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A REPORT ON COUNTER-INSURGENCY IN VIETNAM

I. Introduction

In June 1962, the writer went to Vietnam as a consultant to A.I.D. to make a survey of the insurgent war and to recommend a program for counter-insurgency support. Intensive discussions were held with most Americans in Saigon directly concerned with counter-insurgency and with many American Military Advisors in the provinces. However, the writer spent most of his stay visiting rural areas and talking to Vietnamese in an attempt to determine what the Government was doing to win the war by winning the support of the rural population, whether these efforts held some chance of success and what A.I.D. should do to assist. This report covers the results of that investigation.

II. The Insurgency Situation

A. General

The degree of insurgent strength differs widely from province to province in Vietnam, depending upon the effectiveness of local Government leadership and upon past communist strength as reflected in the present existence of Viet Cong bases and of families with Viet Cong relatives. It is from these bases and through these families that the ~~Vietcong~~ exert their control over the population.

Vietcong

B. The Rural Population

In many provinces I was told that the majority of the rural population was still neutral in the struggle between the Viet Cong and the Government, but that popular sentiment was changing. Where the Government has been able to effectively assist the population in defending itself against the Viet Cong, in Vinh Binh Province for example, the majority now supports the Government. In Quang Ngai Province, where no effective self-defense system has been created, the population has remained neutral. However, in no provinces is there evidence of a shift toward voluntary support of the Viet Cong. This is substantiated by the failure of the Viet Cong to establish new bases of popular support in areas other than those which they held during the rebellion against the French. (The only exception to this is the Ba Den mountain area of Tay Ninh Province, formerly controlled by the Cao Dai.) Moreover, there is evidence in a number of provinces that Vietnamese without Viet Cong family ties, who are the vast majority, will stop helping and even actively resist the Viet Cong if given reasonable assurances that this is not tantamount to committing suicide. The most dramatic and recent evidence of this was the voluntary movement in early July of 1,300 Vietnamese from a Viet Cong controlled zone in Phu Yen Province to the area of Government control where they asked for assistance to defent themselves. These people had been under complete Viet Cong control for over a year.

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C. The Viet Cong

In almost all provinces, Viet Cong activities depend upon the continued existence of past areas of Viet Cong support. Most of the areas were centers of Vietnamese rebellion against the French before World War II. They were later converted into Communist bases during the Indochina conflict. After Geneva, the Vietnamese Government made inroads into these strongholds through a series of pacification operations (the writer was MAAG advisor to two of these operations in 1955) which reestablished civil government. However, the Government failed to follow-up these operations with significant improvements while the Viet Cong went underground and began to secretly prepare for the current struggle. While geographically, Viet Cong operations radiate out from these base areas, the main source of their support within these areas and within the population at large is the family with Viet Cong relatives. In 1954 and 1955, prior to their evacuation to North Vietnam, the Viet Cong prepared for an eventual resumption of guerilla warfare in many areas by: (a) forceably taking north for training Vietnamese youth from as many local families as possible; and (b) obliging all their unmarried soldiers to marry local girls. This gave them an even wider base for future activities - loyalty to the family being perhaps the most important duty of a Vietnamese. In every province, the provincial officials told me that it was through these families that the Viet Cong were controlling the rural population. They were being used as informers to keep the rest of the population under control. Breaking the influence of these families they said, was the single most difficult problem the Government faced in combatting the Viet Cong. The Viet Cong knew this and were trying to extend their influence by forcibly recruiting the sons of other families.

D. The Vietnamese Government

1. Saigon - The main obstacles to effective counterinsurgency action in the provinces do not lie for the most part at the top of the Vietnamese Government as is popularly supposed but at the ministerial working level which is staffed by civil functionaries. As a result of visits to various provinces, I was asked by several Vietnamese officials including the President, for my impressions and recommendations. Most of these received an immediate response. They included such actions as decentralizing counterpart funds to province chiefs to be spent under the supervision of a local committee composed of American and Vietnamese representatives, agreeing to the placement of USOM representatives in provinces where there was an American supported program underway, providing more arms to hamlet militia in a province where the strategic hamlet program was particularly successful and others. To cite one particular instance, I suggested that the President take direct action to get rice to the Montagnards in three critical provinces, because no rice had been released despite his having given urgent orders to this effect three

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weeks before. The Government official most responsible was immediately called to the Palace to make a report. The President was not satisfied and telegrams were drafted on the spot directing the province chiefs to distribute the necessary rice from their strategic reserves. He then telephoned the only province which could be reached by phone (Tuyen Duc) and asked the province chief to report back in the afternoon what action had been taken.

While my impression of higher government officials was that they were eager to work in a cooperative fashion with Americans and many of them including, Counselor Nhu, praised the work of American military advisors, particularly in the provinces, I did not find this same spirit existing in the corps of functionaires. To the contrary, many appeared to be negative, uninformed and unresponsive. Whatever the real causes of this outlook, it seems too ingrained to be capable of rapid change. The only feasible solution for the moment is undoubtedly to decentralize authority and support to the Provinces. Vietnamese officials including the President recognize this bottleneck and have become increasingly willing to by-pass it even though a loss of direct control is involved.

2. The Provinces - Fortunately a different atmosphere prevails in most provinces. Practically all of the officials I met in six provinces had assumed office within the last year. The majority were young military officers. Although most lacked formal training as civil administrators, their conversation and their actions reflected a genuine desire to help the hamlet people and an understanding of their problems. Most of them were working long hours with energy and enthusiasm, inspecting their provinces during the day and going over papers at night. Despite reports in Saigon that provincial officials would not act for fear of making a mistake, I found a surprising degree of local initiative. The Vinh Binh Province Chief, for example, had channeled practically the entire financial and personnel resources of his province into the strategic hamlet program, breaking regulations right and left without authority from Saigon. He is now being cited by Minister of Interior Luong as a good example to other provinces. This impression of an improvement in provincial leadership was confirmed to me by several USOM Public Health technicians, who have been travelling widely in the provinces over the past three years despite adverse security conditions.

III. Vietnamese Counter-Insurgency Efforts

A. General

Vietnamese counter-insurgency efforts have become more effective in the last six months, if judged from Viet Cong propaganda and the results of prisoner interrogations; and if measured by the increasing area controlled by the Government and by the declining number of Viet Cong

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inspired incidents. This improvement consists primarily of effective action of two types--surprise attacks by the Army on Viet Cong concentrations and the strategic hamlet program. As indicated by recent combat in the Plaine des Joncs, the Viet Cong have not discovered any successful defense against well executed, helicopter-supported raids. Nor have they been generally successful in counteracting the strategic hamlet program. To regain control of the population in provinces such as Vinh Binh and Phu Yen where the program is most effective, the Viet Cong have begun to attack the hamlets. Instead of intimidating the population, these attacks are turning it against the Viet Cong. Before, the Viet Cong limited their attacks primarily to appointed Government officials. They said they were against the Government but for the people. Now that hamlet officials are being elected, an attack against them has become an attack on the people themselves.

B. Military Actions

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of the conflict in Vietnam is that the small wars being fought at the hamlet level for the support of and control over the population, involve primarily the hamlet militia and the Self-Defense Corps, secondarily the Civil Guard and only occasionally the regular Army. The Army's employment in a purely combat role, while keeping Viet Cong units dispersed and off balance, has not brought them into contact with the population under favorable circumstances. As outsiders, Army troops sometimes confuse the ordinary population with the Viet Cong in attack areas and by their actions recruit more Viet Cong than are killed on the battlefield. The military civic action program, which was approved in June and which is now being put into effect, should improve the Army's relations with the people. Better coordination between military operations and the strategic hamlets program, as a result of vesting the responsibility for both in the Army Division Commanders, should also provide political, social and economic follow-up for Army combat operations.

C. Civil Actions - The Strategic Hamlet Program

1. Concept - The central idea of the strategic hamlet program is that through the institution of self-government, the people will be given a political stake in their own hamlets, and ultimately in the national government, worth defending. To quote the Province Chief of Phu Yen, "the fence around the hamlet is mainly a symbol of the common defense effort of the hamlet, what is important is the internal organization of the hamlet itself." Mr. Nhu, who has provided much of the guidance for the program told me:

"Free, secret elections of the hamlet chief and hamlet council are the key to the success of the strategic hamlets. The civic action cadres working in the hamlet must not tell the people whom to vote for; otherwise the election defeats

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its own purpose. If the cadres want a particular person to be elected, that person must prove himself to his own people by working harder than the others. If he deserves to be elected, he will be elected."

