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THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE WITH PACIFICATION IN VIETNAM. VOLUME I: AN OVERVIEW OF PACIFICATION

Chester L. Cooper, et al

Institute for Defense Analyses

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VOLUME I
AN OVERVIEW OF PACIFICATION (U)

Chester L. Cooper, *Project Leader*
Judith E. Corson
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INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES
INTERNATIONAL AND SOCIAL STUDIES DIVISION

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13. ABSTRACT

(U) This study derives doctrinal and operational lessons from the US experience with pacification in South Vietnam to guide US policymakers in providing technical assistance and advice in the future to a friendly government facing an internal security problem.

(U) Volume I presents a synthesis of the study's findings and the major lessons learned. Based on those lessons, the volume concludes with some specific recommendations for courses of action by US policymakers.

(U) Volume II examines in considerable detail the major elements of pacification: security; economic, political and social development; reporting and evaluation systems; and the US and GVN organization for pacification. In addition, some problem areas (e.g., land reform, refugees, US economic aid) are also discussed.

(U) Volume III opens with an account of the Malayan and Philippine insurgencies and the lessons learned there and then traces in detail the evolution of pacification plans and programs in Vietnam from the French-Indochina war to the present.

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PREFACE

On 16 September 1970, the Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) requested that the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) undertake a comprehensive study of pacification in Vietnam, the main objective of which would be to derive doctrinal and operational lessons from the US experience in Vietnam that might be used by the Department of Defense and other US Government agencies in providing technical assistance and advice to other friendly governments facing internal security problems. The specific requirements of the study included the following:

- Explore the evolution of pacification in Vietnam from 1954 to the present.
- Identify and assess the doctrines that US and Vietnamese personnel have been directed to follow regarding pacification.
- Describe and analyze the implementation of pacification, including organizational arrangements and procedures followed by the French, US, and Vietnamese Governments, selecting for special attention four to six Vietnamese provinces and within each province one or two districts.
- Identify any significant similarities and differences between pacification doctrines and operational methods used in Vietnam and those that were applied during the 1950s in the Philippine and Malayan insurgencies.
- Describe the elements of the Vietnam experience (both positive and negative) that appear most likely to be of value in meeting future internal security problems elsewhere and those that appear applicable only to Vietnam.

The project leader for the study was Dr. Chester L. Cooper, Director of the International and Social Studies Division (ISSD). Other members of the ISSD study team were Mrs. Judith E. Corson, Dr. Laurence J. Legere, Dr. David E. Lockwood, and Gen. Donald M. Weller, USMC (Ret.). Dr. Rolf R. Piekarz of IDA's Program Analysis Division, Sir Robert Thompson, and Gen. Edward G. Lansdale also contributed individual chapters. The entire study was edited by Mrs. Jean M. Shirhall.

The study team has relied on an extensive examination of written material and on interviews with many individuals from the United States, Vietnam, France, and other parts of the world who have had extended contact with Vietnam and the special problems associated with the pacification effort. Much of the public literature (US, French, and Vietnamese) on Vietnam was consulted, as well as official sources of information within the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Agency for International Development, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Service Historique de l'Armée outside Paris.

A field trip to Vietnam during May-June 1971 provided project members with access to sources of information not otherwise available. The most valuable aspect of the trip was an intensive round of interviews with civilian and military members of the US mission and with Vietnamese, both inside Saigon and throughout the country. The list of those who provided the IDA group with valuable information and insights on Vietnam through interviews and by reviewing drafts of the study is too long to include here and has been attached as an annex to this volume.

As part of its special interest in pacification at the local level, IDA held two seminars in September 1971 at which pacification in Quang Nam and Long An Provinces was examined in detail by civilian and military personnel who had served in those provinces in various capacities and at various times in the course of the US involvement.

Structurally, the study has been divided into three volumes, the first of which presents a synthesis of the study findings, the major lessons learned, and some recommendations for early consideration by policymakers concerned with possible future contingencies in the area of counterinsurgency. Volume II focuses in detail on the functional elements of pacification: security, development, organization, reporting and evaluation, and some special problem areas. Volume III puts the pacification experience into historical perspective, beginning with an examination of the Philippine and Malayan pacification experiences, then proceeding with a close look at the main evolutionary threads in Vietnam, starting from the post-World War II French period and concluding with the 1971 plans and programs.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AID	Agency for International Development
AFAK	Armed Forces Assistance to Korea
APA	Advance Political Action
APC	Accelerated Pacification Campaign
APT	Armed Propaganda Team
ARDEMS	Analysis of Revolutionary Development Evaluation and Measurement System
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BRIAM	British Advisory Mission
BUDC	Barrio United Defense Corps
CAC	Combined Action Company
CAP	Combined Action Platoon
CG	Civil Guard
CGLD	Commissariat General for Land Development
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CID	Criminal Investigation Department (Malaya)
CIDG	Civilian Irregular Defense Group
CINCPAC	Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
CIP	Commercial Import Program
COPROR	Interagency Committee for Province Rehabilitation
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
COSVN	Central Office, South Vietnam
CPDC	Central Pacification and Development Council
CRC	Central Recovery Committee
CTZ	Corps Tactical Zone
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency

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DIOCC	District Intelligence and Operations Coordination Center
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam
DSA	District Senior Adviser
EDCOR	Economic Development Corps
FLN	Force de la Liberation Nationale
F.T.S.V.	Forces Terrestres Sud-Vietnam
GAMO	Groupe Administratif Mobile Operationnel
GVN	Government of Vietnam
HES	Hamlet Evaluation System
HEW	Hamlet Evaluation Worksheet
ICEX	Intelligence, Coordination and Exploitation
IRWG	Information and Reports Working Group (MACV)
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JGS	Joint General Staff (RVNA)
JUSMAG	Joint United States Military Advisory Group
JUSPAO	Joint United States Public Affairs Office
KMT	Koumintang
MAAG	Military Assistance Advisory Group
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAF	Marine Amphibious Force
MAP	Military Assistance Program
MAT	Mobile Advisory Team
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MORD	Ministry of Rural Development
MR	Military Region
MSS	Malayan Security Service
MTT	Mobile Training Team
NLF	National Liberation Front
NLH	New Life Hamlet
NP	National Police
NPFF	National Police Field Forces
NRM	National Revolutionary Movement
NSC	National Security Council
NVA	North Vietnam Army

OCB	Operations Coordinating Board
OCO	Office of Civil Operations
OSD/ISA	Office of the Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs
PAAS	Pacification Attitude Analysis System
PAT	People's Action Team
PAVN	People's Army of North Vietnam
PICA	Pacification Intensification Capital Area
PIOCC	Province Intelligence Operations Coordinating Center
PDP	Pacification and Development Plan
PF	Popular Forces
PFF	Police Field Forces
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRG	Provisional Revolutionary Government
PROVN	Program for the Pacification and Long Term Development of South Vietnam
PRP	People's Revolutionary Party
PRU	Provincial Reconnaissance Unit
PSDF	People's Self-Defense Force
PSG	Pacification Studies Group
RAD	Reports and Analysis Division (CORDS)
RCC	Rural Construction Cadre
RDC	Revolutionary Development Cadre
RDSD	Revolutionary Development and Support Directorate (MACV)
RF	Regional Force
ROK	Republic of Korea
RVN	Republic of Vietnam
RVNAF	Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces
SACSA	Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities
SCAG	Saigon Civil Assistance Group
SDC	Self-Defense Corps
SEP	Surrendered Enemy Personnel
TRIM	Training Relations Instruction Mission

UMNO	United Malay National Organization
U.M.D.C.'s	Mobile Units for the Defense of Christendom
USDO	United States Disbursing Officer
USIA	United States Information Agency
USIS	United States Information Service
USOM	United States Operations Mission
VC	Viet Cong
VCI	Viet Cong Infrastructure
VIS	Vietnamese Information Service
VSD	Village Self-Development

SUMMARY

This study examines the American experience in planning, managing, and implementing pacification programs in Vietnam and attempts to extract from that experience lessons that may stand the United States in good stead if it responds to pleas for aid from a friendly, threatened government. Implicit in this is the notion that we are not attempting to replay Vietnam. Rather we are looking for those relevant, useful lessons in the area of pacification that might have applicability in other insurgency situations. We recognize, of course, that such other situations may differ in important respects from Vietnam and that the lessons learned there should not be blindly or indiscriminately applied elsewhere.

The study does not address the question of the desirability of undertaking to attempt pacification in any given situation, although it does deal with the factors which might influence the probable success or failure of a pacification effort, if undertaken. The decision to undertake a pacification effort will obviously depend on considerations of US political and military interests and commitments in the country faced with insurgency and in the region in which it lies; on the degree of popular support enjoyed by the government of that country, and on its willingness and determination to move in the direction of enlarging that popular support and to endure the hardships and internal difficulties involved in doing this while fighting the insurgency; and on the degree of public support in the United States for US initiatives in that country. Nothing in the ensuing discussion of how pacification activities could be improved should be interpreted to mean that pacification programs of the kind pursued in Vietnam have universal applicability to all countries and all insurgency situations. What we have attempted to show is how, if on

the basis of all the relevant military and political factors, pacification programs are to be undertaken, they can benefit to some degree from the lessons learned in Vietnam.

The war in Vietnam has probably been analyzed and intellectually dissected to a greater extent than any in American history. But Americans directly involved in Vietnam have found, or have considered, themselves so beset by the problems of the moment that few have been able to address the experiences, both good and bad, of those who preceded them. It is no wonder, then, that successive generations of officials have innocently repeated the mistakes of their predecessors. Volume I of this study addresses some of the most important lessons learned as a result of our pacification experience. These lessons are drawn from the detailed treatment of the functional elements and evolution of pacification contained in Volumes II and III.

A. SOME GENERAL LESSONS

1. Agreed Doctrine. The United States should prepare an agreed, comprehensive pacification doctrine.

2. Agreed Objectives. If and when the United States ever again considers mounting another pacification advisory and support effort, there should be a common understanding of goals and objectives before any commitments are made.

3. No Illusions About Our Ally. A government calling upon the United States for assistance in maintaining power in the face of an internal threat, as did the Vietnamese government, is unlikely to be efficient or effective or to meet American ideals of democracy or probity. American commitments to assist such governments must be made with the recognition that our act of commitment and our advice cannot change the nature of the client regime or the society of the host country.

4. Avoid the "Tyranny of the Weak." In situations in which major American human and material resources are involved, the United States must be able to operate within and even to use the ally's own political and social system to assure that he keeps his side of the bargain. If our ally does not perform satisfactorily in our view and we have exhausted our means of influence or pressure, we should have a credible capability to reduce or withhold further support and, if possible, to disengage.

5. Know the Enemy. Before committing itself to supporting an ally besieged from within, the United States should be confident that it knows the composition and the motivation of the threatening forces and the problems at issue. Only through such knowledge will we be able to assess the dimensions of the problem we might confront. Simple prudence requires that we know in advance whether the government's cause is dubious or its prospects hopeless.

6. Clarify the Nature of the Advisory Relationship. Americans should help, not substitute for, the government of our ally. To the extent that we "take charge," we postpone (and may even jeopardize) the achievement of our ultimate objectives. The application of this lesson in practice, as we have discovered in Vietnam, is difficult and calls for a careful selection and training of advisers. If we could turn back history, the process of "Vietnamization" would have been started in 1962, not 1969.

B. FUNCTIONAL LESSONS

1. Some Lessons in the Area of Security

Security is a Prerequisite for Development. While both the provision of local security and certain nonmilitary undertakings are essential parts of a successful pacification program, the conditions for a sustained government presence must obtain if development efforts are to pay off.

The Importance of Good Intelligence. Without reliable intelligence on the insurgents, a threatened government is likely to be at such a disadvantage that American assistance, at almost any level, would be ineffective. A local intelligence capability is therefore a high-priority matter, and the United States should assure that one is organized prior to making a commitment for consequential assistance.

The Proper Role of Police. If a government is to attract support both within its own country and among the American public, the insurgency cannot be used as a devise to create a police state. High priority should be assigned to assuring that rural and urban police forces, and their counterintelligence components, operate within a framework of law and justice.

Regular and Paramilitary Units Should Work Toward Developing and Employing Aggressive, Small-unit Tactics. In Vietnam precious time was lost because the ARVN and the territorial forces were reluctant to press the battle with Viet Cong guerrilla elements before the Communists achieved a formidable main-line capability. Such a strategy calls for aggressive small-unit action, which in turn calls for competent junior and noncommissioned officers and realistic training programs.

2. Some Lessons in the Area of Development

Development Programs Should be Directly Related to the Pacification Effort. There should be early agreement on the role of economic, social, and political programs. Because such agreement was lacking in Vietnam, a plethora of nonmilitary activities were undertaken, many of which were redundant, unwanted, or even counterproductive to the goal of defeating the insurgents.

The Importance of Engaging the Population. Rather than pursuing the elusive goal of "winning hearts and minds," the indigenous government should try to elicit from the population a sense of involvement and a feeling that they have a real stake in the perpetuation rather than the overthrow of the government.

The Need for Accountability and Follow Through. To reduce corruption and minimize the undertaking of overly ambitious projects that cannot be quickly made operational, American officials should exercise restraint in initial programming. This, together with arrangements for continuing follow through and accountability on the part of local officials, should serve to increase the effectiveness of American pacification assistance.

The Importance of Good Local Administration. The most efficient and farsighted national government will be unable to extend its influence unless it establishes an effective presence in the form of local officials. In Vietnam, province and district chiefs perform this role by providing a link between village and hamlet officials and Saigon. Government cadre also are an essential element in closing the gap between the national government and the people. But in Vietnam the importance of careful selection and good training was all too often overlooked.

Redress of Grievances. In countering any insurgency, a vigorous and sustained effort must be made at the earliest possible moment to redress genuine grievances. Indeed, serious consideration should be given to conditioning American assistance on the government's taking such action. In Vietnam, land reform constituted such a real and urgent need.

Refugee Relief. With all the other problems confronting the inadequate Vietnamese bureaucracy, it is not surprising that the vast swarms of refugees from Viet Cong-controlled or bombed-out villages were among the residual claimants for attention and resources. But American and Vietnamese humanitarian efforts, private and public, should have been better coordinated. To some extent at least, the refugees could have been incorporated into the manpower pool available for military and nonmilitary programs.

Urban Areas--The Forgotten Front. Military operations in the countryside of Vietnam, combined with relative security and substantial employment opportunities in the larger towns and cities, created a dramatic population drift to the urban areas. But pacification efforts, primarily development programs, continued to be concentrated in the countryside. The lesson we can draw from our experience in Vietnam in this regard does not stem from what was done well or poorly, but rather from not doing anything at all. Vietnam is now facing the problems resulting from the emphasis placed on rural areas and the neglect of the cities.

