inclined to view them as his own subordinates and issue instructions to them as is normal in a military chain of command. However, the Vinh Long deputy stated that he did not issue either military or civilian orders directly to district chiefs without first discussing the matter with the province chief and getting his approval. He openly acknowledged that he worked under the supervision of the province chief and said that no sharp issues of any sort divided them.

If a district chief is a military man, he assumes leadership of the civil guard company in his district. If he is a civilian, the unit is led by its company commander, usually a lieutenant. He asked the deputy about Binh Minh district, which had a new chief. He explained that the previous chief was a civilian and that the security problem in the district had become serious enough to require the services of a military man. A captain in the army had been appointed.

The deputy for security told us that he conferred with the province chief three, four, and sometimes five times a day. He believed it important to keep the chief fully informed of Viet Cong activities. Sometimes reports indicating a serious security situation would come in during the night and, when that happened, the deputy said, he awakened the province chief to apprise him of the problem. One day, shortly before our visit, a Viet Cong attack occurred at 2:00 a.m. and the deputy's first act was to wake the chief and report it to him.

C. Provincial Government Bureaus

Eight bureaus are attached to the provincial headquarters; four authorized by the Department of Interior and four informally created
by the province chief. Each official bureau chief gets a supplementary VN$800 per month in addition to his normal salary as a civil servant.

Although much of the work performed by the various bureaus is routine, there is value in examining their precise activities which help chart the range of the province chief's responsibilities. It is also significant to note that four of the bureaus deal with substantive matters and the other four with staff work. The fact that four staff bureaus are necessary in a province signifies that the heavy paper work, so common to the bureaucracy in Saigon, is also prevalent at the provincial level. Our investigations into provincial government in Vinh Long did not afford us an opportunity to judge with confidence whether any of the staff agencies -- the secretariat, correspondence, general administration and budget and accounting -- could be merged.

1. Bureau of the Secretariat

The Bureau of the Secretariat is the smallest of the eight bureaus in provincial headquarters. It employs three people including the bureau chief. Although the table of organization for the province indicates that the Secretariat deals with a variety of problems, from information and propaganda to the conduct of ceremonies, its main activities may be divided into three general categories. First, the Secretariat is responsible for personnel management, handling the recruitment, nomination, promotion, transfer, leave, and retirement of all provincial employees. A second major activity is protocol. Vinh Long is centrally located in the delta region, and, until early this year, the President's brother was bishop of the province. Thus, it was, and still is, often visited by dignitaries from Saigon. It is the
responsibility of the Secretariat to arrange receptions and handle all ceremonial functions relative to these visits. Other ceremonies, of which there are many in Viet Nam, are also under Secretariat supervision.

The third major responsibility of this bureau is to prepare the agenda for the monthly meetings of the province chief and his subordinates.

Once each month, the province chief held an official meeting attended by heads of all eight bureaus and the chiefs of the six districts in Vinh Long. Although items to be discussed may have emerged through channels from the district level or from provincial headquarters, it was the responsibility of the head of the Secretariat, under the guidance of the province chief, to formalize the agenda. Due to his position, the head of the Secretariat maintained a close relationship with the province chief. He said he could see the chief any time he desired and conferred with him almost daily.

2. Bureau of Administrative Services

Although public administration in Viet Nam has been characterized by excessive compartmentalization and an almost rigid separation of functions, administrative practices at the provincial level often belie this description. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Bureau of Administrative Services in Vinh Long province. In addition to providing administrative services and support for the provincial government, this Bureau seems to be a "catch-all" for the multiple activities and services performed by the provincial government which do not fit into the other bureaus.

It is obvious from its table of organization that the Bureau of Administrative Services reaches into areas that would not normally be
considered part of the functions of such an agency. This is a result of the nature of government in Viet Nam; more specifically, government in Viet Nam has assumed responsibility for the management of activities which are not by nature governmental. For example, in its efforts to combat subversion, the government has attempted control over individual, family, and village activities and consequently has had to find an arm somewhere in its administrative structure to exercise this control. The growth of governmental responsibility, especially at the provincial level, has clearly outstripped the growth of the administrative structure in the provinces. As a result, an administrator may be found performing functions and being held responsible for problems which are not covered by the title of his bureau.

It should also be noted that the Bureau for Administrative Services is not confined in its activities to provincial headquarters or the provincial level. Since the six district chiefs and their respective organizations are merely adjuncts of the province chief, the Bureau is expected to render them support.

At the time of this study, the Bureau, comprising seven men, was located in a cramped and crowded office adjoining provincial headquarters. The bureau chief, as did most administrators and individuals in Vinh Long, indicated that he had easy and frequent access to the province chief. However, despite the fact that he saw the province chief many times a week, he generally took his problems to the deputy chief for administration.

The bureau chief informed us that he also was in frequent contact with the chiefs of the various technical services in Vinh Long as well as with the six district chiefs. He said that the chiefs of technical
services and districts rank above a bureau chief in the administrative hierarchy. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to him that he visit them at their headquarters.

No newspapers are published in Vinh Long, but Saigon papers come in regularly. (Hue is the only city in Viet Nam, besides Saigon, which publishes a newspaper.) The Bureau chief said all items relating to Vinh Long were clipped and placed in a folder which he examined daily. The comments or criticisms in these clippings, we believe, were brought to the attention of the province chief and other interested persons in provincial headquarters.

The Administrative services chief informed us that he then had before him an item from a Saigon newspaper stating that "cowboys" were active in Vinh Long. He said that the chief of province had reacted to this item by issuing instructions to parents to supervise more closely the activities of their children. The bureau chief drafted the instructions, submitted them to the province chief for review and signature, and sent them to the Association of Students' Parents.

He indicated that Saigon papers were read very carefully with great attention paid to what was said about the administration of Vinh Long province. When an article was critical of something in Vinh Long, the province chief contacted the appropriate district chief and had him investigate the situation. Sometimes critical items appeared in the form of articles by correspondents, and at other times they were contained in letters of complaint to the newspaper. If the complaint involved a district chief, the province chief directed his security people to investigate the official and determine the validity of the complaint.

The Administrative services chief contended that provincial
administrators were often defenseless against accusations or complaints contained in Saigon newspapers. He said that a common thief has recourse to trial by jury, but a dedicated civil servant is helpless before the criticism of the press. He cited the example of a district chief who was professionally injured by a series of unfair newspaper articles. While he was annoyed at some of the excesses of the Saigon press, he acknowledged that it did serve as an effective check on possible abuses of authority by provincial officials.

3. Bureau of Correspondence

The Bureau of Correspondence is responsible for providing mail service, telephone operators for provincial headquarters, and messenger service. Although limited to these routine services, it nevertheless has the status of an unofficial bureau headed by a chief of unofficial standing. The bureau chief informed us that the province chief had, on several occasions, recommended that he be given the full status of an official bureau chief, but the Department of Interior had not yet approved the recommendation.

The Bureau of Correspondence is also in charge of the provincial archives and is the repository for all letters, documents, and correspondence relative to official provincial business. This is no mean responsibility as all administration in Viet Nam is plagued by an over abundance of paper work. The files of the Vinh Long archives were filled to the top with folders, seemingly in a state of chaos, but the bureau chief said they were arranged in an orderly fashion for the use of those familiar with them. He also said, with great satisfaction, that his office would soon move to larger quarters with more space for the archives.
4. Bureau of Political Affairs

The Bureau of Political Affairs consists of the bureau chief and two clerical assistants. The chief had a 30-year career in government service, part of which was spent in the Sureté. Reflecting the purpose of the bureau, a sign condemning the Viet Cong hung above his desk.