The President spoke enthusiastically about the program in these terms:

"The importance of the strategic hamlets goes beyond the concept of hamlet self-defense, they are a means to institute basic democracy in Vietnam. Through the Strategic Hamlet Program, the Government intends to give back to the hamlet the right of self-government with its own charter and system of community law. This will realize the ideals of the constitution on a local scale which the people can understand."

2. Manner of Execution - In all the provinces except one which I visited, the province chiefs were executing the program in the spirit of those statements. This was so much at variance with what I had heard before arriving in Vietnam that I made a special effort to verify my observations. Rumors of rural discontent with the program were rife in Saigon, but were difficult to pin down to a particular province. In the one province, Quang Ngai, where I was able to discover definite unhappiness over the program, this seemed to stem primarily from disappointment that the fences around the hamlet had not produced security rather than from resentment built up because of excessive labor on hamlet defenses. Some province chiefs undoubtedly made promises in connection with building defenses which they failed to keep; however, this has not been as widespread as is supposed.

3. Current Status - The organization of strategic hamlets has become the focal effort of the Vietnamese Government to win and keep the population away from the Viet Cong. Since January of this year over 2,600 strategic hamlets have been organized in almost all provinces. The defenses and internal organization of these hamlets vary widely in effectiveness, although elections have been carried out in most of the 2,600. Only in one province so far, Phu Yen, have hamlets been established through a coordinated military-civil "clear and hold" operation but the Government now recognizes the need for this approach. The Minister of Interior told me that he hoped we would assist many other provinces besides Phu Yen to plan and carry out similar operations.

4. Responsibility - Until recently the implementation of the strategic hamlet program had been primarily the responsibility of the province chiefs. Because the program has mushroomed and strategic hamlets have developed into an integral part of the national counter-insurgency effort, the Central Strategic Hamlet Committee has become in effect a national security council in which decisions are made about a broad range of security problems. The Chief of Staff of the Army and the Chief of the Field Command as well as all interested Ministries now attend the weekly

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meetings over which Counselor Nhu generally presides. Outside of Saigon, coordination in planning and execution between the military and civil authorities is expected to show great improvement as a result of the 12, July Presidential decree placing the Army Division Commanders in charge of the program in their tactical zones.

5. The Role of Counselor Nhu - The nature of the program itself, the manner in which it is being carried out and its effectiveness have all improved rapidly within the past few months. This has been due in large part, to a continuous stream of instructions being sent out from Saigon correcting some of the early faults of the program and stressing the need for voluntary cooperation from the people. Many of these changes have come from Counselor Nhu himself as a result of personal inspection trips to the countryside, which have undoubtedly given him a more practical grasp of hamlet problems. He told me that during these trips, he had been spending up to five hours at a stretch having very frank discussions with people in the hamlets. This was verified by other Vietnamese who had been with him.

6. Provincial Organization - To establish strategic hamlets, each province has organized and trained civic action teams (called in some cases rural rehabilitation teams). These teams of about ten men each contain both civilian and military (mostly Civil Guard) personnel and work directly under the supervision of the District Chief and of a District Strategic Hamlets Committee. This committee is composed of the District Chief, the Civil Guard Company Commander and of personnel from some of the government services such as Information, found at the district level.

7. Civic Action Teams - The personnel for the Civic Action Teams come primarily from existing provincial administration and technical services with a few from the Civil Guard and Self-Defense Corps. In Phu Yen Province, over ninety teams have been organized with only thirty civic action personnel on loan from Saigon, about a hundred functionaries, technicians and civil guard from the provincial administration and six hundred school teachers, available because the operation coincided with school vacations. In Vinh Binh, the Province Chief has 35 civic action teams composed entirely of provincial civil functionaries who are obliged to spend several months in the field before being replaced by other functionaries on a rotation basis. In Tay Ninh Province, civil functionaries, civil guard, and personnel from the technical services make up the majority of the teams, with the exception of a few personnel loaned from the Ministries in Saigon.

8. Organization - At present, the civic action teams perform two major functions. They assist the hamlet in organizing itself and they help set up its defenses. The teams normally contain a non-commissioned

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officer from the Civil Guard and some Self-Defense Corps personnel. Their job is to organize the hamlet defense system and to train the hamlet youth as the local militia. The primary task of the rest of the team is to help organize various population groups within the hamlet and to elect a hamlet government. All organization is done through elections. After a census is taken, elections are first organized for the heads of family groups (four to ten families). These groups are then assigned the construction of a portion of the defenses, generally in front of their own houses. The work to be done is divided among the various families at the discretion of their newly elected group leader. Once this effort is underway, the population is organized into groups of younger men, old men, and women and an election is held for the chief of each of these groups. These groups are given various tasks in defense of the hamlet (the women look after the children in case of attack, etc.) with the youth group being assigned the most important job - acting as the hamlet militia. For elections to the hamlet council and for hamlet chief, hamlet candidates in some provinces must present themselves in slates, in others they run as individuals. Some of the lists of candidates I saw in various hamlets contained as many as four distinct competing slates. MAAG advisors in two provinces I visited had witnessed a number of these elections and felt they were generating enthusiasm.

9. Hamlet Complaints - According to Vietnamese officials in the provinces, not much is or can be done in the way of improving the hamlet until it has been organized and a defense system established. However, the civic action teams are specifically instructed to attempt to determine any grievances or problems which the hamlet may have which require action. These are referred back to the District Chief and to the Province Chief. In the four provinces in which I was able to investigate strategic hamlets in some detail, three of the province chiefs had formed their own inspection and control teams which continuously toured the hamlets for any complaints against the teams or the local authorities. One interesting result of the program has been the uncovering of various abuses in the existing system of administration. District chiefs have been discovered pocketing taxes while telling the Province Chiefs that they were unable to collect from certain hamlets because of insecurity. By having civic action teams working directly in the hamlets and soliciting hamlet grievances, communication up as well as down has greatly improved.

10. Hamlet Development - Once elections have been held and the strategic hamlet is established, most provinces have attempted to carry out some improvements within the hamlet. Within the limited resources available, a few schools are being built and dispensaries with medical kits established. However, provincial resources are very limited. The need for actions to improve the hamlets and the well-being of the hamlet population and to sustain the hamlet self-government is recognized, not only in the provinces but in Saigon. The President told me emphatically

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that he felt action in the hamlets should not stop with the defenses but must be continuous. He believed that it was most urgent to carry out small development projects and to compensate hamlet chiefs and councils.

11. Conclusion - Although the instructions for carrying out the strategic hamlet program are the same for all provinces, the manner in which it is being carried out and particularly the success achieved vary widely. Success seems to depend primarily on the quality of local leadership and their understanding of the program. However, the program is working in those provinces where it has been well applied. An examination of how the program has evolved in several provinces and what the results have been, will illustrate some of the reasons for its success.

D. Strategic Hamlets in Four Provinces

1. Phu Yen

(a) Phu Yen is the southernmost of the three coastal provinces occupied by the Viet Cong during the war against the French. It contains about 350,000 people most of whom are Vietnamese living near the coast. The province chief, Major Deng, was appointed early this year. When he took over the province, security was so bad that most of the local security forces had to be used to guard the provincial government compound. He told a visiting American in March of this year that the Province would be totally lost in a few months if he did not receive outside help.

(b) With quiet U.S. assistance an operational plan was prepared for the province and presented to Saigon for approval. This instituted the first of the "clear and hold" operations with the operational command being placed in the hands of an overall military commander, the province chief being appointed his assistant for civilian affairs. This has made it possible to coordinate the establishment of strategic hamlets with Army operations.

(c) The operation began in May and by the end of June over 90 strategic hamlets had been established. Initial financial difficulties due to a Saigon tie-up in counterpart funds were resolved by decentralizing these funds to the province chief to be spent with the authorization of a provincial committee composed of the provincial treasurer, a MAAG representative and a USOM representative. This procedure was approved by the Vietnamese Government in mid-June.

(d) Although most of the strategic hamlets in Phu Yen contain a number of Viet Cong families and Viet Cong units are located in mountains as close as ten kilometers away, these hamlets have been

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defending themselves against Viet Cong attack. With the province chief, I visited a hamlet called Phuoc Khanh, where the hamlet militia had killed one Viet Cong and wounded two the night before. The chief of the hamlet militia described how it had happened.

(e) For several nights a small part of Viet Cong had tried to break through the bamboo fence around the hamlet. The militia had scared them off by beating gongs, shouting and throwing rocks and homemade spears. Realizing the Viet Cong would return in greater strength the hamlet sent a delegation to the District Chief for help. He gave them what he had - four shotguns and one hand grenade. That night the Viet Cong came again, this time in three parties each with several men on different sides of the hamlet. They tried to break in simultaneously. As soon as the militia heard them the weapons were divided and three groups were dispatched to where the Viet Cong were trying to enter. Two groups fired their shotguns and scared off the Viet Cong. The group confronting the largest party of Viet Cong waited until they had partially broken down the fence before they fired and threw the single grenade. One Viet Cong was killed outright and bloodstains on the ground indicated that two more had been wounded.