3. The Reporting Function

The Importance of Reliable Information Prior to Commitment. Reliable reporting by the country team in every American mission abroad is obviously a sine qua non for intelligent foreign-policy making in Washington. In the case of countries that are of particular interest to the United States and that are "insurgency-prone," it is especially important that Washington have comprehensive objective coverage. Washington, for its part, must be ready to accept field reporting that may not accord with preconceived notions or wishful thinking. Our experience in Vietnam during the French period and on many occasions since documents the need for independent and objective reporting from the field.

Reporting for Program Managers. Once a commitment to provide pacification assistance has been made, a system of reporting must be developed early to provide program managers with the kind of information they require to judge progress and deficiencies, to juggle priorities, and to allocate resources. This involves more than statistical reporting; we are talking here of a management tool. As obvious as this may seem, it was many years after the original American commitment to Ngo Dinh Diem before program managers in Saigon and Washington had such information available.

Objectivity and Selectivity. The computerized reporting system in Vietnam has vastly improved the reporting systems there, but it may have gone too far in eliminating the judgment that well-trained on-the-scene observers can bring to bear, and it almost certainly has developed/a system of reports that are too elaborate to be of use to busy policymakers.

Reporting Versus Public Relations. Reporting on progress should be geared solely to operational, managerial, and policy requirements.

Reporting Systems for Other Insurgencies. Almost certainly a system of reporting can be developed from the elaborate HES effort in Vietnam that would be suitable for other insurgency situations. Something between the statistical overkill that has characterized our Vietnam effort and the qualitative reporting that emerges from the normal embassy should be developed.

4. Organization for Pacification

The Need for Central Management. A successful pacification effort requires a single focus of authority and responsibility. And this means central management, both in Washington and in the field and on both the US and host-country sides, at a level high enough to wield adequate bureaucratic "clout."

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

"Lessons" are only of academic interest unless some actions are taken to effect improvement or consolidate gains. For this reason we include, as a final section in Volume I, some recommendations that we believe deserve attention by officials concerned with national security planning and policy.

It should be clear from the "General Lessons" above that a decision to undertake a pacification program must be approached with caution and, aside from careful weighing of the military and political national interest, with as full a knowledge as possible of the internal factors affecting the likelihood of success, and with keen attention to achieving those preconditions of understanding and commitment which would increase the probability of success. If the option to embark on support of a pacification program in a threatened country is to be kept viable, there are certain measures which should be taken in advance of a critical contingency. First of all, based on the lessons learned in Vietnam (and in other insurgency situations, as well), a pragmatic doctrine of pacification should be developed. To the best of our knowledge, no such doctrine now exists, Vietnam notwithstanding. Perhaps the most effective and expeditious approach to the development of pacification doctrine would be to assign responsibility for its preparation to an executive agent who has sufficient authority to make the bureaucracy respond.

A first step should be to develop a doctrinal manual of some kind. Such a document would, of course, differ from other more conventional manuals, since it would involve not only substantive inputs from, but operational responsibilities assigned to, several agencies of the government; in short, both the security and the development aspects of pacification should be incorporated in the doctrine. As part of the preparation of pacification doctrine, a critical examination should be made of how best to achieve more effective administration of any future effort. We learned the hard way that the planning and implementation of a successful pacification program requires close coordination, if not indeed central management.

The greatest fund of knowledge about the "single-manager" approach to pacification is in CORDS Saigon. Before it disbands, CORDS should be charged with the task of engaging in its own lessons-learned exercise. Urgent attention should be given to the desirability and practicality of keeping a skeleton CORDS structure in being after CORDS Saigon stands down. In this connection, the governments of such insurgency-beset nations as Thailand, the Philippines, or Cambodia might be interested in exploring variants of the single management structure.

* * *

Our experience in Vietnam has produced a considerable amount of expertise in the field of pacification. This know-how has developed among both soldiers and civilians, largely through a process of learning while doing. While this is almost inevitable, some of the lessons learned can be incorporated in training programs for both military officers and civilians so that the American experience in Vietnam will not be altogether forgotten as we stand down there.

* * *

Finally, there is an urgent need to utilize our experience in Vietnam to develop a reporting system that can be used elsewhere, if need be. To this end, the reporting experts in Saigon and Washington should be charged with the task of developing a reporting system on a much more modest scale than HES that could be used in other situations with a minimum of Americans and at a fraction of the cost. Such a scaled-down system should be tried on a pilot basis in one or two other insurgency situations (e.g., the Philippines).

I

SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

The three volumes that comprise this study examine one major element of the struggle in Vietnam--the "pacification" effort. Our ultimate objective has been to determine what the United States has, or should have, learned from its pacification experience and the implications of those lessons for future American policy if this country is ever called upon again to assist a friendly regime faced with an internal threat. And so the name of the game has been "Lessons Learned"--not to rewind the reel of history in Vietnam, but rather to extract from the costly US experience there some general and specific guidelines that might be applicable in another set of circumstances at another time.

It is important that we define at the very outset of our study what we mean by pacification. As we use the term, "pacification" denotes an array and combination of action programs designed to extend the presence and influence of the central government and to reduce the presence and influence of those who threaten the survival of the government through propaganda, terror, and subversion. The pacification process incorporates a mix of programs and activities that may vary in composition and relative emphasis from time to time and from place to place. But, in general, the program mix comprises two broad types of activities. These are designed, on the one hand, to establish and maintain a significant degree of physical security for the population and, on the other, to increase the communication and the ties between the government and the people through a variety of selected nonmilitary programs. (In our subsequent analytical treatment of pacification, we thus distinguish between "security" programs and "development" programs.)

Pacification is not the vehicle for making quantum jumps in standards of living or literacy rates. It is not washing babies, giving band concerts, or paying villagers for property destroyed through military operations. And it is not a device for expanding the American presence throughout the country or imposing New England town meetings on local communities.

In the broad, pacification is one means toward achiving an end--defeating an insurgency. The extension of the government's presence and the reduction of insurgent influence throughout the country, however difficult and ambitious this may be, is still a limited objective. Pacification is actually only one avenue of several to be employed to ensure a stable, popularly supported government: political reform, measures to maintain a healthy economy, education and training to improve the quality of military and civilian leadership, and, obviously, the development of effective, popularly supported main security forces, are but some of the other undertakings a threatened central government must mount to defeat an internal threat.

Why should pacification concern us to the extent of undertaking an ambitious study culminating in three volumes of reflection and analysis? Vietnam was the first war in which thousands of American military officers working side by side, over or under civilians, concerned themselves with the process we describe here as pacification. In both World Wars and in Korea, to be sure, the US army became involved in military government or in the care and feeding of civilian refugees, but these responsibilities were basically the side effects of the major, conventional war. In Vietnam, on the other hand, these programs and many more were an important, even critical, element of the struggle itself. Indeed, many experts firmly believe that if a well-conceived pacification program had been initiated and energetically implemented in Vietnam in the late 1950s, the hostilities there might never have reached the point that American combat troops were required to preserve the Saigon government. Thus, in any future situation in which an ally of the United States asks for help in the face of an insurgent threat, the US experience with pacification in Vietnam might make the difference between a relatively modest but effective program of American support and a repetition of the costly one in Vietnam. And particularly since future disturbances of world peace are at least as likely to take the form of "people's war" as they are of conventional aggression across national boundaries, the American experience with pacification in Vietnam seems worthy of careful study.

To the extent Washington will be prepared to respond to future calls on the United States for assistance, there will be a determined effort (possibly even a prior decision) to keep the American participation to pacification, rather than combat support. As a rough and admittedly hazardous guess, one could postulate that a total American pacification complement of a few thousand would stretch the outer limits of current popular and congressional tolerance. All the more reason to examine the American experience in Vietnam and extract those lessons that will help any future effort to be accomplished more skillfully, inexpensively, and expeditiously.

Before we address some of the specific aspects of the American pacification experience, it might help to put the most operationally relevant developments into some perspective. Volume III traces the long pacification saga in some detail, but it seems worth a few moments at this early point in our study to provide a capsule historical summary.

* * *

During Ngo Dinh Diem's rule, the Saigon government had little time for or interest in the niceties of nation-building or the slow-payoff, resource-consuming programs that we here refer to as pacification. The object of the exercise then, as it is now, was maintenance of power, rather than "winning hearts and minds." The Strategic Hamlet program of the late Diem period gave momentary promise but was implemented more in form than in substance and in the end became a casualty of the November 1963 coup.

In the early 1960s, President Kennedy quickened American interest in counterinsurgency, and Vietnam was regarded as a key testing ground. Despite this, and increasing American support for Diem's survival, Saigon's efforts against increasing Viet Cong terrorism continued to be puny and ineffectual. During the entire period of President Kennedy's administration, the Americans and Vietnamese were unable to agree on the objectives or the major outlines of a strategy to deal with the threat. Indeed, there was widespread and deep disagreement among the Americans themselves.

The period between Diem's overthrow in late 1963 and early 1966 was marked by a bewildering succession of governments in Saigon. As a consequence, Saigon's military efforts and related pacification programs sputtered and staggered both at the national and local levels. There was neither the time nor the inclination on the part of the various governments in Saigon to deal with anything but the most urgent military threats. And these threats were growing--by the spring of 1965 regular North Vietnamese regiments were identified in South Vietnam.

It was not until February 1966 in Honolulu, when President Johnson met with the leaders of the GVN to discuss the nonmilitary aspects of the war, that the Saigon government, then under Air Marshall Ky, pledged high-level attention to the "other war." There had been, to be sure, several efforts to launch pacification programs prior to the Honolulu meeting; some were on a grand scale; most were ill starred. The ambitious program to establish government control and security in progressively wider areas around Saigon (Hop Tac plan) during 1964-65 faltered and then failed, largely because its implementation required military and nonmilitary resources that were beyond the capacity of the GVN to provide. Inflation, communal (primarily Buddhist) unrest, and chronic, seemingly endless rivalries for political power among the generals interfered with sustained and serious pacification efforts.

By early spring 1966, the Vietnamese had begun to get their own house more or less in order. The energetic General Thang was given responsibility for pacification, and he organized under and around him programs designed to increase the Saigon government's authority and effectiveness in the countryside. The United States, too, moved on the organizational front. In April Robert Komer was placed in charge of American pacification efforts at the White House level in Washington and a few months later the Office of Civil Operations (OCO) was established in Saigon. Under Deputy Ambassador Porter, OCO proceeded to pull together the various nonmilitary programs and to provide more effective interaction between American and Vietnamese pacification officials at both the national and local levels.

As described in more detail in Volume II, Part Five, OCO turned out to be a way-station between a loose, decentralized American approach to pacification and a highly centralized management. The establishment of CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support) in May 1967 made pacification the direct responsibility of MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) and substantially increased the level and intensity of effort that the Americans expended on pacification programs. But it would not be until mid-1968, in the aftermath of the Tet offensive, that the GVN gave wholehearted, urgent attention to pacification.

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Reflections and analyses cannot be confined to cold, objective examinations of doctrines and programs. The American pacification effort in Vietnam was not conducted in a vacuum either in Vietnam or the United States. Decisions were made and implemented by men influenced by and responding to the histories and cultures of their societies and by the mood and imperatives of their times. All the more reason to try to recapture, however briefly and sketchily, the background against which flow the American experience and lessons in Vietnam.

Centuries of Mandarin tradition and decades of French influence produced a system of national administration in Vietnam whereby all decisions emanated from the capital outward to the provinces, and whereby the detailed direction of every organ of government proceeded from the director-general of each ministry down to the most minor functionary. Province administration has typically been weak. Despite recent improvements in quality and flexibility in Saigon and in the provinces, the Vietnamese bureaucracy is still characterized by time-worn modes of administration perpetuated by overaged and narrowly motivated civil servants at the middle and upper levels of the system.

Additional constraints on the governmental process and on the effective prosecution of the war have stemmed from the heterogeneous nature of the Vietnamese society and from polarizing forces within it. Differences between Catholics and Buddhists, which came to a dramatic climax in 1963 with the assassination of President Diem, and which have flared up intermittently since then, have reflected a sense of political and religious strength among the Buddhists that was not evident a decade ago. A strong new Buddhist force is emerging, led by laymen rather than the priests, and in a society in which the only cohesive force has been the less numerous, more tightly knit Catholics, this Buddhist political awakening has already tended to split the Vietnamese into sharply defined political, as well as religious, groupings. In addition to the Catholics and the Buddhists, there are two other important religious sects, each with its own political and, to some extent, military power base--the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, both of which have tended to resist the Viet Cong in their own ways, while remaining indifferent and sometimes hostile to the GVN.

Over and above religious divisions, a myriad of other factions divide and subdivide Vietnamese society--all of which have complicated the task of extending the writ and influence of the Saigon government. There are, for a starter, frictions and rivalries that stem from regional and ethnic origins. The people of each of the three ancient parts of Vietnam--Tonkin, Cochin-China, and Annam--have perpetuated a cordial and hearty disdain for one another. In addition to the South Vietnamese themselves, there are significant numbers of Chinese, Cambodians, and aborigines, to say nothing of small pockets of Chams, Indians, French, and Thais. For decades these groups have maintained a guarded separatism, mixing or mingling only for the purpose of advancing narrow economic advantages. Except for the Vietnamese exploitation of the aboriginal Montagnard tribes, there has been a general live-and-let-live attitude on the part of each group toward the others. Yet another divisive influence has been the mutually shared distrust between urban and rural populations. For a century or more the people of the larger towns in Vietnam have been exposed to and influenced by foreigners--the French, the Japanese, and the Americans--but the country folk through it all have pursued their traditional life-styles, making the minimum necessary accommodations to the demands of war, foreign intruders, and twentieth century technology.

These many sources of friction have magnified the tragedy and exacerbated the problems of Vietnam during the past two decades. And they have constrained the effective implementation of American-supported programs and policies. Some countries or societies have been able to bury or at least submerge fundamental divisions in the face of a common danger. This has not happened among the non-Communists in Vietnam. Indeed, the opposite is true. The existence of these undigested lump of peoples has resulted in the exclusion of large sectors of the population of South Vietnam from both the military and nonmilitary prosecution of the war against the Communists. Perhaps this is a result of the ability of the Communists to exploit and drive large wedges between various sectors of the Vietnamese population; perhaps it mirrors the inability of every government in Saigon since 1954 to develop a broadly based constituency; perhaps, most importantly, it is a reflection of the fact that South Vietnam became a state before it became a nation, and that large numbers of South Vietnamese feel no higher loyalty than an allegiance to their village, their priest, their family, or their livelihood.

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Unlike China and Japan or even Korea, where for decades prior to World War II there had been American missionaries, businessmen, and educators, Indochina was virtually terra incognita to the United States until well after World War II. Although the US army had some marginal interest in the area during the latter years of the war, to the extent most Americans thought about it, Indochina was regarded as an extension of France. There was, of course, a great increase in official interest and concern following the invasion of South Korea in mid-1950 when the French struggle in Indochina was perceived in Washington as part of the free world's effort to "contain communism." But it is probably fair to say that the United States really discovered Indochina only in early 1954 when the plight of the French at Dien Bien Phu became dramatic newspaper reading and the Far East Conference at Geneva exposed Indochina and the Indo-Chinese to public view.

