

# **USOM PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVES GUIDE**



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PROVINCIAL REPRESENTATIVE'S GUIDE

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OFFICE OF RURAL AFFAIRS/USOM

... Our hopes for a peaceful and prosperous Viet-Nam can best be realized through the joint efforts of Americans and Vietnamese working side by side in the Hamlets, Towns and Cities, helping the people of the country to achieve their desires for Social and Economic Evolution ...

Joseph L. Brent  
Director  
USAM/Saigon

This guide is to familiarize USOM Provincial Representatives with their job in Vietnam. Its contents have been taken from official publications and from speeches of Vietnamese and American officials. Changes and additions may be necessary, therefore, pages have been left unnumbered and the guide placed in a loose leaf binder.

The guide is divided into seven chapters. The first six chapters provide information of a specific nature on the Counterinsurgency Program. Chapter Seven is a collection of significant reference information not included in other chapter headings.

Recommendations for future additions or changes for this guide are welcome.

# TABLES OF CONTENTS

## Chapter One YOUR JOB Page

1. Introduction by Assistant Director for Rural Affairs/USOM .....	1
2. The Provincial Representative's Role in the Strategic Hamlet .....	4
3. Soldiers and the People .....	8
4. The M. G. Advisor as a Provincial Representative...	14
5. Outline of a Civil Assistance Program .....	16
6.	
7.	
8.	

## Chapter Two THE STRATEGIC HAMLET

1. The Government of Vietnam's Strategic Hamlet Program .....	23
2. The Mission of Strategic Hamlet Construction Cadres .....	52
3. Status of the Strategic Hamlet Program .....	58
4.	
5.	
6.	

## Chapter Three USOM PROGRAM AND ORGANIZATION

1. Program Office .....	59
2. Agriculture Division .....	60
3. Communications Media Division .....	61
4. Public Administration .....	64
5. Education Division .....	66
6. Public Works Division .....	69
7. Public Health Division .....	76
8. Public Safety Division .....	88
9. Industrial Development Division .....	94
10. Personnel Assignments - USOM .....	95
11.	
12.	
13.	

## Chapter Four RURAL PROGRAMS

1. Progress Report.....	101
2. Self Help Program .....	106
3. Special Livestock Program .....	112
4. Public Law 480 Programs .....	124
5. Montagnard Program .....	128
6.	
7.	
8.	

Chapter Five	THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM	
	1. Speech by president Diem .....	129
	2. Central Government of Vietnam (Chart) #1.....	
	3. Local Government in Vietnam (Chart) #2.....	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
Chapter Six	THE ROLE OF OTHER AMERICAN AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS	
	1. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) .....	148
	2. United States Information Service .....	
	3. International Voluntary Services (IVS) .....	150
	4. Emergency Relief & The Voluntary Agencies .....	155
	5.	
	6.	
Chapter Seven	GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION	
	1. Advice to Military Critics .....	157
	2. Report on Vietnam .....	159
	3. The Insurgent Battlefield .....	171
	4. Mountain Tribes of Vietnam .....	181
	5. The Provinces of Vietnam .....	188
	6. GVN Rodent Control Program .....	209
	7. MAAG Radio Stations .....	212
	8. Informational Support for Rural Programs.....	213
	9.	
	10.	
	11.	

Extra spaces are provided in the Tables of Contents to accommodate above additional chapters which may be added at later dates.

You have the most important job in Viet-Nam. You have been selected as a Provincial Representative because you possess the necessary dedication, common sense and imagination to fulfill this difficult assignment.

Our Vietnamese friends have launched a nationwide strategic hamlet program which they wish to be a political, economic and social revolution at the grass roots. This revolution is based upon the basic right of the people to govern themselves and through this self-government to achieve progress, beginning at the hamlet level. The purpose of this program is to give the Vietnamese people something worth risking their lives to defend and in so doing to defeat communism. It will be your job to help the Vietnamese make their aspirations for a better life come true.

We have long since realized that this is a new kind of war and that a pure military solution is impossible. Unless military action is combined with social, political and economic improvements and, through these improvements, the rural people are given a stake in their community worth defending, there can be no permanent victory over communism.

In each province a joint civil-military plan for the creation of peace, security and prosperity through the establishment of strategic hamlets has been developed. These plans combine military actions with the political, social and economic improvements necessary to defeat communism. Within the flexible framework of this plan, it will be your job to help the Vietnamese civil and military agencies in carrying out the grass-roots political, economic and social improvements which are needed and which they desire. However, you must keep in mind that political, economic and social progress in a community depends upon that community having physical protection from the communists - whether by outside military units or by armed and trained militiamen from the community itself. This is why your assistance and support to the Vietnamese must be closely coordinated with the military security actions underway in your province. This is also why you must work in intimate coordination with the local MAAO advisors.

As one of our Provincial Representatives you will be working twenty-four hours a day with the Vietnamese Province Chief, his technical staff and his District, Village and Hamlet personnel as well as with the MAAO Sector Advisor, doing everything in your power to use all available resources to assist the rural population.

Your resources are many and include the full strength of the American Economic Assistance Program in all its technical fields. You will be backed up by the full USOM technical staff in Saigon. But you should rely on your own good judgment and the Provincial Government's Vietnamese technicians for carrying out project activities before calling for outside help.

The USOM/GVN Assistance Program you will be administering and coordinating at Provincial and lower levels, should be visualized as a two-way street. First, our major, rural-population-impact, development

projects such as strategic hamlet establishment and improvement (schools, dispensaries, etc.), montagnard resettlement and improvement, farm credit, hog and livestock production and composting, fertilizer distribution, irrigation and insect and rodent control, will come from the top down. Second, the hamlet self-help projects - worthwhile social and economic development projects developed within the hamlets by the hamlet peoples themselves for which they will donate most or all of their labor and ask for Provincial help for the materials and technical advice - will come from the bottom up.

The Province Chief, the MAAG Sector Advisor and you will have the cash and material resources for immediate allocation to the Hamlet people to carry out these Hamlet self-help projects. It is your responsibility, working with the local Vietnamese officials, to see that rapid action is taken to insure the smooth, quick flow of these hamlet self-help project requests and their prompt review, revision if necessary, and implementation, from the Provincial level. The hamlet people must and can be convinced by your quick action that their government has become responsive to their needs.

You will also have to ride hard on the impact projects coming from the top down and insure that they are effectively implemented. The best plans in the world dreamed up in Saigon or Washington, won't mean a thing unless they really reach the rural population. We look to you to extend that reach. We expect you to keep us informed of urgent requests from your province to the ministries which have not received action and we will follow-up in Saigon.

You will be kept informed from Saigon of all of our plans and activities which may apply in your area and of the supplies and equipment available for your use. Use your judgement and imagination in determining what may apply in your area. The more you know, the better equipped you will be to understand and carry out our policies and your job. Don't hesitate to ask questions because you will need all the information available to make round, accurate decisions.

In most cases, you will be living with the MAAG Sector Advisor and his staff. This should eliminate most of your routine housekeeping and administrative problems. From personal experience I know that it is possible to live off locally available resources including the MAAG facilities. This should not pose any hardship on you nor should you be worried about being identified with our military advisors.

As pointed out earlier, they have as great concern with the need for and success of your work as you do; we are all in this together! Good day-to-day relations with the MAAG Sector Advisor will insure your own security and important help in such matters as transportation, radio communications, and even eating!

As to reports, we will give you simple standard forms or formats. Although we will want to know how you and the USOM Program are doing,



we don't want you to waste too much of your time on administrative details. Whenever possible, let the Vietnamese do the work and give them our helping hand and a push where they need it.

You should think positively at all times and make the seemingly impossible work successfully. It can be done although it may often require much patience and imagination. This is the American ideal, this is still our way of doing things and this is what is going to win here! Feel proud of yourselves as Americans and do your best to instill the "Can do" spirit in your Vietnamese allies so that their hopes for a better tomorrow will rapidly materialize.

This is your job in Viet-Nam; big, broad, full of responsibilities - and most important!

We expect big things from you in your Province! !

## PURPOSE

Accelerated Economic and Social Development in Support of the Strategic Hamlet Program must:

- involve the people of rural Vietnam more deeply in their own future by increasing their participation in the processes of government and economic development,
- assist the people of rural Vietnam to participate in self-help activities which will realize hopes for a better life for them and their children,
- make the Technical Services of the Government of Vietnam, and the US Aid Program immediately responsive to the wants and needs of the people of rural Vietnam,
- by doing all these things, give the hamlet citizen a stake in Free Vietnam worth defending.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### I. Establishing Security

The provincial governments, with military assistance, are helping rural people establish strategic hamlets to defend themselves against communist Viet-Cong attacks and infiltrators. The hamlet people elect their own officials and organize their own militia-type units to protect themselves and their families and to track down the communist menacing their hamlets. This is a new idea; it is positive and offensive, rather than negative and defensive. Where the strategic hamlets are well organized, the rural people no longer fear the communists. Security is beginning to be reestablished in rural areas.

### II. Bringing Democratic Economic and Social Development to the Strategic Hamlet

The implementation of these phases of the Program is based upon two fundamental Vietnamese Government structures, both new in organization and concept -- the Strategic Hamlet Council and the Provincial Strategic Hamlets Committee. Strategic Hamlet Chiefs and Councils are now being elected democratically by strategic hamlet dwellers all over rural Vietnam for the first time; and, as fast as these councils are set up, they will be called upon to represent the people in their hamlets to voice their wants and needs and express them in the form of self-help, development projects. The hamlet peoples will be expected to donate their labor and other locally available resources for these projects while technical assistance and any additional material support will be provided either from existing Provincial Government Services and Budgets or from special budgets available to the Province Chief and Provincial Strategic Hamlets Committee.

Hamlet Chiefs and their Councils may also submit to the Provincial Strategic Hamlets Committee assistance requests other than self-help development projects according to the felt needs of their people. These requests will be screened and referred to the concerned services for action and immediate reply.

The Strategic Hamlets Committee now consist of representatives of the Provincial Government Technical Services, the Army and other Provincial Security Services. This committee should be used with the concurrence of the Chief of Province as a committee for provincial development with which the local USOM representative will work. The committee ideally should contain all persons at the Provincial level interested in and able to accelerate development at the Hamlet level. First priority must be given by Province Chiefs to ensure that the Provincial Strategic Hamlet Committees are dynamic and active, ready to help the hamlet peoples solve their problems and move ahead. By constructive local actions USOM and other American representatives can encourage the rapid development of these committees and can help sustain their active operation.

The Provincial Strategic Hamlet Committees should also review existing, regular GVN and USOM activities relating to the hamlets in their Province and use the Committee and its members to solve problems that may be impeding progress or to otherwise strengthen these activities. Some of these existing projects may be reoriented to intensify assistance to the Strategic Hamlets and otherwise strengthened and coordinated with this new effort. Special funds made available to the Provincial Strategic Hamlets Committee in support of provincial plan can be used to augment these activities locally. Programs already developed by the Provincial Technical Services, which were not previously implemented because of fund shortage or technical difficulties, should also be reviewed by the Committee for possible implementation or modification in light of the new objectives of the accelerated Strategic Hamlet Program and its resources.

Locally suggested projects or programs which are obviously too large, too complicated technically or require overall policy decisions, should be referred by the Committee to Saigon for review. The USOM representative on the Committee is also empowered to seek such technical support or material assistance from Saigon as may be unavailable locally through USOM channels to be coordinated with the GVN centrally. He should also request USOM/Saigon follow-up on urgent unanswered requests for assistance directed by the province to the various ministries.

USOM is in the process of making available to province chiefs special piastre funds for implementing accelerated development activities within the context of Provincial Strategic Hamlets plans. These funds will be available first for those provinces which have established viable Strategic Hamlet Committees and Strategic Hamlet plans and which are going forward with their security programs and are now ready to implement development activities. However, before special funds are used, the Committee and their American representatives should satisfy themselves that all locally available GVN resources have been utilized. This determination should not result in undue delays, and, since quick action will be a key to the success of this new program, special funds should be utilized immediately when emergencies arise.