(f) For our visit, the province chief brought six carbines which he presented to the hamlet militia. They and the rest of the population were extremely proud. It was clear that these people had firmly committed themselves against the Viet Cong. The MAAG advisor, who was with us, told me that in order to visit this hamlet several months before, he and the province chief had needed an escort of an armored car and several trucks loaded with soldiers. This time we had come in a couple of jeeps with only a few armed guards.

(g) This scene is beginning to repeat itself in an increasing number of hamlets in the province. Perhaps the most encouraging sign of a favorable shift in opinion of the local population was the flight of 1,300 Vietnamese refugees from a Viet Cong controlled zone which was mentioned earlier in this report.

(h) The struggle remains far from won in the province. The Viet Cong still hold the mountains back from the coast and some of the valleys in these mountains. However, the tide seems to be turning. Other problems in the province which have made it difficult for the province chief to act effectively are also being resolved. The most serious of these had been the attempts of a local priest to run the province from behind the scenes. During the Viet Cong occupation prior to 1954, this priest had been the sole focus of anti-communist resistance in the province. Afterwards, he continued to exert influence because he was the only local leader who could be considered reliable. Now, over the priest's objections and with the President's approval the current province chief has been

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Phuoc Khanh Strategic Hamlet



The Hamlet Fence at
Phuoc Khanh



— The Phuoc Khanh Militia —



The Militiaman Who Killed a
Vietcong



Carbine Instruction at
Phuoc Khanh



— The Phu Yen Province Chief and —
a Village Chief



— Vietnamese Refugees in Phu Yen —



— MAAG Advisor Distributing Rice to—
the Refugees

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able to replace three incompetent district chiefs who were his proteges. The province chief told me that the President had also indicated that he would have the priest removed from the province if he did not confine himself to his religious responsibilities.

(i) Among the province chief's more pressing problems is the question of economic, social and political development in the hamlets and the province as a whole. He is fully aware of this need and has asked for USOM assistance. For this reason, the original USOM project agreement for the operation, which supported training and equipping civic action teams, relocating families from Viet Cong controlled zones, equipping hamlet schools, bounties for captured Viet Cong, and information and propaganda, has been enlarged to include supplies and materials for hamlet self-help projects, pay for hamlet chiefs and councils, and subsistence for hamlet militia during training. At the province chief's request, a USOM technical survey team was recently dispatched to Phu Yen to draft a program for intensive development of the province. All of this has been done with the knowledge and approval of the President.

(j) During my last visit to the province in July, I found the Province Chief particularly anxious to move ahead with the political development of his province. He was very enthusiastic about the results of the hamlet elections and wanted to hold elections for village chief. These elections would, he felt, greatly strengthen popular support for the Government. It was particularly interesting to see how his confidence in the hamlet population had increased between the time I had first visited his province in early June and this last visit.

(k) The operation in Phu Yen is rapidly becoming a pilot model of what can be done in other provinces. Its success to date, has very much convinced the Vietnamese Government of the wisdom of a similar approach in other areas. In the middle of July two new operations in central Vietnam, based on the Phu Yen model, were submitted for U.S. approval and support. Americans participated fully in planning these two operations and are now working with the Vietnamese to set up new operations to complete the strategic hamlet program in the Delta Provinces of Vinh Binh and Vinh Long.

2. Vinh Binh

(a) Vinh Binh is a typical delta province, laced by canals and waterways with most of the province under varying depths of water during the rainy season. The province chief, Major Thao, told me he had taken office in September 1961 and had started his strategic hamlet program in February of this year. He had been Col. Thao's deputy in the adjacent province of Kien Hoa before coming to Vinh Binh.

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Relocated Hamlet In Vinh Binh



The Khmer Hamlet Militia



— MAAG Advisor and The Vinh Binh —
Province Chief (on right)

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(b) In six months, 315 strategic hamlets had been organized, all with the voluntary help of the population. We visited three of these hamlets, one of which was an entirely new hamlet in which families from a radius of about five kilometers were located. The construction of a new hamlet was necessary because individual homes were too widely scattered to permit organization of a common defense system. When we arrived in this hamlet about forty younger men were filling in ground for the new market place. I was told they contributed one to two days of work a week. They appeared quite cheerful about it. The rice planting season had not yet begun so no one was being taken away from his rice field. Another hamlet of about 2000 people which we visited was composed of about half new houses. Here the population was stringing barbed wire which they had bought with their own funds, the province chief having none to give them. The population of the third hamlet was almost entirely of Khmer (Cambodian) origin. When we entered, the hamlet militia was called out for an inspection. Their weapons were clean and they had spirit. The hamlet chief told me that they had recently repelled a Viet Cong attack, killing two. Their total armament consisted of five French rifles and 45 knives, (as seen in one of the photographs which follows).

(c) Each of the hamlets visited had held elections and their internal organization was identical with that of the hamlets in Phu Yen. Each hamlet appeared to have a well established youth group which was in charge of hamlet defense and at the same time did most of the manual labor. The MAAG advisor, Major Rawn, who travels constantly with the province chief, told me that what I saw was typical of most of the hamlets organized by Major Thao. The MAAG advisor was extremely enthusiastic about the results of the program, pointing out that we were riding through areas with a single jeep escort where two months before, several civil guard companies had been required. He said that he and the province chief often visited these same areas with no escort at all.

(d) The results of the program were also reflected in statistics which the MAAG advisor told me were conservative. From a situation of almost complete insecurity at the first of the year, seventy percent of the population and fifty percent of the area of the province were estimated to be under Government control by June. Approximately 900 Viet Cong had been killed in ten months, and about 250 Viet Cong had voluntarily surrendered. This was accomplished almost entirely by the hamlet militia, the Self Defense Corps and the Civil Guard. The only regular Army troops stationed in the province were one company of Rangers and an armored detachment.

(e) Major Thao seems to have been successful in radically improving security in his province primarily because he has confidence in his people and this confidence is reciprocated by them. I asked Major

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Thao how he had been able to organize so many hamlets with no outside help either from his Government or from us. He did not answer directly but told me a story about how he had found 200 Cambodians in jail as Viet Cong suspects when he replaced the previous province chief. He said he had freed them, then had called them together and told them that he was sure they did not support the Viet Cong. He had asked them if they would help him by defending their own hamlets against the Viet Cong. This and other actions, such as distributing badly needed school supplies to the Buddhist priests, had won full cooperation from the Khmers. The initial success of a few Khmer hamlets had helped convince other communities, both Cambodian and Vietnamese. The MAAG advisor told me that Major Thao was now receiving more requests for assistance in organizing strategic hamlets than he had teams.

(f) Several signs indicate that the tide may have definitely turned against the Viet Cong in this province. The number of casualties inflicted on the Viet Cong by the hamlet militia has risen sharply in recent months while, most encouraging of all, the population is beginning to volunteer information in significant quantities about the identity and location of the Viet Cong.

(g) At present, finishing the program in this province (over 150 hamlets remain to be organized) depends upon obtaining outside assistance. The province chief has exhausted all of the provincial resources which could be used. He has a clear idea of the priority needs which he cannot supply from his own resources. These are listed here to illustrate some of the supplies and equipment required for this program:

1. 3,000 French rifles (if carbines not available) with 200,000 rounds of ammunition (absolutely essential and first priority).
2. Barbed wire
3. Pyrotechnics, radio communications (hamlet to village to district) and shotguns.
4. 2 bulldozers, 4 dump trucks, 1 crane with a piledriver attachment and 4,000,000 plasters (for bridges and roads to restore communications into Viet Cong areas).
5. River patrol craft for the Civil Guard.
6. Medical kits for the hamlets.
7. A fund for economic aid projects in the hamlets (schools first priority).

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(h) When I returned to Saigon and reported this situation to the Minister of Interior he immediately organized a trip with Counselor Nhu to Vinh Binh province. While there, Nhu told Major Thao to develop a plan, with the assistance of his American Advisor, for joint presentation to the central Strategic Hamlet Committee and the US Inter-Agency Committee. As I was leaving Saigon, this plan had been submitted in initial draft to MAAG and USOM for comments.

(i) In summary, the results of the strategic hamlets in Vinh Binh Province were most encouraging. The program was working and it had put the Viet Cong very much on the defensive while the hamlet people were becoming more and more aggressive in their own defense, patrolling and staging ambushes outside their hamlets. This province more than any other I saw, including Phu Yen, gave me the feeling that the strategic hamlet concept, as a means of mobilizing the people against the Viet Cong, would work in every province if properly guided and supported.