For years after the Geneva Conference, despite the increasing American interest and stake in Indochina, there was little American understanding of the history, culture, and sociology of the area and its people. Until 1968, there was no serious effort to encourage Americans assigned to US missions in Saigon to study Vietnamese. Americans communicated with the Vietnamese largely in French or, if they could not speak French (more common than not), in English or through interpreters.

Compounding the difficulties in Vietnam was the American ignorance, even indifference to the problems of coping with a "people's war." To be sure, President Kennedy stimulated both the military and civilian components of the government to examine the problem of unconventional war and to review the availability and readiness of American resources to deal with such wars as part of the US policy of "flexible response." But theoretical planning and academic courses in counterinsurgency could not in themselves compensate for a lack of practical American experience with this type of war. Americans, of course, had been exposed to unconventional warfare during World War II when, in certain parts of the world, OSS and other paramilitary units had engaged in sabotage, black propaganda, and the use of indigenous guerrilla fighters. In some instances (Burma is a good example), the American military role was in part unconventional. But--and this is a critical consideration--that experience was largely in terms of being the guerrillas or of sponsoring guerrillas, not in terms of countering them.

After World War II, Americans played an important role in snuffing out the Greek insurgency, but in this case they had a major if not direct role in revitalizing the tough and highly motivated Greek army. The approach used by General Van Fleet in Greece served him in good stead in Korea, where he was able to marshall the demoralized and debilitated South Korean forces. It is revealing of American inexperience (or naivete or inertia) that when the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) assumed the responsibility for training the Vietnamese army, it imported the organization, doctrine, and tactics that proved successful with the ROK army--which had been engaged in a conventional war against an enemy trying to invade a country in which he enjoyed no effective support.

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The differences in the cultures and backgrounds between the United States and South Vietnam (to say nothing of the difference in language) and the profound ignorance that each society had of the other would have made for a tricky course under the most ideal circumstances. But the circumstances were far from ideal. Uncertainty with respect to each other's objectives, impatience with each other's style, and even suspicion with respect to each other's motives have marked the experience over the years. In a sense Americans and Vietnamese were traveling in the same vehicle, but there was often considerable disagreement as to who was driving, what the destination was, and what route should be taken to get there. We were uncertain allies engaged in a joint but not common enterprise. As one reflects on the past fifteen years in Vietnam, what emerges is not an impression of how unsatisfactory the relationship between Americans and Vietnamese has been, but rather how surprisingly well this unlikely combination has functioned.

II

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

What follows reflects the essence of our analysis of the principal elements of pacification. Each of the matters addressed below, and others besides, are dealt with in considerable detail and with documentation in Volume II of this study. And in Chapter III of this volume, we assess some of the lessons and implications of the various facets of the American pacification experience.

Vietnam is, in many ways, sui generis--just as virtually every experience tends to be unique in time, place, and circumstances. Major insurgencies of the future may be urban rather than rural-based, and they could occur in Latin America rather than in Asia. There is much of value to be gleaned from Magsaysay's successful experience against the Huks in the Philippines and from the British victory over the insurgents in Malaya. But here, too, as we point out in our discussion of these insurgencies in Volume III, Part One, there is danger in generalizing. Although Vietnam cannot serve as a model, it is a point of reference, and without knowing in advance which insights and which lessons may be directly applicable to a future situation, one can make a confident judgment that some insights and some lessons emerging from the American experience in Vietnam will be relevant.

A. SECURITY--THE FOUNDATION FOR PACIFICATION

From the beginning of the US involvement in Vietnam, security for the rural population has been regarded as the basic underpinning of pacification. How to provide that security has been a central issue in the debates on strategy and tactics among both American

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and Vietnamese officials. Disagreements on the nature of the Communist threat to Vietnam's rural population have for many years muddied these discussions and complicated the quest for solutions. But now, the United States seems to have gained a better understanding of Communist political and military strategy in Vietnam. And now, too, there is general agreement that any pacification program has four fundamental security objectives: to deprive the insurgents of the opportunity to gain popular support by denying them access to the population; to establish a climate of "law and order" at the local level so that selected, relevant political, social, and economic developmental programs can be initiated; to whittle down the enemy's political and military apparatus; and, if the insurgents are dependent upon external support, to restrict, or hopefully to eliminate, that support.

Americans and Vietnamese now recognize that the Communists, for their part, attempted to extend their control in the South Vietnamese countryside through two major thrusts: a skillful, carefully targeted program of propaganda; and a selective, controlled use of terror, which after 1964 was backed up by a capability to employ regular military forces as necessary. Popular grievances, as often as not well founded, against the government in Saigon or its local representatives were exploited. (Not surprisingly, trained propaganda teams were among the first groups of "returnees" that Hanoi dispatched to South Vietnam in the late 1950s.) There were many instances of genuine support for the Communist cause, but when that was not forthcoming, assassinations and kidnappings of government officials and arson against government property demonstrated Communist strength, elicited fear if not respect or affection, and eroded the government's presence in areas outside the major cities and larger towns.

A successful pacification effort against such an insurgent threat requires more than intellectual understanding of the problem and the challenge. Early, practical steps must be taken to develop the specific tools and operational programs that will accomplish the four key security objectives. Precious time was lost in Vietnam because even when the objectives were understood and agreed upon, the steps taken to implement them were often halting, laggard, and misdirected. Effective local security forces and an efficient intelligence effort, for example, should have been developed many years ago. But in fact, it has been only since the late 1960s that the paramilitary forces have had adequate support and leadership from Saigon; the hamlet militia concept did not receive adequate attention until even later. As for an intelligence, in particular a "special branch," effort to root out and eliminate the VC infrastructure in the villages and hamlets, this has only recently been translated from rhetoric into attempted performance, despite the fact that it has been a feature of pacification plans since the early sixties. There are lessons here which we will address in a later section.

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The Communists began to build up their political and military organizational base in South Vietnam in 1956 after it became clear that the governments in Washington and Saigon would not proceed with a plebiscite on reunification. Initially, their activities were primarily covert and directed toward the "political struggle," but as their infrastructure grew it is clear, in retrospect at least, that the Communists were preparing for "military struggle." By 1959 that military struggle was intensified and featured increased terrorism against officials, government installations, and private individuals.

The American contribution during those early years had little relevance to the problem of countering a low-level insurgency. Although there were some in Washington who perceived the major threat to non-Communist control of South Vietnam as stemming primarily from Communist political and military capabilities in the south, the MAAG, and President Diem, considered the major threat to be an overt, mass attack by North Vietnamese troops across the 17th parallel. A conventionally trained and deployed South

Vietnamese army was the result--at the expense of a buildup of the more relevant militia and police-type forces--until early 1960, when the true nature of the threat to the Saigon regime--internal subversion--was recognized.

The MAAG's preoccupation with a possible North Vietnamese invasion notwithstanding, the principal reason for the neglect of the paramilitary forces was a basic ignorance of the Communist enemy. None of the American advisory elements in Saigon (with the possible exception of CIA) had a working knowledge of Communist revolutionary warfare. As a consequence, the United States proceeded to assist the GVN without agreed counterinsurgency concepts, doctrines, strategies, tactics, or force structures.

During this period, President Diem's efforts to improve rural security in the face of the increasing Communist threat centered around regrouping populations under various resettlement schemes. (This approach culminated in 1959 with the building of agrovilles.) In addition, he organized counter-terror units as part of a belated and unsuccessful effort to challenge the growth of the Communist organizational structure. Finally, he agreed to launch offensive operations in VC-held territory. Although the balance of forces overwhelmingly favored the GVN, none of the measures undertaken was effective, and the Communists continued to expand their infrastructure and to increase their grip on large areas of South Vietnam's countryside.

The Communist political and military buildup and the failure of the government's resettlement-regroupment programs forced both the South Vietnamese and the Americans to face up to the primacy of the Communist internal threat. By late 1959, it became apparent that militia-type forces would have to be upgraded substantially. With the relief of General Williams by General McGarr in mid-1960, the MAAG abandoned its fixation on creating a conventional army to cope with a conventional invasion and began to evolve a strategy and body of tactics more relevant to the internal threat.

By the end of 1964, increasing US materiel and advisory assistance to the GVN led the Communists to adopt a counteroffensive strategy with the goal of achieving a military victory. To this end, guerrilla groups were upgraded to Main Force units and elements of the People's Army of North Vietnam (PAVN) were infiltrated into the Central Highlands of South Vietnam. In the meantime, the GVN and the United States moved from the static strategy of the Strategic Hamlet program (trying to provide rural security by consolidating hamlet populations into defensive positions) to the variation known as the "oil-spot" concept (the gradual expansion of control from secure areas to insecure areas): regular ARVN units were to clear Communist forces from the environs of the selected "oil spot," and territorial forces were then to secure the villages that had been cleared and prevent the return of the insurgents; once an area was secure, political control and economic development were to proceed. It was at this point, too, that an attempt was to be made to move against the Communist infrastructure through a combination of inducements for deserters and the targeting and apprehending of Communist cadre. These various steps proved inadequate and by the spring of 1965 the ARVN was losing the equivalent of a battalion a week and district capitals were being threatened. A Communist military victory was averted only by the introduction of American combat forces.

The rising number of American combat forces in Vietnam stimulated a high-level review of allied strategy in early 1966. Two schools of thought dominated the debate: One maintained that since the object of pacification was to provide security and economic, social, and political development for the rural population, all military forces, including the regulars, should be concentrated for the protection of the villages undergoing pacification; in essence, this was the strategy already employed in the 1964-65 Hop Tac campaign to expand the perimeter of security around Saigon. The other school pressed a "big war" strategy, maintaining that pacification could best be supported by defeating the Communist regulars, with a minimal, or at best residual, force diversion to provide security for the population. General Westmoreland, COMUSMACV, rejected each of these alternatives for one incorporating elements of both. He embarked on a limited strategy of offensive spoiling attacks by regular forces and a buildup of the Vietnamese territorial forces to provide close-in security. By 1967, sufficient American forces were available to continue an offensive strategy and to earmark 50 percent of the ARVN for clearing operations in direct support of pacification.

Although there was a general recognition by both Americans and Vietnamese that the territorial and police forces had to be improved, disagreements among the American advisory community, MACV's preoccupation with offensive operations, and Vietnamese administrative difficulties continued to hamper progress in that direction. While MACV favored a separate independent constabulary in lieu of the National Police Force, the ARVN opposed police expansion in any form, in part because of its potential competition for manpower and in part because it feared new and potentially troublesome power centers. The CIA, for its part, preferred to create a variant of the national province reconnaissance unit (modeled on the province special units it had helped organize and train to ferret out members of the Communist organization) rather than devote resources to correcting the manifest weaknesses in the existing Special Police and Police Field Forces. These disagreements were settled in early 1967 with the establishment of CORDS under Robert Komer, who decided to support the upgrading and revamping of the existing police establishment.

After the Tet offensive in 1968, President Thieu and General Abrams (Westmoreland's successor) threw their support behind the buildup of the territorial forces, the National Police, and the attack against the Communist infrastructure. And so, some twelve years after the initiation of the insurgency, there was a coordinated approach to the security phase of the pacification effort.

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Following the unifying thrust of the CORDS arrangement and the traumatic shock of the 1968 Tet offensive, substantial efforts were made to improve the capabilities of the security forces. In the quantitative sense, at least, there was a significant increase in the GVN's capabilities. The ARVN was expanded from 200,000 men in 1964 to more than 400,000 in 1971, and the Regional and Popular Forces from a combined total of 150,000 to 550,000 during the same period. The hamlet militia, the People's Self-Defense Force (a concept initiated during Nhu's Strategic Hamlet program in 1963 and dormant until after the Tet offensive) now reportedly numbers 4 million, of which 75 percent have received training and a little more than 10 percent are armed. The National Police has grown from 18,000 in 1962 to over 90,000 in 1971.

As we discuss in some detail in Volume II, Part Two, these quantitative improvements did not entirely compensate for some basic qualitative problems. The cultural alienation of the military elite from the rank and file of the Vietnamese population continues to perpetuate inferior leadership, which, in turn, has inhibited training and combat performance.

Mixed success has attended American efforts to improve the quality of performance of the ARVN and the territorial forces by supporting armed forces schools and training centers, furnishing military advisers to the ARVN and to provincial and district officials, brigading US and regular ARVN and territorial units in combined operations, and providing Mobile Training Teams. In particular, MACV's efforts to improve the caliber of Vietnamese military leadership has borne little fruit. It could well be that this problem is not amenable to an American solution that depends on quick fixes. Rather, the capacity for leadership and motivation stems wholly from the character of the elite of the indigenous society. The Viet Cong, by emphasizing native intelligence, physical stamina, and high motivation rather than formal education and social status, have developed a military force that, despite tremendous losses and hardships, has been able to hang on and remain a significant factor in South Vietnam's military and political future.

B. DEVELOPMENT--THE BRIDGE TO STABILITY

In the early period of American involvement in Vietnam, the Agency for International Development (AID) focused on the kinds of programs it best knew how to run in terms of its experience elsewhere, such as refugee relief and road building. The fact that valid requirements for such programs existed at that early stage reinforced the natural inclinations of the AID staff in Saigon to concentrate on them. After 1962, when the insurgency became recognized for what it was, US assistance was partly redirected toward the rural population in the hope that improving the standard of living of the Vietnamese peasants would win their support for the GVN.

From 1962 onward, popular support in the United States for the American effort was a wasting asset. Time was on the side of the enemy--and the enemy knew it and exploited it. This gave a sense of urgency to American pacification programs, but it also encouraged and rewarded the quest for the quick fix and dramatic victories. Careful planning, patient application, and sustained implementation of complex pacification programs were casualties in the fight against time. Not unnaturally, attention was focused on the "big war"--the regimental-size operations, the bombings, the clears and the sweeps, the incursions and the raids, and the Tet offensives. The grinding, undramatic "other war," pacification, went virtually unnoticed by MACV itself, by the media, and therefore by the American people.

In part because there was no agreement among the civilians as to what should be done in the development area, in part because of traditional differences in outlook between the military and civilian components of the American mission, and in part because there was no single manager for the pacification effort, precious time was lost in sterile debate and wasted motion in attempts to develop an effective relationship between security and development. To the military, pacification translated into security, and security had precedence over developmental efforts. Civilian officials tended to see the basic problem in political terms and advocated political, economic, and social development as the key to weaning the population away from the Viet Cong. This difference of view was especially pronounced during the late 1950s, when military demands pressed hard on the aid program.

