup>

By late 1964, in Quang Nam (and many other provinces,) the national ministries finally authorized large local field staffs for agriculture, animal husbandry, and other technical services to carry out the ambitious new programs. Ironically, by this time the Viet-Cong had gained control of most of the lowland areas in Quang Nam, and the large extension staffs then available could not fully be utilized.

Arrival of American and other allied technicians, engineering teams, and military civic action programs further complicated the operation of economic and social programs. During January and February of 1965, booming construction projects had inflated costs of local materials in Long An by 40 per cent, seriously affecting the buying power of the regular peasant consumers.<sup>3</sup> In Quang Nam, high prices paid by an American contractor for broken rock used in road construction

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<sup>1</sup>Described in Chapter IV.

<sup>2</sup>Donnell, "Politics in Vietnam," op. cit. p. 262.

<sup>3</sup>AID province report, Long An, February 1965.

around the Danang air base forced a year's delay in the building of a key province road. The new and higher rock prices in the bids submitted to the province did not conform to the obsolete formulas of the Public Works Ministry in Saigon, which were based on earlier low prices.

### Self-Help Projects

Following the pattern set by the Civic Action cadres of 1954, the strategic hamlet program included the offer of community self-help projects with each completed strategic hamlet, usually amounting to 20,000 to 50,000 VN\$--depending on the wealth of the area. Part of the government contribution was often supplied in materials. The projects were supposed to be the idea of the hamlet people, selected by them from different projects discussed in an open meeting of citizens. Usually the project was a school, bridge, road, meeting house, or something else useful to the whole community. After careful, and usually repeated, explanation of the program by pacification cadres, the hamlet committee filled out a form describing the project desired. It listed what the people were willing to give in volunteer labor and locally available materials and what they wanted from the Government. The proposal was forwarded through the District Chief for final approval and release of funds by the Self-help Committee and the Pacification Bureau.

In order to speed the process of approval and release of funds, Tuyen Duc province sent a joint team (American and

Vietnamese) directly to the hamlets to examine proposals and project sites in the presence of the people. Visiting about ten hamlets a week, the team issued the money on the spot and prepared release orders for the hamlet to draw materials from the province warehouse.<sup>4</sup>

In 1964, as the MACV Subsector (District level) advisory teams began to arrive in Vinh Binh province, approvals for self-help projects in one remote district were made by the District Chief and the MACV Subsector Advisor, instead of the Coordinating Committee at the province level. Decentralization of decisionmaking has permitted greater flexibility and speed in approvals and inspection.

Inspection. Corruption and low quality of construction were problems everywhere. Various control systems were developed. In Binh Dinh, the USOM Province Representative, a sturdy former agriculture extension specialist, tested the quality of a cement wall by grasping the blocks with his powerful hands and pulling. If the wall broke, it had to be rebuilt. Similar, but less muscular, inspections were conducted by most representatives as the best means of insuring quality construction. The most universal construction malpractice was use of an insufficient ratio of cement to sand. Regular visits to each construction site by economic cadres were necessary

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<sup>4</sup>Interview with Don Wadley, former USOM Representative, Tuyen Duc, 1965.

as building progressed.

In the smaller provinces, field checks by the USOM Representative were not so difficult to maintain. The large numbers of projects in major provinces, amounting to several hundred at a time, made inspection a major chore requiring a considerable staff.

If inspection was not carried out by Vietnamese and Americans, corruption invariably occurred, either by acts of officials or by community leaders. Multiple contacts within the various communities were the safest means of keeping down corruption. Announcements of project approvals on the local radio, noting exact amounts, tended to discourage pilfering by the various levels of middlemen.

Self-help projects were sometimes "rigged" by various technical services chiefs who wanted their own programs featured. Meeting halls were requested in more than forty of the initial sixty projects submitted in Quang Nam. Field checks indicated that over-eager information cadres had influenced those preparing the applications for the cadres to have facilities in which they could conduct their rallies. Most of the structures were never built because the people did not really want the halls. Hendry notes that Information Service officials were pressing the people to build information booths and centers in Khanh Hau (Long An) as early as 1959.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Hendry, op. cit., p. 250.

SELF HELP STATUS  
-PROJECT TOTALS-

15 AUG 64

PROJ No	PROJ. CATEGORY	APPRVD	CMPLTD	U/CNSTRN
1	SCHOOLROOMS	1684	527	897
2	BRIDGES	424	153	193
3	ROADS	649	331	213
4	MARKETS	434	158	139
5	PUBLIC HALLS/HLT & VILL. OFFICES	872	645	151
6	MATERNITIES/DISPENSARIES	692	374	113
7	SERICULTURE CENTERS	5	-	4
8	SNOKE HOUSES	274	8	-
9	WAREHOUSES	289	111	163
10	BLACKSMITH SHOPS	274	4	1
11	SEWING CENTERS	28	1	20
12	TOOL STORAGE SHEDS	276	61	105
13	PIG PENS			
14	CHICKEN COOPS	307	88	41
15	DUCK HATCHERIES	1510	3	1504
16	FISH PONDS	706	193	66
17	WELLS, HAND DUG	2095	1138	805
18	IRRIGATION CANALS	48	25	19
19	DRAINAGE CANALS	73	13	60
20	DAMS/RESERVOIRS/CSTRNS/DIKES	249	58	87
21	CULVERTS	745	223	267
22	BARBER SHOPS	272	108	39
23	GARDENS (SCHOOL, COMMUNITY)	868	36	51
24	RICE DRYING COURTS	1280	511	500
25	WINDMILLS	57	14	14
26	HAMLET LIGHTING SYSTEMS	33	9	12
27	PRIVIES	766	277	438
28	LIVESTOCK RAISING	869	298	273
29	AGRIC. MACHINE PROJECTS	558	11	11
30	TREE PLANTING/ORCHARDS	358	70	11
31	TNG & DEMONSTRATION CENTERS	28	15	1
32	LAND CLEARING	108	88	19
33	BRICK FACILITY	13	7	4
34	FISH NETS	21	20	1
35	KILNS (BRK, CHR COAL, LIME, TILE)	10	-	4
36	DOCK/LANDING FACILITY	26	18	7
37	PLAYGROUND COURTS	518	385	1
38	WATER PUMPS	57	21	14
39	LOAN FUNDS (HAMLET, VILLAGE)	56	16	-
40	SA-MILLS (LUMBER)	2	-	-
41	FISH BOATS/FISH BOAT MOTORS	5	2	3
42	THRASHING FLOORS, CEMENT	27	3	21
43	LIBRARIES	13	8	-
44	COMPOST PITS	50	35	-
45	SLAUGHTER HOUSES	1	1	-
46	SEWAGE LINES	1	-	1
47	REPAIRS OR IMPROVMENTS TO PUBLIC BLDGS, BRIDGES,ROADS, OFFICES, HALLS	646	372	260
<u>TOTALS:-</u>		<u>18277</u>	<u>6440</u>	<u>6533</u>

Figure 16.  
USOM Self-Help Programs

NO.	PROJECTS	APPROVED	COMPLETED	UNDER CONSTRUCTION	NOT YET STARTED	REMARKS
1	School Rooms	93	30	33	30	New Classrooms Improvement
		33	51	22	10	
2	Bridges	24	12	6		
3	Markets	7	4	2	1	
4	Public Halls/Offices	4	3	1		
5	Maternities/Dispensaries	7	6		1	
6	First Aid Stations	2		2		
7	Pig Sties	7	6		1	
8	Poultry Raising	3	2		1	
9	Fish Ponds	2		1	1	
10	Wells, Hand-Dug	162	83	36	38	
11	Irrigation Canal	8	6	1	1	
12	Culverts	108	105	1	2	
13	Hamlet Lighting Syst.	1	1			
14	Privies	1	1			
15	Docks/Landing Facilities	1	1			
	TOTAL	514	315	106	93	

Figure 17. Self-help status report Vinh Binh Province.

(Quang Nam Province)

ẤP \_\_\_\_\_ XÃ \_\_\_\_\_ QUẬN \_\_\_\_\_ DATE APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

PROJECT No. \_\_\_\_\_ PROJECT DESCRIPTION: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTRIBUTION .		COMPLETION DATE SET _____
BY LOCAL PEOPLE MANDAYS	BY GOVERNMENT PIASTRES	BY PEOPLE INSPECTIONS : ( DESCRIBE SITUATION ) AND CORRECTIVE ACTION TAKEN. USE BACK OF CARD IF NEEDED
OTHER:	COMMODITIES	1. DATE _____ BY _____ CONDITIONS
		2. DATE _____ BY _____ CONDITIONS
	A. TOTAL PIASTRES BY GVN	3. DATE _____ BY _____ CONDITIONS
	B.	

Figure 18. USOM staff control card for self-help projects.



As a precaution, the USOM Rural Affairs office forbade use of self-help funds for construction of information booths.

One of the most serious failures in self-help developed as a result of government inability to supply key materials that had been promised the hamlets. Early in 1965, many provinces had approved projects that could not be supplied with cement because of a mistake in the procurement and delivery system. Facing the onset of the rainy season, when no work could be done, the Government and USOM were not able to deliver materials that had been committed.<sup>6</sup>

In sum, self-help programs required considerable and repeated administrative attention. Self-help failed in some provinces because authorities did not assign enough people to the task. Other provinces rushed into the program (at the urging of USOM in Saigon) without an adequate administrative system for promoting, processing, supplying, and inspecting the projects. In Tuyen Duc, the USOM Representative estimated that one-half of all staff activity was concerned with the Self-help program alone.<sup>7</sup> Although this amount of time is not inappropriate, considering the significance of the program, most provinces gave much less time to self-help.

The political significance of Self-help is shown in occasional Viet-Cong reaction to such projects. Peasants were permitted by the Viet-Cong to receive a Government-financed school built by a contractor, but were threatened against

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<sup>6</sup>AID province report, Ba Xuyen, March 1965.

<sup>7</sup>Interview with Don Wadley, USOM, 1965.

building a school on a self-help basis which would be a joint effort with the Government and as such would strengthen the identification of the people with the regime. Most province representatives agreed that self-help schools were better built than those turned over to a contractor because the people took pride in them. The school was then, in fact, their school, not the Government's. They would thus be much more prepared to defend it, it was reasoned.

Self-help projects, if properly promoted and administered, represent perhaps the simplest and surest way of discovering and meeting the conscious needs of the peasants. The program has suffered more from poor administration than any other factor.

National development planners would add to the utility of self-help projects by authorizing village-level, as well as hamlet-level, projects. Many popular projects--upper level elementary schools, bridges, roads, and market places--need to be done at a higher level of management than the hamlet.

