

Report on the officialization of Civic Action

Foreword

After the Geneva Agreement, the situation at our countryside became very complicated:

- a/ Village became ruinous. People suffered miserable. Local authorities were rarely seen and almost nonchalantly worked. It was possible to consider this as a reluctant life, waiting for how the actual situation would evolve.
- b/ The adversary, profiting of the opportunity, launched propaganda postures, inventing, separating the Government and the people from each other, with an aim of maintaining their influence upon the people and of holding them till the general election day.

With the observation above, Premier NGO DINH DIEM invented a convocation for inter-ministry conferences to study the setting of the moving organizations which penetrates the countryside, lives with the people, makes the Government policy and its ways popular to convince the people.

The inter-ministry conferences and the studying on this problem at the Presidency reached a common conclusion:

It should be constituted that an organ has enough authority (power) and ways to undertake the convincement on the people.

Therefore, in the Political-Military conference of the whole Viêt-Nam in January, 1955, the operation of Civic Action has been spoken of and taken up for an discussion. This discussion did not reach an unanimous opinion: a number of province chiefs were still wary lest an organization which goes on parallel with the Political Authority should usurp with each other the power.

However, because the convincement on the people is very necessary and urgent, the Premier of the Gov't has ordered to set up the Civic Actions by Ordinance No. 11-PTT, March 7, 1955, fixing the general ways during waiting for a more studying of an organisation distinct on the power and appropriate to the actual situation.

In the conference of Ministers in South Viêt-Nam at the Gov't Delegate Department on July 4, 1955, after listening to the exposition on Civic Actions and eyewitnessing of the Civic Action operations which had been realized in some Eastern towns, all the ministers acknowledged the Civic Action presence is necessary right in towns. It was only sorry that the present means of Civic Actions still could not satisfy all the needs required by towns.

For the part of Civic Action, after five months of activity and experience for national organizations, the operations has truly proved the necessary role of this organ in the public; especially at present, the convincement on the people between the opposite side and our side has reached the most decisive test.

Following is respectively exposed:

- I - Reasons why set Civic Action.
- II - Notion or duty and power of Civic Action.
- III - Civic Action Organization.
- IV - Activity program of Civic Action.
- V - Means for its activity.

I.- Reasons why set Civic Action.

a/ Observation on the situation at countryside:

1) About economic and social situation:

In a small number of villages near towns and districts capitals, the people can populously trade, so their livings are relatively easy; and so the miserable wounds caused by war disappear a part. But if we penetrate our countryside, we shall see villages almost wretched and ruinous. After dispersed from one to another for many years, the people have returned from their immigration, but unfortunately their wealths had been stolen away; their funds lost; and now they try to restore their lives. But this is not easy for the restoration of the comfortable and happy lives as before. They are not yet hungry, but they are still not satisfied with their penible lives. Major people fall sick, weak, sad. About their safety, robbery causes the indigestible anxiety in their heart.

Every day they must struggle to get their livings and to defend their safety of their lives. While they do not get any help, any defense, any direction.

They find themselves alone, separated. Therefore, of course, their first complaint is that the authority has forgotten them.

2) About political situation:

Meanwhile the Việt-Minh has not any opportunity without lulling or threatening them. One could say that the influences of Việt-Minh are maintained wherever; especially at the country-side, in remote villages,

its bases are openly, freely going on.

The painful situation of the people is made more and more suffering by the Việt-Minh cadres and the latter promise with them a near good day. The seductions, for services on the Việt-Minh operations, enclosed with methods that shall threaten the people if they look neutral, have lead the people into a quandary and made them rely and depend on nowhere.

Therefore, in this situation, the people only obey those who are closely attached to them and know well about them.

b/ Observation on the activities of Administration:

- First, too feeble, haunted by the adversary, frightened and has a little confidence in the National Government.

- Second, has not credit enough towards the people because of lack of personality, dignity and virtue (goodness, pious temper).

- Next, includes too many mandarin elements of the feudal and colonial periods, who cannot be intelligent enough to attain the new working methods and regulations required by the situation.

- Next, has not responsibility, spirit, and cannot conceive the obliging services of the political authority.

Besides these faults of virtue, the administrative levels are short of finances, of personnels: the budgets of almost towns are missed, many technical services in some towns have only one personnel each. This personnel is Head of a service.