Authority to use special funds should depend upon the concurrence of the province chief and the USOM and other American representatives in the GVN/US provincial committee which established to authorize expenditures at special funds. Wherever possible, local procurement in the provinces and local contractual services should be utilized, i.e., purchase of tools, lumber, cement, cloth, foodstuffs, etc. hiring of skilled labor and services, etc. Provincial government officials must do the procurement, but the procurement system should be kept as simple as possible, Americans should advise to insure simplicity and results. For example, if it is necessary to procure farm tools and cloth or cement for immediate local operations or projects, this might be done, by visiting several shops in the town closest to the point of use, and then asking interested merchants to submit samples and acceptable bids against those samples within an hour's time. Quick action and common

sense can keep the merchants from colluding in their simple bids, and strict supervision of delivery against acceptable samples can insure quality. The buyer can reserve the right to reject any bid for unspecified reasons should he suspect any collusion or be unsatisfied with the prices or commodity offered. Upon accepting the bid and the materials delivered against it in full, cash payment should be effected immediately in full. If this system is kept simple, it will be found that goods can be procured often at prices much lower than when more formal billing systems are employed. It is emphasized that a little common sense and good judgment can result in a simple and effective procurement system.

Where needed commodities are unavailable in the Province, requests should be forwarded by the USOM representative to Saigon for procurement, where streamline procurement will be used for earliest possible delivery. Appropriate forms will be made available for USOM representatives for these procurement requests. Desired commodities should be kept simple.

### CONCLUSION

The strategic hamlet program in its accelerated development aspects envisions a two-way flow of actions and help between the rural peoples and their provincial governments. It will draw upon the ideas, wants and labor of the local people and their resources as made known through their elected hamlet leaders to the Strategic Hamlets Committee and, in turn, the Provincial Committee will bring to them the technical services and resources of the GVN and American assistance. The program will also stimulate provincial government action and the plans of government services, drawing upon presently budgeted resources plus special funds, if justified, to accelerate development in rural areas, predominantly at the hamlet level. The program represents a concentration of resources and efforts for work at local levels, and is a natural follow-up to fulfill the hopes of the population for greater prosperity, which must be realized as soon as some measure of security has returned to the hamlet.

Lecture, Special Warfare School  
Fort Bragg, N. C., 30 August 1962

## SOLDIERS AND THE PEOPLE

By Edward G. Lansdale

Brigadier General, USAF

### I.

To the man in the ranks, it seems that there is always someone figuring out a job for him to do.

The Roman legionnaire, in ancient times, as he wondered what aqueduct or road-building project the centurion was going to order him on next, is a close kin of today's man in uniform. And vice versa.

Today's man can't help wondering what you, his commander or his commander's advisor, are learning in this school -- which will mean more work for him to do. Since General Yarborough asked me to talk this morning on the topic of the "Military Support of Community Development Programs," I presume that today's man in the ranks has cause to wonder.

So, let us dedicate the talk this morning to the person who will have to go out and do what we talk about here -- the man in the ranks. We owe it to him to take a hard, practical look at the subject... to make certain that what we have in mind for him makes good military sense. We must not be Pharaohs simply looking for cheap labor. We must not be fuzzy do-gooders simply satisfying a theory. And, above all, we must not become so engrossed in socio-economic activities that we ever forget that a fighting man must ever be ready for a fight... and that readiness had better include the ability to whip the enemy!

In other words, we owe it to him to help him be a good military man, with all that that implies.

### II.

Let's start, then, by thinking of communities in terms of national security, to which you and your troops are pledged.

You are here studying counter-insurgency. In a Communist insurgency, the Communist goal is to win control of the people. When control of the people is gained, along with them go the land, its bounty, the independent life of the nation.

Since a community is basically a grouping of people, gaining control of it is vital to the success of the Communist guerrilla. When he wins enough communities, he wins the nation. Each community so brought under his control can help hide him from you and your troops,

can feed him, clothe him, help finance him, and give him reinforcements.

On your side, the community is every bit as vital to your success. Having its help, you can uncover the guerrilla enemy from his hiding place, start denying him his logistics base, get him moving along to exhaustion and defeat.

The Communists' task is much simpler than yours. His end goal justifies any means for him to get there. Your means must justify the end goal you seek.

The Communist goal is a nation wherein all resources, human and physical, are rigidly, undeviatingly controlled for the benefit of the state. The "state" is an euphemism meaning the Communist Party, and the Party elite in particular. Since the Communist subversive/guerrilla is going to wind up top dog in the state he is fighting to create, he uses any means to get there. He can afford to be completely ruthless in applying coercion by terror. (Incidentally, as you study the tactics expounded by Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara, just stop for a moment and reflect where they and their elite got to personally — and then what has happened to most of the poor boobs who helped them rise to power; they know now the cynicism of the earlier promises; they now know that terror does not end with Communist victory.)

The end goal you seek must be something quite different, or the people will have little to choose between you and the Communists. You are striving towards a future in which you will live, too, along with your troops, and your children, and their children, and the children's children. Therefore, the means you use in defeating Communist insurgency must be largely constructive means, on which that good future you want can be built. It requires much more than propaganda and the use of force.

### III.

Let us say that you are the commander, or the commander's advisor, of a zone in which Communist insurgents are active. In your zone, you have communities — hamlets, villages, towns. Now, just because some of those communities support the Communist insurgents — are those communities to be treated as part of the enemy or are they to be treated as part of the nation which the troops are sworn to defend? The answer should be obviously the latter, although this doesn't always happen in the bitter hatreds of a counter-insurgency campaign. However, if you and your troops start making war on the very communities which make up the nation you are defending, then to whom and to what are you loyal?

Remember how Ramon Magsaysay described the attitude of his troops, in the Huk campaign in the Philippines, as being ready to offer either "all-out friendship or all-out force." This is a good precept to keep in mind as you go to work on communities you suspect are under the secret control of the enemy. Move in with military alertness, but also with brotherly concern.

The first priority need of the community is physical protection, and it's up to you to make sure that this is given. Protection must be not only from outside attack by a guerrilla band against the community, but also must be from inside attack or individual reprisal. If a man in the community helps you, and because of this has his head cut off by the enemy later, then the community isn't being protected and remains vulnerable to Communist control. Much the same is true of the production means of the community. If you cannot protect farmers and workers in their daily tasks, the economy stagnates, and your side is weakened further. All the fine strategy, planning, training, manpower, equipment, supplies, and fiscal help are meaningless, without this protection.

Let me illustrate with the case of a fishing village I noted not long ago, in an area where Communist guerrillas were active. The government's army patrolled the road past the village twice daily, in vehicles. One day, they were ambushed from sand dunes near the village. In after-action security work, the village head man, a fisherman, was picked up by the army for questioning. He told all he knew about the Communist guerrillas, who roamed down to the coast from hills some miles away. The army kept questioning this fisherman for two days, at its headquarters, then turned him to his village. While away from home, being questioned by the army, this poor man couldn't provide for his family. He lost two days work — a fact noted and remembered by the villagers. Several nights later, the Communist guerrillas visited the village, accused him of helping the army, and then murdered him, as an object lesson.

The village receives economic aid from the government, in advice of fishing methods, some supplementary rice occasionally, a village medical kit, and even some help with boats and nets. The army patrols the road past the village and, every so often, works on it with propaganda against the Communist enemy. But, when night comes and the guerrillas are on prowl, which side do you think the villagers must help — or else?

One solution, of course, is to provide the means for the community to protect itself, and then to back up this self-help with military force to meet a contingency larger than the community is able to handle on its own. This is the practical thought underlying the "strategic hamlet" program in Vietnam, which is reportedly starting to be so effective against the Communist Vietcong guerrillas.

As a community starts helping against the Communist guerrilla enemy, two series of activities open up. One is quite pragmatic, militarily. The second is of the spirit, in terms of motivation. The pragmatic consists of not only organizing the defense of the community, in earthworks, weapons, and citizen defenders, but also such things as will help the military come to the rescue: landing strips, helicopter pads, access road, a radio receiver-sender.

The second series of initial activities come as the community starts seeking answers to the question: what is worth risking a man's life to defend? Often, this too, commences in a pragmatic way, by adding to the



material things in a community: improving the water supply with a new well or pump, drainage for the streets, a generator for village power, latrines for public health, a kit of medical supplies. It is a short step from this to starting a school in the community, getting books for those who learn to read, creating an information center where news and advice from the capital is available. The community finds itself becoming linked up closely to the nation, a real part of something bigger. As it does so, the political life of the community grows also, demanding more meaning in answers to the question: what is worth risking a man's life to defend? As the community resolves these political factors at its grass-roots level, as the national government becomes responsive itself, and as the bond between the people and the soldiers grows stronger, the Communist guerrillas find themselves forced out of existence as their cause is exposed for the paltry thing it is.

Americans recently in Vietnam have told me that the "strategic hamlets" there are starting to elect their own village leaders by secret ballot, and are being encouraged in this by the national government. If this is true democracy, starting at the grass-roots level and becoming spread throughout the country, with the government responding, then this might well mark the vital turning point in the fight for Vietnamese freedom against the Communist Vietcong.

#### IV.

What I have been describing is the combat area of counter-insurgency.

Now, it is quite understandable that a military man, experiencing the realities of what happens when Communist guerrillas have actually hit a country, will start doing some thinking on the subject. I know that many of the military, and others, in the free world, have given thought to how to catch insurgency early, in its infancy, and how to prevent it. From this thinking has come many of the ideas and programs for civic action by the military -- or, if you will, "military support of community development programs."

My purpose in sketching in the community in an active counter-insurgency area was two-fold. I wanted you to see the community the way you must -- if you have to apply in combat the lessons you are learning in this school. And, I wanted you to start doing your own thinking on just when it is best for the military and the community to get together -- at a tragic, late hour or early on, when opportunities abound.

In order to stimulate your thinking on the subject, let me note briefly what two other military men have done about it.

#### V.

Do you remember, months ago, when journalists first started going into the Congo to write about the post-independence crisis there?

Many of these journalists made a point of the emphatic difference between Leopoldville and Brazzaville across the river, the difference between the two congos. The flattering remarks about the French side of the river reminded me of an unusual French soldier serving there. He is Lt. General Le rulloch, who commanded the Group Forces of what was then French Equatorial Africa, from Brazzaville.

Recruits for military service were taken straight out of tribal communities, usually knowing only their own local area and speaking only their own tribal dialect. So, as part of their basic training, they were given language instruction, taught French. General Le Pulloch added some instruction in old-fashioned "civics," on the rights and responsibilities of citizens. It resulted in not only a better military force, but in creating a whole new group of responsible citizens after their period of military duty.

Tribal chiefs, district officers, and other officials, were so struck by the results of this training in "civics," that they asked the military to start giving similar instruction in "civics" to classes of civilians in all villages. This was done, with far-reaching results.

Along these same lines are many other examples of the military helping a civilian education. The outstanding one which comes to mind for an American is the Philippines, where U. S. combat soldiers started teaching the three R's to Filipino children just before the turn of the century, and the U. S. War Department established the fine public school system of free education. Much of the noted Filipino resistance in World War II against the Japanese invader, the close comradeship with the American military, came from a shared devotion to the cause of liberty, which we mutually had learned young.

## VI.

In Colombia is an unusual soldier, whom I hope to meet some day. Everything I know about him has come from others, with some fine compliments from people I respect as realists and practical do-ers. The soldier is Colonel Alvaro Valencia Tovar.

Colonel Valencia has been in command of Colombia Army operations at Vichada, Colombia, working towards bringing peace and stability to one of Colombia's noted areas of "violencia" or "violence," where the Communists might well have been going full-bloom by now in guerrilla operations, if it weren't for the inspired work of the Colombia military. Colonel Valencia uses his officers and men to start self-help projects in the region. They practically carry a gun in one hand and a text-book in the other. They've helped local people build bridges, construct river ferries, start schools, build villages, and establish small local industries. While he and his forces have become sort of "jacks of many trades" while helping the people of the region, they haven't forgotten that they are soldiers first. The bandits, the guerrillas of the region, have a real respect for them as top-notch fighting men.