It is appropriate to guide and reconcile certain community self-help project planning with larger district and provincial systems (such as roads), but the basic role of the project as an uninhibited expression of popular will must be insured. Time, energy, and money expended by the people for projects they do not want may retard, rather than advance, the pacification objective.

### Training Centers

By the use of Mobile Action Cadres and special technical services extension personnel, many improved agricultural, home, and health techniques were brought directly to the peasant. Another important means of introducing these improvements was the operation of provincial training centers, where farmers were brought for short periods of training on specific subjects. In 1965, Quang Tri built a training center and approved a budget for its operation. The center has been in constant use for the training of health cadre, 4-T clubs, civil servants, and farmers. It includes a mess hall, sleeping facilities for 100 men, a film room, and farming plots for demonstrations.<sup>8</sup>

In Tuyen Duc, an abandoned United States Special Forces camp at Dam Pao was used as a training center beginning in 1964. Unable to get approval for the project in Saigon, the USOM Representative used his personal funds until the Asia Foundation assisted the center with 400,000 VN\$. Eventually USOM Rural Affairs was able to get Vietnamese budget approval for the center and eight others like it in other provinces. At Dam Pao a staff of fifteen Highlanders was hired and trained to run the center.<sup>9</sup> The accent at Dam Pao was on training Highlander farmers directly, instead of through paid extension cadres. Fifty men and twenty women were given thirty days of training in

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<sup>8</sup>Interview with Dan Whitfield, former USOM Representative, Quang Tri, 1966.

<sup>9</sup>Interview with Don Wadley, USOM, 1965.

a well rounded curriculum, and returned to share their knowledge with their hamlet.<sup>10</sup>

Training centers for non-military purposes were late in appearing in the pacification programs, but have proved their worth where they have been built. Such centers should be kept flexible in the content of their curriculum and the length of courses offered. Rather than being a substitute for extension cadres who carry on a similar process of education within the hamlet, the training center can supplement the extension work by further training of leadership discovered by the extension worker.

#### Public Works Projects

Many of the most popular self-help projects fall in the classification of local public works. The government provincial Public Works Section was concerned with major roads and bridges, but usually gave little attention to lesser projects not funded from its own ministry in Saigon. USOM province representatives had great difficulty in focussing the interest of these province sections towards the hamlet level projects. Proper planning of local roads and bridges requires correlation with the design of the larger provincial road system. Also, engineering problems sometimes require expertise beyond the capability of hamlet people.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

The incorporation of many Public Works functions within the Ministry for Construction (Pacification) may lead to better support by Public Works personnel of pacification projects in the provinces.

Rural electrification. A major program involving the Public Works Ministry began in 1964, with the first concentrated effort at rural electrification. USOM Rural Affairs had started several projects, using United States Government surplus generators. However, expert advice on installation was required, and a regular program of rural electrification was formulated in 1965, involving the Ministry of Public Works and USOM Public Works.

In Kien Phong province, the rural electrification project for Thanh Binh district town became a reality in May 1965. A 30 kilowatt and a 15 kilowatt generator were installed, providing electricity to 300 families. The project was approved in 1964 and the town awaited release of funds for the project by Vietnamese Public Works officials. The generators were received from USOM in Saigon and were stored in a warehouse. Finally, in April, 1965, the province government permitted the local cooperative to proceed on its own with the installation by borrowing money from other funds. In a few weeks the 100 families who had joined the electrical cooperative received electricity and the town had street lights. The mood of the town changed. There was more social and business

activity in the evening hours and the morale of the people was greatly improved.<sup>11</sup> The system operates four hours in the evening and one hour in the early morning. Security lights around the district headquarters are maintained all night.

Similar cooperative arrangements have been planned for Tuyen Duc, rural Nhatrang, Long Xuyen, and an area around Saigon. The effort was spurred by a special mission of rural electrification experts sent by President Johnson in 1965.<sup>12</sup> The wealth of the Delta area makes electrification possible on a public subscription basis through electrical cooperatives. Little attention, however, has been given to the need for electric power in the densely populated, land-poor regions of Central Vietnam. Electric power could be the base from which village industries could grow, through utilization of the seriously underemployed landless peasant.

Well drilling. Most of Vietnam receives a great deal of rain in the span of a year, but for some areas all of it comes within six consecutive months. Salt water intrusion further complicates water supply problems--particularly in the Delta region. A Rural Water Supply Task Force was formed in 1964 to bring potable water supplies to as many hamlets as possible.

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<sup>11</sup>Interview with Robert Traister, USOM Province Representative, Kien Phong, 1966.

<sup>12</sup>Washington Post, 23 September 1965, p. G6.

For years USOM deep well drilling rigs had been at work in Vietnam, slowly tapping subsurface water. In addition the Office of Rural Affairs developed a very simple water powered rig, called a "hydrojet," which could reach as deep as 200 feet. Rigs were sent to several provinces and three man teams were trained in their use, financed by local rehabilitation funds. In some provinces, such as Darlac in the Highlands, the rigs were an immediate success. In others, the extreme depth of the water veins and the presence of hard rock layers rendered the rigs ineffective. Later the Public Works Division of USOM took over the water program, funding it through provincial Public Works budgets.

#### Education Programs

By far the most popular program in the pacification campaign was hamlet school construction. Created with the help of USOM Education in Saigon, its goal was a school in every strategic hamlet. The hamlet school system is comprised of three types of schools: 1) nationally supported, 2) community-financed, and 3) privately operated. The national system rarely reaches beyond the main village town. Vietnam has a serious educational problem in the vast number of hamlets with substandard teachers and schools, or none at all. The Diem regime had built 2,534 elementary schools between 1954 and 1962, but most of these were at the village level. Hamlet

needs were far from met.<sup>13</sup>

In the new program, launched in 1963, 50,000 VN\$ and cement were allocated for each room of a two or three unit school. The hamlet had to provide a person to be the teacher who had at least five years education and who would be given a two month training course in teaching techniques. All costs of training, furnishings, textbooks, and a year's salary were covered by the province rehabilitation agreement.

Quang Nam received 42 classrooms the first year and 60 rooms each year thereafter. Through the Self-Help Program another 140 rooms were requested in 1964--to be built by the people, who received aluminum roofing, cement, and funds from the self-help program budget. Other provinces also developed local answers to the demand for schools. In Tay Ninh, USOM and United States Special Forces combined to help the people construct scores of self-help schools, with the hamlets supplying the teachers and salaries.

There were serious problems in locating teachers for illiterate highland hamlets, which resulted in many vacant schools. In Phu Bon, 26 school rooms had no teachers in early 1965, because the 600 VN\$ monthly salary was insufficient to attract teachers.<sup>14</sup> Later in 1965, the monthly salary was raised, by agreement of USOM and the Ministry of Education,

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<sup>13</sup> Republic of Vietnam, Eight Years of the Ngo Dinh Diem Administration, op. cit., p. 422. The number of operating elementary schools in 1962 was 4,132.

<sup>14</sup> AID province report, Phu Bon, January, 1965.



to 1400 VN\$. In 1966, they were further increased to 2500 VN\$.

More than 2500 classrooms had been built and 5000 teachers trained under the program from 1963 through 1965. The approved yearly rate for the next three years beginning in 1966, was 2500 new classrooms and 4000 teachers.<sup>15</sup>

At this rate of growth, which includes training of teachers already on the job and replacement of temporary thatch schools, Vietnam will soon have a much larger and better elementary school system. Unfortunately there are as yet no clear plans for resolving the disparity of pay between those teachers in the special hamlet program and the teachers in the regular national system.<sup>16</sup>

The massive hamlet school construction programs have added to the already critical problem of aspiring peasants who want their children to go beyond elementary school, and eventually into high school. In Quang Nam, 90 per cent of the junior high students who applied for admission to high school had to be turned away in 1964. School construction and teacher training must also be designed to serve these higher level educational needs. In education, perhaps more than any other field the social revolution shaking Vietnam is illustrated.

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<sup>15</sup>Interview with T.C. Clark, AID, 1966.

<sup>16</sup>Interview with W. Robert Warne, State Department, 1966. See Appendix C, 1966 Quang Nam Agreement, section 02 Rural Education.

It is politically dangerous as well as wasteful to turn away qualified students from the rural areas. As yet little has been done to meet the increased demand for secondary education.

### Health Programs

The first response of USOM Public Health advisors to the insurgent problem was the support of the Hamlet Health Worker Program in 1962. Funds were budgeted through regular USOM and Ministry channels for hamlet workers to receive 600 VN\$ per month. They were trained for one month under the Chief of Medicine for the province. The workers were taught to utilize 12 simple drugs that were supplied in a medicine chest to each hamlet. The recruitment and training of these workers developed at varying rates in different provinces. Quang Nam had nearly 300 workers certified on the national payroll by the 1963 coup (although they had not been paid regularly).

District dispensaries were being constructed across the nation at a steady but slow rate. These medical centers were supervised by a medical technician, with training approximately equal to five years of college. Theoretically the district dispensaries channel patients with more complex problems into the provincial hospitals, where fully trained doctors are usually in charge.

At the intermediate level of the village, little was being done through USOM Public Health programs until a massive reconsideration was undertaken by Vietnamese and American experts in

the summer of 1964. It developed in the discussions that the Vietnamese medical people were less interested in hamlet level workers and more interested in better trained personnel at the village level. This view had also been expressed in peasant demands from Kien Hoa and Quang Nam for more qualified workers. A special meeting of notables from the villages in Quang Nam produced the complaint that hamlet workers were not sufficiently trained to be useful.

As a consequence of the policy shift towards village-level emphasis, which had been encouraged by the new Public Health Division management in USOM, a program was launched to upgrade village facilities through construction of a combination dispensary and maternity clinic, staffed by a certified midwife and a village nurse with one year of training. It had been discovered that the district dispensaries were too far removed to be utilized by most patients.

The new philosophy was apparently both a step towards higher quality medical care and a response to a felt need of the rural population. The hamlet level workers were also retained.

The shortage of doctors in rural Vietnam accrues partly from the fact that 450 of the nation's 750 doctors serve in ARVN (thus caring for less than 1/40 of the population).<sup>17</sup> Many of the other 300 physicians are in Saigon. Quang Nam, for

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Dr. Archer Dillard, formerly USOM/ Public Health, 1965.

instance, had two doctors in 1964, and both were primarily administrators. Quang Tin, with a population of 350,000, had none.

