

for Vietnam
1967

The Hamlet Evaluation System

The Hamlet Evaluation Scheme (HES) got under way at the beginning of 1967. The past system had been found unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, ranging from the fact of up-country advisers having too much paperwork to an overly narrow choice of criteria by which to assess the progress (or lack of progress) of pacification.

Pacification has been officially defined as follows: The military, economic and social process of establishing or re-establishing local government responsive to, and involving the participation of, the people. It includes the provision of sustained, credible territorial security, the destruction of the enemy's underground government, the assertion or re-assertion of political control and involvement of the people in government, and the initiation of economic and social activity capable of self sustenance and expansion. The economic element of pacification includes the opening of roads and waterways and the maintenance of lines of communication important to economic and military activity.

It was also believed necessary to concentrate more precise attention on the hamlet instead of making provincial estimates. Lastly, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) began to concentrate on the hamlet, as distinct from the village (a group of hamlets) as the appropriate target for pacification.

The 44 provinces of South Vietnam were divided into 244 districts containing over 2000 villages and some 12,750 hamlets. US advisory teams went down to district level. Originally a US undertaking, HES has now been adopted by the GVN in such a fashion as to mesh in with what is in effect its mass-mobilisation programme. (This is illustrated by the Pacification and Development "objectives card" and the IV Corps Mekong Delta situation report printed at the end of this introductory article along with a HES Worksheet).

Clearly, the subjective elements in this method of assessment are important, as a perusal of the HES Worksheet will show to some extent. It is true that provision is made for the district adviser to record the level of confidence he places in the validity of information on which his evaluation ratings for each factor are made.

But though he is encouraged to visit each hamlet during the month, as well as to gather information from his team about hamlet conditions, a good deal of the information must necessarily come from the GVN district chief (his opposite number) and his staff, and from other US and GVN sources. Normally, the Vietnamese provide the largest number and the greatest variety of information for the HES; and it may be presumed that at least some of these Vietnamese must be well aware that their own "face" and future prospects are involved in assessments of progress. Thus the categorising of hamlets into A or B or C etc., is to some extent at the mercy of those factors which, so long as the struggle lasts, cannot be quantified.

It can even be argued that this quantifying approach tends to obscure the fact that in this kind of struggle — a struggle in which people can be reminded, at least on occasion, by exemplary acts of terrorism, however, highly rated their hamlet might be, that the Communist apparatus has not been finally eliminated — it is often impossible adequately to gauge those qualitative factors that are so vital immediately the pacification programme is submitted, even if only temporarily, to real stress: confidence, fear, resolution, solidarity, resentment — morale, in a word.

Nevertheless, the HES does provide an indication of outward trends and these outward trends themselves significantly affect the inward direction of men's minds; after all, most men and women are not intrinsically heroic and therefore — particularly in a struggle that has attained vast dimensions — their attitudes are, to a large degree, shaped by signs of which side SEEMS to be the more likely ultimately to triumph.

The real point of the HES is surely this: it is quite impossible to generalise about the indicators chosen for the HES nor about the problems central to successful pacification on the basis of sampling. Through the HES a certain kind of picture of trends, built up hamlet by hamlet and centrally computerised, is produced and it can be produced in no other manageable way. The HES permits examination of the pacification situation at various levels and enables analyses of trends throughout the period in which the system has been in operation.

when both the GVN and US advisers substantially agree upon a figure of 90% plus to describe the pacified areas arithmetically. But as has been suggested, it is the difficult part of the pacification that remains.

It is perfectly true, as Sir Robert Thompson has argued with all his great authority, that the "whole balance of power within the country" has changed in the sense that the GVN can expand its territorial units without difficulty whereas the VC now finds recruiting a very onerous task. If it were not for the presence of the NVA in the South, then what the great American expert, Douglas Pike has called the "burning out process" would now be strongly under way, in an ineluctable fashion. It is under way, but not ineluctably. And this of course is the whole point about persistent NVA reinforcement: to try to demonstrate to the ARVN that it is not going to be permitted to determine the pace of its pacification beyond the point now reached. (Robert Komer had a point when he suggested that the Hamlet Evaluation computer system should contain a self-destroying mechanism which should operate at 90%).

