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PRESENTATION BY
GENERAL WILLIAM B. ROSSON
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF, U. S. ARMY, PACIFIC
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY
SHERATON PARK HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D. C.
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1970

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CURRENT PERSPECTIVE ON VIETNAM

INTRODUCTION

MINE IS THE PRIVILEGE THIS MORNING TO FURNISH THE ANNUAL MEETING AN OVERVIEW OF THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM. THE FOCUS WILL BE ON THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION, WITH PERTINENT ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL POINTS INTRODUCED TO ROUND OUT THE PICTURE AND PROVIDE PROPER BALANCE. DURING THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD I HOPE YOU WILL SINGLE OUT FOR DISCUSSION ITEMS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST AND CONCERN TO YOU.

ACCENT ON VIETNAMIZATION

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THE YEAR THAT HAS UNFOLDED BETWEEN THE 1969 AND 1970 ANNUAL MEETINGS HAS WITNESSED A FULL-SCALE EFFORT IN SUPPORT OF VIETNAMIZATION, THE PROGRAM BEGUN IN 1968 UNDER WHICH WE ASSIST THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM TO ASSUME AN INCREASINGLY GREATER SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR CONDUCT OF THE WAR AND FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. THIS IMPRESSIVE EFFORT HAS PRODUCED IMPORTANT AND ENCOURAGING PROGRESS IN THE QUEST FOR A SOLUTION WHEREIN THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH VIETNAM ARE AFFORDED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DETERMINE THEIR OWN DESTINY FREE FROM OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. AT THE

SAME TIME, THE EFFORT HAS HAD TO CONTEND WITH A NUMBER OF PROBLEMS THAT WARRANT IDENTIFICATION. ON BOTH COUNTS, PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS, I HOPE TO GIVE YOU THE FEEL I HAVE FOR THEM BASED ON SERVICE IN VIETNAM DURING THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

THREE MAJOR UNDERTAKINGS

BEFORE DOING SO, HOWEVER, I WOULD NOTE THAT UNDER THE VIETNAMIZATION PROGRAM UNITED STATES, GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND VARIOUS OF THE FREE WORLD FORCES ARE ENGAGED IN CARRYING OUT THREE MAJOR, INTERRELATED UNDERTAKINGS:

IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION

FIRST IS IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. THIS INVOLVES QUANTITATIVE EXPANSION OF GROUND, SEA AND AIR FORCES, AS WELL AS QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR COMBAT AND TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY. IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION TRANSLATE INTO HEIGHTENED CAPABILITY ON THE PART OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES, PROGRESSIVE ASSUMPTION BY THEM OF RESPONSIBILITIES FORMERLY SHOULDERED BY US FORCES AND CONSEQUENT OPPORTUNITY FOR REDEPLOYMENT FROM VIETNAM OF US FORCES.

SUPPORT OF PACIFICATION

UNDERTAKING TWO IS SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S PACIFICATION PROGRAM, THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO IMPROVE THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LOT OF THE PEOPLE. SUCCESS IN THIS ENDEAVOR IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ATTAINMENT OF AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT. BY SUCCESS WE MEAN PROVISION OF A CLEARLY BETTER ALTERNATIVE TO COMMUNISM -- ONE WHEREIN THE PEOPLE ACTIVELY SUPPORT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND ITS MEASURES FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

CONDUCT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS

THE THIRD UNDERTAKING ENTAILS CONDUCT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS WHOSE PURPOSE IS ESTABLISHMENT OF A SECURE ENVIRONMENT WITHIN WHICH THE ENEMY IS INCAPABLE OF PREVENTING THE STEADY FORWARD PROGRESS OF PACIFICATION AND DEVELOPMENT.

THESE THREE UNDERTAKINGS, OR TASKS, DEFINE THE JOB TO BE DONE. WHAT ARE THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH EACH?

PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS

I. CONCERNING IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION

COMMENCING WITH IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM'S MILITARY AND PARAMILITARY FORCES, BOTH

WE AND THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE CAN TAKE PRIDE IN WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED. ALLOW ME TO USE THE RECORD TO JUSTIFY THIS VIEW, AS OPPOSED TO OFFERING IT AS MY PERSONAL ASSESSMENT. HERE ARE THE FACTS:

EXPANSION

SINCE MID-1968 THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMY, THE VIETNAMESE NAVY, THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE AND THE VIETNAMESE MARINE CORPS HAVE INCREASED IN STRENGTH BY APPROXIMATELY 105,000. THE TERRITORIAL FORCES, THAT IS THE REGIONAL AND POPULAR FORCES TOGETHER, HAVE ADDED ANOTHER 150,000. IN TERMS OF PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENT THIS REPRESENTS OVER 90% OF THE PLANNED STRENGTH FOR THE REGULARS OF APPROXIMATELY 500,000, AND FOR THE TERRITORIALS OF APPROXIMATELY 550,000. SUPPOSE THE UNITED STATES WERE TO MAKE A COMPARABLE EFFORT. WE WOULD HAVE OVER NINE MILLION MEN UNDER ARMS AGAINST A GOAL OF ROUGHLY 11 MILLION.

MATERIEL MODERNIZATION

AS FOR MATERIEL MODERNIZATION, THE EXPANDED SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES HAVE RECEIVED TO DATE, AND WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE UNTIL EXPANSION IS COMPLETE, A BALANCED COMPLEMENT OF MODERN, BATTLE-PROVEN ARMS AND EQUIPMENT -- FOR THE ARMY AND MARINE CORPS M-16 RIFLES, M-60 MACHINE GUNS, M-79

GRENADE LAUNCHERS, THE NEW FAMILY OF TACTICAL RADIOS, LATEST MODEL WHEELED VEHICLES, ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, ARTILLERY, ENGINEER EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS HANDLING EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE GEAR. IN ADDITION TO THESE CATEGORIES, THE NAVY HAS RECEIVED VASTLY INCREASED NUMBERS OF COASTAL SURVEILLANCE, RIVERINE AND SUPPORT SHIPS AND CRAFT. FOR THE AIR FORCE WE SHOULD UNDERSCORE UH-1 LIFT HELICOPTERS AND GUNSHIPS, INCREASED JET FIGHTERS, LARGER AND MORE VERSATILE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND TACTICAL AIR CONTROL ASSETS.