Other allied nations have placed seven surgical teams into provincial operating suites built by USOM. The first surgical team arrived in 1964. Twenty-eight surgical suites, one to each of the larger provinces, have been built since construction began in 1962.<sup>18</sup> The major problem has been in locating doctors and nurses to staff the new facilities. As previously noted, American nursing advisors will be advising in the management of provincial hospitals by mid-1966.

Serious problems still beset the health programs in 1965. Delays in payment of salaries and delivery of medical supplies hampered operations. Training was far from adequate. However, indications of progress towards creating a national system of care, insufficient though it may appear by western standards, are beginning to be evident.

Military civic action projects in medical care have presented a recurrent problem in the province health program. "Sick calls" by armed forces in the villages have often been conducted without prior consultation with the province Chief of Medicine, who is technically responsible for all medical care in his province. There is a great need for more careful

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<sup>18</sup>United States Agency for International Development, The AID Program in Vietnam, op. cit., p. E1.

correlation of these medical civic action programs with the regular system of medical care.

Despite a substantial outlay of funds and a wide variety of rural programs, the health system of Vietnam has yet to become an integrated and effective operation even in terms of the minimal care it has been intended to provide. There has been a reluctance by Vietnamese officials to replace or improve the quality of the hamlet level health worker who is usually poorly trained. Relatively simple problems of regular pay for field workers has not been solved. The rapid turnover of health ministers and USOM Public Health chiefs may be both a symptom and a cause of the problem.

The unbalanced distribution of physicians in favor of the ARVN forces is particularly illogical in the face of the critical shortage of doctors to care for the casualties among the Popular Forces, who still bear the brunt of the war-- along with their civilian neighbors.

### Relief and Refugees

Highlanders. Only a few years after more than 900,000 refugees from North Vietnam had been assimilated in the South, a new exodus began within the South among various Highlander tribal groups. By 1961 and 1962, as the Viet-Cong began to increase their demands for food and manpower, whole villages and tribes began to move towards the Government side. From 1962 through 1965 more than 7,000 of the Bru tribe of Quang

Tri province had been resettled in safe areas. Special agreements for assistance at first had been provided through the old Land Development Program. Later the province release agreements had included housing materials, food, schools, and tools. The Civilian Irregular Defense Group program, under Special Forces, encouraged Highlanders to come into safe areas near their camps.

Lowland resettlement. As the Viet-Cong increased their buildup in the lowland areas, displacing Government control there, a mounting tide of refugees moved toward the more secure province and district towns in order to escape the Viet-Cong. Also, the increasing vigor of Government and allied military operations in 1965 further swelled the number of displaced people. At first the peasants had fled the communists. Now they were caught in the middle of military operations, and many chose the protection of the Government. AID has maintained that the enormous flow is predominantly from fear of the Viet-Cong terror, and that it is, in fact, a favorable sign for the Government.<sup>19</sup> Although both the Viet-Cong terror and allied bombs and artillery are undoubtedly contributive to the problem, the refugees probably found the "friendly" government firepower the most troublesome. It has, however, become a serious administrative burden. The size of the dislocation, reaching

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<sup>19</sup> Testimony by David Bell, Director of AID, before United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee, NBC Television, 4 February 1966.

# SOUTH VIETNAM THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

JANUARY 23, 1966

TOTAL OF REFUGEES  
FROM COMMUNISM **782,697**

## REGION I

QUANG NAM  
- NGAI  
- TINH  
- TRI  
THUA THIEN  
TOTAL

PROVINCE	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
QUANG NAM	8,215	11,916	12,767	14,718	15,798	16,771	17,771	18,771	19,771	20,771	21,771	22,771
- NGAI	32,673	19,181	9,838	58,798	58,798	58,798	58,798	58,798	58,798	58,798	58,798	58,798
- TINH	14,111	5,000		9,771								
- TRI	14,350	4,260	5,888	6,824								
THUA THIEN	3,836	4,613		4,021								
TOTAL	144,820	43,191	20,967	78,429								

## REGION II

BIEN HOA  
BINH DUONG  
BINH LONG  
BINH TUY  
GIA DINH  
HAU NGHIA  
LONG THANH  
PHUOC LONG  
PHUOC THUAN  
PHUOC TUY  
SAIGON  
TAY NINH  
VUNG YAU  
LONG AN  
TOTAL

PROVINCE	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
BIEN HOA	11,462	4,913										
BINH DUONG	17,313	890										
BINH LONG	1,368	334										
BINH TUY	9,323	6,316										
GIA DINH	4,927	2,357										
HAU NGHIA	8,003	3,899										
LONG THANH	11,608											
PHUOC LONG	3,613	1,439										
PHUOC THUAN	3,544	3,159										
PHUOC TUY	1,518											
SAIGON	14,654	2,843										
TAY NINH	1,337	1,003										
VUNG YAU	10,763	6,340										
LONG AN	104,397	90,888										
TOTAL	104,397	90,888										

## REGION III

BINH DINH  
BINH THUAN  
DAR LAC  
KHANH HOA  
KONTUM  
LAM DONG  
NINH THUAN  
PHU QUOC  
PHU THUAN  
QUANG DUC  
TUYEN DUC  
TOTAL

PROVINCE	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
BINH DINH	109,200	31,809										
BINH THUAN	7,438	2,824										
DAR LAC	25,731	15,649										
KHANH HOA	19,854	1,714										
KONTUM	22,293											
LAM DONG	8,111	4,883										
NINH THUAN	20,382	10,219										
PHU QUOC	15,134	14,640										
PHU THUAN	44,689	9,172										
QUANG DUC	8,367	1,743										
TUYEN DUC	7,201	1,984										
TOTAL	314,510	100,695										

## REGION IV

AN GIANG  
AN XUYEN  
BA TUYEN  
BAC LIU  
CHAU DOC  
CHUONG THIEN  
BINH TUONG  
GO CONG  
KIEN GIANG  
KIEN HOA  
KIEN PHONG  
KIEN TUONG  
PHONG BINH  
VINH BINH  
VINH LONG  
TOTAL

PROVINCE	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966
AN GIANG	5,003	5,422										
AN XUYEN	14,118	10,034										
BA TUYEN	18,772	6,370										
BAC LIU	9,583	3,343										
CHAU DOC	4,669	5,628										
CHUONG THIEN	10,449	4,364										
BINH TUONG	79,249	12,641										
GO CONG	7,909	2,360										
KIEN GIANG	9,817	6,109										
KIEN HOA	5,485	6,320										
KIEN PHONG	3,719	2,621										
KIEN TUONG	4,496	3,076										
PHONG BINH	4,934	1,447										
VINH BINH	8,485	3,840										
VINH LONG	14,647	6,104										
TOTAL	101,061	62,085										

## TOTALS

TOTAL OF REFUGEES ... 782,697  
RESETTLED REFUGEES ... 268,214  
REFUGEES RETURNING  
TO NATIVE VILLAGES ... 72,035  
REFUGEES IN TEMPORARY  
SHELTERS ... 442,448

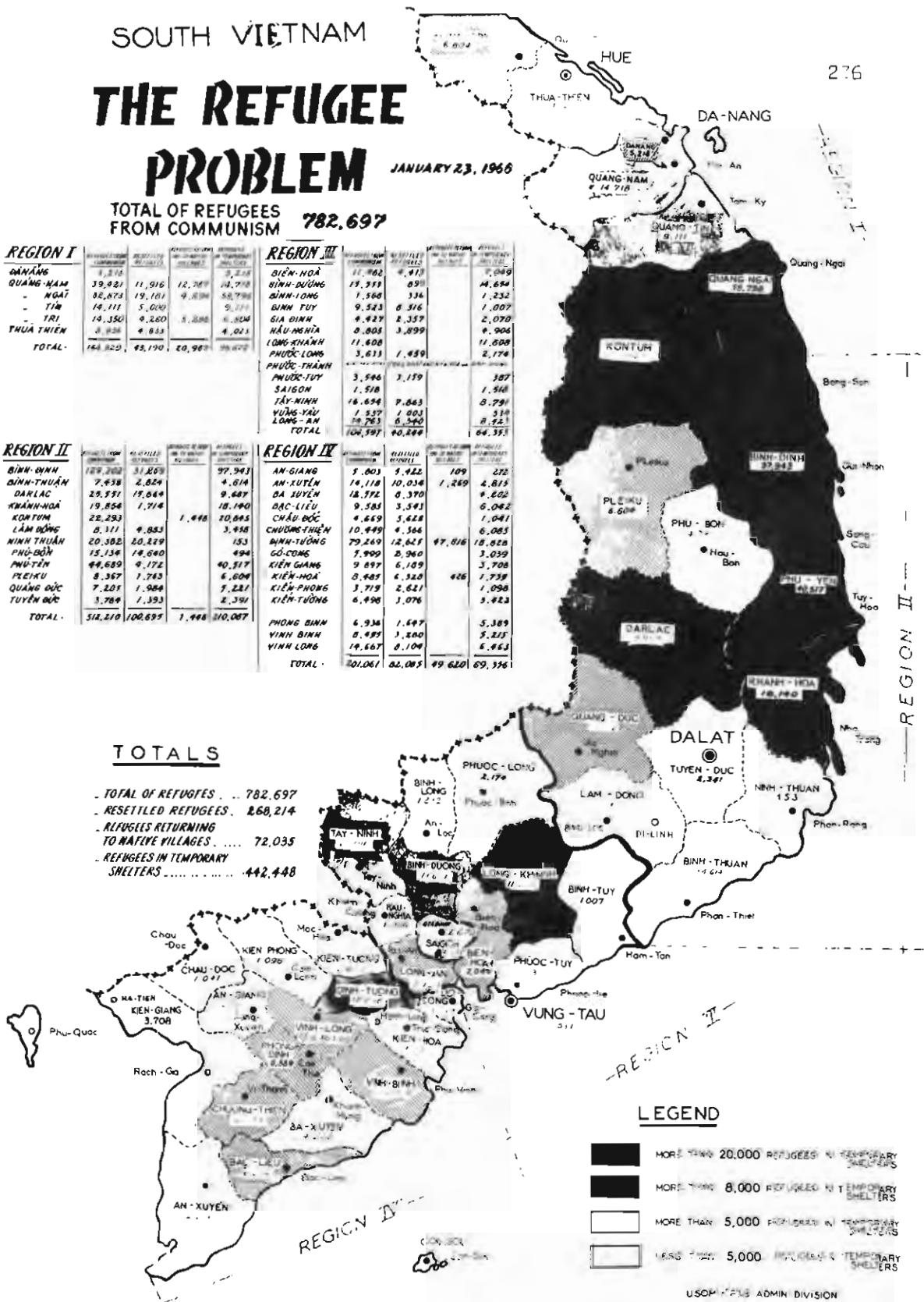


Figure 19

nearly 800,000 people by the end of 1965, far exceeded the preliminary USOM predictions of 100,000 (see Figure 19). Criticism against USOM and the Ministry of Social Welfare has come from the General Accounting Office of the United States Government<sup>20</sup> and from the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees.<sup>21</sup> Critics have noted the gross underestimation of the size of the problem and the inadequate measures for rehabilitation and resettlement.