Now it is not being suggested that the NVA necessarily makes the task of the GVN insuperable. This contest of wills is rather like a marathon race in which "our man" has his every gasp, his every electrical impulse of distress, broadcast for all to hear, while "their man" does not appear to be suffering the least fatigue, which is by no means the case. However, it is prudent to notice that one of the assumptions upon which Sir Robert's analysis, and so presumably his report to President Nixon, rests, is that if a phased US withdrawal leaves the GVN controlling "pretty well all the country", then the NVA will be left in a new situation of being outright invaders instead of supporters of a southern subversive movement. This situation, Sir Robert observes, "does open itself to a rather different response... And it may be noticed that in his speeches of November 3 and (on December 15), the President gave quite definite warnings on this subject." This warning, somewhat delphically expressed, has been repeated.

It is the uncertainty about what such a response would, or could amount to that impels the writer to use the expression, a theory of

victory but... There is no reason to doubt the validity of Sir Robert's assessment of the internal war; it is going the GVN's way on a scale and with a thoroughness not seen before in South Vietnam at any time. The quality of VC leadership has suffered greatly and hence the political capability of the NVA as supporters of a revolutionary war is gravely weakened. Moreover, a theory of victory, even if not complete, is better than no theory; indeed it is a sine qua non of the kind of mass mobilization now being attempted. But unless President Nixon's inexplicit warnings have effect of somehow neutralizing Hanoi's intentions for the future use of the NVA in the South, then the asymmetry between pacification and US withdrawal remains.

This is not only a matter of time-scales, though it is clear that Sir Robert's "cautious optimism", and so presumably his advice to the President, involved taking into account the degree of improvement of Vietnamization, the intentions of the Hanoi government, and the rate of NVA infiltration... a timing of withdrawal, in other words, related primarily to the Vietnamese situation and not to the vagaries of US public opinion. It is also a matter of the one thing that cannot be quantified — morale, particularly at the centre from which the Pacification and Development must be persistently transmitted and amongst those responsible for sustaining at various levels of command.

Hanoi's theory of victory promises a great prize, not just in terms of power and prestige but also in terms of alleviating a now seriously stricken northern economy. The South's theory of victory promises no great prize, apart from peace, even in the best conceivable circumstances. But at present the South, while presenting no threat to the North, is being shown — or so it anyway seems to many in the South — the prospect, after a long and terrible war, of a permanent military threat right along its borders. To complete the theory of victory, President Nixon must not only keep the time-scales fairly symmetrical, he must make his warnings credible in Hanoi and so stay Hanoi's intention to subjugate the South at all costs. Hanoi is clearly staking everything now on the belief that the US electorate will prevent the President making credible such warnings and that their lack of credibility will undermine morale in the South.

HAMLET EVALUATION WORKSHEET*

DIRECTIONS FOR COMPLETING HAMLET EVALUATION WORKSHEET : All hamlets are to be evaluated ~~except~~ those that are considered by the subsector evaluator to be under VC control. It is suggested that a separate Worksheet be used for each evaluated hamlet. During the month, update the evaluation and the problem responses as necessary. At the end of the month review the worksheets. It is recommended that the response selected for each of the 18 indicators be entered in the righthand column. Entries that differ from those made in the preceding month should be transferred to the Hamlet Evaluation Summary Form (HESF) for transmittal to MACV in Saigon. If worksheet entries are made in pencil, the same form can be used repeatedly.

1. Identify the hamlet by name and location at the top of the Worksheet. Type of hamlet refers to RD Plan hamlet types: Ap Doi Moi (ADM), Ap Tan Sinh (ATS), Ap Cung Co (ACC), or Ap Binh Dinh (ABD). Use a check mark to indicate whether or not the hamlet is in a National Priority Area (NPA). Enter the best available population figure and indicate by a check mark whether the figure is reliable or unreliable. A reliable figure would fall within 10% of an accurate head count in the opinion of the subsector evaluator. Use a check mark to record that the hamlet has been visited during the month by a US District Team member or other designated US personnel and/or by a member of the GVN District staff.

