

PART ONE

THE FUNDAMENTAL THEORY OF STRATEGIC HAMLETS

I. Reasons for the Establishment of Strategic Hamlets

The establishment of Strategic Hamlets is considered the focus of activities at the present stage.

After 7 years during which the political and social revolution has been carried on, the establishment of Strategic Hamlets today aims not only at preserving the achievements made, but also at developing new victories expanding the revolution into the countryside, eradicating the enemy in its roots, accomplishing the creation of the infrastructure of the new regime. Having both the nature of national construction and national salvation, the establishment of Strategic Hamlets represents a combined work, closely related to the line and aims of the people's general struggle.

- struggle against Communism,
- struggle against underdevelopment,
- struggle against disunity.

Therefore, to realize the theoretical basis of Strategic Hamlets, we should thoroughly identify the line and the aims of the revolution which we are pursuing; clearly understand our duties at the present stage of the revolution, as well as be fully aware of the present situation of the nation and the situation of the countryside.

A. Objectives of the Personalist Revolution

After independence was regained from the French colonialists, Viet Nam had to face problems which were extremely difficult and complicated: the country's state of underdevelopment and partition, the Communist rebels all-out sabotage and subversion.

These problems were posed at the same time, and the difficulties created thereby not only hampered progress but also threatened even the survival of the people. To solve, and urgently solve, these problems, the line of action had, as a matter of course, to be a revolutionary line that extends beyond the usual conceptions of planning for the programs of action, of the methods of using technical and human facilities, as well as of the patterns of organization and activities.

For the past 7 years we have carried on a general revolution. This revolution, which has the nature of national salvation and national construction, is clearly aimed at building a new Vietnamese society in which man is completely freed, materially as well as spiritually.

The trend of Viet Nam's revolution is not after any existing pattern. It is the fruit of a profound meditation of history, a clear-sighted realization of the actual circumstances; it prolongs the people's tradition and at the same time keeps itself abreast of the progress of mankind, in general. Like any other revolution, the national revolution of Viet Nam is based upon two criteria:

- the radical change in the conception of the scale of values
- the application of the new conception of values to the actual social life.

In other words, the national revolution of Viet Nam not merely pauses at a number of half-way reforms. It is on the contrary, a revolution, that is, a radical and complete change the ultimate objective of which is the creation of a new civilisation based upon a new conception of values, and the application of this conception to a completely new society.

1. A radical change of the conception of the scale of values

Under the Colonialist and Feudalist regimes, the conception of human values was based completely upon external factors: wealth and authority. Man was respected owing to his wealth and his influence. Wealth would lead him to status, authority, and reversely the influential had all the greater opportunity to increase their wealth. That conception had encouraged, driven man into improper acts, guilty attempts, and made him disposed to trample morality, sacrificing his fellowmen to his selfish interests.

It is also due to this conception that the average Vietnamese, especially the rural citizen, had, during nearly all the last century, lived under the despise of society. With their simplicity, honesty and their persistent labor, they could not, from one generation to another, raise their heads under the oppression of outdated prejudices injustice grew more acute, since it is the masses of peasants who have shed the most sweat and blood to build and protect the country. In return for the sacrifices they made to the fatherland, they were not afforded the least convenience of material life and did not enjoy any pride in their spiritual life.

After the August, 1945 event, social life had for a period of time been upset. The mass of people who own property was ruthlessly oppressed, the old ruling class was toppled, but a new rule was established and held in the hands of a new class which ruthlessly exploited and repressed the masses. The Communists deny the conception of values held by the Colonialists and Feudalists, but at the same time disavow even the traditional moral and spiritual values. Aimed at exploitation, the Communists' conception of values is based upon the efficiency of labor, turning man into an inanimated productive machinery.

The label of labor here is heightened with an aim of urging the people to work until exhaustion, in order to satisfy the luxury needs of a minority of high-ranking cadres, and to meet the demands of the leaders of the red empire.