In contrast, a generally favorable report on the administration of the refugee problem was made by the American Council on Voluntary Agencies, after a delegation had visited Vietnam in October, 1965. In the report they complimented the prompt action of military civic action units in seeking out and caring for the refugees.<sup>22</sup> They further commended USOM for the flexibility of its provincial operations network, and stated that the situation is in "good hands."<sup>23</sup> A number of voluntary agencies and church mission groups, some of them active in Vietnam for many years, have rendered significant refugee aid, in close

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<sup>20</sup>Washington Post, 19 December 1965, p. A5.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>American Council on Voluntary Agencies for Foreign Service, Report on Vietnamese Refugees and Displaced Persons, (New York: October, 1965), p. 4.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.



cooperation with government efforts.<sup>24</sup>

The refugees are divided into two types: 1) those temporarily displaced for a few weeks or months, and 2) those who have no hope of returning to their homes. The former may become "refugees" while an operation is underway in their area, returning to their homes when the shooting has stopped.<sup>25</sup>

The more permanently displaced persons are often women, children, and older citizens (whose abler males may be in ARVN or with the Viet-Cong). Rehabilitation programs for these peasants are essential, but difficult to provide. Often there is no land ((in the new location) available for them to till. By January, 1966, refugees were consuming 50,000 tons of rice monthly--imported from the United States because of the shortage in Vietnam.<sup>26</sup> Imaginative efforts to rehabilitate these refugees and motivate them towards enthusiasm for the government cause have not been attempted. Even though it is a difficult problem, it could be thought of as a great propaganda and humanitarian opportunity.

#### The Economic Emphasis: Agriculture Programs

Agricultural production has been the economic touchstone of South Vietnam's past, and most planners have looked towards

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<sup>24</sup>A complete list of the various agencies and their programs can be found in the Report. Ibid., pp. 25-41.

<sup>25</sup>In Quang Nam and Quang Tin the writer has interviewed temporary refugees who refused to build houses and be resettled--waiting only for the war to go elsewhere so they could return to their homes.

<sup>26</sup>David Bell, NBC Television, 4 February 1966.

the nation's future development in terms of what the fertile soil can grow. Extensive experimentation in rice varieties had been started as early as the end of the last decade.

Improved rice varieties were under development to bolster production in the rich Delta region, because increases there could mean much more total rice production than in less fertile areas, such as Central Vietnam. In 1962, emphasis on greater production for the nation as a whole became a secondary goal. The target became the producer rather than how much he produced. The crowded and less productive areas of Central Vietnam began to receive more attention--not for their great agricultural potential but to make the lot of the individual farmer better by improving his meager output.

Land reform. As noted in Chapter IV the Diem regime turned away from land reform at the very time its emphasis might have helped in the insurgency. Little was done by successor governments, although General Khanh made a gesture towards the program by doubling the time allowable for repayment by the farmer of the piece of the land.

The Ky government reopened the campaign for land reform by pledging to redistribute the more than 300,000 hectares of riceland still in its possession.<sup>27</sup> A more immediate and concrete indication of commitment to land reform was expressed by Ky in

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<sup>27</sup>United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, The Vietnam Conflict: The Substance and Shadow, op. cit., p. 6.

September, 1965 when he personally presided over the presentation of land titles to Highlanders in Tuyen Duc province, after many years of broken promises by other regimes.<sup>28</sup>

It is premature to assess performance or the prospects for land reform, but it is clear that the ownership problem in the Delta is still a vital issue, and one which could be turned to the advantage of the government by massive redistribution. American advisors have given great emphasis since mid-1965 to the implementation of a land reform program.

Fertilizer. In the summer of 1963, USOM and the Ministry of Agriculture arranged for a massive distribution of fertilizer to the residents of all completed strategic hamlets in Central Vietnam. The formula allocated enough fertilizer for up to ½ hectare (over an acre) of rice land per farmer. In Quang Nam, the amount was changed to enough for 1/10 hectare so that some of the limited supply could reach each farmer. The results were as good as test plots had indicated they would be. The farmers were sold immediately on chemical fertilizers, and a larger distribution was planned for the spring crop. The first distribution was complicated by three types of fertilizer that were separately bagged and required both mixing and repeated applications. The second distribution was pre-mixed and it went to the entire province--except in a few completely Viet-

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<sup>28</sup>Interview with Don Wadley, USOM Province Representative, Tuyen Duc, 1965.



Cong areas. The result was a record crop in Quang Nam. Similar results were obtained in other provinces. Unfortunately the fertilizer had not been ordered in the United States to coincide with timely delivery for application to the crops. Much had to be stored for several months until the next growing season. The question mark in Quang Nam, where Viet-Cong control was rapidly growing in 1964, was whether the fertilizer had helped the communist rice collections more than the prestige of the Government. There was at that time no mantle of security to protect the bumper crop from the Viet-Cong in most areas.

The Fertilizer program was made nationwide in 1964, (see Figure 20). In the Highlands it was given out free, while in the central lowlands, where it was in its second year (as a program), the fertilizer was sold through the National Agricultural Credit Organization at half price, with credit available. In the wealthier areas (in the Delta and around Saigon) it was sold at a favorable price, in some cases without credit.

The Pig-Corn Program. A severe shortage of protein in Central Vietnam was the target of a program to supply improved varieties of pigs to farmers. American corn was supplied for feed at minimal prices. Devised jointly by USOM and the Ministry of Agriculture, three provincial services worked together on the program: Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, and the National Agricultural Credit Organization (NACO). A local Pig Program committee was formed. The Agriculture extension people handled much of the educational effort; the Animal

Husbandry Service provided proper medicines; and NACO arranged the loan to the farmer. The loans would be repaid when the pigs were marketed. USOM furnished eight bags of cement for each pig sty. Although the program had been specially designed to aid poor peasants, many of the 250 families selected the first year were middle class peasants. In Thanh Nam hamlet of Dien Ban district (Quang Nam) the village chief explained to the writer that owning three pigs was a big investment which poor families did not want to risk. Some poorer families asked for only one pig. They also were the most reluctant to borrow money under the Pig-Corn plan. In other hamlets the program was welcomed and more people applied for pigs than could be accepted. NACO cadres were alert against hamlet officials who favored their own kinsmen in the selection of families.

In order to service these families, NACO and the Animal Husbandry Section were authorized larger field staffs. Saigon had not provided for this administrative increase, but miscellaneous funds from the provincial agreement permitted it.

In Thua Thien and Quang Tri provinces, more than two thousand families were included in the program. Despite problems of overextension and high loss from disease (from 25 to 35 per cent of live pigs delivered), the programs prospered. A major crisis arose in 1965 when corn shipments to Thua Thien were interrupted for several months and the pigs (and people) went hungry.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>AID province report, Thua Thien, April, 1965.

Extension programs. Many locally developed programs were designed to augment farm income. In addition to activities described in Chapter VII, improved sugar cane and sweet potato cuttings were distributed in many provinces. Garden seed distribution also helped balance the diet of the average farmer with a variety of vegetables. A quality boar was given by USOM and maintained by each of the 64 Young Farmer's clubs in Quang Nam in order to improve the scrawny native pigs. After the disastrous flood in November, 1964, several hundred roosters were distributed to help rebuild and upgrade flocks. Village libraries were provided each Young Farmer's club. Books on farm and home improvement ideas were the main items in the collection.

Irrigation. A wide variety of projects was related to irrigation. Most large provinces had an Agricultural Hydraulics Office that dealt with the construction and maintenance of dams and irrigation systems. In 1965, 24 miles of canal were completed and 42 dams were built or reconstructed in Vietnam by the Agricultural Hydraulics Directorate.<sup>30</sup> Wells were drilled and many canals were dug or cleaned out as self-help projects (see Figure 16 for data up to mid-1964). USOM supplied surplus food for labor compensation and cement. Water pumps were always much in demand. Many were supplied, usually

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<sup>30</sup> AID Far East Bureau, Agriculture Factsheet on Vietnam, 24 February 1966.

to peasant cooperatives who purchased them through commercial channels (data on the number of pumps was not available).

Staff. Perhaps the most significant efforts have been the extensive training of farmers in new methods and the building of sizable extension staffs. As yet no solution to the depletion of trained personnel by the armed forces draft had been reached at the end of 1965. Secretary Agriculture Orville Freeman noted with disdain the drafting of a top agricultural researcher when he visited Vietnam.<sup>31</sup> The authorization in 1964 of 800 new agriculture extension field positions in South Vietnam marked a revolution in the development of extension capabilities.<sup>32</sup> For the first time many districts had two or more agricultural and animal husbandry workers to assist the peasants by teaching them better methods. The key problem has been to find the men who are free from the draft so they can stay on the job.

#### Other Rural Economic Projects

Fishing. Many villages live entirely by fishing and the crafts associated with it. Increasing attention had been given to the needs of fisherman through the provision of nylon filament for the weaving of nets and the hiring of cadre to introduce "fish farming" via ponds stocked with tilapia fish. The

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<sup>31</sup>New York Times, 12 February 1966, p. 11.

<sup>32</sup>Tanham, War Without Guns, op. cit., p. 92.



improvement most wanted by fishermen was diesel motors for their fishing boats. The introduction of the Japanese-made Yanmar diesel engine was such an instant success that fishermen were paying twice the price to corrupt government officials for them.<sup>33</sup> The fraud was discovered in 1962 and the program has been discontinued. A planned renewal was delayed by various difficulties stemming from Japanese-Vietnamese negotiations over war reparations. The delays have been costly in the good will of the fishermen, who have shown willingness to buy the engine at almost any price.

Village industries. Self-help projects have assisted many small industries already operating--from saw mills to barber shops. Several sericulture centers, such as the one in Quang Nam, are helping rebuild silk production in Vietnam. Quang Nam had begun building a small industries training center for the improvement of design and techniques in order to meet market demands in pottery, weaving, marble carving, and brick making. The project was based on a survey in Quang Nam made by a USOM specialist. However, the program was rejected by the Central Pacification Bureau in Saigon because no national program as such yet existed.

Small industry development, particularly in areas where land is scarce, is an urgent and neglected need in Vietnam.