The small staff assigned to this Bureau appeared to be a result of the fact that the functions which it performs are also within the purview of other agencies of provincial government. Not only do the various military and security forces keep a tight rein on political affairs, but the then newly appointed deputy chief for security had assumed the position of coordinating officer for several agencies previously concerned with political and security matters. Despite the overlapping of functions, the Bureau of Political Affairs is responsible for keeping abreast of the political situation throughout Vinh Long. The bureau chief receives reports on the security situation from all districts and villages in the province and then summarizes them for the province chief.

The bureau chief indicated that he also was responsible for maintaining contact with political groups, labor groups, and religious organizations in the province. In attempting to explain his activities in this respect, he said that it was not quite liaison, but rather an effort to follow up and evaluate the effect of these organizations on the people in the province. For example, he said, the Hoa Hao religious sect might have a meeting of its members. He would exercise surveillance over it and judge whether its effect was favorable or unfavorable to the government. This is not intelligence work in the sense that it constitutes spying because no official gathering in the province

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may take place legally without permission from a responsible provincial official. The bureau chief was specifically asked about a ceremony, attended by the NIA/MSU research team that morning, in which members of the Hoa Hao had assembled at a cemetery to honor their dead. The bureau chief said that the sect had received permission for the ceremony from the district chief of Binh Minh. The bureau chief had seen the application submitted by the Hoa Hao and said he soon would receive a report from the Binh Minh district chief on the activities and effects of the meeting. This was a normal procedure as the Bureau of Political Affairs regularly receives reports from district chiefs on security matters.

The appointment of a deputy chief for internal security seemed to have created a number of organizational and administrative problems for the Bureau of Political Affairs. Previously, the bureau chief reported and received instructions directly from the province chief. The lines of control and authority were uncluttered and clear, at least to the bureau chief. With the appointment of the new deputy, the bureau chief was less certain where he stood in the administrative hierarchy of the headquarters. He indicated that the functions of his bureau are very similar to those of the deputy for security. He acknowledged that organizationally and "formally" his bureau is under this deputy but, in actuality, the deputy had been issuing instructions to him through the province chief. The bureau chief said that he received routine instructions from the deputy but on matters of significance, his orders came from the province chief. The confusion that accompanies this type of transition and structure was reflected in the fact that even the organizational chart above the bureau chief's desk did not show the new
position of deputy for security. One might conclude from our discussion with the bureau chief that the confusion was not a result of inadequate definition of responsibility, but rather a reflection of the bureau chief's reluctance to acknowledge his own downgrading.

While all officials in Vinh Long are in some way responsible for, or concerned with, security affairs, only those who have these problems as their primary responsibility attended the bi-weekly meetings on security presided over by the province chief. According to the chief of the Political Affairs Bureau, those attending, besides himself, were the security deputy, the head of the civil guard, the chief of the Bureau of Military Affairs, and the officer in charge of the regular army in the area.

During our interview with the chief of the Political Bureau, he was handed a report from the district chief of Sadeo on Viet Cong activities there. The report said three dugouts of Viet Cong terrorists had been surrounded by government forces and the rebels captured along with incriminating documents. The names of the captured Viet Cong were mentioned. The report had first gone to the security deputy for examination and possible action and he, in turn, sent it to the chief of the Political Bureau.

When asked about the general security situation in the province, the bureau chief expressed the belief that the security forces in Vinh Long were sufficiently strong to control the Viet Cong. However, he stated that security was not as good in Phong Dinh and Kien Phong, the two adjoining provinces. He suggested that inadequate security provisions in those two provinces permitted terrorists to infiltrate into Vinh Long, making the job of the Vinh Long forces more difficult.
These observations by the bureau chief may be interpreted to mean that dealing with Viet Cong terrorists on a province by province basis is ineffectual. Since the completion of our study in Vinh Long, the Vietnamese government has recognized this situation and has instituted reforms in security procedures to prevent the Viet Cong from profiting by lack of administrative coordination among provincial security forces.

5. Bureau of Economic and Social Affairs

The Bureau of Economic and Social Affairs has limited responsibility for farmer cooperatives and associations, agricultural and commercial credit, the rice economy, commerce, and agrarian reform. It employs a bureau chief and two clerical assistants. With such a small staff, it is obvious that the Bureau does not have primary responsibility for the management or supervision of the economic areas mentioned above.

The Bureau's primary function is reporting and liaison. The subject matter with which it is concerned is often more directly under the control of the numerous technical services which exist within the province, and, in some cases, under other bureaus in provincial headquarters. The Bureau of Economic and Social Affairs acts mainly as a liaison office between the province chief and the technical services as well as with some of the departments in Saigon. The bureau chief spends little time in the field and is generally tied to his desk by paper work.

Much of this work consists of writing reports on the status of programs which are the responsibility of other people. The chief supplies information on these programs to the province chief and to agencies in Saigon which require up-to-date statistics on economic and agricultural
activities in Vinh Long. For example, while talking with the bureau chief, a questionnaire from the National Bank came to his attention. One of the questions required that a census be taken of the various types of cattle in Vinh Long. The bureau chief said he would follow up this request by submitting a similar one to each district chief. He anticipated that it would take about 15 or 20 days to complete the count.

The bureau chief said that at least ten items which originate in the central government are referred to him daily. In most cases, he is expected to provide information as requested. Much of his work involves responding to inquiries and instructions from the Department of National Economy in Saigon.

The bureau chief expressed the opinion that although the central government in Saigon makes policy, the chief of province has ample latitude to interpret this policy to suit the needs of Vinh Long. The bureau chief felt that the province chief often heeded his advice and communicated his suggestions to the central government, as well as incorporating many of these suggestions in the implementation of government policy in Vinh Long. As with almost all individuals to whom we spoke, the bureau chief felt his relationship to the province chief was a good one. He appreciated the latter's open mind and policy of easy communication. His only complaint -- one that could easily have been made by any civil servant in Vinh Long -- was that he was burdened with excessive paper work and bureaucratic red tape.

During our conversation with the bureau chief, he constantly referred to a problem he then had under study -- establishing and extending farmer cooperatives and farmers associations in the area. He was
engaged in an analysis of the problems involved in these programs and what could be done to make the farmer organizations more successful. As we subsequently learned from several sources, the success of these programs was doubtful or at least not up to expectations.

6. Bureau of Communal Affairs

With the exception of the family, the village and hamlet are the most important units in Vietnamese society. It may be said that the importance of the village has been fully recognized by the government of the Republic and the Viet Cong, both of whom have been making strenuous efforts to capture the loyalty of villagers and exercise effective control over them. In response to fears that the Viet Cong would successfully undermine village life, the government has assumed much authority and power over village affairs.1 Whereas the village once managed its own affairs and even had an elected council, it is today closely controlled by the provincial government.

The most important means by which the province chief controls a village is the chain of command which runs from his office to those of the various district chiefs and village officials. At the same time, the province chief utilizes other channels to regulate village activities and implement programs. In large measure, his reliance on alternative channels is necessitated by the fact that inadequate technical skills exist at the village level to implement all the programs intended for the villages in Vinh Long or any other Vietnamese province.

1 The success of this program or policy is open to question; however, it is not our purpose to evaluate the program at this time.
The Bureau of Communal Affairs is vested with general responsibility for almost all phases of village government and administration. It oversees expenditures and accounts, administration, construction projects, appointments to the village council, evaluations of council members and hamlet chiefs, and many other important and unimportant activities. There is no reason to assume that the Bureau of Communal Affairs has exclusive responsibility for supervision of this wide range of activities; the province chief, as in all areas within his jurisdiction, may assign any bureau or technical service the responsibility for supervising or carrying out a program in a village. The fact that the Bureau of Communal Affairs employs only five individuals, in addition to its chief, suggests that its supervision of village activities cannot be as tight as the table of organization implies.

