taining the peace. In 1962, to the satisfaction of the South Vietnamese Government, India voted with Canada in upholding the position that the problem of internal security in South Vietnam was a proper question for the International Control Commission to investigate.

**Relations with Africa, the Middle East and Latin America**

The Republic of Vietnam has sought to develop friendly relations with the new states of Africa. It has been particularly successful in those parts of West Africa which, like itself, were formerly under French rule. One Vietnamese Ambassador is in many cases accredited to several African capitals.

South Vietnam has also established diplomatic relations with Tunisia, Morocco, Turkey and Lebanon. A trade agreement was signed with the United Arab Republic in 1960, and in 1961 a Vietnamese goodwill mission in Cairo discussed economic and cultural relations with President Nasser.

The Vietnamese Ambassador to the United States is also accredited to Brazil and Argentina. An agreement in principle on establishing relations with Mexico was reached during a visit to South Vietnam by a Mexican goodwill mission in July 1961.

**Vietnam and Asian Regionalism**

The need for Asian unity has been a major theme in the speeches of President Ngo. South Vietnam is a member of the Asian subgroups of the United Nations and its specialized agencies as well as of the Organization of Asian News Agencies, the Eastern Regional Organization for Public Administration and other Asian groups established for special purposes. The country has not, however, pressed for the establishment of an Asian regional grouping dedicated to broader purposes, and no such framework exists.

The development of a regional grouping of the non-Communist Asian nations is hindered by a number of factors: the primary importance of Western ties of some and the neutralism of others; poor communication between countries; production of competitive rather than complementary products; the strength of nationalist sentiment; and ethnic, religious and cultural differences.

**South Vietnam and International Organizations**

South Vietnam vigorously participates in international organizations and conferences of all kinds. Although a Soviet veto in 1952 barred its membership in the United Nations, the Republic of Vietnam maintains an observer at United Nations headquarters in New York, and it is a member of a large number of United
Nations organizations, including: Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE); United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), as a member of the executive board; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); World Health Organization (WHO); International Labor Organization (ILO), as a member of the executive board; International Telecommunications Union (ITU); Universal Postal Union (UPU); International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD); International Monetary Fund (IMF); International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as a member of the board of governors; World Meteorological Organization (WMO); and International Development Association (IDA).

South Vietnam is a member of the Colombo Plan for the Cooperative Economic Development in South and Southeast Asia. This organization coordinates the aid of Western nations and Japan to the Asian countries. Although Vietnam receives technical assistance, equipment and scholarships from the Colombo Plan members, the international political status conferred on South Vietnam by its association with the Colombo Plan nations seems of equal importance to South Vietnam. The first international conference held in South Vietnam subsequent to its independence was the Colombo Plan Conference of 1957.

South Vietnam is a member of numerous other international organizations. Important among these are the International Institute of Public Administration, the International Union of Official Travel Organization, the International Academy of Diplomacy and the International Union for Popular Sanitary Education.

On the nongovernmental level, South Vietnamese groups are equally active in affiliating with international bodies. Among the groups with South Vietnamese branches are the World Assembly of Youth, the World Veterans’ Federation, the Junior Chamber International and the Asian People’s Anti-Communist League.

**Foreign Policy Formulation**

Under the Constitution of 1956, the President is responsible for representing the nation in foreign relations, appointing ambassadors, accrediting foreign representatives, and negotiating and ratifying international treaties. The latter function, as well as the declaration of war, requires the approval of half the total number of deputies in the National Assembly.

Foreign policy is made by the President and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. When the policy pertains to a specific
matter, such as economic relations, international information problems or internal fiscal matters, other high-ranking government officials may be called in—for example, the Secretary of State for National Economy, the Secretary of State for Civic Action or the head of the Directorate General of Budget and Foreign Aid.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is appointed by the President and is responsible only to him. The importance of foreign affairs makes the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, together with the Secretary of State for National Defense, one of the chief policy formulaters in the government.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Political dogma, economic and social objectives and the methods by which state power is exercised unite the North Vietnamese regime with the Communist bloc. By the same token North Vietnam is attached to the train of Communist China and the Soviet Union in their conflict with the Free World powers. Small and relatively undeveloped, it is thrown into virtually complete dependence on the Communist bloc for economic and military aid and external political support. Behind the repeated expressions of Communist solidarity and the propaganda denunciations of the “imperialist enemy” which characterize its pronouncements on international issues, North Vietnam has only the narrow margin of initiative allowed it by the policy differences which have developed between the Chinese and Russian centers of Communist power. The rulers of North Vietnam are evidently unable, and perhaps for ideological reasons unwilling, to risk the consequences of an obvious attempt to exploit for their advantage Soviet-Chinese Communist disagreement. Their conduct of relations with Communist China and the Soviet Union nevertheless suggests that one of their basic concerns is to obtain maximum assistance and support from both, while utilizing their relations with the Soviet Union to counter Chinese power on the other side of their border.

Communist China

Communist China was the first regime with which Ho Chi Minh established diplomatic relations, the first to extend military aid during the Indochina War and the first to sign an economic agreement with North Vietnam following the Geneva Conference. It has continued to supply North Vietnam with arms and technical military personnel.

The two countries were in active accord at the 1955 Bandung Conference of Asian-African Nations which marked the debut
of North Vietnam on the international scene. Communist China has supported North Vietnam's denunciations of United States aid to South Vietnam, while North Vietnam has upheld Communist China's claims to Taiwan and to a seat in the United Nations.

Until 1960 the North Vietnamese leaders adopted a neutral course in the ideological dispute between the Soviet Union and Communist China. In September of that year, however, at the Third Congress of the Lao Dong Party, Premier Pham Van Dong declared that the socialist countries were invincible and that the avoidance of war was possible. Although the North Vietnamese regime has subscribed to the Khrushchev policy of co-existence with the West, ideological differences between the two Communist giants are not emphasized.