3. Quang Ngai

(a) Quang Ngai has perhaps the most serious security situation of all the provinces in Vietnam. There are elements of two regular Viet Cong regiments in the province composed of about 5,000 Viet Cong regulars. Most of these units have their bases in the mountains but depend upon the 600,000 Vietnamese who live in the narrow coastal plain for support. In this plain, spread among almost all the hamlets, are some 20,000 families with Viet Cong relatives. This situation is particularly acute in the southern districts of Duc Pho and Mo Duc, where the majority have Viet Cong connections.

(b) This province was the Vietminh headquarters of Inter-zone V for nine years during the war against the French. It was here that the Viet Cong made their most intensive efforts in 1954 and 1955 to ensure a continuing base for their operations by kidnapping young Vietnamese and obliging their soldiers to marry local girls. The province has apparently always had more revolutionaries in it than any other in Vietnam and is the birthplace of Pham Van Dong, the Premier of North Vietnam. According to President Diem, the people of this province have always been rebellious in character. General Don, the I Corps Commander told me that most of the Viet Cong officers and higher level cadre operating in Phu Yen, Binh Dinh and Quang Nam Provinces as well as in Quang Ngai were of Quang Ngai origin.

(c) Opposing the Viet Cong in Quang Ngai are seven regular Army battalions, 16 Civil Guard companies and about 3,000 Self-Defense Corps. Three of the Civil Guard companies are employed in guarding the road and railroad. Although Viet Cong and regular army strength are more equal in this province than any where else in Vietnam, the I Corps

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Commander has been unable to provide additional troops. This precarious situation has undoubtedly made it difficult to persuade even those families who are opposed to the Viet Cong to defend themselves. Although Viet Cong incidents have declined in the last six months in the province, it still accounts for almost ninety percent of all incidents in the entire I Corps area (four provinces). Provincial officials feel that this decline may be due to Viet Cong preparation for a new major offensive this fall.

(d) The province chief has constructed 200 strategic hamlets in the province but most of these must be classed as failures. While persuading the population to construct long and elaborate bamboo fences, the internal organization aspect of the hamlet was neglected. Only recently have elections been held for the offices of hamlet chief and hamlet council. One of the main difficulties with the program has been the lack of a coordinated defense effort to accompany it. Only a few hamlet militia have been trained and armed.

(e) The Viet Cong have mounted what appears to be a successful psychological warfare campaign against the strategic hamlets. They have burned hamlet fences, used Viet Cong families to distribute propaganda leaflets at night and have set fire to hamlet meeting houses, to demonstrate that they are still very much in control. Without good internal organization and without an armed and trained hamlet militia, the hamlet people have been powerless to defend themselves. The Viet Cong seem to have made a point of not attacking any of the hamlets directly - a sign that they and not the Government still control most of the hamlets.

(f) One story will illustrate this point. An officer in the Vietnamese Army who made an inspection trip through Quang Ngai province told me about a visit he had paid to a particular strategic hamlet. He had asked an old man how he liked the hamlet. The old man replied that he didn't like it at all. The officer asked if he was pro-Viet-Cong. No the old man said, he was very much against the Viet Cong. Had he been obliged to work too hard on the hamlet fortifications the officer inquired. No, he said, he hadn't minded that, what bothered him was that he was now in more danger from the Viet Cong than ever. Before the fences were put up, he could flee the hamlet when the Viet Cong came, now the Viet Cong controlled all the hamlet gates. The officer replied that surely there must be secret exits and the old man said sadly that the Viet Cong controlled those too.

(g) My personal impressions from inspecting several strategic hamlets in the province tended to confirm that they had failed to provide security for the inhabitants. In each hamlet I visited the defenses were poorly planned. About nine kilometers of fence had been

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— Quang Ngai Hamlet Fortifications —



Inspecting Hamlet Defenses in
Quang Ngai



Hamlet Entrance Gate -
Quang Ngai

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erected in one hamlet enclosing a number of rice fields as well as houses. Guarding this perimeter was beyond the capacity of the local militia composed of about twenty men armed with a few French rifles and grenades. In this and in another hamlet which had no arms at all, the hamlet chiefs were desperate for arms, grenades and barbed wire.

(h) The Province Chief of Quang Ngai is a civilian who has been in the province for four years. Although he travels constantly throughout the rural areas and is quite brave, it was my impression, confirmed by other Vietnamese, that he had lost respect from the people of his province because of his inability to protect them. I came away from the province with the feeling that the situation might be beyond his capabilities.

(i) The security situation in Quang Ngai is further aggravated by the extreme poverty of the population. There are simply too many people for too little arable land. The province has never recovered from the war against the French and much of the population exists at the subsistence level. In one hamlet I entered, the hamlet chief begged for help. He wanted food, money, anything that the U.S. could give to the population. According to the Province Chief, this situation prevailed in a number of hamlets and there was little he could do about it. Rats had consumed most of the previous rice harvest. This was before rat poison was made available. Since that time, about 2 million rats had been killed in the province using rat poison supplied by American aid.

(j) At present, a "clear and hold" operation similar to the one in Phu Yen is planned for Quang Ngai and should be launched soon. This will start out modestly with the organization of strategic hamlets in a few districts over which the Government has most control and will be spread as quickly as circumstances permit. The province chief wanted to start in six districts at once which did not seem feasible in view of Viet Cong strength and the ineffectiveness of the previous program.

4. Tay Ninh

(a) Tay Ninh, one of the ten provinces for which General Cao is the Regional Delegate, falls within the Operation Sunrise area. Security in the province is aggravated by a number of disident Cao Dai who cooperate with the Viet Cong and by the presence of a very strong Viet Cong base area in the north of the province.

(b) When I visited the province in Mid-June the strategic hamlet effort had just gotten underway with only 24 hamlets having been completed. Accompanied by a few of General Cao's staff who were Cao Dai

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from the local area, I visited some of the strategic hamlets around the city of Tay Ninh. Several of the areas which we inspected had been totally insecure a few months before. Security was gradually being extended outside of the city but the area around Ba Den mountain, once a Cao Dai stronghold, was still in Viet Cong hands.

(c) During our inspection of the hamlets, which was quite impromptu, we came across several individuals building up their assigned portion of the hamlet parapet. Hamlet defenses in this area consist primarily of an encircling massive parapet with a deep moat, which is made possible by the loose sandy soil. One of the men building up his section of the parapet told me that it had taken him only two days to dig a meters length of the parapet and moat. In usual fashion the outer slope of the parapet and the moat was covered with bamboo spikes which were being anchored by planting grass. Part of the city of Tay Ninh itself is enclosed by such parapets. In some places the parapets rise as high as fifteen feet above the bottom of the moat, giving the impression of an ancient walled city.

(d) Perhaps the most significant development in the province has been the increasing participation of the Cao Dai in the counter-insurgency effort. Although the Cao Dai constitute only one-third of the population of the province, they have always been the controlling element and, until recently, they were quite neutral. This was due in large part to a Government policy of placing outside officials into the province to control the Cao Dai. In the process a number of carpetbaggers, including the former province chief, both oppressed and exploited the Cao Dai. The present province chief, Major Nhuan, has been able, with the backing of General Cao, to use Cao Dai as part of his staff to carry out the strategic hamlet program, and to replace discredited district and village officials with capable Cao Dai. This is winning Cao Dai support although there is still a considerable amount of neutralist feeling to be overcome.

(e) The strategic hamlet program has had the beneficial side effect of uncovering several dishonest officials in the province. Hamlets have complained to the civic action teams about taxes being collected but not reported, and several illegal economic activities, including a manioc monopoly, have come to light. The exposure of these operations and their elimination have produced complaints from interested parties about "arbitrary actions," etc. to the Presidency, but the President has been firm in supporting the province chief and General Cao. One ousted provincial official was reported to have spent 800,000 piasters in vain in Saigon to have the personnel replaced who had uncovered evidence against him.

(f) Cao Dai officials in the province, as well as General Cao, felt that if the Government continued to allow the Cao Dai more self

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rule and if they permitted some of the Cao Dai to rearm this would defeat the Viet Cong. Many of the local people are veterans of Trinh Minh The's forces and are excellent guerilla fighters. Everything I say and heard indicated that the Cao Dai were interested only in being able to defend themselves. There was no evidence of any intention to recreate the Cao Dai Army.