The Communists praise labor in order to trick it. Applying Karl Marx's economic theory of value of LABOR to social life, the Communists have deprived the citizen of all sentimental life, individual sentiments, familial happiness, patriotism, and love for his fellowmen. The worker in the city, the peasant in the countryside are merely considered as machines in an enterprise, or tools for cultivation. The entire society is turned into a gigantic anthill.

Viet Nam's revolution follows a different line, it is absolutely against communism, but at the same time rejects the capitalist line. Thus, our conception of values is completely different from that of the Feudalists, Colonialists and Communists. Our ultimate goal is to build a new social civilization, materialized by the thorough delivery of man in the community development.

In other words, the revolutionary line of Viet Nam is based upon personalism and community (development). The person assists in building, consolidating the community, but in return, the community has the duty to secure the development of the person on the principle of equal advancement.

Originating from the aforementioned revolutionary line, our conception of value will be completely based upon man's inner qualities that are necessary for the achievement of revolutionary goals. Man is respected not owing to his wealth, status, breed, social stratum, but owing to his love for men (humanity), his ability to distinguish right from wrong, just from evil, his ability to act according to his position in society.

2. Application of the new conception of values, of social class to the existing society.

In the present situation of Vietnam, how the above conception is realized? As stated by the PRESIDENT in his Oct. 2, 1961 Address to the National Assembly, Viet Nam is simultaneously fighting two kinds of wars: the war of underdevelopment and the war against Communism. Thus, our national revolution today characterizes a real fight which requires that every citizen possess the qualities of a combatant. First of all, it is a fight against underdevelopment, in order to overcome the weaknesses of an underdeveloped country, and thereby to lead the country toward a rich and prosperous standing. This fight demands from each citizen clear-sightedness to recognize the actual situation, self-awareness and respect for national discipline, outstanding efforts to carry out national reconstruction work in a perilous and destitute situation. Failing to attain these qualities, the Vietnamese citizen would not be able to take active part in the national reconstruction now undertaken.

In another respect, the Vietnamese revolution must also be a fight against the Communists. To prepare for their invasion of free South Vietnam, the Communists shall unquestionably carry out every plot to hamper and sabotage our national reconstruction programs. Therefore, after their ambush, sabotage and guerrilla tactics met with failure, the Viet Cong (Vietnamese Communists) have with the assistance of the USSR and Red China, launched an overt aggressive war, using the countryside as the principal area of their activities. Consequently, it is the duty of each Vietnamese at this time to take part in the eradication of the Communists, in order to save the country. Eradication of Communism is not only the duty of the government and the army, but is also the sacred high mission of each Vietnamese citizen who lives freedom, peace, and justice. We eradicate the Communists not only in the military field, but also in all other fields. This life and death struggle demands from us the awareness of our personal real interests and those of the fatherland, an absolute spirit of sacrifice, an unshakable confidence in the fate of the people, and thereby, disregard for dangers and challenges. Besides our task of fighting against underdevelopment and Communism, it might be added that at present, we have also to fight a third kind of war which is extremely dangerous: disunity. Fighting against disunity means fighting against all schemes and actions that are designed to sow factionalism, suspicion within the nationalist ranks. Fighting against disunity means fighting against the erroneous conceptions and thoughts of those who fail to grasp the realities,

and to distinguish foes from friends. Fighting against disunity also means to fight against territorial partition, against the Communists who advocate the partition of the country, against the materialist heresy which is plotting to dig an abyss between social classes.

In short, the national revolution has now the character of a fight against three enemies. The value of each Vietnamese citizen at this time must be determined by qualities necessary for that struggle or, in other words, by his spirit and personal efforts to take part in the fight against underdevelopment, Communism, and disunity.

Applying the aforementioned conception to the real activities of the Vietnamese society today, the following categories of people deserve the respect and fair treatment of society:

1. First category: The combatants, that is, all those who - regardless of their economic status, their position, whether they are civil servants, army men or civilians - had taken or who are taking part in the struggle for the eradication of Communism on the battlefields, in national construction on work sites, in land development centers, in agrovilles, in enterprises, or in the realm of culture, of thoughts, social activities, etc... First in this category of combatants are as a matter of course, those heroes who have sacrificed their lives.