President Ho Chi Minh stopped in Peiping on his way home from the Soviet Party Congress in Moscow in November 1961, and in December, Marshal Yeh Chien-ying, Vice Chairman of Communist China's National Defense Council, led a military delegation on a visit to North Vietnam. In the course of the visit Marshal Yeh pledged Chinese Communist support for the "Vietnamese struggle" against United States "intervention and aggression," asserting that "the Chinese absolutely cannot ignore this adventurous conduct."

The Soviet Union and Its Satellites

North Vietnam has always acknowledged the Soviet Union as leader of the Communist bloc, and since 1960 its spokesmen have almost consistently accorded the Russians first place in their eulogies of the Communist countries. The Soviet Union has been a major contributor of economic aid to the regime and an important influence on its foreign and domestic policies. As co-chairman of the 1954 Geneva Conference, the Soviet Union supported North Vietnam's charges of United States interference in the South.

The formation in September 1955 of the Fatherland Front Party in North Vietnam and its tactical program of national reunification through a coalition government followed Moscow's decision of the time against employing military means to reunite the country. Ho Chi Minh was also quick to follow the Soviet Union's lead in the de-Stalinization campaign, echoing the condemnation of the former Soviet ruler. The top leaders and other officials of the two regimes have also consulted during visits to each other's capitals: Soviet Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan in 1956; President Kliment Y. Voroshilov in 1957; President Ho Chi Minh in 1955 and 1957. There have been further important contacts at Party congresses held during the late 1950's and
early 1960's. When, at the 1960 Lao Dong Party Congress, the North supported the Soviet position that world war could be prevented, the Soviet Communist Party representative declared his government's intention to broaden its cooperation with North Vietnam.

North Vietnam established relations with the Soviet satellites soon after it received diplomatic recognition by Communist China and the Soviet Union. Economic, technical aid, trade and cultural exchange agreements have been signed, and Soviet-bloc technicians are assisting in the North in its economic development program.

The split between the Soviet Union and Albania in 1961 intensified the difficulty of maintaining a position of neutrality in the Sino-Soviet dispute. *Nhan Dan*, the official organ of the Lao Dong Party, asserted in an editorial on the anniversary of the Albanian Worker's Party in November 1961 that the Albanian and Vietnamese parties and governments are "daily tightening their brotherhood in the world Communist and worker's movement and in the socialist camp with the USSR as its center." North Vietnam's 1962 New Year's message to the Albanians pointedly ignored their split with the Soviet Union, coming no closer to the subject than to call for unity in the Socialist camp.

**Laos and Cambodia**

North Vietnam has intervened actively in Laos since it invaded the country and set up a Laotian Government under its control during the Indochina War. Although it claimed to have withdrawn its forces after the Geneva Conference, its agents remained in the two northern Laotian provinces where the pro-Communist Pathet Lao guerrillas were regrouped. The Royal Laotian Government's protest against this activity during the 1955 Bandung Conference drew a disclaimer from the North Vietnamese, who sought to persuade the assembled Afro-Asian delegates of their peaceful intentions. At the Conference a series of meetings took place between the Laotian, Chinese Communist and North Vietnamese representatives, and the North Vietnamese assured the Laotians that they had no designs on the Laotian provinces controlled by the Pathet Lao. However, formal diplomatic relations between North Vietnam and Laos were not established.

Later in the year the Royal Laotian Government again accused the North Vietnamese of interference and a visit by Laotian Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma to Hanoi in August 1956 brought reaffirmations of nonaggression by the North Vietnamese. An agreement was concluded between the Royal Laotian Government and the Pathet Lao late in 1957, but a year later,
after the exclusion in 1958 of the pro-Communist Neo Lao Hak Xat Party from the Laotian Government coalition, countercharges of border violations and aggressions were renewed with greater vehemence than ever.

On January 17, 1959, the Laotian Government, in a letter to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, protested North Vietnamese occupation of its territory. At the same time North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong asked India to reactivate the International Control Commission for Laos to investigate Laotian aggression. That summer North Vietnamese radio propaganda accused Laotian leaders of persecuting their opponents, of permitting the United States to install military bases on their territory and of bringing the country under SEATO influence.

In response to a Laotian request for the dispatch of a United Nations emergency force to prevent North Vietnamese aggression, the United Nations Security Council agreed in September 1959 to send a subcommittee to determine whether North Vietnamese troops were operating on Laotian territory. The subcommittee’s report, submitted in November, noted charges by Laotian witnesses that Laotian guerrillas received support from North Vietnam in the form of equipment, arms, supplies and the assistance of political cadres, but stated that it had not been clearly established that there had been frontier crossings by regular North Vietnamese troops.

The struggle for supremacy among Laotian leaders beginning in 1960 brought further accusations that North Vietnam, with Soviet help, was supplying material and technical assistance to the pro-Communist Pathet Lao, and that North Vietnamese guerrillas were using Laos as an infiltration route into South Vietnam. North Vietnam denied this and charged that the anti-Communist Laotian General Phoumi Nosavan was receiving assistance from South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem in sabotaging a Laotian policy of nonalignment and peace, which it identified with the aspirant to the premiership, neutralist Prince Souvanna Phouma. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam was represented at the 1961 Geneva Conference on Laos; in 1961 it was host to Prince Souvanna Phouma and, in January 1962, to Prince Souphanouvong, chairman of the Central Committee of the Laotian pro-Communist Neo Lao Hak Xat Party. On July 1, 1962, the provisional national coalition government of Laos announced its intention to establish diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level with several Communist-bloc countries, including North Vietnam.