E. Other Efforts

1. The Montagnards

(a) General - The aboriginal hill people or Montagnards, as they are generally called in Vietnam, have been coming down from the mountains in ever increasing numbers in recent months, primarily as a result of Viet Cong economic pressure and because the Viet Cong have used them as forced labor to carry supplies. Whole Montagnard villages have fled their home areas, sometimes carrying with them their entire possessions. To date, over 100,000 Montagnards have become refugees in about seventeen provinces.

(b) Government Policy - While never officially discriminating against the Montagnards, the Government did not in the past particularly seek their support. Recently, however, Government policy has changed. The Vietnamese have realized that they cannot possibly hold or control the high plateau-mountain area, which contains the principal Viet Cong bases and routes of infiltration, without the wholehearted assistance of the Montagnards. At the same time, a new respect for and confidence in the Montagnards has been generated as a result of the successful arming of several Montagnard units with American assistance.

(c) The Montagnard Program - With the President's approval, a program for civil assistance to the Montagnards has been worked out and a project agreement has been approved. This program will cover all the provinces in which Montagnards are located and will provide economic and social development aid as well as relief assistance. The purpose of the program is to win the loyalty and support of the Montagnards so that they may be trained and armed to fight the Viet Cong. Funds and materials will be decentralized to the province chiefs to be spent with the authorization of a local committee similar to the one established in Phu Yen.

(d) Tuyen Duc Province - Tuyen Duc, which was the only mountain province I had a chance to visit, contained about 10,000 refugees in mid-June. All had fled because of Viet Cong persecution and without pressure from the Government. Many of these refugees, as seen in the enclosed photographs, had come out of the more remote areas with their household belongings, some food and even livestock. A few had been obliged to flee with almost nothing. The Province Chief of Tuyen Duc, Major Bich, was assisting the Montagnards as best he could with his own resources. He had received some limited assistance from CARE but none from the Government. He told me that

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— Montagnard Refugees in Tuyen Duc —
Province



— A Montagnard Strategic Hamlet —

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he had just been to see the President and had proposed a plan for temporary resettlement of the Montagnards while they are trained and armed to take back their home areas from the Viet Cong. The President had agreed and gave orders for immediate support. However, as previously described, it later took special action from the President to get the Province Chief the authorization he needed to distribute rice. The Province Chief impressed me as being extremely concerned about the welfare of the Montagnards. His program was well planned and covered social and economic development as well as relief. Schools and medical aid were to be provided in addition to seeds, fertilizers, tools, housing materials, and technical assistance in improved farming methods.

2. Kien Phong Province - Land Development

(a) Kien Phong Province is in the Plaine des Joncs area and contains about 60,000 people. Most of them live in land development centers along newly constructed canals. The Plaine des Joncs has been a traditional Viet Cong stronghold which the French were never able to penetrate. The President recalls with some pride that when he came into office he told the French that he was going to drain the Plaine des Joncs and resettle people there in order to push the Communists out. The French had said he was crazy. Since that time, a large number of people have, in fact, been successfully resettled in this area and appear reasonably prosperous, despite the 1961 floods.

(b) At the moment, the majority of the people resettled in Kien Phong are from Central Vietnam. The more recent villages, however, are composed entirely of local inhabitants, most of them from the area along the Cambodian border. The Government transports their household possessions for them and gives them money for a new house and an average of three hectares of land. Available land is almost unlimited but takes several years to properly clear of the floating weeds for which the area is named. Local officials told me that the program had been sufficiently successful to generate more requests for resettlement than the Government could handle.

(c) My trip to Kien Phong was as part of an official party accompanying the President. Time for a thorough study of the resettlement effort was lacking, but it was possible to get a vivid impression of the President's effectiveness with his people. At each land development center, congregations of people awaited our arrival, arranged in the traditional pattern of groups of notables, young men, women and children. Ceremonies were held and speeches delivered in the usual formalistic style; however, the President always spoke extemporaneously. More important, however, on entering or leaving each congregation the President stopped and asked questions of a random selection of people about local conditions and problems.

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Some of these exchanges were interpreted for me and were quite frank. There was little meekness or hesitancy in answering the President. After one exchange with a young fisherman which was very much man-to-man, the President turned to the official party and said wryly "the newspapers call me paternalistic but you can see how the people answer me."

(d) The President was formal with the rural people but his manner was neither paternalistic nor condescending as it is sometimes pictured to be and he was certainly not unresponsive to people or their problems. What the President appeared to lack in his approach was a flair for dramatizing his concern about the welfare of his people and the knack of communicating this concern to others.

3. The Forces Populaires

(a) The Forces Populaires is a program being carried out in Central Vietnam. Personnel of the Forces Populaires are recruited from the hamlets. They are indoctrinated, trained, and armed as political action and paramilitary agents and are then sent back to the hamlets in small teams where they assist the hamlet people in their fields during the day and perform guard duty at night. They attempt to win the confidence of the local people, and to eventually learn the identity of the Viet Cong shadow government in the hamlet. Once the Viet Cong are exposed, they can then be driven out of the hamlet by the Forces Populaires themselves, or by the Self Defense Corps and Civil Guard when called on for help.

(b) These forces were just being created in two provinces which I visited, Phu Yen and Quang Ngai. The Phu Yen Province Chief was not enthusiastic about the program, feeling that the strategic hamlets were a more practical way of winning people away from the Viet Cong. In Quang Ngai, the Province Chief thought it might help in a limited way but was more interested in arming and training a militia unit in every hamlet. He pointed out that the level set for the Forces Populaires in his province was only 500 men, while it would take a militia of about 10,000 to adequately defend the hamlets. I was unable to see any of the Forces Populaires in action and, therefore, have no first-hand impressions of their effectiveness.

4. Other Programs

(a) Civil Guard and SDC - As previously mentioned, the Vietnamese Army is not intimately involved in the war at the hamlet level. However, the Civil Guard and Self Defense Corps are, and I did have a chance to see some of these units. In most areas, the Self Defense Corps appeared to be relatively well organized and to have a reasonable standard of morale. This was particularly true of units commanded by Catholic priests. One such

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unit which I inspected in the south of Phu Yen province was led by a priest named Father Nhunh, a former militia leader from the north. The Province Chief told me that this particular unit had fought side-by-side with the regular army against the Viet Cong and had acquitted itself better than the army. He added that Father Nhunh was very cooperative, inspiring the local people without meddling in the provincial administration. The Phu Yen Province Chief also told me that while he had no difficulty in recruiting Self Defense Corps in the province, people were reluctant to join the Civil Guard. They feared the possibility of a transfer out of the province because several years before, when the Civil Guard was relatively small, some units had been sent from Phu Yen all the way to Camau. The province chief of Vinh Binh, on the other hand, told me that he had no trouble in recruiting Civil Guard. In his province, however, the Civil Guard have no history of being transferred.

(b) Existing USOM Programs - Several existing USOM supported programs were having a direct impact on the hamlets in the provinces I visited. The rat-killing campaign had been very successful in Quang Ngai and Phu Yen provinces. Hamlet medical kits were being distributed to a number of strategic hamlets and some province chiefs were making an intensive effort to extend NACO loan to farmers in the strategic hamlets. At the village level, the installation of transmitter-receiver sets has been particularly effective. The Quang Ngai Province Chief and the local MAAG advisor both cited incidents in which these radios had made it possible to respond to Viet Cong actions in a timely and effective fashion. Provinces such as Vinh Binh, which had not yet received the radios, were clamoring for them. The other police program which was universally popular was the issuance of identity cards. It was difficult to measure its effectiveness, but these cards were being issued systematically in every province I visited. I did not have an opportunity to inspect other USOM supported programs such as well drilling, road construction and others which have an indirect but nevertheless valuable effect on counter-insurgency. One on-going program for the establishment of provincial training centers is being intensified and should considerably assist the overall counter-insurgency effort.

IV. Conclusions

Many of the conclusions and recommendations made as a result of my trip to Vietnam, are already included in previously prepared papers which proposed an A.I.D. counter-insurgency support program for Fiscal Year 1963 and outlined an organization to carry it out. These papers are attached to this report. In considering this trip in retrospect, there are some conclusions which appear more pertinent than others to the United States effort in Vietnam. These are as follows:

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1. It is generally accepted that the key to winning the war in Vietnam is winning the support of the population. To gain this support the Vietnamese have developed the strategic hamlet program and a special program for the Montagnards. Each is achieving conspicuous success in several areas. A will to resist the Viet Cong is being generated and support is being won for the Government.

2. Most of our counter-insurgency assistance to date has been directed primarily at improving the combat operations of the Vietnamese Army. We have not so far developed a program of equal proportions aimed at assisting army and civil administration efforts to gain the support of the people. ✓

3. To generate momentum in their civil efforts such as the strategic hamlet program, the Vietnamese have expended most of the funds and materials they can bring to bear from their own resources. To keep these programs from faltering, American support must be injected on a much greater scale than heretofore. The momentum which has been gained must be accelerated.