TRAINING EFFORT

ASSOCIATED WITH EXPANSION AND MATERIEL MODERNIZATION OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES HAS BEEN A REMARKABLE TOUR DE FORCE ON THE PART OF THE INDIGENOUS TRAINING BASE. NO LESS THAN 475,000 OFFICERS AND MEN, FOR EXAMPLE, WERE PROCESSED THROUGH TRAINING CENTERS AND SCHOOLS IN 1969. OVER 600,000 WILL RECEIVE INSTRUCTION THIS YEAR. ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING HAS BECOME A MAJOR ENTERPRISE. AS A MATTER OF SPECIFIC INTEREST TO THE AUSA, I WOULD CALL ATTENTION TO THE HIGHLY EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ROLE THE UNITED STATES ARMY IS PLAYING IN THE TRAINING OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE HELICOPTER PILOTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

PERCENTAGE ACCOMPLISHMENT

WHEN PERSONNEL EXPANSION, MATERIEL MODERNIZATION AND TRAINING ARE TAKEN TOGETHER, PERCENTAGE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE PLANNED UPGRADING OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM STANDS

TODAY AT OVER 90% FOR THE REGULAR ARMY AND TERRITORIALS, 75% FOR THE NAVY, 50% FOR THE AIR FORCE AND 100% FOR THE MARINE CORPS. THE LOWER ACCOMPLISHMENT PERCENTAGES FOR THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE RESIDE IN LONG LEAD TIME TRAINING REQUIREMENTS FOR PILOTS AND SPECIALISTS.

EFFECTIVENESS

WHAT IS THE STORY CONCERNING IMPROVED EFFECTIVENESS? HERE THE EVIDENCE IS QUITE PERSUASIVE. ON THE GROUND FORCE SIDE WE USED TO SPEAK OF ONE REALLY FIRST-RATE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMY DIVISION. NOW WE PUT ABOUT HALF OF THE ARMY DIVISIONS AND THE MARINE DIVISION IN THAT CATEGORY. ROUGHLY THE SAME APPRAISAL APPLIES TO SUPPORTING FORCES, COMBAT AND LOGISTIC. ALTHOUGH LEADERSHIP ASSETS ARE STRETCHED TO THE ELASTIC LIMIT AS A RESULT OF EXPANSION AND OF COMBAT LOSSES, LEADERSHIP IS IMPROVING, BETTER TRAINING, COMBINED OPERATIONS WITH US FORCES, GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM ACTION TO REPLACE INCOMPETENT PERSONNEL, AND EFFECTIVE US ADVISORY EFFORT UNDERLIE THIS POSITIVE TREND.

FOR BOTH REGULARS AND TERRITORIALS, WE OBSERVE MORE TIME DEVOTED TO COMBAT, MORE CONTACTS WITH THE ENEMY, BETTER RESULTS PER CONTACT, MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF SUPPORTING RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY HELICOPTERS, AND GREATER SKILL IN

PLANNING AND CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS. "OFFENSIVE MINDEDNESS" IS OVERTAKING THE "DEFENSIVE MINDEDNESS" OF THE PAST. FRIENDLY VERSUS ENEMY KILL RATIOS ARE INCREASINGLY FAVORABLE. ABOVE ALL, EXPERIENCE GAINED DURING THE CAMBODIAN CAMPAIGNING IN MAY AND JUNE OF THIS YEAR HAVE PRODUCED RICH DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF HEIGHTENED CONFIDENCE AND MORALE. TODAY SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES ARE CONDUCTING COMMENDABLY EFFECTIVE OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA WITHOUT US ADVISORS.

THE VIETNAMESE NAVY AND AIR FORCE MERIT PRAISE FOR THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE PAST YEAR. BOTH HAVE MEASURED UP TO THE DEMANDS OF RAPID EXPANSION, HAVE ASSUMED INCREASINGLY GREATER COMBAT RESPONSIBILITIES AND HAVE ACQUITTED THEMSELVES WELL AGAINST THE ENEMY. THE VIETNAMESE NAVY, IN FACT, HAS UNDERGONE A TRANSFORMATION IN SIZE, CAPABILITY AND ATTITUDE I WOULD NOT HAVE CONSIDERED POSSIBLE. AT THIS JUNCTURE IT SHOULDERS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR COASTAL SURVEILLANCE AND INLAND WATERWAY OPERATIONS UTILIZING AN EXTENSIVE ARRAY OF VESSELS AND CRAFT TURNED OVER BY US NAVY UNITS SINCE REDEPLOYED. THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE MEASURES UP TO THOROUGHGOING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN THE STRIKE AND AIRLIFT ROLES. INDEED, ITS FIGHTER PILOTS AND A SELECT CONTINGENT OF HELICOPTER PILOTS

ARE CONCEDED TO BE AMONG THE BEST THE WAR HAS PRODUCED. THE NEWLY ACQUIRED UH-1 HELICOPTER LIFT AND GUNSHIP CAPABILITIES ARE SHAPING UP NICELY, ALTHOUGH NOT WITHOUT REGARD TO THE LEARNING CURVE. THE SAME MAY BE SAID OF RECONNAISSANCE AND FORWARD AIR CONTROL ELEMENTS. IN THE MEKONG DELTA THE VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE TACTICAL AIR CONTROL SYSTEM, ON ITS OWN, CONTROLS BOTH VIETNAMESE AIR FORCE AND US AIR FORCE MISSIONS.

LOGISTIC MODERNIZATION

IT IS IN THE CREATION OF A MODERN LOGISTIC SUPPORT BASE FOR THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES THAT THE LION'S SHARE OF DEVELOPMENTAL WORK REMAINS. NONETHELESS, THE PROGRAM IS ON SCHEDULE AND WHEN COMPLETED WILL PROVIDE APPROPRIATE MAINTENANCE, SUPPLY AND TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT FOR THE LONG PULL WITH MINIMUM RELIANCE ON OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE. I GIVE EXTREMELY HIGH MARKS TO THOSE ON THE US AND VIETNAMESE SIDES WHO HAVE PREPARED AND SUPERVISED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LOGISTIC MODERNIZATION PLAN.