## VII.

I hope these two examples and the sketchy descriptions of the bond between the military and the community in counter-insurgency operations will serve as a take-off point for your thinking further about this subject. If our brief time together this morning has caused this, then our time has been well spent.

Just remember this. Communist guerrillas hide among the people. If you win the people over to your side, the Communist guerrillas have no place to hide. With no place to hide, you can find them. Then, as military men, fix them . . . finish them!

SUBJECT: Appointment of MACG Sector Advisors as USOM Provincial Representatives

1. The Director of USOM (US Operations Mission) to Vietnam recently requested that MACV consider the appointment of MACG Sector Advisors as Acting USOM Provincial Representatives until such time as USOM is able to assign members of its own staff to function in this capacity.

2. General Harkins in his reply to USOM (Incl 1), after discussions to determine more precisely just what would be required of MACG Advisors acting in this capacity, has agreed that where USOM is unable provided, the MACG Sector Advisors should assist in every way possible consistent with their other duties.

3. A Section Command Advisor has no requirement to assume responsibility for USOM interests until he is specifically instructed to do so. It is important, however, that he understands the nature and scope of the USOM mission, especially in the province to which he is assigned. This will permit him to evaluate local conditions with respect to possible USOM assistance or support.

4. The following examples are given in order to clarify further the intent of designating Sector Advisors as USOM Representatives:

a. Example: In the conduct of a civil-military operation, where special funds have been provided by the U.S., some minimum control must be exercised over expenditures. In this case, the USOM Representative or designated Sector Advisor may be required to authenticate vouchers drawn against these funds. His signature would mean only that he recognizes the expenditure as valid and within the terms of the budget agreement. He would have no continuing accountability for the funds or for their use.

b. Example: Shipments of equipment or supplies provided by USOM to provincial projects may arrive in several increments. USOM may ask the representative to be alert to deliveries and report their times of arrival or condition in which received.

c. Example: An emergency situation may result in a request for USOM to provide assistance, such as rice, medical supplies or clothing. The USOM representative in the area may be asked to give an early estimate of the kind of supplies needed and the validity of the request received by USOM.

5. Most USOM programs now being carried out are executed by agencies of the GVN with funds and technical assistance provided by USOM. Many of these projects were organized and planned before the need for coordinated civil-military operations was fully recognized. Some of these programs are well into the execution phase and do not yet reflect

the increased emphasis on counter-insurgency support and recently established priorities for province rehabilitation. Increased appreciation for the immediate need to support combined civil-military operations according to a system of priorities will result in a better coordinated program, where all available resources can be concentrated in a given area for maximum effect.

6. USOM representatives have been instructed to call on Sector Command Advisors during their visits to the field and discuss USOM activities with them for better coordination and understanding of MAP and AID (USOM) program in the provinces. This should serve to alert advisors as to USOM's capabilities to meet counter-insurgency requirements which might not otherwise be known.

7. Information concerning USOM activities is also attached (Incl's 2-4). Since the 1961 Annual Report, USOM has added the following activities: (1) highlander relief program, (2) installation of village radios, (3) distribution of village health kits and (4) establishment of provincial counter-insurgency support programs. A new edition of the Annual Report is being prepared and will be forwarded as soon as it is available.

## Civic Action and Counter-Insurgency

What should an American military man or civilian do when stationed in a rural area during a counter-insurgency campaign?

John T. Little, Lt-Col Inf., came up with an impressive answer last year when he was in Laos. He commanded a Mobile Training Team of Army Special Forces, whose officers and men were stationed with Lao military units throughout the country. Taking a number of standing instructions and the lessons learned in Laos, the Philippines, and Vietnam, he compiled a set of instructions on Civic Action for his officers and men in simple, every day language.

Although these instructions are tailored to conditions in Laos, they contain many points worth heeding elsewhere. With Lt-Col Little's permission these instructions are being passed along. They deserve wide reading and understanding by all Americans concerned with counter-insurgency.

HEADQUARTERS  
WHITE STAR MOBILE TRAINING TEAM  
Vientiane, Laos

22 September 1961

SUBJECT: Civil Assistance

TO: Commanders  
All Field Training Teams  
White Star Mobile Training Team  
Military Assistance Advisory Group to Laos

1. In an insurgency condition, the guerrilla is dependent on a sympathetic population. Counter-guerrilla operations must, therefore, have as one objective winning the population's cooperation and denying the enemy their sympathy. This can be done by psychological operations in many forms.

2. An imaginative program of village assistance properly backed in the military and civil authorities is one form of psychological operation which will contribute significantly toward this objective and achievement of U.S. goals in Laos.

3. The attached outline for a civil assistance program which can realistically be applied by operational detachments is forwarded for term use in establishing a positive civil relations program. The ideas expressed have been field tested and are practical. Use them as a guide for your actions in this field. Start at once.

4. You are not in competition with other U.S. agencies; USIS and USOM; you are the spearhead of these activities and a focal point for inhection of these activities until Laos civil assistance teams are trained and in use. Your primary mission is training and operations with Fnk; this is secondary to that mission but has an important impact on it.

5. Those teams operating from villages in which USIS and USOM representatives are not permanently represented are expected to initiate action in this field and keep this headquarters informed of progress

s/ John F. Little

JOHN F. LITTLE  
Lt. Col., Inf.  
Commanding

1 Incl

Outline of a Civil Assistance  
Program

Copies furnished:

Chief Each Military Region  
American Embassy

## OUTLINE OF A CIVIL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1. Actions prior to commencement of civil assistance program in Lao villages.

a. Become acquainted with key members of the district. These include:

- (1) The Chao Muong - political boss of the district (has absolute authority over villagers).
- (2) The High District Judge and his staff - this official is second in authority to Chao Muong.
- (3) The Chief Buddhist (Bonze) of the district
- (4) The Police Captain and his staff.
- (5) The Village Headmen.
- (6) The Schoolmaster and School Teachers.
- (7) Leading business men including shop owners and restaurant owners.

b. Gather background data on key personnel of district to include:

- (1) Nationality.
- (2) Date and place of birth.
- (3) Education and Religion.
- (4) Knowledge of foreign languages.
- (5) Special skills or abilities.
- (6) Military service.
- (7) Travel background.
- (8) Past activities in government.
- (9) Present job and salary
- (10) Details of family - how many wives and children.
- (11) Character and personality - is he honest, is he loyal, is he a doer and not just a talker, does he have initiative drive, imagination?
- (12) Is he pro-FAR, pro-American, pro-French?

c. Gathering this information will be a continuing process. Record it and pass it on to the succeeding team.

2. Recommend activities for civil assistance program.

a. Medical Support: Have team medic assist village doctor in sick call. If there is no doctor, team medic should run sick call himself. Team medic will visit all villages in area and make occasional visits to remote villages out of the area. From among the more intelligent of the villagers the team medic should choose an assistant aidman with the object of training him to eventually become the village doctor. The Village should be persuaded to build a hospital with the theme, "this will be for your village and your people. If the people want continued team medical support tell them to build a hospital." Note:



Doctors are paid by government so team need not worry about depriving village doctor of livelihood.

b. Aid to Education: By the team encouraging and helping the children the parents can be made aware of the importance of education. School supplies to be furnished include blackboards, chalk, erasers, pencils pencil sharpeners, writing paper, tablets, multiplication tables, rulers, books, globes, atlases, charts on anatomy, chemistry, physics and biology and nature subjects. Get the material in front of the children. Teach the schoolmaster to be responsible and accountable for the equipment - to take the books up at the end of the semester and reissue them at the beginning of the term. Use the school aid program as a lever to get the village to repair and expand the school. Require the village to send all their children to school. This can be done through the Chao Muong. The children must be taught the world is not flat, that Laos is not the only country, that America is a powerful friend and what the Communists are.

c. Sanitation: This field offers the greatest possibilities for achievement and improvement. Persuade the people to police the streets, cut the grass, burn and bury the rubbish, rake under the houses. Encourage village authorities to destroy homeless, vicious and unwanted dogs. Start a DDT program. Teach the natives how to use the sprayers and mix the solution. Put rat poison in village placing it high enough to be unreachable by children and chickens. Start a war on bed bugs. Use oil to stamp out mosquito breeding areas. Put the villagers on chlo-roquin. In the dry season have family latrines dug. Instruct natives on covering waste. Get villagers to dig wells for drinking water. Instruct families on fly control - distribute swatters. Action should be taken to prevent livestock from over running living areas. Work all projects through the Chao Muong. When he issues the order the people will take action.

d. Aid to Agriculture: Get assistance from USOM. To start program persuade a few farmers to try crop rotation, proper spacing, fertilizing and spraying. This is a long-range project taking patience, time and skillful persuasion. A Lao farmer puts all his earnings into his crop and he is very hesitant about making experiments. But once he has been shown the results of this new method of rice growing he will be an eager participant. In many areas the irrigation system could be improved, small streams could be dammed, etc.

e. Transportation Improvement: All roads in Laos need improvement. Get villagers to build bridges, repair washouts, fill holes, make detours. Use whatever labor is available whether it is three men or three hundred men. Have village construct an airfield. Sell Chao Muong on the advantages in trade and business. Have villagers construct flat-bottom boats to haul goods on the rivers.

f. Children's Playground: This represents an opportunity to influence, educate, and take part in raising children for a better Laos. Stock the playground with swings, teeter-totters, sliding boards,

monkey bars, parallel bars. Set up volley ball, basket ball, soccer, baseball and just plain ordinary tag ball. Set up relay races, obstacle races and jumping contests. Teach them sportsmanship, teamwork, how to win and how to lose. Teach them fair play and get them in top physical condition. To help all this the team captain could write to his favorite town in the United States informing them that the Lao village where the team is stationed wants to be a sister city with them and learn about the American way of life. Through civic organizations in the US town many items for the children could be obtained such as clothes, candy, toys and educational games.

g. Special Tools: Through USOM try to borrow, lease or directly obtain a circular saw. All lumber is cut by hand. This takes hours of time and delays the building program. In addition to the saw, obtain fuel, lubricant, extra blades and maintenance instructions. Also a chain saw is ideal for clearing land.

h. Market Place: If the market place is in a typically rotten condition, interest the Chao Muong in building a new one. Get it centrally located for the people. If you furnish tin for the roof you can demand that they clean the market up after each day's use.

i. Movies: You can obtain a generator and projector from USIS and show Lao and American movies. There are many excellent propaganda movies in the USIS warehouses. Show American films also-- particularly those with a simple direct theme showing us at our best. (e.g., war pictures, cowboy pictures, adventure pictures and light comedies. Avoid films which degrade us or are extremely sophisticated and complex.) The villagers love to watch American films even when they cannot understand a word. A portable PA speaker which would enable the interpreter to give the general plot line would be a big asset when showing US films.

j. Electric lights: Interest the Chao Muong in trying to start a light plant if one is not in operation. Possibly the better-off citizens can be persuaded to pool their money to finance the operation particularly if they can see how they can make a profit in the future. Get USOM help on this one.

k. Local Restaurants and Markets: Try to get the local bars and restaurants to clean up their kitchens and their premises and dispose of their food waste in sanitary fashion. This can be handled through the Chao Muong. Do not patronize below-standard places. If it is a small town, try to interest the local people in building new buildings and attracting more people and more business.

l. As a final word on these recommended activities remember that any program you undertake will be secondary to your mission of training F.R. The time for project planning and team participation is at night and during off duty time. Before starting any work see the people at USOM and USIS and find out what kind of support they can

actually give you. These civic projects will take up many hours but they will be hours well spent in the achievement of the United States objectives of building a greater and stronger free Laos.