In the districts, fortunately some villages near district capital have village councils. Some villages have vagrant village council, some ones temporarily replace it by Administrative Committee, others have nothing else changed; the people who have a conflict with one another do not know anywhere to proceed.

c/ Execution on the assertion of the ministries.

With these lack conditions, with an old notion of political authority basing upon a pass-word "Phụ mẫu chi dân" (The political authority is the people's parents) the Government's assertions, of course, are not explained and executed before the people. The success of the diplomacy, of the rebel elimination, of the projects of the ministries, has brought back a better life. But, because of lack of a strong and alert longitudinal system, this life does not reach the people, and to them otherwise slowly, scatteredly, irregularly, unthoroughly.

Some noisy operations and movements, invented by the ministries or by towns which have tried to organize them, have reached villages. But, either because short of means, they cannot maintain their services, or because of having only manifestation purposes more than realistic purposes, they have only influence upon the people like a straw fire.

d/ Conclusion through the observations.

The people are in a quandary. Administration has faults. The ministries lack a longitudinal system through villages. The instruments for the adversary's activities depend on these facts.

Before this situation, what solutions will the Government have to help it?

The two solutions can be realized:

First solution.

- Rectification, reorganization for administration.
- Plus means for the ministries, the administration levels.

Second solution.

Concentration of means and activities for an united organ. This organ must include the compositions which have spirit, enthusiasm, work hard, risk for the people, for the country, for the nationalism. The working methods must be revolutionary, scientific, model to attract the indifferent elements in the political authority.

When the two solutions are compared with each other, the first meets the obstacles as follows:

1/- Urgent time does not allow it to delay hesitatingly to reorganize all the administration levels and to confirm the fruits of this organization. The urgent character of the people convincement requires instant activities promptly, bringing back to the people the concrete fruits, to prove the character "BY THE PEOPLE" of the national Government.

2/- Addition of means for each ministry and for the administration levels will require a giant budget that our present finance is not yet sure to be able to afford. A fortiori, as the administrative levels are being reorganized, the works of the ministries which are content or not, must be adjusted in a combined organ. This combined organ is just the second solution.

The second solution can conciliate the following points:

- 1/ It holds the combination role of the first solution.
- 2/ With the spirit and working methods of the responsible cadres, it will reorganize administration with its words as well as with its works.

- 3/ Concentrated means, rebate needs and the use of these methods will be rational in combined operations.

Because of these reasons, the second solution is necessarily more noted and taken up into a realization.

That is the sole solution in order that the Government tree take its roots right in villages and will be developed there with the time. All the half-way solutions of reorganization only lose time and scatter means.

Only a fact which can be called an obstacle, is the analysis of the responsibility estate in order to prevent the jealousy in the point of view of powers.

Anyhow, about the spirit of combined operations, people think that this is not a problem hard to explain. New needs must need new process; new situation, new spirit.

Notion on the duty and the power of the combined organ of Civic Action is shown as follows:

II.- Notion on the duty and power of Civic Action.

a/ Towards the ministries.

- Combined assertions of the ministries in ministry levels.
- Combined methods and operations of the ministries in ministry part and town levels.
- Execution of the operations of the ministries in district, village levels.
- Proposing with the ministries all the problems improving the people's living and reconstructing the country-side.

b/ Towards the administration levels.

- Liaison for the adjustment of technical operations and means at every level.
- The agency role to urge the district and village levels.
- Realization of the operations of the ministries at the country-side.

III.- Civic Action Organization

As a revolutionary organ, Civic Action must organize correctly the saying "Few means, but much fruit".

Few means.-- Organization must be simple. The Central Organ only includes a part enough for operations of urging and pursuing towns. Not because of the credit of an organ, the organization must be redundant. It dismisses all the unnecessary function and projects a minimum personnel with just

duties. The central is direct with towns and depends on the Government Premier.

Much fruit.— Organization must be more important in the low level than in the higher. A delegate department is placed in each town to supervise the delegations in districts and a number of cadres responsible for survey and liaison.

In each district, there is a group of cadres working in villages. After reading the content of the organization, we find a clear special point. The utilitarian operations are all undertaken by cadres. The number 125 personnels of the central organ compared with the number 2,000 cadres of towns and districts has inspired a significant conscience.

