

(Morgan Gandy)

Saigon 13200 (UPIS) When ex-general Edward Lansdale arrived here last September, the most common question was, "Who will be the Vietnamese Magsaysay?"

Lansdale had been credited with being the almost magical kingmaker behind Philippines President Ramon Magsaysay in the early 1950s when he brilliantly offered land, houses, water buffaloes and grain seeds to the pro-Communists Huk guerrillas to quell their local rebellion. At a crucial turning point when 40,000 armed HUKs stalked outside the capital of Manila, Magsaysay politically sapped the strength of the revolt which lead to a Communist defeat.

But, in Saigon, no Vietnamese Magsaysay has yet emerged as political and military power has fragmented among squabbling generals of equal status. Instead, the Lansdale concept at this point, according to highly reliable sources, is to search for, support and help train "hundreds of Magsaysays--at the village level."

The basic premise of the Lansdale strategy is that, while American and Vietnamese military forces may partially secure the countryside, there ~~will~~ can be no adequate internal political solution without the support of the rural population.

(More Malloy--BD).

First aid--morgan gandy--saigon x x x the population x x x

The Lansdale strategy is concerned more with the tactics of implementing the re-assertion of Vietnamese government political authority in the villages than with the concept. The means of implementation is called the "traditional carrot and the whip method", according to one reliable source. The "carrot" is ~~that~~ that truly non-rigged elections would be held in which the village population would select their own village leaders. The Lansdale strategy advocates that unless this truly democratic approach is made to the problem, the village population will still support the Viet Cong guerrillas, rather than the Saigon anti-Communist government. After the election, these villagers would be given American-supplied economic assistance plus ~~government~~ Vietnamese government medical, educational ^{and} political cadre to assist the rural population.

The "whip" is specially trained "counter-terrorism" squads which would weed out, isolate or capture the political cadre in the Communist "People's Revolutionary Party." This party is the hard-core, Communist element--a branch of the Lao Dong Communist Party of North Vietnam--which directs and leads the pro-Communist National Liberation Front. The Front is the political backbone of the Viet Cong guerrillas, but is Communist directed.

(MORE MALLOY - BD)

second add--morgan gandy--saigon x x x Communist directed xxx.

The Lansdale plan calls for the utilization of 60 Vietnamese government cadre per each government-controlled village. There are ~~presently~~ ^{officially} an estimated 900 villages under government control of the total of 2,800 villages in the country. The 1966 plan calls for the bringing of an additional 600 villages under government control.

These 60 Vietnamese government cadre per village are broken down into four types: civic action teams to help respond on the people's needs at the village level, intelligence teams to obtain information on Communist activities as well as ^{on} misdemeanors committed by Vietnamese government military or civilian officials, counter-terrorism teams to fight the Communist political agents who attempt to force the villagers to cooperate with the Communist side and secret armed agents commissioned to protect the village against Communist guerrilla attacks until other reinforcements or strike aircraft arrive.

(More Malloy--BD)

Most political sources here indicated that the weakness in previous plans ^{for} ~~in~~ pacifying the villages was that even though Vietnamese military forces secured the villages, the Viet Cong political infrastructure was never rooted out, and the population still aided the Communists. The Lansdale plan would attempt to overcome this previous failure.

Graphically speaking, the Lansdale approach is to move horizontally--from village to village--and from the bottom upwards, ~~which is an unorthodox~~ an unorthodox approach which has hardly endeared ~~Lansdale~~ the former Air Force major general to the orthodox ~~bureaucratic methods~~ bureaucrats who want to ~~move from~~ ^{administer vertically} ~~the~~ top level of Saigon downwards.

The standard Communist guerrilla strategy is to capture control of the villages in order to encircle and then to seize the cities. Both American and Vietnamese military and civilian officials have long recognized that unless the allied military forces and the anti-Communist government "cuts a wide swath" of military and political control in the villages surrounding the major cities, the war will roll towards a ~~stale~~ stalemate, or possibly ^E defeat for ~~the~~ anti-Communist forces.

(More Malloy--BD)

fourth add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x anti-Communist forces x x x.

This "wide swath" of government-controlled villages should reach in an arc of at least ~~eight~~^{SEVEN} miles around the major cities, since Communist forces have captured American .105 mm. howitzers with a range of seven miles. Communist-bloc artillery is known to be moving down the Ho Chi Minh train ~~train~~ from North Vietnam on the backs of elephants, according to highly reliable sources.

While most of the American field camps and major Vietnamese airbases are relatively protected against mortar attack, none are out of range of artillery, according to reliable sources.

This concept of "cutting a wide swath" of government control in the villages is not new. It was initiated under former President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1962 and called the strategic hamlet program. At its peak, the program was credited with fortifying 8,000 of the 12,000 hamlets in the country. (A hamlet is a subdivision of the village). The program was ~~virtually~~^{Partially} crushed by the Communists, however, after ~~the overthrow of~~ Diem was overthrown in November, 1963. The program was later revived, but was never successfully implemented, as the pacification plan. Now, the present government has ~~re-cast or rec~~ re-cast and ~~re-named the~~^{re} same program and re-named it Rural Construction.

(More Malloy--BD)

fifth add--morgan gandy--saigon

x x x Rural Construction x x x.

The Ministry of Rural Construction is headed by a dynamic Vietnamese general--and a meticulous planner--named Maj. Gen. Nguyen Duc ~~Thang~~ Thang. Lansdale, as the Unistates Mission ~~is~~ Liaison Officer on Rural Construction, is the counterpart of General Thang.

Can Lansdale and General Thang succeed?

The outcome depends in large part on the current meeting in Washington of the heads of the American agencies here as well as the American military advisor on pacification. At this point, sources in Saigon believe that Lansdale has only the responsibility of advising the Vietnamese government on pacification--without the authority of ordering American agencies which support the pacification effort with material, money and the training of cadre. These sources say that in this bureaucratic snafu, there are thirty nine different kinds of ~~pac~~ Vietnamese pacification cadre, with each American agency here supporting one or more different kinds. These sources believe that Lansdale needs more power to coordinate American activities which support the Vietnamese government on pacification.

Other reliable sources indicate that the total concept of pacification needs a thorough review.

"The concept of pacification was good--though never implemented--when we had a few stray Viet Cong battalions running around the country, as we did in 1963," one reliable source explained. "Now we have nine North Vietnamese regiments in here. Even if we have one American Marine battalion protecting each village--the Communists will send two regiments to overrun it. We need to consider alternative means to establish security." Endit Malloy.