4. United States assistance can be particularly helpful, if correctly handled, in making the more democratic aspects of these programs work in practical ways which the population can understand. And it is only by this process that the population may be given a political stake in their communities and ultimately in their government which is worth defending.

5. Although there are obstacles in Saigon to effective actions to win the support of the population, the top level of the Government recognizes the need for such an effort and is willing to cooperate with Americans to carry it out. The main obstacle lies in the Saigon corps of functionaires, but this can be by-passed by decentralizing authority to the provinces.

6. Inspired political leadership is generally lacking in the central government. In some provinces, however, this kind of leadership is being generated from the bottom up, by such efforts as the strategic hamlet program. Understanding that only through inspired leadership can the war be won, the President and other officials in Saigon appear not only willing but eager to see such leadership developed.

7. In summary, programs are being developed by the Vietnamese which hold great promise of success. There are no insurmountable obstacles in Vietnam to an effective counter-insurgency effort on the civil side which will win the people. What is needed is sustained and constructive American support and a belief in Washington as well as in Vietnam that the Vietnamese can win. If this can be supplied and we can muster the perseverance and patience which this type of war requires, it will be won.

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July 20, 1962

THE USOM COUNTER-INSURGENCY PROGRAM FOR FISCAL YEAR 63

A. Introduction

1. The Communist Viet Cong have been waging a battle in Vietnam for the control of the people, because with the people go the land, the resources and the nation. To win the support of the population and to isolate the population from the Viet Cong, the Vietnamese Government has launched the Strategic Hamlet Program. The essential idea of this program, is that through the institution of basic democracy in the hamlets, the people will be given a political stake in their own hamlets, and ultimately in the national government, worth defending.

2. This concept is working in those provinces where it has been well applied. The Strategic Hamlet Program has gained momentum, and a will to resist is being generated among the hamlet people. However, if this program is to defeat the Viet Cong, the hamlet people must come to feel that the national as well as the local government is their government and that it is responsive to their aspirations and needs. One of the principal purposes of USOM counter-insurgency support will be to help this come about.

3. Perhaps the most successful method of creating viable strategic hamlets which the Vietnamese have developed to date is through coordinated civil-military, "clear and hold" operations of the Phu Yen type. As a result of the Phu Yen and Sunrise experience, a pattern of operation has emerged to serve as the basis for a more extensive counter-insurgency program.

4. In the struggle for the loyalty of the Vietnamese people, one element of the population, the Montagnards, requires a special approach. As a result of Viet Cong draft labor and economic pressure Montagnards have come out of the mountains seeking Government aid. Some of these have already been helped to establish new villages and to defend themselves. Others will be given relief and self-help assistance with USOM support and trained and armed by U. S. Special Forces to take back their home areas from the Viet Cong. The main objective of the Montagnard program is similar to that of the strategic hamlets - to win people. What makes this program particularly important is that these people occupy an area of Vietnam wherein lie important Viet Cong bases and main infiltration routes.

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5. It must be realized that USOM has not yet been in a position to make the kind of contribution which will win the struggle now going on in the hamlets to ensure their loyalty and support to the Vietnamese Government. Some operations have been launched and experience has been gained but the effort to date is far from the magnitude required to win this war. It is the purpose of this paper to extract some of the experience gained so far, and based on this and a knowledge of Vietnamese Government intentions and capabilities, to project a USOM counterinsurgency support program which will make possible for the Vietnamese to win the war.

B. "Clear and Hold" - The Strategic Hamlet Program

1. The "Clear and Hold" operation of the Phu Yen type, centered upon the creation of strategic hamlets, is typical of a series of province by province, area by area, operations which the Vietnamese Government intends to carry out during the current Fiscal Year. With the introduction of the RVNAF Division Commanders into the Strategic Hamlet Chain of Command, the pace of planning and executing these operations is expected to quicken.

2. In order to fully understand what support USOM must give to these coming operations, a brief description of the Phu Yen operation and USOM assistance to it is given below.

- a. During the preparatory phase of this operation, the Army was indoctrinated in good behavior and prepared militarily. Strategic hamlet civic action teams were assembled, equipped and trained with USOM support.
- b. As soon as the Army was in a position to provide security for the area of maximum Government influence, called the "yellow zone" in Phu Yen, the civic action teams began their work. Spending three to four weeks in each hamlet, they organized the population, set up hamlet defenses and defense systems and established hamlet self-governments through free elections. During this period hamlet youth groups were organized into local militia, given some self-defense training and armed with a few grenades and perhaps some shotguns.
- c. It became obvious as the operation progressed that the hamlet militia needed more arms and training if they were to adequately protect their own hamlets. For this purpose

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a hamlet militia training center is now being created for which USOM will provide funds for feeding the trainees. For these militia who must stand duty full-time, some compensation is planned in PL 480 commodities for raising pigs which will be loaned to the families of hamlet militia as first priority.

- d. It also became evident that the newly elected strategic hamlet councils had to serve their people if this institution of self-government was to develop into one which the people would be willing to defend. To stimulate this growth, USOM suggested, and the Province Chief enthusiastically agreed (1) to provide a minimum amount of monthly compensation to the hamlet chief and hamlet council so that they could afford to devote time to their duties and (2) to initiate hamlet self-help development projects such as schools, markets, wells, etc. for which the province would supply the materials and the hamlet the labor.
- e. Funding of the Phu Yen operation is through the counter-insurgency project agreement, with the authority to spend decentralized to the Province Chief who makes disbursements only with the approval of a provincial committee composed of the provincial treasurer and the local USOM and MAAG representatives. Both control and flexibility are thus established.

3. USOM is now in the process of entering into a new phase in the Phu Yen operation consisting of accelerated economic and social development programs which will directly improve the well-being of the average hamlet farmer. These programs are an intensified health program to get a medical kit with a trained first aider into every hamlet, an accelerated education program to provide elementary schools for every hamlet child, village and district level public works (mostly feeder roads and irrigation dams), and a more intensive agricultural effort in pig raising along with a pesticide, insecticide, and fertilizer distribution program. Some labor saving devices such as windmills will also be built in selected areas for immediate hamlet impact. All of these programs are designed to immediately improve economic and social conditions in the hamlets and to bring a sufficient degree of prosperity to the hamlets in order that their local governments and self-defense systems may become self-supporting.

4. Combined with these programs in Phu Yen will be an extensive Public Law 480, Title II, distribution of commodities in support of

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the hamlet militia, the hamlet chiefs and councils, public works and the hog raising project. Other efforts in Phu Yen for which funds and equipment have already been supplied include support for the resettlement of families from Viet Cong controlled areas, village to district radio communications, identity cards, family photographs, printed propaganda and rewards for captured Viet Cong and for Viet Cong weapons. In addition, it is anticipated that this operation will involve Viet Cong rehabilitation and the eventual relocation of some Viet Cong families, possibly in land development centers in the South.

5. It is believed that all of the operations described in the above paragraphs will be required to completely clear Phu Yen Province of Viet Cong influence and support.

6. As previously mentioned, the Vietnamese Government is expected to conduct a series of "clear and hold" strategic hamlet operations, similar in nature to the Phu Yen type, over the current fiscal year. Two plans have already been presented for U. S. assistance in Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh provinces and two more are currently being prepared for Vinh Binh and Vinh Long provinces in the delta. Others should be forthcoming shortly. On the basis of an estimated 10,000 strategic hamlets to be completed by 30 June 1963, a counter-insurgency budget has been prepared for Fiscal Year 1963 which is attached. It lists item by item the various programs involved, all of which are to be directed towards a single objective, winning the hamlet people by improving their economic, political and social life.

C. Montagnard Program

1. Over 100,000 Montagnards have come down from the mountains in the last six months seeking help from the Vietnamese Government. The Government has responded to this political and psychological opportunity to win their loyalty by providing some relief. USOM is in the process of signing a project agreement with the Director General of Land Development for a 50,000,000 piastre counterpart program to cover the coming three months period.

2. In the emergency phase of the Montagnard program, which will extend over the coming Fiscal Year, USOM's counter-insurgency support will consist of providing food, housing materials if required, tools, seeds, and medical supplies to Montagnard families. It will also provide additional health and educational services in the form of nurses, midwives and teachers and will help the Montagnards to construct defended villages where necessary.

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3. As now established, the program is completely flexible, based upon memorandums of understanding and work plans developed for each province. It is expected that the Montagnards will come out of the mountains in increasing numbers as the full impact of the current program reaches those who have already fled. This anticipated development is provided for in the attached counter-insurgency budget estimate.