IV - Activity program.

a/ Turning out cadres:

A cadre is a soldier to the Nationalism. So, the turning out of cadres is very important, for the first time, for the operations later. To have cadres deserve the Civic Action Role, Civic Action should remark the following points:

1) Choosing cadres for employment: candidates (who return back to act where they have been living) must:

- Have full material conditions (health, vividness, possible to quit their families, cultural degree enough to understand everything quickly etc...)

- Have full intellectual conditions (ready to risk everything and patient, work is the most superior, etc..., before being chosen for employment, candidates must answer the intellectual test questions.)

- Have full warranty of politics (attestations on good character available within a month, introduction letters of the official organizations, etc...).

2) Training program: there include three parts:

About politics: the genuine nationalism; the ways, the policy of the national government; the purpose of Civic Action operation; the conducts of cadres, working methods, civic actions etc...

About technicality: the technical operations of the ministries (of Health, popular education, youth, land reform, etc...) methods turning out local cadres.

About realization: before being sent to work in towns, every group must finish to rally at some spots.

b/ Activity methods.

1) Activity principles: Respectation towards the political authority.

As organ coordinating in high level and imple-enting in the lower, Civic Action should not forget that its principal duty is to consolidate the political authority, to promote it in every operation of the Gov't to support cordially the political authority. The Civic Action Cadres are not the administrative civil servants, but the particular cadres of the present time. They, with their own new spirits and working methods work in the country-sides, making an enormous movement and helping the local authorities to maintain this movement.

Every activity, every project are in need of the discussion and the actual participation of local authorities, we must conceive that the responsibilities of localities are all undertaken by their administrations. So, there is no reasons that the bodies of Civic Action may interfere to resolve directly all the administrative problems. The Civic Action cadres are only allowed to observe and to propose up, to their higher levels or to the ones of administration, the problems of which the resolutions are not unanimous.

2) Working methods: Democracy, revolution. Resolutions for every problem of Civic Action ought to be democratic. All its cadres can participate to be rich in opinions and completely understand the aims. The working methods ought to be revolutionary; lessen papers, rules; do not uselessly speak, depend on the very old presumptions, and are not functionalized.

3) Activity position: In each district, a group of 10 men including its head man, movingly works from this village to the other, again and again at spots which are still less, doing everything possible to let the people know the actual presence of the government right at the country-sides.

4) Activity tactics: Because of urgent time and there are not enough cadres to assign to all the villages for one patch, every group must make all process in order that when operations go on at some spots, the neighbourhood must bear few or more of their influences. The tactics of oil-expanded spot one the paper must be thoroughly applied.

c/ Operations:

The aim of Civic Action is to convince the people for the national good cause. So, its activity operations must consist of everything possible to improve the living of the people.

Now, the most noted operation is that the people find the Gov't takes care of them, of their material lives as well as their intellectual ones. The people must acknowledge that though the Gov't has many problems to face and resolve, it is always next them and always protects and helps them.

The activity program is divided into 5 principal works:

1) Information - propaganda.

to inform and explain for the people:

- The General political ways of the Gov't.
- The success of the Government about the diplomacy, economics and military affairs.
- The Gov't's reforms which are going on (such as land reforms, social labor regulations, etc...)
- The works the Government has already realized on economics, agriculture, society, etc...
- The cruel and dishonest cunningness of the Việt-Minh who mean to offer our country to the Communist (regime) and lead the Vietnamese people into a hidden colonial domination.

In a word, the information and propaganda make the people understand what the Government has realized towards them and compare this with what the Việt-Minh has made or uselessly promised them, in order that the people acknowledge the National Government.

Therefore, information, propaganda methods are all realized: meetings, conferences, explanation, information, press, tracts, individual propagandas, etc... In each village is placed an information hall.

2) Popular education: To oppose the illiteracy - To organize an elementary school in each village - To set class-rooms for grown men at noon and by night ...

3) Social health: To build up rooms to distribute medicines to villages, with aided medicine cases fulfilled with everything necessary.

- Free examination and distribution of medicines.
- Popularization of sanitation (explanation of every illness, present methods from illness, conscience of sanitation of country-sides, etc...)
- Help of presents for the poor families.

4) Improvement of the people life.

The bodies of Civic Action, with their works as well as with their explanations, explain, help the people anything possible to improve the

living of the country-fellows: they repair roads, bridges, drains, dikes, farming works, organize family handicrafts.

- Popularization of cattle breeding - the cooperative societies, the companies of the people ...