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION ARE BY NO MEANS INCONSEQUENTIAL. MANY GROUND COMBAT UNITS ARE OPERATING AT REDUCED STRENGTHS AS THE RESULT OF EXCESSIVE

DESERTIONS AND UNEVEN PRODUCTION OF REPLACEMENTS. LEADERSHIP WEAKNESSES PERSIST AT ALL LEVELS DESPITE THE TREND TOWARD IMPROVEMENT, BUT ARE MOST PRONOUNCED AMONG JUNIOR OFFICERS. EFFECTIVENESS OF NIGHT OPERATIONS, PARTICULARLY AMONG TERRITORIAL FORCES, CONTINUES TO BE SUB-STANDARD. SHORTAGES IN VIRTUALLY ALL SKILL CATEGORIES DETRACT FROM FULL-FLEDGED VIABILITY OF LOGISTIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT. THE ECONOMIC PLIGHT OF THE LOW-INCOME SERVICEMAN AND CIVIL SERVANT IN AN INFLATIONARY ENVIRONMENT MUST BE RECKONED WITH. IT IS SIGNIFICANT, I BELIEVE, THAT DURING MY ROUND OF FAREWELL CALLS IN VIETNAM LAST MONTH, THIS SUBJECT WAS RAISED WITH GREATER FREQUENCY THAN ANY OTHER BY COMMANDERS AND PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS. TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM, US-SUPPORTED EFFORTS HAVE BEEN INITIATED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF MILITARY DEPENDENT SHELTERS AND TO STIMULATE FOOD PRODUCTION BY MILITARY UNITS AND AGENCIES. ADDITIONALLY, OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE INCLUDES SUBSTANTIAL FOOD SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE ARMED FORCES. HERE, AS IN THE CASE OF THE OTHER PROBLEMS WE HAVE NOTED AND OF OTHERS NOT CITED, CURRENT STUDY AND FOLLOW-ON ACTION ARE CONCENTRATING ON DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND SOLUTIONS.

ADVISOR CONTRIBUTION

AS A POSTSCRIPT TO OUR CONSIDERATION OF IMPROVEMENT AND

MODERNIZATION, YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE IMPRESSIVE CONTRIBUTION BEING MADE BY THE US ADVISORS; SOME 12,000 OF THEM, HALF OF WHOM WORK WITH THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGULAR MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT; HALF WITH THE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE AND TERRITORIAL FORCES. IN CONSONANCE WITH THE HEIGHTENED EMPHASIS ON VIETNAMIZATION, THE ADVISORY ORGANIZATION IS UNDER CONTINUING SCRUTINY WITH A VIEW TO STRENGTHENING OF ITS CAPABILITIES THROUGH ASSIGNMENT OF HIGHLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY IS PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN THIS EFFORT, AND RESULTS SHOW HIGH PAY-OFF, PARTICULARLY IN THE IMPROVED QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE OF PROVINCE SENIOR ADVISORS AND DISTRICT SENIOR ADVISORS. THERE CONTINUE TO BE UNDERSIRABLE SHORTAGES IN SOME ADVISOR CATEGORIES, AS WELL AS IMBALANCES IN RANK AND EXPERIENCE, BUT THESE ARE BEING WORKED OUT SYSTEMATICALLY. IN VIETNAM TODAY THE HIGHEST PROFESSIONAL CHALLENGE AND REWARDS ARE TO BE FOUND IN THE ADVISORY ARENA.

II. CONCERNING SUPPORT OF PACIFICATION

TURNING NOW TO THE SITUATION AS IT RELATES TO SUPPORT OF PACIFICATION -- THE SECOND MAJOR VIETNAMIZATION UNDERTAKING. HERE WE MUST EXAMINE EACH OF THE EIGHT OBJECTIVES OF THE

PACIFICATION PROGRAM, THE FIRST OF WHICH IS TO STRENGTHEN SECURITY OF THE POPULATION.

STRENGTHEN SECURITY OF THE POPULATION

ALL REGULAR, TERRITORIAL AND PARAMILITARY FORCES -- US, GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND FREE WORLD -- CONTRIBUTE TO ATTAINMENT OF THIS OBJECTIVE. THE CONCEPT GOVERNING THEIR EMPLOYMENT CALLS FOR INTERIOR PROTECTION OF HAMLETS, VILLAGES AND URBAN AREAS BY PEOPLES SELF DEFENSE FORCES AND NATIONAL POLICE; PERIMETER SECURITY OF HAMLETS, VILLAGES AND URBAN AREAS BY POPULAR FORCES; AND CONDUCT OF PROVINCIAL AND DISTRICT LEVEL MOBILE OPERATIONS BY REGIONAL FORCES. WITH LOCAL SECURITY ACCOMPLISHED IN THIS MANNER, REGULAR GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM, US AND FREE WORLD FORCES ARE ABLE TO ENGAGE THE ENEMY IN BORDER AND BASE AREAS, INTERDICT LINES OF COMMUNICATION, PREEMPT ENEMY OFFENSIVE PREPARATIONS, REACT RAPIDLY TO CONTACTS WITH THE ENEMY AND COME TO THE AID OF TERRITORIALS AS REQUIRED. PROGRESS IN THIS DOMAIN IS HEARTENING INDEED. TODAY ALMOST 93% OF THE POPULATION OF THE REPUBLIC ENJOYS WHAT CAN BE TERMED FAIR TO EXCELLENT SECURITY.

NEUTRALIZATION OF THE ENEMY INFRASTRUCTURE

THE SECOND PACIFICATION OBJECTIVE CALLS FOR NEUTRALIZATION OF THE VIET CONG, OR VC, INFRASTRUCTURE -- THE COMMUNIST CONTROL APPARATUS. IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS BEING BOTH THE MOST IMPORTANT AND THE MOST DIFFICULT OF THE PACIFICATION OBJECTIVES. UNLESS AND UNTIL THE INFRASTRUCTURE CAN BE RENDERED INEFFECTIVE, THE ENEMY'S POTENTIAL FOR SUSTAINING HIS EFFORTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM WILL REMAIN.

PERHAPS THE BEST ILLUSTRATION IN SUPPORT OF THIS STATEMENT IS FOUND IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE'S USE OF TERRORISM TO ACHIEVE ITS ENDS. IN 1968 OVER 6,300 PRO-GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL WERE KILLED, WITH OVER 26,000 WOUNDED OR ABDUCTED. IN 1969 JUST OVER 6,000 WERE KILLED; 21,000 WOUNDED OR ABDUCTED. THROUGH AUGUST OF 1970 THE FIGURES ARE APPROXIMATELY 4,200 KILLED; 14,000 WOUNDED OR ABDUCTED. SOME IMPROVEMENT IN THE TREND IS EVIDENT, BUT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE TO ACHIEVE AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF PROTECTION AGAINST THIS UNIQUELY DANGEROUS THREAT.

