Chart 6 - Organization, Province Regional and Popular Forces

- Province Chief/Sector Commander
  - Sector HQ
  - A & DSL Company
  - Mechanized Platoon
  - River Boat Company
  - Intelligence Platoon
    - Bn and Co Group
    - District Chief/Sub Sector Cdr
      - Sub-sector HQ
      - Intelligence Squad
        - PF Platoon
          - Village

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Command

- Operational Control
The usual area of operation of RF units, when their organization was still limited to company and company-group size, was within their province and occasionally in the provincial boundary areas. After they were upgraded into maneuver battalions and mobile groups, RF units were employed in areas extending into adjacent provinces as well, or even far away from their home province, but only for limited periods of time that never exceeded two months. In MR-4 for example, RF units organic to the provinces of Go Cong and Vinh Long were deployed to operate in My Tho and Chuong Thien provinces, respectively. Also, a number of RF units organic to An Giang province were committed to operations in far away Kien Giang province. When operating as mobile tactical units in those instances, RF units often proved as effective as regular ARVN units.

To provide administrative and logistical support to RF and PF units, each province was assigned an Administrative and Logistical Support Company (ALSC) whose size varied depending on the number of RF and PF units to be supported. These ALSCs were subsequently upgraded into Administrative and Logistical Support Centers which were organized into five different standard sizes or classes: A, B, C, D, and E, in decreasing order. Each center provided support for a province with the exception of Binh Dinh, Quang Nam and Dinh Tuong which, because of their unusual concentration of RF and PF units, were assigned two Administration and Logistic Centers each.

Artillery support for RF and PF units was also greatly enhanced by the activation of a total of 174 artillery sections across the country, each section equipped with two 105-mm howitzers. These artillery sections were assigned to sectors as organic units to provide direct support to RF and PF. The availability of territorial artillery units allowed the release of divisional artillery units for mobile operations. In addition to artillery, each province was also assigned an armored platoon equipped with V-100 armored reconnaissance vehicles for the protection of lines of communication, and, in case of areas such as the Mekong Delta, a river boat section to facilitate movements on waterways.

Prior to 1966, the role of the National Police was generally
confined to maintaining law and order in urban areas, cities, provincial capitals and district towns; there was no police force in villages and hamlets. National police forces were subordinated to the Ministry of Interior and placed under the control of a NP General Directorate. Over the years, the NP expanded considerably in keeping with its growing role and finally developed into an authorized 122,000-man strong para-military force. NP forces included uniformed police, special police, combat or field police, and harbor police. (Charts 7 & 8) In addition to the NP central command, there were four regional commands, one for each military region, and the Saigon command. At the province level, there was a NP service, at district level, a NP section and at village level, a NP subsection.

During the period of intensified pacification effort, the NP made significant contributions in the destruction of the enemy infrastructure and maintenance of law and order in villages and hamlets.

Police field forces (PFF) were well equipped and organized into companies. PFF companies were deployed in provinces where they operated in cooperation and coordination with rural development cadre groups.

During the pacification process, NP subsections were established in villages as soon as they became secure. The strength of each village NP subsection varied according to the size of the village population. Villages having upwards of 10,000 inhabitants were assigned one 18-man NP subsection each. Villages having between 5,000 and 10,000 inhabitants were assigned a 12-man NP subsection. A 6-man NP subsection was assigned to each village with less than 5,000 inhabitants. A village NP subsection had the mission to maintain law and order in order to protect the lives and properties of villagers; coordinate activities with military and para-military forces to destroy or arrest members of the enemy infrastructure; control and screen the village population; develop and maintain an agent net; investigate and interrogate Viet Cong suspects; and control village resources.

Police field forces were directly subordinated to the NP central command. The commander of NP field forces served as an assistant to the NP commander. While equipped and trained in the same way as
Chart 8 – Expansion of National Police Forces
other police forces, the PFF specialized in the role of anti-violence and anti-rebellion and had combat capabilities similar to military forces. PFF companies were attached to provinces to support pacification but retained their police command channel and were administratively supported by the NP central command. At each NP regional command there was a PFF representative whose mission was to coordinate PFF efforts within a military region. The province chief, however, had full authority in the employment of PFF companies assigned to his province. He was assisted by a PFF provincial representative.

At the district level, the NP section chief and the PFF company commander assisted the district chief in determining the employment of PFF platoons for the support of pacification. When required, PFF platoons were also deployed to operate in villages. A PFF platoon leader would cooperate with the village chief on the basis of mutual support and neither was under the control of the other.

Rural Development (RD) cadre were organized into groups of 39 men each. In the central highlands, RD cadre were called Rural Mountaineers and organized into groups of 70 men each. RD cadre were recruited in each province and sent to the Vung Tau RD Training Center for training. Upon completion of training they were sent back to their provinces of origin. Each RD group was composed of a group headquarters, a military section and a reconstruction section. While the organization of the military section was fairly consistent, the composition of the reconstruction section varied greatly according to local requirement. Thus specialized members of a RD reconstruction section were selected on the basis of local activities where they would serve. If the local population lived on fishing, the RD group would include specialists in fisheries and the manufacturing of fish

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As of 1970, the military section was removed from the organization of RD cadre teams, thus reducing the authorized strength of each team to 25. This resulted from a marked improvement of the security situation and the sizable expansion of regional and popular forces. In 1971, following the deactivation of the Ministry of Rural Development, RD cadre personnel were reintegrated into various ministries such as Information/Open Arms, Agriculture, and Public Works.
Chart 9 – Organization, 59-Man Revolutionary Development Cadre Group

- Group Leader
- Deputy Group Leader (Political Officer)
- Intelligence Officer
- Radio Operator
- Medic
- Militia Section Leader
- Reconstruction Section Leader
- Civic Affairs Leader
  - Census—Grievances
  - Education & Culture
  - Motivation
  - Administration
  - Hygiene, Sanitation
  - Land Reform
  - Agriculture Animal Husbandry Industries
  - Cooperatives
  - Construction, Public Works
- Squad
  - Civic Affairs Leader
  - Reconstruction Section Leader
  - Militia Section Leader
sauce. Likewise, in those areas where the local inhabitants were farmers, the composition of the RD groups would invariably include specialists in agriculture and farm animal breeding. The need for those RD specialists was formulated by the provinces and the RD training center was responsible for their training.

A RD group mission was to study and improve local political, cultural, social, and economic programs; find out the true aspirations of the local population; study and recommend local self-help projects; and encourage the local population in the maintenance of the local road system. With an authorized strength of 34, the military section of a RD group planned security measures for the protection of the group headquarters and the reconstruction section, coordinated activities with friendly forces, and organized and trained the village PSDF.

A provincial RD headquarters coordinated RD activities and helped the province chief control assigned RD groups. (Chart 20) In addition to its specified mission, a provincial RD headquarters also cooperated with departmental services to develop programs to meet the needs of the local population. Other tasks performed by the provincial RD headquarters included census and classification of the population; encouraging the population to participate in community activities; improving education programs and combating illiteracy; assisting the population in the maintenance of public hygiene such as house sanitation and the digging of wells; organizing and conducting political indoctrination sessions; and assisting the population in the organization of farmers' associations.

During the period from 1965 to 1970, RD cadre groups played key roles in the pacification and development effort. As of 1971, however, since the pacification program focused on community defense and community development, it was directly operated by the specialized cadre of various ministries. As a result, RD cadre groups were deactivated and the personnel were absorbed into the ministries, such as Information and Open Arms, Agriculture, etc., depending on their qualifications. The pacification effort was also centralized under the Central Pacification and Development Council and the Ministry of Rural
Chart 10 — Organization, Province RD Cadre Group Headquarters

Group Leader

Assistant

Administration Section

Operation and Technical Section

Psywar Section

Security Section
Development was dissolved. In its place, a Center for Pacification and Development was created and subordinated to the Office of the Prime Minister. The director of the center served as secretary general for the CPDC.

Although RF units were provincial and district forces, and PF units, village and hamlet forces, their employment was flexible. To provide better security, province and district chiefs were free to employ their forces where, when, and how they deemed best. RF battalions, because of their independent operational capabilities, were usually employed in combined operations with regular ARVN forces or as province reaction forces. Seldom were they broken down into smaller elements to man static defense positions. The deployment of RF battalions into other provinces, however, was the prerogative of the Military Région commander. In the event the MR commander ordered an RF battalion into another province, he would specify the command relationships under which the battalion would operate; the duration of the attachment and arrangements for operational control and combat support; and logistical and administrative support. In general, a RF battalion deployed out of its home province continued to be administratively supported by its home ALSC but received logistical support from the ALSC in its new area of operation.

The case of RF company groups was somewhat different. Because of their limited command and control capabilities, RF company groups were generally employed in well-defined areas of operation and always confined to the home province. They were mostly employed for local security missions. RF company groups were best suited for providing security for limited areas within a district; supervising national police forces and the people's self-defense forces; and providing guidance for village and hamlet chiefs in organizing and consolidating their local defense systems. Separate RF companies which were not organic to any group or battalion were mostly employed for the protection of public utility installations, roads and bridges.

Popular force platoons were assigned to villages and operated according to the village chief's defense plan under the control of his deputy for security. Depending on the situation, PF platoons might
be deployed to operate in village boundary areas or in adjacent villages. The long-duration deployment of a PF platoon from its home village was discouraged and subject to approval by the Military Region Command. When operating away from its home village, a PF platoon received free rations of rice.

