

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROGRESS ACHIEVED UNDER THE  
COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAM IN VIETNAM  
through August 1963



Although the GVN's Strategic Hamlet Program was only 16 months old August 17, 1963 with nearly 8,000 hamlets completed, embracing over 70 percent of the country's population, the USOM supported GVN-countrywide, social and economic counterinsurgency effort is not yet one year old.

This effort is conceived in three major phases based on the GVN's Strategic Hamlet Program plan for a total of approximately 11,400 hamlets to be completed by June 30, 1964. The phases are Hamlet Establishment -- during which the people are assisted to build hamlets to defend themselves and organize local self-governments. Hamlet Development -- during which the hamlet people are assisted to improve their social and economic conditions, and Hamlet Stabilization, during which the viable, secure hamlet units take their rightful places as the stable building blocks of Vietnamese society - and U. S. assistance is reduced. In support of this effort, MAAG and USOM have teamed together in the provinces and in Saigon to provide the required military and economic assistance.

The Hamlet Establishment Phase is well along in most of the 7,800 hamlets listed as completed. Social and economic, as well as military counterinsurgency operations are now being conducted at all levels of government and through regular as well as special programs. USOM's regular technical assistance programs, conducted through the Vietnamese ministries, are being targeted at counterinsurgency objectives while most of USOM's special counterinsurgency programs are being carried out at provincial levels through the media of Provincial Rehabilitation Agreements signed with the Province Chiefs of the forty provinces of SVN. For these agreements USOM has been able, through its Provincial Representatives and with the help of the MAAG Sector Advisors who cover the concerned provinces, to encourage and support the Province Chiefs in taking quick and decisive actions on the Strategic Hamlet Program.

The GVN and USOM have organized joint Technician Task Forces which will visit each province of Vietnam to work out with the local authorities three-year Provincial Development Plans aimed at maximizing viable Hamlet Development. Individual Project Agreements will be signed with each Province committing GVN, USOM, Provincial and Hamlet resources to support a Provincial Development Plan. These Plans are designed to establish a solid base for rural economic take-off.

These streamlined and decentralized procedures, which the GVN is now continuing with its own funds, have greatly contributed to the effectiveness of counterinsurgency operations. The US\$10 000 000 special piastre purchase fund was used to launch the provincial rehabilitation operations together with dollar-financed, imported commodities and U. S. Food For Peace directly at Province and hamlet levels with quick effective results. In these operations, sufficient experience has now been gained to confirm the validity of the Strategic Hamlet Program as the heart of the overall counterinsurgency program and as a winning effort.

Significant rural social and economic achievements to date include:

1. Free hamlet elections for the first time in Vietnam in completed strategic hamlets and the carrying this year of elections to the village the next highest local administrative unit
2. Extension of the popular vote principle to having hamlet peoples select and participate in USOM aided Self-Help Projects in which completed strategic hamlets carry out construction of social and economic facilities such as roads, dams wells schools fish ponds etc. This program is engendering great local enthusiasm and self-help contributions from the population. Revenue producing activities are being encouraged which will finance salaries for hamlet school teachers and other local services 726 projects have been started and 362 completed to date
3. Good GVN organization in the form of a strong Interministerial Committee to set the overall policy and to coordinate and direct the Strategic Hamlet Program. This committee has functioned very effectively to date
4. Decentralization of program operations to Provincial and hamlet levels through the device of Provincial Rehabilitation Agreements which give the Province Chiefs and local officials the resources and authority to carry out programs directly.
5. Assignment of USOM Provincial Representative in addition to the MAAG Sector Advisors to each of the provinces to assist and support the Province Chiefs and their staffs in implementing the Strategic Hamlet program and to share responsibility for the utilization of counterinsurgency funds and supplies.

6. Speed-up of reaction time to emergency needs. Last year a number of Montagnards fleeing the Viet Cong went without food and some returned to the Viet Cong because no assistance could be made immediately available. Today, due to stockpiling in the provinces and availability of funds at province level with the standing authority and flexibility for their use, emergency needs are met in a matter of hours. People believe in this kind of government action.

7. Under the Hamlet Establishment Phase in 40 of the 41 provinces of SVN with USOM assistance, 7,063 hamlet construction cadres, 11,697 elected hamlet leaders, and 78,205 hamlet militiamen have been trained of which 38,288 have been armed. The relocation of 145,618 families from insecure areas into strategic hamlets has been carried out, as well as the reception and resettlement of more than 100,000 refugees (mainly Montagnard). All this is in addition to the enormous physical effort of building 7,800 hamlets and providing the logistics for supplying all these activities.

8. The provision of a real measure of security for the 71 percent of the population of SVN now living in strategic hamlets and the instilling in them the will to resist Communism as evidenced by excellent fighting records of strategic hamlets attacked by the Viet Cong. Recent GVN victories in Quang Ngai, Kontum, Binh Duong - areas considered as traditional Viet Cong strongholds less than a year ago is an example. GVN-USOM counterinsurgency efforts have been concentrated in these provinces for the past six months.