ORGANIZATIONALLY, MUCH HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED TO PLACE THE NEUTRALIZATION EFFORT ON A SOUND FOOTING. INDEED, IN SELECTED AREAS CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE HAS BEEN INFLICTED ON

THE INFRASTRUCTURE, OVERALL, HOWEVER, THE ENEMY'S CONTROL MECHANISM REMAINS INTACT AND NOTHING SHORT OF MAJOR EFFORT AND PRIME SKILL WILL SUFFICE TO RENDER IT INEFFECTIVE. NOT THE LEAST OF THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED HAS BEEN INDECISIVE VIETNAMESE ACTION TO ACCORD THIS VITAL ENDEAVOR THE PRIORITY IT REQUIRES. ENCOURAGINGLY, HOWEVER, THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS HAVE SEEN A STRENGTHENING OF GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM EMPHASIS. MEANWHILE, US PARTICIPATION IS BEING UPGRADED BY SPECIALIZED TRAINING AND IMPROVED PERSONNEL SELECTION.

POLICE PROGRAM

ESSENTIAL TO STRENGTHENED SECURITY FOR THE POPULATION, NEUTRALIZATION OF THE VC INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAINTENANCE OF LAW AND ORDER OVER THE LONG PULL IS DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENT AND RELIABLE POLICE. UNFORTUNATELY, ATTAINMENT OF THIS CAPABILITY MUST BE REGARDED AS A PROBLEM AREA INFLUENCED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, BY VIETNAMESE DISENCHANTMENT WITH POLICE PERFORMANCE AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT SOME YEARS AGO, AND BY ADHERENCE TO OUTMODED ORGANIZATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS. NONETHELESS, THE POLICE EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM HAS MOVED AHEAD, ALTHOUGH UNEVENLY, DURING RECENT YEARS. PERFORMANCE IN SOME LOCALITIES,

SUCH AS SAIGON, HAS BEEN COMMENDABLE, AND RENEWED EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ACCORDED TRAINING. SIGNIFICANT, BUT STILL INSUFFICIENT, PROGRESS HAS BEEN RECORDED IN THE EFFORT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF POLICE AT DISTRICT LEVEL AND BELOW. EXPANSION GOALS MANIFEST SHORTFALLS BECAUSE OF RECRUITING POLICIES THAT GIVE THE ARMED FORCES PRIORITY OVER THE POLICE, BUT TRANSFER OF 13,000 PERSONNEL FROM THE MILITARY DURING THE PAST YEAR PROVIDED AN INTERIM SOLUTION. LOW PAY AND LIMITED INCENTIVES DETRACT FROM THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF A POLICE CAREER, BUT THE PROBLEM HAS BEEN ACKNOWLEDGED AND A START MADE IN OVERCOMING IT. ON BALANCE, PROGRESS IN MEETING POLICE OBJECTIVES IS DISAPPOINTING. ONLY THROUGH A PRONOUNCED CHANGE IN VIETNAMESE ATTITUDES AND PRIORITIES CAN IT BE ACCELERATED.

PEOPLE'S SELF-DEFENSE FORCES

THIRD AMONG THE PACIFICATION OBJECTIVES IS DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE'S SELF DEFENSE FORCES IN URBAN AS WELL AS RURAL AREAS. IN ESSENCE, THESE ARE HOME GUARD PERSONNEL. SINCE LATE 1968 OVER 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ MILLION MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED, ABOUT TWO THIRDS OF WHOM HAVE RECEIVED RUDIMENTARY MILITARY

TRAINING AND AMONG WHICH ROUGHLY 360,000 ARE ARMED. THE REMAINDER PROVIDE SUPPORT OF VARIOUS TYPES -- FIREFIGHTING AND FIRST AID, FOR EXAMPLE. MEMBERSHIP IN THE PSDF IS IMPORTANT FROM A POLITICAL AS WELL AS A MILITARY VIEWPOINT, FOR THE VOLUNTEER AND HIS FAMILY HAVE CAST THEIR LOT OPENLY WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THAT THE ENEMY TAKES THIS PROGRAM SERIOUSLY IS EVIDENCED BY THE FACT THAT THE PSDF ARE HEAVILY TARGETED FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITY. ALTHOUGH THEIR PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN SPOTTY TO DATE, THE PSDF ARE ASSUMING AN INCREASINGLY EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE SCHEME OF THINGS.

IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

THE FOURTH OBJECTIVE FOCUSES ON IMPROVEMENT OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION. ONE OF THE TRULY SIGNIFICANT TESTIMONIALS TO PACIFICATION PROGRESS IS FOUND IN THE EXPANSION OF ELECTED GOVERNMENTS AT HAMLET AND VILLAGE LEVELS. A REMARKABLE 95% OF THE MORE THAN 11,000 HAMLETS AND 2100 VILLAGES HAVE SUCH GOVERNMENTS TODAY. OF COMPARABLE SIGNIFICANCE IS PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN TRAINING LOCAL OFFICIALS AND IN GIVING THEM APPRECIABLY GREATER AUTHORITY UNDER THE CONCEPT OF DECENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT CONTROL. DURING 1969 OVER 31,000 RECEIVED INSTRUCTION AT THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER; THIS

YEAR OVER 42,000 MORE ARE PROGRAMMED TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTION. THOUSANDS MORE HAVE BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE TRAINED AT PROVINCE LEVEL. DISCERNIBLE IMPROVEMENT IN THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF LOCAL ADMINISTRATION HAS DONE MUCH TO ENHANCE THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S IMAGE AND TO WIN SUPPORT FOR ITS PROGRAMS.

GREATER NATIONAL UNITY

PACIFICATION OBJECTIVE FIVE STRESSES GREATER NATIONAL UNITY THROUGH CONTINUED EMPHASIS ON THE CHIEU HOI, OR OPEN ARMS, PROGRAM WHICH ENCOURAGES ENEMY MILITARY AND POLITICAL FUNCTIONARIES TO RALLY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM. OVER 47,000 CAME OVER LAST YEAR; 25,000 HAVE RALLIED THIS YEAR. LOSS OF THESE PERSONNEL NOT ONLY IS A MATTER OF INCREASING CONCERN TO THE ENEMY, BUT BENEFITS THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM BY BRINGING ADDITIONAL PEOPLE UNDER ITS CONTROL. MANY OF THE RALLIERS PROVIDE VALUABLE INTELLIGENCE; OTHERS JOIN THE RANKS OF FRIENDLY FORCES. ON THE MINUS SIDE, MORE RALLIERS THAN ONE WOULD WISH EXPERIENCE DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT.