Much of the bureau chief's time is devoted to trips into villages where construction projects are under way. His interest is not exclusively a supervisory one; he acts as a purchasing agent to obtain materials for the construction of schools, markets, and other projects. According to his assistant, the bureau chief has had much experience in construction and prefers to act as his own contractor rather than rely on an outside firm. He feels that by doing the work himself, he can obtain greater efficiency and economy in construction. The province chief encouraged him in this activity. It is quite possible that both men were motivated or induced to follow this procedure by the lack of competent, reliable building contractors who might normally operate out of a city like Saigon.

Construction projects have a high priority in Viet Nam today because they represent a visible weapon in the government's fight to gain...
the loyalty of village people. During our period of observation in Vinh Long, the province chief, next to his interest in security, evidenced the greatest concern about village and community construction. As a result, he and the chief of the Bureau of Communal Affairs found themselves working together closely to advance their common interest. The province chief was often accompanied by the bureau chief on trips to inspect construction sites.

7. Bureau of Military Affairs

Until recently before our study, the Military Affairs Bureau performed many of the functions presently carried out by the deputy chief for security. The appointment of this deputy did, in fact, make an anomaly of the Bureau. He located his office on the Bureau's premises and proceeded to exercise authority over all areas previously under its jurisdiction and to utilize its personnel as he deemed fit. In fact, its employees made up his whole staff, since he had no other, and the bureau chief became his adjutant or assistant.

While there may be inherent administrative problems in this situation, the NIA/MSU Research Team did not perceive any. The bureau chief acknowledged that he had been downgraded but he accepted this as a necessary consequence of the dangerous security situation in Vinh Long. None of the personnel in the Bureau was a member of the army and, considering the security challenge, there was much to support the contention that a military man should be in charge of military operations, at least, in the province.

The fact that a civilian bureau chief, until six weeks prior to our study, had been in charge of military affairs, gives credence to
the idea that the Vietnamese government had not made a clear distinction between military and political activities. Furthermore, when the civilian was succeeded in authority by a military man, the latter not only became, in effect, the commanding officer of all military forces in Vinh Long, but also was assigned responsibility for political education of the citizens in the province. ¹

The chief of the Military Affairs Bureau felt that the province chief often heeded his advice and followed up on his suggestions. Like most of his colleagues, he spoke of good relations with the province chief and easy access to him. The bureau chief's only complaint was the familiar one in Vinh Long -- too much paper work and red tape.

8. Bureau of Budget and Accounting

Provincial government in Viet Nam is limited in its activities and effectiveness by the size of its budget. However, the size of a provincial budget does not reflect the totality of government services performed in a province. Funds are spent directly by agencies of the central government; funds derived from the central government are spent by provincial officials; other funds derive from the province itself; budgetary responsibilities are imposed at the village level under the Bureau of Communal Affairs, and investments are made in the form of local labor and materials which are not included in any provincial budget but serve as an informal substitute for taxes. (The government has never officially equated local labor contributions with substitute taxes, although high officials have often recognized the parallel.)

¹ See the President's instructions, page 33.
Therefore, the Bureau of Budget and Accounting does not reflect all provincial budgetary problems and activities. The major source of funds for the province is the central government where the budget, prepared by the Budget Bureau chief and submitted by the province chief, is reviewed. The responsibility for preparing village and district budgets is largely left to the chief of the Bureau of Communal Affairs. After reviewing the provincial budget, the central government makes its allocation based on its own resources and expected revenues. To supplement these funds, a province has limited authority to tax and procure revenue within its borders. The word "limited" is used because the central government has established a maximum level of taxation designed to prevent provincial officials from taxing too heavily and alienating the people.

The chief of the Bureau of Budget and Accounting informed us that his bureau is mainly responsible for all funds coming from the national budget which are spent in Vinh Long province, the province's internal budget, and American aid projects within Vinh Long. He spends one month a year preparing the provincial budget and budget requests. It is essential, during this period of preparation, that he remain in close contact with the numerous technical services in the province, especially those which require supplementary funds from the provincial budget. During this period the bureau chief also consults daily with the province chief on budgetary issues. The bureau chief said that he started his formal preparation in September, inasmuch as the budget had to be submitted to the central government by November. He told us that during November and December, the budget was studied by the director general of Budget and Foreign Aid in Saigon.
The Bureau, which employs seven people besides the chief, also serves as a central information office for the technical services and district chiefs in all matters relating to budget and expenditures. The chief pointed out that close liaison is necessary because the provincial budget provides funds for some personnel employed by the technical services and the districts. The Department of Public Works, for example, employs a number of people in Vinh Long who are paid from the provincial budget. Similarly, certain personnel at the district level, although technically on the payroll of the district, are paid by the province. This means that the head of the Budget Bureau must maintain close contact with district chiefs to learn their needs and anticipate expenditures for the coming year.
Despite the complex network of administration extending from the President of the Republic down to the village chief, the quality of government in the province depends on the daily decisions, many of a critical nature, made by the province chief. During our period of observation in Vinh Long, it became evident to us that while the province chief may depend upon the central government for guidance and upon his headquarters staff and subordinate levels of administration within the province for assistance, he cannot escape personal responsibility for the multiplicity of issues demanding the attention of government at the provincial level. Rather than describe the complexities of the job in the abstract, we have included in the following pages a consideration of some of the actual matters dealt with by the chief of Vinh Long province. In many instances, we personally observed him working toward the solution of specific problems. In others, we relied upon discussions with him, others in his administration, and residents of the province.

A. The Province Chief as Security Commander

Undoubtedly the most time-consuming and important problem faced by the province chief of Vinh Long is security. Like most other Delta provinces, Vinh Long is a rich rice producing area. Its broad expanses of paddy land are dotted with isolated thatched huts and many hamlets. The province is lined and criss-crossed by natural waterways and canals.
Although Vinh Long is neither a border nor coastal province, movement in and out is a simple matter and concealment within the province is not too difficult.

Nevertheless, provincial officials felt that the security problem was less severe in Vinh Long than in other provinces in the Mekong Delta. Roads in Vinh Long are relatively better and the terrain is slightly less suitable for establishing concealed guerrilla retreats. The greatest strength of the Viet Cong, as seen by provincial officials, is their ability to terrorize the people and compel their cooperation. The deputy chief for security affairs estimated that only about 100 hard core Viet Cong cadre were then in Vinh Long, but these forces were augmented by rebels from adjoining provinces. It is impossible to effectively patrol the borders between provinces and security officials gave no indication that inter-provincial cooperation existed in efforts to cope with terrorist activities on a regional rather than provincial basis. Since our study, however, some moves have been made in this direction.

The Viet Cong never were completely eradicated from Vinh Long. We were told that although many of the Viet Minh went north after the signing of the Geneva Agreements in 1954, other remained in the south and have since been rejoined by a number of those who originally went north over the 17th parallel. It is not difficult for the Viet Cong to re-enter South Viet Nam. They have easy access by land across Cambodia, or by sea along Viet Nam's long coastline. Typical of the Delta region, the Viet Cong retain cadres and caches of arms at convenient places in the province. The abundance of rice in the area helps solve the problem most familiar to guerrillas -- food supply.
Rice also offers an additional means of harassment to the Viet Cong. They can disrupt the supply to Saigon and the provinces of central Viet Nam, thereby making their power felt both by local residents who are deprived of an income and by Saigon and central province residents who are deprived of food.