2. Second category: The families of these combatants especially the families of the dead soldiers, the disabled soldiers, those who have sacrificed their lives for their mission.

3. Third category: The landless peasants (and the workers). In Viet Nam, as in any other agricultural country, it is the landless peasants who constitute the majority of the people, who have made great contribution to the process of rehabilitating and defending the country; they also are those who suffered the most, and received the worst treatment under the Colonialist, Feudalist and Communist regimes. One of the objectives of the Vietnamese revolution is to bring to these components of society a plentiful life in freedom and happiness, a life which man as a human being deserves.

These three categories of worthy people include all patriotic Vietnamese who are making contributions, in this field or another, to the building of a new Vietnamese society. Apart from these three categories, all those who - no matter what status they hold, even if they belong to a wealthy and

noble stock - lack the will and actions undertaken to serve the fatherland, who stand out of the struggle against 3 enemies, underdevelopment, Communism and disunity, do not only deserve the respect of society, but are considered as enemies who must be eliminated.

OUR MISSION AT THE PRESENT STAGE OF THE REVOLUTION.

1. The stages of economic and political revolution have been accomplished.

In summary, the goal of the Vietnamese revolution is to instill in social life a new conception of values which is based upon the inner qualities of a new model of man.

To achieve that view upon life and values, Vietnam has through the past 7 years, gradually fulfilled the following tasks:

First of all, the feudalist monarchy was toppled and replaced by the Republican regime. From the central level down to the local (province) level, progressive political structures were established through universal, direct suffrage by which the people had ample opportunity to take part in the management and direction of national affairs.

Economic reforms were aimed at turning the people especially the workers (in towns) and farmers (in rural areas) - into owners of their property, to create adequate physical conditions which provide the people with the opportunity to exercise democratic political rights.

Simultaneously with political and economic reforms, popular education has been intensively accelerated throughout the country, enabling the people to raise their level of knowledge, so that they can take an effective part in democratic activities.

In all fields of activities, work plans were projected, aiming at the interests of the large majority of the people, that is, the manual and intellectual workers in towns and in the countryside, especially the labor class.

The establishment of the compensation fund, the determining of minimum wages, urban renewal which is designed to build labor living quarters, agrarian reform, land development, construction of irrigation dams, digging of canals, the establishment of Agrovilles, Agricultural Credit Programs, Cooperatives, etc... are aimed at enabling the majority to catch up soon with those strata which are privileged materially

as well as spiritually, at reducing the gap between social classes, and thereby, the fundamental structures of a new regime may be established.

Thus, in the process of our struggle, we have surmounted the first stage and the achievement scored was the destruction of the structures of the old regime, and the establishment of an energetic organization for the new regime. That was the period of political and economic revolution, the rehabilitation of the national and social setting.

The setting of the regime encompasses the structures of political activity (the Constitution, the government, laws...) the structure of local government, and structures of economic activity (the system of communications and power production).

2. Expansion of the revolution into the social realm (building the fundamental structure)

Once a nation has acquired a modern mechanism and has attained a (certain) level of material living and conveniences, the revolution must then make another step toward its goal, that is, it is then time for the extension of the revolution into every walk of life, into every social unit.

The revolution, once it expands into the social realm, aims at rehabilitating every pattern of spiritual and sentimental life, every conception, every habit, breaking the outdated ideology, in order to erect a new civilization based upon a new system of spiritual values. The change in the scale of values would be a radical social reform. This is the final stage in the process of the Revolution, following the stages of political and economic revolution the fruit of which was the creation of a setting for the new regime. The "Revolution in values" must be carried out in every unit of society, must take the smallest unit of the community as the compasses for all activities, and expand upwards. It follows an itinerary which is different from that of the stages of political and economic reforms, which follow the reverse course. It mobilizes the means which conform to the limits of each citizen's ability.

G. THE PRESENT SITUATION OF VIETNAM.

As presented in the above paragraph, Vietnam has to fight simultaneously 3 kinds of war, in its revolution for national salvation and reconstruction:

- underdevelopment
- disunity
- communism.