CARE OF WAR VICTIMS

PROVIDING A BRIGHTER LIFE FOR WAR VICTIMS, OR REFUGEES, IS THE SIXTH OBJECTIVE. AT THE BEGINNING OF 1969 THERE WERE 1.4 MILLION OF THEM. SINCE THEN ALMOST ONE MILLION HAVE BEEN RESETTLED OR HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGES AS SECURITY HAS IMPROVED. TODAY THERE ARE ROUGHLY 550,000, THE BULK OF WHOM ARE IN THE PROCESS OF BEING RESETTLED OR RETURNED TO THEIR VILLAGES. HERE, THEN, IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT INDICATOR OF PROGRESS.

IMPROVED INFORMATION PROGRAM

OBJECTIVE SEVEN EMBODIES AN INTENSIFIED CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM'S INFORMATION PROGRAM. EMPHASIS IS ON USE OF AUDIO-VISUAL MEDIA, INFORMATION TEAMS AND LOCAL OFFICIALS TO EXPLAIN GOVERNMENT POLICY AND GOALS, AND TO ENCOURAGE SUPPORT FOR SUCH ENDEAVORS AS EXPANSION OF THE PSDF, NEUTRALIZATION OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE AND GREATER HAMLET AND VILLAGE ECONOMIC SELF-DEVELOPMENT. DESPITE ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE, THE EFFORT HAS BEEN HANDICAPPED BY ORGANIZATIONAL WEAKNESSES AND A SHORTAGE OF EXPERTISE. IT HAS YET TO ACHIEVE THE DESIRED IMPACT.

ECONOMIC EFFORT - PROSPERITY FOR ALL

THE EIGHTH AND LAST OBJECTIVE IS DESCRIBED AS PROSPERITY FOR ALL. PRIMARILY AGRICULTURAL IN NATURE, IT ENJOYS A HIGH PRIORITY IN THE EYES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND IN TERMS OF US SUPPORT. PRINCIPAL INGREDIENTS ARE LAND REFORM, WHICH INVOLVES REDISTRIBUTION OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED LAND, TRANSFER OF LANDLORD-OWNED LAND TO TENANT FARMERS UNDER THE RECENTLY PASSED "LAND TO THE TILLER" LEGISLATION, RICE SELF-SUFFICIENCY (DESTINED FOR ATTAINMENT NEXT YEAR), CROP DIVERSIFICATION, INCREASED PROTEIN PRODUCTION, CREDIT FOR FARMERS, PROCESSING AND MARKETING OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, INCREASED CROP EXPORTS AND EXPANDED AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT EXCELLENT PROGRESS ON THIS FRONT. A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR HAS BEEN SUCCESS IN OPENING, SECURING AND UPGRADING ROADS AND WATERWAYS TO FACILITATE FARM TO MARKET FLOW AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT.

ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM THAT ARGUES FOR COMMENT PERTAINS TO INFLATION, THE RADICALLY ADVERSE BALANCE BETWEEN LARGELY US-FINANCED IMPORTS AND GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM EXPORT EARNINGS (700-800 MILLION VERSUS 15-20 MILLION ANNUALLY), NEED FOR MONETARY, COMMERCIAL

AND TAX REFORMS, AND THE REQUIREMENT FOR STRONG ANTI-CORRUPTION MEASURES. IF ALLOWED TO CONTINUE WITHOUT BENEFIT OF CORRECTIVE ACTION, THESE PROBLEMS WOULD PRESENT SERIOUS OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS OF THE TOTAL PROGRAM FOR VIETNAM.

WHAT IS BEING DONE ON THIS SCORE? IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM, WITH OUR ENCOURAGEMENT AND SUPPORT, HAS INITIATED A REFORM CAMPAIGN -- ONE THAT WILL ENCOUNTER ROUGH GOING, BUT ONE THAT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE NATION'S FUTURE STABILITY -- INDEED SURVIVABILITY. INDICATIVE OF PROGRESS TO DATE HAVE BEEN LAST MONTH'S INTEREST RATE ADJUSTMENTS FOLLOWED EARLY THIS MONTH BY REVISION OF THE PIASTER EXCHANGE RATE, IMPORT TAX STRUCTURE AND RICE PRICES, PLUS ANNOUNCEMENT OF A SUBSTANTIAL PAY INCREASE FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES -- MILITARY AND CIVIL SERVANTS.

SOCIAL PROGRAMS

TURNING MOMENTARILY TO THE REALM OF SOCIAL SERVICES, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT ENCOURAGING GAINS ARE BEING MADE IN EXPANDING PUBLIC EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SERVICE, BOTH OF WHICH FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN DEMONSTRATING GOVERNMENTAL INTEREST IN AND CONCERN FOR THE PEOPLE. VETERANS BENEFITS, ON THE OTHER HAND, PARTICULARLY FOR THE DISABLED, HAVE

RECEIVED INADEQUATE ATTENTION AND ARE THE SOURCE OF PROTEST BY VARIOUS GROUPS, SOME OF WHICH APPEAR TO BE TOOLS OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS. IN ANY CASE, THE GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM RECOGNIZES THE PROBLEM AND IS ENDEAVORING TO ALLEVIATE IT. THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION, OF COURSE, INVOLVES LONG-TERM EFFORT AND VERY CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE.

III. CONCERNING CONDUCT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS ENEMY SHIFT IN STRATEGY

THIS BRINGS US TO PROGRESS AND PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE THIRD OF THE MAJOR VIETNAMIZATION UNDERTAKINGS, CONDUCT OF COMBAT OPERATIONS. WE MIGHT BEGIN OUR CONSIDERATION OF THIS TOPIC BY NOTING THAT LAST YEAR HANOI SHIFTED ITS STRATEGY FROM ONE OF SUSTAINED EFFORT TO ACHIEVE DECISIVE VICTORY TO ONE OF PROTRACTED WAR LEADING TO AN ILL-DEFINED "ULTIMATE" VICTORY. THIS WAS ACCOMPANIED BY GREATER RELIANCE ON ATTACKS BY FIRE AS OPPOSED TO COSTLY GROUND ASSAULTS, AND BY A SHIFT OF EMPHASIS FROM URBAN AREAS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE -- PRIORITY TO THE MEKONG DELTA. FIVE REGIMENTS WERE MOVED FROM NEIGHBORING MILITARY REGION 3 TO REINFORCE THE DELTA. AT THE SAME TIME HANOI STRESSED NEED TO DISRUPT VIETNAMIZATION (WHICH IT CALLS "DE-AMERICANIZATION"), ROLL BACK PACIFICATION,

INFLECT CASUALTIES ON AMERICAN FORCES AS A MEANS OF STRENGTHENING ANTI-WAR SENTIMENT IN THE UNITED STATES, AND UTILIZE THE BORDER SANCTUARIES AS BASES FOR SUPPORT OF OPERATIONS INTO THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM.