Up to mid-1962 North Vietnam had not given Cambodia, with which it has no common frontier, the same attention which it
had concentrated on Laos. During the Indochina War the Viet Minh invaded Cambodia and helped set up a regime in competition with the established government, but this regime was disbanded after the Geneva Conference. Since 1955 North Vietnamese-Cambodian relations have been relatively uneventful. Trade, telecommunication and postal agreements have been signed by the two.

**France**

In August 1954 France appointed Jean Sainteny its Delegate General in North Vietnam, and economic and cultural negotiations were opened in October. President Ho Chi Minh stated that economic relations between North Vietnam and France should be based on principles of equality and reciprocal interests and gave assurances that former French residents who wished to return to Hanoi would be well received. In December provisional agreements were concluded providing safeguards for French businessmen and for the continued functioning of the Pasteur Institute in Hanoi and other French cultural institutions.

These agreements notwithstanding, expropriations and other pressures soon eliminated what remained of French economic interests in the area. France's refusal to press South Vietnam to agree to elections for reunification in 1956, North Vietnamese recognition of the Algerian Provisional Government in 1958 and the general heightening of Cold War tensions contributed to the worsening of relations. The French Delegate-General left at the end of 1957. North Vietnam and France concluded an agreement in June 1960 to repatriate about 6,500 Vietnamese in New Caledonia and New Hebrides, but repatriation was temporarily suspended late in 1961 after the return of about 1,600 persons. While North Vietnam continued to maintain a commercial mission in Paris in mid-1962 and a small French delegation remained in Hanoi, both had virtually ceased to function.

**The United States**

The United States has succeeded France as the principal object of the obloquy of the Hanoi regime, which denounces it as no less than the main enemy of world peace. Typical of the language employed is a statement made by Premier Pham Van Dong in 1960:

> The world is a fighting ring between the most reactionary aggressive and belligerent force, which is imperialism, of which the American imperialists are the most cruel and fierce, and the forces of peace, democracy, national independence, and socialism, whose backbone is the socialist camp led by the great Soviet Union.
North Vietnam has directed numerous protests against the "United States-Diem clique" to the International Control Commission as well as to Great Britain and the Soviet Union, whose representatives were cochairmen of the Geneva Conference.

Other Countries

As of mid-1962, among the East Asian nations, North Vietnam had exchanged ambassadors only with Communist China, North Korea and Outer Mongolia, although it was expected that it would establish diplomatic relations with the new national coalition government of Laos. It has representatives below the ambassadorial level in India, Indonesia and Burma.

India and North Vietnam have consuls general in each other's capitals. Indian Prime Minister Nehru visited Hanoi in October 1954, North Vietnamese Deputy Premier Pham Van Dong (who was also Minister of Foreign Affairs) visited New Delhi in April 1955, and President Ho Chi Minh visited India in February 1958. On these occasions both countries expressed hope that Vietnam would be unified peacefully through elections on the basis of the Geneva Agreement. President Ho Chi Minh also expressed appreciation for India's conduct as chairman of the International Control Commission. North Vietnam supported India's seizure of Goa and sent a government mission to India in 1961 to air its complaint about United States "interference" in South Vietnam. The next year, however, found it criticizing India, whose representative on the International Control Commission had concurred with the Canadian member that internal subversion in South Vietnam was a matter of concern to the Commission and that there were links between the Viet Cong and North Vietnam.

North Vietnam and Indonesia have exchanged consuls general and established economic, cultural, scientific and educational relations. Ho Chi Minh visited Djakarta in 1957, and a number of nongovernmental missions have been exchanged between the two countries. The Indonesian consul general has affirmed Indonesia's backing for the reunification of Vietnam, and a rally of workers was held in Hanoi in January 1962 in support of Indonesia's demand for control of Dutch-held New Guinea (called West Irian by the Indonesians).

North Vietnam maintains a consulate general and a news service in Rangoon, Burma. The Burmese Prime Minister visited Hanoi in 1954, and North Vietnamese Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Pham Van Dong returned the visit in April 1955. President Ho Chi Minh paid a visit to Burma in 1958. A North Vietnamese National Assembly delegation was received in Burma in 1961.
North Vietnam’s hostility to the Western powers is projected on those allied or politically aligned with the West. Among these, Japan roused the regime’s ire when, in 1959, it signed a war reparations agreement with the Republic of Vietnam and not with North Vietnam. In 1962 the Federation of Malaya was accused of “gross interference” in Vietnamese affairs for assisting South Vietnam in its struggle with the Viet Cong guerrillas.

In the Middle East and North Africa, North Vietnam has established diplomatic relations with Morocco; it recognized the Algerian Provisional Government in 1958, and cultural agreements have been signed with Iraq and Yemen. In 1961 a North Vietnamese Government delegation made goodwill visits to Morocco, Tunisia and the United Arab Republic.

In Africa, North Vietnam has diplomatic ties with Guinea and Mali, has signed economic and cultural agreements with these countries, and has sent them technical advisers and goodwill missions. Exchanges of delegations have also taken place with other African countries.

Cuba is the only Latin American country with which North Vietnam has established diplomatic relations. There are agreements between the two for cultural, scientific, technical and trade cooperation and relations as well as exchanges of delegations.

Great Britain maintains a consulate general in Hanoi, but it is also an object of North Vietnamese strictures against “imperialism” and is condemned for its support of South Vietnam.

