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H 959
DAV

Revolutionary Development
in the Republic of Viet Nam
A paper presented
by
James N. Davis
to
Professor James Ranchino
Political Science H490

Honors Paper #41

Revolutionary Development in the Republic of Viet Nam

The scope of this study is three-fold. It attempts mainly to explore United States involvement in the Republic of Viet Nam from the perspectives of the history, the aims and the effectiveness of the pacification program.

The rationale for the use of such a method as pacification in the rural areas of Viet Nam may be traced back at least as far as the beginning of Western colonial interests there. Saigon submitted to colonial rule by France in 1885. French control came to an abrupt halt when the colony was surrendered without a struggle to Japan in 1940 by the pro-Nazi Admiral Decoux. After fifty-five years of French domination, the entire Indochinese area had 2% of its children in school. Not including work camps, there were eighty-one prisons. The territory of present-day Laos had only one native doctor. After 1940 French bureaucrats in Viet Nam worked for Japan. During the year 1943 the bureaucracy spent 71,000 piastres for hospitals and 4½ million for opium distributed through the official opium monopoly.¹ South Viet Nam under French rule had had one doctor for every 120,000 people. Even today there are only 1000 South Vietnamese doctors for a total population of 15 million, and 700 are in the armed forces. "The other 300 have the right connections or have bought their way out. Of course, in private practice, they make up for it by charging outrageous

fees."² This situation poses severe problems, especially with the nonurban population which makes up 80% of Viet Nam.

As an infant nation, Viet Nam naturally has had a difficult struggle to survive the many political and economic traumas concomitant with development. Yet because of the ravages of long years of war and dislocation of the peasants, Viet Nam--more than other parts of the "third world", is "out of the habit" of attempting to be a productive society. The United States has been partially responsible for this attitude through an overabundance of aid. Whenever there is a shortage, the American government immediately sends in supplies. The people have been rapidly developing a "dole complex."³ This ever-present atmosphere is being combatted by the Self-Help portion of pacification.

1961 was a key year for the beginning of direct United States participation in pacification. President Kennedy was attempting to make peace with Laos while trying to win the war in Viet Nam. Although Kennedy supported the Ngo regime, he was violently opposed to its anti-Buddhist bias. (Kennedy publicly denounced the anti-Buddhist policies of the Ngos before the United Nations in September, 1963.) There were three missions sent to Viet Nam in 1961: Vice President Johnson in April; Professor Eugene Staley of Stanford Research Institute from May to July; and,

General Maxwell Taylor--the most prestigious military adviser and Walt Rostow--the most respected civilian adviser--in September. The Staley mission was by far the most important of the three.⁴

Although the Staley Report was of an essentially civilian nature, very few nonmilitary recommendations were made. None of Staley's proposals considered the political changes most observers believed were necessary.⁵ Staley devised a strategy that was meant to be applied for two years. But more than this, the plan defined an entire war policy. Staley stayed in Saigon for six weeks, was aided by the Vietnamese economist--Vu Quoc Thuc(a law professor in Saigon) and was directed by Ngo Dinh Nhu(Diem's brother and political adviser.)⁶

The original pacification idea was to establish strategic hamlets only in areas "that had already been more or less recaptured." The placing of a hamlet in Viet Cong-held territory would be too risky. If it fell, the confidence of the people might be lost. In order to secure maximum government control of the countryside, most Vietnamese military officials wanted to fit the rural hamlet system into the social structure of the peasantry.⁷

Specific recommendations of the Staley Report included: enlargement of ARVN forces to 170,000 and an increase of its anti-guerrilla training; supplying the Dan-Ve(Village Militia)

with modern arms and radio equipment; doubling the Bao-An (Civil Guard) to 120,000 men; building strategic hamlets and villages and increasing the agrovilles from twenty-two to one hundred in a year's time.⁸ The chief military emphasis was on the village militia. All soldiers, however, were to receive some psychological training because certain sources within the United States (notably Time magazine) had stated that poor behavior on the part of government soldiers was largely responsible for bad feeling against the Saigon administration. The agrovillage (khu tru mat) experiment, which had been attempted three years ago, was to be resumed. Strategic hamlets were to be set up to surround the agrovilles so that peasants could retreat to the hamlets after having worked in the agro-cities during the day. In this way protection would be given to 800,000 persons out of a rural population of eight million (i.e., 10% of the farming population.) A very important truism emerges here: "Staley's economic program was dependent upon the mobilization of considerable military means."⁹