2. For each of the 18 indicators, select the response that best represents the hamlet conditions during the month. The brief responses given on the Worksheet are intended to suggest steps in progress from E to A. Refer to Joint MACV-OCO Directive 1-87, 2 Jan 87, Annex E, Guidance for Evaluating HES, for more complete discussion. It should be understood that within each indicator, signs of progress in one rating, "D" for example, are implied in a related "C" rating if not repeated in the description of the "C" rating. The responses refer to the hamlet itself unless otherwise stated.

3. Enter in the boxes at the far right the number that represents the confidence you have in the validity of the information upon which your ratings for each factor were based: (1) No confidence; (2) Low confidence; (3) Medium confidence; (4) High confidence; (5) Complete confidence.

4. Changes in the wording of indicators are printed in upper case.

HAMLET PROBLEMS DURING MONTH

Select the one best answer for each section of each question

1. Incidents of misconduct by friendly elements adversely affecting friendly relations with the hamlet populace:
 - a. US Military. ☐ 1. None; ☐ 2. Minor only; ☐ 3. Serious; ☐ 4. Inapplicable; ☐ 5. Unknown
 - b. Other PWMAF ☐ 1. None; ☐ 2. Minor only; ☐ 3. Serious; ☐ 4. Inapplicable; ☐ 5. Unknown
 - c. ARVN ☐ 1. None; ☐ 2. Minor only; ☐ 3. Serious; ☐ 4. Inapplicable; ☐ 5. Unknown
 - d. RP/PF ☐ 1. None; ☐ 2. Minor only; ☐ 3. Serious; ☐ 4. Inapplicable; ☐ 5. Unknown
 - e. RD Team ☐ 1. None; ☐ 2. Minor only; ☐ 3. Serious; ☐ 4. Inapplicable; ☐ 5. Unknown
2. Actions by friendly elements during military operations adversely affecting relations with hamlet populace:
(including but not limited to fire from any type of weapon, destructive passage within hamlet area, defoliation)
 - ☐ 1. None;
 - ☐ 2. Minor only.
 - ☐ 3. Serious
 - ☐ 4. Unknown.
3. Corruption or tyranny of hamlet or village officials:
 - ☐ 1. No indications
 - ☐ 2. Rumored,
 - ☐ 3. Suspected but no proof.
 - ☐ 4. Solid indication.
 - ☐ 5. Unknown.

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HAMLET EVALUATION

MACRDS

DISTRICT _____ VILLAGE _____ HAMLET NAME _____ GVN HAMLET NAME _____
 Hamlet visited by US _____ GVN _____

