

A SUGGESTED PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM TO BE
UNDERTAKEN BY THE EMBASSY OF VIETNAM

The main objective of this operation is to make the public in America understand the problems of Vietnam, using the strategic hamlet program as a base. Through the understanding and the sympathies of the American public, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam will gradually influence the press and the Congress to support the war efforts of the Vietnamese people.

A. PREPARATION PERIOD: October-December 1962.

During this period the following steps should be taken:

1. Publication in English (and if possible, in Spanish for Latin America) of a simple, illustrated booklet (60 pages) on the concept and workings of the strategic hamlet. The booklet must include a short sketch of Vietnamese history and the struggle for survival, independence of the Vietnamese in order to integrate the idea of strategic hamlet in the historical movement of the people of Vietnam.
2. Movies on strategic hamlet.
3. Tapes of interviews (simultaneously translated in English) of Vietnamese living in the strategic hamlets. Also interviews of American personnel working with the Vietnamese in the hamlets.
4. A series of detailed papers and studies on the strategic hamlets to be used for background information and for lectures among sophisticated audiences in the US.

During this period, it is suggested that Mr. Tran van Dinh return to Vietnam for a month to tour the strategic hamlets, to talk with the people and the officials. A young, dedicated, American-educated Vietnamese should be assigned to work with Mr. Dinh. The young man will later follow Mr. Dinh to Washington to be his assistant with the rank of Second Secretary of the Embassy. First-hand experience must be acquired for this operation to work.

B. INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD: February to June 1963:

Mr. Tran van Dinh and his assistant (in some cases) will tour the main cities of The United States and the important colleges and universities to speak on strategic hamlets. He will appear on TV, talk on the radio, give lectures to Rotary Clubs, Chamber of Commerce, etc. Whenever possible, he will visit families of soldiers who died in Vietnam or are serving in Vietnam, bringing with him small handicraft gifts from

Vietnam. During this same period, the Vietnamese Armed Forces Attache will make the same tour of US military installations. This period will result in more experiences to be used in the next period.

C. BARNSTORMING PERIOD:

This period is the offensive period when the target is the mass of American people, the men and women in the street. (This is the period of shaking hands and kissing babies). Mr. Tran van Dinh and his assistant, the Armed Forces Attache and his assistant (he must be fluent in English) will travel state by state, visiting small towns. A group of ten students from Vietnam now in the US will be added to the party, to entertain the American public (cultural program, music, short plays in English). If possible, tickets to such cultural shows will be sold and the money collected donated to local churches or charity organizations. If possible, two or three Vietnamese, "heroes of the strategic hamlets" will be flown from Vietnam to be with the tour. This period is very important and requires careful and systematic planning. One or two Americans can be hired during this period for technical advice and assistance. Because it involves students, this period can start only in July and end in early September. The students have to be recruited in June, and financed and trained in Washington, D.C.

During the barnstorming, the American men and women in the street will be intelligently and subtly suggested to write their newspapers and their congressmen to support Vietnam. It has to combine down-to-earth diplomacy with entertainment and serious business.

CONCLUSION:

This program which will be repeated each year can be extended to some parts of South America and can be used in Africa and Asia, with modifications. In order to be successful (and it must be) cooperation and coordination with the various American and Vietnamese agencies involved should exist, although it is a purely Vietnamese operation conducted by Vietnamese militants for the cause of Vietnam. It has to have an autonomous character but supervised by the Embassy. It is estimated that this operation will require an independent budget of about US \$30,000 a year but that it will pay much greater dividends, than have various public relations firms in the past.