People's Self-Defense Forces were not usually employed in a military capacity. Being an auxiliary force, PSDF members assisted popular forces in the enforcement of security in the villages and participated in activities involving the villagers and their families. In secure areas, PSDFs were also employed to guard roads and bridges and in mixed patrols with PFs. However, PSDFs were almost never entrusted the task of manning the defense of important GVN installations or vital lines of communication.

The great number of military forces employed in support of pacification never seemed to keep up with the requirements occasioned by the necessity to deploy a permanent occupation force to every hamlet. The situation was such that when protection forces were deployed from a certain area considered "secure", that area might relapse into insecurity and the local population would lose confidence in the GVN. To ensure a judicious employment of forces, the Central Pacification and Development Council devised certain principles which were embodied in the concept of area security. According to this concept, whenever an area had been pacified and deemed secure, its military forces would be reduced and partly redeployed to other less secure areas. This redistribution of forces generally occurred within a Military Region and was a function of the changing situation and the MR commander made the decisions affecting the redeployment of regular ARVN forces and RF battalions.

U.S. Organization for Pacification Support

The Office of Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) was organized in May 1967 as an effort designed to unify US pacification support activities heretofore conducted separately by such US agencies as United States Agency for International
Development (USAID), the CIA, Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPACO) and the military advisory system. CORDS provided support to the GVN in all aspects concerning the pacification program. Placed under the control of the Commander, USMACV (COMUSMACV), it directed and supervised both military and civilian support activities. COMUSMACV was assisted by a Deputy for CORDS, a US official with ambassador's rank, whose functions were to coordinate and supervise all pacification support activities, military and civilian. In particular, the Deputy COMUSMACV for CORDS was responsible for formulating policies and programs designed to interface with the GVN pacification effort. (Chart 11)

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS) was the principal staff assistant to COMUSMACV and DEPCORDS/MACV on US Civil-Military Support for the GVN pacification and development program. He had primary general staff responsibilities for: providing advice on all aspects of US Civil/Military Support for the Community Defense and Local Development Program; in conjunction with GVN authorities, developing joint and combined plans, policies, concepts, and programs concerning US Civil/Military support for community defense and local development; supervising the execution of plans and programs for US Civil/Military support for Community Defense and Local Development; providing advice and assistance to GVN, including the Central Pacification and Development Council, the various ministries, the RVNAF JGS, and other GVN agencies on US Civil/Military support for Community Defense and Local Development; managing and directing US civil assistance to the autonomous cities in the fields of integral security, political mobilization, and technical support; serving as the focal point for local development programs, population and resources control, and for civic action by US forces; serving as point of contact with sponsoring US agencies for the Community Defense and Local Development Programs; evaluating Civil/Military Community Defense and Local Development activities and reports on the progress, status, and problems of community defense and local development support; carrying out US representation to the GVN Chieu Hoi ministry, recommending basic
Chart 11 - Organization, Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for CORDS, USMACV

COMUSMACV

Deputy for CORDS

Chief of Staff

ACS for CORDS

Management Support

Plans, Policies and Programs

Pacification Study Group

Research and Analysis

Chieu Hoi

Phung Hoang (Phoenix)

Public Safety

Territorial Security

Community Development

War Victims

Municipal Development
policies, goals and guidelines for planning purpose, and acting on all Community Defense and Local Development program support policy matters pertaining to subordinate echelons.

The principal functions of CORDS Directorates were as follows:

**Pacification Study Group**

Conducted field studies of community defense and local defense programs, and other programs to the extent they affected community defense and local development.

**Management Support Directorate**

Supervised and coordinated activities in the management and administrative area, including manpower planning and control, management analysis, and manpower development, administrative services, general services and communications; and air operations in support for CORDS activities.

**Plans, Policies, and Programs Directorate**

Advised and assisted the GVN Central Pacification and Development Council and other GVN agencies in the development of community defense and local development plans, policies and concepts; developed military political and economic plans, as well as policies and concepts concerning community defense and local development activities; contributed to plans and policies developed by other MACV staff sections, determined MACCORDS piaster requirements; negotiated with USAID and the GVN on all resource levels; advised the Director for CORDS on the impact on defense and development of military strategies and tactics; through senior advisers and regional DEPCORDS, coordinated with US and GVN field commanders, province senior advisers and province chiefs regarding implementation of programs; and coordinated CORDS responses to all audits.

**Research and Analysis Directorate**

Operated the MACCORDS management information systems; developed and operated automated data processing systems in support of CORDS and GVN community defense and development objectives; controlled CORDS field reporting, analyzed reports to provide quantitatives and qualitative measurement of community defense and local development progress; analyzed the dynamics of the community defense and local development.
process to define problems and recommended solutions; advised and assisted the GVN central pacification and development council on matters pertaining to measurement of pacification progress; advised and assisted the office of the Prime Minister in the establishment of a GVN computer center; provided staff support services to CORDS directorates relating to ADP, reports, graphics and briefings.

**Phung Hoang Directorate**

Advised and assisted the GVN Phung Hoang Division of Headquarters, National Police Command and recommended and developed Phung Hoang plans and policies.

**Municipal Development Directorate**

Advised and assisted the urban committee of the CPDC, the Director General of Reconstruction and Urban Planning and other GVN agencies in the formulation of policy, programs and projects for development of the urban areas of the RVN; coordinated the function of CORDS and other US mission agencies, as appropriate, in matters relating to the administration, physical planning, and technical and social development in urban areas; promoted the involvement of the private sector urban programs and projects. Assisted and advised the Mayor of Saigon and was responsible for all US assistance to the city of Saigon, to include personnel, commodities and funding.

**War Victims Directorate**

Developed policy goals, objectives and guidelines for US assistance to GVN programs assisting refugees, war veterans, and other people in need of social and economic help and to the GVN programs of land development and hamlet building benefiting victims of war; advised the GVN Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of War Veterans, and the Directorate General of Land Development and Hamlet Building.

**Territorial Security Directorate**

Advised and assisted the RVNAF JGS on regional forces and popular forces, the Ministry of Interior on people's self-defense forces, and the Director General of Youth and Sports on youth affairs; developed and recommended policies and programs on the employment and improvement of regional forces/popular forces units.
Community Development Directorate

Advised and assisted in implementation of programs under the auspices of the central pacification and development council, the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD), the Ministry for the Development of Ethnic Minorities (MDEM), and Ministry of the Interior (MOI) overall responsibility within CORDS for advisory efforts aimed at improving the operation of province and lower levels of government; tasked with support and technical supervision of regional and provincial advisory operations in development; served as direct counterpart to MORD and MDEM; advised appropriate subdivisions of CPDC, MOI and other ministries, as required, to assist in implementation of specific programs assigned to the directorate in the GVN pacification programs, the national fund for local development, the province development council, the village self-development fund, the rural credit program, the rural development cadre program, and the Son Thon Rural Development Cadre (Mountaineer RD) program.

Public Safety Directorate

Served as the principal advisor to the Director CORDS and the Director, USAID, and developed and recommended basic policy, goals, objectives, and guideline for US civil military support to the GVN national police command; developed and recommended basic policy, priorities, goals, objectives and guidelines for the US public safety programs supporting these agencies. Assessed the progress and priorities of law enforcement and related security actions.

At the Corps and Military Region level, the Commander, US Field Force, in his capacity as senior adviser to the ARVN Corps commander, was responsible to MACV for all efforts concerning pacification and security in his area of responsibility. He was assisted by a Deputy for CORDS, usually a civilian, whose functions were to coordinate and supervise US activities in support of the pacification program in the MR. In addition, the Commander, US Field Force was also assisted by a military deputy, responsible for military activities. (Chart 22)

At the province/sector level, the civilian and military advisory efforts were integrated under the control of the Province Senior Advisor who, as Director, Province CORDS, was a civilian or a military
Chart 12 – Organization, CTZ/MR CORDS in 1968

Field Force Cdr/Senior Adviser
- Deputy Force Cdr.
- Deputy for CORDS

Chief of Staff

Deputy Senior Adviser

Assistant Chief of Staff for CORDS
- Mgmt Support
- Plans & Programs
- Reports

Force General Staff
- Chieu Hoi
- NLD
- RD

US Units

Province Advisory Team
- Refugees
- Psy Ops
- Public Safety

ARVN Div. Advisory Team
- ARVN Regt. Advisory Team
- ARVN Bn. Advisory Team

District Advisory Team

 Coordination of Military & CORDS matters
- Operational Control when unit assigned on RD direct support mission

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officer. As director, province CORDS, the province senior adviser reported to and received directives from the deputy CORDS, US Field Force. When a regular ARVN battalion was attached to the province as reinforcement for pacification support, the battalion's adviser was placed under the control of the director, province CORDS. In general, the province senior adviser/CORDS director advised and assisted the province chief in all areas related to the pacification program of the province.

At the district level, CORDS also integrated civilian and military support and advisory activities concerning pacification. The director, district CORDS, district senior adviser, was responsible for implementing and following up on pacification support activities. The CORDS district adviser was usually a military officer since his duties as senior district adviser included mostly military activities.