The great operations require necessarily the particular, technical capabilities, the abundant means of cadres, and they take charge of acquiring the aspirations of the people and transmit these aspirations to the superior technical levels or to the concerned Ministries to examine the intended realization.

5) Maintaining security - discipline:

- To help the people to organize H.D.H.C. at villages which have not yet it.
- To help and strengthen the H.D.H.C. organizations.
- To constitute the guard groups of villages to oppose burglars, robbers, gangsters.
- To pursue and reveal communist elements, pro-communist men, rebellions ...

and finally, the most important work is to maintain the offices which have been placed. Because if these works that, as mentioned above, have been realized, were not continuously maintained, they would come to an obstructing effect as the above said movements and operations.

Therefore, it is necessary to turn out local cadres, because they live where they were born, they can continue the works realized by the moving Civic Action bodies. These cadres do not work at the salaries of the Government but they only gain some privileges or material, intellectual rights as exempted in some public useful works; gaining credit, position in every village conference; officially considered the cadres of the Government with congratulating certificates or diplomas, etc... The training of these cadres must be realistic and urgent - little theories but much execution.

Each village is in need of turning out 5 cadres to undertake to five official works as mentioned above.

The maintaining of services can also depend on social bodies: Youth, woman, old people, etc... because these bodies are supported for H.D.H.C. to help its council.

These above said works of the moving bodies of Civic Action are not only fully realized in the public, but also made so as to attract the people and to make them earnestly contribute to public usefulness. It is not sufficient to gratify but it must be necessary to understand the reflection of the gratified person.

V - Activity means.a/ Juridical means:

At present, the Civic Action service is temporarily constituted by the Premier's decree of number 11-PPT, March 7, 1955. It is necessarily officialized into Special Commissariat for Civic Action to have enough juridical conditions as well as credits towards the Government organs, no less than the foreign services.

Because the particular character of the service and the revolutionary organizations are not like the technical ministries or organs, we propose to constitute Special Commissariat and not to constitute Commissariat General. The former will exist when the Government is in need of it and will be dissolved when the political situation as well as the administrative one can insure the credit of the people.

b/ Financial means:

Being not yet officialized, this service cannot yet afford a legal and fulfilled budget to make rapid progress in its duties. Now the expenses for works as well as for personnel are in a narrow state of cash of 10 million; so this service cannot act fulfilledly and quickly for 34 towns, 150 districts and 6,000 villages.

Then if we want the Civic Action works have fruits and act quickly, the organ of Special Commissariat for Civic Action is in need of a budget of at least 180 million. To work with this budget, we have simplified all the organizations and only paid special attention to true needs and to minimums of works. (see budget plan - the accompanying paper number 3).

Because of the particular character of works, the budget of Special Commissariat for Civic Action is necessarily provided in the self-governing character, fleeing within its domain as possible from financial procedures which bar the urgent activities.

c/ Material means:

Special Commissariat for Civic Action is a newly constituted service, so it lacks every material means: houses, vehicles, chairs and desks, furniture and necessary materials.

Because it is an common organ working for Ministries, we think that it should be helped by Ministries and organs. Thus this makes the budget easier and helps enough activity means for the Civic Action organ service.

Conclusion: To promote a spirit combining the people with one another or a political movement, we must have an unanimous operation.

At present, the Việt-Minh in their defeat on social ranks, their land

reform does not also avoid to depend on the particular bodies of works to act. Experience lets us know that the operations and these bodies of work do not encroach the power of the political authority but they help the political authority to realize the assertion of the Government.

Civic Action, in effect, is not only an operation, but also a political movement with an aim to let the adversary know the people have had a serious, comprehensible notion on what they want and on how they desire.

After five months of activity, the presence of Civic Action has clearly proved this discrimination.

In this period full of evolutions, the National Government must urgently realize the important works of its assertion.

If the success on diplomacy, economics and military affairs of the Government did not echo in the public, they could not win the Vietnamese Communist.

Now, in the capital and great towns, a noisy movement against the communist and of revealing communist is going on. Meanwhile the Civic Action bodies, present right at the country-sides, have also the duties of following the works of the capital and other towns.

We respectfully submit this report to the Premier's examination and whenever the Premier approves for us the constitution of Special Commissariat for Civic Action and ratifies its budget, we immediately develop the present system without losing the time.

Saigon,

Special Commissioner of the Gov't.
undertaking Civic Action.

Signature
KIEU CONG CUNG