FACTORS		Conditions in Hamlets under Some Degree of Control	
Indicators	C	D	
1. <u>VC Military Activities</u> a. <u>Village Guerrilla (G) Unit</u>	VII Gs combat effective tho some identified or eliminated; VC VII defenses largely intact.	VII Gs reduced somewhat in men & defenses; can attack in platoon strength from within VII or 1-2 HRS TRAVEL TO HAMLET.	Military control of VII broken; 50% losses, havens destroyed; level; can harass but not prevail in hamlet.
b. <u>External Forces (EF)</u> (Prov. Main Force unit in district)	EF intact; may have base & can make company-size attacks WITHIN A FEW HRS TRAVEL TO HAMLET. Hamlet or VII may have been fired on and/or assaulted during month.	Unit in district reduced up to 25%; EF otherwise as in E.	Unit to district reduced up to bases near hamlet destroyed, company-size or larger, no hamlet during month.
c. <u>Military Incidents Affecting Hamlet</u>	Armed VC units in hamlet at night, sometimes in day; MAY HAVE FIRED ON OR ATTACKED OR OVERRUN HAMLET. Little or no GVN authority at night. Routes to hamlet may be interdicted by day; may have been ambush near hamlet.	GVN activity under harassment. MAY BE MINES and/or frequent sniping on routes to hamlet; VC night activity in hamlet.	Long range fire at night; VC. May be occasional sniping AN hamlet.
2. <u>VC Political & Subversive Activities</u> a. <u>Hamlet Infrastructure</u>	Party cadre underground by day but free to intimidate populace at night. No assurance party structure or leaders uncovered.	Members and most leaders of VC hamlet organizations uncovered & neutralized but HAMLET undercover agents still operative.	Intel indicates most of Party agents under VII or Dist control.
b. <u>Village Infrastructure</u>	Despite some individual identification, VII apparatus intact, functioning.	Some VII cadre eliminated but apparatus fairly effective.	Most key members of VII apparatus neutralized; effectiveness decreased.
c. <u>Activities Affecting Hamlet</u>	VC apparatus can undermine GVN in hamlet by incidents ranging from propaganda thru terrorism & sabotage, at least at night. ALL TAXATION BY VC.	No overt propaganda but terrorism or sabotage during past month. VC TAXATION PREDOMINANT.	No overt VC incidents; subversion, but SOME EXTORTION SUSPECTED.
3. <u>Security (Friendly Capabilities)</u> a. <u>Hamlet Defense Plan & Organization</u>	No night defense except by external forces although required. PF PRESENT DURING DAY.	Day & night defense by external forces & PF BUT local DEFENSE FORCE recruiting & training MAY BE underway.	Local warning & combat some armed local defense PF AND/OR RD TEAM IN URBAN AREAS POORLY INADEQUATE.
b. <u>Friendly External Force (FEP) Assistance</u>	FEP ARE INADEQUATE IN STRENGTH to meet needs for arty, air support, reaction ground forces, etc.	FEP meets needs but only effective marginally, e.g., delayed response, no night response, not aggressive, etc.	Availability and effectiveness meet needs.
c. <u>Internal Security Activities</u>	No agents, no intelligence from public -except possibly sporadic police informants.	No complete intelligence system; a few trained or voluntary informants; some data from census grievance WHERE OPERATIVE.	Hamlet chief gets use volunteers & from external sources.
4. <u>Administrative & Political Activities</u> a. <u>GVN Governmental Management</u>	APPOINTED NON-RESIDENT GVN officials, marginally effective, IRREGULARLY present, only in daytime.	Some local participation in hamlet management; GVN officials usually present but only in daytime.	Managerial groups resident, elected, usually present at night.
b. <u>GVN Responses to Popular Aspirations</u> (Census Grievance Program)	NO CONSIDERATION BY LOCAL OFFICIALS TO POPULAR ASPIRATIONS. No census activity or grievance program.	OCCASIONAL RESPONSE BY LOCAL OFFICIALS TO POPULAR ASPIRATIONS. Census grievance program MAY HAVE BEEN started in hamlet or VII.	Some individual grievances OR VII initial census grievance program.
c. <u>Information/PSYOP Activities</u>	Little or none.	OCCASIONAL PUBLIC INFO activity public indifference.	Frequent activity even if marginally evident; civic associations & groups.
5. <u>Health, Education & Welfare</u> a. <u>Medical Services & Public Health</u>	NO OR INFREQUENT VISITS TO HAMLET OR VIL BY MEDCAP OR SIMILAR TEAM.	Only periodic, scheduled visits TO HAMLET OR VIL BY MEDCAP OR SIMILAR TEAM.	Full-time coverage by external sanitation instruction, DMU MEDIC & MIDWIFE PRESENT POORLY TRAINED & EQUIPPED.
b. <u>Education</u>	No GVN-sponsored educational facilities; may be informal instruction by VII elders, monks, Cath. priest.	Some PARTTIME formal instruction ACCESSIBLE BUT no permanent classrooms OR CLASSROOMS NOT FULLY USED.	Formal, full-time public program in permanent classroom OR VIL but overcrowded & children not enrolled.
c. <u>Welfare</u>	No social welfare activity.	Some welfare activity BY GVN AND/OR FOREIGN SOURCES to aid needy families, but basic need not determined.	Basic needs determined, but not met.
6. <u>Economic Development</u> a. <u>Self Help Activity; Civic Action</u>	None.	People assist in selecting projects but outsiders do most of work.	Projects from RD OR OTHER PROGRAMS OR CIVIC ACTION local consent & some local work in those started.
b. <u>Public Works</u> (require outside expertise; affect at least village)	SOME TYPE OF PUBLIC WORKS MUCH NEEDED BUT none planned or undertaken.	Some detailed planning AT DISTRICT for projects under RD OR OTHER GVN programs.	Planned projects suitable some work started.
c. <u>Economic Improvement Programs</u> (Farming, Fishing, Land Reform, New Urban Industries, etc.)	None	Some planning at district; a few basic programs started IN VIL.	VN TECHNICAL WORKERS basic programs underway; some work started.

