

Êđăp Ênang: Some thoughts on the forced relocation of Vietnamese highlanders during the American War in Vietnam

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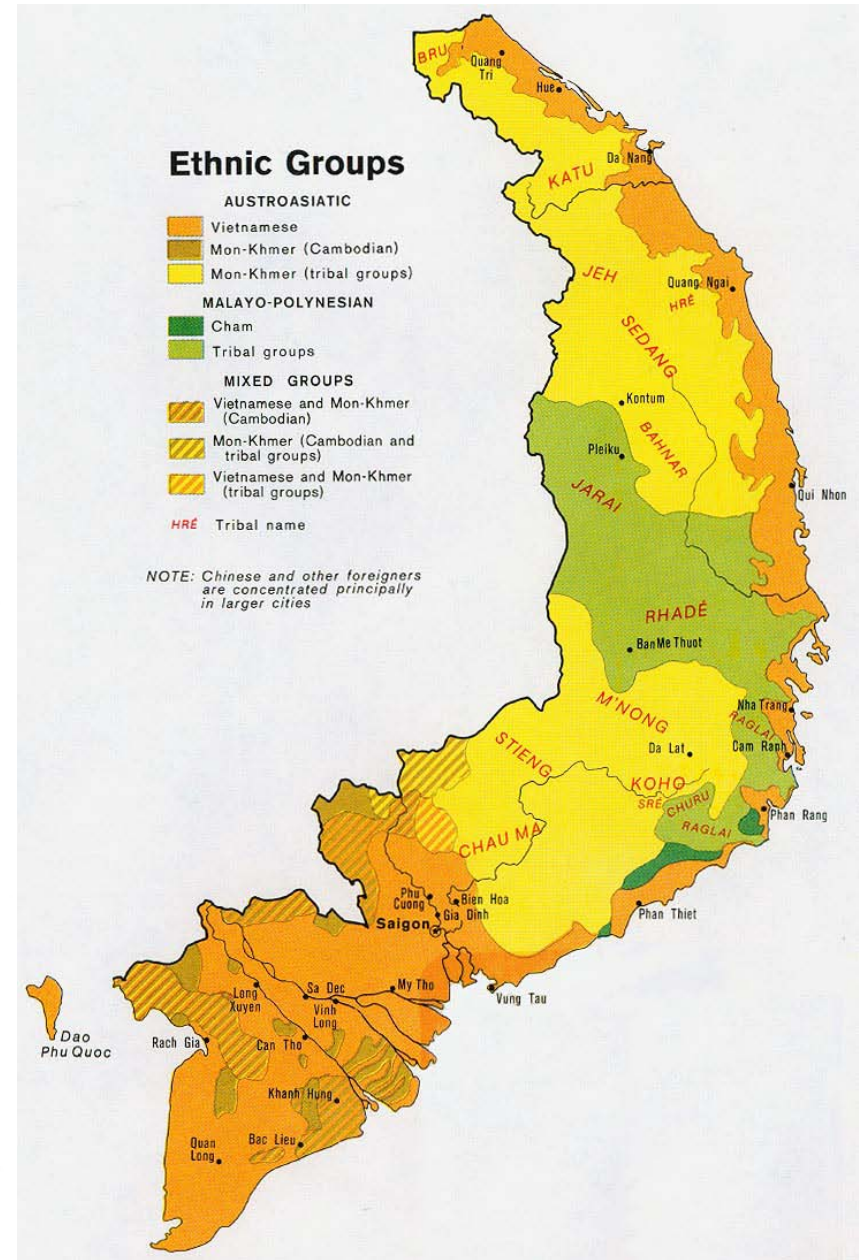
7th Triennial Vietnam Symposium—The Vietnam Center
Dr. Gerald Hickey Memorial Session
Understanding the Ethnic Minorities of Vietnam
10 March 2011

Ethnic Groups of South Viet Nam

The Jarai language belongs to the Chamic group of languages. All of these languages are members of the Austronesian language family, which ranges from Malagasy (Madagascar) to Polynesian. So Jarai is distantly related to Hawaiian.