WHAT CAUSED THESE CHANGES ON HANOI'S PART? VIEWED FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF HINDSIGHT, THE REASON REVOLVES AROUND HEAVY LOSSES SUSTAINED BY THE VIET CONG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY FORCES DURING THEIR ABORTIVE OFFENSIVE ATTEMPTS IN 1968 AND 1969, RELENTLESS PRESSURE AGAINST THE ENEMY'S BASE AREAS AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION, THE GROWING EFFECTIVENESS OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS AND TERRITORIALS, AND SUCCESS OF THE ACCELERATED GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM PACIFICATION PROGRAM FOR 1969. IN ANY EVENT, THE NET EFFECT WAS A DECLINING CAPABILITY ON THE ENEMY'S PART -- ONE COMPOUNDED BY LOGISTIC DIFFICULTIES BROUGHT ON BY CAMBODIAN TERMINATION OF SUPPLY VIA THE PORT OF SIHANOUKVILLE, US AIR INTERDICTION OF THE HO CHI MINH TRAIL, MAJOR FRIENDLY SUCCESSES IN UNCOVERING CACHES, FALL-OFF OF RECRUITMENT WITHIN THE REPUBLIC AND CONSIDERABLY LOWER LEVELS OF PERSONNEL INFILTRATION FROM NORTH VIETNAM.

FRIENDLY RESPONSE

AGAINST THIS BACKDROP, U.S. GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM AND FREE WORLD FORCES ASSUMED DOMINANCE OVER THE MILITARY SCENE DURING THE LATTER PART OF 1969 AND EARLY 1970. FOR THE MOST PART, THE ENEMY HAS FRAGMENTED INTO SMALL UNITS; RELIED UPON HIT AND RUN TACTICS, TERRORISM AND PROPAGANDA TO ASSERT HIS PRESENCE; AND MADE MAXIMUM USE OF THE SANCTUARIES TO REFURBISH. FRIENDLY RESPONSE HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE AND RECONNAISSANCE TO LOCATE ENEMY UNITS AND BASE AREAS, FOLLOWED BY RAPID-REACTION OPERATIONS TO EXPLOIT CONTACTS AND PREEMPT ENEMY INITIATIVES. TACTICAL AIR HAS BEEN EMPLOYED EXTENSIVELY IN CLOSE SUPPORT, INTERDICTION AND AIRLIFT ROLES. B-52s HAVE BEEN USED TO FULL AND TELLING ADVANTAGE IN BRINGING MASSIVE FIREPOWER TO BEAR AGAINST THE ENEMY IN AREAS NOT READILY ACCESSIBLE TO GROUND UNITS. NAVAL FORCES HAVE CONTINUED TO STIFLE ENEMY ATTEMPTS TO RESUPPLY BY SEA, DENY USE OF KEY INLAND WATERWAYS AND SUPPORT GROUND OPERATIONS. MAXIMUM PRIORITY HAS BEEN ACCORDED THE UPGRADING OF TERRITORIAL FORCES TO ENABLE THEM TO REPLACE REGULAR ARMY AND MARINES IN THE LOCAL

SECURITY ROLE, THUS PERMITTING THE REGULARS TO REPLACE US FORCES OPERATING FURTHER AFIELD. THIS PROCESS, AS DISCUSSED IN CONNECTION WITH IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION AND SUPPORT OF PACIFICATION, HAS PRODUCED ENCOURAGING RESULTS IN TERMS OF PROGRESSIVE REDEPLOYMENT OF US FORCES.

THE FAVORABLE TREND ASSOCIATED WITH COMBAT OPERATIONS BRINGS INTO FOCUS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR WORTHY OF SPECIFIC EMPHASIS. I REFER TO THE EVER-INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND COVERAGE OF THE COMBINED INTELLIGENCE SYSTEM AND TO THE RESPONSIVENESS AND RELIABILITY OF ITS PRODUCTS. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH ABILITY TO LOCATE THE ENEMY IS AN INDISPENSABLE PREREQUISITE TO SUCCESS OF PREMPTIVE OPERATIONS, ACCURATE TARGETTING AND QUICK REACTION, ONE CANNOT OVERSTATE THE IMPORTANCE OF INTELLIGENCE NOR WITHHOLD THE PRAISE SO RICHLY DESERVED BY THOSE WHO MANAGE AND OPERATE THE SYSTEM. IN ADDITION TO ITS EFFECTIVE SUPPORT OF TARGETTING, THE INTELLIGENCE COMPLEX EXCELS IN TECHNICAL EVALUATION, DOCUMENT EXPLOITATION, INTERROGATION, COMPILATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRODUCTION OF ESTIMATES.

CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS INTO CAMBODIA

LOOKING BACK OVER THE COMBAT ACTIVITIES OF THE LAST YEAR, THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT THAT THE US-GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS TO CLEAN OUT THE BASE AREA SANCTUARIES IN CAMBODIA, PREEMPTING THEREBY ENEMY ACTION AIMED AT DISRUPTING VIETNAMIZATION, CONSTITUTE THE HIGHLIGHT. NOR CAN THERE BE DOUBT AS TO THEIR UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS IN TERMS OF MATERIAL AND PERSONNEL LOSSES INFLICTED ON THE VIET CONG AND NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY FORCES, DISLOCATION OF THE ENEMY'S LOGISTIC AND CONTROL STRUCTURES, AND DISRUPTION OF HIS TIMETABLE. MOREOVER, PUNISHMENT ABSORBED BY THE ENEMY, COUPLED WITH NEED ON HIS PART TO COMMIT TO CAMBODIA FORCES THAT OTHERWISE WOULD BE EMPLOYED AGAINST SOUTH VIETNAM, HAS RESULTED IN DECREASED FRIENDLY CASUALTIES AND DIMINISHED PRESSURE AGAINST THE MILITARY FORCES AND POPULATION IN THE REPUBLIC. THIS IN TURN HAS GIVEN US THE PRICELESS OPPORTUNITY TO PRESS FORWARD WITH PACIFICATION -- THE KEY TO AN ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. THIS OPPORTUNITY IS BEING EXPLOITED.

FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF VIETNAMIZATION PROGRESS, NOTHING COULD HAVE PROVIDED A MORE BENEFICIAL TONIC TO THE ARMED

FORCES OF SOUTH VIETNAM THAN THE CAMBODIAN OPERATIONS I COMMENTED EARLIER ON THE REWARDS ACCRUING TO THEM IN HEIGHTENED MORALE, EXPERIENCE, CONFIDENCE AND ABILITY TO PLAN AND CARRY OUT OPERATIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE INVOLVING JOINT EFFORT. NONETHELESS, THE POINT BEARS SO HEAVILY ON ANY APPRAISAL OF THE SITUATION THAT I HOPE YOU WILL SUPPORT MY HAVING REPEATED IT.

THE SITUATION TODAY

AS ONE SURVEYS THE COMBAT SITUATION IN VIETNAM TODAY, THE SALIENT FEATURE IS THE LOW LEVEL OF ACTIVITY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. THERE HAS BEEN SPECULATION THAT THE COMMUNISTS WILL LAUNCH A NEW WAVE OF ATTACKS DESIGNED TO INFLUENCE THE UPCOMING U. S. ELECTIONS, BUT THE REALITIES OF HIS DIMINISHED CAPABILITY SUGGEST THAT ANY SUCH ATTEMPT WOULD BE MODEST IN INTENSITY AND OF SHORT DURATION. DURING THE NEXT FEW WEEKS THE SOUTHWEST MONSOON WILL GIVE WAY TO ITS OPPOSITE FROM THE NORTHEAST, AND WITH THE CHANGE WILL COME INCREASED ENEMY LOGISTIC ACTIVITY IN SOUTHERN LAOS AND NORTHEAST CAMBODIA, POSSIBLY FOLLOWED BY GREATER COMBAT ACTIVITY ON HIS PART.

MILITARY REGION I

IN MILITARY REGION 1 OF SOUTH VIETNAM, THE FIVE NORTHERN PROVINCES, WE OBSERVE THE ENEMY'S GREATEST CONCENTRATION OF

STRENGTH, NOTABLY ABOVE, IN AND JUST SOUTH OF THE DEMILITARIZED ZONE, AND PRESSING INWARD FROM THE LAOTIAN BORDER AREA OF THE NORTHERNMOST TWO PROVINCES THIS IS A TROUBLESOME AREA, AS IS ALL OF MILITARY REGION 1 -- CONTIGUOUS WITH NORTH VIETNAM AND THE LAOTIAN SANCTUARY, FAVORED FROM THE ENEMY'S POINT OF VIEW BY SHORT LINES OF COMMUNICATION, AND INFLUENCED BY A LONG HISTORY OF COMMUNIST CONTROL OVER MUCH OF THE POPULATION IN ONE OF THE TRULY IMPRESSIVE SUCCESS STORIES OF THE WAR, MOST OF THE POPULATED COASTAL PLAIN OF THE REGION HAS BEEN BROUGHT UNDER FRIENDLY CONTROL THIS HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH A COMBINATION OF US-GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM OPERATIONS AGAINST ENEMY BASE AREAS NEAR THE LAOTIAN BORDER AND BY THE SYSTEMATIC GRINDING DOWN OF ENEMY FORCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE LOWLANDS IT IS IN THIS NORTHERN REGION THAT WE HAVE SEEN THE EMERGENCE OF TWO OF THE STRONGEST SOUTH VIETNAMESE DIVISIONS AND THE LEADING PERFORMANCE BY TERRITORIAL FORCES HERE WE HAVE SEEN AN EFFECTIVE ADJUSTMENT TO THE REDEPLOYMENT OF MAJOR UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS UNITS

TODAY IN MILITARY REGION 1 THE ENEMY IS ENDEAVORING TO WORK IN FROM LAOS, REESTABLISH BASE AREAS IN THE ANNAMITE MOUNTAINS AND PROJECT OPERATIONS INTO THE COASTAL LOWLANDS HOWEVER, FRIENDLY SPOILING OPERATIONS AND LOCAL SECURITY MEASURES, PLUS CONCENTRATED APPLICATION OF TACTICAL AIR AND B-52's, HAVE

THE SITUATION UNDER CONTROL INTENSITY OF COMBAT IN THE NORTHERN REACHES OF THE REPUBLIC HAS BEEN THE HIGHEST OF ANY AREA FOR MANY MONTHS FRIENDLY CASUALTIES THERE HAVE BEEN HIGHER IN TURN IN MY ESTIMATION, VIETNAMIZATION WILL TAKE LONGER TO ACCOMPLISH IN THIS TRADITIONALLY DIFFICULT LOCALE THAN IN ANY OTHER

MILITARY REGION 2

MILITARY REGION 2, WHILE GENERALLY QUIET OVERALL, PRESENTS A PERSISTENT ENEMY THREAT IN THE HEAVILY POPULATED NORTH-EASTERN COASTAL AREA AND ALONG THE CAMBODIAN-LAOTIAN BORDER IN THE CENTRAL HIGHLANDS A SIGNIFICANT EXAMPLE OF PROGRESS FOR THE REGION IS FOUND IN ASSUMPTION BY GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM FORCES OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR GARRISONING THE HIGHLANDS ON THE OTHER HAND, TERRITORIAL FORCE PERFORMANCE IN THE AREA AS A WHOLE HAS BEEN THE POOREST IN THE REPUBLIC PACIFICATION HAS TENDED TO LAG IN THAT THIS VAST REGION IS AN ECONOMY OF FORCE AREA, IT MUST DEPEND UPON OUTSIDE REINFORCEMENT SHOULD A MAJOR CRISIS ARISE

