

John O'Donnell

Comments on Operational Guidance on Relocation Assistance

1. Providing cash to relocated families for the purchase of housing materials is probably the most practical means of handling this problem where wood and other housing materials are locally available. In the Plain of Reeds, as elsewhere where housing materials are limited and expensive, it may be more practical to purchase large lots of wood, bamboo or thatch, as the case may be, at province or district level to take advantage of price reduction through bulk buying. These materials could then be transported to the hamlets at program expense.
2. Concur with idea of providing cash to relocated families to compensate them for time spent in reconstructing their homes within the hamlet defense perimeter. In the event that frames are built in the hamlet prior to the movement of families, hamlet residents who work on this construction could also be paid in cash for their labor - perhaps at the rate of 10 piastres per man per day.
3. Disagree with idea that persons working on construction of hamlet perimeters should be compensated. In my opinion, this is more of a propaganda and psychological preparation problem - the residents of the hamlet are working together to protect themselves from the Viet Cong tax-collectors and terrorists and should be happy and proud to participate in the establishment of defenses for their homes and families. In addition, many hamlets residents have been and are working on the construction of hamlet defenses without any thought of monetary compensation.
4. In line with ideas on relocation, received copy of operations order prepared by Long An Province Chief which spells out excellent relocation plan - it is being translated now. High points are:
 - a. Survey is being made by district and village officials of every hamlet in which relocation is to take place
 - b. Areas are set aside for relocated families - generally government-owned land - 25 x 30 meter plots
 - c. A visit is made to each family which will be relocated to tell the people that they will have to move and to prepare them psychologically for it.

- d. The inspectors check the condition of the house frame to determine whether it can be moved to the hamlet or whether it will be necessary to purchase materials for a new frame.
- e. The most reluctant are those who live in brick houses. They are being encouraged to make the move for their own good with the assurance that they will be allowed to return to their homes as soon as the security situation allows. They are encouraged to cut down all brick surrounding their homes (not coconut or fruit trees) so that Viet Cong will not be inclined to use the abandoned house as hiding places.
- f. Transportation requirements will also be assessed at the same time, e.g. can trucks be used, how many men needed to assist home owner in moving frame to hamlet, carts available, etc.

5. On the basis of these surveys, manpower, equipment, and money will be assembled at the hamlet level to carry out the relocation. Hamlet Construction Cadre and Hamlet Committees will assist families when they arrive in hamlet, distribute money and make receipts. In addition, one Civil Guard company has been assigned to each district to assist in relocation.

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