In addition to the CORDS system, the US placed advisers with Vietnamese forces, adding to the RVN military effort to support pacification. Greatly expanded in organization and personnel, the US advisory system encompassed the entire RVNAF hierarchy and reached down to the battalion level. Advisory groups and teams advised and assisted RVNAF units in all areas of operation. They were supported by a communication system of their own which provided a continuous link from the central echelon to corps, divisions, regiments and battalions. At corps level, US Field Force commanders also played the role of corps senior advisers. (Chart 13)

In conjunction with their combat efforts, US forces also performed civic action activities which were highly praiseworthy in view of their effective contributions to the GVN pacification effort. US civic action programs underwent some changes in emphasis; in 1964, for example, US civic action efforts were focused on providing health protection and sanitation for the peasantry in rural areas. They included such programs as well digging, and anti-malaria operations. In 1965, however, in view of the massive US participation, US civic programs emphasized the necessity to reduce casualties and damage to the civilian population, foster good rapport between US forces and the population, and assist the peasants in their farm work, particularly
Chart 13 — US Advisory Relationship with ARVN

US

Commander, MACV

Corps Senior Advisor

Division Senior Advisor

Province Advisor

District Advisor

ARVN

Chairman JGS

Corps Commander

Division Commander

Province Chief

District Chief

Regimental Advisor

Battalion Adviser

Command

Advisory Relationship

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in those areas adjacent to US bases. US civic action programs also helped the local population to repair roads and build bridges, schools, maternity wards and dispensaries.

Civic action programs implemented by US forces gained popular sympathy and developed excellent rapport between them and the civilian population. In addition to the building task, US forces took good care of the civilian population whenever casualties and damage occurred. Injured civilians were always immediately evacuated for treatment, and all damages were compensated for with fairness. In this respect, US forces seldom incurred criticism since they carried out with zeal MACV directives to "limit to the maximum extent casualties and damages to the civilian population."

Within the first six months of 1966 alone, US forces built 78 schools, 29 dispensaries, 43 bridges, and repaired 246 miles of rural road. In addition, a total of 12,860 tons of clothing, food, and medicine donated by the International Catholic Relief Service were distributed to the local population during military operations. Nevertheless, the most realistically useful civic operation undertaken by US forces was the Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP). It was widely appreciated by the rural population since it provided for much-needed medical treatment and medicine.

US civic action operations were also helpful in bringing relief to the increasing number of war refugees. In this regard, the US effort was particularly effective during 1968 when thousands of people became victims of heavy fighting. Relief programs of long duration were undertaken by US forces who assisted the RVN in building resettlement centers and distributing food, medicine, and clothing to the refugees.

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The Phoenirc Program

The Phoenix program was proposed by US authorities in 1967 as a means to consolidate and unify intelligence activities aimed at the destruction of the VCI. Despite GVN concurrence, it was nearly a year before the government approved Phoenix by executive decree. The delay stemmed from difficulties in defining terms of reference for the program and in selecting the agency responsible for its execution.

To implement the program, Phoenix committees were established from the central government to the districts with the missions of collecting information on the VCI, and planning for the organizing operations to neutralize it. (Charts 14, 15, & 16)

Corps commanders, province and district chiefs served as chairmen of the Phoenix committees at their respective levels. In this organization, the Regional National Police director, the provincial NP chief and the district NP chief played the role of committee secretary general. Members of a Phoenix committee included representatives of the police field force, the special police, the military security service, the provincial reconnaissance unit (PRU) and Chieu Hoi, RD cadre, Sector S-2 and other military organizations.

The coordination of intelligence and operations among various military and civilian agencies included the following tasks: (1) to collect, corroborate and disseminate information pertaining to key cadre, organization, and plans of the VCI; (2) to exploit information gathered in a timely manner so as to conduct quick reaction military operations; and (3) to classify, interrogate, and recommend the adjudication of suspects temporarily detained.

The task of eliminating the VCI was carried out in close coordination with search-and-destroy and pacification operations, making full use of propaganda and psywar techniques and resources. The Phoenix effort was supported by military units in combined operations, closely coordinated with police forces. The goal was maximum coordination; police field forces and the PRU joined in the task of eliminating the VCI. RF and
Chart 14 - Phoenix Operation and Control System

- Prime Minister
- Minister of Interior
- Commander National Police
  - Regional NP Commander
    - Province NP Chief
    - District NP Chief
    - Village NP Chief
  - Regional Phoenix Office
    - Province Phoenix Center (PIOCC)
      - Provincial NP Command
        - Regional Phoenix Committee
          - Central Phoenix Committee
          - Regional Phoenix Committee
          - Province Phoenix Committee
            - DIOCC
                - VIOCC
Chart 15 — Organization, Province PHOENIX Committee

Provincial and City Phoenix Committee

Chairman: Province Chief

Deputy Chairman
Police Chief
S-2, Sector

Senior Advisor

Phoenix Center Director

Sector Operations Center

Mail Section

Situation Section

Plans and Operations Section

Information

Screening

Field Police

Province Reconnaissance Unit

- Command
- - - - - - Advisory
- - - - - - Coordination
District Phoenix Committee
Chairman: District Chief, also Center Director

1st Deputy:
Dep. Subsector Cdr.
2nd Deputy:
District Police Chief

Mail Section
Political

Situation Section
Military

Operations Section
Field Police

Security & Intelligence
RF - PF

Village Phoenix Committee Chairman:
Village Chief Deputy:
Assistant for Security

Secretary
PF units participated in operations designed to attack and destroy the VCI. For example, these units provided the information, held or cordoned the target, and protected searching and screening parties made up of the special police, police field force, and military security personnel.

Information on the VCI, collected by intelligence agencies during military operations, or by the provincial interrogation center, was immediately disseminated to related units or agencies, to the DIOCC, and to the provincial permanent center for exploitation.

Provincial reconnaissance units (PRU) conducted special operations to collect or exploit information and participated in combined operations with other forces. Organized and armed by the US Embassy, PRUs were placed under the control of and employed by the provincial police chiefs when the National Police was assigned the responsibility of implementing the Phoenix program. Together with police field force units, PRUs made up the main police striking force in the task of eliminating the VCI.

The National Police was the principal active component of the Phoenix organization. The Special Police were responsible for collecting, corroborating and evaluating information concerning the VCI. The police field force units were the NP reaction forces who actually conducted police operations designed to destroy the VCI.

RD cadre teams were also given the mission of supporting the elimination of the VCI by providing information leading to the discovery of the VCI and participating in reaction operations conducted by friendly forces.

Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) cadre, because of their specialized knowledge of the enemy, were particularly useful in the elimination of the VCI. They were most effective in appealing for enemy personnel's return and providing support to intelligence collection activities or reaction operations. Selected returnees were employed in the interrogation of VC suspects or to identify VCI personnel among refugees.

The enemy infrastructure usually conveyed the general impression that its personnel were a special breed of fanatic Communist cadres. In fact, a distinction had to be made between those VCI cadre who were
truly indoctrinated party members and the sympathizers or common people who were induced into serving in the VCI. In most cases, the second category of VCI personnel was made up of ordinary, poor people who cooperated with the enemy either because of his pressure or for profit. They included smugglers of medicine and other essential commodities plying their trade between GVN-controlled and VC areas.

People detained by police and security forces during military operations were first classified into three categories, VC or NVA soldier, suspected member of the VCI, or undetermined identity. If subsequent interrogation, documentation, police records check, and possibly possession of weapons proved conclusively that the individual was clearly an enemy soldier or a VCI operative, he (or she) was sent to the PW camp (in the first instance) or remanded to trial (if a member of the VCI). If, on the other hand, no evidence was found to implicate the person as a VCI member, he was released. Those detainees who were suspected of being members of the VCI but could not be convicted as such for lack of evidence were placed under the jurisdiction of the provincial security committee which had the authority to either release or detain them temporarily pending investigation. This committee was chaired by the province chief and included the provincial judge or prosecutor, the police chief, the MSS representative, the sector S-2 and representatives of operational forces as members. The role of the MSS representative was particularly significant since the MSS, a counter-intelligence agency, collected and provided information on the VCI to the PIOCC and DIOCC. The committee was empowered to release or detain a suspect at the provincial reeducation center (jail) for a period of time ranging from three months to a maximum of two years. The "trial" of suspects took place once a month and its procedure began with a presentation of records by the police chief. If there were no complications, the committee immediately decided on each case.

This procedure was criticized as unconstitutional and undemocratic because it amounted to a trial without due legal process. However, the GVN contended that it was simply an administrative, not a judicial act, hence not determined by national laws. And since it was not a trial
process in the legal sense the suspect could not have legal counsel nor
was his presence required when the committee made its decision.

The reason the GVN resorted to this procedure against the VCI was
that it was nearly impossible in most cases to produce enough hard
evidence for indictment, yet the suspect's culpability was certain beyond
reasonable doubt. Thus to stay on the safe side, the official reasoning
went, it was better to detain the suspect than to free the criminal, even
at the expense of incurring some wrath. On the other hand, the GVN au-
thorities were faced with the problem of identifying hard-core VCI mem-
ers from among the suspects who, for the most part, were just sympa-
thizers or innocent people induced into the VCI service under persuasion,
coercion or threats of blackmail, or simply to earn a living. To provide
enough time for thorough research and investigation, temporary detention
of the suspects was necessary.