3. Tips on conduct of a civil assistance program.

a. Upon arrival in the village pay a courtesy call on the Chao Muong. Do not talk shop on the first meeting, just make friends.

b. Deal directly with the Chao Muong. Do not work through his subordinates. Always work through one man - the chief.

c. Make a statement on graft. Let the Chao Muong know that under no circumstances will you tolerate graft and if you detect it all aid will stop. If corruption starts the villagers will tell you. You do not need to search for it.

d. Do not stockpile supplies - get them distributed promptly. You must have a system of control. Make the Chao Muong sign for everything you give him and see that he signs out the equipment to his subordinates. Since it is impossible for everyone to have a pick, shovel, grub hoe and axe, the tools should be issued from a central point on a loan basis. When a farmer finishes with a piece of equipment he returns it to the village chief. The chief must be taught how to run this system.

e. Always make the villagers share the work load. Let them know that all these projects are village projects not US help for the helpless. Once you do one project all by yourself the villagers will forever after expect this from your team. Do not give them something for nothing. For example a good approach could be "I will try to get a tin roof for this school house if you will build the school and furnish all the other materials and labor."

f. Try to present your ideas to the Chao Muong in such a fashion as to make him think it was his idea in the first place. Let him win full credit for the completion of any project. Do not issue orders to him or demand an instant decision. When you approach him with an idea let him have a night to think about it. But the next day be sure to gently push him toward a decision.

g. Do not start anything you cannot fully support. Never promise anything. Remember you can be moved out at a moment's notice. Have all the material on hand before you start any project. Check it out with your superiors before you begin.

h. Initially your weapon is talk. It must be interesting, arousing, intelligent. You are a master salesman for the United States. Some pitfalls for newcomers; drinking too much at social functions (keep your mind clear for business), getting involved with the native women (creates jealousy and hate and makes you a set up for anti-US propaganda), being arrogant, sarcastic or be-littling in your conversation (these

people are hypersensitive and proud and you will come to a dead end if they dislike you). Some positive tips are: avoid anything that reminds the people of French control. For example the French required that every man in the village contribute one day's work or a couple of pieces of lumber to each building project. The Lao do not even like to talk about it. Maintain the proper team attitude of good natured willingness and endless patience in the face of resentment to change and complete apathy. Be tactful, be tolerant. Show exceptional kindness to the children and the very old. Be courteous, be relaxed and do not be in a hurry.

i. Do not worry if they do things differently from what you propose. If they achieve the end result that is all that counts.

j. For success on this mission observe the native customs. For example when you are visiting a different village inform the villagers that you are coming so that the people can assemble. The district headman (the Chao Muang) always makes a political speech on these occasions. Never force your way into a village where the broken branches across the trail indicate a closed celebration. Follow the native custom of removing your footgear when going into a village house. Learn the customs of your region.

k. Make sure the United States gets credit for all U.S. items distributed. If possible equipment should be stamped with a U.S. flag. When the Chao Muang makes a speech to the citizenry about the tools and supplies they are to receive make sure he tells the villagers that the equipment comes from America.

l. Do not give away U.S. items for nothing. For example if you give picks demand they dig a well or ditch the streets. If you give school supplies, make them either build a school or repair the old one.

4. In conclusion: The sky is the limit in what you can achieve. You cannot make a new Laos in one day but it only takes one day to start. Now is the time to start beating the enemy at his own game - the winning of men's minds, emotions and loyalty to the concept of freedom, justice, individual human rights, equality of opportunity and a higher living standard.

This discussion of the Strategic Hamlet Program is translated from the original Vietnamese Government document. It outlines the basic concepts and indicates the present status and future objectives of the program.

The Strategic Hamlet is the keystone upon which the counter-insurgency program is based.

## FROM STRATEGIC HAMLETS TO SELF DEFENSE VILLAGE

### FOREWORD

This document is intended to explain the procedures for implementing the strategic hamlet policy, which has been proposed recently. Since it is impossible to cover fully, in this document, all the concrete measures to be applied, these will be furnished in a number of additional documents, i.e. :

At the present time, the strategic hamlet policy has the highest priority, and therefore it is necessary to publish a document that analyzes the specific measures required for organizing the government agencies, particularly at the national level, to speed up the program. The document on this subject might be prepared by the Presidency, and then submitted to the Inter-Ministerial Council on Strategic Hamlets.

It is necessary to make a clear delineation of the regions under dispute between us and our enemy, the regions under enemy control, and the regions transformed into war zones or into combat villages. It is necessary to estimate the existing and potential forces of our enemy in each region, and to understand the strategy and tactics there. The document on this subject might be studied by the Interior and National Defense Ministries, and then submitted to the National Internal Security Council for approval.

In the regions under enemy control, we must conduct offensive military operations, assemble the people, and establish fortified hamlets, as stipulated in the Thompson report. What are the tactics for offensive military operations, and what is the method of assembling the people and establishing fortified hamlets? The document on this subject might be drafted by the Military Operations Command and the General Commissariat for Land Development.

An important phase of the strategic hamlet plan is to conduct a series of supporting military operations designed to drive our enemy out of the regions, provinces, and districts, in order to guarantee security. What military tactics will be required to drive our enemy out of each area? The document on this subject might be drafted by the Armed Forces General Staff, after an examination of information from the various military zones.

When the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team organizes a strategic hamlet, it is most important to conduct a mopping up operation and to establish a system of controls to ensure that no Vietnamese Communist agents are planted there. What techniques of investigation and control must be applied by the security team in a strategic hamlet? The document on this subject might be entrusted to the Central Vietnam Operations Team for study and drafting.

A basic action of the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team in each hamlet is to establish civic organizations, for example, associations of these groups be? The document on this subject might be drafted by

the Civic Action Ministry (Directorates General of Information and of Youth).

Another important requirement in the defense of a strategic hamlet is to organize a system of emergency alarm and speedy liaison. How should this system be organized? How should the watch towers and signals system be organized? What should the secret signals be? How should the clandestine liaison system operate? The document on this subject might be drafted by the National Police and Security Services.

Finally, our mobile forces for military operations and our Strategic Hamlet Operational Teams, may become the Victims of enemy guerrilla attacks and ambushes. What is the best way of moving our forces to avoid enemy ambushes? This document might be entrusted to the Civil Guard General Directorate for drafting.

### INTRODUCTION

The strategic hamlet policy at present consists of a plan for organizing strategic hamlets to ensure security and to establish our control in rural areas.

It is necessary at first that this policy be applied only in the regions under dispute between us and the Communists. But, in their war zones (D, Duong-Minh-Chau, Dong-Thap, Ca-Mau, U-Minh), or in the regions where our enemies have established control by organizing their combat villages, we need to apply another policy, as follows:

The national military forces, combined (by the General Staff or the Military operation command) with the central intelligence units, must organize destructive military operations.

A national government unit, such as the General Commissariat for Land Development or the General Commissariat for the Reconstruction of Flooded Areas, must join with the military forces to carry out a plan of assembling the people and establishing a hamlet. We must take violent measures, moving and reassembling people in selected localities in order to establish fortified hamlets. Then we will entrust the local districts and provinces with the task of transforming these into strategic hamlets in accordance with a policy, to be explained later.

Now, how do we carry out the above-mentioned policy of establishing strategic hamlets? Up to now, one has been under the impression that the authorities in charge of carrying out this policy, have not yet clearly understood the problem, for there is a lack of unity and many province and district chiefs have complained as follows: "A large quantity of documents relating to strategic hamlets, is sent to us from all sides. We have no time to read them all. Even when we read these documents, we do not understand them. We do not know where to begin and where to stop".

To remedy this state of affairs, the leaders have to enter into a discussion to give greater clarity to their thought, and explain all problems. But, what are the subjects to be discussed?

Before starting any job, a practical man must answer the following three questions:

What do I wish to accomplish?

What means do I have?

How do I do the job?

Here, it is the same. We must answer these same questions.

## P A R T I

### WHAT DO WE WISH TO ACCOMPLISH?

To answer this question, we must clearly understand our purpose. This question seems to be simple, but it is really very complicated, because our desires are often numerous, and we do not know how to classify them in order of priority. For instance, we wish to ensure security in rural areas, but, upon starting our job, we act as if we wish to "collect many taxes" or to "develop economically and improve agriculture," etc. Today, a district chief receives an order to "organize strategic hamlets and self defense villages" in order to ensure security in rural areas. Tomorrow, the district chief will receive orders to recover immediately the funds loaned by the Agricultural Credit Office to farmers, to help landowners collect rent, and to organize agrovilles and land development centers. A district chief receives too many orders, i.e., too many requests from higher authorities, and, in this position he is either unable to classify these according to priority or he is not courageous enough to do it. Of course, he is forced to execute all these orders in part, so that he will not be blamed by his superiors. Like a man operating in the dark, he does not know where to begin and where to end. He works without any program or plan, which is not his fault! Even his superiors are not fully agreed on which order is of primary importance and which is of secondary importance. Every ministry thinks that its own activities are the most important. Every ministry fears being blamed. Consequently, the general representative of the government in a regional unit in direct charge of applying government policy in his locality, for fear of being blamed by his superiors, seeks some way to satisfy every ministry to a certain extent!

Of course, our primary wish at the present time, is to organize strategic hamlets to ensure the security of the people in rural areas. Those who are directly responsible for this work are the district chiefs (we will explain the reason why in Part III). Therefore, during the period of time necessary for the local district chief to carry out the plan of organizing strategic hamlets in his entire district (for instance: 6 months, 8 months, or a year), all other orders must be considered of secondary importance. We cannot reproach him during the indicated period



of time, for the fact that taxes are not collected; that funds loaned by the Agricultural Credit Office are not fully recovered; that land development centers are destroyed; that notable in scattered villages are assassinated; and that paddy cannot be harvested. The duty of higher authorities is to study, revise if necessary, and approve the plan for the establishment of strategic hamlets submitted by the district chief, and then, they must help him execute the plan within the scheduled time. After achievement of this plan, the district chief will carry out objectives of secondary importance.

The aforesaid explanation seems to be very simple and logical, but, as a matter of fact, if higher authorities lack comprehension and definite agreement, the district chiefs will not be able to work.

## P A R T II

### WHAT MEANS DO WE HAVE AVAILABLE?

To answer this question, we have to check existing facilities rather than ideal ones. To carry out the policy of organizing strategic hamlets, we are not permitted, for instance, to think along the lines of requiring 300,000 regular soldiers, 100,000 civil guards, and 4 billion piasters from the national budget.

Suppose we now have only 150,000 regular soldiers and 50,000 civil guards. What distribution must be made of these troops? What exact number should be in the eastern region of South Vietnam? What are the available weapons? Moreover, we must check the number of militiamen, youths, civic action, and information leaders, etc.

The Government representative and the commander of the military zone must check what is available for use directly in the military zone, excluding what has already been sent to various provinces. In the same way, the province chief must check what is available for him to employ directly, excluding what has already been sent to various districts. The district chief must check what is available for his immediate use, excluding what has already been sent to various villages. For example, the commander of the military zone and the representative of the eastern region have on hand one regular division, two companies of commandos, and five companies of civil guards. This does not include the special forces at the disposal of each province chief. The Bien-Hoa Province chief has on hand one company of commandos and one company of civil guards at the disposal of each district chief in Bien-Hoa province. And so on.

After having checked our existing facilities, we must know how they are being used at present. Generally speaking, besides some changes in each locality, we can now sum up the use of these forces. One part is reserved for the defense of government areas, such as posts, public buildings, bridges, roads, factories, workshops, barracks, etc. Another part is used as a shock force, seeking our enemies and conducting military

operations on the basis of information received. After a military operation, this force returns to its base for a rest. It cannot conduct successive military operations to seek out our enemies, because the latter run away before our arrival; they habitually avoid meeting our forces, when they realize that they are weaker than we are. Our enemies appear to attack us only when they have a great hope in triumphing over us (owing to their greater strength, their geographical advantage, a surprise attack, etc.)

Finally, we also have to examine the present situation of our enemy forces. For instance, what present enemy forces are in the eastern region? Will these forces be increased or reduced? The security and intelligence units (G-2 of the Army, and security service) must discuss this matter, and answer these questions.