D. Other Operations

1. With or without specific "name" operations of the clear and hold type USOM will attempt to lend some effective, if necessarily limited, support to the counter-insurgency effort in almost every province. Working through the USOM provincial representative, whether he be MAAG, IVS or USOM staff, and through the medium of the provincial strategic hamlets committee, the economic and social development of the strategic hamlets will be accelerated. As fast as hamlet self-governments are elected, they will be called upon to represent the people in their hamlet and to voice their needs and seek expression for them in the form of hamlet self-help development projects.

2. In all important provinces, whether covered by special operations or not, an effort will be made to convert the Provincial Strategic Hamlets Committee, on which practically all the provincial services now sit, into provincial development committees. These provincial committees will receive requests for assistance from the hamlets other than for self-help projects, and will screen these requests and refer them to the concerned services for reply. Every effort will be made to get maximum impact at the hamlet level from existing Government programs by accelerating and orienting them as required.

3. The normal provincial budget will be supplemented by special funds provided by USOM, with Vietnamese Government's concurrence for hamlet self-help projects and for district and village level development projects such as roads, bridges, irrigation works, drainage works, dikes, etc. which cannot be supported from the Government budget but which would provide the greatest impact upon the well-being of the local population. These funds will be administered through a provincial committee of the Phu Yen type.

4. Locally suggested projects or programs which are large, too complicated technically or which require overall policy decisions, should be referred by the Provincial Strategic Hamlet Committee to Saigon for review. The USOM representative will seek such technical support or material assistance from USOM Saigon as may be unavailable

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locally. He will also forward copies of urgent provincial requests for central Government support so that these may be followed up, at the request of the Assistant Director for Counter-Insurgency, by the USOM Technical Divisions with their counterparts in the Government ministries.

E. Funding Considerations

1. In any counter-insurgency struggle there are likely to be a large number of unforeseen contingencies. However, it is believed that the attached budget estimate, containing requirements for Fiscal Year 1963 funds by operational activity, represents a sound forecast of what the overall counter-insurgency program will consist of.

2. Counter-insurgency support cannot be calculated and justified in advance, to the finite degree required of normal USOM programs and projects. Washington must therefore decide on the basis of the best information available what commitment of support it is willing to give and then firmly make that commitment. Counter-insurgency cannot be waged piece-meal. It is a political, social, and economic as well as military war in which failure to execute all of its aspects and to see it through is likely to be fatal. Before it starts supporting the kind of large scale counter-insurgency effort which will be required to win the war in Vietnam, the Mission must therefore know what resources it will have at its disposal.

3. It cannot be over-emphasized that the most important element in financing counter-insurgency are local piastre funds. If we are to render effective and timely support to the counter-insurgency struggle, we must have the necessary piastres for local goods and services. The program contained in the attached budget anticipates making maximum possible use of PL 480 commodities and off-shore procurement in the counter-insurgency campaign. However, this cannot be substituted for and must only be considered a supplement of the main effort to be financed with piastres.

F. Some Conclusions

1. The war being waged in Vietnam is primarily a series of small political as well as military wars being fought in the hamlets for the loyalty and support of the hamlet people.

2. Support for this war must, above all, give the hamlet citizen a stake in his hamlet, and ultimately in the national government, which he is willing to defend.

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3. Limited but successful experience in some areas of Vietnam show that this is possible. This experience must be applied to other areas as quickly as possible. For this, a greatly enlarged USOM support effort is required.

4. Momentum has been built up on the Vietnamese side which must not be lost. To give effective support, USOM must know exactly what resources it will have. AID must therefore decide now, not after the Fiscal Year is half over and Vietnamese momentum has been lost, what amount of support it is willing to give and for what purposes.

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COUNTER-INSURGENCY PROGRAM BUDGET ESTIMATE, FY 63

<u>OPERATIONS</u>	<u>Piastres</u>	<u>Dollars</u>
1. Montagnards emergency relief and resettlement	200,000,000	\$100,000 (Primarily for surplus items)
2. Hamlet self-help development projects @ 20,000 p's per hamlet for 10,000 hamlets	200,000,000	\$2,000,000 (Primarily for sheet roofing, cement, tool kits)
3. Feeding of hamlet militia during training-- 100,000 militia @ 300 per man (to be supplemented by PL 480)	30,000,000	---
4. Pay for Hamlet Chief and Hamlet council-- average 8,000 Chiefs @ 400 p's per mo., and 24,000 council members @ 300 p's per month for 10 mos. (to be supplemented by PL 480 if feasible) This figure will be supplemented by a GVN contribution to raise the pay closer to the level of the SDC.	104,000,000	----
5. Rice for population constructing hamlets in impoverished areas. 1,000,000 people, 20 days work each @ 3 p's per day (to be supplemented by PL 480)	60,000,000	----
6. Construction of housing for families re- settled from Vietcong controlled areas-- 50,000 families @ 3,000 p's per house	150,000,000	---
7. Emergency relief for Vietnamese refugees from VC controlled areas	25,000,000	\$50,000 (Primarily for surplus items)
8. Food, clothing, tools, seeds and livestock for 50,000 resettled families @ 3,000 per family (PL 480 commodities must be used otherwise cost will be 4,500)	150,000,000	\$300,000

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9. Equipping and training strategic hamlet civic action teams @ 10,000 p's per team for 1,000 teams	10,000,000	----
10. Per diem of 1,000 strategic hamlet civic action teams for 300 days @ 200 per day	60,000,000	----
11. Salaries of 200 strategic hamlet civic action teams in impoverished provinces @ 20,000 per team per mo for 10 mos.	40,000,000	----
12. Local transportation of PL480 and PA procured items in support of counter-insurgency operation	20,000,000	---
13. Accelerated district and village level development projects (roads and bridges, irrigation works, etc.) having impact on hamlets. 30 priority provinces @ 10 million per province (to be supplemented by PL 480 distribution as payment for common labor	300,000,000	\$1,000,000
14. Accelerated Hog Raising Program (cement only requirement) Pigs to be loaned by MACO to 500 families per mo for six mos period	---	\$ 25,000
15. Accelerated Public Health Program--one medical kit in ea of 10,000 strategic hamlets with a trained hamlet first aider	50,000,000	\$5,000,000
16. Accelerated Primary Education Program--Construct primary schools in 2,000 strategic hamlets by June 1963 and provide additional teachers and free textbooks.	138,000,000	\$ 350,000
17. Hamlet and village water supply program	---	\$ 750,000
18. Windmill and wind charger program--provide 5,000 locally constructed windmills @ 4,000 p's ea and 1,000 windmill-windchargers procured offshore.	20,000,000	\$ 500,000
19. Fishboat program for fishing hamlets 1,000 boats with nets and motors	25,000,000	\$ 500,000

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20. Accelerated agricultural programs with hamlet impact--rat poison, insecticide, sprayers, fertilizer	---	\$3,000,000
21. Special rehabilitation program for VC prisoners including rehab. center and resettlement hamlets. This will probably also involve moving some VC families from Central Vietnam to the South	100,000,000	\$1,000,000
22. Commedia Support for Counter-insurgency --District newspapers, mobile units, hamlet radios and information materials	2,000,000	\$ 750,000
23. Public Safety communications, hamlet to village--3,000 sets @ \$300 ea and completing village network	---	\$1,580,000
24. Public Safety--family photos and other equipment.	10,000,000	\$300,000
25. Local administration training centers, construction and training costs	15,000,000	\$150,000
26. Military Civic Action	---	\$1,200,000
27. Strategic Hamlet Supply of barbed wire, posts, flashlights, etc.		
a. Offshore Procurement 5,000 hamlets @ \$8,500 per hamlet	---	\$42,000,000
b. Purchase of local barbed wire 400 tons per month for 10 mos @ 3.5 p's per kilo	14,000,000	----
28. Rewards for captured VC and weapons	10,000,000	----
29. Contingency and Special Projects	100,000,000	----
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	* 1,833,000,000	60,555 ,000

NOTE: This budget is keyed mainly to those counter-insurgency operations which have a direct hamlet impact. However, there are other counter-insurgency support programs which are essential and must be included in the USOM FY 63 program. These include:-----see next sheet

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Railroad sabotage replacement, provincial roads, (equipment) additional medical support for the provinces including nursing schools, surgical suites and malaria eradication; on-going programs to train village and hamlet teachers in the teacher training centers. MAOO support for credit and co-ops, maintenance automotive and public works equipment servicing entire rural affairs departments, police weapons and training, POL counter-insurgency operations support.

*This figure includes the 730,000,000 million piasters to be directly purchased with FY 63 funds.