For all the criticism directed against it, the detention power
authorized provincial security committees failed to deter the VCI mem-
ers still at large since the maximum two years behind bars was not
really too high a price for the hard-core VC. Compared to what had been
done under the First Republic which outlawed the Communists altogether,
detention appeared mild and even democratic. Under President Diem's
secret directives, province chiefs were allowed to "dispose of" VCI
members in whichever way they deemed appropriate including murder, without
legal justification. The VCI members were especially fearful of the
"Central Vietnam Special Task Force" organized and directed by Diem's
brother, Mr. Ngo Dinh Can in the early 60's. The task force members
indiscriminately slaughtered every VCI member they hunted down and this
deterred VCI overt activities for some time.

Under the Second Republic, the spirit of democracy was strong and
pervasive, precluding the use of harsh measures. Against members of
the VCI captured, the strongest measure taken was detention which, to
hard-core elements, could be looked upon as a period of rest pending
release and renewed activities. To the innocent people detained because
of suspicion, however, detention was apt to alienate them from the GVN
cause and, under Communist proselyting influence, could well turn them
into sympathizers and eventually members of the VCI.
The GVN had no choice than proceed with the program of eliminating
the VCI, which could be equated with a military force in terms of
destructive effectiveness. GVN officials responsible for the program
were fond of saying that eliminating a district or province political
commissar of the VCI was tantamount to putting a whole VC company out
of action. Given the effect of the program on VCI activities, this
was not an inflated statement.

The period from the inception of the Phoenix program up to 1971,
which was considered the best year of the RVN in terms of security and
pacification achievements, saw a marked decline in VCI activities. Out
of an estimated total of 40,000 members recorded by 1971, the VCI suf­
fered 15,603 eliminated or neutralized, broken down into 5,615 killed,
4,391 detained, and 5,597 returnees, or more than one third of its
strength. In 1968 the VCI suffered the biggest loss ever in its ranks,
because it was pushed into overt military activities in support of the
"general offensive-general uprising" campaign.

In retrospect, the Phoenix program can be termed a reasonable
success. This success could have been maintained and furthered as long
as South Vietnam was free from NVA incursions. Like pacification in
general, its achievements could be offset by military reverses. The
momentum of the program came to a standstill in 1972, for example, when
NVA units launched the Easter offensive. The same was true of the post­
 cease-fire period during which pacification and other programs suf­
 fered severe setbacks in the face of stepped-up enemy attacks which the
RVNAF alone, thinly spread as they were and with reduced war supplies,
were unable to contain effectively.

The program was also beset by internal problems among which the
most serious was the shortage of capable intelligence personnel at the
province and district levels for effective coordination of activities
against the VCI. Next came the lack of appropriate support and weight
given to the program by province and district chiefs who, either because
of their overburdened responsibilities or failure to realize the impor­
tance of the program and take proper interest in it, placed its execution
squarely into the hands of the national police. Left to its own
initiative, the politically-oriented national police was generally reluctant to take forceful actions and became ineffective against the VCI.

Then there was the problem of identifying and prosecuting VCI members operating under cover and living mixed with the population. Identification was particularly difficult against planted agents in crowded urban and suburban areas where the mass of working people lived. Very seldom, if ever, was their presence detected by the national police.

The problem was even harder in the rural areas where village and hamlet councilmen operated in constant fear of retaliation which accounted for their lack of enthusiasm or even dereliction in eliminating the VCI. More often than not, they failed to take action even when they knew there were enemy agents living in the community, for sometimes these agents turned out to be the relatives of certain councilmen themselves. The fear of retaliation led to a propensity toward accommodation and finally developed into a philosophy of "live and let live" which was at the root of passivity and inaction. In a few extreme cases, some councilmen might turn out to be the very VCI that the Phoenix effort set out to eliminate.
CHAPTER IV

RVN-US Cooperation and Coordination in Pacification

The Central Level

Prior to 1968, during which period the Minister of Revolutionary Development (RD) served as secretary general of the Central Revolutionary (Rural) Development Council, all pacification plans and programs were developed by the RD Ministry in cooperation and coordination with US Embassy agencies and other GVN ministries. When approved and signed by the Prime Minister, these plans and programs were disseminated to GVN ministries and the Joint General Staff for implementation.

To develop a pacification plan or program, every year the Central Pacification and Development Council (CPDC) formulated a set of concepts and objectives as guidance for the pacification effort during the year. Before these concepts and objectives were disseminated to the ministries and the Joint General Staff (JGS) for planning, they were subject to discussion and agreement between the President of the Republic and the US Ambassador.

As far as the JGS was concerned, the CPDC concepts and objectives served as bases for planning the military support requirement which was formalized by the annual Combined Campaign Plan, a planning effort jointly made by the JGS and the US Military Assistance Command (USMACV). To the ministries of the GVN, these pacification concepts and objectives also constituted guidelines for their own specific plans and programs which they worked out in coordination with counterpart US agencies.

(Chart I?)

On the military side, the yearly planning process involved the establishment of a combined staff made up of elements from the JGS and MACV. It was this combined staff that worked out the military plan in support of the GVN pacification effort. The combined JGS-MACV staff
Chart 17 — US-RVN Relationship in Pacification, before 1971

Other Ministries

Ministry of Rural Development

Ministry of National Defense

Joint General Staff

US Military Assistance Command

Corps

Senior Adviser Commander, US Field Force

Military Deputy

Deputy CORDS

Division

Senior Advisor

Advisors

Province

Sector

Province CORDS

Adviser

Field Police

Army

RF

Advisor

PRU

District

Subsector

District CORDS
was presided over by two co-chairmen, one from the JGS, the other from MACV, usually general officers. Members of the combined staff on the JGS side included: the Assistant Chiefs of Staff for J-1, J-2 and J-3, the commanding generals of the Central Logistic Command and the Training Command, the director of the General Political Warfare Department, and the commanders of the Air Force and Navy. The Assistant Chief of Staff, J-3 served as deputy chairman and secretary general. On the MACV side, there was the same array of corresponding staff division chiefs. In addition, the combined staff also included representatives of Free World Military Assistance Forces (FWMAF) fighting in Vietnam, such as the Republic of Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, Australia and New Zealand.

As soon as the combined staff was established, the co-chairmen convened a preliminary meeting during which staff components of each side were introduced and working procedures determined. After agreement on working procedures and locations, the co-chairmen proceeded to form combined RVN-US staff subcommittees and assigned specific tasks to each of them. The mission of each combined staff subcommittee was to draft the military plan as related to its staff functions and based on the guidelines provided by the CPDC as well as specific complementary directives as may be issued by the chairman of the JGS and the commander, USMACV. Staff officers of each combined subcommittee cooperated and coordinated with each other during the entire planning process.

During the last meeting session, subcommittees finalized their reports and presented them to the combined staff co-chairmen who sometimes suggested modifications or elaboration before the final draft was submitted to the chairman of the JGS and the commander, USMACV. The final draft was always translated into English and made into two copies: Vietnamese and English. The co-chairmen reviewed the final text of the copies, then submitted them to the chairman, JGS and the commander, USMACV, and after their review and comments, might order another session to make necessary modifications as directed.

The printing of the final text of the plan was usually done by MACV since the JGS did not have the assets required for the rapid production of copies. The final step in the process was a formal ceremony in which
the chairman, JGS and the commander, USMACV signed the documents. Since the plan involved FWMA forces, the commanders of these forces were also invited to attend the ceremony and co-sign the document.

The plan was then disseminated by quickest means to ARVN Corps, US Field Forces, FWMA forces and the services and arms. Upon receipt of the plan, ARVN corps and US Field Forces proceeded to study and work out their own plans, based on the concepts and directives contained in the Combined Campaign Plan. As far as ARVN Corps were concerned, they were responsible for establishing projects, plans and programs in accordance with the basic JGS-MACV plan and in cooperation with US Field Forces concerning military activities. Corps plans were then submitted to the JGS for approval before being implemented. These plans also served as basic guidelines for province chiefs to establish provincial plans.

Central, corps, and provincial plans were completed before the end of the year so that they could be implemented as of the beginning of the new year. To provide effective support for the GVN pacification effort, and also to follow up on the implementation of the pacification plan, the JGS and MACV jointly conducted program review trips every quarter. During these field trips, the chairman, JGS and the commander, USMACV personally visited each corps headquarters where they reviewed the progress being made and gave appropriate directives to help solve problems beyond corps capabilities. These quarterly review meetings were attended by major unit commanders of all forces operating in the corps tactical zone, including US, ARVN, and FWMAF and their staffs.

In addition to efforts on the military side, every six months the President of the Republic, as chairman of CPDC, also made field trips to corps headquarters to review pacification progress being made in each corps tactical zone. He was usually accompanied by the entire cabinet and high-ranking military authorities. At each presidential review meeting held at corps headquarters, all province chiefs were present. On the US side, there was also the participation of high-ranking officials from the US Embassy, CORDS, and other agencies involved in pacification support.
The MACV-JGS quarterly reviews centered on the problem of security in each corps area and the military effort made by each corps in support of the GVN pacification program. Of particular interest to the US and RVN military leaders was the employment of military forces. They were mostly concerned to see whether this employment was judicious and responsive enough to each corps area pacification requirements, and whether forces available were appropriately distributed among the four corps areas for the effort. The presidential reviews, on the other hand, focused primarily on national development and the progress made by each province in meeting the pacification criteria set forth by the CPDC.

