National Committee for American Aid  
   (29bis Phan-dinh-Phung street)

National Committee for Importation  
   (74 Nguyễn-Du street)

Directorate of Foreign Trade  
   (36 Nguyễn-Du street)

A comparative study of functions and relationships between these 3 agencies.

by Nguyễn-Quan

The official Organization Chart which is issued by the National Economy Department presents the Directorate General of Commercial Affairs as follows:

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National Economy Department

Directorate General of Commercial Affairs

National Committee for Importation
Directorate of Foreign Trade
Directorate of Domestic Trade
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No comment is necessary as to the Directorate of Domestic Trade's functions.

On the contrary functions of both National Committee for Importation and Directorate of Foreign Aid need to be clarified as both issue licences for importation of foreign goods:

1. The National Committee for Importation manages the mass of foreign currencies granted to the Vietnamese Government by the American Aid and delivers import licences with regard to the amount of money made available by that aid.

The Directorate of Foreign Aid only manages the mass of foreign currencies the Vietnamese Government succeeded to obtain by extending its exportations. Import licences shall be therefore issued within the limits of that mass.
2. The maximum permitted for Import licences issued by the Directorate of Foreign Trade is 500 US$. There is no limit for those issued by the N.C.I.

3. Actually 90% of Import licences (in value) are issued by the National Committee for Importation.

4. Import licences issued by the Directorate of Foreign Trade mostly concern importation from countries other than the USA.

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The Director General of the Commercial Affairs, Mr. Dinh-van-Chi, also heads the National Committee of Importation. Its organization is illustrated by the following breakdown.
The National Committee for Foreign Aid

Foreign Aid, more specifically American Aid for Vietnam, started in 1950. At its beginning it involved the 3 Associated states through the French "Commissariat General" and a joint agency called "Temporary Committee for Importation from American Aid" managed the operation. That Committee numbered 3 representatives of the 3 states, 1 representative of the French Commissariat General and 1 of USOM.

Since January 1955 American Funds were directed through the 3 states themselves and each state managed its own share. As far as Vietnam was concerned a supreme agency was soon created and named National Committee for Foreign Aid.

The present N.C.F.A. is composed of:

- chairman: President of Republic or his deputy
- vice-chairman: Minister of Finances
- members: minister of National Economy and minister of Public works
- reporter: Administrator General for Foreign Aid.

In theory, it meets once a year in order to:

- make review of all Department’s proposals and estimates as to the use of Foreign Aid Funds.
- plan a general program for utilizing the granted funds

Each region has its Regional Committee for Foreign Aid (South, Center and P.M.S.) which is actually vested with no real powers.

The Administration General for Foreign Aid

The above mentioned National Committee for F.A. is merely an occasional agency which is bound to meet once a year. As to the permanent management of the Foreign Aid, it involves the agency called Administration General for Foreign Aid which works like the Executive Office to the N.C.F.A.
In each region there also is a Regional Administrator for Foreign Aid but as well as the Regional Committee, it has no definite powers. A new project of reorganization which has been submitted for signature on October 1965 (and is not signed yet) provided the abolition of both Regional Administration and Committee.
What are the relationships between the Administration General for F.A. (then the National Committee for F.A.) and the National Committee for Importation?

The N.C.I. was previously a branch of the A.G.F.A. A president's memorandum letter No. 545-TC dated August 16, 1955 reorganized as follows:

- the A.G.F.A. is responsible to the Department of Finances
- the N.C.I. becomes a Directorate within the Directorate General of Commercial Affairs and then is responsible to the National Economy Department.

For a better understanding of these two agencies' functions let us know that money from the American Aid granted through 2 ways:/ direct granted aid and counterpart fund which is also called commercialized aid.

Direct granted aid calls for no comment. It mostly involves equipment and machinery for the nation's economy recovering.

Commercialized aid aims at getting money (Vietnamese piasters) to back the nation's budget. It involves all kinds of goods. The way to obtain piasters is to issue import licences which actually is the main NCI's function.

In brief functions of N.C.I. and those of A.G.F.A. are complementary: N.C.I. provides money (counterpart fund in piasters) to A.G.F.A. (and then N.C.F.A.) which works out programs to spend it.

Annex

A.G.F.A. deals with the American Aid and the French Economic Aid. As to the aid from the Colombo Plan, it is cared for by the Planning Direction, an agency directly responsible to the Presidency.