The task of the Viet Cong has been facilitated in Vinh Long by an ecological pattern which differs from that of the provinces in the central lowlands and highlands. Instead of populous villages, each with its own traditional consciousness, Vinh Long is made up of villages embracing many sparsely settled hamlets. A typical hamlet consists of a series of peasant huts on either side of a small trail which winds over an irrigation canal and on through the rice fields. The population may vary from 50 to 5,000 people and the closest adjoining hamlet will sometimes be as far away as 20 kilometers, a trip which may take eight hours by boat from the village center.

It is obviously more difficult to provide protection for a population dispersed in this fashion over a large area than for one concentrated in villages.

At the time of our study in Vinh Long, the pattern of Viet Cong attack was that of small bands of guerrillas striking at poorly protected villages and hamlets. There had been only a few occasions when the Viet Cong had mounted a major attack on a protected installation.

Security in Vinh Long was the responsibility of the province chief. Mr. Ba contended that although he had never been in the army, he was not inexperienced in military matters. He said that he had worked closely with the military during the uprisings of the Hoa Hao sect and the Binh Xuyen river pirates, adding that this experience had given
him an understanding of military matters and had facilitated the job
of maintaining a favorable relationship with the colonel who commanded
the military district in which Vinh Long was situated. Before the ap-
pointment of the deputy chief for security, the province chief himself
developed plans and was in direct command of security matters and mil-
tary operations. He often accompanied the civil guard on combat mis-
sions. Mr. Ba could utilize at his discretion the regular army detach-
ment assigned to him or call for the support of the Fifth Military Re-
gion, headquartereded at Can Tho.

The number of personnel available to the province chief for security
work was, in some respects, deceptive. Vinh Long has a population of
532,705 people on an area of 1,800 square kilometers. It has six dis-
tricts, 19 cantons, and 81 villages. At the time of our study, there
was no effective provincial telephone service and transportation was
not easily available to all sectors of the province. Seen in this con-
text, the number of personnel assigned to the task of combatting guer-
rilla terrorist activity seems minute.

The only way by which provincial security forces can effectively
counter the highly mobile Viet Cong is the development of an efficient
intelligence system. Our discussions with the chief and other provin-
cial officials did not indicate that such a system existed in Vinh Long.
The province chief informed us that he had three regular sources of in-
formation on security matters: (1) the provincial police service, (2)
the Sureté in his province, and (3) private informants. Mr. Ba also
acknowledged that he received information occasionally from the Sureté
in Saigon.

He consulted regularly with the army major who was his deputy

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1 See footnote on organizational chart, page 28, and map.
chief for security. The major told us he hoped to improve the security situation in Vinh Long in the near future, primarily by more effective utilization of the civil guard and the village self-defense corps (Dan Ve). He made it clear that he would prefer using regular army troops because he felt they could eliminate the Viet Cong more expeditiously, but he expressed slight hope that a sufficient number of such troops would be made available to him on a regular basis.

Even with the appointment of a deputy chief who devoted his time exclusively to security problems, the province chief still dealt with many internal security matters. Often, his involvement was the inevitable consequence of his position as administrative head of provincial government. For example, on April 4, 1960, he received a local village leader of the National Revolutionary Movement. The two men spoke about security problems in the village and the party leader expressed concern over a menacing letter which had been received by a village landowner. The letter had a Viet Cong seal attached to it and was designed to make the landowner flee from his property. The province chief examined the letter and quickly concluded that it was not an authentic Viet Cong threat. He pointed out to his visitor that the seal obviously had been transferred, and clumsily at that, from another letter to this one. The chief's suspicions were aroused because he had learned previously that the landowner in question had alienated his tenants by refusing to extend credit to them. The chief concluded that the tenants had drawn up a fraudulent Viet Cong threat as an act of revenge against the landowner.

The following day, the province chief held a prolonged discussion on security with the chief of Lap Vo district. The district chief
reported that on the previous evening there had been an exchange of rifle fire between government forces and Viet Cong in the village of Hoi An Dong. The village police chief and a member of the self-defense corps were killed. The district chief said he thought a small band of Viet Cong had been involved and that the encounter was an accidental skirmish rather than a planned attack on Hoi An Dong. The real attack, he believed, was intended for the village of Hoa Dinh where a local theatrical festival was scheduled. Many people were to congregate in a single auditorium -- an attractive target for the Viet Cong. The latter could demonstrate their power either by terrifying or by lecturing to the assembled villagers. However, en route to Hoa Dinh, the rebels met the Hoi An Dong police chief and a group of Dan Ve on their way to a neighboring village to break up an organized gambling group. A fight ensued in which the police chief and one Dan Ve died. No Viet Cong were killed.

The district chief felt that if it had not been for the gambling operation in the neighboring village, his two men would not have been killed. He said that the army lieutenant who commanded the civil guard in the village where the gambling was going on was not only aware of the operation but had participated in it to his profit. The district chief pointed out that the lieutenant was a good professional soldier but his involvement in organized gambling made it impossible for the local police chief to properly perform his duties because he did not want to risk antagonizing the commander. Province Chief Ba instructed the district chief to firmly inform the lieutenant that if he did not put an end to his gambling activities, the province chief was prepared to remove him from his command.
Next, the Lap Vo district chief was told to widen the road leading into Hoi An Dong to make the village more easily accessible to provincial security forces in case of future trouble. The two men then turned their attention to finding a replacement for the chief of the village police force who had been killed. Mr. Ba told the district chief that he would have full freedom in selecting a replacement but pointed out that, in his judgement, it would be advantageous to select someone from outside the village. The province chief said that a resident of the village would know everyone there intimately and would be inhibited in enforcing the law by friendship and family ties. Someone from another village, he said, would feel no restraint in exercising his authority over the people of Hoi An Dong.

After concluding this discussion, Mr. Ba was visited by the Cho Lach district chief. The province chief considers Cho Lach the district with the most serious security problems in Vinh Long. He emphasized to the district chief that he must not rely on any single individual or group of individuals to maintain security in Cho Lach. Mr. Ba said it was necessary for the district chief himself to keep abreast of all security problems in the area and urged him to organize his own intelligence service, keep himself informed of all developments affecting security; and report to the province chief any district official who was not qualified to do his assigned job. Recently, Mr. Ba had transferred a district police official from Cho Lach to a district where security was less precarious.

On numerous other occasions, we observed the province chief discussing security matters with his deputy for security and other officials. He participated in planning military operations with his deputy
and left no doubt in our minds that internal security was his greatest problem. Although he told us that his relations with the military command in the region were good, we saw no instances of regular army troops working in cooperation with provincial security forces. Troops were often seen riding in trucks through the province in daylight hours, but the heavy burden of security -- especially during the night -- fell to the more poorly trained and equipped forces of the province.

The constant pressure of security was illustrated by events at a dinner our research group attended at the province chief's home. Although a place had been set for the deputy chief of security, he was not present when we sat down at the table. While we were eating, the major arrived dressed in a field uniform. He explained that he had just returned from a military operation which had taken place at the border between Binh Minh and Sadee districts. He had learned of the presence of a small band of Viet Cong in the area and, accompanied by a contingent of civil guard, attacked the suspects in their living quarters. As the deputy and his men approached, they were fired upon by the Viet Cong who then fled. The result of the night's work was one captured terrorist and a few weapons.

Province Chief Ba and the major went on to discuss other security matters with us. They expressed anxiety that the Viet Cong might single out as targets the agrovilles under construction in Vinh Long. That afternoon, the major had visited an agroville in An Xuyen province. According to people there, the Viet Cong had already attacked the place, caused much damage and killed several people. Both Mr. Ba and the deputy were intent on taking precautions to ward off Viet Cong attacks on agrovilles being built in Vinh Long and on making preparations to
While the Viet Cong were not sufficiently strong to assume permanent control over any section of provincial territory, their activities had the effect of impeding almost every government program in Vinh Long. In fact, the government had been forced to establish programs to counter the Viet Cong that contributed little to economic and social development. Large numbers of men had been diverted into military and security organizations.