The divergence of opinion within the American civilian community centered around the issue of long-term versus short-term development, or between the traditional AID approach and the new counterinsurgency techniques. The "traditionalists" argued that pacification was basically a military problem, and that in the meantime economic assistance should be directed primarily toward developing the economic institutions of the country so that when the military had defeated the insurgents, the government would have an infrastructure in-place on which to build. The "counterinsurgents," on the other hand, saw the war as a contest for the loyalty of the peasants and, consequently, recommended high-impact programs that would bring immediate and visible benefits to the people and convince them that the government had something going for it. This argument became especially heated immediately following the death of President Diem, when a change in AID's top personnel in Saigon provided an opportunity for the debate to surface. It came to the fore again with the establishment of CORDS in 1967, but the pacification plans formulated within CORDS appear to have satisfied both the traditionalists and the counterinsurgents. In the end, both kinds of programs were included, but this papered over rather than resolved such problems as, for example, whether to provide full-blown hospitals or simple clinics staffed by paramedical personnel. The issue is a fundamental one not only in terms of the American experience in Vietnam, but as it may affect any future similar enterprise; it involves basic questions of organization and management, personnel selection, staffing patterns, and allocation of funds and other resources. (We address this question further in Volume II, Part Three.)

Because the conceptual conflicts were never really resolved, there was a vast proliferation of American programs and personnel. A logical consequence was the tendency to force American standards and values on the Vietnamese people. Many development programs were designed and planned to fit American conceptions of Vietnamese aspirations rather than what the Vietnamese themselves desired.

The proliferation of American programs placed a severe strain on the Vietnamese ability to absorb and implement them, and when the Vietnamese bureaucracy became swamped or could not handle them, frustrated Americans tended to assume direct operational control. This exaggerated the Vietnamese dependence on the United States and, together with our excessive generosity, had a demoralizing effect on Vietnamese society. As a side effect, the lavishness of our aid and its application on a seemingly indiscriminate basis undoubtedly contributed to an increase in local corruption.

Much of the resources and energy going into pacification programs over the past decade and a half have been focused on trying to transform the economic, social, and political life of rural Vietnam. As discussed in Volume II, Part Three, the payoffs seem to be modest, tardy, and, in many instances, short-lived, in terms of what was expended and expected. The extent to which village-based pacification programs will be continued when they are turned entirely over to the Vietnamese will depend not on vague and lofty appeals to nationalism or anti-communism, but rather on a shrewd and elementary cost-benefit calculus by village councils and district chiefs.

How much of the ambitious, overall pacification effort, then, will survive, in any meaningful way, the wind-down of American activities in Vietnam? Suffice it to say at this point that much will depend on the extent to which a particular program falls comfortably into traditional Vietnamese value judgments and awakened political, social, and material expectations. On the basis of extensive interviews with both Americans and Vietnamese, the study team believes that many programs regarded as high priority by Americans may falter or even be discarded once the Vietnamese assume full responsibility for implementation and funding. Chief among these are probably those programs that fall into the category of "nation-building."

Even under normal, peacetime conditions the Vietnamese would probably regard the emphasis currently given to programs in the areas of education, health, community development, refugee resettlement, and land reform as expensive luxuries. All but the most urgent requirements for social and economic betterment are likely to be postponed until security is assured throughout most of the country.

C. ORGANIZATION FOR PACIFICATION

A search for effective arrangements to manage and coordinate the efforts of the various parts of the US Government responsible for pacification has been a continuing preoccupation of Washington policymakers. There was a reluctance (which increased with the passage of time and the increase of our commitment) to permit the war in Vietnam to interfere with the normal process of government in the United States. For this reason, reliance was placed on ad hoc committees, task forces, and "special groups"--some at the highest policy levels, some at the working level--rather than on the establishment of a single managerial staff or the appointment of a Vietnam "czar." This jerry-built structure continued even in the face of growing awareness that pacification programs and budgets cut across normal governmental jurisdictions and that they could not be implemented effectively through traditional government arrangements or through interagency committees with little or no operational responsibilities.

The problem has been no less complicated in Saigon. The principal problems the ambassador faced in attempting to coordinate the American mission's efforts arose from the pacification programs that cut horizontally across the various components of the establishment. The American effort to advise and support the Vietnamese in their pacification program was significantly blunted by institutional rivalries and frictions among MACV, CIA, AID, and the embassy itself.

Despite a growing, albeit grudging, recognition in Washington that the struggle in Vietnam was absorbing substantial American resources in terms of men, equipment, and money, there was little attempt to establish effective overall control, or even coordination, of the various far-flung American programs. There was a brief moment in 1966 when responsibility for pacification (but not the military, intelligence, public affairs, or other aspects of the Vietnam effort) was centered in the White House under Robert Komer. But when Komer went to Saigon in 1967 to head CORDS, the White House organization withered and soon reverted to the status quo ante, mostly because Komer in effect carried his White House hat--and clout--with him to Vietnam. This was pretty much the situation until the end of the Johnson administration in January 1969--and indeed is pretty much the situation now.

The establishment of CORDS meant that the pacification effort in Saigon was finally consolidated into a centrally managed organization. CORDS provided for not only a horizontal integration of the civil and military aspects of the pacification effort, but also a vertical integration through the establishment of lines of control and communication from the American mission in Saigon down to the districts. Each of the military regions was headed by an assistant deputy for CORDS to whom provincial and district advisers were responsible. CORDS was also designed to improve day-to-day relations with appropriate Vietnamese components and individuals. The chief of CORDS had direct access to the premier, and each level in the CORDS hierachy tied into a roughly comparable point in the Vietnamese structure. There developed as a consequence a pattern of advisers and counterparts from the premier's office to the districts.

Even those American officials most instrumental in reorganizing the American pacification effort probably did not realize the extent to which the new arrangements would shake up the bureaucracy in Saigon. The establishment of CORDS thus provided an important bonus in terms of increasing the effectiveness of the Vietnamese government.

With the thinning out and likely demise of CORDS, however, the improvements in the GVN's public administration may fall victim to the deeply imbedded, centralized, bureaucratic practices that have characterized the government for almost two decades. But there are some signs that CORDS may have some lasting effects. The National Institute of Administration, the Vietnamese training program for middle-level officials, has concentrated on the improvement of provincial administration. The population, at least in the provincial capitals and larger towns, has learned to expect, and may continue to demand, a higher standard of administration from their local civil servants than had been the case in prior years. And the new breed of younger and well-trained administrators that is beginning to assume responsibility in the central government may refuse to revert to the arcane practices that characterized the past.

D. THE PROBLEMS OF PARTNERSHIP

Every US ambassador to Saigon since 1954 has grappled with the problem of extracting commitments for improved military, political, and economic performance from South Vietnam's leaders. And having gotten such commitments, American officials have struggled to assure meaningful implementation. With the passage of time and the increase in the American commitment there was a concomitant increase in Washington's stake in effective GVN performance. The ability to influence the Vietnamese consequently became a matter of increasing urgency, but in the last analysis, Americans had to rely on the carrot rather than the stick. Threats to hold back or cancel aid became increasingly ineffectual with the growing GVN awareness that Washington had almost as much to lose as Saigon. There was probably no greater source of frustration for American officials serving in Vietnam.

The establishment of CORDS did not by any means solve this problem of leverage in the area of pacification, but the major emphasis given to implementation at the province and district levels did result in increased authority and responsibility for the provincial governments and the loosening up of the rigid bureaucratic channels in Saigon.

E. KEEPING INFORMED--THE REPORTING FUNCTION

From the very outset of American official interest in Indochina, following the outbreak of the Korean war in 1950, Washington analysts and policymakers have sought to obtain sufficient relevant and reliable information so that American policy could be sensibly formulated and American military and nonmilitary programs effectively managed. Until 1967 this quest had been plagued by the need to rely first on the French and subsequently the Vietnamese as primary sources for basic information. Much of this information and the conclusions drawn from it were, of course, qualitative and subjective. This created a problem for both policymakers and managers that has persisted (though to a somewhat lesser extent since the late 1960s) to the present. There was a tendency, conscious or subconscious, on the part of reporting officers from the lowest level up through higher headquarters to see the situation as they would like to see it or as they would like to have their superiors (or the American suppliers or advisers) see it. For many years Washington analysts knew so little about Vietnam that they were unable to discern, even if they wished to do so, instances when the reporting was demonstrably inadequate, blatantly false, or grossly biased.

During the 1950s, the lack of coordination of American elements in Vietnam permitted the several US agencies there to concentrate on the issues and developments they knew best from prior experience in other situations and to report on those through their own channels. Thus, the embassy reported on political developments and personalities on the Saigon scene, and the MAAG reported on its progress in helping the Vietnamese develop a conventional army; but no one, except the CIA in some of its field reports, paid much attention to reporting on the ebb and flow of GVN fortunes in the countryside. In short, Washington learned, and presumably Saigon knew, very little about the object of the exercise--the insurgency and the insurgents. By 1961, the situation had worsened dramatically for the GVN. Although the massive increase in American advisers gave promise of more relevant and comprehensive reporting and evaluation, these hopes were short-lived; the information turned out to be grossly overoptimistic.

With the increasing American involvement in Vietnam that took place after 1960, there was an increasing concern for objective reporting. Emphasis on quantitative analysis, spurred on by Secretary McNamara, led to data collection and reporting on every aspect of the situation in Vietnam. Although McNamara took the lead in pressing for a flood of statistics, indexes and graphs, every agency in Washington involved in pacification also insisted on detailed, frequent, and lengthy status reports from its Saigon representatives. As Part Four of Volume II discusses in some detail, Saigon and Washington were virtually sated with statistical reports, but American officials were nonetheless undernourished in terms of understanding the meaning of the information they were receiving.

In an effort to come to grips with the deluge of reports that emanated from the various elements of the American mission in Saigon, an effort was made in mid-1964 to consolidate and coordinate the reporting and evaluation efforts in Vietnam and to establish some degree of order in the analysis efforts in Washington. But, reporting continued to derive overwhelmingly from Vietnamese sources and evaluation depended heavily on subjective judgments by US field advisers who were largely unqualified to render them. These deficiencies did not attract much high-level attention in Saigon or Washington because the main war of big battles commanded the highest priority and, too, because officials had not yet acquired an interest in, or much sophistication about, the "other war."

In 1966 pacification began to attract far greater attention in the upper reaches of the US Government. In the autumn of that year, Secretary McNamara and Director of Central Intelligence Helms agreed that the time had come for radical reform in pacification reporting. What followed in less than three months' time was the institution throughout Vietnam of a reporting arrangement known as the Hamlet Evaluation System (HES). By January 1967 every American district adviser was required to submit monthly evaluations of the pacification status of each hamlet in his district in terms of defined indicators. Although it marked a great improvement, the HES suffered from several continuing disabilities, among them the fact that comparability of results was difficult to determine; the evaluations were, after all, based on the essentially subjective judgments of more than 250 district advisers.

A far-reaching analysis of HES paved the way for a basic revision, "HES-70," which went into effect in January 1970. Much more objective and sophisticated than its predecessor, HES-70 was a centrally scored system, uniform throughout the country. It eliminated the district adviser's own overall assessment of the state of security in his district and largely confined his reporting responsibilities to responding to an elaborate series of objective questions. Along with a score or more associated reporting programs that followed in its wake, HES had by 1971 developed into an information system that in its excessive reliance on objectivity and its massive series of reports may have over-compensated for the earlier subjective, spotty reporting.

HES and the other systems associated with it are far more reliable than anything that preceded them. HES, of course, is a highly sophisticated American system uniquely applicable, in its present form, to Vietnam and adopted at a time when a huge American presence in-country made it feasible and necessary.

III

LESSONS LEARNED

Before we proceed with a systematic review of lessons learned, it is well to remind both ourselves and the reader that what follows is by no means the first nor is it likely to be the last exposition of this subject. The war in Vietnam has probably been analyzed and intellectually dissected to a greater extent than any in American history. But Americans directly involved in Vietnam--operators, advisers, and planners--have found, or have considered, themselves so beset by the problems of the moment that few have been able to address the experiences, both good and bad, of those who preceded them. There has been little or no institutional memory; history has started at the beginning of an official's tour. And no one official, with the possible exception of the ambassador, saw the total picture. Perhaps the most dramatic example of the narrow, ephemeral nature of American insights comes through in our discussion of the French experience in Volume III, Part Two, Chapter I; Americans paid only casual if any attention to what the French, themselves, learned in Indochina prior to the US involvement in 1954--and then made many of the same mistakes. American officials, through oversight or because of the pressures of time, paid little heed to lessons that had already become apparent.

We recognize, of course, that the returns from Vietnam are not all in and that some lessons we now believe valid may turn out to be invalid as events continue to unfold there. But the returns are never all in, at least within the time frame in which a policymaker must operate, and, besides, enough is available now to warrant the inferring of major lessons that policymakers should find useful.

In what follows, the lessons are discussed under appropriate elements of the pacification program, although a few lessons are so universal that we have listed them under a "general" heading.

Within each category, some lessons are broad in their import and some fairly specific; some may have obvious direct relevance to most other likely insurgencies and some would seem applicable only to those that might closely parallel the Vietnam pattern. Finally, some have implications that go beyond pacification, per se, and touch on American foreign policy toward internally unstable allies.

A. SOME GENERAL LESSONS

1. Agreed Doctrine. The United States should prepare an agreed, comprehensive pacification doctrine.

The process of expanding the government's presence and of increasing the political, economic, and social effectiveness of that presence is a critical enterprise for any regime faced with a consequential internal threat. Unless such a government proceeds expeditiously to give the populace a real stake in the maintenance of the government, it may find its power progressively reduced to the point that it will retain control only of its capital. If the United States is not to find itself confronted with another "Vietnam," pacification must be understood by American officials not only as a series of disconnected propositions but as a doctrinal whole. As obvious as this point may seem, its fundamental importance and its institutional, educational, and operational implications are, even now, not yet fully appreciated.

2. Agreed Objectives. If and when the United States ever again considers mounting another pacification and support effort, there should be a common understanding of goals and objectives before any commitments are made.

The successful, efficient achievement of any objective requires the rigorous application of a coherent strategy. In the international arena, this becomes more complicated, but no less important. A review of the American pacification experience in Vietnam brings home the importance of a careful determination of the ends we have in mind, a discriminating selection of means to achieve those ends, an ever-watchful eye lest the means become ends in themselves, and an assurance that our ally (i.e., the host country) not only understands our objectives, but is in agreement with them. The American pacification effort in Vietnam was plagued with confusion and uncertainty among officials both in Washington and in Saigon as to the purpose, the allocation of responsibilities, and the desirable scale and pace of specific programs. Problems were compounded by a lack of agreement on objectives as between American and Vietnamese officials. Since Washington was frequently uncertain of its objectives, it was often profligate and mistaken in both the choice and the scale of the programs it adopted and it had difficulty in reaching a common sense of purpose with the Vietnamese. Confusion about the role of territorial security forces, pro forma local elections, and local deliveries of large quantities of unneeded supplies are but a few examples. Volume II, Parts Two and Three, discusses other programs that were unrelated, either consciously or unconsciously, to US pacification objectives, and yet others that were sandwiched in or rode piggy-back on more relevant programs because someone or some agency in Saigon or Washington regarded them as Good Things to Do, and which, incidentally, gave them a larger role to play.