Apart from periodically scheduled review sessions conducted by the president and high-ranking military authorities, there were also frequent field trips by ministerial representatives, JGS staff officers and their US counterparts. These trips were made to provinces, districts, and sometimes villages, with the purpose of assessing local problems and difficulties and helping local authorities to solve them or giving them additional resources and support, if required.

As was the case with the JGS, every year the various GVN ministries also received guidance directives from the CPDC to establish their own plans and programs. Each ministerial plan was drafted by the ministry staff and signed by the minister himself. These plans became appendices of the annual overall national pacification plan, called the Pacification and Development Plan or the Community Defense and Local Development Plan.

The establishment of these individual plans required elaborate coordination among the various ministries, between the ministries and their US counterpart agencies and between the ministries and the JGS. The coordination was vital and indispensable since the pacification effort required substantial US assistance and support in funding and technicians on the one hand and the guarantee of security provided by military forces on the other.

The task of coordination among civilian ministries was complex and difficult to trace with accuracy since a ministerial plan involved many different elements and required the assistance and support of several different organizations. The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), for example,
was responsible for making plans and programs related to the development of agriculture. In this program, MOA was required to obtain funds for the purchase of seeds, and for the publication of pamphlets or instructional materials on the use of fertilizers and insecticides for distribution to provinces before the crop season started. It was also necessary to plan for farm credits through the rural development bank, organize and conduct seminars in provinces to help farmers acquire better farming methods, and encourage them to increase the planting of "miracle rice." Also, it was necessary to keep track of special agricultural projects and to train all types of specialists for the provinces in order to guarantee the success of these projects.

To implement this program, MOA had to coordinate and cooperate with several other ministries or agencies. For example, MOA needed the help of the Ministry of Economic Affairs to plan for foreign currency funds for the import of fertilizers, insecticides, and farm equipment. Likewise, the Ministry of Economic Affairs had to coordinate with MOA on rice import and export policies, agricultural products, and farm breeding. MOA then needed the assistance of the Ministry of Finance to reduce tariffs imposed on imported agricultural equipment and machinery. From the Ministry of Defense, MOA had to request special transfers of drafted agricultural specialists serving in the RVNAF so that they could help with programs, help with the clearance of interdicted fishing zones along the coastline, and to guarantee the security for MOA specialists in rural areas. The Ministry of Information was also asked to cooperate in disseminating information about MOA projects and programs by radio and television. To help facilitate the movement of local products to consumer markets across the country, MOA had to coordinate with the Minister of Public Works for the repair, improvement, and development of the communication system. Finally, MOA coordinated with the Ministry of Education to help conduct classes for the training of specialists and to promote the 4T programs in schools, and coordinated with the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Ethnic Minorities for the attachment to MOA of qualified cadre.1

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1The 4T program was similar to American 4-H clubs. The four Ts stand for: Than (Health), Tri (Head), Tam (Heart), and Thu (Hands).
The corps commander, as chairman of the Regional Pacification and Development Council, was responsible for developing a regional pacification plan. The CTZ pacification plan reflected the regional variances and was designed to reach the regional objectives set forth by the CPDC. It was developed in cooperation and coordination with the US Field Force as far as military or operational support was concerned and with ministerial representatives and the regional CORDS in matters dealing with civilian programs. As soon as the CTZ pacification plan was approved, it was disseminated to divisions/DTAs and to provinces for planning. The DTAs were primarily responsible for planning tactical operations to support the provinces while the provinces had to plan for every activity to implement the program. To develop his own pacification plan, the province chief had to rely on directives contained in the corps plan and reinforcement support provided by the DTA or CTZ. The provincial pacification plan was reviewed by the corps commander before being submitted to the CPDC for approval.

As chairman of the regional pacification and development council, it was the corps commander's prerogative to reject or modify province plans. In a few cases, he just returned the plan to the province chief for modification. In general, however, the corps commander seldom exercised his prerogative and usually transmitted province plans as they were submitted.

The most difficult problem encountered by corps in providing support for the provinces was the shortage of military forces. There were several ways corps could solve this problem without asking for additional forces from the JGS. The corps commander could redistribute territorial force allocations; request additional authorized strength in territorial forces and allocate the authorized spaces to needy provinces; redeploy regular forces or deploy RF units from one province to another for short durations; and coordinate with US/FWMA forces for operational support if corps organic forces had been fully committed and in case the areas to be pacified lay within the US/FWMA areas of responsibility.
The redistribution of territorial force allocations was most widely used since it was within one commander's authority. Several provinces were plagued by a constant shortage of territorial forces due to exhausted manpower resources and difficulties in recruiting and replacements. The 1968 general mobilization law, for one thing, authorized only the conscription of male citizens aged 18 and above, while the Viet Cong effectively pre-empted this manpower by abducting teenagers of 17 and 16, sometimes younger, into their ranks. As a result, territorial units were constantly under strength and their authorized quotas were never fulfilled. To solve this problem, a corps commander could transfer the unfulfilled authorized strength quotas to other provinces that enjoyed abundant manpower resources and recruiting facilities. This redistribution of allocations would then be administratively adjusted by the JGS. It was an effective means that permitted the increase of territorial forces on the one hand and the release of regular ARVN forces for operational purposes on the other.

The primary role of US and FWMA forces was to conduct search-and-destroy operations against enemy main force units and bases. However, in case an area targeted for pacification lay within the TAOR of a US or FWMA major unit, coordination with the US Field Force could be made so that the operational activities of this unit helped in the pacification task. Sometimes search-and-destroy operations conducted by US and FWMA forces near pacification areas could be tremendously beneficial, although indirectly, to the pacification program by keeping enemy forces away from these areas.

Similarly, the deployment and disposition of ARVN forces to expand GVN control could be beneficial to US and FWMA areas of tactical responsibility since ARVN forces might interdict the penetration of enemy forces in the areas. In general, there was an effort to combine or coordinate combat activities between ARVN and US forces to provide the kind of mutual support that benefited both.
The Division Tactical Area Level

The DTA was responsible for providing military support for the pacification program through the tactical employment of its regular forces. Provincial pacification plans were usually worked out with the assistance of the DTA since they involved sizable military support by regular forces. During the planning phase, the division commander usually advised the province chief as to what regular forces would be available for his support, and the division senior adviser provided advice and assistance to the ARVN division commander on the coordinated employment of forces and combat support. When the plan was implemented, the division senior adviser assisted the DTA commander in requesting US support. In this regard, the division senior adviser constantly coordinated and exchanged viewpoints with province senior advisers to ensure adequate support for the provincial effort in pacification.

The employment of forces within a DTA to support provincial pacification programs was subjected to careful consideration and planning. The primary concern of the DTA commander when planning the employment of his forces was directed at such questions as: What would happen to the overall DTA situation once forces had been committed to the province? Was there any reaction force left for the division to be used when required? Was the relocation of forces to the provinces judiciously made? Would the provinces be able to employ correctly and judiciously the attached regular forces? Such worries compelled the DTA commander to constantly monitor the employment of his forces and to plan for contingencies in close coordination with his adviser. It became the rule for most DTAs that an infantry division never fully committed all its forces for pacification support. It always retained a reasonable reaction force for use in emergencies.

The Province/Sector Level

In his role as chairman of the province pacification and development council, the province chief was responsible for establishing the
provincial pacification plan, in close cooperation and coordination with
the province senior adviser, the ministerial service chiefs of the prov-
ince, and other civilian and military agencies. The provincial pacifi-
cation plan was reviewed by corps/MR, then submitted to the CPDC for
approval. When the plan had been approved, funds and material required
to support it were directly allotted to the province chief. As far as
military support was concerned, it was provided by the DTA upon approval
of the corps commander. Corps could also provide support to the province
by allotting authorized RF/PF spaces for recruiting purposes.

The province chief was not only the planner of the provincial paci-
fication program, he was also its executor. In general, most provincial
shortcomings which usually delayed pacification progress could be traced
to three major shortages: support forces, materiel, and cadre.

With the assistance of his senior adviser, the province chief had
to plan for the effective employment of forces allotted by the DTA or
corps. He had to decide where to employ regular forces, where to employ
territorial forces, and where to replace regular forces by territorial
forces. He had to base such decisions on the particular areas to be
pacified and the province's ability to recruit and train new troops so
that when the pacification program started, he would have adequate and
readily available support forces.

Once funds and materiel were made available to a province, the
corps commander had to maintain the amount of regular forces committed
to its support as required by the province plan. If a transfer of these
forces was contemplated for any reason, the corps commander would have
to ensure that they be replaced by other forces.

There was some rigidity in the way province plans were implemented.
Unless warranted by extremely adverse circumstances, a plan usually
underwent few changes during the course of the year. For one thing,
it was geared to the funds and materiel the province had requested.
In practice, however, the province did not always obtain what it needed
in time, and there were many reasons for this. First, there were not
enough transportation facilities; most of the materials were import
items and their availability depended on delivery schedules; and finally,
materiel was damaged or lost during transportation. Although seemingly unimportant, the shortage of materiel such as barbed wire, iron posts, and cement, adversely affected the provincial pacification effort. In order to provide timely and adequate support to the provinces, US agencies closely monitored the delivery and movement of materials and took care not to cause undue obstacles to the provincial pacification programs. Sometimes, to gain time and speed up the delivery of materiel, ARVN corps obtained temporary loans from US Field Forces for such items as barbed wire, fence posts, boards, and cement, and distributed them to provinces as advance issues to be reimbursed when imported materials were delivered.