A discussion with a provincial official from the Bureau of Economic and Social Affairs graphically demonstrated the havoc the Viet Cong had been able to play with even the best government programs. He told us that when the Viet Minh ruled the area, prior to the establishment of the Republic of Viet Nam, landholdings were broken up and distributed to the peasants free of charge. The recipients have been farming this land ever since without title and without assuming the responsibility of paying taxes on it. Under the government's agrarian reform program, the former landlords have gone to court and asked for either the restoration of their property or some form of compensation. Many of these holdings are in the most insecure portions of the province and the landlords are afraid to enter the area to collect rents or take possession of their property. The tenants have let it be known that the landlords are free to come back if they choose. There is little doubt that the tenants have been encouraged in this situation by the Viet Cong who want to appear as benefactors of the peasant. Thus, while the peasant continues to benefit from the land without fulfilling any of the legal obligations of ownership, the government is not able to effectively implement the terms of its
own agrarian reform program. Ironically, the provincial official pointed out, the Viet Cong has been able to make the agrarian reform program, designed to make the peasant the legal owner of the land, seem like government oppression of the peasant.

B. The Province Chief as Engineer

Province chiefs in present-day Viet Nam are selected for their abilities as administrators or military leaders. Yet, observing a province chief at work, one could reasonably suggest that engineering talents would be as valid a basis for selection as either administrative or military competence. Throughout almost every day of our stay in Vinh Long, we watched Province Chief Ba make decisions pertaining to some construction project under way within the province. At one moment he would be selecting a construction site, and the next conferring with someone about the purchase of materials. He conveyed the impression that, next to security, his effectiveness as a province chief was measured by his ability to construct roads and public buildings and undertake other community projects which would ultimately benefit the people.

It is hard to disagree with Mr. Ba's appraisal of the importance of development projects in his province. There is scarcely a village in Viet Nam where the government is not continually pushing some kind of community construction project. At times the pattern seems chaotic; however, and this point is important, government officials contend that despite appearances, these projects represent the basis for a new social, economic, and political infrastructure for Viet Nam.

If the short-range answer to the Viet Cong is military, the long range
answer is development, and the essence of development is construction. At the same time, there is a calculated risk in undertaking countless construction projects at breakneck speed in village after village. Each project requires capital, labor, and materials. In varying degrees, the rural population is compelled to contribute these, directly or indirectly. Because the level of community consciousness is not always sufficiently high for the peasant to appreciate the activities he is forced to support, he is often alienated from the government in the process. The Vietnamese peasant demonstrates a profound aversion to being taxed and when he is forced to contribute free labor to government projects, his reaction is often hostile. It may be argued that the government can ill afford to sacrifice popular support for the rapid construction of roads and buildings. Nevertheless, the government has chosen to take this risk and it is the responsibility of the province chief to advance its programs.

Province Chief Ba spent much of his time traveling throughout Vinh Long inspecting projects, talking to provincial officials and discussing problems with village residents. At some time during each day that we observed Mr. Ba, he inspected a project or a village outside of the provincial capital of Vinh Long. His intense concern with community construction is apparent in the following description of a typical inspection trip.

On April 6, accompanied by his deputy chief for administration, his secretary, an engineer attached to the Department of Public Works, and our research team, Mr. Ba drove from his headquarters to Lap Vo district. His first stop was My An Hung, a large village of about 12,000 inhabitants, where he wanted to observe progress on the
construction of a market place. The new market was being financed by the province but the land on which it stood "had been donated by individual residents of the village." As the province chief walked through the village, he spoke to several residents and encouraged them to build shops and commercial establishments in the area surrounding the market. There already were about 25 stores in the vicinity but Mr. Ba hoped that, as more were built, the market would become the commercial center of the village and the adjoining areas would be full of supplementary business activities. Mr. Ba was favorably impressed with what he saw in My An Hung and attributed the successful growth of the market area to the village chief. He told us the village chief was a man of genuine ability who got along well with his people. Because they respected him for his competence and integrity, he was able to convince them that they should participate in village projects. The province chief explained that the success of many programs initiated at higher levels in Saigon depended upon the ability of village chiefs and the lowest ranking officials.

After leaving the village in Lep Vo district, the province chief and his small entourage drove to Sadeo district. In the course of the trip, he stopped at three villages to inspect market places under construction. Mr. Ba let it be known that he was not satisfied with the progress being made; he found construction slow and fewer stores being built than he had hoped. He attributed this lack of progress (as he had attributed the success in My An Hung) to the local village chiefs who had failed to inspire the villagers to cooperate in carrying out the general plan of the market place. He informed all three chiefs that construction at My An Hung was proceeding much more rapidly
than in their own villages.

Mr. Ba's secretary took notes on the discussions with the village chiefs and upon his return to provincial headquarters late in the day, the province chief dictated a detailed memorandum to the district chief of Sadec where the three villages were located. The memorandum was intended to encourage the village chiefs to move faster in completing the market place and other projects. In another village, Mr. Ba was approached by the village chief and one of his predecessors. The latter was an old man who wanted to bring a complaint to the attention of the province chief. He told Mr. Ba that the man in charge of constructing the market place had made extremely difficult requests of the villagers. For example, he said that people had been required to contribute a certain amount of topsoil for the foundation of the new market place. The old man explained that this was a hardship for the villagers and that it would have been much more reasonable if they had been asked to bring a boat load or two of ordinary soil to fill the holes in the road surrounding the market place. Province Chief Ba was sympathetic to the complaint and promised to do something about it. He told the man that the present village chief could not issue instructions to a representative of a technical service, but that he, the province chief, would instruct the person in charge of the project to modify his requirements.

Later, Mr. Ba explained to us that the technical service employee in this village was in need of proper training and experience. Mr. Ba said the man had two faults: he did not know enough about the technical aspects of construction and he did not know how to deal with people.

If the representative of the technical service needed further training, it is unfortunate that he could not have had Province Chief
Ba as his teacher. Mr. Ba was not only conversant in a wide range of technical subjects but his treatment of people -- officials as well as villagers -- was masterful. He maintained few of the outer trappings of officialdom and in dealing with the residents of the province he used persuasion, not force. When discussing issues with subordinate officials, he found little need to assert his authority and attempted instead to apply reason. In each village the province chief moved among the residents casually and the people did not hesitate to come up to him and talk over their problems. There was no bowing and scraping before the chief and he had a subtle way of making it clear that he wanted neither tribute nor special attention.

Mr. Ba's easy manner could have been deceptive; there was no doubt in our minds that he had authority over all that happened in Vinh Long province. We learned from other officials at the province, district, and village level that Mr. Ba frequently made unannounced checks of district and village headquarters. Whenever he went into a village, he examined the village register which contains the date and hour of each inspection trip made by the district chief and lists his recommendations for the improvement of village affairs. By checking this register, the province chief immediately knew how closely the district chief was keeping abreast of matters in the village.

When we returned to provincial headquarters, Mr. Ba invited us into his office and led us to a map of the province which had various colored flags designating past, present, and future construction projects. He proudly pointed to the schools, market places, and other structures which had been completed under his leadership. He took great pride in these accomplishments and informed us that the costs of the construction projects
in Vinh Long were less than for similar projects in other provinces. He explained that he held expenses down by not using contractors or calling for construction bids; instead he had his own staff buy building materials and he frequently used village "volunteers" to do the actual work.