For example, the number five (5):

Jarai = roma; Hawaiian = 'elima



Long houses on stilts



Ancestor pole in front of long houses



Dry rice swidden (slash-and-burn) field after burn off



Harvested rice being husked with mortar and pestle



Father and daughters by vegetable garden



Woman weaving on a loom



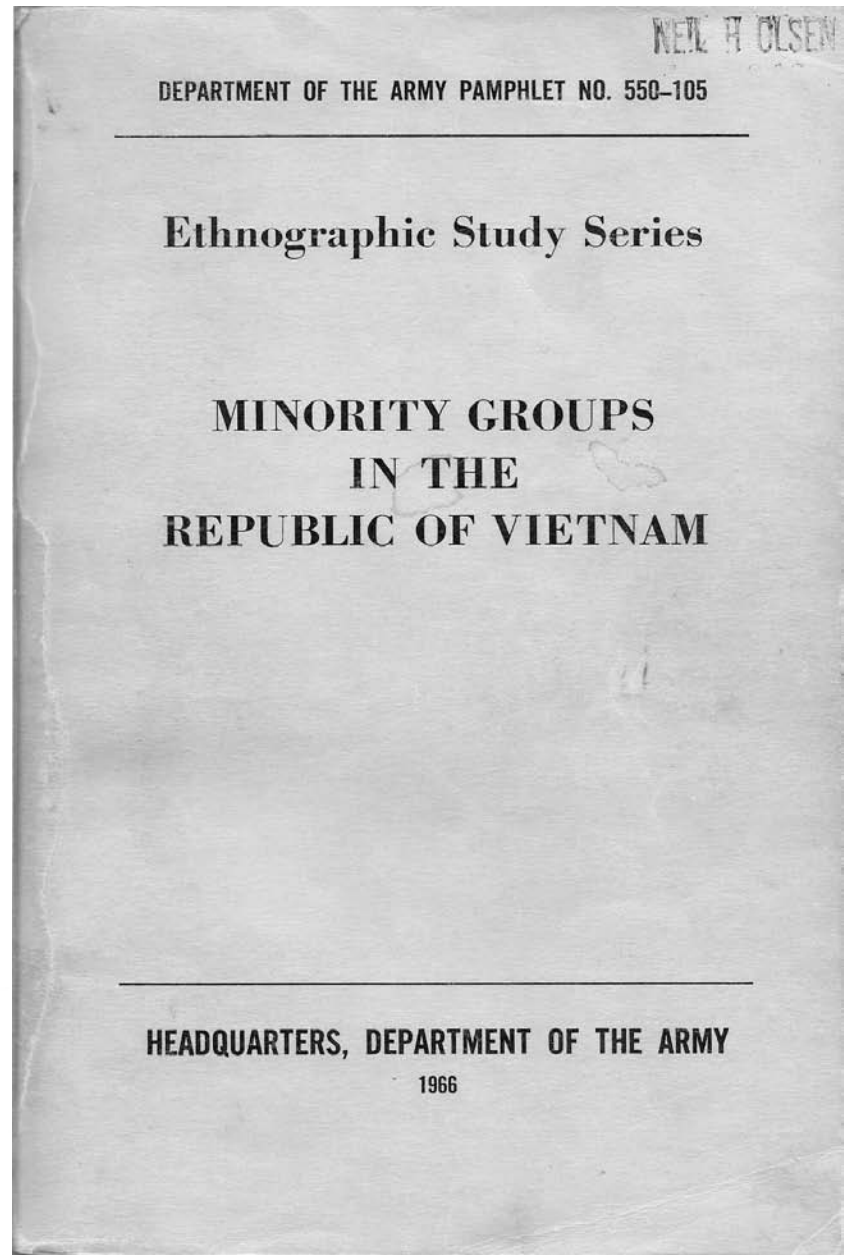
South Vietnamese propaganda sign in Vietnamese and Jarai languages