An Evaluation

US assistance played a vital role in the total pacification effort, beginning with the top level where the GVN ministries, as planners and supervisors of their own programs, seemed to need it the most. They were usually plagued by a shortage of personnel required for the various programs. In addition, there was not always qualified cadre for all specialized fields. Training and qualifying such specialists in sufficient numbers took a long time and close support from various US agencies. Planning for specialist requirements was also a time-consuming task since it involved the compilation and review of individual requests received from all the provinces. Despite these shortcomings, the assistance provided by CORDS and other US agencies usually satisfied every need in personnel training required by the ministries. This was due to the very close cooperation and coordination between the GVN agencies and CORDS and other US agencies. Every plan and program was subject to careful studies by both sides.

At the CTZ/MR level, however, it seemed that the US side usually held the initiative in planning. For one thing, at this level there was always a substantial US staff with a wide variety of specialists and qualified personnel. Sometimes a plan was subjected to careful studies by the US staff for five or six months before actually being
forwarded for the first time. In general, US Army staffs were made up of talented and experienced officers who had become experts in their own right. They were extremely efficient and helpful in assessing and evaluating pacification results. In particular, they proved to be unequalled experts in evaluating hamlets, monitoring and assessing the employment and capabilities of territorial forces, and in monitoring the implementation of such programs as Phoenix, Chieu Hoi, and war refugees. Their contributions of opinions, ideas, and suggestions were always pertinent and valuable for remedying deficiencies; their role in pacification support was particularly valuable and in many cases indispensable.

On the RVN side, it was admitted that at the field levels, corps and division, staff officers did not always possess a thorough understanding of the pacification concept and its programs. As a result, most of the planning was initiated and undertaken by the US side. At the beginning of the pacification effort, for example, a plan disseminated by the central level to corps was merely duplicated and sent verbatim to provinces without comments or specific guidance. The corps staff responsible for pacification usually consisted of inexperienced officers who were not familiar with planning or studies and often they were assigned to pacification because they did not fit into any other staff capability. As a result, corps were unable to make studies or plans that could help improve the pacification effort.

By contrast, at the execution level, i.e., province, there were many talented and experienced province chiefs. Some held their positions for several years and consequently had a full grasp of provincial problems, the local terrain and the local population. Others had innovative ideas and achieved spectacular gains in pacification. Province senior advisers usually stayed in their jobs only one year, or sometimes a little longer, and as a result they were not entirely knowledgeable about the province and its pacification problems. Nevertheless, they played key roles in providing assistance and support for their counterparts. If a province was well supplied with materiel or received adequate military support, it was invariably due to the province senior
adviser's active role. His connections and resourcefulness were invaluable assets that made him extremely useful to the province chief. Through his connections with higher echelon commands, for example, a province senior adviser could always communicate his counterpart's problems and obtain immediate response and help. Sometimes a province senior adviser even used MACV or the US Embassy leverage to get things done quickly through the ARVN or GVN channel in support of his counterpart; advisers were effective in cutting through red tape.

The role of the district adviser was particularly a difficult and demanding one, even more so than that of the province adviser. To be effective, the district adviser had to assume a dual role: military and political. He advised and assisted the district chief not only in military and operational matters but also in the use of national resources, the supervision of village and hamlet councils, civic actions, and public relations. In other words, the district adviser had to double as an administrative and political counselor to help his counterpart manage district affairs. Given the relatively young and inexperienced district staff and the extent of work involved in the management of a district, the adviser's role was an uphill task indeed. To give an example, each district managed an average of 30-40 PF platoons, three to six RF companies, thousands of PSDF, police field force, and the RD cadre.

But by and large, US district advisers performed extremely well despite the alien environment. Mostly young army officers at the beginning of their assignment, they usually became inveterate oldtimers of the Vietnam war, wiser though not older, and extremely adept at handling counterinsurgency problems by the time their tour of duty was over. Their contributions to the pacification effort were most significant in the areas of security and rural development. As a special breed of politico-military advisers, they were very popular with the local officials and population.

In summary, US senior advisers at the province and district level played very important roles in pacification support and made substantial
The pacification process usually began with a tactical operation which went through three major phases, each involving the employment of different forces.

In the initial phase, regular ARVN or territorial forces or both conducted a securing operation in the area targeted for pacification. Their objective was to destroy or drive away enemy main or local force units and guerrillas. Since the area to be pacified was usually populated, the use of firepower was subject to limitations to minimize casualties and damage. As soon as the enemy units were destroyed or driven away, friendly forces usually broke down into small elements for a careful search to destroy the remnants of the enemy or those enemy who tried to escape by mixing with the populace. At the same time, psywar and propaganda activities were conducted, first to publicize the victory and secondly to intimidate or proselytize enemy cadre into surrendering or rallying to the GVN side. At night, small units conducted and laid ambushes around the village to prevent the enemy from escaping under the cover of darkness. After a period of two or three days, they deployed to adjacent areas to pursue the enemy still in the area or to strike into enemy bases or communication routes nearby to prevent the enemy from staging a comeback.

During the second phase, while friendly forces shifted their activities further away to ensure complete protection for the village, cadre teams and regional forces began to enter the village to take over control, replacing the operational forces. This was time for the true pacification effort to begin. By this time, local guerrillas
and the VCI in the village had either been destroyed or neutralized, but there might still be some elements hidden in underground shelters. The mission of the RF was to provide security and protection for the national cadre teams and to conduct searches to root out any remaining enemy. National cadre teams then began the process of separating the enemy from the people. This process consisted of investigation, screening, classification, and checking identification papers. This job was performed by the national police. Other cadre organized an information and propaganda service, initiated civic action programs, and conducted meetings during which they explained the purpose and merits of the pacification program. They also began to organize village defense systems and the election of village officials who would make up the village administrative council. Regional forces, meanwhile, started building watch towers and other fortifications to consolidate the defense system. The goal was to demonstrate to the villager the credible presence of security forces who would stay in the village as long as required to protect them.

The last phase was devoted to developmental works. It began as soon as the village had become secure and free from enemy interference or harassment, either by the VCI or guerrillas. National cadre teams began long-term works such as building a school, a maternity ward, an information office, a market place and repairing roads, and erecting bridges. All these efforts had the goal of bringing about security and prosperity for the villagers and letting them appreciate the contrast between what the GVN was doing and what the enemy had said they would do.

The division of a pacification operation into three separate phases was purely theoretical, and phases were not identified in terms of time elapsed but rather by actions taken. All three phases could begin simultaneously if conditions permitted; also, an operation might never get beyond the initial or securing phase. The succession of phases was contingent upon the security situation and counteractions of enemy forces in the area.
First priority in pacification was usually given to populated and economically prosperous areas, urban centers, and villages and hamlets bordering on vital lines of communication and waterways. As soon as these areas were pacified, the effort would shift to adjacent areas. The idea was to spread out as an "oil stain" from secure areas into less secure or semi-secure areas, and from there into insecure areas. Areas targeted for pacification which were termed semi-secure or insecure were usually selected so that they interconnected with secure areas by convenient communications.

Cordon-and-search was a technique designed to search for and destroy the enemy in which a large military force was used to encircle and seal off an area, usually a village or hamlet. It was usually conducted by night to obtain the element of surprise. A force conducting a cordon-and-search operation usually consisted of two elements: a cordon element to encircle and seal off, and a search element which looked for and destroyed the enemy inside the cordon. The cordon force stood ready to counteract any enemy effort to deploy his reinforcements from other areas in order to relieve the elements that had been surrounded, or to face reactions from the enemy being encircled.

After the target area had been sealed off, the search element would wait until daybreak and only then did its members enter the area and began searching. This was when, caught by surprise inside the trap, enemy guerrillas or VCI cadre, or even fugitives such as draft dodgers, deserters and criminals, attempted to slip out through the cordon. The cordon force on the outside perimeter then would arrest them or destroy any enemy element who resisted. The searching task was planned in minute detail and the target village divided into several sections; each search party was assigned a specific section. The search was a painstaking and time-consuming process.
which required patience and a thorough familiarity with enemy methods of camouflage and concealment. Enemy underground shelters or weapon caches were usually well laid out and skillfully camouflaged and search parties were carefully trained in enemy concealment and camouflage techniques.

In general, regular ARVN units were employed as the cordon force. They were sometimes augmented by US or FWMA forces if the objective area lay within a US or FWMA TAOR. Search elements were usually made up of RF and PF units, the national police, and sometimes PSDF. The success of cordon-and-search operations depended on detailed organization of forces, close coordination, effective control, thorough understanding of the roles to be performed by participating forces and adequate training in search techniques.

Security patrol activities constituted a technique to search for and destroy enemy forces. There were several forms of searching and destroying, each of which utilized a different technique.