National and International Organizations

North Vietnam is not a member of the United Nations. It sends observers to meetings of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact and the Council for Mutual Economic Aid. It is also affiliated with numerous Communist-controlled international bodies, including the World Federation of Trade Unions, the Women’s International Democratic Federation, the International Union of Students, the World Peace Council, and the Asian-African People’s Solidarity Organization. Youth, student, athletic, labor and other groups, mainly from the Communist countries, are constantly arriving in Hanoi under the terms of cultural agreements.

Within North Vietnam itself numerous organizations have been formed to give unofficial voice to the official foreign policy lines of the regime in frequent public gatherings and mass rallies. Among these groups are the associations for friendship with the Soviet Union and China, the Vietnam-Mongolia Friendship Association, the Vietnam-Indonesia Friendship Association, the Vietnam Asian-African Solidarity Committee, the Vietnam Committee for Algerian Independence, the Vietnam Peace Committee and the Vietnam Commission for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries.
CHAPTER 23
SUBREVERSIVE POTENTIALITIES

Throughout the course of its history, especially during the long period of Chinese rule, Vietnam has known much of secret societies, conspiracies and rebellions. That background and 80 years of experience in clandestine political activity under French colonial rule have familiarized the Vietnamese with subversion and countersubversion and made many of them proficient in both.

Government leaders, both in South and North Vietnam, are prone to assume that the actions of all dissidents and political opponents are potentially subversive in intent. Probably coupled with this official attitude is a popular tendency to attach no particular stigma to the person accused or convicted of subversion.

In mid-1962 the Republic of Vietnam, with intensive United States aid, appeared to be gaining in its ability to deal with Communist subversion and insurrection. There was no indication, however, that it would soon be able to make the struggle so costly that the Communists would not be able to continue it. Observers were estimating that, even with military and economic assistance, the Republic faced a contest which might go on for a decade or more (see ch. 31, The Armed Forces).

When President Ngo Dinh Diem took office in 1955, the government's effective authority went little beyond Saigon, and there the municipal government and police were in the hands of organized racketeers. Two sizable areas in the Mekong Delta were virtually ruled by religious sects. It was only after these essentially nonpolitical but nevertheless dangerous contenders for state power had been eliminated that the government was free to turn to the Communist challenge, which was being carefully prepared in the countryside.

The government is putting major emphasis on a program for grouping the peasants living in exposed areas into specially protected communities called strategic hamlets. The hamlets are provided with extensive educational, health, welfare and economic assistance. Much depends upon the government's success in winning peasant support for these and other security and economic measures in the countryside. In the strategic hamlet program, with its compulsory participation, nightly curfew behind closed barriers and regular identity checks, the authorities must deal with a peasant population traditionally suspicious of central authority and resentful of interference in local affairs. A similar but still more difficult problem must be expected in establishing strategic hamlets among the ethnically distinct, and only semisedentary
highland peoples, who have a long history of friction with the ruling Vietnamese.

By mid-1962 the peasant reaction seemed to be generally favorable. There were reports of local complaints, but the program was going forward rapidly and showing definite results in protecting the villagers from Communist subversion and terrorism.

President Ngo's exercise of personal power and his reluctance to delegate authority beyond a small circle of relatives and close associates make for prompt and decisive executive action and reduce the possibility of betrayal in high places. These same characteristics also deny the government the services of some able men, and insofar as they make for indifference to criticism, they tend to convert constructive opposition into hostility. The President has no simple option in the matter, however, given the magnitude of the Communist threat on the one hand and the inexperience of the people in the operation of representative institutions on the other. Relaxation of a strong hand at the controls would invite a destructive flurry of domestic political competition and increase the opportunities for Communist subversion. The strong policy which the President has pursued is infused with his mind and personality. The apparent absence of anyone qualified to take his place in the event of his removal from public life is a serious vulnerability—and the President's life was twice threatened by violence between 1960 and 1962. For such an emergency, Article 34 of the Constitution stipulates that the Vice President or, if he is incapacitated, the President of the National Assembly, shall fulfill the presidential function. But because of President Ngo's extraordinary grasp of the details of government, his absence might create a major disruption in administrative processes which could be exploited by the Communists.

In North Vietnam, as of mid-1962, the regime appeared to be in firm control and to be capable of coping with subversive threats from within the country for the foreseeable future. Potentially subversive groups lacked organization, effective leadership and a popular following, while the regime's leaders were, on the whole, experienced in Communist conspiratorial techniques, alert and seemingly adaptable to changing situations.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

More than a century of active or passive resistance to colonial rule has accustomed the people of South Vietnam, particularly the peasants, to viewing the central government as an alien authority and to expressing dissatisfaction with it by conspiracy and violence. Time has been too short, opportunities too infrequent and
indoctrination too limited, during the 8 years of independence, for the population as a whole to become accustomed to the use of democratic processes in seeking relief from what they regard as governmental injustices.

The establishment of the Republic of Vietnam south of the 17th parallel after the Geneva Agreement of 1954 prevented the Communists from seizing control of the entire country. Prior to the Agreement the Communists, using the popular themes of “anti-colonialism” and “national independence,” played a dominant role in organizing opposition against the French throughout the country. In the North they wrested power from the French, first in the rural areas, then in the towns. In the South their agents and guerrillas operated freely in parts of the countryside, but they were unable to consolidate their control and failed to win the principal towns. The withdrawal of the French and the emergence of the Republic of Vietnam headed by President Ngo brought a shift in the tactics of the Communists. Calling for “unification of Vietnam” and “opposition to foreign intervention,” they apparently expected to gain control of South Vietnam by means of a nationwide referendum, proposed in the Agreement, which was to be held in 1956. But the South, contending that inadequate provisions had been made for free discussion of the issues and for impartial supervision of the balloting, declined to participate in the proposed election. The Communists then turned to a militantly subversive campaign against the Republic; United States assistance became a major propaganda target (see ch. 12, Public Information and Propaganda; ch. 20, Political Dynamics).