Washington devoted such vast, indeed virtually unlimited, resources to the pacification effort that the Vietnamese were urged to assume or forced to accept more and more ambitious programs in the area of pacification than they could possibly absorb. (One exasperated American official once expostulated that the American approach was like "attaching a garden hose to a fire hydrant.") The sheer scale and weight of these programs tended to blunt their effect or overkill their objectives. With tighter constraints on manpower, materiel, and funds, planners and operating officials may have been forced to develop a more coherent strategy and embark on more carefully conceived programs.

It is easy to be clever about this in hindsight, and it is worth reminding ourselves that people involved with Vietnam during the latter half of the 1960s were operating under pressure from the very highest levels of the American government to "get results." Washington's eagerness tended to fuel the natural inclination of American civilian and military advisers to "achieve" something during their short tours in Vietnam. If a program did not show early promise, there was a great temptation to drop it and cast about for another. If a program or a technique seemed to be working, there was pressure to increase its scale. And if a program worked well in one province, there was a compulsion to employ it throughout the country. For any program that had influential advocates, there was no constraint on resources.

What emerges from this experience in Vietnam is the need for discrimination in the selection and implementation of particular programs, a rigorous (but not rigid) application of priorities, and a recognition of the need for quality rather than quantity, both of people and of programs. Clearly, if the United States is ever again involved in a pacification effort, an agreed concept should establish at least the broad parameters of planning and action. And surely there should be significant constraints on the expenditure of resources.

3. No Illusions About Our Ally. A government calling upon the United States for assistance in maintaining power in the face of an internal threat, as did the Vietnamese government, is unlikely to be efficient or effective, or to meet American ideals of democracy or probity. American commitments to assist such governments must be made with the recognition that our act of commitment and our advice cannot change the nature of the client regime or the society of the host country.

Of all the emotions and attitudes that our experience in Vietnam has aroused among Americans over the years, perhaps the most common, at least among those directly involved, has been that of frustration. A sense of frustration has pervaded virtually every planning, managerial, and operating element involved in Vietnam during the past fifteen years. There has been ample reason for this: creeping American bureaucracy in Saigon; the pressure for quick results emanating from Washington, combined with lagging Vietnamese performance; growing unenthusiasm for the whole enterprise; civilian-military rivalries; the entrenched institutional interests within the civilian elements of the executive branch in Washington and within the mission in Saigon; the inability of the United States, a military superpower, to impose a military defeat on an underdeveloped, second-rate country. But probably most of all, American frustrations have been focused on our South Vietnamese ally--both the government and the people. Lethargy, corruption, disinterest, ineptitude, stifling bureaucracy, are only a few items on a long laundry list of American complaints about the Vietnamese.

This deep and widespread sense of frustration has tended to blind Americans to an essential element of the problem: if our South Vietnamese ally had had a strong, popular, efficient regime, if the South Vietnamese Civil Service had been honest, well trained, and dedicated, if the army had been well led, disciplined, and highly motivated, the United States would probably not have found itself involved in the first place. Under such a salubrious set of circumstances the Saigon regime could almost certainly have handled its internal problems with only a modest amount of American economic and military aid. And so most if not all the targets of American criticism and the causes of American frustration in Vietnam were part of the original bargain when the United States first decided to get involved in the fate of the Saigon government.

While the study team has no way of knowing the circumstances under which the United States would again respond with substantial military and economic assistance to a plea from a friendly power confronted with an insurgent threat, it would be a fair prediction that, as in Vietnam, the government at issue will be unlikely to be a model, stable, effective one; Denmark or New Zealand or Switzerland is not going to be the next Vietnam. If, in fact, the United States again becomes involved in an insurgency situation, the odds seem high that it will be in an area unfamiliar to most Americans in language, culture, and history, that the indigenous counterparts will have different standards of performance, and that corruption will frequently be built into the social and economic fabric of society.

4. Avoid the "Tyranny of the Weak." In situations in which major American human and material resources are involved, the United States must be able to operate within and even to use our ally's own political and social system to assure that he keeps his side of the bargain. If our ally does not perform satisfactorily in our view and we have exhausted our means of influence or pressure, we should have a credible capability to reduce or withhold further support and, if possible, to disengage.

It is ironic, even wryly amusing, that the United States, without whose efforts the Saigon government would have collapsed time and time again, has had such difficulty in playing the role of senior partner in the joint enterprise. This situation, which has been by no means confined to the relationship between the United States and South Vietnam, has been aptly described as "the tyranny of the weak." The key, or at least one key, to the puzzle is that Washington soon became at least as committed to a successful outcome of the struggle as was the government in Saigon itself. It became quickly apparent that Washington's commitments of aid, which were based on Saigon's commitments to perform or reform, could be manipulated by the Vietnamese government so that in effect American aid became virtually unconditional. The deeper into the situation we found ourselves, the less able were we to exercise decisive influence. (Vietnam's farcical national election in the autumn of 1971 is a case in point.)

If the United States is to be able to exercise influence on the situation as it evolves and even on the use of our aid after our commitment, we must know a great deal about the government and the society we are helping. The exercise of "leverage" can better be done through the skillful use of diplomacy rather than the blunt instruments of cajolery and threats.

5. Know the Enemy. Before committing itself to supporting an ally besieged from within, the United States should be confident that it knows the composition and the motivation of the threatening forces and the problems at issue. Only through such knowledge will we be able to assess the dimensions of the problem we might confront. Simple prudence requires that we know in advance whether the government's cause is dubious or its prospects hopeless.

The matter of knowing one's ally is thus only part of the essential task that American officials must master before committing major resources to another government's cause. At least as important is knowing the nature of the threat to our would-be partner. Through the efforts of our own intelligence system, as well as through careful research and analysis, we should have a high degree of confidence that we know the enemy's leadership, his external support, his ideological drives, his motivational and propaganda techniques. Moreover, we should be keenly aware not only of the issues he is exploiting, but the degree to which these are real and justifiable causes of anti-government feeling. Our experience in Vietnam surely demonstrated that we underestimated the strength, motivation, and tenacity of the Communists and that we ignored the justice of some of their demands.

Detailed knowledge of the insurgent apparatus and mode of operation is unlikely to be easily and readily available. A government threatened from within to the point that it must seek external assistance has failed, almost by definition, to uncover much useful operational information about the enemy. And, insofar as it has, it is likely to pass on to the United States only partial and selective items of intelligence. Clearly, we must strive to achieve our own capability for making reliable judgments about the nature and extent of the enemy threat.

6. Clarify the Nature of the Advisory Relationship. Americans should help, not substitute for, the government of our ally. To the extent that we Americans "take charge," we postpone (and may even jeopardize) the achievement of our ultimate objectives. The application of this lesson in practice, as we have discovered in Vietnam, is difficult and calls for a careful selection and training of advisers. If we could turn back history, the process of "Vietnamization" would have been started in 1962, not 1969.

It is clear from the American experience in Vietnam that a missing link in our counterinsurgency efforts has been the development of techniques to transfer effectively whatever know-how we possess to the military and civilian officials of countries we are assisting. It has also become clear that we cannot fight a counterinsurgency war as a surrogate of a threatened ally; this was true even after we had introduced large numbers of American combat forces into Vietnam. We have had to return again and again to the hard fact that it was basically our ally's war and that if we took over the major responsibility from him we would have forsaken our ultimate political objectives, even if we had scored a definitive military victory.

The delicate balance between "assisting" and "doing" requires certain personal traits and demands strong self-discipline on the part of American officials. The watchwords are consummate skill, keen sensitivity, and constant awareness. Much depends on the early arrangements that have been worked out between the American mission and the host government. Such arrangements must be clearly understood by both sides at every step on the bureaucratic ladder. But let us not deceive ourselves with elaborate wiring diagrams or statements of high principle. Realistically, unless our ally is in desperate circumstances, he is likely to promise more than he is prepared to deliver. Over the years earnest men in the American mission in Saigon and in the Vietnamese government have churned out hundreds of organization charts, blueprints, and guides for perplexed bureaucrats. And high American and Vietnamese officials have issued scores of lofty directives designed to assure orderly contact and communication between the two partners. Only the most naive would seriously claim that these devices would produce tidy bilateral relationships. And, of course, they did not. The need for constant interaction between a swollen American mission with a wide spectrum of functions and a hard-pressed host government confronting urgent, unfamiliar problems virtually guaranteed that the participants would tend to ignore a tightly structured bureaucracy. Nonetheless, it is well that the participants know the names and numbers of the other players and that some overall pattern and degree of discipline characterize the kaleidoscopic frenzy of daily activity.

The officials of the host country are more often than not harassed, underpaid, and bewildered in the face of new problems. If they cannot avoid frequent confrontations with eager, demanding American counterparts, they tend to resort to supine acquiescence (which is rarely translated into action), stone walling, dissembling, or playing one American official off against another. We have learned, or should have learned in Vietnam, the bootlessness of trying to cajole local officials into pressing forward with American-sponsored programs that are not actively supported by their own government.

What of the advisers in the field who must implement the grand plans and the ambitious programs? It is they who fight the daily battle on the ground. The American adviser is the "grunt" of the "other war."

The role of the adviser is complex enough. But the concept of the advisory relationship is even more so. During the entire American experience in Vietnam, this concept has been rarely addressed and has never been satisfactorily resolved. The term, itself, is troublesome and perhaps should be dropped from the vocabulary of counterinsurgency. More often than not it is misleading. It has muddied the thinking of analysts and planners, but more importantly it has confused those actually charged with "advisory" responsibilities.

An adviser, like a teacher, presumably imparts knowledge to someone who knows less about the subject than he. Well-qualified American specialists in public health, irrigation, aircraft maintenance, road constructions, public administration, and military training have, in actuality, been advisers to their Vietnamese counterparts. But many others, both civilian and military, have played an entirely different role. Some were monitors, inspectors, or needlers, making sure that American supplies or funds were properly or honestly expended. Others, in effect, provided staff support for hard-pressed Vietnamese officials. Still others served in an avuncular capacity to harassed, depressed counterparts. And running through the whole process has been a conscious American attitude that the advisory relationship provided the Vietnamese with the knowledge or skills which, whether the Vietnamese knew it or not, they needed. If we are ever faced with another situation in which the United States commits itself to helping another government put down an insurgent threat, Washington planners should examine whether an adviser-counterpart relationship is necessary and, if so, they should develop a clear definition and operational understanding of that relationship before moving ahead. Clearly, there are only a limited number of functions, primarily technical in nature, on which Americans can actually offer advice. In such situations, more often than not, our role will be to monitor the use of American resources.

A few American senior officials, whose experience in Vietnam warrants taking their views seriously, maintain that "a good adviser is born not made." And yet most advisers the study team has interviewed insist that, while certain personal characteristics are essential, an effective job can be done only after an adviser has been exposed to a period of training; a patient, sensitive disposition is necessary, but insufficient in itself. To the extent that advisers received any training, it was, more often than not (according to the testimony received), naive or irrelevant. Some suggestions the study team received for a more effective training program involve the study of American and host country policy and objectives (in detail as well as in the broad), detailed discussions of case studies, realistic analyses of the adviser-counterpart relationship, early preliminary exposure to the culture of the host country (some have suggested that training should actually have been conducted in Vietnam or at least that Vietnamese should have participated intensively in the training programs), and specialized attention to the subject matters on which the adviser was expected to impart "advice." Language training was strongly and universally urged.

Elsewhere in this volume and in Volume II the questions of lengths of tours and the problems implicit in rapid turnovers of Americans working on pacification programs have been addressed. If, indeed, the United States embarks on a training program of the intensity and scope suggested above, it cannot afford the luxury of advisory tours of duty of less than about three years--except in the happy circumstance of our being able to close out advisory tours in a shorter period.

B. PROGRAMMATIC LESSONS

Up to this point the discussion has focused on what our Vietnam experience has taught us in terms of some positive perspectives or cautionary guidance that might serve Washington policymakers and planners in good stead at some future time. In the following pages, specific issues are addressed that touch on the programmatic and operational aspects of pacification in Vietnam. While their applicability to any future set of circumstances may not be directly apposite, they nonetheless have some generality and are worthy of note. Most of the issues raised here are discussed in fuller detail in the appropriate sections of Volume II.

1. Some Lessons in the Area of Security

Security is a prerequisite for development. While both the provision of local security and certain nonmilitary undertakings are essential parts of a successful pacification program, the conditions for a sustained government presence must obtain if development efforts are to pay off.

One of the most persistent dilemmas that both the American and Vietnamese governments have faced since the mid-1950s has stemmed from efforts to resolve the relationship in timing, and to determine the appropriate mix between the two major elements of pacification, security and development. This is a dilemma that is likely to apply to other, especially other rural-based, insurgencies.

On the face of it, the timing question would seem to be easily resolved. Without security, development projects are likely to be short lived, even bootless. (Why provide a new school or a clinic in an area too insecure for the government to staff and operate it? Why encourage local elections if the elected officials would be in constant peril?) But the dilemma is easier to dispose of intellectually than in practice. The degree of security in vast areas of the Vietnamese countryside has varied from time to time, indeed from season to season; few villages, towns, or even cities can boast of a record of sustained, complete security. Clearly, security is a relative rather than an absolute concept and implementation of development programs cannot wait until all is peaceful.

The American experience in Vietnam has demonstrated that before development programs can have much influence the people must have some confidence that the normal daily rhythm of their lives can be maintained without fear or trauma. Does this mean that nothing should be done until a local area is deemed secure? Obviously not. "Law and order" is unlikely to be sufficient, in itself, to stimulate positive support for the government. On the other hand, the introduction of a large number of economic, social, and political programs before they can be locally absorbed and administered has proved wasteful, ineffective, and even counterproductive. Obviously, each situation has to be judged on its own merits. How secure is the area? How many security troops and what kind are necessary to maintain security? What do the people want? What do they need? It is not very productive to over-intellectualize this problem.

The Importance of Good Intelligence. Without reliable intelligence on the insurgents, a threatened government is likely to be at such a disadvantage that American assistance, at almost any level, would be ineffective. A local intelligence capability is therefore a high-priority matter, and the United States should assure that one is organized prior to making a commitment for consequential assistance.

Most "insurgency-prone" countries probably have only a modest intelligence and counterintelligence capability, in part because their regimes are reluctant to create independent centers of power. South Vietnam was no exception. It had only the most elementary intelligence organization during the period of Communist political and military buildup in the 1950s and early 1960s. Even this was dismantled in the wake of Diem's removal in late 1963. Critical decisions by both the United States and South Vietnam thus had to be made without benefit of accurate intelligence.

An effective intelligence network should provide information on the underlying strategy of the incipient insurgency--whether, for example, the insurgents place their emphasis on isolating the cities from a strong rural power base or seizing effective control over the urban areas. Either strategy requires an organizational phase involving the recruitment of a political and paramilitary apparatus. This organizational phase is the most vulnerable period of an insurgency; if the leadership can be identified and apprehended, the stimulus behind expansion will be lost.