The ap chien luoc (strategic hamlet) program of rural development was formally launched on February 3, 1962 by presidential decree. A basic unit was thus provided through which Saigon might control the countryside while giving the peasantry a certain amount of self-determination. After Diem's fall ap chien luoc continued as the New Life Hamlet

Program. It is presently known in the United States as Revolutionary Development.¹⁰

Gargantuan amounts of internal corruption coupled with Viet Cong disruption of transportation, communication and commerce have caused United States officials to believe that something more than the conventional AID program is needed in Viet Nam. In the year 1965, 1500 local government officials, school teachers, health workers and agricultural agents were either killed or kidnapped. One might add that over two-thirds of the able-bodied men from twenty to thirty years of age are and have been involved in some phase of the war. Inflation and losses in the living standard caused by decreased domestic production are ever-present dangers.¹¹ The bulk of American non-military aid to Viet Nam for the past few years, therefore, has worked "to help feed the people, keep the civil economy functioning and forestall runaway inflation."¹²

The current Revolutionary Development effort is explained by the United States Agency for International Development as "a process through which the Government of Vietnam is attempting to secure its countryside from Viet Cong terrorism and other forms of illegal activity and, at the same time, to build a new and more promising life for its rural people." The AID has outlined three phases of pacification. First, there is a "clearing" phase in which military forces are

deployed to eliminate Viet Cong guerrilla bands from the area to be secured. Second, during "securing" military forces keep a shield around the area while security forces attempt to eliminate or cripple Viet Cong political control (the Viet Cong "infrastructure".) In this phase the Revolutionary Development Cadre begin restoring local governmental structures which will relate to the administration in Saigon. Basic economic and social improvements are also included in in the security phase. The third step is called "development." It provides for more social and economic betterment, which will pave the way for development of the country when peace finally arrives.

The AID role in New Life or Revolutionary Development places heavy emphasis on the efforts of the Vietnamese working together in local projects. In self-help programs, farmers and villagers supply the labor and in many cases funds while the governments of Viet Nam and of the United States give necessary funds and materials which are too expensive for the local people. In order to further education in rural areas, hamlet schools, teachers and instructional materials are provided by the government. Rural public works projects construct communal roads and increase rural electrification. In an animal husbandry plan farmers are given livestock on a credit basis along with training on how to increase their holdings. Agricultural irrigation for improvement of crop

production and a rural health program are being instituted. Finally, there are many other smaller projects which attempt to augment rural income.¹³

As has been noted, there are many very positive aspects to Revolutionary Development as outlined by the AID. Yet one must submit the program to an acid test: how effective has it been? In 1963 an overextension of the hamlets almost completely obliterated them. Peter Arnett of the Associated Press reported April 21, 1967 that the American government wants teams to work only where maximum security is in effect in order to avoid another such catastrophe. In the same news dispatch Arnett explained how people around communist war zones are being resettled. A "scorched earth" policy is destroying all living things in the evacuated areas in order to starve out the enemy. The people, however, tire of the squalor of the resettlement camps and want to see their family burial grounds again. They return to the forbidden areas and make themselves targets.¹⁴

Even the minister of Revolutionary Development, Major General Nguyen Duc Thang, admitted publicly on November 11, 1966 that the pacification program had fallen short of its goals. Thang's criticism centered on the New Life Hamlet Program(which he referred to as "old life" hamlets.) The new life hamlets were said not to have provided any semblance of a new life. Thang listed the lack of any real

social revolution, resentment caused by forced labor and communists remaining in supposedly secure areas as reasons for the dearth of progress. He proposed the giving of \$33.9 million to the program in 1967 (a 40% increase) and allowing the people to control the hamlets instead of the RD cadres.¹⁵