Patrols were used against guerrillas and small units. Patrols were small and lightly equipped, but capable of operating independently. Their mission was to attack and annihilate the enemy, if he was of small size, and to locate or follow large enemy units. They then called on large friendly forces, tactical air or artillery to destroy them. Troops selected for patrols were good combat soldiers - courageous, audacious - with high morale. Patrols were deployed far from their base for periods of from three to five days without support or resupply. Their activities helped the main force rest and recuperate, and stand ready to strike when required. This employed the principle of economy of force.

Another technique used in pacification, especially during the securing phase, was hunter-killer teamwork. This technique was designed to hunt down and destroy isolated enemy elements such as VCI cadre and guerrillas. The hunter-killer team consisted of two elements: the hunters and the killers. The hunter element was lightly equipped and highly mobile. Its mission was to track down enemy forces while maintaining constant touch with the killer element, which stood ready for action. When contact was made the hunter
element notified the killer element which swiftly moved in with tactical air and artillery support. The killers usually moved into the target area by the swiftest means, by helicopters in most cases, to prevent the enemy from breaking contact and escaping.

Terrain transformation was a pacification technique designed to transform an insecure, enemy-controlled area into GVN-controlled villages and hamlets. It was employed in all military regions and with significant success by the ARVN 3d Infantry Division in western Duy Xuyen district, Quang Nam province.

The security situation in Quang Nam province was poor; the enemy frequently attacked friendly forces and shelled Da Nang airfield. Three months before the cease-fire, the 3d Infantry Division was assigned the mission of restoring security and protecting the Da Nang airfield in particular. For this mission, the division created a security zone for Da Nang city out to the range of enemy rockets and artillery - an anti-rocket and anti-shelling belt. At the same time it made plans to restore security to the area west of Hoi An (15 miles southeast of Da Nang) through an intensive pacification campaign which encompassed all the villages and hamlets in this area. (Map 2) Nevertheless, a larger part of the province, the flat plain area in particular, was still under enemy control. This terrain was covered by lush vegetation and crisscrossed by rivers and streams; it included many natural obstacles and the enemy had established many bases which were connected by a trench network and surrounded by mine fields, booby traps, and extensive defense positions. Up until that time, operations into this area had met with serious difficulties and heavy losses.

About three days before the cease-fire became effective, the 3d Infantry Division clashed violently with the NVA 711th Division and inflicted serious losses. With the 711th Division nearly paralyzed, the 3d Division redeployed its forces to hold ground and maintain control of the population in the area around Da Nang. With the ARVN 3d Division spread out, the enemy renewed his attacks and threatened to destroy the 3d Division piecemeal.
Map 2 — Quang Nam Pacification Campaign
With additional support from engineer and armor elements, however, the division was able to stabilize the situation and regain the initiative. As the first step in the pacification effort, the division used bulldozers to clear the densely vegetated areas where the enemy sought cover. Then it deployed the 57th Infantry Regiment to occupy Hill 55, the Go Noi area, and the area northwest of Duy Xuyen district town. The 2d Regiment, with armored reinforcements, meanwhile crossed the Thu Bon river and reoccupied the Loc Hiep area.

After destroying enemy bases in this area, the 3d Division maintained its disposition of forces throughout the area, not only to confront the enemy, but also to demonstrate to the International Commission of Control and Supervision (ICCS) that the area was under effective control.

Terrain transformation operations were also conducted in several villages and hamlets in the Go Noi area, and others in the districts of Dien Ban, Dai Loc, Duc Duc and Duy Xuyen. The villages and hamlets in this area had not been under GVN control for ten years, and the enemy had turned this fertile but densely covered area into a fortified and defended base system. In addition to having the advantage of the protection provided by natural obstacles and an elaborate system of fortifications, minefields, and booby traps, the enemy was thoroughly familiar with the terrain. Most of the local population had migrated toward other localities, and those remaining consisted of about 300 households, the majority of which had connections with or relatives among enemy ranks.

In order to reoccupy this heavily defended guerrilla base area, which sheltered the enemy 44th Front forces and other local force units, it was obvious that friendly forces had to be sizable and adequately supported. The 3d Division made sure that all of its units were built up to strength before launching the operation. Its basic maneuver concept was to overrun the enemy positions with an overpowering force, inflicting on him maximum losses and forcing him out of the area. Despite heavy casualties to friendly forces, caused mostly by enemy mines and booby traps, the 3d Division succeeded in overrunning the area and driving enemy forces away. Then its forces
held the area and proceeded systematically to eliminate remnants of enemy forces, not only there but in adjacent areas. Its goal was to secure the target area and prevent the enemy from coming back.

In order to achieve this, the 3d Division obviously needed more troops but since reinforcements were hard to obtain, it made use of the terrain transformation technique. The first requirement was to destroy all enemy fortifications, trench and shelter system, minefields, and booby traps. In addition to manpower, artillery firepower and bulldozers proved highly effective in this task. Within a short time, the area was effectively cleared of all obstacles and its outlook was entirely transformed. Then engineer units began to repair roads and build new ones, and finally devoted themselves to the task of rebuilding the villages and hamlets without altering their configuration and boundaries.

The next phase consisted of consolidating the defense system by the building of outposts and watch towers and by maintaining security. For this purpose, the division permanently installed one of its infantry battalions in the area. The battalion established its operational base at Le Naill and employed its companies in constant mobile operations in and out of the area. The presence of regular friendly troops inspired confidence among the local population, who realized that they could stay in the area indefinitely. This was entirely different from previous sweeping operations.

To maintain security, 3d Division troops conducted searches, patrols, and ambushes. These activities gradually eliminated the enemy infrastructure, rehabilitated roads and buildings, and paved the way for the next phase of reopening the area. At the same time, popular force platoons were introduced into the area and they were deployed to occupy the Chiem Son area and to secure a series of hillocks connecting it with the Le Naill area. Regular forces, meanwhile, held the areas of Tra Son and Duong Dong, to the south. Part of the Go Noi area was taken over by regional forces.

By this time, security had been restored over the entire area and soldiers were encouraged to grow manioc and vegetables during their idle hours. To begin resettling the population in the villages
and hamlets north of Duc Duc and west of Xuyen Truong, the ARVN regimental commander and the district chiefs worked out plans to return those village officials who had fled the area to their original villages and hamlets in the district of Duy Xuyen and north of Duc Duc where they would reestablish local government, with the assistance of the national police and popular forces; return the people, the refugees in particular, to their home villages; build watch towers and village offices; and conduct training and combined ARVN-PF activities.

These efforts brought about remarkable results. With the help of ARVN units, the local people gradually moved back. ARVN units conducted medical civic actions, while competing with one another to build market places and schools. Encouraged by these ARVN efforts, people from outlying, insecure areas soon moved into the area, and even people who had fled and had lived in the province capital for a long time returned to their villages.

As the security situation improved, the number of people returning to their villages increased. The village councils began organizing people's self-defense forces and taking a census of the population. By the time the provincial and district governments initiated development programs, all the villages and hamlets in the area had been resettled and were living in stable, peaceful conditions.

The technique of terrain transformation was first used by US forces against the enemy's "iron triangle" base area in MR-3. It involved the use of heavy bulldozers to level bunkers, trees and destroy underground shelters during a period of several months. Against another enemy base area, Ho Bo - Bo Loi, US forces also used napalm bombs to burn down whole stretches of dense jungle. The purpose of these operations was to deny enemy forces a safe haven to conduct and support spoiling activities against the GVN pacification effort in Binh Duong and Hau Nghia provinces which were adjacent to these base areas. Without these operations, no progress in pacification was possible in these provinces.

In MR-4, the liquidation of Communist mini-bases, using the same technique, was conducted on a large-scale from early 1970 to
early 1972. These were usually swampy and densely covered areas located along canals and near inhabited hamlets. Heavily mined and booby-trapped, these mini-bases had been considered impenetrable despite their close proximity to GVN-controlled hamlets.

Another special pacification technique was the county fair or village festival - a combination of cordon-and-search, civic action and intelligence collection. It required the formation of a special task force which consisted of cordon units, search elements, and a village festival organization.

While the missions assigned to the cordon units and search elements were the same as those given to similar elements in a cordon-and-search operation, the village festival organization added another dimension: winning over the hearts and minds of the population by psychological and civic actions, and at the same time gathering information on the enemy infrastructure.

The village festival organization consisted of a provincial element and an ARVN element. The provincial element included an RD cadre group, the national police, and popular forces. The RD cadre group was the principal actor in the village festival show. It usually consisted of several teams: an information team, an armed propaganda team, a cultural team, an agricultural team, and a small artist troupe. The information team organized film shows, distributed propaganda materials and held education sessions for the villagers to promote the GVN cause and policies while countering enemy propaganda. The armed propaganda team, which was usually made up of former enemy ralliers, served as guides and informants to the NP and popular forces. They pinpointed the families that had members working with the enemy, families that sympathized with the enemy and whose members had regrouped to North Vietnam, and finally, enemy weapon caches, underground shelters, and messenger routes. The agricultural team provided guidance to the farmers on improved techniques of crop planting and livestock breeding. The cultural team organized games and sports, while the artist troupe performed short propagandistic plays, songs and variety shows.

The National Police element usually included an interrogation
team, an identification team, and the Special Police. Its mission was to check identification papers and family records, take photographs and fingerprints, search suspect areas for enemy documents, organize an agent net, interrogate suspects, and supply information to friendly forces. The popular forces conducted a census among village youths to establish a list of draft-age people and to try to recruit them into their ranks.

The ARVN element usually consisted of a MEDCAP team and a psywar team. The MEDCAP team organized sick calls and a dispensary service, and also distributed candy for the children and clothing for the poor. The psywar team held political indoctrination sessions to brief the population on the purpose of pacification and on the reason why GVN troops came to the village. It also maintained morale among friendly troops and made appeals to enemy cadre, persuading them to surrender or rally to the GVN cause.

The technique of village festival was chiefly employed in those villages and hamlets where the GVN wanted to maintain permanent control and presence and the emphasis of the entire effort was on winning the sympathy of the villagers and gathering information on the enemy.

**Coordination in Security Activities**

Because the pacification effort involved the conduct of security activities by a variety of military forces, coordination was vital for its success. Aside from tactical coordination among operational forces of different nationalities in case of combined activities, coordination between operating forces and the local government was the most important, since military activities in support of pacification were generally conducted in populated areas. When US forces operated separately, coordination with the local government was usually made through the local adviser. One of the major concerns was to minimize casualties and damage caused to the civilian population. The use of firepower, whether by tactical air or artillery, on an area targeted for pacification was, therefore, subjected to elaborate regulations and directives that both the JGS and MACV agreed to publish in a
joint Standing Operating Procedure (SOP) for ARVN as well as US forces.

Two examples of coordination in security activities are provided to show how it was actually done.


This was a valuable experience which was started by US Marines in the 1st CTZ (MR-1) as soon as they completed their initial deployment in this area in late 1965. One of their immediate tasks was to initiate a pilot program of pacification in populated areas near Da Nang, and after this proved a success, the program was expanded to other areas around Hue. The key element of this program was the concept of "combined action" which joined small US Marine elements with popular forces platoons. This concept was based on the premise that the PF were the GVN forces that enjoyed the closest relationship with the population. They were no strangers to the villages; in fact all of them were relatives of villagers. They knew the local people, the local enemy, and the local terrain. But at the same time, PF were loosely trained, poorly equipped, and poorly led. Thus the combined action concept was also designed to train these forces and make them combat effective.

The combined action program called for the deployment of US Marine squads in villages where each of them was integrated with a PF platoon; they lived and operated together as a single unit. A US Marine squad was further broken down into teams or cells which teamed up with PF squads to improve their combativeness, make maximum use of firepower, and familiarize PF troops with Marine combat techniques. The presence of US Marines among PF platoons inspired confidence and boosted morale and combat effectiveness.

A combined action platoon (CAP) was an integrated unit consisting of one 14-man US Marine squad and a PF platoon whose authorized strength was 38 men. Their mission was to help maintain law and order in the villages where they were stationed; to conduct patrol and ambush activities; and to gather intelligence and perform civic actions.

The US Marine squad leader could call for tactical air and artillery support and medical evacuation by helicopter. This capability was the main source of PF morale, although the support was
seldom needed. To control and supervise the activities of the CAPs, a combined Marine-PF headquarters was established at the district command post with the US Marine company commander and the district chief in command.

CAPs did not always operate separately and individually. When major operations were conducted by US Marine units in the areas where the CAPs were assigned, CAPs served as guides and provided intelligence. Conversely, US Marine units were always prepared to relieve or support the CAPs whenever required. Although their mission involved civic action, CAPs had very limited capabilities in this regard. Their civic action efforts were primarily designed to stimulate the local governments and encourage them to provide more help and assistance to the villages.

The combined action program brought about many realistic benefits. The local population, living under permanent protection of these combined units, developed trust and confidence in the GVN. The presence of the CAPs also denied the enemy infrastructure freedom of action. In addition, they also trained the PSDF and were instrumental in more rigorous activities on the part of village officials.

2. Operation Rang Dong/Fairfax.

During 1966 and in early 1967, US forces in the III Corps Tactical Zone conducted major actions against enemy main force units and bases such as in Operations Cedar Falls and Junction City. The security situation in areas surrounding Saigon, and in Gia Dinh province in particular, had deteriorated but not because of the presence of enemy main force units - in fact there was no more than one enemy local force battalion in the area - but because the enemy infrastructure increased its activities. The VCI in Gia Dinh province was particularly elaborate and almost had a free hand.

To eliminate the enemy's forces and his infrastructure in the area around Saigon, a US infantry brigade was assigned the task of helping in the pacification effort. On the GVN side, forces committed in the pacification operation included one Ranger group and the provincial territorial units.

The principle of combined activities in Operation Rang Dong/Fairfax
was the integration of US and ARVN units. During the initial phase of the operation, battalions of the ARVN 5th Ranger Group and those of the US 199th Light Infantry Brigade operated in parallel with each other and were responsible for one or more districts of Gia Dinh province, depending on the situation. As the operation progressed, and with experience gained, both US and ARVN battalions operated in the boundary area between districts and even beyond the provincial boundary. This concept of operation differed radically from the US Marines' combined action program in that it involved the pairing-off of regular battalions and not lower echelon units such as RF companies or PF platoons. But the basic principle of combined activities was practically the same. The ARVN units were more familiar with the local terrain and environment and could establish good rapport with the local government and people. US forces, on the contrary, enjoyed superior resources, had more firepower, especially that provided by organic artillery - a battery per infantry battalion - and modern communications. In addition, US forces were supported by tactical air, helilift, and rapid medical evacuation, and these assets could benefit ARVN units as well.

During the initial phase, ARVN ranger battalions operated without artillery support, moved on foot, and were limited to daylight activities. Lacking helilift support, they were unable to penetrate outlying enemy base areas. Because of combined operations with US forces and the sharing of US support assets, these constraints were no longer problems for ARVN units.

Operation Rang Dong/Fairfax was designed to achieve two basic objectives: to improve the security situation around Saigon, and particularly in Gia Dinh province, and to completely pacify this area. To carry out the latter, US forces conducted training not only for ARVN regular units but also for all territorial units.

To ensure close cooperation and coordination, US and ARVN units established an Area Security Coordination Committee and a Combined Intelligence Center. The Area Security Coordination Committee included US and ARVN battalion commanders and the district chiefs. These three commanders met periodically to discuss plans or decide on the efforts.
to be made. The committee was without a chairman or executive authority. All the decisions were based on mutual agreement or understanding, and the purpose of each meeting was only to affirm the agreements arrived at among the leaders before each of them issued orders to his own subordinate units. The Combined Intelligence Center was designed to collect and disseminate in a timely manner all intelligence pertaining to the enemy so that quick response actions could be taken.

The ARVN ranger battalion, consisting of four companies, was similar in organization to the US infantry battalion. This organizational similarity permitted the integration of one ARVN company with one US company. At lower echelons, platoons and squads were also integrated so that every activity conducted was effectively an integrated US-ARVN activity, whether it was a battalion-level operation or a squad ambush. Sometimes all eight companies participated in operations at one time; at other times only individual platoon-level activities were conducted, depending on the situation and the distance from friendly bases. Movements of penetration into enemy bases were either by helicopters, by boats, or on foot. In general, daylight combined activities were no smaller than platoon-size but at night they were mostly of squad size. Through this method of operation, an infantry battalion was able to lay up to forty ambushes within the limits of a district in any one night. On a few special occasions, ARVN and US battalions also conducted separate company-size activities in combination with RF or PF units.

In order to improve security in villages, ARVN units once a week conducted district-wide cordon and search operations at night in cooperation with the national police. These operations contributed to improving overall security.

After a period of large-scale activities which inflicted heavy losses to the enemy main force in the Capital Military District, ARVN and US forces switched to small-unit tactics, focusing on the destruction of enemy guerrillas. Friendly units were broken down into small elements which deployed against the enemy supply and infiltration routes. Another friendly tactic which proved particularly effective in Operation Rang Dong/Fairfax was the concentration of efforts on a particular objective area. This type of operation was based on
reliable intelligence reports and involved repeated bombardments by tactical air and artillery against adjacent base areas that the enemy used as staging areas or safe havens. These continuous attacks by fire flushed the enemy out into the objective area where he would be destroyed.

Operation Rang Dong/Fairfax succeeded in radically changing the security situation in the Capital Military District within a short time. Not designed to be as permanent and as continuous as the Combined Action Program in the I CTZ, the operation ended in November 1967.

In 1964, well before the success of Operation Rang Dong/Fairfax, the government began the Hop Tac pacification campaign in the Capital Military District with the purpose of clearing and securing this area. The Hop Tac campaign was conducted by III Corps forces and was operationally controlled by a command post at the CMD headquarters. The staff in charge of the campaign was a joint, military-civilian organization which combined III Corps military officers with GVN ministerial and US embassy representatives.

The Hop Tac campaign failed to achieve its objectives because of several difficulties. First, there were not enough police to maintain law and order in all hamlets. Second, there was a shortage of territorial forces to provide protection and maintain security in those areas cleared by regular forces. Third, civilian development projects such as the construction of schools, market places, and maternity wards, were unable to make any progress due to political instability in the national capital; this was a period of turmoil during which several governments succeeded each other within a short time. Finally, there was a total lack of guidance and direction from the central government. Without a central pacification control body and specialized cadre, the campaign was doomed to failure and was suspended in September 1965.

Training

An inherent weakness of ARVN forces lay in the fact that, being trained to fight the enemy with conventional tactics, they did not thoroughly understand the role of pacification support. Hence training