Almost inevitably the question will arise of whether to build on existing intelligence arrangements or to organize a new and hopefully more effective one. Obviously, the answer will depend very much on the local circumstances. The United States should insist on an early decision, one way or the other, and then see that such a decision is implemented. After more than a decade of backing and filling on this issue, the Saigon government has just gotten to the point that an effective intelligence and counterintelligence effort is apparently within sight.

The Proper Role of Police. If a government is to attract support both within its own country and among the American public, the insurgency cannot be used as a device to create a police state. High priority should be assigned to assuring that rural and urban police forces, and their counterintelligence components, operate within a framework of law and justice.

A government confronted with an insurgency must face up to the need for conducting its police and counterintelligence activities under the rule of law (not necessarily American or English law, but still in terms of a code consistent with the society's conception of the proper relationship between the government and those governed). Ramon Magsaysay recognized during the Philippine insurgency in 1950 that if the government is to distinguish itself from those who rely on terror and subversion, its police must be respected as the executive arm for law enforcement. The system of martial law imposed in Malaya was impeccably administered and quickly lifted when it was no longer necessary.

Washington policymakers must insist on a system of law enforcement in the host country that will not create American popular revulsion and eventual opposition to their decision to assist our threatened ally. The strong-arm tactics that have characterized police and special branch activities in Vietnam since the early days of Diem's regime have done much to alienate American public opinion.

The tactics of an undisciplined and unprincipled police and special branch organization can be counterproductive. The subversive apparatus should be attacked not only through identification and arrest, but also through simple procedures that will clear members of the population who have been forced to associated themselves with the subversives. In addition, generous conditions of amnesty should be held out to induce defection, as was the case in the Philippines and Malaya. Such a program should be backstopped with effective psychological-warfare techniques. (It should be noted that the "Rallier" program was not instituted in South Vietnam until 1963 and not effectively pushed until 1966, long after the period of intensive Communist buildup.)

Additional police-type security forces may be required to cope with a rising level of violence. A combat police modeled after the Malayan or South Vietnamese Police Field Forces or gendarme-type units could back up urban police in the event of widespread urban violence. The organization and equipment of such a force should be as simple and unsophisticated as possible. Administrative and logistic support, including transportation, should be centralized in a support-type organization. Widespread deployment and indiscriminate use of an elite combat police force should be eschewed since this can quickly lead to a breakdown of popular confidence in the government. Thus, the fundamental principles should be simplicity of organization and equipment and careful, limited employment. Perhaps, as in the case of the Philippine constabulary, such a force could be made part of the military forces (although not absorbed into them) for the duration of the insurgency.

Regular and Paramilitary Units Should Work Toward Developing and Employing Aggressive Small-unit Tactics. In Vietnam precious time was lost because the ARVN and the territorial forces were reluctant to press the battle with Viet Cong guerrilla elements before the Communists achieved a formidable main-line capability. Such a strategy calls for aggressive small-unit action, which in turn calls for competent junior and noncommissioned officers and realistic training programs.

The lessons regarding the role of regular forces in Vietnam confirm those of other insurgencies: regular forces must employ an offensive strategy against the insurgents. This is equally applicable to regular and paramilitary units assigned in direct support of a pacification effort. If an offensive strategy is employed early (before the enemy is allowed to build his military structure by transforming guerrilla forces into regular units), the growth of the insurgent military structure can be checked and reversed. Regular and paramilitary forces should adopt aggressive small-unit tactics, rather than "holing up" in a defensive posture, notwithstanding the difficulty of supervising small-unit patrol and ambush operations.

Small-unit effectiveness is critically dependent on the leadership and professional competence of company and platoon commanders and key noncommissioned officers. Unfortunately, in Vietnam these personnel were in short supply--and are likely to be in future counterinsurgencies. Shortages in company-grade officers can be at least partially overcome by moving promising NCOs through an officer candidate program, but our military advisers were unable to persuade the South Vietnamese command to move in this direction--away from politically motivated commissioning of officers and away from rigid requirements of formal education. In any future American military advisory effort, a sound officer candidate program should be a major objective.

As we point out in some detail in Volume II, Part Two, combat performance can also be improved by rigorous, practical field training in patrol and ambush tactics and combat marksmanship, but here, too, the Vietnamese have displayed neither much interest nor initiative. Clearly, in any future American military advisory effort, emphasis should be placed on realistic small-unit training programs. In this connection, the American training effort should be limited to training the "trainers" in order to encourage the indigenous forces to develop their own training capability.

Our Vietnam experience has taught us that direct involvement of military advisers with combat units and territorial forces should be avoided, except in extreme circumstances; all too often the American advisers became a crutch and tended to delay the development of

Vietnamese initiative. Advisers might provide quick fixes in moments of great urgency, but their direct participation in combat should be terminated as soon as possible.

The United States should also avoid "mirror imaging" its own military organization, equipment, and training techniques. Our ally should be encouraged to organize, equip, and train his forces with due regard to his own traditions and capabilities and those of the enemy.

Regular and paramilitary forces can be freed from static local defense if an effective "home militia" is developed. Thus, at the earliest discernible stage of the insurgent threat, consideration should be given to the organization of local security forces, if they do not already exist. In most peasant societies lack of governmental security forces in the countryside has forced the people to organize "home guard" units for their own protection against bandits and criminals. Further, experience in Vietnam shows that the increased involvement of the people with the government through the device of a hamlet militia is at least as important as the security value of such a militia.

2. Some Lessons in the Area of Development

Development Programs Should be Directly Related to the Pacification Effort. There should be early agreement on the role of economic, social, and political programs. Because such agreement was lacking in Vietnam, a plethora of nonmilitary activities were undertaken in Vietnam, many of which were redundant, unwanted, or even counterproductive to the goal of defeating the insurgents.

As we look back on our experience in Vietnam, it is disheartening to realize that no convincing concept concerning the role of development programs emerged at any stage. If the United States and the GVN had tried and succeeded in formulating an agreed concept for development, many mistakes and much waste might have been avoided. During the late 1950s, almost no efforts were focused on improving the lot of the individual peasant, although, in retrospect, this may have been precisely the time when such efforts could have helped arrest the insurgency or at least ameliorate some of the grievances the enemy was exploiting. In subsequent years, when the Communists began to make serious inroads into the countryside, there was a frantic attempt to quickly "do something" for the peasant, but by then it was probably too late for local development programs to have much effect. Many of those programs that were launched now appear to have been irrelevant or at least marginal to the real concerns of the peasants and to the task of countering the insurgency.

Once the United States became involved in pacification programs in Vietnam there was a tendency to assume that every economic, political, and social problem was in some way related to the insurgency. With our strong sense of social justice and morality, we not only tried to solve many of these problems, but tried to do it in "the American way." Inevitably this led to indiscriminate application and to pervasive Americanization of development assistance. Whenever a new Vietnamese problem was identified, a new American program was launched (with its accompanying baggage of American money and advisers) without particular consideration of, or coordination with, the actual needs and capabilities of the Vietnamese themselves. The proliferation of US-sponsored economic and social programs only generated new problems at local levels, or at least accentuated old ones there. As we point out in some detail in Volume II, the more obvious effects were overtaxing local administrations, encouraging corruption, and superimposing a stifling expansion of US presence almost everywhere.

The Importance of Engaging the Population. Rather than pursuing the elusive goal of "winning hearts and minds," the indigenous government should try to elicit from the population a sense of involvement and a feeling that they have a real stake in the perpetuation rather than the overthrow of the government.

Even in the most prosperous and stable societies, the population rarely give over their hearts and minds to those who govern them. The early counterinsurgency theorists, by advancing this unattainable goal, have set many naive planners and practitioners in pursuit of a will-o'-the-wisp. Even under the best of circumstances, rural populations of most underdeveloped countries conceive of their central government only as an instrument for exacting taxes and drafting their sons. Urban populations tend to be at least as cynical.

The Vietnamese peasant does not demand a vast array of goodies in exchange for his support and allegiance. He is concerned with only a few matters that directly bear on his day-to-day life. Land reform, especially in the Mekong Delta, was one such matter, and so was ready and secure access to markets. The urban dweller, for his part, centered his hopes on employment, tolerable housing, and freedom from arbitrary police harassment.

The immediate objective of local political, economic, and social programs (i.e., the "development phase" of pacification), thus, should not be to transform the institutions of the country into replicas of some Western theoretical model. The main purpose should be to demonstrate to the people that they are able to participate in the key decisions bearing on their day-to-day lives. As we point out in Volume II, Part Three, the government should try, by its programs and by its actions generally, to convince the population that they have a stake in the perpetuation rather than the overthrow of the government.

The Need for Accountability and Follow Through. To reduce corruption and to minimize the undertaking of overly ambitious projects that cannot be quickly made operational, American officials should exercise restraint in initial programming. This, together with arrangements for continuing follow-through and accountability on the part of local officials, should serve to increase the effectiveness of American pacification assistance.

Lavish American aid led not only to an unhealthy Vietnamese dependency on the United States but also contributed to a demoralization of that society by creating tempting opportunities for speculation and corruption. American advisers were often unwilling or unable to institute tight procedures for control and accountability. Substantial resources were either diverted to the Viet Cong or sold for profit, not only by local officials but by high-ranking Vietnamese personages who were not above acceding to a particular American program because of the opportunity it presented for personal gain. In a future insurgency, American development assistance should be granted on a highly selective, discriminate basis, taking full account of local needs and capabilities; we should avoid mounting such extensive assistance efforts as those in Vietnam.

Another serious deficiency in the American experience with economic and social development in Vietnam has been the failure to follow through on projects under way. In all too many cases, villagers have participated in building a school only to find that the government made no provision to provide a teacher. Dispensaries have been built without supplies or midwives on the horizon. These are but two of many such examples. The adverse psychological impact of the government's performance in such situations is obvious. Clearly, then, it is essential to exercise restraint in initial programming and then to assure that there will be expeditious implementation and effective monitoring.

The Importance of Good Local Administration. The most efficient and farsighted national government will be unable to extend its influence unless it establishes an effective presence in the form of local officials. In Vietnam, province and district chiefs perform this role by providing a link between village and hamlet officials and Saigon. Government cadre also are an essential element in closing the gap between the national government and the people. But in Vietnam, the importance of careful selection and good training was all too often overlooked.

The National Liberation Front first revealed its true intentions at the village level in South Vietnam. Although political cells may germinate and operate in darkness, it is difficult to disguise that phase of the insurgency that aims at severing the tie between local communities and the central government. Although this transition is an overt one, a country's leaders may not necessarily recognize the signs when they appear. In the late 1950s, for example, the Diem administration consistently ignored or deprecated the significance of assassinations and disappearances of local officials. If the Saigon government had, early in the insurgency, established better local administration, the insurgents might have been thwarted at an early and vulnerable stage.

The Diem administration erred not only in shifting the basic unit of local administration from the village to the hamlet, but also in imposing a system of appointed officials with no local ties. Both steps ran counter to traditional arrangements and consequently generated popular tensions that weakened the influence of the central government in the countryside. Subsequent administrations in Saigon restored the village to its former preeminence (though not until late in the 1960s) and also reintroduced the customary election of local officials. The strengthening of village administration in South Vietnam served a purpose well beyond the purely structural requirements of administration in the countryside; it permitted the government to build a relationship of mutual advantage with its people, thereby offsetting the insurgents' appeal.

The essential mechanism for establishing government control in the countryside was the cadre. These armed civilian representatives of the national government were meant to serve as catalysts for political, social, and economic development in the villages and hamlets. But a government presence in the countryside that generates antagonism and resentment is worse than no presence at all. This points up the importance of able, well-trained, sensitive, and highly dedicated cadre. Quality is a goal to be sought in all aspects of pacification, but it is especially important in the earliest stages of contact between the government and the people; it is at this point that the latter weigh most carefully the advantages and disadvantages of alternative affiliation--with the government or with the insurgents. A major shortcoming of the GVN's cadre program was its low quality. Although some of the early and more modest cadre efforts were successful in recruiting and training highly effective team members, the overall experience was spotty. The principal faults lay in overly rapid expansion, low pay, and failure to provide draft deferments. These were compounded by Saigon's fear of creating an independent, locally based political force. Consequently, Saigon was reluctant to integrate the cadre into the regular government structure, or to allow them to attain any real influence and effectiveness. In any future effort, the United States should encourage its ally to employ cadre teams or the equivalent as a cutting edge of pacification in the event effective local government does not exist. We should also endeavor to see that cadre teams are carefully selected and well trained, for this is a clear case in which quantity cannot and should not be substituted for quality.

Redress of Grievances. In countering any insurgency, a vigorous and sustained effort must be made at the earliest possible moment to redress genuine grievances. Indeed, serious consideration should be given to conditioning American assistance on the government's taking such action. In Vietnam, land reform constituted such a real and urgent need.

The National Liberation Front gained substantial popular support by exploiting the peasants' legitimate grievances against unfair land tenure patterns, usury, and inequitable agricultural credit and marketing arrangements. In hindsight, one marvels at the ability of various Saigon regimes, year after year, to substitute rhetoric for action in addressing these fundamental issues. And, also in hindsight to be sure, one wonders why the American mission, which while concentraing so much of its energy and resources to developing support for the GVN among the rural population, was so patient with Saigon's procrastination on agricultural reforms. Granted there were difficulties--much of the countryside seesawed between Communist and government control, the National Assembly included conservative land owners, and far-reaching reforms are easier to promise than to produce. But, as demonstrated in Volume II, Part Five, Chapter II, when the government's promises were finally translated from slogans into action, there were significant, positive effects.

Refugee Relief. With all the other problems confronting the inadequate Vietnamese bureaucracy, it is not surprising that the vast swarms of refugees from VC-controlled areas or bombed-out villages were among the residual claimants for attention and resources. But American and Vietnamese humanitarian efforts, private and public, should have been better coordinated. To some extent at least, the refugees could have been incorporated into the manpower pool available for military and nonmilitary programs.

The refugee problem in Vietnam plagued and complicated the pacification effort from the very outset. Saigon, even with substantial assistance from the United States Government and from American volunteer agencies, was overwhelmed by the ever-mounting stream of refugees--some of whom fled from Communist repression, but most from battle-ravaged and bomb-destroyed hamlets and villages. Although the program was atrociously managed, it is difficult, even with the wisdom of hindsight, to be harsh with the hard-pressed responsible officials. Refugees, like the killed and the maimed and the degradation of society itself, are some of the bitter fruits that are harvested in war. During a time of peace and stability even a rich country would have difficulty in caring for and resettling millions of destitute, homeless people. But having said this, it must be noted that the American effort was diffuse, even chaotic, until very late in the day. Coordination of private voluntary agencies and AID efforts was inadequate; movement of relief supplies from ports to refugee camps was tardy; and distribution within the camps, especially when unsupervised by American officials, was frequently unfair and sometimes corrupt. The Saigon government gave scant attention to the problem of either training the refugees or arranging their return to home villages when that was possible.