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WORKSHEET

NAME OF EVALUATOR _____

TYPE OF HAMLET _____ NPA _____

HAMLET POPULATION _____

Yes _____

No _____

☐ Reliable figure
☐ Unreliable figure

		B	A	Reported Evaluation as of
Identified. Below plat activities		VII G control reduced to 1-2 hamlets on VII periphery or 2-3 HRS TRAVEL TO HAMLET; could make desperation raid. Activities of Gs from adjacent Vils limited by no havens or by friendly defenses.	VII G remnants driven out. No threat of harassment or intimidation from Gs in adjacent Vils.	1a
men and arms, or operations RR fire near		Bases in district OR WITHIN 6 HRS TRAVEL to hamlet destroyed; unit in district only marginally effective. Not capable of company-size operations.	Unit in district eliminated or ineffective; no attacks by plat or larger & no mortar, ROCKET, or RR fire in district or near hamlet. Attack possible only from outside district.	1b
adjacent hamlets. WINES on routes to		No incidents in hamlet during month; infrequent harassments within VII or nearby.	No incidents including harassments in VII or nearby hamlets or on routes to VII during month.	1c
Identified; some operative.		All normal Party apparatus identified & dealt with; agents under VII or Dist control eliminated.	Whole Party apparatus APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN eliminated or neutralized.	2a
Identified, up to half		Most of VII apparatus leaders eliminated; almost all members identified. Little coordinated VC activity in VII.	VII organization wiped out. Few covert agents directed from outside but stymied by friendly security organizations.	2b
covert TION OR		No subversion DETECTED in hamlet & no incidents in adjacent hamlets during month.	No subversive activity DETECTED in VII during month.	2c
Active; on		Defense force organized BUT ONLY PARTIALLY EFFECTIVE; adequate plan and communications for its use. IN URBAN AREAS, ADEQUATE POLICE BY DAY.	Adequate defense force & adequate defense plan, following prev RD plan WHERE APPLICABLE. IN URBAN AREAS ADEQUATE POLICE DAY AND NIGHT.	3a
ly		Need for FEP less than G; can be met adequately.	Need for FEP very slight; can be met adequately.	3b
ts & some Z PRESENT.		Effective informant system; considerable useful info from public.	EFFECTIVE INTERNAL SECURITY APPARATUS COVERS HAMLET: hamlet security deputy, police, informant system, willing public participation.	3c
local; appointed or		Complete managerial group fully resident includes elected hamlet chief; fully functioning but with some external support SUCH AS RD TEAM OR OTHER GVN WORKERS.	EFFECTIVE elected hamlet governing body; ELECTED VII COUNCIL; all officials in hamlet & VII resident.	4a
involved; IN HAMLET away completed.		More GVN actions being taken to meet people's grievances & aspirations IN HAMLET OR VII.	Substantial evidence of GVN efforts to meet aspirations. RESIDENT GVN grievance representative IN RD HAMLET OR VII.	4b
public impact STARTING.		Systematic coverage; increased awareness of govt programs & personnel. Increased numbers of villagers; people participating freely where civic associations are functioning.	RESIDENT VILLAGE OFFICIAL executing regular program. Active public awareness of GVN personnel, impending elections, district programs, etc.; civic associations active and effective.	4c
s; MAY include NSNS. MAY BE L. BUT		MEDICAL PROGRAMS, FACILITIES, SUPPLIES, TRAINED PERSONNEL (AT LEAST MEDIC & MIDWIFE) ACCESSIBLE BUT OVERCROWDED, OVERWORKED OR IN SHORT SUPPLY.	ADEQUATE MEDICAL PROGRAMS, HOSPITAL FACILITIES, SUPPLIES, TRAINED PERSONNEL READILY ACCESSIBLE; GENERAL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.	5a
Education HAMLET 95% of		AT LEAST 90% OF CHILDREN receive primary education in READILY ACCESSIBLE permanent classrooms; may be some adult classes.	AT LEAST 90% OF CHILDREN receive primary education in readily accessible permanent classrooms; secondary school accessible; adult education program.	5b
not.		Basic needs being met; some special benefits being paid by GVN.	Basic needs satisfied; special benefits clarified & being paid; benefit channels continue to function.	5c
CE with tion		All programmed projects under way, chosen to satisfy aspirations; popular participation with outside aid.	Some projects completed; local pride general; continuing external interest and support for new projects. IN SOME URBAN AREAS NO SUCH PROJECTS NEEDED.	6a
c needs;		Priority projects underway; resources at hand; PEOPLE AWARE OF ADVANTAGES PROJECTS WILL PROVIDE.	PROJECTS WELL ALONG OR COMPLETED; PUBLIC IS USING NEW FACILITIES. IN SOME URBAN AREAS NO SUCH PROJECTS NEEDED.	6b
PARTTIME: arrested.		GVN TECHNICAL WORKERS RESIDENT IN VII; more advanced programs started; increased popular support and participation.	Most programs well advanced in response to popular demand & continuing participation; OR SUCH PROGRAMS NOT NEEDED.	6c