What are our enemies' plans for the use of their forces? The research sections of the above intelligence units must give a clear answer on guerrilla tactics, mass attacks, the means of moving troops, the means of inserting agents, means for defecting the masses, plans for organizing combat villages, etc. It is necessary to have a single document with a detailed explanation of each of these subjects.

We should know what we have available, so that we may draft a practical working plan.

### P A R T   I I I

#### HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH THE TASK?

In order to achieve our purpose (as already mentioned in Part I), how do we use the data that we have on hand (mentioned in Part II) in order to have a better chance for success?

It is deemed necessary that we apply the following working methods:

A. At the national level. The central committee taking charge of the strategic hamlet project should:

1. Within the scope of Part I,

Work out an agreed-upon document, stipulating the basic policy of the strategic hamlet project, which different levels are to use as a basis for solving various contradictions that may arise due to differences of opinion among the ministries or to various separate orders dispatched to the localities from a number of central agencies; and solve different practical contradictions between central agencies during the period devoted to carrying out the strategic hamlet project. For example, the Civic Action Ministry wants to use its personnel to achieve its own anti-Communist propaganda program separately while the Civil Guard Directorate General wants to use the civil guards to garrison a number of military posts it considers necessary, etc.

2. Within the scope of Part II,

Determine in which regions the strategic hamlet project must be introduced initially, and the areas where such a project cannot be carried out so that we can destroy the enemy and then assemble the people and establish strategic hamlets.

Check various facilities available throughout the country (personnel, weapons, budgets, etc.) that can be used for the strategic hamlet project (and to provide oneself with additional means under any circumstances such as foreign aid, etc.) Then, those facilities must be distributed to each region according to its request as already mentioned above. For example, if region A is safe and does not need to establish strategic hamlets immediately, it should transfer part of its facilities to region B which needs to set up strategic hamlets right away.

Study different basic documents on the strengths and weaknesses of our present use of forces as well as on how the enemies use theirs (guerrilla tactics, organizational system, etc.)

3. Within the scope of Part III,

Study basic documents on the organization of a strategic hamlet and a self defense village (this will be explained later).

Study documents on how the deployment of our forces at the zonal, provincial and district levels can fit in with the strategic hamlet project (this will be explained later).

Inspect, urge, and control the proper execution of the strategic hamlet project by different lower levels.

B. At the Regional level. Apart from being well aware of the policy through the study of various basic documents dispatched from the central government, and from helping to solve different interpretations, as well as by inspecting the execution of the project by various lower echelons, the Committee for the Establishment of Strategic Hamlets at the regional level (that is to say the commander in chief and the government representative) must assume the most important task which is as follows.

There exists in each region a certain amount of strength under the direct command of the commander in chief. This strength is almost entirely military: for example, the 5th Division in the eastern region, the 7th Division in the Tien-Giang zone and the 21st Division in the Hau Giang Zone. (Please observe that there are almost no political figures at this level. Therefore, if a few civilian political leaders are available, such as able National Assembly-men, let them accompany the army units during different military operations).

Now, how does the commander in chief use this military force which is on hand in executing the strategic hamlet project?

The problem set for the regional commander is as follows:

"With his available force (the national level will provide him with more force according to the situation, but this is not sure) can the commander map out a military operation plan to assure different provinces in his region that: thanks to the successive military operations he launched throughout the period of time necessary for the execution of the strategic hamlet project in the entire military region, the enemy would definitely not be able to concentrate a strength of more than two companies (for example) to harass different provinces under his command?"

Before giving a clear-cut answer to the chiefs of different provinces, the commander must carefully:

1. Review the existing strength on hand.

2. Exclude the minimum force which is reserved for the protection of the government base (quarters, public buildings, military posts, factories, etc.) which the commander is directly responsible for (because there are some bases which are placed under the responsibility of the province).

3. Determine the size of the force remaining that the commander can permanently use to launch a long-range military operation. The answer to this question is very important; the commander must study carefully before giving it. With his remaining strength, can the commander preserve security in different provinces within his military region (as already mentioned above)? If security cannot be maintained in all the provinces (for example, each region has seven provinces), the commander may divide the region into two sectors in which he undertakes to secure order one after the other, according to the local need for the organization of strategic hamlets. For instance, in the eastern region, if the commander in chief thinks that he has not enough strength to conduct a military operation throughout the region in an effort to keep all the provinces there from being subjected to different enemy concentrations of as much as two companies (or a battalion) during a six months period, for example, during which time various provinces in the region can set up strategic hamlets, he may maintain security and order first in the provinces of Binh-Duong, Bien-Hoa and Tay-Ninh, thus enabling these three provinces to carry out their strategic hamlet project while the other provinces continue to contain the enemy temporarily.

Once the commander in chief has completed his review and has reached a decision, he begins a series of military operations according to a new strategy which may be called driving out the enemy rather than looking for the enemy.

Up to the present time, the objective of many military operations has been to hunt for the enemy. Based on a specific piece of information, the commander guesses the position of the enemy in a certain locality or war zone. He then sends his troops to fight with the enemy. What is the result?

The result is sometimes negative because the enemy has already fled away (our troops are burdened while the enemy can assemble and disperse quickly), with some guerrillas killed and a maximum of a dozen rifles seized (of little significance as compared with the number of weapons captured by the enemy when they occupied our posts). When this happens, the troops are physically tired out, because they had to carry out the operation on schedule, and spiritually fed up, because they did not see any enemy when they were ordered to hunt for them, and returned empty-handed. On other occasions we have fought with the enemy and defeated them. Let us say that about 100 of the enemy are killed and many weapons seized. With regard to the enemy's tactics and strategy, such a loss does not affect him very much. Generally speaking, the enemy troops killed are not the regular ones or perhaps only a few of them are regular troops. Therefore, his units can be easily re-formed. The number of weapons seized by us is also insignificant, because he will capture our weapons during ambushes or attacks on our posts. After the victory, our troops withdraw, and although they are tired, their morale improves for the time being, but the territory is still actually controlled by the enemy. Sometimes, unfortunately, we have been defeated by the enemy, and this is disastrous.

Therefore, it is thought that the operational plan of seeking out the enemy should be assigned to the General staff or to the Operational command. When it is supplied with a confirmed source of information on an enemy concentration at a certain locality or war zone, the general staff or the operational command will immediately use different national forces such as paratroops, marines, naval and air forces to attack the enemy. The more the enemy can be killed, and their weapons and food captured, the better. But, such an operation is not designed to occupy areas or to organize the masses.

As for the commander in chief of the region, he ought to study a new plan for using his regional forces by conducting a long-range campaign to drive out the enemy in order to assure different provinces within the region (or a number of provinces with the consent of their respective chiefs) that in the course of such a campaign, there would not be any enemy concentration of more than two companies or a battalion

The goal is to drive out the enemy. Thus, in order to prevent the enemy from concentrating more than two companies, different operational units of the region (the regular division which comprises several regiments, ranger units, and supporting units such as artillery and armored units) must be constantly on the move throughout the area to make surprise attacks. Of course, while moving about like that, the said units would fight the enemy whenever the latter were seen, but their basic aim still is not to seek out the enemy.

These military operations would not exhaust the soldiers physically, because whenever the commanding officer noticed that the soldiers needed a temporary rest he could order them to stop at some locality, or village (provided that wireless communication was still available with the commander of the operation). On the other hand, the soldiers also

would not get mentally tired for they would be aware that the operation was not designed to hunt for the enemy.

During their movement as already mentioned above, different army units could stop at some area where strategic hamlets are being set up to help the organization teams and people there for a few days. Thus, the troops would be carrying out the job of winning over the people in a practical way, and the people would feel sympathetic towards them.

Some people might think that such continual military operations are expensive. It is believed that the extra expenses for fuel, vehicles, etc., would be offset by the consumption of a smaller amount of ammunition.

Again, people might fear that the enemy would concentrate larger forces than ours to defeat our various operational units. Let us remember that we still have the national intervention forces (paratroops, marines, rangers and naval and air forces) placed under the direct command of the general staff or of the operational command. If the enemy dares to concentrate large forces it means he risks fighting a "position warfare" with us, and the national forces comprising the Army, Navy, and Air Force would interfere in time to defeat these forces.

C. At the provincial level. Since the region has assured, as already mentioned above, that the province does not have to cope with an enemy strength of more than two companies (or a battalion), what does the province do during this period of time? This refers only to the provinces that are to implement the strategic hamlet project.)

Above all, the province chief must check his forces to see what he has on hand. Generally, each province has a number of regular troops, some civil guards, and some rangers. The province chief must divide the strength into two parts, one passive and one active.

The passive portion, of minimum size, is designed to protect different government bases under the control of the province (besides the bases placed under the responsibility of the region mentioned above, and those of the district which will be discussed later) such as, public buildings, factories, billets, bridges, etc.).

The other portion, of maximum size, is organized into mobile operational forces. For example, the province chief has about one regular battalion and one company of civil guards or rangers left. Apart from this military force, the province chief also has a number of civic and administrative personnel such as civic action, information, youth, security agents, police, etc., besides the administrative personnel already sent to the districts for operations. By the way, it is proposed that a number of persons working in national agencies, ministries, directorates, and services be dispatched in rotation to the provinces for operational purposes. Each ministry, directorate, and agency would sponsor a province

by sending a number of its personnel to help this province. For instance, the Youth Directorate General would sponsor the province of Vinh-Long by sending some of its employees (about 30 persons) in rotation to help this province while the latter is establishing strategic hamlets. The Information Directorate General would sponsor the province of Bien-Hoa, etc.).

After checking the strength of his forces, the province chief must determine how to distribute and use the forces. Up to now, the province chief generally has used different civic and administrative personnel to organize receptions in honor of distinguished visitors, for ceremonies in the province, for propaganda, etc. During the period in which the province has been implementing the strategic hamlet project, such operations are considered of less importance and upper levels also must be aware of this. Consequently, the province chief needs only to maintain at the provincial chief town a small number of personnel to help the Provincial Committee for the Establishment of Strategic Hamlets conduct liaison with the upper echelons, cooperate with and inspect different districts, and find and distribute necessities to the districts. Thus, the province chief would dispatch the rest of his personnel to different districts, to be placed at the disposal of the district chiefs who would use them to help establish strategic hamlets. Therefore, the province chief could manage to send about 30 - 50 more persons to the districts.

The province chief will divide his military strength into two portions, one, the minimum force, to be considered as the provincial strength designed to protect different bases and one, a maximum force to be used as the mobile operational units (as already mentioned above).

The problem of the province chief is as follows:

"With such a mobile military strength (for instance, a battalion and a company of rangers), placed under his direct command (or that of the deputy province chief in charge of internal security), can the province chief assure different district chiefs in the province of the fact that they would not have to cope with an enemy strength of more than a platoon?"

He must study carefully before giving such an answer. If he cannot assure all the districts in the province, can he ensure security in half of them? This means, while the commander of the region is conducting military operations to deter the enemy from concentrating more than two companies (or a battalion) within the region, the province chief must launch military operations to prevent the enemy from massing more than a platoon within his province.

In so doing, the province chief must use the military strength on hand to carry out the tactics of driving the enemy out of the province (like the tactics adopted by the regional commander, the province chief should not send his troops to hunt for the enemy within the province, but with the help of speedy movement of his military forces, he would prevent the enemy from concentrating as much as a platoon to harass the districts.



Some people may be afraid of the fact that the enemy will face the situation by concentrating a stronger force (for instance, more than a battalion) to clash with the mobile force of the province chief or to attack a certain locality or agency in the province. Let him remember that the commander of the region has assured the province against such an event. In fact, it is necessary to establish close liaison between different units of the province chief and those of the commander of the region as well as close liaison between the tactical intelligence unit of the province and that of the region. These points are entirely technical, so the commander of the region and the province chief must study them before reaching a joint decision.

