

PACIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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Over the centuries, mankind has been a fertile originator of new styles of warfare. In part, these have been the result of innovations in hardware which have permitted new techniques of conflict. In part they have involved new tactics, using the materials available in new ways. I During this sad history of man's hostility to his fellow, a rhythm has developed by which domination of the battlefield by the offense has usually generated new styles of war by the defense to counter it, and in sequence the development of a newer style of war by the offense. Periods of strong defense have normally seen peace followed by periods of conflict initiated by a temporarily stronger offense. World War I's successful defensive techniques of trenches and artillery were followed by the development after the peaceful 20's of the Blitzkrieg and close air support. The strategic bombing and nuclear missile umbrella of the 50's had as a counterpart the development of a new style of warfare termed the People's War, or War of National Liberation by its Communist sponsors. But the rhythm of history continued and a new technique was refined to strengthen the defense. This new technique is that of pacification and development, and it is in this context that I would like to outline the United States support of the Government of Vietnam's Pacification and Development program today.

One of the reasons for confusion about pacification and development in Vietnam has been the variety of names applied to the process during the formative period of this new defensive tactic. The strategic hamlet program, the new life hamlet program, revolutionary development, and now pacification and development, have presented a kaleidoscope of familiar words bearing apparently new meanings. At times the far-off observer has questioned whether the words were only empty shells without integrity or reality. In truth, what was happening was the gradual forging of a new technique of defense to match the people's war offense. This process is by no means complete, but it has gone far enough today to be subject to analysis and description so that all may comprehend this new weapon for the arsenal of peaceful and defense-minded peoples.

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An understanding of this new defensive technique required an understanding of the offensive technique it is developed to counter. The latter has been inscribed in prose by some of its originators, Lenin, Mao, Trong Chinh, and in blood and destruction on the people of Vietnam. The classic three stages of this new form of war were played out according to scenario in Vietnam. When South Vietnam did not collapse as the world had expected by 1956, the organizational or subversive phase was launched with agents re-establishing networks temporarily demobilized after 1954, building guerrilla bases and conducting armed propaganda and terrorist forays into the villages and hamlets. By 1960, the process had matured sufficiently so that the second or guerrilla phase was inaugurated, with the first attacks of 50, 100, and 200-man units, designed to erode the authority of the government in the countryside. By 1964, the stage was set for the third or final phase, the general offensive conducted with the aid of ethnic North Vietnamese troops moving down in battalions and divisions to assault and take the last centers of government power.

At this point, the scenario went off the track, thanks to the arrival of United States combat forces who met the challenge of conventional force and halted the momentum of the Communist tactic. As shown by Tet 1968, the Communists by no means abandoned the effort but in retrospect made a convulsive effort to carry out the third phase by striking at the hearts of the cities and hoping for a general uprising and a collapse of the GVN. Subsequent efforts to repeat this exercise during 1968 met no greater success, and on the military front the earlier Communist momentum seemed halted.

On the other levels of the people's war, the development of new defense had also progressed. To meet the guerrilla, increased attention was given to strengthening the territorial or local security of the hamlets and villages. To meet the subversive, the terrorists or the Communist "mafia" within the communities, increased attention was given to the police and improved administration. As an essential foundation for the entire effort, the political structure of the government was defined and the Constitution and its institutions inaugurated. The defense against all three levels of the enemy effort undoubtedly will continue to be refined and integrated in the future.

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Where does the effort stand today? Pacification and development are now accepted as essential components of what General Abrams has referred to as "one war." Operating behind and thanks to the shield provided by regular military operations against Viet Cong and North Vietnamese divisions and regiments, the government's pacification and development program has concentrated on the other two levels of the People's War tactic, the guerrilla and the political. In order to draw the effort together and make it truly one war, the government under President Thieu's strong leadership has organized the Central Pacification and Development Council, with counterpart councils at the region and province level. At the national level, the council consists of all the ministers and a special staff under Deputy Prime Minister Khiem coordinating and integrating these efforts so as best to support the primary objectives of extending territorial security and stimulating political cohesion and solidarity. A national plan has been developed with appropriate priorities for the various elements contributing to the one war effort, rather than leaving each ministry carry out its own technical specialty in a vacuum. Goals and standards are set for performance by the regions and provinces and regular inspections and reviews are conducted to encourage progress and to identify obstacles.