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<sup>33</sup>Interview with Robert Schoettler, USOM fisheries advisor, 1962.

Underemployed refugee camps exemplify the same problem. Unlike the USOM Agriculture, Education, and Health Divisions, USOM Industry has not geared its advisory program to a rural emphasis. Large scale projects have been the industrial emphasis in Vietnam. A major research effort on feasibility of various projects in each province would be a productive beginning.

### Summary Evaluation

An impressive array of programs for rural social and economic development has been fielded by the joint efforts of Vietnamese and American planners since 1962. Somewhat less impressive has been a prominent absence of cohesive provincial or national economic and social planning in these programs. USOM program planners were interested in economic feasibility of projects in the pre-insurgency period. When the counter-insurgency emphasis grew in 1961-1962, more comprehensive and long-term planning considerations were increasingly ignored by USOM. The present course of program development in South Vietnam is geared to the input of as much aid as possible, with little regard for how the programs will be financed after the insurgency hopefully is defeated. Other problems in planning and scheduling will be discussed in Chapter XIII.

## PART IV

### NATIONAL PACIFICATION SYSTEM

#### SYNOPSIS

In Part IV the supporting national apparatus for province pacification programs is described and analyzed. Bi-national and multi-national coordination problems are discussed, and United States inter-agency administrative mechanisms are considered.

In Chapter XII, Sector Affairs units in the United States Military Assistance Command are reviewed, with attention to organizational and personnel matters. Chapter XII also deals with the impact of counterinsurgency activities on the structure and function of the United States Operations Mission (AID) to Vietnam, with particular focus on the organization and staffing of the Office of Provincial Operations.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NATIONAL PACIFICATION SYSTEM

The intimate and absolute control exercised over the provinces by the Saigon government necessitates at least a summary examination of the pacification system at the national level. Almost all field officials, American and Vietnamese, tended to live by the doctrine that Saigon and the ARVN Corps commanders were responsible for many of the provincial administrative problems.

#### Pacification Organization Within the Republic of Vietnam

The Strategic Hamlet campaign had been run from the Presidency for six months before it was announced in February, 1962 that the campaign would be under an Interministerial Committee for Strategic Hamlets (IMC).<sup>1</sup> The Committee was largely a figurehead, engaging in the "post-decisional participation" typical of the regime. Its secretariat provided the liaison for USOM Rural Affairs and MAAG. When the Diem regime fell, the Central Pacification Committee (CPC) became the equivalent body for policy. It too, rarely met, and its Permanent Bureau for New Life Hamlets provided the appearance of program coordination on the Vietnamese side. In fact, however, there was no

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<sup>1</sup>Osborne, op. cit., p. 27. The Committee included representatives in Education, Defense, Rural Affairs, Civic Action, and Interior.

strong central policy as with the Ngos. Under Diem, policies were implemented or rejected once they found their way to the Presidency--although this sometimes could take many months. After Diem, the Permanent Bureau moved very cautiously between the titans of the various Army commands and the heads of ministries. By June of 1964 it had begun to tighten controls on the highly flexible spending policies encouraged after the November coup by USOM Rural Affairs--to the grief of provincial officials and advisors. Eventually a national plan and budget for pacification emerged.

The creation of a Deputy Premier for Pacification was a move by General Khanh to give status and power to the pacification effort, but the office involved only theoretical concern with pacification.<sup>2</sup>

In October of 1965, the Rural Construction Board was formed to supplant the previously less active Central Pacification Committee as the policy body. The Ministry of Rural Construction served as an administrative arm of the Council, headed by Major General Nguyen Duc Thang. In early 1966, further powers were given to the Ministry and the name was shortened to Ministry of Construction.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Interview with Erland Heginbotham, USOM, 1966.

<sup>3</sup>As noted previously, in March, 1966 the American Mission in Saigon had begun calling the "construction" program by the new term: "revolutionary development."

The considerable resources of the Public Works Ministry were transferred in the new framework, and urban programs were added. The newly renamed Construction Board was comprised of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister for Defense, the Corps commanders, and the Ministers of Health, Education, Agriculture, and Reconstruction.

Planning policy is relayed by the Corps commanders to Construction Boards at Corps level. In the Corps boards, Division commanders and Province Chiefs are involved, and provide the policy link to the province.<sup>4</sup> Some divisions also have pacification offices connecting them to regular units and province operations. The intrusion of the Corps and Division as additional administrative levels has slowed and complicated the provincial programming and operations functions. Relocation funding was held up in several provinces in 1965 by Corps level insistence on close control.<sup>5</sup>

Two key pacification positions under the Minister of Construction have emerged: a director of pacification programming and a director of cadre training. The rapidly evolving national structure has both limited field responsibility and increased field resources. The vital training function--described previously--is now solely in the hands of the national ministry.

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<sup>4</sup>Interview with John Helble, Department of State, 1966.

<sup>5</sup>Quang Tri in I Corps is an example. Relocation payments were delayed several months while waiting for Corps inspection and approval. Interview with Dan Whitfield, formerly USOM Representative, Quang Tri.

Considerable progress in programming within the ministries has been made. Multiple funding sources and receipts systems are replaced by increased use of regular funding channels. Some of the province level flexibility has necessarily suffered.

#### The United States Mission

As the Head of the Country Team, the Ambassador is the senior American official in all pacification, as well as diplomatic, matters. The Mission Council reports to him and is comprised of MACV, USOM, JUSPAO (which includes USIS), the Embassy, and CIA. All these agencies report to their Washington headquarters, but always with the knowledge of the Ambassador.

A specialized committee was formed in 1962 to deal with counterinsurgency problems, entitled: Committee for Provincial Rehabilitation (COPROR). Representatives of all agencies were involved and theoretically coordination problems were settled there. COPROR had no secretariat, and coordination usually resulted from less formalized, and more frequent, inter-agency contacts.

A special Psychological Operations Committee (Psyops) was appointed in 1964 to facilitate coordination in this special arena. In 1965, the Information and Psychological Warfare elements of USOM, MACV, and USIS were united in closer coordination as JUSPAO. MACV psywar elements are operationally attached to JUSPAO, but not detached from MACV command. (See Figure 22). The Mission Psyops Committee continued policy control over JUSPAO, but the joint operations were under the direction of the head of USIS.