D. At the District level. We all understand that at the regional level, the passive force in charge of protecting different bases is of less importance and the agency directly responsible for the strategic hamlet project is also merely a committee, while the main force most necessary for the implementation of the strategic hamlet project (though it is an indirect factor) is the mobile operational force. At the provincial level, the unit directly in charge of the strategic hamlet project is made up of a single committee, too. However, the passive force responsible for protecting the various bases is more important (because there are in the province many more bases which need to be protected); nevertheless, the main force designed to implement the strategic hamlet project (though indirect) is still the mobile operational force.

Now, at the district level, we shall find that the proportions of the three elements will change. This proves that the key role in setting up strategic hamlets is that of the district chief. To solve the problem, let us review the position of a district chief to see what he should do.

#### 1. Preparatory Period

Above all, the district chief must contact the province chief and the committee for the establishment of strategic hamlets of the province directly. He may bring with him his assistant or a few top collaborators such as the civil guard company chief, etc.; these people will participate in a conference on the strategic hamlets policy and on how to carry it out (already mentioned above and to be explained later). This does not mean that the province chief and the Provincial Committee for the Establishment of Strategic Hamlets must organize a training course for district chiefs. Actually, the province chief may confer personally with some district chiefs for a few hours and explain the policy to them. This will save time and money and will be more efficient. District chiefs may present their own problems to be discussed and settled on the spot.

Afterwards, the district chief returns home to check his existing forces: civil guard, militia, security agents, police, civic action and information personnel, rural youth, his own personnel,



weapons and means of communications and liaison, etc. For example, the district chief has under his command an average force of 300 men, of whom about 200 are armed. He must determine which bases need to be protected within his district, as well as studying the enemy situation in other villages of the district. Then, he will divide the above mentioned forces into three elements as follows:

Part I, of minimum strength, will be the passive force, in charge of protecting various bases within the district (billets, district chief town, post, bridges, etc.) about 70 armed men and 10 civic administrative personnel. Only the most important positions need be protected; scattered posts and small outposts of less significance which are garrisoned by a few civil guards each need not be included. The administrative personnel should be in charge of the permanent government activities, so that the administrative machinery operates smoothly. This task may be assigned to the district chief's assistant.

Part II, comprises about 70 armed men and some five political action personnel and public relations personnel. This will be the mobile force that conducts continuing and surprise military operations according to an established plan. Such military operations also are designed to drive out the enemy and discourage the concentration at any village in the district of a strength of more than a squad. During the military operations, this strength also will be in charge of conducting operations designed to win over the people. Naturally, we must maintain vigilance and study the situation carefully or we will be ambushed during our military operations. But this belongs to the military phase and the commander of this unit must be responsible for it. This mobile shock force may be placed under the command of the civil guard company chief.

Part III, comprises all the remaining troops and personnel, about 60 or 70 armed civil guards, 10 security agents, police and provost marshals, 30 civic action, information, administrative, agricultural credit service, public health personnel, rural reform youth, etc. This force will be organized into a strategic hamlet operational team and set up strategic hamlets in various areas. This team must be under the district chief (or under his assistant when he is absent). The civil guards forming part of this team may be placed under the command of the civil guard company subchief.

After having organized these three forces, the district chief must call a conference of various leaders for discussion and assignment of tasks. Then they are trained immediately in working methods and liaison techniques for the three forces both during peacetime and in response to an alarm. For instance, when the alarm is given and the district chief is out with the operational team, how does the district chief's assistant use the passive force to cope with the situation, or how does he manage to contain the enemy, or to disperse and preserve his force, and try to contact the mobile force which is conducting a military operation? All details must be studied and compiled into a special top-secret document of the district, applicable to the local

situation. Then the said three segments must be trained so that the machine operates smoothly. (Of course, we also must prevent the activities of spies and maintain troop morale, etc. But, these points are always necessary and need not be mentioned here.)

Finally, the district chief must draft plans for the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team that he will head. First, he must organize a mobile office. He will have his seal, a portable typewriter, and necessary papers brought along during his survey trip in order to solve on the spot any problem that might arise in any village, thus saving the trouble of sending papers back and forth to the district office. The dismissal or the assignment of a member of a village council could be a problem to be solved on the spot.

Next, he must assign priorities to various villages within the district where the operational team will work. To do this, the district chief must study the map of the district to see which villages are of greater strategic military importance. For example, a district is composed of 12 villages. Among them, seven or eight can be considered as being more strategically important because they can be used to secure the main line of communication and prevent Communist penetration of the district. The district chief then selects seven villages, for instance, and plans that, within a period of a month or a month and a half, the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team will fulfill its task in one of these villages. Consequently, seven villages will be well organized after about seven to ten months and after about one year the district chief will have complete control over the whole district. The other district will follow the same pattern and the plan for establishing strategic hamlets will soon be fulfilled throughout the country. Only by following the above pattern can the district chief know where to begin his task and where to end it.

The district chief must then define the tasks and responsibilities of the civil guards, security and police force, and other personnel in setting up strategic hamlets. As soon as the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team reaches a specified village, the civil guards of the team, well aware of their responsibilities, will start their work immediately. These men will be deployed, as necessary, to defend the village. Their task will vary according to local circumstance and they must be ready for action and not have to wait for orders until after the operational team arrives at the target village.

The members of the security and police force within the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team must know what they will do when the team reaches a target village. They must know how to take a census of the local population for the purpose of eliminating clandestine Communist agents, and how to prepare documents. They must study local reports and have biographical information cards, family registers, etc., already prepared.

The youth, information, civic action and sanitation personnel must know what to do in order to draw the local people into their

respective organization, and how to train the local people to carry out activities peculiar to these organizations.

## 2. Operational Period

After reading the above explanation, it is easy to see why the district chief plays a decisive role in the plan for establishing strategic hamlets. At the national, zonal and provincial levels, the unit in charge of strategic hamlets is only a reduced committee charged with studying, coordinating, controlling, reaching decisions and distributing facilities. At the district level, however, the unit dealing with strategic hamlets is a most important force, more important than the provincial force for defending bases or the mobile force conducting military operations against the enemy.

The Strategic Hamlet Cooperational Team, under the command of the district chief, actually occupies one of the selected villages. A district includes, on an average, 12 villages, from which the district chief selects eight villages. He occupies the first village, Binh-Minh, for example, which has, on an average 6,000 inhabitants ( a large village has nine or ten thousand inhabitants, (a large village has nine or ten thousand inhabitants, but a small village has two or three thousand) and is divided into four hamlets (a large village includes seven or eight hamlets, but a small village includes about two hamlets). As it is a medium sized village, the district chief estimates that the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team will allow a month to organize it. For a large village, this period of time may be increased to a month and a half, or two months, if necessary.

After occupation of the village, the civil guard team, well briefed on the operation beforehand, immediately undertakes the defense of the village (according to the local terrain). The civil guards will cooperate with the village militiamen to take turns on patrol, set up guard posts, build gun pits, dig shelter pits, and establish a system of alarm and liaison, so that our enemies may not penetrate any of the hamlets of the entire village while the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team is staying there. If facilities are available and adequate (bamboo and barbed wire), they will expedite the erection of a fence around each hamlet. Let us remember and understand that this fence is not intended to help the village offer resistance to our enemy's violent attack, but it is merely aimed at protecting the village from infiltration by our enemy. Provided with this fence, each hamlet has only a few known entrances and exits, all under constant control. What is said above does not mean that the barbed wire fence is not necessary. It only means that we should not consider the barbed wire fence as a decisive factor, while neglecting to perform the more important task, which is the internal organization of the village.

While the civil guard team is undertaking defense of the village, the security team cooperates with the village police commissioner, the village council and the hamlet chief for the following purposes:

To eliminate the remaining planted Communists. The genuine Communists must be liquidated. Suspected persons must be arrested, and sent to the provincial security service, as the method of unmasking them is a technical job and is not to be handled at the district level. (We may entrust a technical unit with the task of drafting a document setting forth this technique.)

To take a census of the population in each hamlet. It is necessary to complete a biographic background, to set up a household booklet for each family, and to take a photograph of each family, including men and women, and old young people. This file must be set up in three copies, one copy for the district chief, one for the family concerned, and one for the village council.

To control at the same time the quantity of paddy, rice, land, and cattle of each family in each hamlet. This must be clearly indicated in the household booklet of each family.

To expedite the immediate delivery of plastic identity cards to the people, if the facilities are available.

According to the opinion of some district chiefs, if the work is organized as set forth above, the purging and the control in a medium-sized village of four hamlets including from five to six thousand inhabitants, may be achieved within three weeks.

While the civil guards are ensuring village defense, and the security agents are establishing controls, the civic action, information, youth and public health teams are busy organizing the masses in each hamlet.

It is necessary to say first that organization of the masses does not consist of gathering the inhabitants to pass out anti-communist propaganda, laud our regime and our President, or give theatrical performances for entertainment. Later, when security is already ensured in the village, an information commissioner will have enough time to do these things. If these things are done now, people will become tired of them, and will say to themselves, "We see, so why repeat this constantly!"

Organization of the masses also does not consist in organizing the National Revolutionary Movement, or the Farmers Association, etc. It consists in organizing all the inhabitants of each hamlet into groups. For instance, each hamlet has a section for oldsters from 45 to 60 years old, a section for youths from 18 to 45 years old, a section for women from 18 to 45 years old, and a section for children from 14 to 18 years old. Each section is divided into platoons, squads, and small subcells (according to neighborhoods, lanes, and groups of households). The sections of the village form a group for instance, the Youth Group of Binh-Minh village, the Women's Groups of Binh-Minh village, etc. These organizations will conduct strictly democratic elections for the selection of leaders. (If civic action, youth, and information leaders are

prudent enough, the elections will have no unexpected or disastrous consequences, and people will elect the persons selected by us) All the files relative to the organization of groups are set up in three copies (one for the group concerned, one for the village council, and one for the district chief). This organization into groups may be achieved within two or three weeks.

After the organizational phase, we have to entrust the work to the groups concerned, and guide them as to what needs to be done. If the work consists only in holding frequent meetings to study vain theories, such as the international and local situations, Communism, Personalism, etc., it will be useless and the groups concerned will dissolve quickly. The training and guidance concerning the work to be done may be summed up as what must be done in peacetime, and what must be done in case of emergency. For example, in peacetime, the oldster's section is in charge of looking after houses, gardens, family sanitation, and children; the women's section, besides housekeeping, is in charge of collective actions, such as visiting and consoling families, organizing day-nurseries, etc.; the youth's section is in charge of guard and patrol duties; the children's section is in charge of spying, on the way to school, guarding buffaloes, catching fish, etc. In case of an alarm announcing a small attack, i.e., the Communists are few in number and may be resisted and beaten, where must the youths fight, how are women to handle liaison and supply, etc.? In case of an alarm announcing a violent attack, in what trenches must the youths take refuge, and by what gates must they go out? By what gate must the women flee? In what secret depots are rice and paddy to be stored? The organizers have to draft, for each hamlet of the village, a document concerning necessary work for the organization, including all the details in this paragraph, according to the situation in each locality; all groups are to follow the guidelines set forth in this document when accomplishing necessary work. This guidance and this effort will not promote dissatisfaction among the hamlet inhabitants who will realize that these actions are necessary for themselves and their families.

During this phase, the organizers must mobilize the groups of oldsters, youths, women and children to establish a defense and combat system in each hamlet of the part in building gun pits, digging shelter pits, and laying spiked boards in important areas. In peacetime, at the places where spiked boards and grenades are placed, it is necessary to put up signboards indicating the danger. Before the arrival of the Communists, the inhabitants of each quarter and each lane must remove these signboards.

Each house must be provided with a secret trench, so that, in case of emergency, people may take refuge there, and go out by another way. Rice, paddy, and poultry can be hidden there temporarily. The inhabitants can establish all this internal defense system. This requires a certain amount of labor, but not a large sum of money. People can set up this system within a few weeks. The inhabitants will not be discontented because they understand the utility of their jobs, and besides

they can work in their own houses, lanes, and quarters. Concerning this internal defense system, the organizers have to draw a detailed map for each hamlet of the village. This secret map must be drawn in one copy, to be kept on file by the district chief.