C. The Province Chief and Agriculture

The most important product of the agricultural nation of Viet Nam is rice. Although rubber is the largest source of foreign credit, the rich paddy lands of the Mekong Delta yield more than enough rice to permit Viet Nam to feed itself and export a surplus. Of all 38 provinces in the country, USOM agricultural experts say only five or six rate higher than Vinh Long in terms of potential agricultural development. Rich soil, sufficient water, a large labor force, and a favorable ratio of land to population make Vinh Long an important farming area.

Notwithstanding its favorable natural assets, the economic potential of Vinh Long, or all of Viet Nam for that matter, cannot be realized if the government takes a laissez aller attitude. To use a term favored by government officials, there must be a "rationalization" of agricultural production and peasant life before the nation can enjoy the benefits of its bountiful soil. The first requirement in fulfilling this objective, of course, is to protect the farmer from the harassment and terrorism of Viet Cong guerrillas. Beyond this, government objectives include better roads in rural areas, more equitable land distribution, the introduction of improved farming methods, crop diversification, low interest loans to farmers, the establishment of cooperatives
and farmers associations, and a variety of other programs designed to improve peasant life and contribute to the nation's overall economic development.

Much of the work involved in implementing these programs is performed by field representatives of central government agencies. However, as we have observed in other areas, the presence of technicians does not relieve a province chief of responsibility for government programs. As technical field representatives in Vinh Long made clear to us, without the active support of the province chief it would be impossible to achieve the goals of the central government in the field of agriculture.

While our research period in Vinh Long was too brief to permit us to come to definite conclusions, we received several distinct impressions through observation and interviews. Most important, we felt that even the support of the province chief could not assure the success of a program. Enthusiastic officials are no substitute for well trained agricultural economists, rural sociologists, and technical experts. The absence of such specialists destines a program to failure. It is unreasonable to expect a province chief and his staff to possess the many kinds of specialized knowledge needed for a large-scale rural development program.

Provincial officials in Vinh Long discussed the kinds of mistakes that can be made when inexperienced personnel are responsible for important programs. We were told that the government was interested in the development of rural cooperatives but, unfortunately, their functions and purposes were never clearly explained to farmers. Furthermore, according to one informant, the government did not make sufficient money
available to properly launch the cooperative movement in Vinh Long. The Long Chau cooperative, for example, had been in existence since 1956, had about 1500 members, but was not considered a success. Long Chau had rice storage facilities but little rice was kept there because farmers considered the storage rates too high. Eventually, rates were lowered but farmers still felt they were better off financially selling their rice immediately rather than storing it for several months and assuming risks. One official told us that he personally had stored 10,000 piasters worth of rice which, after four months, was sold for 11,000 piasters. He had to pay 400 piasters in storage fees to the cooperative. He told us that he would not store his rice there in the future because he did not consider the 600 piasters gained in the transaction a good enough yield on his investment.

More recently, the government has emphasized farmer's associations rather than cooperatives. To the confusion of the peasants in Vinh Long, the man responsible for explaining the farmers associations to them was the same man who had been manager of the rice cooperative. Immediately there was suspicion of the farmers associations. "They thought it was the same organization with a new title," one person told us.

This seemed to be the kind of issue which warranted the intervention of the province chief, but we found no evidence that Mr. Ba was deeply involved in the farmers association movement. His apparent detachment can be justified by the tremendous demands made upon him in other areas of agricultural development. At the time of our investigation in Vinh Long, the province chief and many other officials were preoccupied with the building and settling of two agrovilles. They
were high-priority projects and required constant supervision by Mr. Ba. The agrovilles involved the relocation of large numbers of people scattered over the countryside. They were intended to enable the peasant to enjoy more of the benefits of communal life, particularly security, and ultimately to improve his economic status.

The government desired to establish these agrovilles as rapidly as possible, a goal which placed a heavy burden on the province chief. Although others supervised the actual construction, the importance attached to the agrovilles made it necessary that he participate in all phases of the program. Neither the construction timetable nor the budget allowed the province chief a choice of methods in recruiting labor to build the agrovilles. He was compelled to conscript free labor from villages throughout the province. There was neither time nor personnel to explain the attractions of the agrovilles; consequently, those selected to live in the new communities had no choice in the matter.

Mr. Ba held the opinion that, while the agrovilles would eventually have social and economic value, their primary purpose at the time was to improve security in Vinh Long. Both agrovilles, Cai Son and Tan Luoc, were located in areas where the people were most sympathetic to the Viet Cong. To offset Viet Cong strength, the province chief planned to resettle many Catholics at Cai Son and populate the Tan Luoc agroville with members of the Hoa Hao sect. The province chief believed that these religious groups were anti-communist and that their presence would weaken the influence of the Viet Cong in the area.

We were interrupted in our discussion by the visit of an engineer who was involved in construction of the agrovilles. He complained to the province chief that many owners of land on which the agrovilles
were being built did not have the necessary maps and deeds to prove ownership and that without these proofs they could not be compensated. Province Chief Ba was more moderate in his response to this problem than the young engineer. He instructed the engineer to announce to the dispossessed landowners that they must have a title to their land before they could be compensated; however, if they did not have one, they would be given three months in which to file a claim for compensation and produce some other evidence of ownership. The engineer then gave the province chief a general rundown of developments at the Tan Luoc agroville. The latter was clearly dissatisfied with the rate of progress and informed the engineer that with 6000 people working on the project, he expected it to move ahead much more rapidly.

D. The Monthly Meetings

Each month the province chief convened a meeting of district chiefs and agency heads at his headquarters. There are two reasons for including a discussion of this meeting here: (1) its agenda presents a capsule description of the scope, complexity, and importance of problems confronting provincial officials; and, (2) it is administratively significant that the province chief regularly called certain of these officials together to discuss general issues. It demonstrates a means by which a province chief can consult regularly with administrative subordinates and keep himself informed of ideas prior to formulating decisions. It is often contended by informed observers in Viet Nam that too many province chiefs deny themselves access to the knowledge and ideas of their subordinates. The notes presented here have been gathered from several officials who regularly attended these
meetings. The province chief did not feel it would be proper for our research group to attend one of the sessions; he thought our presence would destroy the atmosphere of intimacy which he sought to create.

The meeting was held at an appointed time each month in the office of the province chief. He acted as chairman and those attending included the six district chiefs, the two deputy chiefs of province, the chief of the civil guard, the eight bureau chiefs in provincial headquarters, a leader of the Republican Youth, two army officers overseeing construction work on the agrovilles, the chief of police, and the head of the Sureté. An agenda, for which anyone entitled to attend the meeting could suggest items, was prepared and distributed in advance of the monthly meeting.

We learned that the first part of the session was devoted to a discussion of security problems and the remainder dealt with general administrative matters in the province. The security questions discussed by the group at the time of our study were as follows: the need to train additional personnel to handle Viet Cong threats against security; defense of provincial villages and military installations; ways of improving the information program at each level of provincial government; aid to families of members of the civil guard and self-defense corps killed by the Viet Cong; and the inadequacy of arms and ammunition available to the civil guard and self-defense corps. On the last point, the group decided that the only way to solve the problem would be to distribute the weapons and ammunition captured from the Viet Cong.

The first matter discussed during the second part of the meeting dealt with training the Republican Youth (Than Nien Cong Hoa). The
government has placed great stress on the desirability of recruiting youth into the Cong Hoa movement, yet those responsible for administering and leading the program feel that its purposes and activities have not been clearly defined. The second item was a progress report on the agrovilles under construction. Next, there was a discussion of the progress of farmers associations in the province and the effort to increase membership. As with the Cong Hoa Youth, officials professed confusion as to the specific objectives of the associations.