# UNITED STATES MISSION VIETNAM

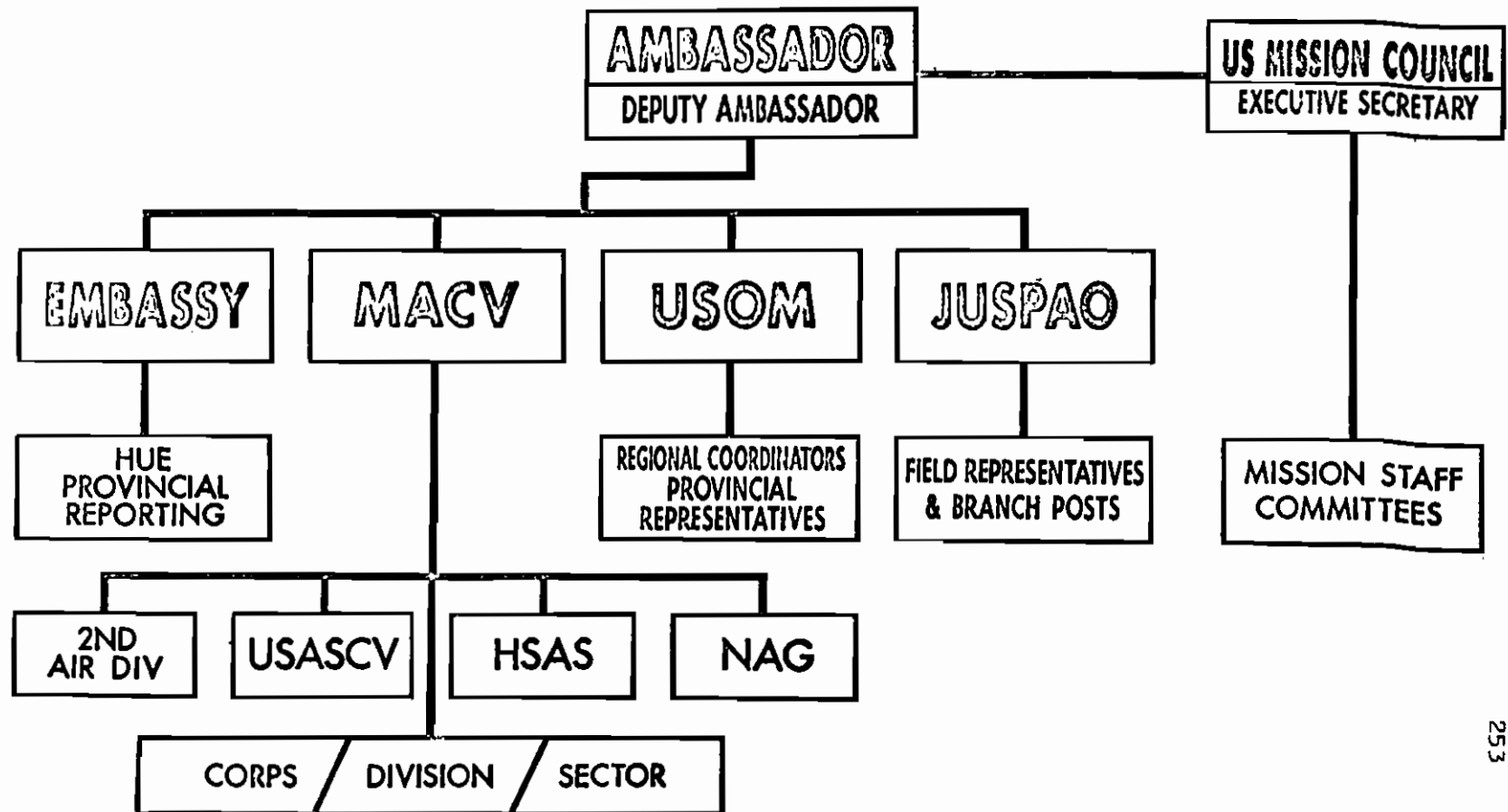


Figure 21



Figure 22

# JOINT UNITED STATES PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE (JUSPAO)

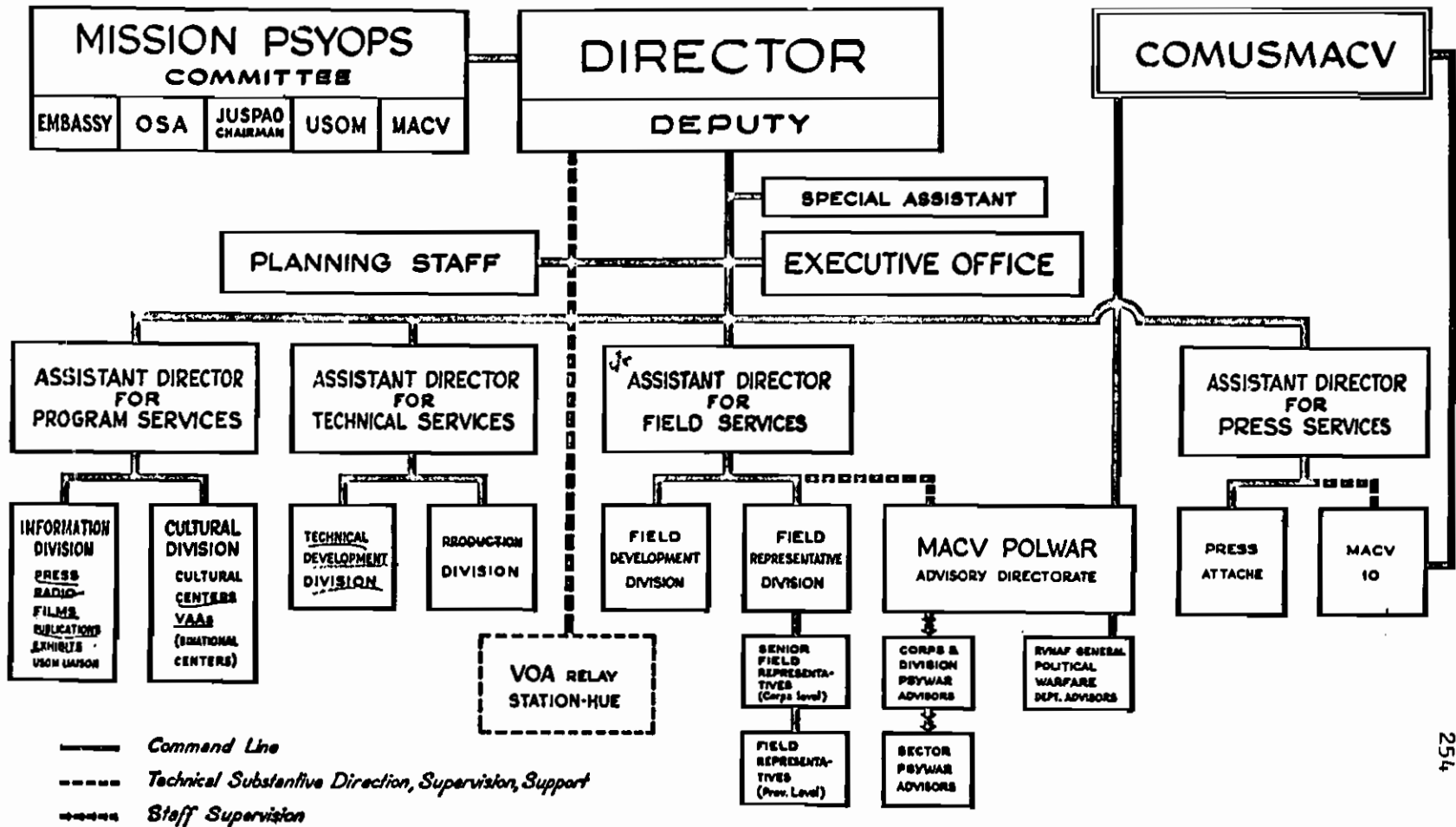


Figure 22

By fall of 1965 a special counterinsurgency team had been assembled under General Lansdale who was personally attached as a special assistant to the Ambassador. Much of the liaison with the Government of Vietnam on pacification policy appeared in early 1966 to be through this group headed by Lansdale.

The increasing necessity for coordination within the American Mission was expressed in the assignment of the Deputy Ambassador to this role.<sup>6</sup>

Regional coordination. In 1963, the Senior Advisor of the I Corps area requested the formation of an American coordination committee for the four province regions. Monthly sessions included all MACV sector advisors, USOM Representatives, the USIS Director from Hue, and the Consul from Hue. The primary function of the meetings was the interchange of information on programs and problems.

#### Bi-national Coordination

The history of Vietnamese and United States coordination indicates radical shifts of practice, ranging from the intimacy of the early Lansdale and Michigan State roles to the formalized and distant relations after 1956.

In 1961, Diem was pressured to form a National Security Council in order to decentralize his personalized command of the Armed Forces and give the United States Mission a formal

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<sup>6</sup>Shaplen, Robert, "Letter from South Vietnam," New Yorker, 12 March 1966, p. 60.

high level organism with which it could coordinate.<sup>7</sup> After a few meetings, the Council was never heard from again. The Americans went back to advising each other at that level. Ironically, in the critical early years of the insurgency (1958-1961), the Americans had no actively functioning advisors either at the very top (the Palace) or at the grassroots. The lowest echelon MACV advisor was at the Division level in 1961.<sup>8</sup> As noted earlier, USOM Field Service advisors had been proposed at the province level in 1958, but were rejected by Diem.

In 1964, USOM created a Rural Affairs liaison officer who operated primarily in the New Life Hamlet Bureau. A USOM social development expert was assigned as special advisor to the Minister of Social Welfare.

At the Corps level, USOM and Vietnamese military and civilian representatives were made a part of the Corps Rural Construction Boards in 1965. The most continuous operational liaison was maintained at the province level and--for MACV--in the subsector. There was no formal vehicle for high level United States-Vietnamese consultation. Meetings were conducted on an ad hoc basis.

In 1964 (when the writer was in Saigon), the single USOM liaison advisor to the New Life Hamlet Bureau was charged with

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<sup>7</sup>Donnell, "Politics in Vietnam," op. cit., p. 222.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Joseph Taylor, AID, 1965.

handling USOM problems from 44 provinces. Complete backstop staffs for the various regions existed in MACV and USOM, but there was no accepted counterpart relation for systematic decisionmaking on the mounting administrative and program problems. From the province point of view, the massive Saigon staffs of the two nations were not providing the support necessary for successful field operations.

Gradually, coordination in Saigon improved to the point that Joint Financial Management Teams were formed to visit the various provinces and resolve program problems on the spot. These mobile teams were the first genuine relief from the operational confusions created by the complicated rules and rigid interpretations that have been endemic to traditional Vietnamese bureaucracy.<sup>9</sup> But many 1965 province reports continued to indicate the need for decisive and faster supportive action from Saigon.

American combat forces. The presence of more than 200,000 American combat troops by early 1966 necessitated a special agreement between the Government of Vietnam and the United States. The arrangement recognized the independence of command by each nation of its own forces. Joint operations were conducted by ad hoc planning, in which command was not transferred by either side. By early 1966, the arrangement, unusual in military history, was working well.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>AID province report, Binh Tuy, December, 1964.

<sup>10</sup>Interview with Source Number 72, USOM, 1964.

Free World Assistance

The influx of assistance from approximately 30 nations has been both a welcome and administratively challenging input. This aid from nations allied with South Vietnam has been officially referred to as "Free World" assistance by official Americans. Korean, Australian and other military units have been coordinated with MACV via a joint operational organization on the same level as the MACV commander. MACV serves as the basic support system for all foreign military units in Vietnam.

Among civilian agencies--such as the various Free World surgical teams--USOM provides administrative support in the form of interpreters, housing, etc. In fact, most Free World aid is a coordinated part of the larger USOM input--in part because the participating countries do not usually have comparable overseas support systems for aid operations. Formal programming of Free World Assistance projects is always finally negotiated and formally announced, of course, by the Vietnamese Government, as the host country.

## CHAPTER XII

### INTRA-AGENCY PACIFICATION STRUCTURES:

#### USOM AND MACV

The creation of the MACV and USOM networks of provincial advisors and representatives was only part of the massive buildup of American assistance mechanisms that was in full swing by 1962. This chapter will survey the national-level changes, primarily as they are relevant to provincial operations.

#### I. THE EVOLUTION OF THE USOM APPARATUS

Some of the technical divisions in USOM had begun to revise their programs by 1962, but the most radical change in USOM was the innovation of the Office of Rural Affairs and Counterinsurgency (later shortened to Rural Affairs).

##### The Office of Rural Affairs

The Office of the Assistant Director for Rural Affairs was responsible for "coordinating the planning and implementation of the USOM Counterinsurgency efforts."<sup>1</sup> Although the technical divisions were not under the command of the Assistant Director, his recommendations regarding their programs carried great weight in determining their shape and priority as related to

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<sup>1</sup>United States Operations Mission, Organization and Functions Manual (Saigon: April, 1963).

counterinsurgency. Most of the technical divisions had not yet reoriented their normal development projects, and considerable conflict developed between Rural Affairs and the divisions.

The Rural Affairs Office had several special project advisors for development and promotion of the Pig-Corn Program, Women's Affairs, Self-Help, The Open Arms Campaign, and Hydro-jet Well Drilling. A public health specialist in the Office served as liaison with the Public Health Division and province representatives. These projects sometimes overlapped the subject areas of the special divisions. The Rural Affairs Office took the position that certain urgent projects could be better implemented by Americans who were operationally assigned to the project rather than through the slower channels of the regular USOM-Ministry advisory apparatus.

Much of the attention of Rural Affairs personnel was given to implementation of the strategic hamlet campaign, most of which was not directly related to the other USOM divisions. Clearly, however, USOM had not yet begun to function in the new counterinsurgency mission as a fully coordinated whole.

The November revolution was followed by the departure of Assistant Director Phillips for personal reasons. During the critical period when the Vietnamese Government was constantly reshuffling itself, the Rural Affairs Office was without a permanent head.

In June, 1964, seven months after Phillip's departure, George Tanham, previously with RAND Corporation, arrived to

become the Associate Director for Operations, a position which involved higher rank and theoretically a stronger role in coordinating rural operations involving the technical divisions in USOM.<sup>2</sup> In a few weeks James Killen became Director of USOM. Killen almost immediately questioned the role of the Office of Operations, and soon changed its name to the Office of Provincial Operations. Killen's primary objection to provincial activities at that time was the heavy involvement of Americans in performance of duties that he felt should be carried out by the Vietnamese Government. He opposed release of commodities and approval of funds by USOM Representatives and he promoted the theory that the Vietnamese should be pressured to do these things for themselves. In a 1964 discussion he argued:

When we decided to maintain a quick counterinsurgency effort, it turned out we had to put ourselves in the part of the Vietnamese. . . put our people in the countryside and give them resources and tell them that 'you do the things the GVN should be doing for the people in the countryside.' Are we wise in thinking in terms of perpetuating a situation. . . in thinking that we should continue to do for the Vietnamese government things it should be doing for itself? Are we seeing some strengthening of Vietnam as a result of our efforts, or are we institutionalizing an excessive dependence on the USOM representative to do things they should be doing for themselves?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The structural changes within USOM may be traced by comparison of the USOM organization charts in the Appendices.

