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Provincial Pacification Thoughts from Kien Hoa Province.

The purpose of this program should be for USOM, specifically USOM Kien Hoa, to be able to support the local GVN New Rural Life Hamlet Program (or whatever it may be called in the future) by assisting in those areas and with those approaches which directly lend support to the war and counterinsurgency efforts. The program should be carried out in the Province, Villages and Hamlets with existing personnel and with maximum flexibility on the local level but responsive to agreed upon unified concepts.

The aim should be to establish a program in the province which can be responsive to local government needs, to assist in bringing security and to improve the lives of the people through socio-economic development. At this point, particular attention should be paid to the correction and alleviation of those conditions which have arisen here as a result of the increased wartime activity over the past year or eighteen months. A determined GVN/US political and social effort is needed to assist the disrupted rural population. The rural population has suffered increased disruption through an intensification of both the air and land war in contested and enemy controlled areas. There is some evidence that the people in these areas who had been basically uncommitted or had some felt identification with the GVN are becoming less committed or are being forced to identify with the V.C. who occupy or control their area. This is because there have been increasing civilian casualties and property damage with its social and economic damage in the nongovernment controlled areas which constitute the larger part of the province. There is also on the part of the GVN/US effort a lack of impact and reaction programs to deal with this pressing problem. While people may initially be attracted into the GVN controlled areas, once they have come in they have no economic potential and GVN is unable to provide for them or occupy them. Rather than sit around the streets and market places they return to their lands in the contested or enemy controlled areas where they receive at least some support from the VC and live with the VC and suffer from Air and artillery harassment. It is then entirely possible that they begin to identify with the VC and give actual support willingly rather than as a result of VC pressure which in the past has been largely the case.

Maximum assistance should be channeled directly to the province rather than through the conventional GVN financial and ministerial arrangement. Aid should go directly to the people via the Provincial Committee. In the past when this was the case, Kien Hoa had a fairly operational impact and reaction program. We were able to on the basis of Provincial Committee agreement to institute local programs and react to local problems almost immediately. Since this program was terminated almost everything has had to have time consuming ministry approval or be checked by the ministry

during its progress or be put to a bid, all of which went through GVN financial channels, and which consumed valuable time and energy. This has slowed down reaction time from a few days at most to a matter of months and without ensuring any later control or increased productivity. For a recent example I refer to our problem in spending that section of the Rural Reconstruction Budget which provided money for water pumps under the Agriculture heading. Originally 600,000\$00VN was budgeted for this purpose. Before the funds were committed this was orally reduced to 200,000\$ VN by the Budget Committee. In order to speed things up so as to expend this money for badly needed pumps, the Agriculture Chief had to use 150,000\$00VN of his own personal funds to buy the pumps because the financial procedures were so time consuming. He has yet to be reimbursed since the financial procedures have yet to be completed. However, due to his personal interest we have had pumps for two months. Incidentally, the cut from 600,000\$VN to 200,000\$VN was never made on paper, but we until recently could not even begin to spend the money because of this supposed cut. We are supposedly authorized on advance fund under this budget which is supposed to take care of these problems, however financial controls are so tight that the province feels it cannot safely use it.

The USOM Operations effort in Kien Hoa should be directed at pacification as a separate entity as well as through the normal ministry programs with the aim of assisting the provision of security through winning over the population, by solving the conditions brought about by the war, and by helping to provide socio-economic improvement.

Pacification should call for, first, the use of whatever military and psywar resources required by the Province Chief help establish security, second, the solving of the problems resulting from the wartime situation, and third, the attempt to provide Socio-economic improvement.

"Impact" and "reaction" are perhaps the key words, and the Provincial Committee should have funds and resources through American channels to be able to have an impact on the rural population and be able to react to the local situation immediately. If the Provincial Committee were to have this capability of impact and reaction again a considerable effort could be exerted by them in behalf of the war effort. Once the military pacification phase of pacification is initiated and carried to the point of "relative" military security, then the effort to solve local conditions imposed by the war can be implemented and we can begin to work on the problems affecting the standard of living. USOM should be in the position to support the Province Chief and local authority by providing funds, commodities and advisory services directly to carry out pacification.

Not necessarily in rank order the first priorities should be in:

1. Emergency relief, resettlement and relief work projects.
2. Support and training of Village and Hamlet officials.
3. Chieu-Hoi rehabilitation and resettlement.
4. Support of the Paramilitary.
5. Support of Cadre engaged in Pacification.
6. Population and resources control.
7. High School Student and Youth motivation and assistance.
8. Self-Help.

Once these first priority activities are under way, then socio-economic programs

which will then be more meaningful can be started. These programs should also involve the Provincial Committee or be under its control and should include not in rank order:

1. Land Reform assistance
2. Agriculture and fishing
3. Secondary and elementary schools
4. Rural electrification
5. Pure water systems
6. Irrigation and wells
7. Rural Health
8. Provincial Newspaper and Radio station
9. Public Administration
10. Public Works
11. POL
12. Etcetera.

In the 1963 program (FY'64) a miscellaneous or contingency fund was set up to provide for impact and reaction when situations were not covered by existing programs. A substantial percentage of the "Pacification Budget", perhaps up to 25%, should be in this category. This fund should be used primarily for impact and reaction activities; to supplement existing, exhausted or non-functional budgets; and to handle the multitude of minor expenses for which no adequate provision has been made. For example, a number of self-help schools have been built lately with or without self-help financial support and usually with a substantial investment of money, materials, time and labor on the part of the local population. However, in spite of all this in a few cases because of one circumstance or another there has been nothing left over to provide furniture, latrines, playgrounds or miscellaneous but important fixtures such as wells or reservoirs. This condition existed at about the time schools were about to open. We have no adequate funds with enough money in them to buy furniture for these schools or loan the money to the hamlets to have it built and financial procedures are so difficult with the funds that we do have that we can do nothing to legally assist. Another lesser example, if we were to want to buy some 500.\$00VN or 1000\$00VN item for a particular pressing need we are forced to go through GVN financial procedures which may take days or weeks at which time the opportunity to act may have been lost.

In my view, USOM must change its approach and develop priorities to action which will directly assist in the pacification and war effort. Such an approach is not in contradiction to long range economic development but is necessary in this case to create conditions whereby we can achieve it. Existing ministry programs need not be curtailed but in some cases should be tailored to meet wartime priorities. We need not sacrifice the long run for the short run in this case, for the long run is possible only if such short run objectives, such as winning the war and the loyalty of the people, are achieved.

This paper is only a thought paper and may be incomplete and certainly is not comprehensive enough. The ideas herein reflect those of several colleagues who worked with me in the Rural Affairs Program, principally those of Lt. Col. Tran Ngoc Chau and my own.

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