MILITARY REGION 3

MILITARY REGION 3, THE AREA INEVITABLY ASSOCIATED WITH SAIGON, THE NATIONAL CAPITAL, HAS PROFITED GREATLY FROM LAST

YEAR'S SUBTRACTION OF ENEMY FORCES TO REINFORCE THE MEKONG DELTA, AND FROM DIMINISHED ENEMY PRESSURE SUBSEQUENT TO THE CAMBODIAN OPERATIONS MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, THE US GOVERNMENT OF VIETNAM, AND FREE WORLD FORCES IN THIS AREA AUTHORED A SUCCESS STORY OF THEIR OWN BY MAKING A SHAMBLES OF THE ENEMY'S BASE STRUCTURE AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION, AND BY INFLICTING GRAVE INJURY UPON LOCAL FORCES, GUERRILLAS AND INFRASTRUCTURE PACIFICATION HAS RECORDED STRONG GAINS SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS LARGELY HAVE REPLACED US FORCES ALONG THE ENTIRE BORDER WITH CAMBODIA, AND TO TERRITORIAL FORCES HAS BEEN ENTRUSTED THE IMMEDIATE DEFENSE OF SAIGON -- A FAR CRY FROM THE DAY WHEN MAJOR US AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGULAR UNITS RINGED THE CITY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMY ELEMENTS CONTRIBUTE TO GREATER SECURITY FOR THE REGION BY OPERATING AGAINST THE ENEMY IN ADJACENT AREAS OF CAMBODIA

MILITARY REGION 4

MILITARY REGION 4, THE MOST DENSELY INHABITED PORTION OF THE REPUBLIC, REFLECTS THE HIGHEST ORDER OF PROGRESS ACROSS THE BOARD IN FULFILLMENT OF CRITICAL OBJECTIVES THE ACHIEVEMENT IS THE MORE HEARTENING BY VIRTUE OF ITS SINGULARLY VIETNAMESE

FLAVOR -- AKIN TO THE MEKONG DELTA ITSELF IT WAS IN THE DELTA DESPITE THE PAST RECORD OF HEAVY ENEMY PRESSURE, HIGH RECRUITMENT AND EXTENSIVE TAXATION, THAT THE VIETNAMESE RESISTED INTRODUCTION OF US GROUND COMBAT FORCES IT WAS HERE THAT THE INDIGENOUS REGULARS AND TERRITORIALS FIRST DISPLAYED ABILITY TO FILL THE GAP OCCASIONED BY REDEPLOYMENT OF MAJOR US COMBAT FORCES IT IS HERE THAT PACIFICATION HAS CHALKED UP CONSISTENT GAINS AGAINST DETERMINED ENEMY RESISTANCE, AND CONTINUES TO DO SO

MORE SO THAN IN THE CASE OF THE REGULARS, WHOSE PERFORMANCE MEASURES UP TO ENCOURAGING STANDARDS, THE TERRITORIALS HAVE EXERTED DECISIVE INFLUENCE ON THE SITUATION IN THE DELTA NOT ONLY ARE THEY TO BE FOUND IN GREATER DENSITY VIS-A-VIS THE REGULARS THAN ELSEWHERE, BUT THEIR PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN SECOND ONLY TO THAT OF THEIR COMRADES IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCES THEIR PRINCIPAL WEAKNESS, AND A RECURRING ONE, HAS BEEN LAXITY IN NIGHT SECURITY, OFTEN AT SEVERE PENALTY IN PERSONNEL AND WEAPONS LOSSES AS IN THE CASE OF MILITARY REGION 3, SOUTH VIETNAMESE REGULARS FROM THE DELTA ARE OPERATING IN CAMBODIA, THUS PROVIDING GREATER DEPTH TO THE SECURITY OF THE AREA IT IS IN THE RIVER AND CANAL-LACED DELTA PLAIN, OF COURSE, THAT US AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE NAVY FORCES HAVE PLAYED AND CONTINUE

TO PLAY A CONTRIBUTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL ROLE.

POTENTIAL PROBLEM

AS A FINALE TO THIS CONSIDERATION OF COMBAT OPERATIONS I WOULD OBSERVE THAT OUR OBJECTIVE IS PROGRESSIVE SHIFT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THESE OPERATIONS FROM REMAINING US COMBAT FORCES TO THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM ARMED FORCES, WITH US FORCES ASSUMING A SUPPORT AND, FINALLY, ONLY AN ADVISORY ROLE. THUS FAR THE TIMING OF THE SHIFT HAS BEEN ATTUNED TO THE REALITIES OF THE COMBAT AND PACIFICATION SITUATIONS AND TO THE ABILITY OF THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES TO SHOULDER THE ADDED RESPONSIBILITIES. I MUST EMPHASIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THE PROCESS IS BY NO MEANS AUTOMATIC. IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION IS ANYTHING BUT AN INSTANT PROCESS. NOR CAN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR BE IGNORED. THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE LOOK FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN THEY WILL BE CAPABLE OF FENDING FOR THEMSELVES, BUT THEY ARE WARY OF AN ENEMY WITH WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN IN A LIFE AND DEATH STRUGGLE FOR SO LONG, AND THEY HARBOR CONCERN THAT THE US MAY CUT THEM LOOSE BEFORE THEY ARE READY TO STAND ON THEIR OWN. ACCORDINGLY, IF I FORESEE ANY SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM RELATING TO CONTINUED SUCCESS OF VIETNAMIZATION, OVER AND ABOVE THOSE INHERENT IN THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL UNCERTAINTIES

CONFRONTING AN EMERGING NATION, IT IS NEED TO BALANCE WITH UNCOMMON SKILL AND ACCURACY THE ENEMY THREAT, IMPROVEMENT ON THE PART OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC AND THE PACE OF US TROOP REDEPLOYMENT. SERIOUS ERROR IN FULFILLING THIS NEED, OR FAILURE TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE MATERIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE ONCE VIETNAMIZATION HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, COULD RESULT IN SACRIFICE OF THE JUST AND HONORABLE SOLUTION THAT IS WITHIN OUR GRASP.

CONCLUSION

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, ALLOW ME TO CONCLUDE THESE REMARKS BY EXPRESSING MY PRAISE AND ADMIRATION FOR THE MAGNIFICENT PERFORMANCE OF UNITED STATES ARMY PERSONNEL AND UNITS IN VIETNAM. MANY OF THOSE PRESENT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS RECORD OF EXCELLENCE. YOU CAN TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN HAVING DONE SO.

I HOPE THIS PRESENTATION HAS SUCCEEDED NOT ONLY IN PROVIDING A CURRENT AND USEFUL PERSPECTIVE ON VIETNAM, BUT IN WHETTING YOUR APPETITES FOR THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD.