

were overthrown, their idea was later picked up by pacification authorities and translated into the concept of Rural Development cadre. At a later stage, in keeping with the GVN effort to reform its administration, cadre was understood to encompass executives of all management levels, including the military.

The RD cadre teams, which were activated when the pacification program was set in motion, initially consisted of volunteers but their leaders came mostly from wealthy and influential families, including those seeking refuge from mandatory military service. Although RD cadres were recruited among the local population and assigned to local governments, they were directly controlled by the RD ministry. RD group leaders were authorized, for example, to report directly to the minister in Saigon, by-passing the local government channel. This practice infuriated local officials and other national cadres. The RD cadres even had the upper hand over PF troops, who were the natives of their localities. The animosity and competition between RD cadres and PF troops were such that there was little cooperation or mutual assistance. During 1966 and 1967, when RD cadres operated in conjunction with RF troops in villages and hamlets, RF troops were assigned to outposts and watchtowers while RD cadres conducted activities and lived among the people. But there were instances in which RF troops ignored requests for relief by RD cadre teams who were under enemy attack. This rivalry existed primarily in the provinces of Binh Duong and Bien Hoa where RD cadre teams suffered significant losses at the hands of the enemy. It stemmed from the fact that RD cadres considered themselves emissaries of the central government, hence superior to the RF, the para-military forces, or other cadres, whom they held in low esteem.

Other categories of civilian cadre, usually called national cadres, were usually found to be slow-moving, excessively bureaucratic, imperious, but dependent on the military for almost everything. It was as if they were unable to shake off the influence of French colonialism of which indigenous civil servants were made a loyal instrument. They rarely made inspection trips to villages and hamlets to examine and assess personally the situation. Instead, they depended primarily on reports

from subordinates, reports which usually did not reflect the true or complete situation. Sometimes higher level cadres were aware of the inaccuracy of formal reports but still forwarded these self-serving reports without adequate investigation or comments.

The success of the pacification program depended in a large measure on the capability and attitude of the national cadres. Some were genuinely devoted and determined in serving the national cause. However some, most unfortunately, only thought of themselves and avoiding hardship. As a result, the abuse of power for personal benefit and the pursuit of worldly pleasures were widespread. Cadres were not always ideologically motivated; many of them were materially oriented. The "cadre" concept thus became devoid of significance because by vocation, a cadre must be the personification of the national ideology and a representative of the political regime. As originally conceived, cadres should have been the antidote of the basically lethargic bureaucracy. As such, cadres would endure hardship, overcome difficulties, and prove themselves as examples of personal sacrifice for the national cause. It is generally admitted that one can evaluate the merits of a certain regime by looking at how its cadre behave and perform. In the context of the Vietnam conflict, the lack of enthusiasm and determination on the part of some national cadres was one reason why the GVN was unable to motivate and rally all the population. The disheartening fact was that some cadres who enjoyed power and authority only thought of consolidating their positions. Those who were wealthy kept seeking more enrichment, and those who were enterprising sought ways to transfer their wealth into foreign bank accounts, preparing for an eventual exit, if and when the opportunity or requirement arose. The sons of wealthy and influential cadres could avoid the draft. Through bribery, they could stay free of military service or go overseas to continue their studies. As for the lower level cadres, they were economically the most underprivileged of all, like the private soldiers. Hard-pressed by soaring prices and meager salaries, they were usually compelled to make ends meet through petty corruption or moonlighting. The few who were well-off could always buy their way to desk jobs in secure areas. In the

end, no matter how good or significant a plan or program might be, it could be retarded by the very cadres responsible for its implementation.

This is not to say that all GVN cadres fell into the undesirable categories depicted above. There were many highly capable individuals who were truly devoted to the national cause. But the circumstances were such that they were not always given the chance or the freedom to prove their talent and devotion. Being frequently a minority among the cadre ranks, there was little they could do to redress the situation.

In the employment of forces, although ARVN regular forces were committed to support the GVN pacification effort, the Regional and Popular Forces were the mainstay of pacification. In time, territorial forces made up 55 percent of total RVNAF strength but due to their rapid expansion, most RF and PF unit commanders were relatively inexperienced.

RF units served as the provincial main force while PF units were the village main forces. Both forces were employed as small units, usually companies and platoons for the maintenance of territorial security. Being thinly spread out and lacking adequate support, they were extremely vulnerable to enemy attacks. This vulnerability was exploited to the maximum by enemy forces who usually attacked with a superior force, inflicting heavy losses on the RF and PF. Nevertheless, this was a sound concept of force employment in the pacification effort since territorial forces consisted of men who were born and grew up in the very villages where they were assigned. As a result, the territorial trooper was well familiar with the local terrain. But despite their authorized strength, territorial forces suffered constantly from a shortage of personnel. Some RF battalions participated in operations with only 120 men. The gravest problem that plagued the RF and PF was a high percentage of absentees who were included on the unit roll calls, and often on payrolls. These absentees included deserters, AWOLs, hospital patients, trainees, and those permanently detached to guard and escort duties of province, and district chiefs and elected officials. There was also the deplorable phenomenon of "ghost" and "ornamental" soldiers — those who had died and those who only occasionally reported for duties respectively — but whose names were still recorded in roll calls and

payrolls. In addition, there were losses but no replacements because of recruiting difficulties, and there were deserters who sought protection from religious or political organizations. These conditions resulted in most RF and PF units never being at full strength and it was almost impossible to remedy this situation.

Despite being plagued with understrength and a shortage of experienced cadres, the RF and PF were employed in a wide variety of capacities. There were some units which seemed condemned to operational duties year in and year out without rest, refitting or training. There were others which permanently manned outposts and watchtowers and guarded bridges, lines of communication, and government installations. Despite mandatory training programs designed to improve RF and PF combat effectiveness, which prescribed the rotation of units to undergo training, very few province and district chiefs complied with these programs. Village chiefs managed to justify their non-compliance by various pretexts. When a RF unit underwent training at some center, its strength usually included office and general service personnel in order to comply with the JGS requirements for unit strength. But as soon as the unit completed training, it returned the "borrowed" personnel and found itself understrength again. Thus the "trained unit" never had the chance to operate as a unit.

The RF and PF usually suffered from a serious shortage of non-commissioned officers and specialists. Several platoons were commanded by corporals or corporals first class. Companies were usually commanded by young second lieutenants fresh out of school. Because of these shortcomings and weaknesses, the territorial forces never effectively fulfilled their mission and, as a result, regular ARVN forces were frequently required to perform the territorial role. When taking over combat responsibility from departing US forces, ARVN was spread thin in its attempt to fill in the void where territorial forces were incapable of maintaining security. The enemy was thus given the chance to infiltrate and resume local activities because many areas were left undefended for lack of forces.

The RF and PF improvement program as initiated by the JGS was based on the innovative policy of assigning new recruits and draftees to RF units, and authorizing recruitment without regard to age limitations, provided RF and PF units were brought up to authorized strength. In order to improve command and control, the JGS also adopted certain special measures and incentives such as accelerated NCO training courses, battlefield promotions, and promotions for combat worthy cadres without regard to rank seniority, all with the objective of increasing cadre strength and effectiveness for the territorial forces. Disciplinary and replacement measures were also taken against those territorial commanders who neglected to improve and develop their forces. However, the task of improving the RF and PF demanded more time, more perseverance, and more patience; a military force of such proportions could not reach desired standards without a long-range program.

The Impact of U.S. Policies

The RVN depended almost entirely on the US for its nation-building effort and defense against Communist subversion and invasion. American policies, therefore, could help make or break that effort.

When the Communists rekindled their war of aggression in South Vietnam, the US came to the relief of its embattled ally by providing money, equipment, weapons, advisers and even its own air force and combat troops to fight the war for several years. The varying emphasis of US policies in South Vietnam always bore a direct consequence on the outcome of the conflict and American military doctrine and strategy affected the Vietnamese conduct of the war.

During the five years that preceded the outbreak of war, American military policy sought to train and equip the Vietnamese military as a conventional force to face an eventual conventional invasion. However, this invasion first materialized under the unconventional form of subversion sustained by guerrilla warfare. The RVNAF, tailored to the US Army image, were hard-pressed to fight this kind of war for which they were ill-prepared. Increased US military aid and the availability of US

combat support assets failed to solve the basic problems of the long-term conflict.

On its own initiative, the GVN came up with its Strategic Hamlet program to counter the subversive war. Instead of providing this program with adequate material and technical support, the US continued with regular military aid. Instead of encouraging this new program, American officials were inclined to find fault with it and criticize its shortcomings. When South Vietnam nearly came apart in late 1964 as a result of political instability and military setbacks, the US decided to save it the American way. Perhaps this was the only way at the time, but having regained the military advantage, the US decided to proceed with the military war and only showed lukewarm interest in the "other war" which was left to the GVN to fight.

Four precious years were thus lost before the US renewed any interest in the other war. It seemed as if the US had failed to realize the dual aspect of the war whose nature was even ignored by some US commanders. That was a regrettable error of strategic proportions that cost human lives, political support and time. Only after military emphasis failed did the US become more conscious of the nature of the total conflict and make a truly cohesive effort to help the GVN with its other war. But the years had been lost that could have perhaps radically changed the outcome of the war for rural control had the Strategic Hamlet program received the full weight of US support from the start.

The Communists benefited the most from fishing in those troubled waters during this time. In addition to force buildup, they succeeded in reestablishing nearly invulnerable bases along the border areas and even "mini" guerrilla bases in the midst of GVN territory. The VCI was also provided the opportunity to gain a firm foothold in the rural areas where it seemed to flourish.

The US insistence on political stability and elective, democratic government as preconditions to continued aid and support effectively molded the RVN regime into a Western style democracy that functioned primarily in form, not in substance. The true nature of the regime remained intrigue-ridden, dictatorial, and repressive. Perhaps the

Vietnamese peasantry was not yet ready to cope with ballots and senators. In any case they were more preoccupied with down-to-earth things such as a decent living, social justice, and security that hopefully pacification would bring about. These also happened to be the implied goals of US aid and support.

But only two years after its first cohesive effort to support pacification, the US already thought of disengagement. While these intensive two years were enough to inculcate progress and momentum to the pacification effort, the gradual removal of the US military protective shield began to overtax the RVNAF capabilities to fight two wars at the same time despite force structure increase and modernization. Still, benefiting from the initial momentum, pacification harvested its most abundant results during the following three years, 1969-1971, with continued US support.

The Paris Agreement soon ushered in a most difficult period for the GVN which had to face with complete US withdrawal, continued enemy harassment, an eventual resumption of the war and most unfortunately, a sizable cutback in US aid. All these events reduced the GVN strategic options to a simple matter of survival; pacification could hardly progress when the nation's survival was at stake. It was finally the US people who repudiated even the last flimsy hope of survival and sealed the fate of South Vietnam as a free nation.

CHAPTER IX

Observations and Conclusions

After completing my previous chapters and conducting in-depth discussions with Vietnamese associates, I wish to emphasize several general observations and conclusions.

Of the strategic alternatives available to the GVN and the US in South Vietnam, pacification was probably the most sensible option that not only potentially met the Communist politico-military challenge but was also basically consistent with American policies and Vietnamese national goals. Given the historical context of the war, perhaps it was the only sensible strategy.

In fact South Vietnam had very little choice, if any. The war it fought was first and foremost a legitimate defense occasioned by insurgency and aggression. Otherwise, South Vietnam was perfectly happy to be left alone with its task of nation-building south of the 17th parallel. It never bore any aggressive design against North Vietnam and had little capability for it. Its strategy was and had always been a strategy of defense and survival.

This strategy did not seek a military victory as an end in itself because the war was not simply a military war. Even if the conflict had been reduced to a military showdown, there were chances of its going on almost indefinitely as long as the insurgents were kept revitalized by an interminable flow of men and supplies from the north. At the height of military gains, some Vietnamese and American leaders talked exuberantly of the war fading away or reverting to brushfire guerrilla warfare. This only showed how mistaken they were as to the enemy's intentions and capabilities. The enemy, in fact, enjoyed a wide range of options. The use of military force, albeit a prominent feature of his strategy, was

but one among other options. He could switch from one to another without ever lessening the threat to the GVN. More importantly, he always seemed to be able to maintain his military pressure on two levels of warfare, simultaneously or alternately. The absence of one did not preclude the presence of the other and either one posed a continuous security problem for the GVN.

The highest level of pacification success from 1969 to 1971 was possible primarily due to improved security and the military advantage that the US, RVN and free world forces enjoyed over the Communists. Indeed, with 1,100,000 men of the RVNAF and over half a million of US and FWMA troops, and with overwhelming firepower and other combat support assets, we truly held the initiative on the entire South Vietnamese battlefield and caused the enemy severe losses in human lives and equipment. For sometime, all Communist main forces were effectively driven away from populated areas and over the national border.

Meanwhile, the United States air and naval bombardments also brought havoc to North Vietnam, the Communist "rear area" that sustained the war in South Vietnam, and effectively reduced the flow of NVA troops and supplies into the South. This was a period during which North Vietnam, its troops in the South and the Viet Cong suffered severe setbacks and were in real difficulty.

To regain their initiative and restore control over the rural area, the Communists launched their Tet "General Offensive — General Uprising" in 1968, but met with determined reactions by the RVNAF and US/FWMA forces and suffered a resounding military defeat. Over 120,000 Communist troops were either killed or wounded and in excess of 37,000 weapons were captured by our side. More of the rural area, as a result, progressively came under control of the GVN and friendly forces.

In subsequent actions, the RVN and US forces drove enemy forces farther away from border areas and repeatedly struck at logistical bases that the enemy had built during previous years along the Cambodian and Laotian borders. The Cambodian incursion of 1970, and the cross-border

operation into lower Laos in early 1971 were victorious examples of combined RVN-US military effort. The rural areas during this period were almost free of enemy main force units. Whatever remnant forces the enemy had inside South Vietnam were merely local forces or guerilla elements and his considerably weakened infrastructure.

In 1972, the pacification effort began to decrease in effectiveness because there were not enough combat forces to hold the initiative on the battlefield and provide security for the population at the same time. The US and Allied countries had by that time withdrawn 90% of their ground troops. US combat support in terms of B-52 strikes, tactical air, naval firepower while still available was greatly reduced. The reduction in combat power was considerable. Whereas the US, other Allies, and the RVN committed up to 22 divisions at the height of the US buildup, by 1972 there were only 13 divisions. This represented a reduction of 40% in combat strength. Other reductions in firepower and support assets were so great that no comparison was possible between what the US had deployed and what the RVNAF could now muster.

It was estimated that at the time of the cease-fire, Communist forces in South Vietnam numbered about 293,000 men to include 14 infantry divisions and four combat support divisions, but excluding the five general reserve NVA divisions which served as a backup and accounted for another 50,000 to 60,000 men. The trend was such that while the enemy nearly doubled in combat strength, our side was reduced by nearly one half its former strength. Also beginning in 1972, the North Vietnamese Army became more modernized. Its movements were mechanized and its infantry units fought with a complete array of artillery and armor support. Its modern capabilities and assets were on obvious display during the 1972 Easter invasion. Over the years of US buildup, the Communist bloc also responded by escalating its aid to North Vietnam, with the end result that, after US withdrawal, the RVNAF were to face the increased Communist might alone.

As a direct result of the US troop withdrawal, and bound by a rigid strategy of territorial control, the RVN regular forces became overextended. They no longer had adequate mobile combat strength. Search

and destroy operations against enemy infiltration along the western border gradually became impossible to conduct. The RVNAF were finally incapable of conducting mobile operations and supporting pacification at the same time, as had been done during the period of US participation. From 1972 on, the RVNAF gradually lost the initiative and were increasingly on the defensive.

The biggest shortcoming in pacification, aside from the shortage of forces, was the artificiality of its reporting. Despite impressive statistics, the figures were often misleading. They frequently served a political purpose and did not reflect realistic gains. Moreover, real gains could be easily upset by Communist spoiling actions.

The Paris Agreement in 1973 prescribed a "leopard skin" or standstill cease-fire which was a disadvantage for the RVN and a blessing for the enemy. No longer impeded by mines and destroyed by bombs, North Vietnam devoted its energy to rebuilding its shattered economy on the one hand, and making preparations to invade the South on the other. Once again, the rural areas of South Vietnam were in turmoil. The enemy was striving to regain his control by military actions ranging from limited attacks to all-out offensive. Not only had war been resumed, it also escalated in terms of forces committed and target size and culminated in open invasion. But the US protective shield had been removed; the RVN was left to fend for itself with less and less assistance. Unenforced warnings by the US in the face of blatant violations only encouraged the enemy to proceed with his conquest.

Another RVN shortcoming was its total dependence on US aid. Without this aid it could neither maintain its military force nor continue its pacification effort. US policies, therefore, always had a decisive effect on the RVN ability to defend itself and consolidate its national posture. We have already seen how the US varying emphasis on pacification affected its progress. In military assistance, this effect was even more conspicuous. During the period US forces fought in Vietnam, US military aid was substantial and adequately met RVNAF combat needs. However, from nearly

\$1.5 billion in FY-73, U.S. military aid suddenly dropped to \$1 billion in FY-74 and finally to \$700 million in FY-75. This drastic cutback gravely affected not only the RVNAF combat capabilities but also the morale of their cadres and troops. It was obvious that the RVN ability to defend itself and its chances of survival depended to a large extent on the amount of US military aid appropriated. As a result of this huge and unexpected cutback, the RVN was unable to keep its territorial integrity intact and as the RVNAF capability to provide security diminished the GVN pacification effort also decreased proportionately.

Ever since US support became a unified, cohesive effort in 1967, the GVN pacification program was given a momentum that sustained its steady progress, despite occasional setbacks. But from the beginning, this program was plagued by problems of control and coordination, inadequate supporting forces and cadres and an over-anxious propensity for immediate results.

From an organizational point of view, the basic weakness of the system during its first two years, 1966-1967, was the concentration of too much power into the Ministry of Revolutionary Development which regarded itself as an all-important super-ministry with overriding authority. RD cadre, consequently, often acted as if they were a breed of super-cadre with special powers. When other cadres and agencies were assigned lesser responsibilities, they were hurt because of their unfavored standing. As a result, they were inclined to shun responsibilities and let the RD cadre do all the work.

The province chief, coordinator of pacification, was usually assigned too much responsibility. It was simply beyond his capacity or capability to carry out so many tasks at the same time. He was, for example, the chairman of at least ten committees, in addition to being a military commander and an administrative chief. One can hardly imagine how he managed to carry out these duties and at the same time play host to a constant flow of visitors, senators, representatives, GVN officials, foreign dignitaries, and military commanders. Receiving guests and visitors alone was apt to keep him busy around the clock. Yet, in the pacification program, it was the province chief who played the primary role of both planner and executor, and success or failure rested on him, and on him alone.

US agencies were indispensable in their pacification support role. Adequately staffed with qualified, experienced personnel and experts, these US agencies were strong in planning and in problem-solving studies. They not only recommended plans and programs for the GVN agencies to implement, but also provided realistic advice and suggestions for effective problem-solving. Therefore, when the US presence was drastically reduced, the void it created was huge and impossible to fill. Despite a certain familiarity with US methods and procedures which they learned during the years of cooperation, GVN officials apparently were never able to function as effectively as with US assistance. The fact was the GVN did not have adequate experts or specialists for every field of activity, and was basically weak in research work, planning, and management. GVN agencies could only do routine work. This does not mean that the GVN was without initiative or creativity; this simply recognizes the fact that GVN shortcomings existed and were significant.

The experience of Revolutionary Development indicated that pacification, as a total effort involving equal contributions from several agencies, could not simply be entrusted to any single ministry, but should have been made the responsibility of an inter-ministerial council deriving its authority from the President or the Prime Minister. Also there should not have been so many different categories of cadres for, by human nature, they tended to compete with each other, to the detriment of the common effort. However, under existing conditions, cadres should have been assigned clearly defined responsibilities and employed to the maximum extent of their capabilities. It also appeared that US advisers sometimes overshadowed their Vietnamese counterparts by simply being too devoted and too eager to get things done. Perhaps a better approach for advisers would have been to suggest ideas and fully exploit the good relationship with counterparts, to stimulate them to initiating their own plans and programs in order to obtain the desired objectives. The simple fact, which was paramount in pacification work, was that no one understood the Vietnamese people's aspiration better than the Vietnamese themselves. What should have been avoided was the imposition of ideas and forcing Vietnamese to do things in ways that they did not consider their own. In the long run, this could make them overly dependent on advisers.

Pacification was a vast enterprise which required an efficient administrative machinery and massive resources, not only in terms of materiel and equipment but also in cadres and supporting forces. Anti-subversive experience showed that the ratio of forces between the government and the insurgents was the key to success. The successful anti-insurgent campaign in Malaya required a 12 to 1 personnel ratio while in the GVN pacification effort, a ratio of 8 to 1 was the most ever achieved. And when the US withdrew, that force ratio was further reduced to a mere 2 or 3 to 1. The simple fact was in order to achieve security and maintain it continuously for the benefit of pacification, an adequate military force was required as long as the enemy military threat was there. A second requirement was the destruction of enemy logistical bases and sanctuaries to cut off his supplies and prevent his force buildup. As long as these two requirements were not fully met, pacification gains stood little chance of being sustained.

As has been said, statistical results reported could provide a false impression. A village was considered as pacified, for example, when certain criteria had been met such as the establishment of the village council, the installation of a village office, an information hall, a first aid station, etc. But in some cases, the village office was installed in a PF outpost whose facilities it shared and council members usually commuted from a nearby town or city to work during office hours and almost never stayed in the village after dark. More often than not, the village information hall was just a squalid shack or hut covered by a few roofing sheets and adorned with old newspapers and faded pictures. But on a report, there was no doubt that the information hall existed and that one objective had been achieved for the village pacification effort even though its effectiveness was below desired standards. The same was true of first aid stations, another important objective to be achieved. Undoubtedly, there existed such a station for every pacified village, but medicine was always in short supply, often locked up and the resident nurse not in the area when patients called. No one knew exactly how much and what types of medicine the station had. Thus, for all practical purposes, it was impossible to obtain from a report the true situation.

Pacification objectives, as conceived and set forth by the CPDC, were all sound and reasonable although somewhat arbitrary and mechanical. The problem seemed to lay with some local governments which tended to implement them in a perfunctory manner, substituting form for substance, and reporting token as true and complete achievements. Then there was the problem of cadres, on whom the success of pacification depended in a large measure.

The cadres were supposed to serve as a transmission belt between the central government and the population. Their role was to organize, teach, persuade and push the people to greater exertions in accepting the GVN programs and participating in them. In the social context of the Vietnam war, the cadres were also supposed to fill in the gap and hopefully resolve the dichotomy between the urban leadership and the rural peasantry. This was perhaps one of the most crucial and problematic issues that the GVN had to face in its efforts to rally popular support for its cause. Conceived as such, the cadre's role was indeed burdensome.

Most of the cadres, RD and others, were recruited among villagers and given special training at Vung Tau before field assignments. Group and team chiefs, however, were invariably selected from among the educated urban minority. Cadre training emphasized the need for winning popular credibility and support and to achieve this, cadres were taught to live by the Communist formula of the *Tam Cung* or "three withs" (eating, living, and working with the people), and by setting personal examples of self-sacrifice, hard work and political awareness. With regard to relations with the people, cadres were also taught to abide by certain codified rules which required them to speak politely, pay for the things they damaged, and above all to protect the lives of and behave correctly toward the peasants. These were also the rules that ARVN, RF and PF troops were taught during special indoctrination courses. The RVNAF political education effort in fact stressed that each soldier had to behave toward the people as if he were a political warfare cadre.

The things learned, however, seemed to be far removed from what actually happened when contact was made with the people. But the mischievous

acts were mostly committed by unruly troops during the course of operations. Such practices as petty larceny, failure to return borrowed items, and buying goods at a "favored" price sometimes occurred in hard-pressed circumstances but they were mostly committed without the commander's knowledge. There was usually confusion as to who the culprits were. Since a pacification operation involved a variety of units and cadre teams, it was almost impossible to ascertain which troops, regular or territorial, were actually responsible for the misconduct. But the finger was usually pointed at the soldiers since they were the most numerous. The cadres in general behaved better than the soldiers not because they were better disciplined but because of their intensive indoctrination. Still their conduct was not always exemplary.

For all their training, indoctrination, and efforts, the cadres seemed not to be very effective in their assigned role as the intermediary link between the central government and the people. They also failed to lessen the urban-rural bipolarity and win the peasantry over to the GVN cause. Some attributed this to war weariness and apathy, but while there was some truth in it, the problem seemed to be more profound. Also, some GVN high-ranking officials in their frustration tended to blame the system's failure to develop an attractive political dynamism on the "lack of dedicated cadres". This was equally true but such lack was more effect than cause of the failure. For one thing, the Communist-inspired concepts such as cadres and mass organizations could not simply be transplanted or adapted in a piecemeal manner with comparable results. The fact was in addition to ideological motivation, the Communists also used coercion and terror in a manner unique to totalitarianism. Unfortunately, these methods were intrinsically alien to such a regime as the GVN's and if mechanically adapted for any purpose, they invariably worked against the regime that used them. There was also the social malaise that a long war had produced and such vices as corruption, graft, and abuse of power were usually the product not the cause. This was also true of war weariness, apathy, or divisiveness.

So the cadres and other pacification supporting forces could be the strength or weakness of the GVN or for that matter of any political regime.

The crucial factor was whether or not such a regime could inspire political awareness or motivation. There was also the danger that the cadres could become "degenerated", to use Communist terminology, or in the case of the GVN, simply bureaucratized. This was what actually happened to the so-called "cadres", RD or others, who by exposure to the system, acted and behaved as functionaries which they truly were.

As to the general population, hardened and disenchanted as they were by the long, destructive war, disillusioned and frustrated by an elusive peace, and ever worried about an uncertain future, many naturally remained uncommitted to the GVN cause and its efforts. Perhaps this was the common syndrome of war weariness and social malaise. But to most of them the crucial and immediate concern was how to subsist materially and survive war hazards. Everything else, including political awareness, or even democracy was less significant; and as long as they lived with privations and hardships, and insecurity, and uncertainty as to the future, no one could blame them for lack of commitment or apathy.

But the Vietnamese people were inherently alien to Communism and always longed for freedom. The million or so North Vietnamese people who first chose to flee south in 1954 eloquently spoke for their love of freedom above everything else, including careers and personal properties. The people's insurrection at Quynh Luu in Nghe An Province, North Vietnam in November 1956 and the subsequent movements of refugees fleeing the advance of Communists in South Vietnam during the period from 1968 to 1972 and in 1975 indicated that, given a choice, the Vietnamese always opted for freedom. Even now that South Vietnam has come under Communist control, refugees still escaping from Vietnam report continuing resistance.

Pacification was a long process that just could not be completed effectively during a short campaign. To succeed in building outposts, filling them with qualified defense troops, and completing the election of village councils within a certain area could not be evaluated as a successful pacification program. These accomplishments were only interim objectives. The nature of true pacification success lay in the hearts and minds of the people and this was a long range proposition which demanded much more time.

The war in Vietnam encompassed many fields of challenge. In the military effort, RVNAF and Free World Forces succeeded temporarily in stabilizing the situation but were never able to gain absolute and permanent superiority over the enemy. Due partly to the indecisive military situation, efforts to achieve political cohesion and enlist popular support were unsuccessful. The conflict, being essentially political rather than military in nature, could only be resolved if there was political cohesion and success in rallying the people to support the GVN cause.

Finally, there was the fundamental question of leadership that truly lay at the core of all successes and failures. Even if adequate time could be bought for the processes of pacification to proceed, there was still doubt that political cohesion would occur and provide effective leadership at the national and all local levels. The profuse availability of material assets or even manpower simply furnished the tools, not the motivation to carry the task to ultimate success. To instill motivation effective leadership was required. Thus the problem seemed to be a circular one: both pacification and political cohesion were essentially interdependent.

The basic weakness of South Vietnamese leadership lay in the fact that GVN officials were all recruited from among the educated urban petty bourgeoisie and this only served to perpetuate the wide gap between them and the rural peasantry. In fact, the national leaders, the province and district chiefs were either military officers or intellectuals who made up the elite minority of the nation. Mostly Western-oriented and sustained by interrelated class or clan interests, they were by nature alien to and unassimilable with the peasantry's cause. Their inability to identify with the peasantry who made up 80% of the population was perhaps a major cause for ineffective leadership.

The same could be said of military leadership which affected the pacification effort in a most significant way. While the national leaders were imbued with revolutionary ideas, they failed to inculcate the same idealistic spirit to some military commanders who behaved as if they existed outside the social mainstream. Political indoctrination also failed to instill

that spirit because not only did it sidestep social reform as a major theme, it also sought to teach exotic, high-strung ideas such as the theory of the "Six Great Warfares", a Nationalist China adaptation of Mao's theory of total war. As a result, troops under this unenlightened, uninvolved military leadership, tended to develop a haughty but false sense of pride not always in full service of the people. This explained the repulsive syndrome of the vain soldier some of whom considered themselves the guardian angels of the regime. But some unit commanders seemed to encourage this false sense of pride which accounted for so many mischievous acts detrimental not only to the prestigious standing of their units but also to the common cause.

Pacification, in the final analysis, was a revolutionary process which affected the peasant majority. The fundamental question was, as had been oftentimes discussed among Vietnamese intellectuals and scholars, who, as a class, could effectively lead that revolution to success? To the anti-Communists who repudiated proletarian dictatorship or even peasantry leadership, this was a question that seemed to have no answer.

Although considerable progress was made, pacification remained a problematic issue for the GVN which seemed unable to bring it to total success. Besides political cohesion, the GVN seemed to be lacking the credibility, the ability and the time required to unify its main efforts. In particular, the GVN credibility suffered a marked decline since the day the National Liberation Front was allowed an equal standing at the Paris talks. It declined further when, despite President's Thieu's vows, northern Quang Tri remained in enemy hands. The population, therefore, grew more and more suspicious of the GVN capability to protect them against the Communists. Pacification also required from the Free World allies which came to its assistance, patience, perseverance, and more determination above all since the time element and will power appeared to be the key to success.

In conclusion, the amount of assistance contributed by the United States to help the RVN was tremendous in terms of money, equipment and manpower. This assistance was greatly appreciated by the people of South Vietnam. However, as long as North Vietnam could quietly enjoy the option

to pursue its aggressive scheme, and as long as the GVN itself could not overcome its internal difficulties, provide effective leadership, and achieve a unified, total effort, there was no way pacification could continue to progress toward its intended goal.

Appendix A

D E C R E E 614-TT/SL

Republic of Vietnam
President's Office
1 July 1970

SUBJECT: Military Organization of the National Territory

The President of The Republic of Vietnam decrees:

Article 1. This Decree defines the military organization of the national territory based on the following provisions:

SECTION 1

Territorial Organization

Article 2. The National territory is divided into four Military Regions. The composition of each Military Region is determined as follows:

1. Military Region I consists of (5) five provinces and two cities:
Quang Tri, Thua Thien and Hue City, Quang Nam and Da Nang City, Quang Tin, and Quang Ngai.
2. Military Region II consists of twelve provinces and two cities:
Binh Dinh, Phu Yen, Phu Bon, Kontum, Pleiku, Darlac, Khanh Hoa and Cam Ranh City, Quang Duc, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Lam Dong, Tuyen Duc and Dalat City.
3. Military Region III consists of Saigon Capital, Con Son Island, eleven provinces and one city:
Phuoc Long, Binh Long, Binh Duong, Long Khanh, Binh Tuy, Phuoc Tuy and Vung Tau City, Bien Hoa, Tay Ninh, Hau Nghia, Long An, and Gia Dinh.
4. Military Region IV consists of sixteen provinces:
Kien Tuong, Dinh Tuong, Go Cong, Kien Hoa, Kien Phong, Sa Dec, Vinh Long, Vinh Binh, Chau Doc, An Giang, Kien Giang, Phong Dinh, Chuong Thien, Bac Lieu, An Xuyen, and Ba Xuyen.

Article 3. In the new organization, each province will become a Sector. Each administrative District or each Area under an Administrative Delegate will become a Sub-Sector. Those cities which are far from province capitals, and vital areas will become Special Sectors. A Special Sector may have several Sub-Sectors. Saigon Capital will have a special territorial organization which will be specified by a separate document.

Article 4. Rung Sat Special Sector will comprise two Districts of Gia Dinh Province, Quang Xuyen and Can Gio, which are within the territory of Military Region III. Con Son Island will retain its present status as Special Sector.

Article 5. Saigon Capital will become the Special Capital Military District which includes Saigon Capital, Gia Dinh Sector and Con Son Special Sector.

Article 6. All Corps Tactical Zones are abolished. Each Infantry Division will be in charge of a tactical area. The boundaries of these areas will be determined by JGS/RVNAF depending on local security situation and based on the recommendation of Commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions.

SECTION 2

Chain of Command

Article 7. The responsibility for each Military Region rests with an Army Corps.

- Army Corps I is responsible for Military Region 1.
- Army Corps II is responsible for Military Region 2.
- Army Corps III is responsible for Military Region 3.
- Army Corps IV is responsible for Military Region 4.

Article 8. Army Corps Headquarters are also Military Region Headquarters. Army Corps Commanders are also Military Region Commanders. All Army Corps and Military Regions are directly under the command of JGS/RVNAF.

Article 9. The Special Capital District is subordinate to Military Region 3.

Article 10. Military Sectors are included in Military Regions. Mayors and Province Chiefs will be concurrently Sector or Special Sector Commanders if they are military. If they are civilian, the position of Sector or Special Sector Commander will be held by a field grade officer.

Article 11. Sub-Sectors are included in Sectors. The District Chief will be concurrently Sub-Sector Commander if he is military. If he is civilian, this position will be held by a military officer.

SECTION 3

Functions

Article 12. Army Corps and Military Regions have the following responsibilities:

A. Mobile Operations:

- Plan and conduct search-and-destroy operations against units of enemy Main Force, Regional Force, Guerrillas and infrastructure.
- Conduct reaction, and relief operations designed to ease enemy pressure.
- Supervise and support operations conducted by an infantry division or a sector.

B. Territorial Security:

- Conduct border defense operations against enemy incursions.
- Defend lines of communication, vital points, villages, hamlets, and all administrative and economic establishments.
- Protect the people and national resources.
- Strengthen the system of outposts, operational bases, and fire-support bases.

C. Pacification and Development:

- Conduct military efforts in support of the Pacification and Development Program.
- Review Pacification and Development Plans submitted by sector commanders and province chiefs.
- Determine priorities for the use of armed forces and their deployment in support of the Pacification and Development Program.
- Monitor, supervise and control the implementation of the military plan in support of the Pacification and Development Program.

D. Other functions:

- Civilian defense:
 - Advise and assist local authorities in organizing people's associations and PSDF.
 - Advise local authorities in counter-riot action and maintenance of order.
- Command, train and administer Territorial Forces, and all attached units.
- Plan and operate a Territorial Intelligence network and an area communication network.
- Administer national defense resources in personnel and materiel.
- Direct and supervise the administration of manpower and material resources.

- Organize and train home reservists.
- Coordinate logistic activities in support of all agencies and military units located or operating in Military Regions.
- Political Warfare.
- Accomplish polwar activities in order to win the people's hearts and minds.
- Provide care and assistance to military dependents of all mobile units stationed in military regions.
- Promote and sustain popular support for front-line units.

Article 13. The Special Capital District has the following responsibility:

A. Mobile operations:

- Organize and conduct mobile operations as required or as directed by the Commander of III Corps and Military Region 3.
- Supervise and support operations organized by subordinate sectors.

B. Territorial Security:

- Defend Saigon Capital, vital points, villages and hamlets and all administrative and economic establishments.
- Protect the people and national resources in the Special Capital District.
- Establish and consolidate the system of outposts, operational bases and fire support bases.

C. Pacification and Development:

- Deploy armed forces and conduct military efforts to support Pacification and Development Programs in all sectors.
- Follow up, direct and control the implementation of the military plan in support of Pacification and Development.

D. Other functions:

- Civilian defense:
 - Assist local authorities in organizing people's associations and PSDF.
 - Assist local authorities in counter-riot action and maintenance of order.
- Command all attached units.
- Plan and operate a territorial intelligence network.
- Direct and supervise the administration of personnel and materiel.
- Organize and plan military training for home reservists.
- Carry out polwar operations in the Special Capital District.

Article 14. Infantry divisions have the following responsibilities:

A. Mobile Operations:

- Conduct mobile operations as required or as directed by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions. Efforts will be focused on enemy main force units and bases.

B. Territorial Security:

- Conduct reaction operations at the request of sector headquarters. Priority for these operations will be decided by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions.

- Provide combat units, fire support and other supports to sectors as ordered by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions.

- Protect important establishments and open roads and waterways as directed by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions.

- Protect important establishments and open roads and waterways as directed by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions.

C. Pacification and Development:

When instructed by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions, coordinate activities with sector headquarters to provide effective support for the Pacification and Development Program.

When instructed by commanders of Army Corps and Military Regions, in conjunction with sector headquarters, launch securing operations in order to pave the way for the Pacification and Development Programs of provinces and sectors.

D. Other functions:

- Assist sector headquarters in providing military training for RF and PF when requested.

- Assist local authorities in the control of national resources and population, restore and maintain order when required.

Article 15. Sectors have the following responsibilities:

A. Territorial Security:

- Plan and conduct search-and-destroy operations against units of enemy provincial main force, guerrillas and infrastructure.

- Establish sector security plans and carry them out after approval by Army Corps and Military Region Headquarters.

- Recommend to Army Corps and Military Region Headquarters reinforcements required for the maintenance of sector security in case of shortage of armed forces.

- Direct all activities of RF, PF and other forces in sectors (National Police, Pacification and Development Cadres, People's Self-Defense Forces).

B. Pacification and Development:

- Formulate a military plan in support of the Pacification and Development Program based on the policy and guidelines of Army Corps and Military Region Headquarters.

- Monitor, supervise and control the implementation of military plan in support of Pacification and Development Program, and be responsible for this to Army Corps and Military Region Headquarters.

C. Other functions:

- Inspect, direct, train and support RF and PF in sectors and maintain their morale.

- Control the supply and maintenance of weapons distributed to PSDF members.

- Carry out territorial intelligence tasks.

- Coordinate and install communications systems.

- Control manpower and material resources and administer home reservists.

Article 16. Sub-Sectors have the following responsibilities:

- Assist sectors in the preparation and implementation of Sector Security Plans and Pacification and Development Plans.

- Direct RF and other forces (NP, Pacification and Development cadres, PSDF) belonging to sub-sectors in the support of Village and Hamlet Defense Plans.

- Direct and supervise subordinate units in the support of Pacification and Development Programs.

- Maintain sub-sector reaction forces to relief villages and hamlets under attack.

- Recommend to sector headquarters the conduct of operations in support of Pacification and Development Plans.

- Provide guidance to village chiefs in the establishment of village defense plans and fire support requests.

- Command, and control sub-sector RF and PF units.

- Carry out intelligence and counter-intelligence tasks.

- When instructed by sector headquarters, transmit mobilization order to home reservists, commandeer and control them.

- Issue and check PSDF weapons and ammunitions.

Article 17. Special Sectors are in charge of the following:

- Direct search-and-destroy operations against provincial units of enemy main force, guerrillas and infrastructure.

- Support the Pacification and Development Program in accordance with the policy and guidelines of Army Corps and Military Region headquarters.

- Protect villages, hamlets, vital points, and all administrative and economic establishments.

- Command and control RF and PF units as well as other assigned units.

- Carry out intelligence and counter-intelligence tasks.
- Assist local authorities in the restoration and maintenance of peace and order.
- Assist local authorities in the organization of people's associations and PSDF.

SECTION 4

Coordination

Article 18. In their responsibilities, Sector Commanders, Special Sector Commanders and Sub-Sector Commanders will act as soldiers; the Saigon Mayor, Province Chiefs, Mayors and District Chiefs continue to retain their political and administrative powers and as far as these powers are concerned, they remain subordinate to the Ministry of Interior.

Article 19. If in the exercise of duties, there is a disagreement between military officers and administrative officials, priority will be given to military actions in emergencies; however, this must be reported immediately to higher headquarters.

Article 20. In order to effectively defend the Special Capital District III Corps and Military Region 3 Headquarters must pay special attention to security conditions in Bien Hoa, Binh Duong, Hau Nghia and Long An Provinces.

SECTION 5

Special Provisions

Article 21. All previous documents and provisions which are contrary to this Decree, will be abrogated, in particular:

Decree 227/QP, 9 December 1965, and Directive 089/QP, 9 December 1965.

Article 22. The Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the Minister of Interior and the Chief Joint General Staff/RVNAF are responsible for implementing this Decree in keeping with their respective duties and functions.

This Decree will be published in the Republic of Vietnam Gazette.

Nguyen Van Thieu

(Translation by Translations and Publications Branch, MSD/CORDS, APO 96243, 10 July 1970)

Appendix B

Republic of Vietnam
Office of the Chairman
Central Executive Committee
24 December 1966

D E C R E E 198-SL/DUHC

SUBJECT: Reorganization of Village and Hamlet Administration

The Chairman of the Central Executive Committee

DECREES:

Article 1. This hereby places the village under the responsibility of two bodies:

- Village People's Council, and
- Village Administrative Committee

The organization, authority, duties, and functioning of these two bodies are defined as follows:

CHAPTER I

Village People's Council

Section 1: Organization

Article 2. The Village People's Council is composed of from six (6) to twelve (12) members elected by the village people through universal suffrage, direct and secret ballot. The election procedure shall be determined by a separate decree.

The member who wins the largest number of votes shall be the Chairman of the Village People's Council. The member who wins the next largest number of votes shall be the Deputy Chairman of the Village People's Council.

In case the Chairman of the Village People's Council is elected Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee as defined in Article 24, the members who obtained the next highest number of votes in the election of the Village Council shall hold respectively the positions of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Village People's Council.

In case the deputy chairman of the Village People's Council is elected Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee, the elected member who obtained the next largest number of votes shall hold the position of deputy Chairman of Village People's Council.

In case of a tie, the eldest member is declared elected.

Article 3. The term of office of the Village People's Council is three years. Members may be re-elected.

Article 4. Members of the Village People's Council are not authorized to hold any salaried public positions but they may hold another elected position. Any member of the Village People's Council may be appointed Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee, but during such tenure, has no vote in the Council.

Members are not authorized to bid for contracts with the village.

Parents and children, blood brothers and sisters, wives and husbands may not hold various responsibilities in the same Village Council.

Article 5. Village Council members may send individual requests for resignation to the Province Chief through the Village Council Chairman. The resignation shall be effective on the date of receipt of the decision of the Province Chief, or, if no decision is received from the Province Chief, the resignation shall be effective one month after the request for resignation is submitted.

Article 6. Any member of the Village Council shall be declared automatically resigned by decision of the Province Chief for the following reasons:

- a. Violation of the regulation excluding a person from holding more than one salaried public office or failure to fulfill all the conditions for eligibility laid down by the Decree fixing the Council electoral procedures, whether discovered during or after his elections
- b. Three consecutive absences during the regular or special sessions, without any just reason recognized as well-founded by the council.

Subject to a two-thirds majority of the Council, the Province Chief may remove from office any Village Council member who without justification, fails to fulfill the duties assigned to him by the council.

Article 7. In case the Village People's Council proves to be inoperative or there is evidence that activities of more than half of the Village Council members are pro-Communist or neutralist in favor of Communism, the Special Commissioner for Administration may sign a decision to dissolve the Village Council upon the recommendation of a committee composed of:

- The Province Chief or his representative Chairman
- A local Presiding Judge, Court of First Instance, or Court with Extended Powers or Justice of Peace Member
- One member of the Provincial Council Member

The Chairman or any member representing the Village People's Council concerned has the right to plead before the Committee.

Article 8. In case of dissolution of the Village Council, the election of a new Council will be held within a maximum period of three months. In addition, a by-election will be held, also within the maximum period of three months, to replace any members who have resigned, died, or terminated their responsibilities for whatever reason, provided that:

- The number of missing members is at least one third of the total membership;
- The members so elected have at least one year to serve prior to the expiration of the term.

Section 2: Authority

Article 9. Within the limits of current laws, the Village Council is empowered to discuss and decide on the following matters:

1. Plans of construction and programs of public interest in the village;
2. Village budget;
3. Miscellaneous taxes, fees, additional percentages, rentals and all receipts for Village budget;
4. Regulations governing the collection of the income of the village;
5. Purchase, transfer, exchange, leasing or renting of village properties and general administration and maintenance work on these properties;
6. Bids for procurement, supply or transportation for the village;
7. Receipt of donations and legacies for the village;
8. Concessions for public services;
9. Creation and modification of village construction plans;
10. Projects for construction of roads, bridges, dams, etc.;
11. Creation, abolition, naming, renaming, modification of boundaries, and removal of Village, hamlet offices;
12. Loans, subsidies;
13. Organization, management of markets and fairs;
14. Legal proceeding in order to defend village interests, and out-of-court settlements subject to approval by the Province Chief;
15. All issues that must be submitted to the Village Council for discussion and decision in accordance with regulations in force.

Article 10. The Village Council is empowered to control the following matters:

1. Implementation of policies and programs of the Government and all decisions of the Village Council;
2. Annual report of expenditures in relation to the village budget;
3. Accounting ledgers of villages;
4. Behavior of personnel and cadres at all levels in village, particularly their attitudes toward serving the people.

The Council is empowered to warn the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and members of the Village Administrative Committee as well as the Chief Secretary and assistants if it finds irregularities in the exercise of their duties.

The Council is empowered, subject to a three-fourths majority of its total membership, to propose the removal from office of the Village Administrative Committee Chairman, Deputy Chairman or other members, if it finds grave faults in the exercise of their duties.

Article 11. The Village Council must be consulted by the Village Administrative Committee in regard to the following matters:

- Land affairs in the Village;
- Problems relative to professional practice by Villagers;
- Recruitment of personnel, and
- All questions that must be submitted to the Council for decision in accordance with regulations.

Article 12. On any problem of general interest to the village, the Village Council may express opinions, proposals or aspirations to the local District Chief, Province Chief, Provincial Council, or Special Commissioner for Administration.

All such ideas, recommendations and suggestions received from the Council must be considered and resolved within the shortest period of time. Results of the consideration must be made known to the Council.

Article 13. Except for the matters prescribed in Articles 14 and 15, all decisions made by the Village Council must be carried out by the Village Chief within 15 days after transmittal to the Village Administrative Committee.

In case the decisions of the Council cannot be carried out, the Village Chief shall give explanations to the Council for reconsideration if necessary.

After reconsideration by the Council, if disagreement still exists, the Village Council as well as the Village Administrative Committee may submit the matter directly to the local District Chief or the Province Chief for solution.

Article 14. The following decisions must be ratified by the Ministry involved before implementation:

1. Construction projects, equipment, and programs affecting the public interest, expenses for which exceed \$1,000,000;
2. Village budget, the total of which exceeds \$1,000,000;
3. Miscellaneous taxes, fees, receipts for Village budget;
4. Leasing or rental of real estate or properties for a period of over three years with rental cost exceeding \$500,000 per year;
5. Receipt of donations and legacies with additional charges and conditions;
6. Transfer, purchase and exchange of village properties, the expenses of which exceed \$500,000;
7. Creation, and maintenance of Village public properties, the expenses of which exceed \$500,000;
8. Creation and modification of Village construction plans;
9. Establishment, naming, abolition, modification of official boundaries or moving of village offices;
10. Loans, special subsidies;
11. Concessions for public services extending as long as three years, the estimate for which exceeds \$500,000;
12. Establishment of contracts costing over \$500,000 which involve financial responsibility for villages.

Article 15. The following decisions must be ratified by the Province Chief before implementation:

1. Establishment of village budget, the total of which amounts to \$1,000,000 or less;
2. Establishment of the percentage rate on any kind of taxes that the village has been authorized to levy;
3. Leasing or rental of real estate or other properties for a period of three years or less with the rental cost ranging from \$50,000 to \$500,000 per year;
4. Receipt of donations and legacies with no additional charges and conditions;
5. Purchase, transfer and exchange of Village properties, the expenses for which range from \$50,000 to \$500,000;
6. Creation or maintenance of Village properties, the expenses for which range from \$50,000 to \$500,000;
7. Projects for construction of roads and plazas, alignment of roads and construction of village roads;
8. Projects for modifying hamlet boundaries;
9. Concession for public services for a period of three years or less, the cost of which does not exceed \$500,000;
10. Establishment of contracts costing \$500,000 or less that require financial responsibility of the village.

Section 3: Functioning

Article 16. Five days at the latest after the result of the election is ratified, the Village Council will convene its first session under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Village Council to elect the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee and to establish the Standing Committee of the Council and the internal regulations.

Article 17. The Standing Committee of the Village People's Council is composed of the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and a Secretary General. The Secretary General is elected through a single secret ballot and with simple majority. In case of a tie, the eldest is declared elected.

The result of election and internal regulations of the Council must be submitted within seven days to the Province Chief through the local District Chief for approval.

Article 18. The Village Council convened by its Chairman shall meet in regular sessions at least once a month; its monthly meeting shall not last more than four days.

In addition, the Council may convene in special session at the request of the Chairman of the Village Council, the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee or one-third of the Council members. Special sessions shall not last more than two days in a month.

The agenda of regular and special sessions shall be fixed by the Village Council Chairman after the latter discusses it with the Village Administrative Committee Chairman and the Standing Committee of the Council.

Every Council member has the right to suggest one or several questions to be listed on the agenda. In case such suggestion is not approved, it must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and accompanied by an explanatory statement by the Secretary General of the Council.

Article 19. The Council session and vote shall be valid if more than one half of the total Council members are present. In case a meeting is duly convened but the above mentioned quorum cannot be formed, the Council can reconvene twenty-four hours later and its vote will be valid irrespective of the number of Council members present.

All decisions made by the Council are considered valid if they are approved by more than half of the members present unless otherwise prescribed by this decree.

In case of a tie, the vote of the Chairman shall be decisive.

Any decisions, ideas, recommendations expressed outside the regular sessions, against current laws, or outside the authority of the Council as prescribed in this Decree are automatically void.

Article 20. Meetings of the Village People's Council shall be public unless otherwise requested by the Chairman of the Village Council, the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee, or more than one half of the total Council members.

The chairman, deputy chairman and members of the Village Administrative Committee have the duty to attend sessions of the Village Council and, whenever deemed necessary, have the right to present their opinions.

On urgent matters arising when the Council is not in session the Village Council Chairman may consult individual members of the Council.

Article 21. Proceedings of meeting of the Village Council must be recorded by the Council Secretary General in a separate register which is kept in the Office of the Village Administrative Committee and a copy must be submitted to the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee for action within five days after each meeting.

CHAPTER II

The Village Administrative Committee

Section 1: Composition

Article 22. The Village Administrative Committee is composed of:

- One Village Chief concurrently Commissioner for Civil Status;
- One Deputy Village Chief concurrently Commissioner for Economy-Finance and;
From one to four Commissioners to assume the following functions:
 - Security
 - Propaganda and Civic Action
 - Social Welfare
 - Agricultural Affairs

Article 23. The term of office of the Village Administrative Committee terminates at the same time as that of the Village Council. In case the Village Council is dissolved before completing its term of office, the Province Chief, upon recommendation of the District Chief, can designate a temporary Administrative Committee according to the procedure provided for by Article 44. He may designate the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman and any other members of the temporary Administrative Committee from members of the former Village Administrative Committee.

Article 24. The Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee is elected by the Village Council from among its members at the first

meeting of the Council as specified in article 16 above. The election must be held in a public meeting session and through secret ballot, using an absolute majority. If no member receives the number of votes required on the first ballot, simple majority is required on the second ballot.

The Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee is not authorized to assume concurrently the functions of Chairman, Deputy Chairman, or Secretary General of the Village Council.

The Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee can be declared automatically resigned in accordance with procedures specified in Article 6. The Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee can be declared resigned by decision of the Province Chief upon recommendation of the Village Council in accordance with procedures specified in Article 10, or he may be removed upon recommendation of the District Chief, with the agreement of the Village Council, for failure in duty or serious fault.

In case he is prosecuted before the court and put in jail, his functioning will be suspended by decision of the Province Chief.

In case the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee terminates his duty as a result of death, resignation, dismissal, being declared to have resigned or for any other reason, the Village Council will elect another Chairman.

Article 25. The Deputy Chairman and Commissioners of the Village Administrative Committee are appointed and removed from office by decision of the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee with the concurrence of the Village Council.

Such appointment must be made in accordance with procedures set forth by the Province Chief. A copy of the decision concerning such appointment must be submitted by the Chairman to the District Chief of Province Chief concerned for ratification.

The Province Chief, or District Chief upon authorization of the Province Chief, has the right to disapprove the appointment of a member if this member does not meet the prescribed conditions. In this case, the appointment decision will be returned to the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee with explanatory statement attached.

If no action is taken by the Province Chief or District Chief within twenty (20) days after receipt of the copy of the appointment decision, the appointment is considered valid.

Section 2: Duty and Authority

Article 26. The Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee represents the Village administration and is vested with the following responsibilities:

- Publishes and enforces laws and regulations and implements policies of the Government at the village level;
- Sees to maintenance of security and public order in the village; in this respect he has the right to mobilize the organic forces in the village and, if required, to request the Popular Forces of the locality to provide support for security measures;
- Reports to the Province Chief and District Chief any occurrences in his village, submitting to them reports on special questions as may be required;
- Certifies documents pertaining to movable and fixed property and issues administrative certificates (certificate of good character, certificate of residence, etc.);
- Prepares a list of questions to be brought before the Village Council for discussion and executes decisions made by the Village Council;
- Supervises the Village Administrative Committee and assumes responsibility for the whole Committee to the Village Council;
- Serves as representative of the village before the law: signs contracts, takes legal proceedings, etc.
- Oversees the functioning of other governmental agencies at the village level;
- Provides direction for and operates village administrative affairs;
- Signs receipts and authorizations within the limit of appropriations covered by the Village budget;
- Serves as conciliator for minor disputes in the village.

The Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee has the authority to reward or punish subordinate personnel and make recommendations on rewards, punishment of employees and cadres of various echelons working in the village.

In his capacity as member for Civil Status Affairs, the Chairman is responsible for maintaining civil status registers and for recording and issuing birth, marriage and death certificates to the people in his village. He also presides over wedding ceremonies held in his office.

Article 27. The Deputy Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee coordinates the activities of members of Village Administrative Committee in accordance with instructions of the Chairman and replaces the latter when he is absent or occupied with other duties.

In addition, the Deputy Chairman may be permanently delegated by the Chairman to sign certain categories of papers dealing with matters provided for in Article 26 above, except for civil status matters and expenditure authorizations.

In his capacity of Commissioner for Economy and Finance, the Deputy Chairman administers finance and village properties and handles problems concerning village budget, taxation, economy and supply.

Article 28. The Commissioner for Security handles problems concerning administrative and judicial police, public order, military draft and military affairs.

He also serves as a judicial police agent.

Article 29. The Commissioner for Propaganda and Civic Action is in charge of problems pertaining to popular associations, information, open-arms, civil proselyting, youth, and village postal service.

Article 30. The Commissioner for Social Welfare handles problems concerning culture, education, social welfare, construction, labor, public sanitation, and public health.