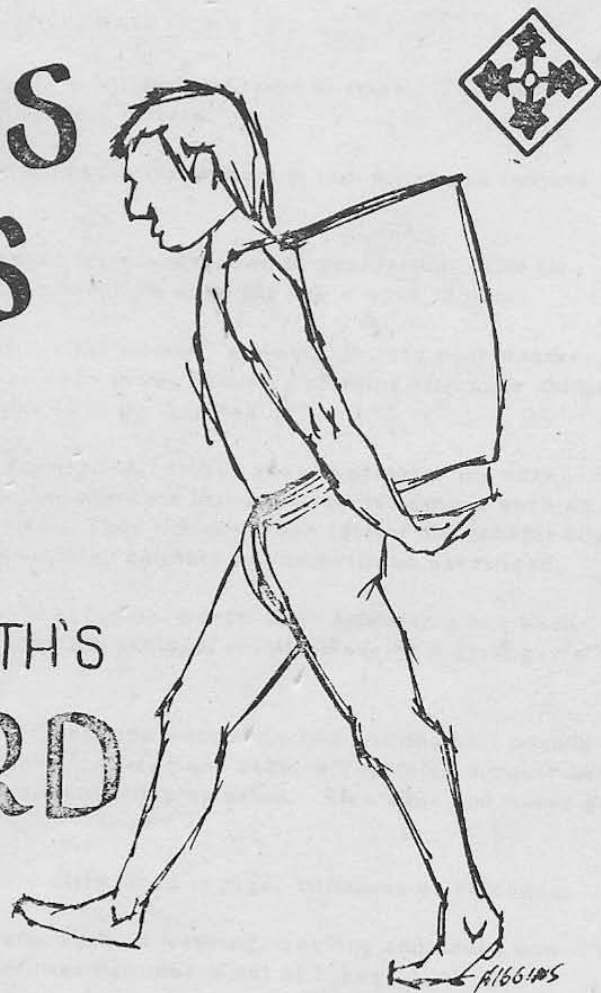
Minority Groups in the Republic of Vietnam,
DA Pamphlet 550-105,
February 1966

“Whenever possible avoid projects or operations which give the tribesmen the impression **they are being forced to change their ways.**”

“The Jarai prefer to live in longhouses with their entire extended family. Whenever possible, housing projects should take this preference into consideration. **The style of the house should not be changed; it is an integral part of Jarai environment.**” (p. 300)