President Ngo, during his first 2 years in office, was preoccupied with eliminating the military strength of the religious sects and of the Binh Xuyen organization which actually controlled certain sections of the delta region (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety; ch. 31, The Armed Forces). The Communists took advantage of this situation to work in the villages to undermine the government by means which ranged from propaganda to sabotage and terror. They found a vulnerability in the appointment of many district and village administrators who had served under the French, and they passed the charge that the new government did not represent the interests of the people because it had not ousted the old colonial rulers (see ch. 20, Political Dynamics; ch. 25, Agricultural Potential). They did not succeed in inciting any general uprising, but they were able to sustain and, in 1961, to intensify a campaign of guerrilla warfare and intimidation in the rural areas of the South.

The government has also met violent opposition from non-Communist quarters. On November 10, 1960, about 15 army
colonels and majors, leading some paratroopers and collaborating with a few opposition politicians, made an abortive attempt to seize control of the government. The insurgents claimed that they were not seeking to overthrow the government, but merely to get rid of certain of President Ngo's advisers and to force him to end political interference with the military establishment. After about 30 hours of skirmishing with security forces, the paratroopers surrendered. Their leaders tried to negotiate a settlement, but gave up their efforts when they found that they were confronted with loyal army and police forces and that they lacked political support.

Still another armed attempt was aimed at the government on February 27, 1962. Two air pilots, taking off on a mission against guerrillas in the Mekong Delta, bombed the presidential palace in Saigon instead. The action was apparently on their own initiative. Intercepted within a few minutes, both pilots made forced landings; one in Saigon, the other in Phnom Penh in Cambodia where he was granted asylum.

Both attempted coups were launched by non-Communist military men, acting without effective political support and direction. It was clear, however, that both were significant mainly for the opportunity to seize the initiative they might have afforded the Communists.

**Government Policy**

No general definition of subversion is made in law, but Article 7 of the Constitution provides that "all activities having as their object the direct or indirect propagation or establishment of communism in whatever form shall be contrary to the principles embodied in the present constitution." Various decrees and ordinances provide harsh penalties for behavior which could be interpreted as threatening political or economic stability or public order, and any opposition regarded as harmful by the authorities can be punished as contributing to the advancement of intermediate Communist objectives.

Broad legal authority for identifying subversion and dealing with it is provided in Decree No. 6 of January 11, 1956, which provides that "individuals considered dangerous to national defense and common security" may be confined by executive order or obliged to reside in a fixed place under police surveillance. No hearings are required in such cases. Intended to apply only to Communists, the decree reportedly has frequently been invoked in the arbitrary arrest and confinement of non-Communists whose acts are regarded as a threat to national security.

Another important anti-subversive legal measure is Decree No.
13 of February 20, 1956, pertaining to press offenses. The decree brings the publication of newspapers and the purchase of newsprint under a licensing system. Printing of misleading statements which could be "exploited by subversive elements" or could otherwise "endanger public security" is punishable by 5 years' imprisonment, heavy fines and suspension of publication rights (see ch. 12, Public Information and Propaganda).

**Government Countermeasures**

The scope and intensity of Communist activity have been such that the government employs not only the police but also the military and paramilitary forces on countersubversive missions. These forces, with their estimated strengths as of May 1962, are: the Army (including the Gendarmerie), 170,000; Civil Guard, 68,000; Self-Defense Corps, 50,000; Municipal Police, 12,000; Republican Youth Rural Defense Groups, 280,000; and Women's Paramilitary Units, 30,000 (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety; ch. 31, The Armed Forces).

**Strategic Hamlets**

To reduce the vulnerability of isolated rural communities to Communist terrorism, a program was initiated in 1961 to construct special defenses around selected centrally situated hamlets. Under the program, which is supervised by the Department of the Interior in cooperation with the Department of Civic Action, villagers in vulnerable localities are concentrated, by persuasion or force if necessary, into these so-called strategic hamlets. In areas that are relatively secure, the movement is voluntary and the concentrations are called "defense hamlets." The scheme serves the dual purpose of protecting the peasants from terrorist raids and of isolating the Communist guerrillas from the villages, thus depriving them of food, information and recruits.

The defensive works of the strategic hamlet typically consist of an inner fence of bamboo spikes and thorn bushes; a moat, the sloping sides of which are planted with mines and traps; and an outer barrier of barbed wire. A short section of the barriers can be moved to permit passage.

Cement, brick or stone watchtowers, manned by members of the local Self-Defense Corps, command good fields of fire in all directions. Arms may also be distributed to 100 to 150 selected men in the hamlet. Other special security precautions taken within the strategic hamlets include curfew restrictions, identity cards, checks of the inhabitants to prevent Communist infiltrations, police intervention, fire drills and security force alerts.

The national government, assisted by the United States aid
program, finances the cost of materials and equipment for schools, first-aid stations and lecture halls. It also helps with public works projects, such as the construction and repair of roads, bridges and canals, and provides funds for medicines, fertilizers and seeds. Most of the labor for the defense works and for civic improvements is done by the villagers themselves without pay (see ch. 30, Foreign Economic Relations).

Despite the reluctance of peasants to leave their established homes, the strategic hamlet program, as of mid-1962, appeared to be progressing at a rapid pace. By mid-1962 more than 1,000 strategic hamlets had been established or were being developed.

Civic Action Teams

The Special Commissariat for Civic Action, created in 1955 as an agency of the Presidency, was charged primarily with mobilizing popular support for the government's civic programs. After an expansion of its mission to include countersubversive functions, the Commissariat was combined with the Department of Information in 1962 to become the Department of Civic Action (see ch. 19, Constitution and Government). Civic action teams have been organized which are trained in part by army specialists who, in some instances, are aided by United States military advisers. The teams assist the villagers in carrying out special projects, particularly those in the fields of public health, education, land reform and security. Working closely with the villagers, they are in a position to detect and report on Communist infiltrations.