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July 20, 1962

PROPOSED USOM COUNTERINSURGENCY ORGANIZATION

A. Concept of Operations

1. An organization to be effective must be keyed to the operations it will conduct. USOM's counterinsurgency operations will consist primarily of giving advice and support to two main types of Vietnamese counterinsurgency activities: The provincial or area clear and hold operation centered upon the strategic hamlets (similar to the Phu Yen Operation), and Montagnard relief and temporary resettlement. The primary objective of USOM's advice and assistance will be to win the active support of the hamlet and Montagnard population to the Vietnamese Government and away from the Viet-Cong. This will be done for the most part through the Vietnamese Government provincial administrations, but will require a great deal of coordination and liaison with various ministries and levels of the Central Government. An excellent precedent has already been set in the case of Phu Yen for the kind of extraordinary effort and organization which USOM support of counterinsurgency will require.

2. In the Phu Yen operation the activities which USOM is supporting from counterpart funds range from the resettlement of people from Viet-Cong controlled zones to rewards for capturing key VC. Lately this has been revised to include support for strategic hamlet self-help projects and other assistance and is likely to be revised again to include district and village level economic development projects, some of which will be supported by the use of U.S. surplus agricultural commodities. To provide support for this type of operation, members of the Mission's counterinsurgency group have directly coordinated support with all other U.S. agencies and with every level of the Vietnamese Government from the President down. One USOM representative has been assigned to the Province for the duration of the operation and technicians from various USOM Divisions have made trips to the province to assist with different aspects of the operation.

3. USOM's role in support of Montagnard counterinsurgency operations will consist primarily of providing assistance for emergency relief and temporary resettlement, some of which will phase into long term resettlement. From an organizational point of view this portion of counterinsurgency will be easier to support since a single entity of the central echelon of the Vietnamese Government, Land Development, is responsible. However, this particular aspect of counterinsurgency will continue to require, sometimes at USOM instigation, prodding from the highest Government level to keep the program moving. It will also require continuous liaison with the province chiefs by USOM personnel to ensure that the program is flexible enough to meet constantly changing local needs.

4. USOM's methods of operation and organizational procedures in support of counterinsurgency operations to date have been characterized in general by maximum flexibility and direct access to all Vietnamese and American agencies which could contribute to the success of these operations. USOM has not waited for the

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the Vietnamese to generate requirements but has assisted in introducing ideas, drafting plans and projects, getting approval within the Vietnamese Government, coordinating the approval and support of other U.S. agencies and then providing advice as well as support to the Vietnamese during execution.

5. The proposed USOM counterinsurgency organization must continue to operate in the same vein, but in a more highly intensified fashion. The methods of operation of this organization and the operations it will support will extend beyond normal USOM procedures and operational concepts. The organization must have the authority and the freedom of action to operate in a manner which the situation in Viet-Nam demands. Due to the highly centralized nature of the Vietnamese Government, it must have direct access to the Government at all levels. It must also be able to coordinate directly and freely with all other U.S. agencies concerned.

6. In addition to current USOM support for counterinsurgency, which is limited to project assistance, the proposed counterinsurgency organization will have at its disposal local funds, supplies and equipment which have been purchased for direct support of counterinsurgency. This will greatly increase the flexibility of USOM's counterinsurgency operations but it will also impose additional responsibilities upon the proposed counterinsurgency organization. It must be able to handle the off-shore procurement, warehousing and distribution of counterinsurgency supplies within Vietnam. It is also anticipated that extensive use of PL 480 commodities will be made in support of counterinsurgency and that this in itself will require a special effort by the organization.

7. In keeping with the operational character of the proposed counterinsurgency organization, technicians will not normally be permanently assigned to its staff. The number of technicians required would in itself create an unwieldy organization. However, the proposed organization, if it is to give effective counterinsurgency support, must have immediate and first call on whatever technical assistance is available within the technical divisions of the Mission. In its operations the organization will use this technical assistance to the maximum extent possible.

8. The nature of counterinsurgency will lay special requirements upon the USOM organization which carries it out. This organization should have at its disposal a secure operations center where classified maps and other display materials charting the progress of the counterinsurgency campaign can be kept on view for briefings and to facilitate a constant check on the status of various operations. The organization will also be handling a large volume of classified documents which will necessitate special precautions and procedures.

9. The counterinsurgency organization must be staffed by personnel who are primarily doers -- people with enthusiasm, energy, imagination and initiative. In a counterinsurgency struggle, success often depends on the timely exploitation of opportunities. This calls for an organization which is capable of running on an around-the-clock basis and for personnel who are both willing and able to stand the pace.

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10. In the provinces, counterinsurgency operations will be simple, free of red tape, and practical. Much will depend on the dedication, tact, imagination and common sense of the provincial representatives who, working with the province chief and Government provincial services, will help coordinate and expedite existing Government and USOM programs as well as draw on direct aid funds to accelerate economic and social development in the hamlets. He must make the image of American efficiency and quick response a reality and must transfer this image in the eyes of the common people to the Government of Vietnam.

11. To maintain the highest possible level of performance in the proposed organization, its chief must have the authority to remove or reassign personnel who cannot carry out their assignments. The USOM counterinsurgency organization, if it is to be most effective, must be of a combat nature where good performance can be as readily rewarded as AID regulations will permit and where incompetence or failure can be eliminated by immediate reassignment, within the Mission if necessary, but outside the counterinsurgency organization.

B. Description of Proposed Organization

1. It is not considered necessary to reconsider in this paper the justification for creating a position of Assistant Director for Counterinsurgency (or Rural Affairs) within the Mission. Experience has fully justified this need. However, this is not a job that one man can handle alone. A staff will be required but it should be kept as small as possible, consistent with the work to be accomplished.

2. The Assistant Director will spend a large part of his time in liaison with the Vietnamese Government, with other U.S. agencies and in field trips to keep the overall counterinsurgency effort moving. He will, therefore, require a Deputy to act in his absence in order to keep operations going at the rapid pace required if results are to be achieved.

3. Both the Assistant Director and his Deputy must devote themselves primarily to operations. An executive officer is therefore required to assume the administrative burden, including reporting on counterinsurgency activities.

4. Although the office of the Assistant Director for Planning and Program will do the overall programming for all USOM activities, it is anticipated that there will be a need for one officer within the counterinsurgency organization who can handle on a full time basis the necessary program documentation and who will be responsible for the procurement, warehousing and distribution of counterinsurgency supplies. He will require the assistance of at least one warehousing and transportation specialist.

5. The Voluntary Agency Programs can give great support to counterinsurgency if thoroughly coordinated and if all possibilities are developed. In addition, Title II PL 480 programs can be used in support of counterinsurgency as well as a greater utilization of U.S. excess property resources. It is anticipated that the development of these programs will require the full time duties of one officer.

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6. Because of the importance of Montagnard operations within the overall counterinsurgency effort and because of their special nature, it will be necessary to assign one officer full time to this problem. As these Montagnard operations develop, the need for full time assistance in specialized fields such as health and possibly education and agriculture can be anticipated. An exception to the general rule of no technicians in the organization should be made here because of the need for specialization in the Montagnard field.

7. The main burden, within the proposed counterinsurgency group, of providing assistance to and support of counterinsurgency operations in the provinces will fall upon USOM provincial representatives. Most of these personnel will not be USOM regular staff members but IVS or MAAG personnel. In order to properly supervise and support these representatives, a Field Operations Section should be included in the proposed counterinsurgency organization. This Section, headed by a Field Operations Officer, would contain several area operations expeditors who would support and expedite assistance from Saigon to the provinces. They would also be assigned to special name operations during the preparatory and launching phases. Other officers specifically assigned to special projects would also be a part of the Field Operations Section.

8. As previously recommended in this paper, no technical assistance staff should be included in the organization. It will utilize technicians from the Technical Divisions as a specific need for their advice and assistance develops.

9. For a chart of the proposed countersurgency organization see Attachment A to this paper.

C. Job Descriptions for Counterinsurgency Personnel

1. Assistant Director, Counterinsurgency(ADCI)

Duties: Responsible for planning, organizing, directing USOM Counterinsurgency Operations and for direct liaison and coordination with related U.S., GVN and other foreign agencies both public and private. He will have the authority to deal directly with all GVN officials and with the Chiefs of all U.S. Agencies on counterinsurgency matters, will be the USOM representative to the Committee on Rural Rehabilitation and will participate as required in Task Force or Country Team meetings concerned with counterinsurgency.

2. Deputy Assistant Director and Chief Operations

Assist ADCI in carrying out his responsibilities and in conducting day-to-day USOM CI Operations.

3. Counterinsurgency Executive Officer

Responsible for administrative services for USOM CI Operations including logistics for office and field personnel and reporting.

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