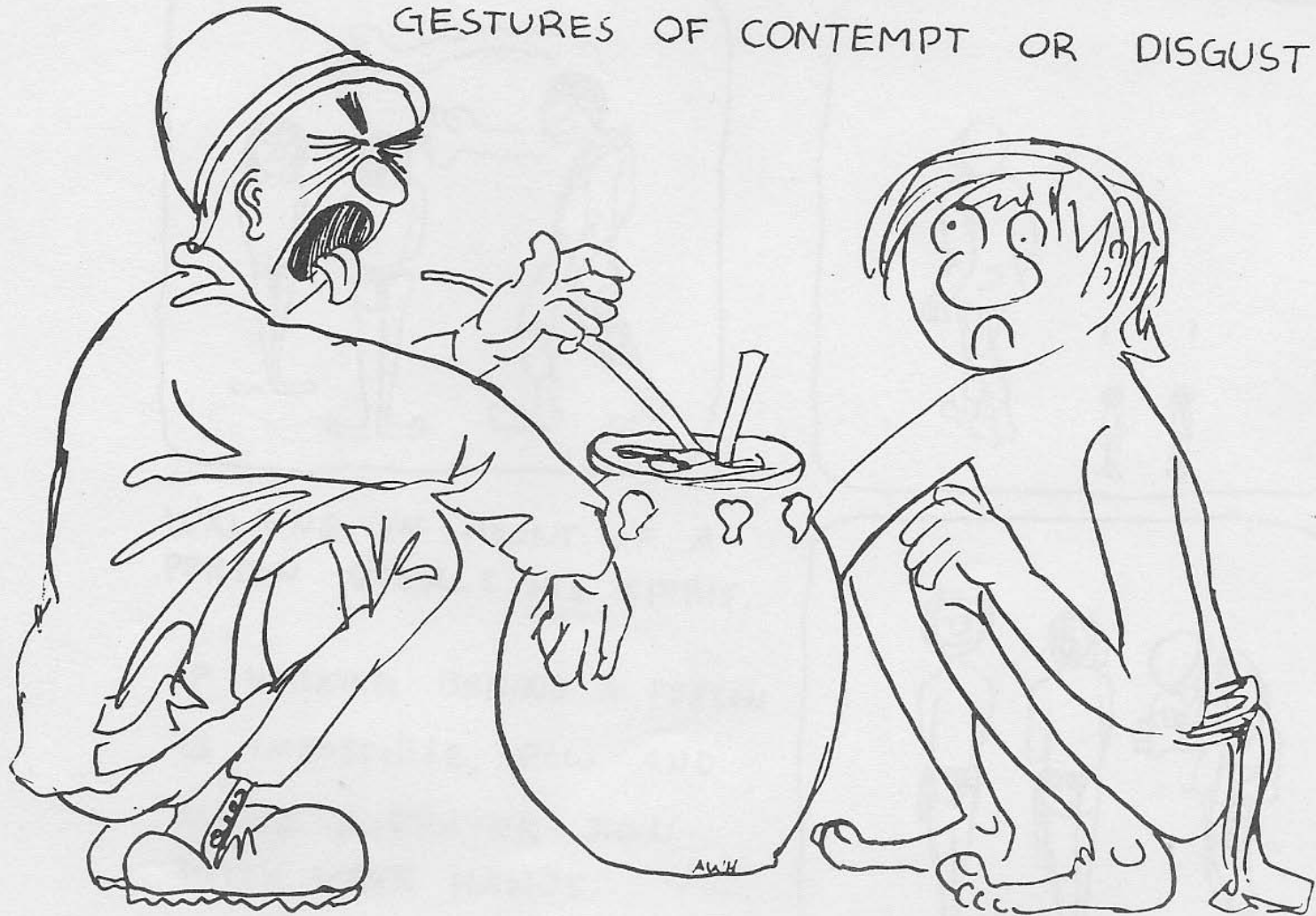
TRADITIONS
CUSTOMS
AND
TABOOS
OF THE FIGHTING FOURTH'S
MONTAGNARD
NEIGHBORS



...WITH PICTURE TIPS

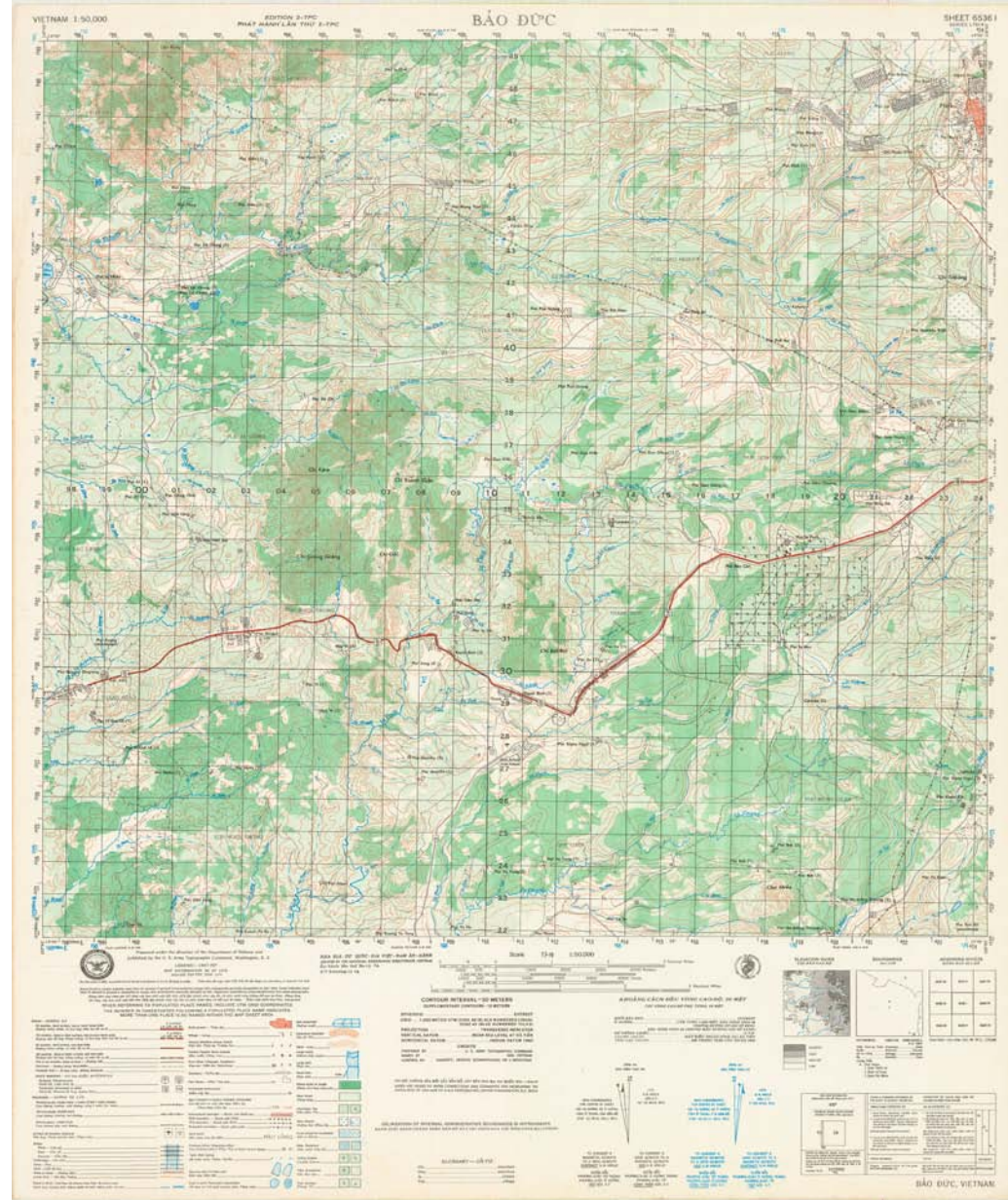
OLSEN Pleiben
8 June 68

YOUR HOSTS CAN UNDERSTAND UNSPOKEN
GESTURES OF CONTEMPT OR DISGUST



Bao Duc: 6536-1 Map

During the 4th Infantry Division's Operation Francis Marion (April to October 1967), 51 hamlets in and near the Ia Drang valley were relocated to the Edap Enang Resettlement Center (in the area of Plei Yt).



Êđăp Ênang means “peaceful, quiet”

- In **Rhade** (Êđê), a closely related group to the south
- NOT Jarai, the language of the people involved!
- In Jarai, it should be *Ronăp Ronang* or *Ronuk Ronang* (depending on the dialect).

Edap Enang kids



W.F.W. Magazine
April, 1968

“By their very nature the Montagnards are ill-suited to Edap Enang. The town is too large, a conglomerate of the 47 hamlets they were forced to desert. And they don’t like the soil here—a sign deeply rooted in their primitive tradition that it is time to move on.”

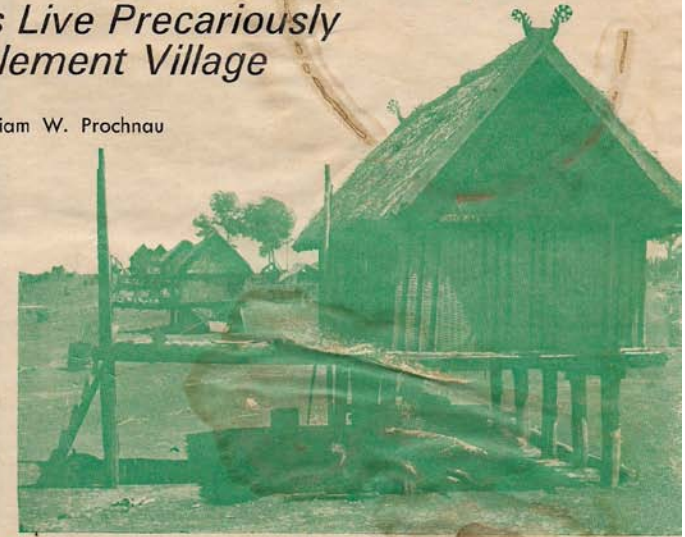
Prochnau 1968:13.

Edap Enang-VIETNAM

Jarai people, Pleiku province

Montagnards Live Precariously In Resettlement Village

by William W. Prochnau



CAUTIOUS MONTAGNARD tribesmen are not wholly convinced Edap Enang is for them.

THIS NEW TOWN'S NAME, taken from the Montagnard dialect spoken here, means “peace and security.”

But, in Edap Enang no one is quite certain whether the name was born out of reality or hope.

Edap Enang is a creation of the war—a planned community, Vietnamese style, for 7,200 Montagnard tribesmen whose bad luck it was to live in an area sought by both North Vietnamese regulars and the United States Army's 4th Infantry Division. It is a resettlement village, planned and built to get the Montagnards out of the

line of fire in the contested countryside. Edap Enang is a prime example of the Allies' pacification program and, in its way, also of the problems wracking that troubled, but essential, program.

The Montagnards are a nomadic, superstitious people who have roamed through Vietnam's Central Highlands for centuries. They are the war's innocents—simple, primitive farmers—few of whom can read or write. The women go bare-breasted; the men wear loin cloths.

When provoked, the Montagnards can be the fiercest of fighters. But, unless provoked they

spend quiet lives scratching out a meager existence by farming and occasional cross-bow hunting. They never have learned to use fertilizers so, when their soil goes bad, they wander off in search of new farmland.

Although the Montagnards are age-old rivals and antagonists of the Vietnamese, the tribesmen get along with the Americans remarkably well. The GIs bring armloads of candy and other goodies into Edap Enang. They also collect clothes, tools, medical supplies and almost anything else that might be useful to the villagers.