When first organized, the Commissariat's main effort was limited to work among the refugees from North Vietnam who were settling in the Mekong Delta region. By 1962 civic action teams were operating in virtually every province, and about 300 teams reportedly were working in the villages of the Central Highlands and Central Lowlands regions after having completed a special 2-month course in preparation for popularizing the strategic hamlet program. These teams, composed of 20 to 30 men each, help to construct defenses. They are also provided with funds from which they can make small grants to the poor and buy medicines, fertilizers, seeds and material for public works projects, such as the construction and repair of roads, bridges or canals. When a guerrilla-infested area has been cleared by the security forces, the civic action teams are expected to move in and watch for Communist reinfiltiration while they help the peasants repair combat damage.

Five-Family Units

In urban areas, the government utilizes the five-family unit system in which families living in the same neighborhood are
organized in groups of five. The head of each is directly responsible to the local administrative authorities for the conduct of the members of his group. An important function of these units is to cooperate with the police in detecting and preventing subversion and other illegal activities (see ch. 6, Social Structure; ch. 21, Public Order and Safety). Civic action teams are said to be introducing a modified version—the so-called interfamily system—into the villages and strategic hamlets.

Other Measures

Captured Communists and others taken into custody as subversive are given a course of indoctrination, presumably under the direction of army officers, at provincial prisons known as re-education centers, and possibly also at several special centers for the detainment of political offenders (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety). Late in November 1961 the Saigon press announced the release of some 130 political detainees from Phu Loi re-education center in Binh Duong Province north of Saigon.

School youth groups, organized under the sponsorship of the Departments of National Education and Civic Action, take an oath of loyalty to the "Government of the Republic of Vietnam." Oaths are sometimes administered with impressive ceremonies to provincial gatherings of students. Early in 1962, for example, some 5,000 students in Ba Xuyen Province, southwest of Saigon, and a like number in Tuyen Duc Province, in the Da Lat area northeast of Saigon, pledged allegiance to the government in the presence of the Secretaries of State for National Education and for Civic Action and other notables.

To counter Communist subversive efforts among tribal peoples of the Central Highlands, government administrators in 1961 received special instructions to respect the customs and views of the montagnards, whom the Vietnamese have tended to look down upon as primitive and backward. Army psychological warfare units were assigned to develop programs to cultivate friendship between troops and the montagnards, and civic action teams were sent to their villages to win their confidence and support.

An example of the application of subversive countermeasures in an emergency situation was provided following the air attack against the presidential palace on February 27, 1962. The first step taken was the cancellation of all exit permits issued before the attack in order to prevent the flight of any plotters. Next, all planes and pilots were grounded until loyalty investigations of crewmen were completed. Finally, the Director of Psychological Warfare in the Department of National Defense sent radio instructions to all psychological warfare cadres throughout the country to use every possible means to inform the armed forces.
and the public of the actual situation and encourage the people to carry on their daily work and be alert for Communist efforts to exploit the situation.

Groups Actively Subversive

The two main arms of the North Vietnamese Communist assault on the Republic of Vietnam are the Viet Cong and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (Mat Tran Dan Toc Giai Phong). Viet Cong, a derogatory contraction of the term for "Vietnamese Communist," came into general use early in 1957 everywhere except in the North in referring to the Communist guerrillas and terrorists operating in the South. The National Front is the political arm of the subversive effort. Both of these groups are directed and materially supported from North Vietnam by the Workers' Party of Vietnam (Dang Lao Dong Viet Nam), the Communist party of Vietnam, usually called the Lao Dong Party. They are directly and indirectly assisted by the material aid and propaganda support of the Communist-bloc countries, principally Communist China and the Soviet Union. Various other groups, including several underground political parties and self-styled movements—most of them subsidiaries of the National Front—play less significant subversive roles.

Viet Cong

The Viet Cong is by far the most active subversive group in South Vietnam. Its antecedents go back to the founding of the Indochinese Communist movement in South China in 1925 under the direction of Soviet-trained Nguyen Ai Quoc, later known as Ho Chi Minh. In 1936, after a decade underground in Indochina, the movement emerged, during the "Popular Front" period in France, as a legal Communist party. Pursuing the Communist "united front" policy of the time, the Party grew in size and attracted some support from non-Communist groups. It was suppressed again on the eve of World War II, and most of its leaders fled to South China. It continued its clandestine activity under the unpopular Vichy regime, however, and by 1941 it was the dominant force in the Vietnam Independence League (Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi—popularly, the Viet Minh), which it had been largely instrumental in organizing.

The Communist-led Viet Minh, representing itself as a coalition of nationalist groups, soon gained enough strength to mount harassing guerrilla attacks against both the French and the Japanese throughout Vietnam, although in the South non-Communist nationalist groups were stronger and more active than were the Communists. By mid-August 1945 the Viet Minh had seized power in North Vietnam and had set up a provisional
government in Hanoi. Bao Dai, in view of the increasing strength of the Viet Minh, apparently decided that he had no alternative but to abdicate as Emperor of Vietnam. The formal ceremony was held on August 26, 1945, in the imperial palace at Hue (see ch. 2, Historical Setting). Thereafter the Viet Minh, strengthened with arms left by the evacuating Japanese, led the attack against the French forces sent to reoccupy the country and intensified their organizational activities in South Vietnam, particularly in rural areas where government controls were weak or lacking. Finding the Viet Minh coalition too unwieldy for their purposes, the Communists gradually integrated its subsidiary organizations and, in February 1951, incorporated its key elements into the newly formed Lao Dong Party.