Finally, the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team must secretly organize for each village two small special operation subcells (each including about three persons). (One small subcell is in charge of sabotage. It may be composed of women or oldsters who must be courageous and particularly trustworthy. It is necessary to train them in handling grenades discretely and quickly. We have to turn over to them some grenades to be buried or hidden in a secret place. These women or oldsters will act only in case our enemies should arrive in large numbers and occupy the hamlet or the village as we will stipulate later. Another small subcell is in charge of liaison. It may be composed of women, youths, or youngsters who must be courageous, agile, particularly trustworthy, and well aware of all the trails and tracks of the hamlet, of the village, and even of the whole zone. The above persons will act only in case the hamlet or the village should be occupied by the Communists as we will stipulate later.

Moreover, each hamlet has to establish some guard towers (on high trees, if possible), and some signal towers outside the fence of the hamlet, on the roads by which our enemies may advance towards the hamlet. (For instance, these signal towers are looked after by day by boys who watch the cattle, and at night by fishermen). The watchers in the guard and signal towers must know how to use the alarms and secret signals to be devised for each locality (for example, a torch-lamp, whistle, tocsin, drum, etc.). Some secret signals indicate the presence of strangers in the village; others indicate the arrival of the enemy numbering about a squad; and others indicate the arrival of the enemy, numbering about a platoon.

### 3. Final Week of operations

After having completed the above security systems, the district chief may decide to carry out the following political and social activities:

The hamlet managing committee and a village council must be elected. If a democratic election is organized immediately upon the occupation of the village by the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team, it will be extremely dangerous, because the Communists never fail to infiltrate easily into hamlet managing committees and the village councils, to turn our hamlets and villages into their "combat villages". Three weeks after such detailed organizational procedures, however, it is not difficult to set up a democratic election. If the district chief is prudent enough the inhabitants will elect the persons selected by him. This type of election is very advantageous in the psychological field. Since these people will be different from the persons designated by the district chief (as in the case of the former village councils), those who are elected will not be influenced by the district chief to be dictatorial towards the inhabitants, and consequently the latter will like the village

authorities better. Moreover, people prefer, of course, to protect the persons they have elected rather than those who have been designated by the district chief, and who leave the village and the hamlet and go to the civil guard post or the district capital after office hours. This election is not absolutely free from danger. In certain cases, the Communists can also infiltrate the hamlet managing committee or the village council, but the district chief must not avoid organizing this election, merely because of its possible failure. At any rate, the district chief may use his right of veto by refusing to approve an elected person, and organizing another election (this is a rare case, and it is better to be careful beforehand). Report concerning these elections must be prepared in three copies (one for the village, one for the district chief, and one to be sent to the province). Provided with his seal and letter-head notepaper, the district chief can immediately take action to approve the election with legal documents.

Next, the district chief convenes the hamlet chiefs, the leaders of various groups and the village council to discuss the establishment of a communal regulation. This communal regulation may be changed according to each village, and need not necessarily be identical in all villages. Communal regulations should include the following points:

A legal and democratic rule must be conducted. This means that the village council (the police commissioner) is not allowed to arrest village inhabitants without reason. The village council may arrest strangers who enter the hamlet or the village illegally (without papers and guarantee), but the village council will have no right to arrest the inhabitants who are in the village after the controls have been established, unless they are caught outright, or unless their arrest is authorized by the district chief. If these inhabitants are arrested on suspicion, a report must be made and the subjects must report to the district headquarters within 24 hours. With respect to land, it is necessary to apply government regulations, i.e., lands which were wrongly distributed by the Communists must be given back to landowners, etc.

A community collective system must be established. The village inhabitants, according to age, must take turns working on the public projects of the hamlet or the village (road embankments, market repairs, schools, construction etc.). This means that duties and interests must be equal in organizations such as cooperatives, farmers associations, and village-managed lands (such as those lands whose cultivation is entrusted to the village by land owners living in the towns; tenants may not rely on the communists' illegal distribution to take possession of these lands).

A system of social justice must be established. This means that it is necessary to set up a new system of values for the hamlet or the village. The public facilities of the hamlet or the village (market, school, first aid station, maternity hospital, public rice fields and public lands) must be granted according to the following order of priority:



First, to those who fight our enemies with weapons and their families (those who resist Communism);

Second, to those elected by the people (village council, hamlet managing committee, and leaders of various groups) to assume public office (those who help unify the people); and

Third, to the productive elements of the hamlet or the village, i.e., to poor farmers and workers, etc., who struggle against underdevelopment (those who try to improve the development of the area).

This system of values must be applied strictly in order to put an end to the traditional privileges of powerful officials of the hamlet or the village. The communal regulation, drafted according to the above principles, must be signed by the hamlet chiefs, the leaders of various groups, and the village council. It must also be approved to propose modifications, if necessary. The file on this communal regulation must be made in three copies (one for the village, one for the district chief, and one to be sent by the district chief to the province).

Finally, the assignment of tasks must be accompanied by definite instructions. The district chief holds a meeting of the hamlet chiefs, the leaders of various groups, and the village council to entrust them solemnly with the task of defending and administering the hamlet or the village, and to give them the following definite instructions:

If a few squads of the enemy come to terrorize, assassinate, etc., the armed forces of the hamlet or the village (village defense youths and militiamen equipped with about 20 rifles, daggers, scimitars, etc.) can defeat them. According to their operational regulations, the enemy is no better armed than we are: they have no machine guns or other automatic weapons. If some of them infiltrate as strangers into the hamlet or the village, it will be easy to unmask them immediately. We must arrest them, send them to higher authorities, or eliminate them.

If the enemy comes in large numbers, over a platoon for instance, (this eventuality may be gradually removed by systematic military operations to drive out the enemy conducted by the region, the province, and the district as explained above), the village defense force should oppose them. Another tactic must be used as soon as those in the signal towers and the guard towers give the alarm, the village armed forces prepare to delay the progress of the enemy so that we may have enough time to preserve and disperse our forces in order to evade the attack. At that moment, in accordance with a scheduled plan, all provisions, paddy, and rice of each house must be hidden in a cache; youths must flee by one secret way, and women must escape by another. Only the old people and the children should remain in the hamlet (certainly, the Communists do not hate and kill them).

Thus, when the hamlet or the village is occupied by the Communists, it is almost deserted. The enemy must be very cautious while staying there, because he doesn't know where spiked boards and traps are located, etc. The enemy might take the following two measures:



First, the village might be turned and destroyed. Ordinarily the enemy does not adopt this measure, for fear of losing ground from a psychological standpoint because of the rancor of the people. In an agrovillage or a land development center might be burned and destroyed, however, because it can be claimed afterwards that this was destroying the work of the Americans and Diem. In other cases, only the village council office, if it exists and is magnificent enough, might be destroyed. (For that reason, during the present stage, we should not waste money on the construction of a magnificent office for the village council).

Second, the inhabitants remaining in the hamlet in accordance with our plan might be assembled and threatened or given propaganda insulting the American imperialists and Diem, etc. In this case, the remaining inhabitants, including the old people, should obey, assemble, and make a political struggle against them (by saying, for instance, "We have to obey all your orders now, but after your departure, we will have to obey the government's orders. We are nothing but honest citizens who expect to earn their livelihood quietly, etc.") However, while the enemy is assembling the people, the special operations subcell for sabotage must infiltrate amongst the inhabitants to throw a grenade. It doesn't matter whether any of our enemies are killed, provided that the explosion of the grenade gives the people an opportunity to run away and forces the Communists to flee. At the same time, in the shelter pits, the youths, equipped with guns, fire from different places, not to kill the enemy but to create an unsafe situation for his troops. At that very moment, the special operations subcell in charge of liaison makes a quick preliminary investigation of enemy forces (strength, weapons, etc.), and submits an urgent report to the nearest of our units, for instance, to a regional or provincial unit which is carrying out a random military operation nearby, or to a district mobile unit which is conducting a military operation in a neighboring village. (If the enemy is too strong for the friendly local unit to resist, this unit must send signals to the provincial, zonal or national levels to ask for reinforcements, and specifically request air support.) When the friendly forces come to attack the enemy from outside of the village, the village armed forces (militiamen and youths) should furnish supporting fire from the inside.

Thus, enemy forces can occupy a village for 24 hours at most, and then must withdraw. Consequently, they do not have enough time to search for and take paddy and rice, or to terrorize and seize youths. Upon their departure, the hamlet or the village functions again as usual, and does not suffer heavy material and spiritual losses. (At most, the village council office is burned, and some guard towers are destroyed, but the village inhabitants can set them up again quickly.) Furthermore, when the enemy forces withdraw they cannot leave their spies behind them, because of our organization of the hamlet or the village, we can refer to our file and check the inhabitants, and so it is easy to unmask their spies for arrest or elimination. Therefore, the hamlet or the village always belongs to us. The enemy only occupies it temporarily and without safety. Their forces are on the defensive and

we take the offensive, whereas formerly enemy forces took the offensive and we were on the defensive-when our troops came, the village concerned belonged to us and, upon the withdrawal of our troops, the village was under the control of the enemy.

#### P A R T IV

#### WHAT ARE OUR PROBLEMS?

The accomplishments of the strategic hamlet project will not always be as simple as it has been explained here. We shall be faced with a number of difficulties such as the following:

##### A. Problems created by the enemy

The enemy will strive to plant agents in the various hamlets and villages we have established. Knowing that he can no longer penetrate the hamlets and villages which have already been organized by us, he will strive to infiltrate agents into our ranks and these agents will become the leaders of the hamlet or village, such as the leaders of different civic groups, managing board members, and village councilmen. If they succeed in taking such vital positions, our strategic hamlets and self defense villages will be gradually turned into enemy "combat villages". Consequently, the enemy gains a victory without any risk of battle and our efforts come to naught. In case the number of spies is small, the latter are assigned to draw sketches and collect detailed information on the internal defense system of the hamlet, as well as to detect the various anti-communist elements in the hamlet, who will be denounced to the enemy when the latter occupies the village. In order to prevent this danger, it must be realized that a large scale purge and control by the security group attached to the Strategic Hamlet Operational Team is of great importance. The security agents must study a technical investigation guide on eliminating spies. The Police and Security Directorate General or the Duong-van Hieu group may study this matter and write the guide.

The enemy may concentrate his forces in order to attack different hamlets and villages organized by us. If security is ensured by a series of military operations conducted by the regional, provincial, and district levels in order to drive out the enemy, such a danger will rarely occur. Should the enemy venture to attack and occupy our hamlets and villages with a large force, we also do not suffer heavy losses (because evasive tactics have been applied in the hamlets and villages). On the other hand, the enemy may sustain a great defeat like the recent battle of Me Lang (Vinh Binh Province) due to our intervention force. However, in the event that the enemy succeeds in occupying and destroying a certain village, we must plan different measures to meet the situation. Such measures are called the pairing system. This means that we shall pair each village organized in the country-side under the strategic hamlet project with a strategic subquarter in a town (The strategic street and subquarter project in towns differs from the strategic hamlet project

in the countryside, and it needs to be spelled out in a separate document). In peacetime, each strategic subquarter in a town will give a helping hand to its twin strategic hamlet in the countryside by sending people and facilities to it. When some event occurs and a certain hamlet or village in the countryside is destroyed, however, the positive anti-Communist elements should flee and take refuge in the urban area, and the strategic subquarter in the town will receive and care for them.

The enemy might concentrate his forces in order to attack our various Strategic Hamlet Operational Teams. This danger will rarely happen, as security is ensured by systematic military operations conducted at the same time on the regional, provincial and district levels, as previously indicated. However, the national level must contemplate making every effort to provide itself immediately with more facilities (personnel, weapons, transportation and communication facilities, such as vehicles and radio sets) to be supplied to different Strategic Hamlet Operational Teams and the mobile forces in various districts. These facilities are not dispatched to different hamlet and villages as many a locality has mistakenly believed. Rather they are designed to strengthen the district forces (especially the Strategic Hamlet Operational Teams and the mobile force). With regard to a village, initially it would only use its existing fire power (an average of 20 to 30 rifles of the Self Defense Corps), but afterwards, it would use as many weapons as it could capture from the enemy.