Late in 1966 an American source on pacification was quoted as saying: "Whatever progress has been made has been made by American, South Korean or Australian security. The South Vietnamese themselves have scored enough failures to offset this. The result of this ambitious program, so far, is that not a single Province in the entire country is absolute secure." The largest problem seems to be with the South Vietnamese bureaucracy which the United States is supporting. Many aid materials simply do not get from Saigon to the rural areas. "[Graft] appears not so much the fault of the AID as the White House's own top-level decision to keep, in every way, from interfering with the South Vietnamese government."¹⁶ If the program continues at its present rate, it will require 89 years to pacify the 2500 villages in South Viet Nam."¹⁷

Robert W. Komer, special assistant to the president and now civilian head of pacification, reported to President Johnson on September 13, 1966 that since the Honolulu conference of February 6 through 8, 1966, many concrete improvements

have been made. To counter inflation the Vietnamese piastre was devaluated 50%(now worth 118 piastres to the dollar.) Electrical power has been given to 135 rural localities. Port congestion was reduced, and customs duties and domestic taxes were increased. The cost of living stopped rising by late summer, and confidence in the piastre grew stronger. (See Appendix II.) The most important and immeasurable aspect of the rural pacification program is that the people have learned, in some instances, to work together on projects which benefit a large group. This factor alone sets a precedent for most of Southeast Asia.¹⁸

The eighth organizational change in the South Vietnamese pacification program was announced May 12, 1967. United States military forces took over the bulk of the work of pacification. Although the Agency for International Development and the Office of Civilian Operations will remain in South Viet Nam, they will no longer govern pacification. All of the ultimate decisions now pass to the senior military man in each of South Viet Nam's four corps areas. A conservative estimate states that the United States troop total will climb to at least 700,000 quite soon. One civilian source argued against the military takeover: "The merger is a little like taking all the welfare agencies in New York City and putting them under the police commissioner. We've got different backgrounds, different problems and

different ways of doing things." The prime reason given for the change was security. The 20,000 pacification officials work in 59-man teams. Because of lax military surveillance, 220 have already been killed by the Viet Cong so far in 1967.¹⁹

We have seen that American motives in pacification seem to be "good." With massive assistance of men and dollars, the government of the United States feels that it can change ancient patterns of life ~~and~~ thinking--almost "overnight." If pacification fails the war is not necessarily lost, but there is certain to be more destruction. Arnett predicts that the entire country of Viet Nam may have the same appearance as the southern delta if it "resists pacification" for the eighth time: "...the war has virtually overrun the whole population. Paddy fields are overgrown, homes destroyed, dikes broken and the population gone."²⁰ The American government must ultimately be posed with several very crucial questions. Is the capitalistic system the only workable solution to the problems of a developing nation? Is it possible to superimpose a Protestant socioeconomic structure on an Oriental culture? Finally, do we as a nation have the right to play God in Southeast Asia?

FOOTNOTES

1. Charlotte Pomerantz and Howard Kaplan, editors, The Unspeakable War(New York: Labor Committee for Peace in Vietnam, 1966) , p.2.
2. Marvin L. Stone, "Is U.S. trapped in a 'hopeless war'?", U.S. News and World Report(December 5, 1966), 43.
3. Ibid.
4. Jean Lacoutre, Vietnam: Between two Truces(New York, 1966) , p. 64.
5. Bernard Fall, The Two Viet-Nams(New York and London, 1964) , p. 278.
6. Lacoutre, op. cit., p. 64.
7. Lacoutre, op. cit., p. 158
8. Fall, loc. cit., p. 332.
9. Lacoutre, op. cit., p. 65.
10. Douglas Pike, The Organization and Techniques of the National Liberation Front of South Viet Nam(Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1966) , p. 64.
11. Robert W. Komer, The Other War in Vietnam--A Progress Report(Washington, D.C., 1966) , p. 6.
12. Komer, op. cit., p. 5.
13. Agency for International Development, Revolutionary Development(Washington, D.C.: Agency for International Development, 1966)p. 2.
14. Associated Press dispatch, The Arkansas Gazette, April 21, 1967.
15. Associated Press dispatch, The Arkansas Gazette, October 20, 1966.
16. Ibid., p. 46.
17. Stewart Alsop, "The President's next big decision", The Saturday Evening Post(March 25, 1967), 27.