<sup>3</sup>Office of Provincial Operations, "Transcript of IV Corps Regional Meeting of Province Representatives," (Saigon: USOM, 26 September 1964), p. 5. (Mimeographed.)



One USOM Representative expressed the position of most provincial personnel by saying that the USOM Representative had done much to aid the Province Chief in accomplishing his job:

There have been five Province Chiefs during my tenure in Vinh Binh Province. All were very reluctant to make decisions and very reluctant to make field inspections. The key is to have all leaders identify themselves with the people. My role is to encourage the Province Chief to get out and meet the local people and solve their problems. We have given him the capability of taking initiative because of the resources we have provided him. We have not made decisions for him. We point out problem areas and what he can do to correct them. I have seen more growth of decision making on the part of the Province Chief, not more dependence on the USOM Representative.

We have brought more and more problems to him, particularly in civilian areas. We have provided continuity when new Province Chiefs have been assigned. We have provided action by having materials and commodities on the spot. We have given him control of his own resources. Previously he had a minister to patrol these resources from Saigon. We have given him coordination of these resources.<sup>4</sup>

The director continued to oppose the previous provincial operations role, eventually removing the leverage which USOM Representatives had enjoyed by the responsibility to approve commodity and fund releases. These differences on administrative and program policies and personal harrassment of Tanham by the Director led to Tanham's resignation in December, 1964. Province Representatives with problems that needed strong support from their superiors in Saigon continued to get little

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<sup>4</sup>Remarks by W. Robert Warne, Ibid., pp. 7-8.

assistance from them during this period of top-level conflict.

After Tanham's resignation, Killen reduced his former position to Assistant Director and Samuel Wilson was appointed.

Regional organization. The increase of field personnel in 1964 had led to the formation of regional offices in the four Corps areas. Province representatives were expected to work through these facilities for most problems related to Saigon. The technical divisions attached field personnel to these offices. There were advisors from almost every USOM Division who travelled among the provinces working outward from the regional base. Killen had brought these regional offices directly under the Office of Director. The Assistant Director for Provincial Operations was reduced to a "Chief of Staff" status, without line command over the regional offices. Killen further weakened the position of Assistant for Provincial Operations by creation of three new Assistant Directors, one of whom took over logistics activities that had originally been in the Office for Rural Affairs.

Killen felt the quality of the Provincial Operations personnel was inadequate for their role. He envisioned it as more advisory and necessitating a considerable background of managerial experience.<sup>5</sup> After an extended reappraisal of the role of the Provincial Representative, during which scores of

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<sup>5</sup>Interview with James Killen, former Director, USOM, 1964.

experienced men were released as not appropriate for another tour, the position grade was escalated from an FSR-5 to an FSR-3. A recruiting effort both in and outside AID was pointed towards finding former mission directors and deputy directors to head the regional offices.

The Office of Provincial Operations had lost many of its special projects programs, most of which were transferred to the appropriate technical division. However, new staff positions were created to bolster the programming of specifically provincial operations, such as Open Arms, Self-Help, Relocation, etc.

Killen favored the buildup of village police and emphasized the role of the Public Safety Division. He opposed the large size of the mission (as he had done in other missions) and tried at first to reduce the staff.<sup>6</sup>

Most Province Representatives agreed that Killen's policies seriously hampered their function. Although he often spoke of pressuring the Vietnamese towards doing things for themselves, he had taken away the American leverage in the province by removing the necessity of American approvals at the local level. In sum, his conventional approach to development activity did not appear to fit the requirements of the Vietnamese situation in 1964 and 1965. He did, however, integrate the divisions of USOM into a more smoothly functioning mechanism in which all divisions were actively supporting a single policy.

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<sup>6</sup>San Francisco Chronicle, 6 February 1965, p. 1.

The reappointment of Ambassador Lodge in July, 1965 coincided with the removal of Killen, and his eventual replacement by Charles Mann, AID Director in Laos. In the fall of 1965, USOM began to make plans for a massive buildup in USOM personnel and the USOM Representative approval for funds and commodities was restored for the 1966 agreements. In February, 1966, the position of Assistant Director for Provincial Operations was redesignated Associate Director for Field Operations, with responsibility for direct supervision of the regional offices as well as provincial operations.

#### Personnel Selection for Provincial Operations

The initial selection of the Rural Affairs personnel included a wide range of sources and types. Many were former military officers; some were from technical divisions of AID; some had worked for other government and voluntary agencies.

Rufus Phillips did much of the initial interviewing personally, and sought to find people who were specially qualified in human relations skills such as ability to work under pressure and difficult circumstances, and experience in effecting administrative change and results in programs. Great emphasis was placed on capacity to deal with persons of another culture, particularly in being able to "empathize" with the counterpart's situation and problems. Finally, a sense of service and a desire to accomplish were considered essential motivations.

# USAID VIETNAM

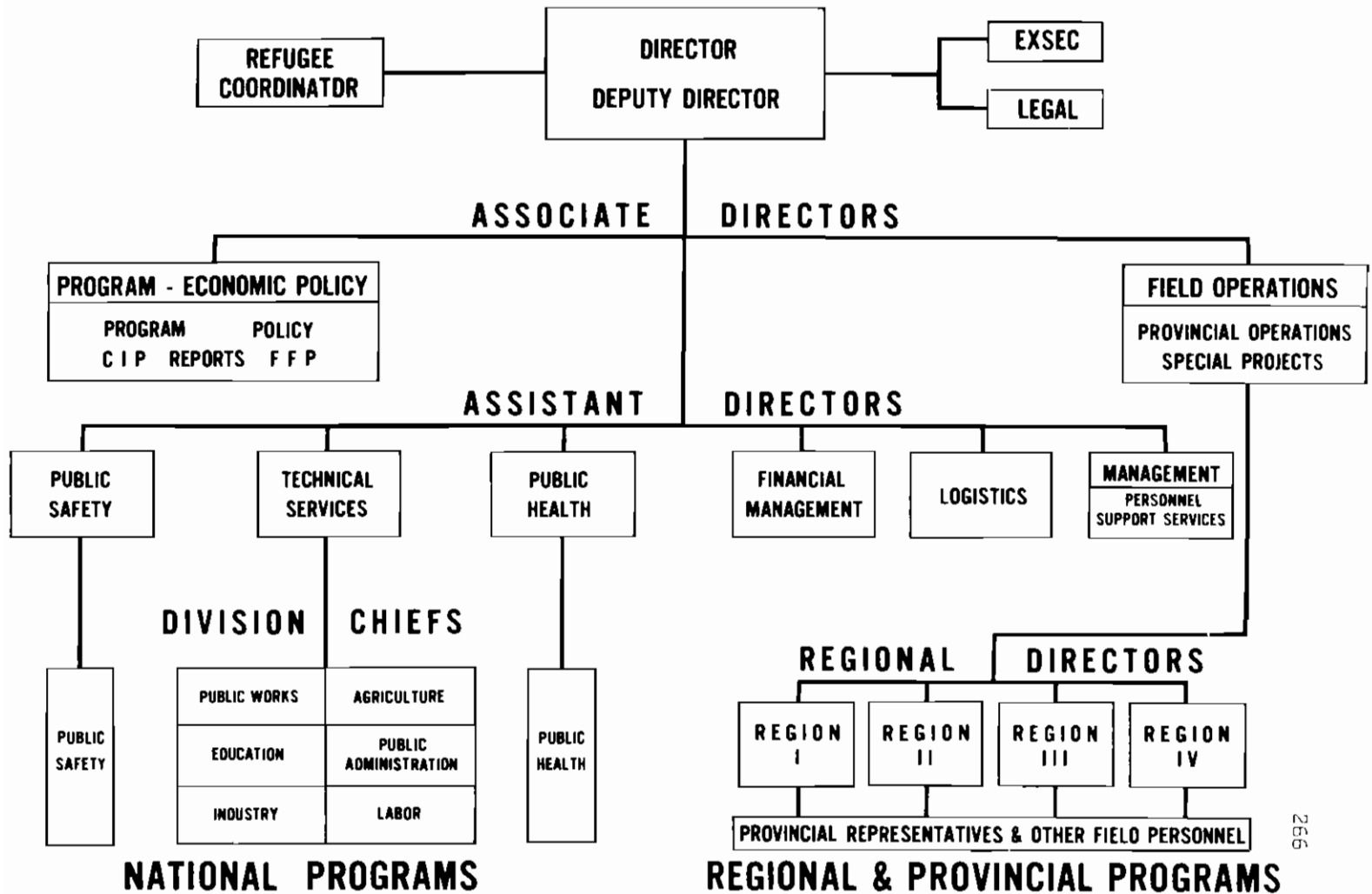


Figure 23. USAID Vietnam.



In 1964, large numbers of personnel were recruited by normal aid methods and by secondment from the Army. Many retired officers were hired--most of whom had Far Eastern experience.

Some of those initially recruited by Phillips were not permitted to return under the Killen administration (although several eventually went back after Killen's departure). In the effort to upgrade the maturity and quality of the Province Representatives, higher level former military officers were recruited, and more stringent criteria were applied for selection. Several men with city management experience were recruited, in the theory that local government experience would be useful in the local government of Vietnam as well. The problem of retaining and recruiting qualified men had grown acute by mid-1965, when the terms of those whose families had been evacuated in early 1965 were being released.

#### Technical Divisions

The buildup in the USOM technical divisions had begun with a major enlargement of the Public Safety Division in 1962 and 1963. It included more police advisors and personnel responsible for the radio communications network which was planned to tie the lowest hamlet to Saigon. The development of field advisory staffs by all the divisions began in 1964. The addition of technical personnel for operational responsibilities further increased the field staffs. In 1965, a complete framework for refugee administration was organized. By December, 1965, more

than 800 Americans and 200 Filipinos and Chinese were employed by USOM.<sup>7</sup>

The size of the Public Safety and Public Health Divisions had increased to the point in early 1966 where each Division was headed by an Assistant Director. The Agriculture Division also had begun to multiply its staff in 1966 by recruiting province level technicians in addition to those stationed at the Corps level.