The fourth item concerned ways and means to assure repayment of loans extended to individual farmers by the National Agricultural Credit Organization (NACO). The rates of repayment in the different districts of the province were compared. Next on the agenda was the problem of tax collection, a vital issue in provincial government since many local activities as well as allowances for village officials are financed by revenues from provincial taxes on land. Furthermore, the ability of a province to collect taxes is a reflection of the security situation in the area. During the 1959 fiscal year, the highest percentage of taxes collected -- 88 per cent -- was in the district of Vinh Long where the provincial capital is located. Figures for the remaining five districts were: Cho Lech, 65 per cent; Sade, 55 per cent; Lap Vo, 49 per cent; Tan Binh, 49 per cent; and Binh Minh, 44 per cent.

The group next took up the matter of village budgets. It was pointed out that many villages had not presented or drawn up their budgets and it was felt that each should be urged to do so without delay. The last item discussed was the utilization of public lands owned by each village. Suggestions were advanced on how the villages
could rent these lands more easily and obtain funds to augment the local budget. At the time of our study, 4,352 hectares of public land in the province were owned by the villages. Of the total, 3,300 hectares had been rented and it was decided to appoint a committee to determine why the remaining land had not been leased.

Minutes of the monthly meeting were sent to the Department of Interior, the regional delegate, and the commander of the 5th Military Region. Province Chief Ba established the custom of having a luncheon for all those attending the meeting and, according to our informants, the monthly session, followed by the luncheon, contributed to the quality of administration in Vinh Long. It made isolated administrators aware of the types of problems faced throughout the province and provided an opportunity for officials at different levels of provincial government to get together informally to discuss matters of mutual interest. Our informants said that when these matters are brought up through regular channels, decisions are slower and there is not the give and take found in face-to-face discussions. Although they did not attend the meetings themselves, the chiefs of the technical services were invited to the luncheons. We were told by one official that the opportunity to visit with provincial leaders in a relaxed atmosphere saved writing several dozen letters each month. He expressed a marked preference for informal procedures in dealings with his colleagues.
APPENDIX  A

TRAINING PROGRAM FOR VILLAGE AND HAMLET OFFICIALS:
A CASE STUDY

The following case study illustrates many of the administrative difficulties confronting Viet Nam's 38 province chiefs. The case we have chosen deals with the planning and creation of a training program for future village and hamlet officials. It is not a dramatic issue, but perhaps for this reason it better illustrates an aspect of provincial government that is often overlooked by those who concentrate on big and critical questions. It demonstrates the degree to which provincial officials, while engaged in security operations, construction of agrovilles, and other vast programs, are obliged to concern themselves simultaneously with the routine administrative duties common to all bureaucracies.

Provincial officials looked on the training program as being of eventual value, yet they felt it imposed a burden on them which they were not fully prepared to assume at the time.

Moreover, this case depicts the dilemma of the province chief in his relationships with departments of the central government and with his subordinates at the district and village level.

Background

The village in Viet Nam is more than a political unit; it is a social, economic, and, in many respects, a spiritual entity which commands loyalty from its members. While Viet Nam is no longer a "federation of villages," no government can afford to ignore the deep
attachment of the individual Vietnamese to his traditional village. In many respects, the village is the key to the future of Viet Nam. If the government is successful in gaining the allegiance of the villager, the Viet Cong stand small chance of subverting the government; if, on the other hand, the government cannot get the active support of the villager, soldiers and weapons will be of little use in the struggle against guerrillas. Thus, the village has become a battleground between the government and the Viet Cong, each vying for the loyalty and support of its peasant inhabitants.

The problem is not a simple one, even for the wisest government. The autonomous tendency of the village -- which gave rise to the proverb, "Royal decrees cannot pass over village rules" -- anchors the village to the past and works against change. It is change, however, that is necessary if Viet Nam is going to experience the social, economic, and political development that its educated citizens demand and its less educated ones soon will demand.

In recent years, the government has issued numerous decrees affecting village government. Perhaps the most significant was the government's replacement of the elected village council by an appointed council. Through this move, the government sought to minimize the possibility of the Viet Cong infiltrating village government and, at the same time, hoped to link village administration more closely with national policy. A drawback to the new arrangement was that government-appointed village councillors were not necessarily the leaders to whom the village looked for guidance. Realizing this, the government attempted to set forth principles for the selection of village council members and initiated training programs for those already on the
councils.¹

Provincial officials throughout Viet Nam felt that these moves were not sufficient to assure a qualified village council. Many province chiefs felt that it would be wiser to select promising local residents and train them in the duties and responsibilities of a village council member or a hamlet chief. Thus, when village or hamlet officials died or left office, a group of trained young men would readily be available to replace them. The idea was brought to the attention of the Secretary of State for Interior during a meeting with Southwest area province chiefs in 1959. Nothing more was heard of it by the province chiefs until March 22, 1960, when the regional delegate convened a meeting in Can Tho attended by all deputy province chiefs in the area and announced that the President had decided to initiate a training program for future village and hamlet officials.

The delegate instructed the deputy chiefs to organize two training courses in each of their provinces, one for village council members and one for hamlet chiefs. Each council course would be attended by five young men from each village and the hamlet chief program would train three young men from each hamlet. Trainees were to be selected from among "bright, alert, and loyal members of the community who are in good health, anti-communist, and under forty years of age." Present village council members or hamlet chiefs were not to be selected because the program was designed to find eventual replacements for these men. The deputies were further instructed by the delegate to limit the size of the

classes to 200 students and give priority to areas which had the poorest security. The village council training course, lasting ten days, was to take place in the provincial capital and the hamlet chiefs' course, lasting five days, would be held at the various district capitals in each province. The delegate said that lesson plans for the courses would be sent to the province chiefs by the Department of Interior. Classes were to commence on April 15, just three weeks from the date of the meeting.

When Province Chief Ba learned of these instructions, he was distressed. Vinh Long, with 81 villages and 741 hamlets, would have to train 405 future village council members and 2223 hamlet chiefs. Mr. Ba felt three weeks was insufficient time in which to select instructors, arrange for classroom space, procure housing for the students, and obtain funds to finance the training program. Without written instructions, he lacked the specific details he considered necessary to arrange the courses.

In the absence of adequate information, the province chief asked one of his subordinates to telephone a close friend who worked in the Department of Interior in Saigon to try to learn more about the program. After talking with his friend, the administrator traveled to Saigon to examine whatever written material was available. Finally, on March 29, the province chief received a letter, dated the previous day, containing detailed instructions about the program.

According to this letter, the curriculum would consist of political instruction, public administration and military and intelligence training. Teachers were to be selected from among chiefs of bureaus and technical services in Vinh Long. The province was to provide
food and lodging for which 20 piasters per day per student was being allotted. In contrast to the verbal instructions given by the delegate, the letter directed that the training programs for both village and hamlet officials be held in the provincial capital. In addition to instructors and food and lodging, the province chief was required to provide training materials and furnish transportation.

Mr. Ba confided to us that, while he considered the training program highly desirable, he disapproved of its timing and procedures. He stated that his staff was already overburdened and the April 15 deadline left little time to make proper arrangements. He also felt that the entire course could have been improved if he and other province officials, most familiar with village and hamlet problems, had been consulted in the planning of it. Nevertheless, he did not feel it would be prudent to convey his reservations to his superiors. His job, he said, "was to carry out orders."