Having signed the Geneva Agreement of 1954 which divided the country at the 17th parallel, the Communist regime focused its propaganda on national unification, confident that it could win the referendum by which this was to be achieved. Apparently as insurance in case the newly proclaimed Republic of Vietnam refused to participate in a referendum, the Communists proceeded with plans for a military and subversive effort to overthrow President Ngo's administration and seize control of the entire country.

When withdrawing their forces into North Vietnam after the Geneva Agreement, the Communists had left behind caches of arms and ammunition, groups of carefully selected staunch Party members and some of their best guerrilla fighters, estimated to total about 2,500 men, who were dispersed to hideouts in remote jungles of the delta and in the mountainous areas along the boundaries with Cambodia and Laos. Driven underground by the authorities in the South, they created several front organizations, the most important of which was the South Vietnam Committee for the Defense of World Peace which attracted a number of intellectuals, including doctors, lawyers, journalists and at least one Buddhist prelate.

Disappointed and somewhat demoralized by the South's refusal to participate in the election scheme, the Communists changed their tactics and devoted the next 2 years mainly to recruitment and reorganization. Many South Vietnamese Communists who had withdrawn with the North Vietnamese forces in 1954 and had completed instruction courses in subversive tactics now returned to the South to take up responsible positions in the Communist movement. Peasant morale was generally low. The shortage of trained and competent administrators created a confused situation in the rural areas that was easy for the Communists to exploit. Organizing cells wherever they could, especially
in the villages, they posed as “patriotic liberators” and sought by agitation and propaganda to alienate the people from the government. Their appeals were effective. Living and working with the peasants, their voices were heard above those of the usually aloof functionaries of the distant central government in Saigon.

In 1958, after having received substantial aid in personnel and materiel from the North, the Viet Cong embarked on a campaign of terror and intimidation accompanied by renewed propaganda for the unification of Vietnam, the removal of the “traitorous Ngo Dinh Diem clique,” and the elimination of the “United States imperialists.” The strength of the Viet Cong forces of all types had mounted to an estimated 9,000 men, and guerrilla harassment increased in intensity and scale. By 1960 the Viet Cong were attacking in groups of up to several battalions in strength. Meanwhile, political and military reinforcements infiltrated from the North in increasing numbers, and local recruits were obtained by propaganda, intimidation and kidnapping.

The Viet Cong, numbering about 25,000 in 1962, may be divided into three general categories: full-time guerrillas, part-time guerrillas and village activists. The full-time guerrillas—an estimated 9,000—constitute the hard core of the Viet Cong forces. They are organized on a provincial or regional basis into companies and battalions. Three battalions north of Saigon reportedly were merged and designated, in early 1962, as the “Main Force Liberation Regiment.” These units are composed of highly disciplined, well-trained, seasoned, politically indoctrinated guerrilla fighters. They are commanded by experienced leaders, many of them native to the South although trained in North Vietnam.

The part-time guerrillas, thought to number about 8,000 men, are organized by districts into platoon or company-sized units. They are provided with small arms, grenades, landmines and explosive charges and receive some training while assembled in hideouts or engaged in guarding cached supplies.

Guerrillas in the third category—also estimated to total about 8,000 men—are, in effect, a Viet Cong active reserve in the villages. Working at their regular occupations during the day, they take part in night missions at the order of the guerrilla leader in their area. A typical village in an area where government control is weak may have 10, 15, or more of these activists. Their usual arms are knives and machetes, but a village group may have several submachineguns as well as rifles, grenades and landmines. Viet Cong of this type, notwithstanding their lack of military training and their casual discipline, play an important role. They are the eyes and ears of the provincial and regional groups and frequently their mouthpieces. They identify promising military
targets, procure recruits and food supplies by persuasion or intimidation, and furnish information on the vulnerability of village defenses and the activities of administrative officials and the security forces.

In the first half of 1961 the Viet Cong, according to official reports, murdered more than 500 government officials and civilians, including district chiefs and health officers, and kidnapped about 1,000. The year before, 60 medical aid stations were destroyed, 284 bridges were blown up and 400 schools were closed because of Viet Cong activity. Other routine operations include the mining of roads and rail lines, the blocking of canals, the cutting of telephone lines and the theft of such equipment as electric generators, well-drilling rigs and hospital supplies. To obtain food and funds for the regular Viet Cong units, rice is extorted from peasants; tribute is exacted from plantations and other enterprises in payment for immunity from sabotage; kidnap victims are held for ransom; and buses are held up and their passengers robbed of money and valuables. Arms and ammunition are obtained in surprise raids on isolated Civil Guard outposts, weak Self-Defense Corps units and police stations.

National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam

The National Front was founded in December 1960, three months after the Lao Dong Party in Hanoi had declared its intention to "liberate" South Vietnam and overthrow the Republic "by all means." The Front, ostensibly a coalition of groups representing all segments of South Vietnamese society, is clearly a creation of the Lao Dong Party and is designed to give the appearance of popular sanction for Viet Cong violence in the "struggle for liberation from the imperialistic United States-Diem clique." Although carefully avoiding references to communism in their writings and pronouncements, Front leaders adhere strictly to Lao Dong policies on all issues.

The Front's announced objectives include: unification of all "patriotic forces" in South Vietnam; union of all classes, parties, nationalities, religions, factions, mass organizations and "patriotic" personalities in a struggle to overthrow the rule of the "United States imperialists and of the Diem clique"; and achievement of "independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and national reunification."