The enemy might concentrate his forces to conduct an attack on different important bases with a view to creating confusion and causing us to alter our operational plan immediately, for instance; the enemy may assemble his troops to attack the capital of a certain province. After that attack is over, we may become upset and try to place the blame on either the national, regional, or provincial levels. As a result, the region and province would not dare to continue their military operations to drive out the enemy by a joint plan, as previously stipulated, and would withdraw their forces to garrison the chief towns. Thus, the strategic hamlet project of the region and province would be frustrated, Strategic Hamlet Operational Teams in the various districts would be attacked everywhere by the enemy, and the situation would become disastrous. Actually, the higher levels must realize that the protection of important bases is assumed by the passive force of the province and region. When enemy is too strong, this protective force must quickly dispatch a signal to the national forces (paratroop or marines) asking them to come to the rescue. Therefore, each large base must establish a signal system with the national level. In case the counter-offensive ends in failure, it is the national forces and the passive forces of the province and region that are responsible. In the face of such a situation, we must not cause the active forces of the region and province to alter their plans by giving up their existing operations of driving out the enemy.

The enemy can organize political struggles and demonstrations,

can pass motions, and use a press campaign to spread lies to the effect that we use violence to force the people to do as we wish, setting fire to their houses, demolishing hamlet and assembling them behind the barbed wire fences of various camps. This certainly will happen. But, we need not worry about such a campaign provided we keep our basic policy in mind and can carry it out properly.

"Within the framework of the strategic hamlet project, it is absolutely forbidden to force the people to leave their houses and lands behind and go to establish new hamlets villages." The people can stay in their respective hamlets and villages and set up their own strategic hamlets and villages as already mentioned above. There may be a few minor exceptions such as an isolated house in a deserted area, when we should try to persuade the owners to move and settle in hamlets or villages, if we do not need them to stay at their former places and turn their houses into signal towers for the hamlets or villages.

#### B. Problems created by Government authorities

Different executive echelons are not aware of the policy of strategic hamlets and do not know how to carry out this policy. For this reason they mistakenly assume that the strategic subquarters in towns and the strategic hamlets in the countryside are the same. Therefore, the Central Committee for the Establishment of Strategic Hamlets and the Interministry Council must positively establish their respective characteristics:

In towns, the policy is aimed at setting up subquarters and strategic streets, and the organizational methods should be studied by means of a particular document. The deputy mayor lieutenant colonel in charge of internal security for Saigon might study this problem and write this document on the basis of experiences in Saigon. The persons responsible for executing this policy are mayors and district chief.

With reference to Communist war zones, military zones and controlled regions (combat hamlets and villages) the policy is to conduct military operations to destroy those zones and assemble the people to set up new fortified hamlets. The document on this problem may be worked out by the Land development Commissariat General. Those who are in charge of carrying out this policy in different areas already stipulated are the national military forces (the general staff or the operation command with its paratroops, naval and air forces, marines and rangers) and a responsible agency such as the Land Development Commissariat General (or the Commissariat General for the Reconstruction of Flooded Areas).

Furthermore, and for the remaining territory in the countryside over which we and the enemy are fighting, the policy is to set up strategic hamlets according to the methods already mentioned in this document. The responsible units are the Ministry of the Interior, the Central Committee for the Establishment of Strategic Hamlets, different government representatives, commanders of military regions and the strategic hamlet

regional committees, different chiefs of province and the strategic hamlet, regional committees, different chiefs of provinces, provincial committees, and most particularly the different district chiefs and the strategic hamlet operational teams of the district as already described.

Our different executive echelons all have complained that they are lacking in trained personnel, but actually these would not be lacking if different units, especially at the national level, knew how to distribute personnel more rationally. During this period of time, inasmuch as the strategic hamlet program is national policy, different national units that are directly responsible for implementing it must reduce their personnel, give up a number unnecessary operations and send some of their employees and trained personnel to the strategic hamlet committee which in turn will send them to various districts. After all, what can the Agricultural Credit and Cooperative Agency, the Land Reform office, the Land Development Office, etc., do when the countryside has no security?

They also complain that our personnel are of lower ability. This is not entirely true either. Actually, our personnel at the district level are relatively able, but they used to be seriously lacking in guidance. For instance, a certain chief of province would only order a district chief to step up the establishment of strategic hamlets in order to maintain security in the villages; when the establishment of strategic hamlets was under way, he would order that the youths and militiamen be trained to ensure village defense and to oppose terrorism; but he would also state the need to apply a new system of values by carrying out personalism and social justice. But, how was this to be done? Where did it begin and where did it end? This would not be explained. Truly speaking, the chief of province is not entirely responsible for this. His superiors have also not had a clear concept of the policy nor of the guiding principles which should be explained to the province chief. In order to avoid such a state of affairs, we must train our personnel. This does not mean we must organize a large training course. We know though experience that such training courses are both inefficient and expensive, partly because the instructors habitually give vague lectures on doctrines, politics, and a number of principles, and partly because the trainees are not psychologically attuned to the instructors, so that they become bored by what the latter try to teach them. Our training is a direct method which saves time and money. For instance, the Secretary of State for the Interior or of Civic Action, after having carefully studied the strategic hamlet project policy document must hold an intimate talk with a few province chiefs to explain the policy minutely to them and to discuss with them the ways in which to solve their different problems. The province chiefs after having been well briefed, will explain the policy to their collaborators and to their districts chiefs. The district chiefs also will do the same with regard to their immediate subordinates, about five or six persons. Such a direct and intimate approach takes only a few hours. If the speaker is enthusiastic and decisive, his listeners can easily understand and remember what he says.

On the surface, this training is unobtrusive, but it is actually efficient.

Our different executive agencies also have complained that they are lacking in money. To meet this situation, the provincial and district levels formerly used a very simple method obliging the people to pay contributions of, for example 10 piasters per capita. Let us remember that the people have already made too many petty contributions without reference to the illegal ones they have paid to the Communists and the village bullies. To the people, 10 piasters is a large sum. If they are required to contribute, they will become more dissatisfied because they do not yet know what the final results of the policy will be, and so we had better ask them to furnish labor rather than money, especially to accomplish different projects of basic necessity such as the digging of shelter pits in their houses, the building of gun pits and the laying of spiked boards in their respective lanes and yards. In addition, different committees for the establishment of strategic hamlets at the provincial, regional, and especially at the national level, must look for more facilities (finances, weapons, transportation and communications facilities such as vehicles, and radio sets, construction materials such as iron, cement, barbed wire, bamboo, timber, etc.) to be dispatched to different districts and readjust the allocation of the existing facilities of different units according to a new criterion, to wit, that the strategic hamlets have precedence, and to get additional facilities by asking for more foreign aid.

Our various existing civic groups, such as the National Revolutionary Movement, may complain that they are not permitted to participate in the strategic hamlet program under the terms of the policy described above. This really is a misunderstanding. These civic groups could lend an efficient helping hand if they would select and send volunteers to participate in different strategic hamlet committees at the national, regional, provincial, and especially at the district level, as members of strategic hamlet operational teams. Furthermore, different civic groups, such as the National Revolutionary Movement, should introduce their trained personnel into various village Organizations so as to make them more vigorous: the village council, the hamlet managing committee, the committees of the aged, the youth's, the women's and the children's groups of the village. If the National Revolutionary Movement, for instance, can assume this task, it will obviously lessen the burden of the strategic hamlet committee.

Some military units do not know how to conduct military Operations or refuse to assume the military operational task mentioned above. This can be solved by the National Internal Security Council only and a conference is necessary to discuss and spell out the tasks in writing on the basis of a new operational plan.

At the national level, the armed forces general staff (or the operational command can use a powerful shock force made up of paratroops, marines, and the naval and air forces and that part of the artillery

and armored vehicles not yet placed under the command of different regions. If the general staff (or the operational command) finds that this force is inadequate to carry out its task, it must seek ways in which to acquire more troops by, for example, withdrawing part of the infantry troops stationed in a certain area which is relatively safe or by establishing another ranger regiment, to be assigned to the national forces. This national force should be assigned the following tasks. A primary task is the protection of various national government bases. its main task is to launch mopping up operations, looking for the enemy in enemy war zones and controlled regions (which have been clearly delineated) so as to enable the unit in charge of assembling the people to set up new hamlets. Its auxiliary task is to support and rescue different bases or units at the regional, provincial, and district levels when they send cables to the national level asking for help in case of heavy enemy attacks. (The paratroops and air force in particular would assume this task.)

At the regional level, the regional command generally has an infantry division and a few ranger units. Under certain circumstances, it may ask for permission to organize some more ranger units. The regional strength is assigned to protect different bases placed under the control of region. Its main task is to conduct military operations to break up enemy concentrations in the region (except those in enemy war zones and controlled regions as already mentioned above). Its auxiliary and extraordinary task is to launch military operations in support of the national forces, in case of necessity, when the latter are conducting an attack on an enemy war zone.

At the provincial level, the province chief has available, for example, a ranger unit and a few civil guard companies. Apart from protecting various bases, the task of the provincial force is to conduct military operations designed to break up enemy concentrations within the province (except enemy war zones and controlled regions as stipulated above).

Only by carrying out a clear division of responsibilities can we avoid contradictions, save time, and ensure systematic security, so that the districts may organize their strategic hamlets with ease.

While accomplishing our mission, we may be faced with extraordinary difficulties which cannot be foreseen. The essential requirement is that different executive echelons must draw upon experiences, analyze them in detail and send timely reports to the national level. This is aimed at exchanging experiences and learning lessons that may be of interest to other localities.

#### CONCLUSION

From the beginning, this document has dealt with the organization of strategic hamlets. However, the part concerning the execution of the program explain that: strategic hamlets in the villages (defense, control,



election, the communal regulations, and organization of the masses). There may be some confusion between the strategic hamlet and the strategic village.

At present, the term "strategic hamlet" is the most popularized one. However, we must not think of the organization of strategic hamlets as outside the village and beyond the village council system. The province chief or the district chief cannot send his strategic hamlet operational teams to occupy a number of hamlets to be turned into strategic hamlets while at the same time ignoring the village system and the village council. Such a procedure would create confusion and the organization would not actually score any good achievements.

Therefore, it is considered an absolute necessity to occupy each village and organize all the hamlets within a village; the organized hamlets called strategic hamlets constitute self-supporting units may be called self defense villages. Thus, the various strategic hamlets must be set up within the framework of the self defense village, and then we shall understand why it is called a "strategic hamlet".

First, because it has a strategic value relative to military security. After being organized, different hamlets are no longer a charge of the army and the civil guard, whereby the latter must garrison and ensure their defense. On the contrary, they become strong points for the army and civil guard when the latter are conducting military operations, because they are bases that can efficiently provide camouflage facilities, supplies, and information for our troops.

Second, because it has a strategic value relative to the political domain. Up to now, we have known only about what constitutes democracy through the press and parliament. At present, in different hamlets already organized, the government is presenting true democracy and the people enjoy different democratic rights directly by participating in the election of their representatives who look after public interest in the hamlets and villages.

Third, because it has a strategic value relative to economic and social spheres. We are still putting out slogans such as "Collective Progress of the Community" and "Social Justice". Through the strategic hamlet organization, the people can clearly see that these principles being carried out in the countryside under communal sanction, they can see too the development of a new system of values concerning the duties, rights, and interests of the citizens living in the hamlets and villages.

However, by setting up strategic hamlets, we have not yet completely solved all the problems of security and national defense. The Vietnamese Communist may continue to lay mines, carry out assassinations, rob passenger cars, sabotage railroads and destroy trains. The establishment of strategic hamlets is merely an appropriate first step towards the solution of different security problems related to national defense. If the policy is correctly carried out in conjunction



with the plan for attacking different enemy war zones and the assembling of the people therein in the newly established strategic hamlets we can hope that the country will be pacified within a period of two to three years.