Urban Areas--the Forgotten Front. Military operations in the countryside of Vietnam, combined with the relative security and substantial employment opportunities in the larger towns and cities, created a dramatic population drift to the urban areas. But pacification efforts, primarily development programs, continued to be concentrated in the countryside. The lesson we can draw from our experience in Vietnam in this regard does not stem from what was done well or poorly, but rather from not doing anything at all. Vietnam is now facing the problems resulting from the emphasis placed on rural areas and the neglect of the cities.

Pacification activities in Vietnam gave scant emphasis to urban areas until the Viet Cong launched major attacks on the cities and towns in the Tet offensive of early 1968. Even then, the reaction of US and Vietnamese authorities consisted mostly of short-range improvisations unrelated to any serious urban planning. In contrast to the attention that security and development commanded in the countryside, there is almost no record of substantial efforts to address major urban problems, in the pacification context or outside it. Hence the lessons learned from the urban experience in Vietnam tend to be fragmentary when they are not indeed negative--i.e., when they do not derive from the absence of action rather than from a positive record of program planning and execution.

Almost unnoticed, officially at least, Vietnam has become an urban society. Drifts to the provincial towns and major cities by refugees, artisans, and underemployed rural workers were intensified with the war boom that followed the infusion of American troops after 1965 and with new waves of country-folk seeking refuge from the fighting. The population of the Saigon metropolitan area, now estimated at almost 3.5 million people, has increased by 75 percent since 1960. Except for some efforts by AID in the area of public works (water, electricity, and road building) and the Vietnamese government's concentration on security measures, the cities of Vietnam have been residual claimants on the time, energy, and resources of pacification officials. While such questions as poverty, pollution, sanitation, housing, traffic congestion, noise, and crime are not, strictly speaking, insurgency related, they do bear heavily on the government's ability to enlist the positive support of the people in its capital. The fact that local bully-boys rather than Viet Cong terrorists have made Saigon into a seething social jungle is small comfort to Americans who had expended vast resources to pacify Vietnam.

3. The Reporting Function

Importance of Reliable Information Prior to Commitment. Reliable reporting by the country team in every American mission abroad is obviously a sine qua non for intelligent foreign-policy making in Washington. In the case of countries that are of particular interest to the United States and that are "insurgency-prone," it is especially important that Washington have comprehensive, objective coverage. Washington, for its part, must be ready to accept field reporting that may not accord with preconceived notions or wishful thinking. Our experience in Vietnam during the French period and on many occasions since documents the need for independent and objective reporting from the field.

We have noted earlier that future situations involving the possibility of major American assistance to a government faced with an internal threat are likely to stem from countries that, for want of a better term, can be described as "less developed." We have noted, too, that countries that would seek our help in coping with such a threat would not necessarily be run by model governments. But this will be only part of the problem confronted by American officials as they grapple with decisions of whether to make a commitment and, if so, the kind and the amount of resources to commit. From the very outset of official concern about Indochina until relatively recently, American policymakers have been plagued not only with a basic lack of information about both the ally and his enemy, but about what in fact was going on. In the early 1950s, American officials had to rely almost entirely on what the French chose to tell them, and even in the late fifties and early sixties when the United States became directly engaged, Washington was largely dependent on non-American sources or on very sketchy information of its own to provide the background for important decisions. This is not a matter of statistical reporting; that comes later in the game; we are addressing here the problem of obtaining reliable, objective, and perceptive overall appraisals of the situation. Without such appraisals American decisionmakers are at the mercy of public relations handouts, propaganda, uninformed and emotional reports, rumor, and gossip. But reliable information from the field is only useful if policymakers treat it seriously--the bad news as well as the good. Barbara Tuchman's tale of Washington's tragic disinterest in Stilwell's lugubrious reporting about the Chungking government's attitudes toward the war against the Japanese during 1942 and 1943 is still a relevant example.*

Washington's principal source of information about developments in any country is the American mission--particularly the political and economic sections, the defense attachés, and the CIA component. Such other information as can be gleaned from correspondents, fact-finding trips, or research into secondary sources, provides only a gloss or a check on what the American mission, itself, is reporting.

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*Barbara W. Tuchman, Stilwell and the American Experience in China 1911-45 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1970).

It is probably a fact of life that at the early stages of trouble in any country the American mission will be quite small. While there may be American military bases in-country, these are typically "enclaves" and the personnel stationed there have no responsibility for providing information on the internal problems of the host country.

Does this mean that every American embassy in insurgency-prone countries should be inundated with reporting officers? Certainly not. What it does mean, and what our experience in Vietnam underlines, is that there must be carefully selected and trained military and civilian personnel in the United States mission who know the language and who spend time in the countryside. Analysis and judgment as well as keen observation must be the keynotes of their reporting. Country teams must have substance as well as form; intelligence and political, military, and economic information should be fully shared and integrated so that the mission's situation reports are truly comprehensive analyses of developments and trends. Much depends, of course, on the readiness of the ambassador and his senior civilian and military staff to call the shots as they see them. And much depends, too, on Washington's insistence on getting a straight story no matter how unpalatable it may be at the time.

Reporting for Program Managers. Once a commitment to provide pacification assistance has been made, a system of reporting must be developed early to provide program managers with the kind of information they require to judge progress and deficiencies, to juggle priorities, and to allocate resources. Again, this involves more than statistical reporting; we are talking here of a management tool. As obvious as this may seem, it was many years after the original American commitment to Ngo Dinh Diem before program managers in Saigon and Washington had such information available.

If a determination is made in Washington to proceed with assistance, it will be necessary for those Washington officials charged with program responsibility to have access to information over and above broad country team judgments. We are addressing here the problem of "middle managers," not the great men who make policy and not the end-of-the-line "operators." These are the officials who develop program content, resolve conflicting priorities, allocate resources within the budgetary constraints, recruit scarce skills, coordinate their own programs, and coordinate theirs with those of others.

Once the United States commits significant resources to a program of pacification, it requires reporting on progress in meeting military or nonmilitary objectives. This information is designed to answer, as meaningfully as possible, the simple questions: "How are we doing?" "How are they doing?" This kind of reporting is primarily quantitative, periodic, comprehensive, and, to the extent possible, objective.

Objectivity and Selectivity. The computerized reporting system in use in Vietnam has vastly improved the reporting there, but it may have gone too far in eliminating the judgment that well-trained, on-the-scene observers can bring to bear, and it almost certainly has developed a system of reports that are too elaborate to be of use to busy policymakers.

One would suppose a reporting and evaluation system that minimizes subjectivity would be ideal. It makes for uniformity, it frustrates attempts to make "brownie points" in the eyes of a superior, its component parts are fairly readily verifiable by a monitoring effort, and it is especially suitable to the difficult early stages of operating such a system when the reporters' personal judgments may be untried and unsophisticated. But, as a number of American advisers have attested, a rigidly objective system has two offsetting disadvantages. It reduces the ability of an operator-reporter (such as a district senior adviser in Vietnam) to take managerial corrective action; under such a system, for example, he may be uncertain as to the necessary corrective action. Moreover, such a system fails to capitalize on the sensitive expertise that a seasoned operator-reporter can bring to bear. In short, a rigidly objective system can, as it were, provide length and breadth, but not necessarily depth. The best arrangement would seem to be a combination of an objective, HES-like pacification measurement system that also includes complementary, subjective pacification reporting by well-qualified observers and supplementary intelligence appraisals of enemy objectives, plans, and activities by independent intelligence sources.

Reporting and evaluation should provide information (on status and trends) to policymakers, information (as guidance for resource allocation) to managers, and operational signals (on progress and slippages) for men in the field. These purposes have not been served too clearly in Vietnam, with the result that, even after the development and improvement of HES, vast amounts of information have sometimes been collected for their own sakes. American officials in Vietnam have deplored the alleged abuse of overly summarized pacification reporting in briefings for visiting personages or for "public relations" purposes in the United States. Fair enough, but in Vietnam, itself, the extensive information generated from reporting and evaluation has been inadequately used as the "middle management tool" that American officials there describe as its primary function.

Reporting Versus Public Relations. Reporting on progress should be geared solely to operational, managerial, and policy requirements.

Progress reporting for policy and management officials must not be distorted for public relations purposes. If the credibility of both the United States and its ally is to be maintained, information made publicly available must be consistent with the actual state of affairs as reflected by objective reporting. The United States must keep one set of books.

Reporting Systems for Other Insurgencies. Almost certainly a system of reporting can be developed from the elaborate HES effort in Vietnam that would be suitable for other insurgency situations. Something between the statistical overkill that has characterized our Vietnam effort and the qualitative reporting that emerges from the normal embassy should be developed.

In Vietnam, moved by chronic distortions in local reporting, the United States eventually vaulted over those difficulties by developing and operating an elaborate system of its own. It was able to do so because of the fortuitous availability of enough Americans to undertake such an ambitious project. It is doubtful that in any future situation broadly analogous to Vietnam there will ever be enough Americans in-country to staff and manage a complex like the Hamlet Evaluation System and its associated systems. Instead, American representatives will have to encourage our ally to develop his own arrangements. We must recognize, of course, that most less-developed countries have neither the American interest nor capability for elaborate, objective, quantitative reporting and analysis. But many knowledgeable Washington analysts currently dealing with computer analyses of HES data are convinced that it is possible to develop for other nations a rudimentary reporting and evaluation system that will suffice for identifying major patterns and trends. Thus, the United States should focus primarily on advising and assisting an ally to develop a sound system of his own for reporting and evaluation, instead of concentrating on elaborating and perfecting a system made in America for Americans.

In any case, if the United States again provides advice and assistance to an insurgency-beset ally, it must not allow itself to become dependent on distorted and otherwise unsatisfactory reporting and evaluation by our ally for the vital information required for policymaking. Nor should we permit our ally to frustrate our efforts to improve the level and quality of information. Nor should we be precluded from monitoring, or at least spot-checking, the operations of our ally's reporting and evaluation system. Since, in the future our presence in-country is likely to be far less prominent than it became in Vietnam, it will be all the more important to assign Americans who can work in full harmony and understanding with the host country's instrumentalities for reporting and evaluation. This will require not only language fluency, but the ability to project oneself into the ally's cultural patterns.

4. Organization for Pacification

Need for Central Management. A successful pacification effort requires a single focus of authority and responsibility. And this means central management, both in Washington and in the field and on both the US and host-country sides, at a level high enough to wield adequate bureaucratic "clout."

In this and in subsequent volumes of our study, we have frequently referred to the duplicative, competitive, indecisive, ineffectual administration and implementation of our pacification efforts.

The fact that steps were eventually taken through the establishment of CORDS to remedy the lack of central direction and management is noteworthy, but is no reason for self-congratulation. This took six years after the United States became heavily involved in the pacification effort, two years after we, in effect, "went to war," and one year after the president himself gave pacification high priority. And even then, the single-manager approach was confined to Saigon, and Washington proceeded very much as usual.

The concept and the process of pacification as it evolved in Vietnam embraced a wide spectrum of activities--military, police, intelligence, information, communications, economic, political, and social. In hindsight, we know that the number of programs and sub-programs were too many, that their application was too broad, and their objectives were often too ambitious. The job almost certainly could have been done more expeditiously and less expensively, and possibly more effectively, if we had been more discriminating about what we wished to achieve, more selective in the choice of programs, and more insistent on high standards of performance and results. But even under these more rigorous criteria, the pacification effort would have engaged people with a wide variety of backgrounds and skills and would have involved programs administered by many different American agencies. Clearly, if the United States ever again becomes involved in another venture of this kind, we must recognize at the outset that informal coordination among the participating elements of the American government is an inadequate administrative device to produce effective results.

Little official thought seems to have been given to preserving the concept of central management of an American effort in dealing with other on-going counterinsurgency efforts. CORDS, itself, is dismantling quickly as the United States winds down its Vietnam efforts. It is not our contention here that CORDS was an ideal institution that should somehow be kept in being after its purpose has been served in Vietnam. Nor is it our belief that it should serve as an exact model for other American efforts. But while the country team abroad and the coordinating committee in Washington may be adequate forums for exchanging information and reviewing or recommending policy, they do not provide the kind of central management necessary once a commitment is made and programs become operational. Now does the committee arrangement permit effective, realistic planning. What is clearly required is a single focus of authority and responsibility

IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although our assigned objective in this study was to review the American experience in providing pacification advice and support to the Government of Vietnam, we do not wish to exaggerate its importance in the total effort. Pacification assistance was but one element of American policy for Vietnam. But it was an important one. If pacification had been successful in the decade before 1965, it may not have been necessary to introduce American ground forces or engage in major air warfare. It seems prudent, therefore, to attempt to translate lessons learned into a few recommended specific courses of action that might better prepare the United States to help an ally cope with an insurgency, if such a contingency arises again.

Our recommendations are based on two assumptions: that by no means all the lessons the United States has learned in Vietnam are applicable or even relevant to other situations in which this country might at some future time assist a weak ally; and that the fundamental objective in any other such situation will be to keep the level of conflict below that entailing a large-scale infusion of American military and nonmilitary advisory or technical personnel, let alone combat forces. What follows, therefore, stems from our conviction that while there is unlikely to be another Vietnam qua Vietnam, the United States will continue to confront a disorderly world in which friendly, albeit weak, governments may seek American assistance in coping with internal threats. And while the threshold of American response will almost certainly be higher and the scale of effort will almost certainly be lower in the foreseeable future than in the recent past, a systematic effort should be made to build on what we have learned through our costly experience in Vietnam.

Even if the current national mood were very different, the United States would be forced, from the point of view of its limited resources and its political credit at home and abroad, to pick and choose carefully those governments it wished to assist. The Nixon Doctrine incorporates this practical consideration into a statement of national policy. Its central thesis as described in the President's Report to the Congress on 18 February 1970 is that "America cannot--and will not--conceive all the plans, design all the programs, execute all the decisions and undertake all the defense of the free nations of the world. We will help where it makes a real difference and is considered in our interest." Even in years prior to such an explicit articulation of policy, the National Security Council structure formally or informally maintained an array of friendly countries that were "insurgency-prone" and that conceivably would seek American assistance. No recent administration in Washington, and certainly not the present one, has subscribed to the view that the United States should indiscriminately "police the world."

The recommendations that follow recognize the futility of developing and maintaining a "master plan" that would have general application for every area (even for selected areas) where the United States might be called upon, and would be ready to respond to requests, for assistance. Our recommendations also recognize the practical difficulties in organizing and sustaining a corps of counterinsurgency experts poised for action--anywhere, at any time. But because the development of master plans and the creation of a corps of stand-by experts are unrealistic, this does not mean that we necessarily have to choose a post-Vietnam posture of indifference to the lessons learned during the past decade. Surely, some advance or contingency planning and preparation is wiser than a policy of "ad hocism." It is in this spirit that we offer a few specific suggestions for early official consideration.

1. Develop a Pacification Doctrine. Based on the lessons learned in Vietnam (and in other insurgency situations, as well) a pragmatic doctrine of pacification should be developed. To the best of our knowledge, no such doctrine now exists, Vietnam notwithstanding.

