

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~

December 18, 1961

NATIONAL SECURITY ACTION MEMORANDUM NO. 119

TO: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense

SUBJECT: Civic Action

The President is concerned that we may be missing an opportunity this year to develop methods for supporting whatever contribution military forces can make to economic and social development in less-developed countries. While recognizing that civic action is not universally applicable, he hopes we will take full advantage of its contribution in crisis areas as well as in those where the threat of subversion is more remote.

By civic action we mean using military forces on projects useful to the populace at all levels in such fields as training, public works, agriculture, transportation, communication, health, sanitation, and others helpful to economic development.

In countries fighting active campaigns against internal subversion, we should encourage local forces to undertake civic action projects as an indispensable means of strengthening their society's economic base and establishing a link between army and populace. In countries threatened by external aggression, local forces should participate in civic action projects which do not materially impair performance of the primary military mission. In countries where subversion or attack is less imminent, selected military forces can contribute substantially to economic and social development, and we should make such a contribution a major function of these forces.

The President hopes that we can include civic action projects in existing and future military and economic assistance programs wherever practicable and in guidance that will affect future planning. He realizes we will have to develop new procedures for supporting this sort of project but feels that the benefits to be gained in some countries warrant considerable effort on our part. In an emergency, we should also consider using U.S. training teams as catalysts for a more rapid or substantial reorientation.

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By SKE NARA, Date 9/90

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