International Voluntary Services. The young volunteers of IVS were employed in several ways relevant to counterinsurgency programs. The two emphases of IVS were agriculture and education. There were a few volunteers also working in Public Health. The various USOM divisions usually arranged with the Vietnamese Government for the volunteers to be related to a provincial or regional agriculture service or a school. Several IVS men were assigned to the Rural Affairs programs for special projects and others became Province Representatives.

#### Possible Effects of the USOM Staff Increase

Some high-level administrators expressed concern in late 1965 over the enormous buildup of personnel for 1966. One key administrator informed the writer that the tendency of the increase would be to take the activities out of the hands of the Vietnamese at every level.<sup>8</sup> He further commented that one of

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<sup>7</sup>Agency for International Development, AID Program in Vietnam, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with Source Number 33, AID, 1965.



the causes of the buildup was USOM's fear of complete United States military take-over of all American operations in Vietnam, which was desired by the military. The logistical requirements for supporting USOM field staffs have multiplied under the new system and have further increased the size of Saigon support staffs as well.

## II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MACV

The enlargement of MAAG began with an increase from 327 to 685 during 1960. Before then, MAAG had been scrupulously held to the ceilings of the Geneva Agreement. The growing insurgency, however, forced the enlargement. In 1962, MAAG was subsumed under MACV which by then included various air support and other units as well as more advisors. By then the American advisory effort began to get much closer to the actual prosecution of the war through the presence of regimental and battalion advisors.

### The Sector Advisory Role

Perhaps the most significant innovation, in terms of military advisory roles, was the assignment of Sector Advisors to assist Province Chiefs in pacification matters. (As noted earlier "sector" refers to all military activities within a province or a specially designated military area.) The emphasis in selection was on mature men with considerable military experience. Few of the Sector Advisors had served in an advisory role before, although

almost all had previous combat and command experience. By 1964, training included military assistance techniques and usually three months of language.

The appointment of Civil Affairs Advisors for each Sector team eased the pressure on the Sector Advisor in his responsibilities concerning non-military matters. Unfortunately, these men were not usually highly qualified, often seconded from other regular corps and given a few months of civil affairs training. They were by no means career specialists in civil affairs.

Jordan notes three problems associated with the advisory role in Vietnam: 1) lack of command, 2) absence of family, and 3) shortness of tour.<sup>9</sup> The field-oriented character of the advisory mission and the sheer size of the advisory input precluded the presence of families. In the earlier years, up to 1964, families had been permitted, and tours were longer, but increasing terror forced evacuation of all dependents in February 1965. The consequence of one year tours was a constant cycle of change, in which the advisor usually achieved mastery of his job and rapport with his counterpart just in time to begin thinking of his new assignment in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

Lack of American command was a problem experienced by many advisors. A General Officer associated with MAAG for several years in Vietnam once explained to the writer that he believed

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<sup>9</sup>Jordan, op. cit., p. 162.

<sup>10</sup>A perceptive account of military advisory problems in Vietnam is given by Robert Shaplan, "Letter from South Vietnam," New Yorker, 16 April 1965, pp. 166-189.

# U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM SAIGON, VIETNAM

1965

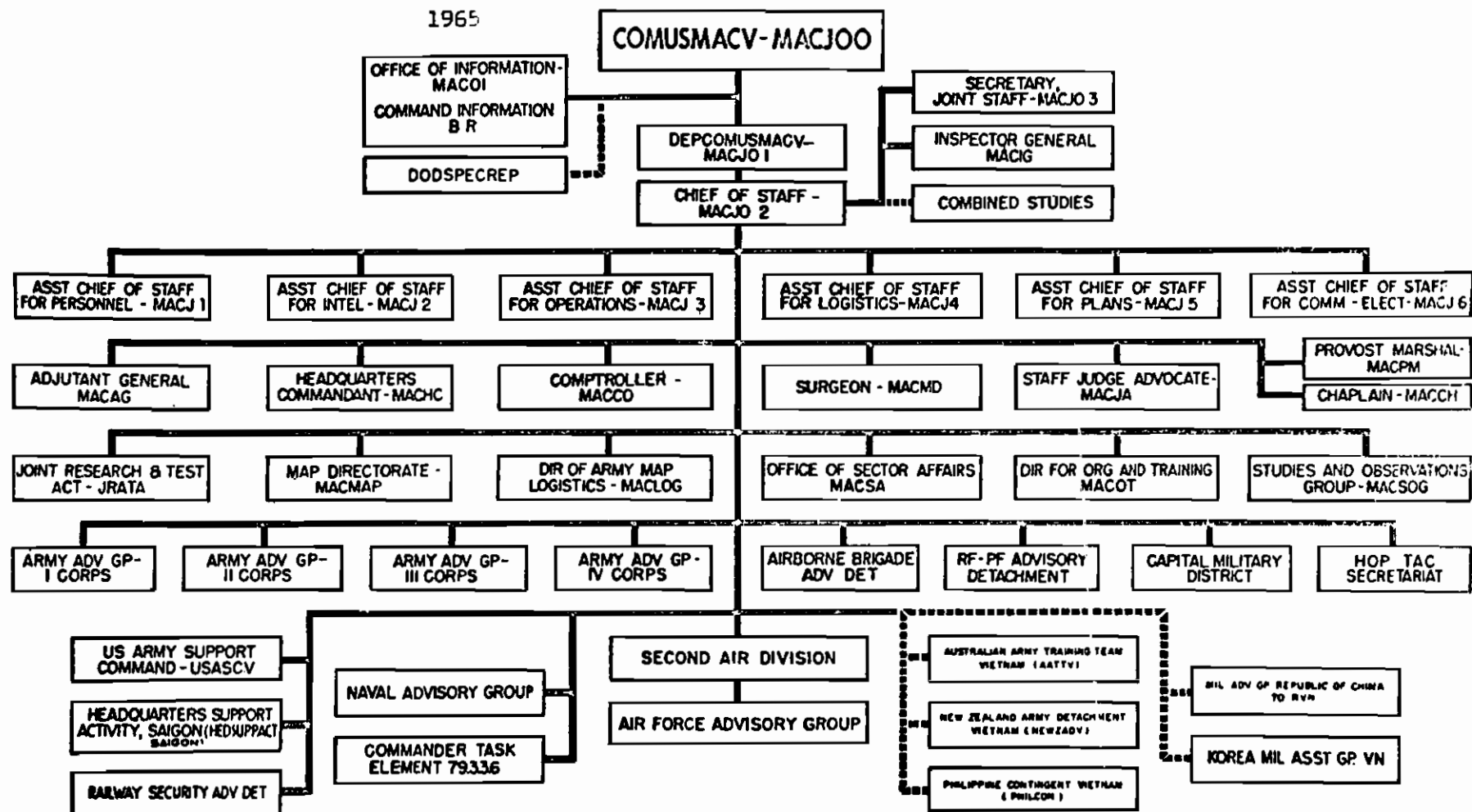


Figure 25.

United States command in Vietnam was essential for victory.<sup>11</sup> Men in Vietnam who had previously advised in Korea were acutely aware of the difference between the two situations, particularly in the absence in Vietnam of leverage to back up persuasion (viz., control of the Korean commander's gasoline and ammunition ration). While direct American command would appear to be unrealistic in the light of the intensive Vietnamese nationalism, it would probably enhance the advisory role to supply more direct control of some of the American material inputs such as was done in Korea.

Reporting. A great deal of the Sector advisory staff's attention was given to reporting. In 1964, vast amounts of data were being sent from the sector level. Sector Advisors have estimated to the writer that as much as 60 per cent of their time was spent preparing specific reports. Prior to the fall of Diem, the upper levels of the MACV system had encouraged optimistic reporting on pacification. This was clearly sensed at the sector level, resulting in the widely varying estimates regarding pacification between military and civilian field reporters.

#### The Office of Sector Affairs

A special office in Saigon had been opened to focus on the problems peculiar to the Sector Advisors, which often were related to problems of civil administration rather than purely

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<sup>11</sup>Interview with Source Number 38, former MAAG Commanding General, 1965.

military matters typical of the other advisory roles. Regional reporters kept up with their particular areas and regularly made field visits. In 1964, however, the Office was primarily oriented towards reporting for its own sake. No control system or bi-national channel assured that reports requesting action would receive a reply.<sup>12</sup>

The sector team and the larger advisory system. Communications with Saigon by Sector Advisors always went through the Senior Advisors of Division and Corps, under whom the sector was subsumed in the chain of command. The sector activities were often more remote from standard military problems than the ARVN itself. The Senior Advisor of a Division, for instance, was closer to activities of his junior advisors in his own divisional framework than the Sector team attached outside the ARVN system.

The tensions between the province chiefs and division commanders were often reflected in the relations between the counterpart advisors. In this administrative milieu, the Sector Advisor's effort to help his Province Chief clear a road block in Saigon was confronted with a double filter at Corps and Division that did not always facilitate action in Saigon. Further, the ARVN-oriented Senior Advisor at Division

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<sup>12</sup>This observation is based on numerous contacts in 1964 with Sector Advisors, who made such "request for action" reports, and with regional reporters in the Office of Sector Affairs who admitted that such reporting was not action-oriented.

had to write the Sector Advisor's efficiency report, although the Division was usually operationally isolated from many of the complex social, political, and paramilitary problems, confronted daily in the Sector.

The Sector and Subsector system, numbering about 2000 men, was only a small part of the massive MACV advisory component in early 1966.<sup>13</sup>

Special Forces. American Special Forces teams operated independently of the advisory command systems in which their various camps were located. By 1964, pressure from Division and Corps Advisors led to the coordination of Special Forces operations with the American Senior Advisors at the Corps level.

#### American Combat Forces

As noted in Chapter VII, American forces entered directly into pacification campaigns in the Danang Special Sector (a part of Quang Nam province) and elsewhere. By early 1966, the Marines had given a great deal of attention to intensive civic action projects--so much in fact that some observers feared they had inhibited provincial government participation in the pacification effort.<sup>14</sup>

Another complication arose from the arrival of combat forces. Some observers felt the attention of MACV was drawn

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<sup>13</sup>Shaplen, "Letter" (12 March 1966), op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

from its previous focus on advisory problems to the American combat units. In a survey of sector advisors, complaints against the diversion of interest from the concerns of pacification by MACV superiors were widely voiced.<sup>15</sup> Although the previous military background of MACV superiors would naturally orient them towards the more familiar American combat operations, this could lead to avoidance of the central task of achieving victory through reliance on Vietnamese forces and particular focus on pacification as a comprehensive military, political, social, and economic process.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Interview with Source Number 72, USOM, 1964.

<sup>16</sup>Idem.