A pacification doctrine should be developed in full recognition that the pattern for Vietnam will not exactly fit other situations, especially urban-based insurgencies. It should be prepared on the assumptions that the United States will be advising and/or assisting another government, not fighting in its behalf; that American resources devoted to such an effort will be limited; and that the effort will cut horizontally across the executive branch structure and will involve, among others, the Department of Defense, CIA, AID, Department of State, USIA, and various elements in the Executive Office of the President. The doctrine should include the assignment of generalized peacetime responsibilities. Obviously, there should be general agreement on the doctrine within the government and a general commitment to its operational modalities.

Perhaps the most effective and expeditious approach to the development of a pacification doctrine would be to assign responsibility for its preparation to an executive agent who has sufficient authority to make the bureaucracy respond. A first step should be to develop a doctrinal manual of some kind. Such a document would of course differ from other more conventional manuals since it would involve not only substantive inputs from, but operational responsibilities assigned to, several agencies of the government. In short, both the security and the development aspects of pacification should be incorporated in the doctrine.

As part of the preparation of pacification doctrine, a critical examination should be made of how best to achieve more effective administration of any future effort. We learned the hard way that effective planning and implementation of an American pacification support effort requires close coordination, if not indeed central management. But the arrangements that have been worked out in the case of Vietnam are both unique and frail.

The greatest fund of knowledge about the "single-manager" approach to pacification is in CORDS Saigon. Before it disbands, CORDS should be charged with the task of engaging in its own "lessons learned" exercise. Urgent attention should be given to the desirability and practicality of keeping a skeleton CORDS structure in being after CORDS Saigon stands down. In this connection, the governments of such insurgency-beset nations as Thailand, the Philippines, or Cambodia might be interested in exploring variants of the single management structure.

Any study of organization for pacification should give some thought to the structure of the American embassy and its relationship to the military advisory mission in insurgency-prone countries. Vietnam can teach us much in these regards, both good (for example, the embassy's provincial reporting unit) and bad (for example, the stultifying bureaucracy within the American mission generally and the ponderous relationships that evolved between MACV and the embassy).

One problem in the organizational area that seems to call for immediate attention is the area of advisory responsibilities for police and counterintelligence activities. The insurgencies in Malaya, the Philippines, and certainly Vietnam have taught us the need for the establishment, at the earliest feasible moment, of an effective police-counterintelligence ("special branch") organization. But a prior condition for any assistance that the United States might render in this area will be to get its own house in order. In particular, responsibility for this function must be clearly established as between CIA and the Public Safety Division of AID.

2. The Problem of Personnel. Our experience in Vietnam has produced a considerable amount of expertise in the field of pacification. This know-how has developed among both soldiers and civilians, largely through a process of learning while doing. While this is almost inevitable, some of the lessons learned should be incorporated in training programs so that the American experience in Vietnam will not be altogether forgotten after we stand down there.

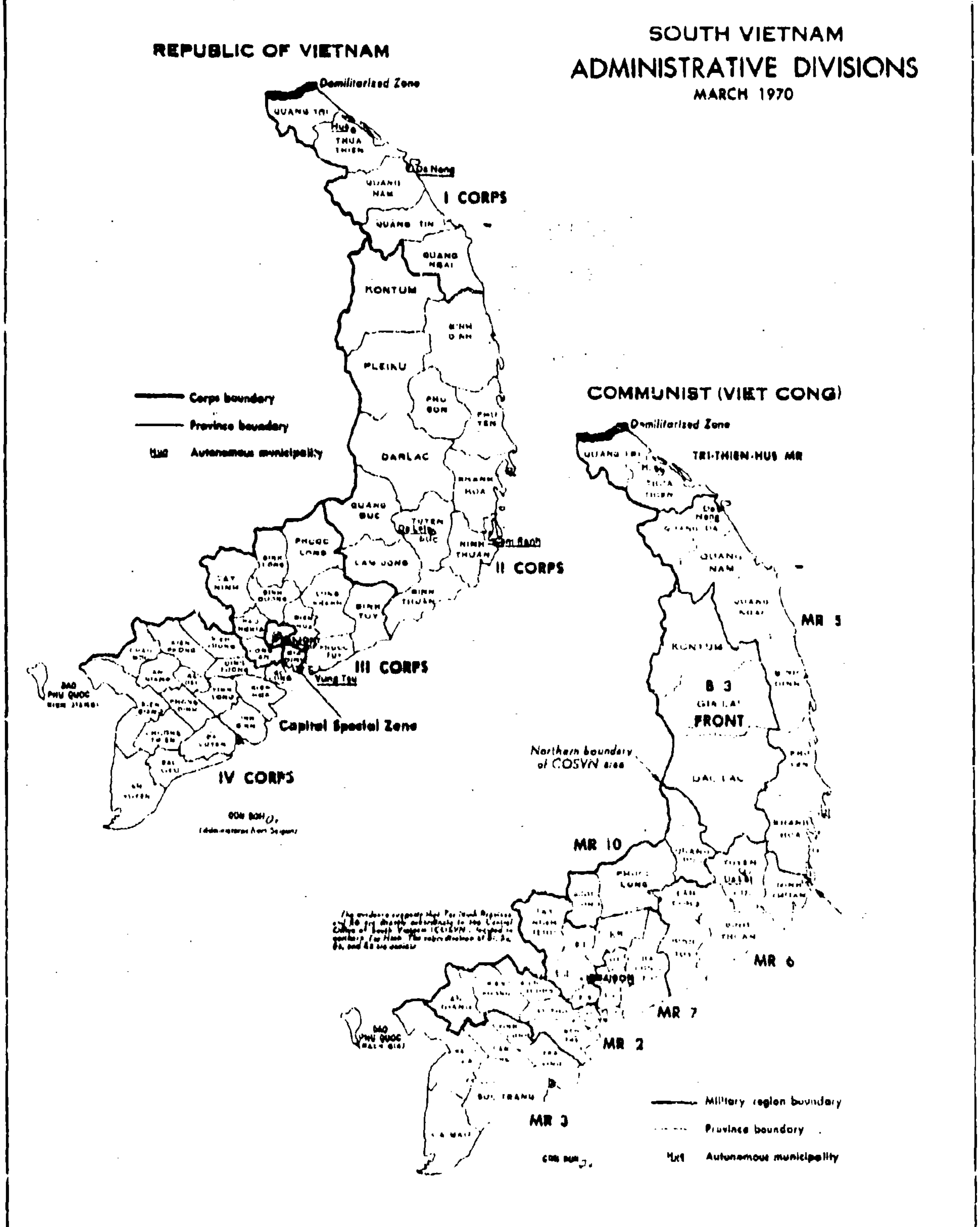
Training programs, for example, at Service war colleges, should provide courses in pacification and these should be open to both military and civilians. The Foreign Service Institute and the National War College should devote some attention in their curriculums to the basic principles and concepts of pacification. Finally, the Defense Language Institute should provide in-depth courses to both the military and civilians in the languages, culture, and history of selected, vulnerable countries. (In this connection, steps should be taken to preserve at least a skeletal program at the Foreign Service Institute's Vietnam Training Center, although the emphasis on Vietnam per se would obviously be phased out.)

An optimum objective of these programs would be to develop and maintain a store of knowledge in-depth and a ready expertise for each of the insurgency-prone countries under NSC scrutiny. While optimum objectives are rarely achieved, a robust effort in this direction would seem the least we could do in the light of the costs we sustained in Vietnam through having to resort to trial and error.

3. Develop an Adequate Reporting System. There is an urgent need to utilize our experience in Vietnam to develop reporting systems that can be used in other insurgency situations.

A vast effort and substantial resources were expended by the United States in Vietnam to develop a reporting and evaluation system (HES and its related systems). What evolved was an elaborate array of reports, based on an extensive collection of detailed data, a sophisticated weighting system, and a highly technical computer printout. This costly and ambitious reporting system, which relied heavily on American personnel, will probably never be reproduced in another place at another time. Nor should it be. Nonetheless, too much has been invested in this effort to abandon it without attempting to store up relevant methodology and techniques for future use if need be.

The reporting experts in Saigon and Washington should be charged with the task of developing a reporting system, on a much more modest scale than HES, that could be used in other situations with a minimum of Americans and at a fraction of the cost. Such a scaled-down system should be tried on a pilot basis in one or two other insurgency situations (e.g., the Philippines).



SOUTH VIETNAM
ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS
MARCH 1970

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Demilitarized Zone
QUANG TRI
Hue
THUA THIEN
Da Nang
QUANG NAM
I CORPS
QUANG TIN
QUANG NGAI
KONTUM
BINH DINH
PLEIKU
PHU BON
PHU YEN
DARLAC
KHANH HOA
QUANG DUC
TUYEN DUC
Da Lat
Cam Ranh
NINH THUAN
PHUOC LONG
LAM DONG
II CORPS
BINH THUAN
BINH TUY
TAY NINH
III CORPS
Vung Tau
Capital Special Zone
IV CORPS
DAO PHU QUOC
CON SON
Corps boundary
Province boundary
Hue Autonomous municipality
COMMUNIST (VIET CONG)
Demilitarized Zone
TRI-THIEN-HUE MR
QUANG TRI
THUA THIEN
Da Nang
QUANG DA
QUANG NAM
QUANG NGAI
MR 5
KONTUM
B 3
GIA LAI
FRONT
Northern boundary of COSVN area
DAC LAC
PHU YEN
KHANH HOA
MR 10
PHUOC LONG
TUYEN DUC
NINH THUAN
BINH THUAN
MR 6
SAIGON
MR 7
MR 2
DAO PHU QUOC
SOC TRANG
MR 3
CA MAU
CON SON
Military region boundary
Province boundary
Hue Autonomous municipality

ANNEX

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED AND CONSULTED

LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED AND CONSULTED

I. INTERVIEWS

A. United States

Mr. James Blaker
Mr. David Brown
Mr. William Bundy
Dr. George Carver
Mr. Robert Darling
B. Gen. James R. Herbert, USA
Col. Amos Jordan, USA
Amb. Robert Komer
Gen. Edward Lansdale, USA
Mr. Robert Matteson
Mr. Clay McManamay
Dr. William Nighswonger
Mr. MacDonald Salter
Mr. George Tanham
Amb. Maxwell Taylor
Mr. Thomas Thayer
Col. William Thomas, USA
Mr. John P. Vann

B. Vietnam--Saigon

Gen. Creighton Abrams, USA
Mr. William Ahern
Mr. Anthony J. Alitto
Mr. Eugene P. Bable
Amb. Samuel Berger
Mr. H. Lee Braddock
Mr. Everet Bumgardner
Amb. Ellsworth Bunker
Mr. Martin S. Christie
Amb. William E. Colby
Mr. Russell Cooley
Mr. Lawrence Crandall
Mr. John C. Dodson
Mr. H. Aubrey Elliott
Mr. Richard J. Evans
Mr. Ben R. Ferguson
Mr. John Figuiera
B. Gen. Eugene P. Forrester, USA
Mr. Robert Gee
Col. Ephraim Gershater, USA
Mr. James Green
Mr. Hatcher James
Mr. Richard L. Hough
Mr. Robert O. Jones
Mr. Frederick V. Lilly, II
Col. Robert McCord, USA
Mr. John R. Mossler
Miss Juanita L. Nofflet
Mr. Thomas Oliver
Mr. Robert S. Pace
Mr. Richard Parkinson
Col. James K. Patchell, USA
Mr. John Riggs
Dr. John C. Russell
Maj. Jean Sauvegeot, USA
Mr. Frank W. Scotton
Mr. Theodore G. Shackley
Mr. Stanley J. Siegel
Mr. Intz Sillins
Mr. Franklin Stewart
Mr. Norman L. Sweet
Mr. John Sylvester
Col. Joseph T. Tambe, USA
Mr. Martin M. Tank
Mr. Thomas W. Thorsen
Gen. Frederick A. Weyand, USA
Mr. Cecile A. Williams
Mr. Stephen B. Young

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C. Vietnam--Provinces and Districts

Mr. Harvey M. J. Ames
Maj. Joseph V. Arnold, USA
Col. Nguyen Bé, RVN
Col. William F. Boiler, USA
Capt. Andrew W. Bolt, USA
Maj. Noel P. Brady, USA
Mr. Edward K. Bryan
Mr. Ralph Cruikshank
Mr. John D. Dean
Mr. James W. Echle
Mr. Edon E. Ewing
Maj. Lee F. Kleese, USA
Maj. Stephen P. Larson, USA
Mr. Daniel Leaty
Lt. Col. Robert W. Lockridge, Jr., USA
Mr. John P. Lyle
Capt. Joseph R. McElroy, USA
Maj. Philip C. Medenbach, USA
Capt. William Noe, USA
Maj. Charles O. Pflugrath, USA
Mr. John S. Powley
Mr. Richard Riddle
Maj. Terry E. Rowe, Jr., USA
Mr. Henry Sanbri
Mr. Frank E. Schmelzer
Maj. Harold L. Shankles, USA
Mr. William Sinclair
Capt. Robert G. Strange, USA
Maj. Richard E. Supinski, USA
Mr. Earl L. Thieme
Lt. Col. George O. Tucker, USA
Maj. Ray J. Vejar, USA
Lt. Col. Robert E. Wagner, USA
Mr. Robert L. Walkinshaw
Maj. Harold L. Watts, USA
Mr. Donald D. Westerlund
Maj. Donald Witmeyer, USA
Mr. Kenneth Young

D. Bangkok, Thailand

Mr. George Newman
Mr. Gary Quinn
Mr. Robert Schwartz
Mr. William Stokes
Amb. Leonard Unger

E. Hong Kong

Hon. Jack Erwin

F. Paris, France

Amb. David Bruce
Miss Patricia Byrne
M. Claude Cheysson
M. Olivier Dussaix
M. Jean Letourneau
M. Jean Sainteny
Gen. Raoul Salan
Gen. Vernon Walters

G. London, England

Mr. Dennis Duncanson

II. PROVINCE SEMINARS

A. Long An Province

Mr. David Brown	Mr. Jeffrey Race
Mr. David Cartes	Mr. Thomas Scoville
Mr. Robert Cutts	Maj. Eugene Zupsic
Maj. Carl Neely, Jr.	Lt. Col. William Thomas
Mr. John O'Donnell	

B. Quang Nam Province

Col. Donald Evans, USMC	Col. Clifford Peabody
Mr. John Horgan	Maj. B. E. Strickland, USMC
Mr. Richard Ledford	Col. James A. Swenson
Dr. William Nighswonger	

III. REVIEWS

Mr. David Brown	Mr. John Horgan
Lt. Gen. John Chaisson, USMC	Amb. Robert Komer
Amb. William Colby	Gen. Edward Lansdale
Mr. Robert Cutts	Dr. William Nighswonger
B. Gen. James R. Herbert, USA	Lt. Col. William Thomas, USA