Then, we must understand how is the situation of Vietnam in face of these 3 kinds of wars.

1. Underdevelopment.

We shall consider this in three aspects:

a. Social:

In the social respect, the feudalists and colonialists had, after years of domination, "intoxicated" our people. Later, the Communists, with their "no family", "no-fatherland" prolicy, rendered the already chaotic social order even more chaotic.

b. Cultural:

In this respect, Feudalism, Colonialism and Communism had also joined hands in with holding our people's progress, disrupting the development of our culture. The feudalists, with their narrow-mindedness and blindness, had disrupted the development of our culture. The colonialists had adopted a policy of obscurantism designed to make our people ingorant, depraved, forgetting their fatherland, the society in which they lived, and thinking only of themselves in a selfish manner. After the Feudalists and Colonialists, the Communists had adopted and is adopting a policy of one-way obscurantism, "empoisoning" our people with foreign ideas, to eradicate our traditional culture which our forefathers had toiled to build and to replace it with an enslaved culture.

After 7 years of revolution, we had endeavored to eradicate the prestiges of the culture left behind by the Feudalists and Colonialists, and have achieved good results. However, the influence of Feudalism, Colonialism and Communism still remains, to a considerable extent; the Communists are still attempting to destroy our culture and to develop their enslaved culture. Hence, we must exert greater efforts to eradicate definitely the influence of Feudalism, Colonialism and Communism, and to build a sound culture which conforms to the people's tradition.

c. Economic: Our country possesses rich resources, but after nearly a century under the domination of Feudalism, Colonialism and Communism, our restrained, strangled economy has brought about the consequence that our country is now in a state of underdevelopment: shortage of technicians, lack of capital and under exploitation of national resources.

2. Disunity.

Under the profound influence of Colonialism, Feudalism and especially Communism, an equally dangerous situation is prevailing in our country, that is disunity. In the national respect, we are in a state of territorial partition. The Communists had maneuvered to partition the country and are making use of their materialist doctrine to dig the gap of disunity between social classes, to create suspicion, factionalism among individuals and organizations. In addition, there exist, within the ranks of our cadres and people, erroneous ideas and conceptions of those who fail to grasp the real national situation and to distinguish foes from friends.

3. Communism:

In the battle against Communist sabotage, we have encountered new difficulties and problems. In face of our successes in all respects, the Viet Cong, losing all hope of using their scheme of subversion and sabotage to hamper the maturation of the Personalist Republican regime have obeyed to the orders given by Russia and Red China and have launched a war of overt aggression against South Vietnam with large military units.

The Communists' plot is aimed at striking directly at the countryside, using it as the main springboard of their activities, hoping to destroy the results of reconstruction undertaken by our government and people in the very fundamental infrastructure, and thereby to occupy the countryside and encircle the towns and overthrow our regime.

Exactly as stated by the President, the Red monster represents a great obstacle in our advance toward securing happiness for the whole people and building prosperity for our country.

D. THE PRESENT RURAL SITUATION:

In conjunction with the perils of disunity and underdevelopment, the Communist plague is creating a special situation in the countryside, both in the political security and socio-economic respects.

1. Political Security:

a. Village and hamlet government.

Carrying out their plot to bring down our fundamental organization, the Viet Cong have assassinated, kidnapped village

and hamlets officials, creating for the rural authorities in some areas the following state:

- Dispiritedness, evasion of responsibility, vacancies created by the absence of village officials,
- The scope of our activities narrowed, in space as well as in time,
- Village officials went in exile, as a result of the enemy's usurpation.

b. Popular organizations:

The Viet Cong have intensified their sabotage against our popular organizations, rendering part of our organization in the countryside:

- either inactive or automatically disintegrated
- even worse, in certain areas our popular organizations have become transformed organization created, exploited and directed by the enemy.

c. The people:

The Viet Cong have used every trick to attract and control the people; on the one hand, they intensified their treacherous propoganda, distorting the governments policies, on the other hand, they stepped up terror and threat, which brought about the following consequences:

A minority of the people fell to their side or are disposed to:

- harbour the chandestine cadres of the enemy
- supply, feed, give information to and provide guidance for the enemy
- Abandon their family to take part in organizations operating for the enemy.