1 Field Force Vietnam *Typhoon* May 1969

“...the Jarais did not want to go. Traditionally tied to the lands where their ancestors were buried, and distrustful of change, they chose the vagaries of war to the promised safety of Edap Enang. In the spring of 1967, a decision was made to move them anyway.”

“In hindsight, the result seems predictable. The Jarai began to move out faster than they were moved in. Initial preparations were insufficient to support the number of people brought in. Rice harvests were lost, potable water was in short supply and housing was inadequate.”

Maniloff and Russell 1969:11.



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ON THE COVER

FRONT: Two Nung security guards at the 5th Special Forces Group headquarters in Nha Trang fire an illumination round from an 81mm mortar. Photo by Sp5 Thomas Lykens, 54th Signal Battalion. BACK: Comradeship born of years spent living a common heritage twinkles in the eyes of these Montagnard elders from the settlement of Edap Enang. They smoke pipes made from buffalo horn, as traditional among Montagnards as their love for the highlands. Photo by Sp4 Calvin J. Culp, 54th Signal Battalion.

41st Civil Affairs Company, Team 9

Critical analysis of Edap Enang

1Lt. Edward Ruminski's report on conditions at Edap Enang

“Analysis of Edap Enang Resettlement Center to include its present situation, its needs, general conclusions and considerations and proposed courses of action.”

This report covers four main areas:

1. Administrative/Military
2. Agriculture, Land Distribution, and Education
3. Refugees and Public Health
4. Public Safety

Ruminsky's priority 1: Administrative/Military

- On 17 Feb 1968, II Corps Commander Gen. Vinh Loc transferred Edap Enang (EE) administration to a Pleiku province responsibility, under Thanh An district
- District chief's permission is necessary to distribute rice every 15 days
- There is no province level official administrator to coordinate the various agencies involved with EE
- There is no EE Jarai natural leader being positioned and supported by the advisory and GVN channels in order to control and develop the situation

Ruminsky's priority 2: Agriculture, land distribution, and education

Situation as of 18 May 1968 (for 860 families living in Edap Enang)

- 466 families have both land and rice seed (the 50 pounds of rice seed per family is not sufficient for planting the land area they have received)
- 268 families have 50 pounds of rice seed, but no land for planting
- 126 families have no rice seed and no land
- 394 families have no land for planting
- Hamlets and families who arrived later received land far from their homes or there was no land left to distribute
- Education: 2 problems. Distance of EE from Pleiku; lack of students

Ruminsky's priority 3: Refugees and Public Health

- EE will not be a viable community until the population stabilizes—at least for a period of 8 months—one planting/harvesting season
- A fluctuating population makes effective land distribution very difficult
- EE has a dispensary, 2 medics, a mid-wife, and several medics within the RF/PF units
- Medical personnel need to be training for the time when American MEDCAP assistance will be withdrawn
- Supplies, further training, and moral support are crucial

Ruminsky's priority 4: Public Safety

- National Police need to be better equipped and directed
- They should have the capability of communicating in Jarai
- Need proper market place surveillance
- Overall program of civilian control for which Police would be answerable
- National Police have area of responsibility from Thanh An including Than Giao (appx 15 km along QL 19)
- There are 9 men and they share 2 motor bikes; they are ill equipped (.38 caliber pistol) and have no direction given to them and no program for which they are answerable

Gerald C. Hickey memorandum, Appendix III, Background Materials on the Montagnard Problem in Vietnam.

U.S. Senate, Hearings of the Subcommittee on Refugees and Escapees, Senate Comm. on the Judiciary. Pt. III, Vietnam. Hearing of April 22, 1971.

- Residents were given 3-day notice of relocation
- Could only take what they could carry
- Regional Forces and other cadre stole their belongings: pigs, chickens, and goats (and gongs) during the move
- Government troops burned the hamlets after they abandoned their homes
- This was in 1971, 4 years after Edap Enang

Five criteria to apply to a resettlement scenario

1. Motivation (forced or voluntary)
2. Composition of the moved unit
3. Distance moved
4. Ecology of the new location
5. Degree of maintenance of original life style patterns

(McArthur 1972: 12)

Conclusions

Depending on your direction of focus, Edap Enang presents a number of conflicting images.

Looking backward, it is easy to develop a case for inept planning made worse by blundering civil servants and over-zealous advisors.

Looking forward, Edap Enang presents a picture of a group of diverse villages which have been relocated in a resettlement complex which is slowly taking root as a viable community.

The important point is not the mistakes which were made, but the lessons which should have been learned (McArthur 1972:18).

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Bonni kō ih

Thank you! Cám ơn!