18. Komer, op. cit., pp. 51-54.
19. Associated Press dispatch, The Arkansas Gazette,
May 12, 1967.
20. Associated Press dispatch, (op. cit., April 21,
1967.

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- Stone, I. F. "What 'Pacification' really means to Viet Nam's landless peasantry", I.F. Stone's Weekly(March 20, 1967), p. 3.
- Stone, Marvin L. "Is United States trapped in a 'hopeless war'?", U.S. News and World Report(December 5, 1966), p. 43.

Appendix I. Contradictions

In doing research work on a problem as complicated as the current United States commitments in Viet Nam, one encounters many contradictory statements. Considering the differing views on the Viet Nam conflict, this would only seem natural. One concrete discrepancy occurred between two conservative news media: Associated Press and the Saturday Evening Post.

"Westmoreland...will have a civilian deputy heading up the United States pacification work. He is Robert W. Komer, 44, special assistant to President Johnson, who is known to approve the military takeover."---Arkansas Gazette, Friday, May 12, 1967

"...the President's two chief civilian advisers on the conduct of the war--Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and White House aide Robert Komer--both oppose giving American forces the pacification mission." Saturday Evening Post, p. 26.

Appendix II. AID information
on organization and success of pacification

More specific information is given at the end of the Komer report on pacification successfulness (published as The Other War in Viet Nam--A Progress Report.) Komer details work in pacification during the seven-month period from the Honolulu conference of February, 1966 to the date of the report--September, 1966.

A major goal of the Honolulu conference was the continued emphasis on rural construction work. In addition to successes given on page 9 of this paper, Komer cited:

- (1) The placing of eighty wells and 60 potable water systems in villages and district towns;
- (2) Improvement of mechanisms of providing credit to the farmer and to the small businessman;
- (3) The distribution of 26,000 pigs of improved varieties of Yorkshire and Berkshire;
- (4) A pilot program for distributing 14,000 acres in An Giang is proceeding (a step toward land reform).

AID materials on organization and training of Revolutionary Development Cadres

TAB B

VIETNAM REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT CADRE

The term "cadre", as used in the Vietnam Revolutionary Development (RD) program, refers to villagers who have been trained and employed as non-permanent Vietnamese Government personnel and assigned to work in their home areas which have been recently cleared of large Viet Cong guerrilla forces. They perform the following tasks: (1) serve as a channel through which contact is reestablished between the national government and the rural population; (2) assist the people in reestablishing their normal way of life and the fabric of local society; (3) assist them in improving their basic living conditions; (4) facilitate the reestablishment and operation of popularly selected village/hamlet governments and (5) explain the government's program to the rural people.

On January 1, 1966, the Vietnamese Government combined several previously existing special types of cadre into one RD program. The various types of cadre previously worked as individual units responsible for implementing a variety of projects within the overall rural construction program. In general they suffered from lack of centralized control and direction, inadequate training and poorly defined responsibilities. These various types of cadre are now being re-trained and phased into the new revolutionary development cadre groups.

The Ministry of Revolutionary Development is charged with carrying out the reorganization, training and deployment of the new RD cadre groups. Training the new cadre is done at the National Training Center at Vung Tau. The training programs include at least one group from each province. If there is a single theme to the training program, it is to instill and promote a national spirit, awareness and dedication in the people of Vietnam. RD cadre are taught they are the link between the Government of Vietnam and the rural people. They pledge themselves to the development of rural Vietnam.

The basic training course teaches the new cadre about Viet Cong operations, infrastructure and influence, the eradication of which becomes their primary goal. They are taught that there are other nations assisting Vietnam, not as a form of re-colonization, but as assistance to the people against the enemy and in support of the social revolution. Cadre members are given rigorous physical training and are taught the use of various arms and small unit tactics. Finally, they are taught that their principal weapon is political action.

The second part of Vung Tau training is divided into specialized areas offered for the various types of teams: (1) militia, (2) civic action, (3) New Life Development. These teams make up the basic structure of each 59-man RD cadre group. In addition, a leadership course is given to those selected as best qualified to serve as the command element.

Each of the component teams has a different responsibility, but every member is expected to know the other's job and if needed, to be able to replace anyone in the Group. The teams are expected to operate as a coordinated Group.

Within the group organization, the militia teams have as their primary duty, the job of detecting and eliminating the Viet Cong political/military infrastructure. It is also their duty to organize and train a hamlet self-defense force and to assist in meeting needs of the rural population in the fields of social welfare, health and education.

The Civil Action Teams survey and classify the area being secured. They identify and register the village/hamlet people. (In Vietnam a village is made up of a group of hamlets. The RD cadre will operate at both the village and hamlet level.) Their job is to record not only the physical factors, but to also identify the opinions and aspirations of the people, both friend and enemy. Their job is also to make local government honest and effective. They urge the participation of the people in organizing hamlet administrative committees, people's councils and people's organizations based on age and interest groups. Their job is ultimately to help the people hold elections to select their own leaders for local government.

The material progress of the village/hamlet is the responsibility of the New Life Development Teams. This task includes teaching and guiding the people to avail themselves of government sponsored programs of social and economic development. These teams organize self-help projects and bring in direct assistance from the various government agencies in the form of technical advice and material aid such as improved seeds, fertilizers and equipment. Through self-help projects where government agencies provide the materials and the village/hamlet provides the labor, the rural people acquire their own schools, medical clinics and similar facilities. The teams also assist the local people and local officials in implementing the GVN land reform programs and in stimulating cooperatives and cottage industries.

Following satisfactory completion of the training course the cadre groups undergo two additional weeks of training in their home provinces and are then assigned to villages or hamlets in the same provinces which have been selected to participate in RD in accordance with an annual plan developed at the Provincial level and approved by the Central Government authorities. Generally these will be villages or hamlets in areas which GVN or other free world military forces have recently cleared of Viet Cong mainforce elements or areas previously cleared but in which GVN civil authority has not yet been firmly established. The cadre groups will remain in the village or hamlet for whatever length of time is necessary to remove all vestiges of Viet Cong authority and to firmly reestablish a capable locally elected governing body which is operating effectively and is in continuing productive contact with GVN appointed authorities at the District and Province levels. The Province Chiefs support the cadre groups once they are in the field.

This is a slow process. It is estimated that in some cases it will be necessary for the cadre to remain on the scene for a year or more. In addition, it takes time to recruit, train and field the cadre groups required to support the total RD effort. Thus immediate dramatic results cannot and should not be expected from the new approach and set-backs are inevitable. However, many of the weaknesses of earlier attempts at using cadre in support of the Vietnamese pacification program have been recognized by Vietnamese authorities and have been taken into account in developing the new approach. A few months ago the motto "Let's work slowly but firmly" was suggested at a Seminar of Province Chiefs held in Saigon to consider the general subject of RD. This certainly should be the watchword where cadre are concerned since previous experience has shown success cannot be achieved in any other way.

Appendix III. Effects of pacification
on the civilian population

Certain authorities have expressed concern over the advisability of the use of pacification methods in such a culture as that of Viet Nam. On page 158 of Jean Lacoutre's Viet Nam between two truces, the leading French authority on Indochina states:

"In this ancient country to jeopardize the village structure by setting up artificial agglomerations is to break the backbone of the country itself, to go against its collective conscience; its beliefs and its homogeneity at the deepest level; this is particularly true if this system of intensive organization, and close and permanent control...destroys the family cell, that other basic fact of Vietnamese society."

I have also included a New York Times News Service article on the village of Khanhvan and relevant comments by I.F. Stone.

Pacifiers Arrive and Pledge to Stay, For 5th Time, in Key Vietnam Village

© New York Times News Service

KHANHVAN, South Vietnam — Pacification came to this fertile hamlet 18 miles north of Saigon Tuesday—for the fifth time in seven years.

This time the South Vietnamese government, the commander of the battalion that will guard the hamlet and its American advisers say that the Viet Cong can be banished for good. But they acknowledge that it may take years to do it and to convince the peasants of Khanhvan that Saigon's forces are here to stay.

The guerrillas can be expected to fight back. Both sides recognize that Khanhvan is important symbolically, as a center of Communist strength dating back to the 1950s, and strategically, lying across communications routes just beyond the outskirts of the capital.

The fifth pacification of Khanhvan began Monday night when two battalions of Vietnamese infantry surrounded the hamlet, keeping inside any guerrillas who might have been spending the night there.

At dawn the troops moved in. Loudspeakers summoned the 2,000 villagers to the market place. Police checked their identification cards. Three Chieu Hoi, Viet Cong deserters, were present to identify any guerrillas they recognized.

Two were "positively" identified, one as the wife of the leader of the hamlet's Viet Cong platoon, who was said to have fled to the thick bamboo jungle that surrounds the hamlet with about 35 of his men. The other was said to be the local guerrilla explosives expert.

Then a detachment of physicians and dentists from the United States First Infantry Division began giving free examinations. The doctors found little disease or malnutrition but the dentists pulled 75 bad teeth.

A lunch of frankfurters and rice was served. Then the district chief, Maj. Nguyen Doc Gian, tried in a 30-minute speech to convince the villagers that the government would protect them this time.

"They look skeptical, and you can't really blame them," said Lt. Col. Robert Q. Schweitzer of Chicago, commander of the First Division's Revolutionary

Development Task Force. Schweitzer speaks fluent Vietnamese.

Duc asked the villagers how they felt about having the Army back.

"We feel good and we feel bad," one man said. "We feel good because we will have protection. But we feel bad because the Viet Cong told us that if we let you stay here they would attack us with mortars and machine guns."

This is the way it has been for the past decade in Khanhvan, Schweitzer said.

The large roofed market place where the peasants met Tuesday was built on a knoll. On either side of it were erected rows of attached concrete houses and shops.

"The Viet Cong had been building its infrastructure for 20 years," the colonel said, "and nothing was done to get them out. The militia company that was supposed to protect the hamlet wouldn't leave its compound. The result was that in six months Khanhvan was back in the hands of the Communists."

In February 1964, the militia garrison was wiped out as it cowered in the old French port just beyond the market place.

"From then until last December, when we began patrolling in here, laying the groundwork for today's operation, Khanhvan has been solidly in VC hands," Schweitzer said.

Why, the colonel was asked, did he think pacification would work now, after four failures.

"Five things," he said. "This time we will leave a battalion of Vietnamese troops with American advisers. They will stay for at least a year and it won't be behind walls.

"Second, a Revolutionary Development team will arrive within a week to work with the villagers.

"Third, we are cutting down the jungle around the village. We've already bulldozed 200 acres. Not only will that eliminate VC hiding places but it will give the villagers more arable land.

"Fourth, we will root out the infrastructure.

"Finally, and most important, the villagers have seen what Viet Cong government is like.

They don't like it. And there's no longer a feeling of hopelessness among the government troops and officials. For once they think they're going to win."

**Constituent Assembly basically reactionary and against land reform*

Why the Constituent Assembly Is As Undemocratic A Farce as The Military

What "Pacification" Really Means to Vietnam's Landless Peasantry

In Vietnam, as in Washington, semantic trickery is the order of the day. "Pacification" means subjugation, and "Revolutionary Development Cadres"—the agents of pacification—are really counter-revolutionary police teams to subjugate the peasant. "Absentee landlords are still riding in with pacifying troops." writes Fred Emery, Saigon correspondent of the London Times (March 10), "not merely to grab back their lands but to extort back rents for the time they fled the Vietcong." Though a Ngo Dinh Diem law of 1955 limits rents to 25% of the crop, Emery notes that "landlords still extort rents as high as 60% of the product of a rice field" and adds "it is not hard to see why peasants keep their arms."

A Subject They'd Rather Avoid

Emery says "It may seriously be questioned whether any progress of lasting nature can be expected, in spite of military successes, so long as pacification continues without a real revolution in the Government's attitude towards land reform." He notes that "it is possible to listen to a senior OCO [Office of Civilian Operations, which handles the civilian end of the U.S. effort in South Vietnam] official talk for 90 minutes without once mentioning land—just as the subject has not found favor in the new Constituent Assembly." Emery fails to recognize that the Constituent Assembly is dominated by landlords, and that the American government has no real enthusiasm for land reform, especially since it would undercut the only class which supports the U.S. in the countryside.

The spectacle of landlords returning with the "pacification" teams to take back the land and collect back rents can hardly endear us to the peasants. "Senior American officials recognize the problem only too well," Emery writes, "and say, rather nervously, they are hoping the Government will shortly come up with a decree abolishing back rents." The "government" is the military junta. The Generals are either of, or linked to, the landlord class. To expect them to abolish back rents is as foolish as to expect them to decree land reform.

Richard Critchfield in the Washington Sunday Star (March 5) recalls that a year ago in Honolulu Johnson pledged "social revolution, including land reform", [Critchfield writes that the last three words were not in the original State Department draft for the Honolulu declaration but were added on "the insistence of the American counter-insurgency expert, Major General Edward G. Lansdale, Jr."]

Land reform was supposed to be the cornerstone of the new "revolutionary development program," but when Dr. Phan

The Kind of Regime Washington Likes

"Rio de Janeiro—This is the country that less than three years ago threatened to become not merely another Cuba but perhaps something close to another Red China. . . . To be sure the military regime . . . has been no model of democratic permissiveness. Brazilian journalists deemed too unfriendly to the government may find themselves behind bars. . . . More important than dictatorial benevolence are the clear signs of improving health being shown by the economy. . . . Price increases on everything from chicken feed to newspapers still occur regularly. The government printing presses continue to spin out cruzeiros . . . but U.S. firms are leading the investment parade. . . . Under a new investment guarantee agreement with the U.S., Brazil since 1965 [when the military took over—IFS] has approved more than \$120 million worth of new projects by U.S. firms . . . beside the rules limiting pay increases to percentages well below the rate at which the cost of living is rising, there is an almost total prohibition against strikes."

—Wall Street Journal, March 9

Quang Dan last December proposed that the Constitution guarantee every Vietnamese peasant the right to own the land he tilled, the measure got only 3 out of 117 votes. "Many deputies," Critchfield writes, "said it sounded 'too much like communism.' He says later Dr. Dan "succeeded in getting a much milder proviso adopted pledging government help to the landless." But this (we discovered recently) says only (Art. XX) "The State advocates raising the standard of living of rural citizens, and especially helping farmers to have farmland." Just how is left unclear. Article XVIII guarantees the right of private property and says "expropriation or requisition for the common good must be accompanied by speedy and just compensation at price levels existing at the time of expropriation or requisition." This makes it impossible to pay for land reform in bonds nor to buy land at its original cost or tax valuation or even to take into account that it may have been acquired unlawfully. Such constitutional provisions are an obstacle to peaceful land reform in Latin America.

In the Mekong Delta, Critchfield writes, 50 percent of the peasantry is entirely landless and 80 percent rents all but a small part of their ricelands. Thus for the majority of the people the landlord-dominated Constituent Assembly is as unrepresentative a farce as the military junta.

In Latin America, Too, Talk of Land Reform Doesn't Match the Realities

"Men whose fathers for generations have worked land owned by others now work it as their own."

—LBJ's message to Congress on Latin America March 15

"The implementation of legislation affecting the agrarian structure is still slow; the distribution of land and other productive resources among the rural population remains very unequal, and potentially productive land, water and human resources are seriously underutilized in the rural areas. . . . Among the various types of land reform, slowest progress in 1966 was land redistribution. In Colombia,

the land reform agency acquired or expropriated with compensation only 21,000 hectares . . . and established little more than 2,000 families. . . . In Chile only 1800 families received family-size parcels. . . . In the Dominican Republic, although several hundred thousand hectares of fertile land are in the possession of the Agrarian Institute, the rate of systematic settlement is currently only 1,000 families a year, or less than 0.5 percent of the number of families working on subsistence tracts of one hectare or less.

—Sixth Annual Report, 1966, Social Progress Trust Fund, Inter-American Development Bank, released Mar. 16.