A number of people maintain a weavering, passive and irresponsible attitude:

- paying taxes to us and to the enemy
- not reporting on the enemy's activities, etc...
- maintaining a weavering attitude, although they remain on our side, daring not actively carry out the works advocated by us.

However, a majority is determined to engage in a life-and-death fight against the enemy.

2. In the socio-economic respect, the following phenomena have appeared in some areas:

- Many work projects have been destroyed by the Viet Cong immediately after completion and before the people can benefit from them.

- The people are unable to develop their capabilities in building their villages and hamlets, because they are subjected to Viet Cong control and hindrance.

- The facilities and benefits provided by the gov't for the people have been usurped and sabotaged by the Viet Cong: Burning mechanical ploughs, pillaging of agricultural credit loans, etc...

- The people's property has been fragrantly extorted, in the forms of fund drive, collection of taxes, buying on credit, etc...

- The government's policies and work projects have been distorted by the Viet Cong. In some areas, the people became wavered or have erroneous feelings about these programs, thus creating difficulties and obstacles to their implementation.

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In order to triumph simultaneously on three battlefronts against

- Communist sabotage
- Disunity
- Underdevelopment,

we advocate "the accomplishment of the personalist revolution in the villages and hamlets, within the framework of the Community and equal advancement".

1. Adequate organization of the hamlets, establishment of administrative institutions in the countryside, determination to preserve the regime, waging a life-and-death fight against Communism and acquiring the ability to educate our organizations, to exert leadership over the people in eradicating the Communists in their respective localities.

2. To mobilize all the capability and means of every citizen for self-protection and protection of their hamlets and villages; to direct all efforts of the people toward two

objectives: rehabilitation of the country, breaking up the Communists' scheme of striking at the countryside, in order to defeat them right in their main areas of operations.

3. To penetrate deeply into the hinterland to perfect the fundamental structure of the revolution, to build the regime from the smallest unit of the nation.

To use those means which conform to the ability of each citizen to build, preserve and develop the successes of the revolution.

4. To realize the objectives of the revolution right in localities where the citizens are living and actually engaged in activities of their daily life. To create favorable conditions for the citizens to develop their potentialities, to fully use every initiative of the people in the building of a new society in which everybody has equal opportunity to develop their personality in freedom, in prosperity and fraternity.

5. To realize the maximum: work very hard, advance very fast, without creating much disorder to the life of the family and the individual.

6. To disperse the people's erroneous feelings about the benefit of large-scale programs, frustrating the Viet Cong's attempts to capitalize on these errors to sow the seeds of discontent and foment a passive, irresponsible or resistant attitude among the people.

This policy represents a combined strategic maxim for the accomplishment of the revolution for national salvation and reconstruction in the very fundamental structure of society.

The establishment of strategic hamlets is the very response to that maxim, because the establishment of strategic hamlets is just like a revolution restricted from the broad national limits to the narrow limits of a village, a hamlet; it makes the people feel the necessity of preserving the achievements from which they directly benefit. Once the people volunteered to preserve the accomplishments realized in the villages and hamlets, they would have indirectly depended the nation.

Therefore, the establishment of strategic hamlets may reasonably be considered as an effective strategy for the eradication of Communism in the new epoch and, owing to this establishment, the nationwide and general revolution would be in uniformity with the revolution in the social units, and the protection of each unit would be in uniformity with the defense of the nation.

II. The goals of the establishment of strategic hamlets.

The goals of the establishment of strategic hamlets may be centered on the following:

A. The expansion of the revolution to the hinterland

1. Development of the results achieved in the nationwide and general revolution.

2. Expansion of the revolution to the fundamental structure of the nation.

3. Realization of the goals of the revolution right in where the people are living and carrying on their daily activities.