9. A greatly improved sense of security among much of the population and local officials exists in almost all provinces. Many roads which could not be travelled freely several months ago are open and technical workers can and are reaching people formerly denied by the Viet Cong. Improved security has resulted in increased supply movements to and from the provinces.

10. Better crop yields are enabling rice exports of 225,000 m/t to date as opposed to imports last year and rural areas have more purchasing power. Consequently provincial capitals and towns are growing more prosperous daily. Plans are being studied to increase rice production to enable exports of 1,000,000 m/t per year by 1965.

11. U. S. Surplus Foodstuffs (Food For Peace) made available for a variety of programs under Title II Public Law 480 including livestock feeding, have proven to be very valuable counterinsurgency assets. They have been received in Saigon and delivered to end recipients countrywide without

difficulty. Their reception by the people in the hamlets has been excellent. They have enabled us to save large amounts of piastres by substituting for cash-wage-payments as well as for rice and other necessities required for re-location, resettlement and emergency relief. Larger, and continuing imaginative use will be made of these resources in the future. These foodstuffs have benefited more than 2,000,000 hamlet peoples to date.

In addition to the foregoing more general results of the GVN's counter-insurgency efforts which have been supported by USOM listed below are a few specific program achievements and expectations:

A. The rat control program, so successful in Central Vietnam is being extended countrywide this year to cover 1,200,000 farm families, 60 per cent of the farm population. Three-quarters of the nation's farm population will also be covered under the crop insecticide program.

B. The pig-compost program already successful on a pilot basis in 6 provinces of Central Vietnam with 6633 improved piglets distributed to date some of which have already farrowed is now being extended to 12 other impoverished provinces. It is being increased ten-fold in Thua Thien and Quang Tri Provinces nearest the 17th parallel. This will cover more than 20,000 poor farm families by the end of the year.

C. 19,000-plus metric tons of chemical fertilizer have been received and distributed as rewards for strategic hamlet construction to 200,000 farm families in the ten central lowland provinces. This should increase their rice crop yield 25 percent in this traditionally rice deficit area.

D. Improved varieties of rice, corn, sweet potatoes, legumes and fruits are being multiplied and extended as quickly as possible to help farmers increase production and income. This program is already achieving excellent results. A plan is now under study to distribute countrywide through Strategic Hamlet Committees, improved rice seed in small quantities to farmers in every completed hamlet.

E. The National Agricultural Credit Organization plans to loan small farmers approximately 1,000,000,000 piastres this year which is nearly double last year's total. Loans and collections to date this year are running double last year's figures.

F The 1963 Hamlet School Program is nearly completed in 26 provinces through Provincial Rehabilitation Agreements and is now being expanded to include an additional 14 provinces and 562 additional classrooms. In the first twenty-six provinces 853 classrooms have been constructed in more than 300 hamlets with 50 000 new pupils taught by 625 newly trained teachers. Plans are under study to try to start at least one classroom in every hamlet in the country needing one by 1965 supported by self-help and local PTA's. "Goal - A School for Every Hamlet"

G Under the Hamlet Accelerated Health Program up to 8 000 rural health workers are to be paid by the GVN to service hamlet peoples from USOM provided health kits 6 000 of which are already out. In addition U S Public Health Service surgical teams are now operating in three province capitals and one New Zealand surgical team is in another capital. For Hamlet Health, plans are also being made to have this program locally supported in future years.

H Lowcost hand-operated ("jet") well-drilling rigs have been developed locally and are being used in hamlets country-wide to drill up to 1,200 wells this year down to 100 meters in depth. This is more than all the wells drilled in the past five years. Windmills for lifting water and generating electricity are also being perfected locally. Water for drinking and irrigation is a major need.

I. 5,000 community listening sets plus ten thousand individual transistor receivers will be distributed to hamlets to improve the government's reach to its people. (Over 4,000 sets have already been distributed.)

J The Amnesty Program (Chieu Hoi) announced by the President on April 17 is progressing satisfactorily with about 9 300 returnees to date of whom a substantial number are Viet Cong activists including many officers. Most ponderous returnee to date is one elephant who came in with two Viet Cong on the high plateau.

K Counterinsurgency supply handling records show that in the nine months since USOM counterinsurgency supplies have been arriving in Vietnam for social and economic development 110 000 metric tons have been received 16 000 of which have been turned over to the concerned ministries and 94 000 metric tons (mainly foodstuffs fertilizer and cement) of which have been moved by GVN/USOM logistics direct to the provinces and hamlets

The above activities which relate directly to the Hamlet Development Phase, all illustrate the planned emphasis of our counterinsurgency effort for social and economic development in rural areas which has already demonstrated results in a very short period of time. We have full confidence that within three years, the strategic hamlets of Vietnam will have become viable politically, socially, and economically and able to manage and finance their own future growth in peace with confidence and with a minimum of foreign assistance.