The program in the field has been based upon the extension of security. Hamlets without government presence, peoples subject to Viet Cong authority for want of any other choice, and hamlets whose population abandoned them and moved to the urban areas for safety from the Viet Cong and the war have all seen the arrival of new territorial forces, members of the Regional or Popular Force units to establish protection against Viet Cong platoons and companies. During the past year, these Regional and Popular Forces have been armed with M-16s in order to make them more effective in their job of protecting local communities and they have been substantially increased in size so there are now about 425,000 of them. Local People's Self Defense Forces have been organized by the government so that they may participate in the protection of their communities, and some 300,000 weapons have been distributed to these part-time soldier farmers and soldier citizens to stand guard, provide information, and sometimes fight to the death.

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As a result of these steps since November last, about two and one-half million more people enjoy greater security, although not yet perfect security, than in their previous contested or VC-controlled status. Over 2,000 additional hamlets have been included within the arm of GVN security and in Gia Dinh Province, for example, some 87 hamlets today have the People's Self Defense Force as their sole security force, in an area which a year ago was a battleground with VC and NVA battalions.

Security requires more than protection against platoons and companies. It also involves protection against the terrorists and mafia who live in the community and exert a covert authority within it. This, too, is an essential element of the answer to the People's War. For this purpose the National Police is being augmented and assigned to rural villages where their function will be to provide security, law and order for the population rather than mere protection for the government. A special program has been developed called PHUNG HOANG or PHOENIX, to identify and to act against the Viet Cong secret establishment or infrastructure. This program is designed to identify the members of this conspiracy to arrest them and bring them to justice. It also includes the improvement of judicial procedures to match the goals of the Vietnamese Constitution, a process which in more than one country has not been immediate.

If this were all to pacification, the charges of imposing it on the people might be sustainable. Such a limited concept, however, would be self defeating as the technique of the People's War was expressly designed to be effective against such authoritarian defenses. One of the lessons of experience has been the need to expand the concept beyond mere security and to look ahead to positive development if it is to counter the Communist challenge successfully. Thus the development component of the pacification program is at least co-equal to security.

The guiding principle of the 1969 program is the development of "community spirit." By arranging the participation of the citizen in community decisions, they become his decisions, the community his community and the Constitution and nation his as well. Almost 800 villages and 4,500 hamlets attest to the government's understanding the importance of this process in the elections held during the spring for their local

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governments, elections which have generally passed the scrutiny of the foreign press. The village self-development program in which villages are provided with funds for local development and authorized to decide for themselves the projects they desire is an example of the use of development to build community spirit and self reliance. The People's Self Defense Force has thoroughly repudiated those cautious individuals who feared the distribution of weapons to the population to use in defense of their communities. The government's program for temporary care, resettlement and return to village of the millions of refugees who chose to seek assistance from the government rather than to join the enemy in the hills has made a substantial contribution to convincing them that they chose the national community correctly. The Chieu Hoi program's invitation, reception and resettlement of those desiring to rejoin the national effort and abandon the insurrection has attracted over 27,000 former Viet Cong this year, more than any other whole year. The government concern for the well being of its citizens has also been exemplified by the vigorous IR-8 rice program and the land reform program recently announced and soon to be presented to the national assembly, which would implement a true land-to-the-tiller's approach to the rural areas of Vietnam.

Thus a program has developed and a structure designed to implement it. At this moment in time, it is clear that there have been certain successes over the past months. It is also clear, however, that the enemy has not abandoned his hope of achieving victory in Vietnam, as expressed most recently in Ho Chi Minh's 20 July speech: "Our armed forces and people throughout the country, millions as one man, upholding revolutionary heroism, and fearless of sacrifices and hardships, are determined to carry on and step up the resistance war, with the firm resolve to fight and win, till the complete withdrawal of U.S. troops and till the total collapse of the puppet army and administration, in order to liberate the south, defend the north and proceed toward the peaceful reunification of the country."

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This People's War continues. The defense has improved over the years and has developed a positive political momentum which has permitted President Thieu to take the political initiative and offer a free election to move the contest from bullets to ballots. This momentum exists in other fields as well, in the revival of the rural economy, the growth of political institutions and organizations and the assumption of responsibility and authority by elected local officials. With a determined enemy, however, one must anticipate the possibility of new techniques of offense, and defenses must be maintained and developed to meet such threats. This the Vietnamese people and government are increasingly able to do on their own, and there will be less need for United State participation and involvement. A successful defense against the People's War then can be the stimulus to a truly national program of self-defense, self-development and self-government. This is the goal of the 1969 Pacification and Development Program of the people and Government of Vietnam, and it has been the objective of American support for their program.

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