The day following the meeting at which the regional delegate first announced the training program and before receiving any written instructions from the Department of Interior, the province chief sent letters to each of his six district chiefs requesting them to submit lists of proposed trainees to provincial headquarters before March 30. He specifically informed them that he wanted to forward these lists to the Department of Interior for approval before the first class opened. He told the district chiefs to select trainees from among members of the Republican Youth, members of the NRM, or outstanding young villagers. Even if the district chiefs received the letter on March 23, the day it was sent, they had but one week to make their selections and submit them to the province chief.
The process seemed simple but it involved more difficulties for the district chiefs than appeared on the surface. The average district in Vinh Long has about 14 villages comprising approximately 100 hamlets. Inadequate transportation and communication undermine the most efficient administrative procedures. For example, the district chief of Binh Minh received the province chief's instructions on March 24. Two days later he sent each village chief in his district a memorandum instructing them to submit the names of proposed trainees as soon as possible. The memorandum stated:

"We are happy to inform you that, according to information received from our superior, each village must choose several young men who belong to the youth of the Republic of Viet Nam or to the NRM. These young men must be capable, active, have a substantial background, and be of a very anti-communist spirit. You must be assured of the loyalty of each man selected as well as the loyalty of his family. Two training courses will be held, one to which each village must send five candidates to be trained as village council members. The training will take place in the provincial town of Vinh Long and last for 10 days. A second class for future hamlet chiefs will be held in the district town of My Thuan and will last for a period of five days. Each hamlet will send three candidates to this program. Upon graduation from these training courses, these candidates will eventually become members of the village council or hamlet chiefs in the event of vacancies. Each candidate will supply three pictures of himself."

The district chief set a deadline of March 29 for the submission of names, leaving himself one day to forward the names of all candidates in the district to the province chief. A careful reading of the Binh Minh district chief's memorandum to the village chiefs reveals that the wheels of confusion were already in motion. Because the memorandum was on the inaccurate oral instructions of the regional delegate and not the more precise written orders the province chief subsequently received, it contained several inaccuracies. Village chiefs were told that courses for future hamlet chiefs would be held in each district's principal town, whereas they actually would be
conducted in the provincial capital. The district chief failed to mention that the maximum age for a trainee was 40 years. The three days allowed village chiefs to select candidates for the two training courses was unrealistic. In some cases it would take almost a day for the memorandum to be carried from district headquarters to the village chief and another day to deliver the reply, leaving the village chief only one day to select five candidates for the village council course and three from each of his hamlets for the hamlet chief course. Even if all of these conditions could have been satisfied in one day, it was impossible to provide three photographs of each candidate as few villages and even fewer hamlets have photography shops.

It is no wonder that of the nine villages in Binh Minh district only My Thuan, the chief town, submitted the required list by March 29. When the district chief examined the My Thuan list, he found two mistakes and returned it to village headquarters for correction. All other villages failed to meet the deadline and the district chief received no more lists until April 3, when one other village delivered the names of candidates to district headquarters. To the dismay of the district chief, this list also failed to comply with instructions. It contained only the names of candidates recommended for the village council course. The problems in Binh Minh were typical of those encountered in the five other districts of Vinh Long. The March 30 deadline passed without any response to his instructions and the province chief, on April 2, sent a telegram to each district chief urging him to submit the names of candidates in the shortest time possible. This produced results from several districts, but upon studying them, Mr. Ba found that they did not satisfy the requirements he had established. He felt that either the
district chiefs had misunderstood his instructions or that his first memorandum had not been sufficiently clear.

On April 4, Mr. Ba dispatched another telegram to the district chiefs telling each of them to send one of their assistants to provincial headquarters where the deputy province chief for administration would brief them on the requirements and procedure of the training courses. That same day, each district complied and sent a representative to provincial headquarters. After extensive briefing, the district chiefs immediately wrote again to their village chiefs, supplying them with the correct information and fixing April 6 as the new deadline. By now, deadlines began to loom as imaginary goals not to be taken seriously. No district submitted its list by April 6. At last, two days later, Sadec district, a fairly urban and well-to-do area on the western fringe of the province, produced a full and correct list of candidates for the province chief. After receiving it, the province chief sent another telegram to the five remaining district chiefs telling them in strong terms to carry out his orders within 24 hours.

In the meantime, Chief Ba and his staff wrestled with the problems of procuring instructors, locating facilities, and making the countless arrangements necessary to conduct training courses for 200 students. Reluctantly, the province chief decided to hold the first session of the training course in a primary school, recessed for vacation, in the city of Vinh Long. He hoped that by the time the second class got under way, the provincial Youth Center of An Duc would be completed and could be used for the program. Then, he would turn the primary school back to the field representatives of the Department of Education so they
could maintain their own activities there. The big drawback to the arrangement was that the primary school lacked facilities to house the 200 trainees. Some construction work would be necessary before they could be accommodated, additional water and shower facilities had to be installed, water pressure had to be increased, and an infinite number of minor details attended to. The province chief asked the engineer who headed the Department of Public Works service in Vinh Long to assist him in the task.

The province chief still did not know where he would obtain money to support the training program. The provincial budget had no funds to pay the anticipated expenditures. Construction, housing, training facilities, food, minor expenses, all added up to an estimated 500,000 piasters. The province chief learned to his dismay that the Department of Interior had made no provision to support the program when it ordered the courses established. In a letter dated April 6, Mr. Ba informed the Department that he could organize the courses but that he did not know where he would get the money to pay expenses. He requested the Secretary of Interior to intervene on behalf of Vinh Long province and request the Bureau of the Budget to make sufficient funds available for the training program. Mr. Ba said he let it be known that, if necessary, he personally would go to Saigon to ask the Secretary to intervene with the Bureau of the Budget. He felt that this was a way of conveying his urgent need for money to carry out a successful program. He also informed the Department that if the money did not come soon, he would not begin the course on April 15 as instructed.

The next day, April 7, the province chief, hoping to initiate the course on the appointed date, designated certain provincial officials
as instructors, allowing them time to prepare their lectures. Here was another matter which dissatisfied the province chief -- the demand that he release civil servants to conduct the training program. Just one day earlier, he had inaugurated two other training courses instituted by agencies of the central government but placed under his responsibility. One was a training course for commissioners in charge of youth in the villages and the second was for young men in the village self-defense corps. Each detail of these programs and all provisions for housing the trainees, required the attention of the province chief. He even took an interest in the menus planned for the students because he was aware that the director of the programs was from the north and the students were from the south. He suggested to the director that he modify the menus to satisfy southern palates.

By April 9, Mr. Ba had received no word from Saigon on where he was to obtain funds to support the new training courses. The uncertainty attached to this program, which he was committed to begin on April 15, added to the weight of responsibility which was starting to appear excessive for any single administrator. The province chief did not attempt to explain away his pessimism about the training program, he merely pointed out that Vinh Long did not have the human resources to satisfy the simultaneous demands placed upon it by agencies of the central government. The Directorate General of Reconstruction had ordered the province to build two agrovilles; the Department of Interior had instituted the training program for future village council members and hamlet chiefs; the Directorate General of Youth had assigned a youth training program to the province. The next month, Mr. Ba said, the Department of Agriculture was likely to insist that
he establish a program to train young men in new agricultural techniques. He told us that each training program and project required not only a teaching staff, but additional personnel such as staff organizers and soldiers to protect it from possible Viet Cong attacks. He felt that competent administrators had to "sell" a program before it was of any value. If the people were not convinced of the benefit of a program, it would be of doubtful psychological advantage to the government. The province chief acknowledged the value of each of the individual programs but he emphasized that none of them could be really successful unless officials of central government agencies consulted him and other province chiefs more frequently and intimately when the programs were being planned. He argued convincingly that Vinh Long province could not do all of the things expected of it with its present personnel. "Sometimes," he mused, "the distance between Saigon and Vinh Long is much, much greater than 175 kilometers."

The NIA/MSU team left Vinh Long before the training courses outlined in this case study began. It is believed, however, that the obstacles encountered in endeavoring to set up these courses provide typical examples of a certain set of problems facing provincial administrators in Viet Nam.