Article 31. The Commissioner for Agricultural Affairs handles problems concerning land administration and agriculture. He cooperates with the Deputy Chairman, concurrently Commissioner for Economy and Finance, in the administration of village public land and rice fields.

Section 3: Functioning

Article 32. The Deputy Chairman and Commissioners of the Village Administrative Committee, are subordinate to the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee.

Article 33. The Village Administrative Committee shall meet at least twice a month under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee to review the work completed and, at the same time, to work out plans of action for the months to come and to coordinate with other agencies in the Village.

In addition, the Village Administrative Committee shall meet at least once a month with the Village Council, upon convocation of the Village Council Chairman, under the joint chairmanship of the Village Council Chairman and the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee.

Article 34. There is a secretariat placed at the service of the Village Administrative Committee. This secretariat is headed by a Chief Secretary who is assisted by one or two assistants.

The Chief Secretary and Assistants are selected and removed from office by decision of the Province Chief upon recommendation of the local District Chief.

Article 35. The Chief Secretary of the Village Administrative Committee has the following responsibilities:

- To supervise the village secretariat;
- To handle general administrative problems;
- To keep seals, registers and village records;
- To act as the Village Cashier.

The Assistant to the Chief Secretary is in charge of the Civil Status Section, assists the latter in the performance of the above-cited duties and replaces him during his absence or when he is busy with other duties.

CHAPTER III

Hamlet Management Committee

Article 36. The Hamlet is placed under the management of a Hamlet Management Committee which is composed of:

- One Hamlet Chief
- One Assistant for Security
- One Assistant for Propaganda and Civic Action

In hamlets where the population exceeds three thousand (3,000) the Hamlet Chief may be assisted by a Deputy Hamlet Chief.

Article 37. The Hamlet Chief and his Deputy are elected by the people in the hamlet through universal and direct suffrage with secret ballot. The election procedure will be provided for in a separate decree.

The term of office of the Hamlet Chief and his Deputy is three years. They may be re-elected.

The Hamlet Chief and his Deputy are not entitled to enter into contracts with their village.

Parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives may not hold various memberships in the same Hamlet Management Committee.

Article 38. The Hamlet Chief and his Deputy may tender their resignation, be declared resigned or removed from office in accordance with the same procedure governing the bodies at village level, but the term of the Hamlet Chief and Deputy Hamlet Chief has no connection with the term of these bodies.

In case the Hamlet Chief terminates his duties before completing his term for any reason, the Deputy Hamlet Chief will perform the duties of Hamlet Chief and an election will be held within a maximum period of three months to elect another Deputy Hamlet Chief.

In case there is no Deputy Hamlet Chief or the Hamlet Chief and Deputy Hamlet Chief both terminate their duties, an election will be held within a maximum period of three months to fill these positions.

Article 39. The Hamlet Chief represents the Village Chief in his hamlet and is vested with the following duties:

- To carry out the laws, policies and regulations of the government and the directives of local administrative authorities;
- To maintain order and security in his hamlet;
- To supervise the Hamlet Management Committee;
- To report to the Village Administrative Committee on the general situation and activities of his hamlet;
- To represent the hamlet before the Village Administrative Committee;
- To certify routine administrative papers before submitting them to the Village Administrative Committee;
- To maintain hamlet registers;
- To assist the Village Administrative Committee in the collection of taxes;

The Deputy Hamlet Chief replaces the Hamlet Chief during his absence or when he is busy with other duties.

Article 40. The Assistant for Security and the Assistant for Propaganda and Civic Action are appointed by the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee in accordance with the conditions prescribed by the Province Chief, upon the recommendation of the Hamlet Chief and with the concurrence of the Village Council. The District Chief may disapprove such appointments in accordance with the procedure set forth in Article 25 above.

The Assistant for Security assists the Hamlet Chief in the maintenance of order, security and defense of the hamlet.

The Assistant for Propaganda and Civic Action assists the Hamlet Chief in problems concerning popular associations, information, open-arms, social welfare, youth and public sanitation.

CHAPTER IV

General Provisions

Article 41. In the exercise of their duties, the members of the Village Council are not entitled to any salary but are granted an allowance computed on the basis of the number of days of attendance at Council meetings. Members of the Standing Committee of the Village Council receive a special allowance to be determined later. The special allowance of the Chairman of the Village Council must be equal to the monthly compensation received by the Chairman of the Village Administrative Committee.

The Chairman and his Deputy and other members of the Village Administrative Committee, the Chief Secretary and his Assistant, the Hamlet Chief, the Deputy Hamlet Chief and Assistants are granted monthly compensations.

The allowances and compensations mentioned above are supported by the village budget in accordance with a rate to be fixed by a decree of the Special Commissioner for Administration with the concurrence of the Central Budget Agency.

Article 42. During their period of service, all village and hamlet officials mentioned in this Decree, together with their spouses and legitimate children, are entitled to receive second class treatment in government hospitals. Hospitalization fees will be paid in accordance with regulations applicable to government officials.

In case a village or hamlet official is fatally wounded or missing in the course of exercising his duty, his legal beneficiary is entitled to a compensation equal to twelve times his last month's salary. This compensation is supported by the village budget. In the case of a member of the Village Council, the death benefit will be the equivalent of twelve times his monthly allowance on the basis of 30 days a month.

Article 43. Temporarily during the pacification period, and in areas where elections cannot be held, local authorities will establish by decree and upon consultation with representatives of all strata of people in the village:

- A provisional Village Administrative Committee (at village level)
- A provisional Hamlet Management Committee (at hamlet level)

Article 44. The Provisional Village Administrative Committee is established by a decree of the Province Chief. Its composition is limited to the following members:

- One Chairman concurrently Commissioner for Civil Status;
- One Deputy Chairman concurrently Commissioner for Economy, Finance and Agricultural Affairs;
- One Commissioner for Security;
- One Commissioner for Propaganda and Civic Action, concurrently Commissioner for Social Welfare;

The Provisional Village Administrative Committee assumes the combined responsibilities and holds the authority of both the Village Council and Village Administrative Committee.

The provisional Village Administrative Committee has a small secretariat appointed by the Province Chief.

Article 45. The Provisional Hamlet Management Committee is created by Service Order of the District Chief concerned. Its composition can be limited to one Hamlet Chief and one Assistant.

Article 46. Village and hamlet operating expenditures are ordinarily covered by the village budget.

In the pacification period, all organizing and operating expenditures incurred by the Provisional Village Administrative Committee and the Provisional Hamlet Management Committee are supported by the national budget.

Article 47. This Decree cancels and supersedes Decree No. 203-d/NV dated 31 May 1964.

Article 48. The Deputy Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, the Commissioners General, Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Special Commissioners and Province Chiefs are charged, each as to that which concerns him, with the execution of this Decree.

This Decree will be published in the RVN Gazette.

Nguyen Cao Ky

Glossary

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| ALSC | Administrative and Logistical Support Center (for RF and PF) |
| ARVN | Army of Vietnam. The common term used to refer to regular army forces to include airborne and ranger units |
| CAP | Combined Action Platoon |
| CAT | Combined Action Team |
| Chieu Hoi | The "Open Arms" program for encouraging the VC defect to the GVN side |
| CIDG | Civilian Irregular Defense Group |
| CMD | Capital Military District |
| COMUSMACV | Commander, US Military Assistance Command Vietnam |
| CORDS | Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support. The MACV agency that provided single manager direction of all US Civil/Military pacification activities in the RVN |
| COSVN | Central Office for South Vietnam (Politbureau) |
| CPDC | Central Pacification and Development Council |
| CRDC | Central Revolutionary Development Council |
| CSCC | Combat Support Coordination Center |
| CTZ | Corps Tactical Zone. The geographical area of responsibility of a Corps, but frequently and erroneously used to refer to the Corps headquarters itself: e.g. "CTZ will review...", "DTA will submit to CTZ ..." The term "Region" is sometimes used interchangeably with CTZ since both areas encompass the same geographical area |
| DIOCC | District Intelligence and Operations Coordination Center |
| DSA | District Senior Advisor |
| DTA | Division tactical area. The geographical area of responsibility of a division (prior to 1970) |