4. Support of hamlet self-defense force other than PF by district and/or province officials:

- ☐ 1. Received adequate support as requested.
- ☐ 2. Some support received but inadequate.
- ☐ 3. Support promised but not received.
- ☐ 4. Support needed but none promised.
- ☐ 5. Has self-defense force but outside support not required.
- ☐ 6. Has no self-defense force.
- ☐ 7. Unknown.

5. Supplies from outside hamlet or village for self-help projects:

a. From GVN sources

- ☐ 1. On time and adequate.
- ☐ 2. Delayed but adequate.
- ☐ 3. Inadequate and delayed.
- ☐ 4. Promised but none received.
- ☐ 5. Promised for future delivery.
- ☐ 6. None required.
- ☐ 7. Unknown.

b. From non-GVN sources

- ☐ 1. On time and adequate.
- ☐ 2. Delayed but adequate.
- ☐ 3. Inadequate and delayed.
- ☐ 4. Promised but none received.
- ☐ 5. Promised for future delivery.
- ☐ 6. None required.
- ☐ 7. Unknown.

6. Access to drinking water:

a. Local sources of drinking water are inadequate.

☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐ 3. Unknown

b. Plans and/or work underway to improve local drinking water supply

☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐ 3. Unknown

7. Refugee problems:

a. What percent of the hamlet population are temporary residents who are refugees?

- ☐ 1. None or very few
- ☐ 2. 10-25 %
- ☐ 3. 25-50%
- ☐ 4. More than 50%
- ☐ 5. 100% (refugee camps only).
- ☐ 6. Unknown.

b. Is GVN assistance adequate to enable them to subsist?

- ☐ 1. None required.
- ☐ 2. Required and adequate.
- ☐ 3. Required but inadequate.
- ☐ 4. Not applicable (refugees only).
- ☐ 5. Unknown.

8. Tax collection (in kind or in cash):

a. By the Viet-Cong.

☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐ 3. Unknown

b. By the GVN

☐ 1. Yes ☐ 2. No ☐ 3. Unknown

9. US Advisor's access to hamlet:

a. By surface from district headquarters:

- ☐ 1. Weapons not necessary.
- ☐ 2. No special security arrangements necessary but weapons must be carried.
- ☐ 3. Special security arrangements necessary.
- ☐ 4. Not feasible except by accompanying an operation.
- ☐ 5. Access unfeasible.
- ☐ 6. Unknown.

b. From airstrip or helicopter pad nearest to hamlet:

- ☐ 1. Weapons not necessary.
- ☐ 2. No special security arrangements necessary but weapons must be carried.
- ☐ 3. Special security arrangements necessary.
- ☐ 4. Not feasible except by accompanying an operation.
- ☐ 5. Access unfeasible.
- ☐ 6. Unknown.

10. Condition of main routes from hamlet to village center:

- ☐ 1. In good repair, adequate for current traffic.
- ☐ 2. Being repaired or improved (relocated, dredged, new bridge, etc.)
- ☐ 3. Difficult or dangerous to travel because of poor repair.
- ☐ 4. Impassable (flooded, bridge out; stream dried up, etc.)
- ☐ 5. Unknown.

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