B. Extermination of the enemy in its very roots.

1. Defeating the Communists right in their areas of operations - the countryside.

2. Eradication of the state of backwardness in the spiritual and material life in the fundamental unit of the national community.

3. Elimination of the vicious "intoxacation" left by the Feudalists, Colonialists and Communists on the minds of the nation's masses.

C. Completion of the regime's fundamental structure.

1. Breaking up old habits which run counter to progress, to start a new pattern of life, a view upon life and a conception of values appropriate to the new age.

2. Concentrating sufficient material and spiritual conditions to provide everybody with equal opportunity for the development of his talent and capacity, the full use of his initiative in securing and preserving the common achievements.

3. Bringing into sight of the people, through concrete accomplishments of the villages and hamlets, the picture of great achievements on a nationwide scale, and thereby, arousing in their mind the sense of responsibility for the preservation and development of the results obtained.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC HAMLETS.

- A. Strategic hamlets are established to realize a ~~thorough~~ thorough social reform.

The establishment of strategic hamlets is not solely aimed at a purely military objective (protection of security), or a purely economic objective (improvement of the people's standards of living). The establishment of strategic hamlets has a more comprehensive significance. It is the focus of the works undertaken at the present stage, aimed at achieving a radical social reform, proceeding from an old society overwhelmed by injustices and submerged in outdated and erroneous prejudices toward the erection of a new society in which everybody would have sufficient opportunity and equal conditions for the development of his abilities and the attainment of a happy life, and in which human dignity is respected.

In other words, each strategic hamlet would be a model hamlet, the revolution will expand deep into the countryside to attain its goal - the liberation of man as a whole.

- B. Apart from the eradication of Communism, the establishment of strategic hamlets is also effective in eradicating two other plagues: underdevelopment and disunity.

As mentioned earlier, the establishment of strategic hamlets is also aimed, besides military objectives, at political, social, economic, cultural goals. The establishment of strategic hamlets is, therefore, aimed at eradicating three kinds of plagues: Communism, underdevelopment and disunity.

The establishment of strategic hamlets will thus be a longterm undertaking; it could not be accomplished within a few years. It demands an outstanding perseverance and patience. It is aimed at conspicuous objects related to the daily life of the people, from the distribution of rights to the hamlets' patterns of life.

Humble though its objects are, its goal is ambitious, since the success or failure of our struggle is dependent upon the results of the establishment of strategic hamlets.

- C. The establishment of strategic hamlets is not dictated by Communist subversion.

The establishment of strategic hamlets falls within the framework of the political and social revolution which has been carried on for 7 years throughout the country. Whether or not the Communist directed subversive war was launched Vietnam must unquestionably pursue this revolution.

However, it is due to Communist sabotage that any plan whatsoever must be aimed at serving the interests of the struggle against Communism, and prior to the execution of any program or plan, we cannot overlook the anticipation of measures for preventing subversive activities on the part of the Communists.

Thus, it is reasonable to say that the establishment of strategic hamlets is the most effective means to fight Communism at the present stage. Owing to the reform in the pattern of life in the rural society, those elements who have rendered worthy services to the Fatherland will enjoy the national and good treatment they deserve. The change in the conception of values in the villages and hamlets would bring to the people an intensive source of inspiration which constitutes a motivating force behind a competitive movement for the eradication of Communism, in order to achieve national salvation and reconstruction.

- D. The establishment of strategic hamlets differs from such programs of large-scale works as the construction of agrovilles, land development centers.

The establishment of strategic hamlets has been carried out within the small scale of each national unit. The means used are also humble and are within the reach of the ability of each citizen in the hamlet. But, humble though the means are, the effects are great, since they are concrete results that were achieved quickly and are immediately visible to the people.

- E. The establishment of strategic hamlets must be the task of the people.

The establishment of strategic hamlets is undertaken voluntarily by the people themselves, after they fully grasp the government's policy, in order to alter their pattern of life by their own abilities.

The government has the duty to provide them with cadres, facilities, technical assistance and come to their rescue when necessary for the protection of security. The government and accelerating the work. The people's initiatives and efforts are the key factors of success./.