National Front leaders, working clandestinely in the South, try to organize demonstrations, prepare and covertly distribute leaflets and posters and display banners. They foment strikes, particularly in public transportation and other vital economic areas, and encourage members of the armed forces to defect and join the "people's ranks."
policy questions, they call for cancellation of all “unequal treaties” with foreign countries; establishment of diplomatic relations with all countries in accordance with the “peaceful coexistence” theme of the 1955 Bandung Conference of Asian-African Nations; rejection of political alliances or blocs; and acceptance of economic aid from any country provided no political conditions are attached (see ch. 22, Foreign Policies; ch. 15, Labor Relations and Organization).

Subsidiary associations are formed to voice opinions as new public issues arise. By April 1962, at least 12 associations had been formed, including the Association of Peasants for the Liberation of South Vietnam and the South Vietnamese Liberation Students’ Union. Other associations have been established for young people, writers and artists, journalists, veterans of the Indochina War, montagnards, Chams, workers and women. The Front subsidiaries send representatives to congresses and conferences in Communist-bloc countries where they commonly make addresses and hold press conferences denouncing United States “imperialism” and “armed intervention” against the “liberation efforts of the people of South Vietnam.”

The Front’s news and propaganda organs are the Liberation Press Agency and the Liberation Broadcasting Station. The latter does not identify its place of operation, thereby suggesting that it exists clandestinely in South Vietnam. It appears that Radio Hanoi and the Vietnam News Agency, also of Hanoi, cooperate closely with the National Front. The Front’s radio and news output is so similar in quality and orientation to that issued by the Hanoi agencies as to suggest that they have a common origin (see ch. 12, Public Information and Propaganda).

The first congress of the Front, according to the Liberation Broadcasting Station, was held in the last half of February 1962 at an unnamed place, presumably in North Vietnam. It issued a policy statement reiterating the current Communist themes in the area and declared its intention to replace the National Assembly of South Vietnam with a new parliament which would prepare a new constitution. It harshly condemned the United States and asserted it was ready to accept any group which would join in the struggle against the “United States imperialists and their agents.” It proclaimed friendship with Laos and Cambodia and support for them in opposition to all “schemes, acts of sabotage and aggression by the United States imperialists and their henchmen.” The congress also declared that the Front and its armed forces would not encroach upon the territories of Cambodia and Laos.

The congress, according to the Liberation Broadcasting Station,
elected a Central Committee of the National Front composed of 52 members. Only 31 members were actually named, leaving, it was said, 21 vacancies to be filled at a later date by representatives of groups and parties which would join the Front in the future. Named as chairman of the Central Committee was Nguyen Huu Tho, reported by the Hanoi radio to be a lawyer, an intellectual and the vice chairman of the Saigon-Cho Lon Movement for the Defense of Peace who was also, in 1962, serving with the Viet Cong. The five vice chairmen, as reported by the Hanoi radio, were Phung Van Cung, Vo Chi Cong, Huynh Tan Phat, Son Vong and Ibilih Aleo. The Hanoi radio gave the following biographical notes on the five men and secretary-general Nguyen Van Hieu of the Central Committee. Phung Van Cung is a physician and chairman of the South Vietnam Committee for the Defense of World Peace who has lived with his family in a Viet Cong controlled area since 1960. Vo Chi Cong, a delegate of the Central Executive Committee of the Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party, has been involved in resistance movements since 1930. Huynh Tan Phat, an architect, is chairman of the National Front for the Liberation of Saigon-Cho Lon-Gia Dinh (a National Front subsidiary), secretary-general of the South Vietnam Democratic Party, and an adherent of the Viet Cong since 1958. Son Vong, a high ranking Buddhist prelate, is a delegate of the Patriotic Khmer People (a Communist-oriented group, reportedly a subsidiary of the National Front), adviser to the Committee for the Liberation of the Western Region of South Vietnam (a subsidiary of the National Front), and vice president of the Buddhist Association in Vinh Binh Province, southwest of Saigon. Ibilih Aleo, a Protestant, is a member of a montagnard ethnic group of Ban Me Thuot and chairman of the Committee on the Movement of Highland Autonomous Nationalities. An officer in the French Army during World War II, he joined the Viet Minh underground and was arrested by the French late in 1945 and sentenced to death. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment and he was released in 1952. The secretary-general of the Central Committee of the National Front, Professor Nguyen Van Hieu, an intellectual and journalist, was secretary general of the South Vietnam Committee for the Defense of World Peace and secretary-general of the South Vietnam Socialist Radical Party; since 1954 he has been engaged in propaganda, cultural and intelligence activities for the Viet Cong.

In mid-June 1962 a National Front communique announced that "the patriotic self-defense forces," as the Viet Cong units are commonly called by the Communists, would not encroach upon the lives and property of any foreign resident who remains from

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working for the “United States-Diem clique.” This was the first publicized threat with implications that the foreign residents who refused to support the guerrillas would be regarded by them as legitimate targets for sabotage and terrorists operations.

Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party

The Vietnam People's Revolutionary Party (Can Lao Vietnam), according to Radio Hanoi, was formed late in December 1961 by a group of “South Vietnamese Marxists-Leninists.” It was stated that the new party, operating within the framework of the National Front, was pledged to replace President Ngo’s regime with a “People's Democratic Government.” The party called upon the working class, peasantry, soldiers, officers and the members of President Ngo’s administration to work toward this goal. The announcement was the first public admission from the North that the guerrilla campaign against the Republic was other than a spontaneous uprising of South Vietnamese patriots.

The new party is evidently intended to provide an organizational vehicle—controlled by the Lao Dong Party through the National Front—within which could be concentrated the efforts of all South Vietnamese Communists and their sympathizers. The action parallels that taken by the Communists in 1951 when the Lao Dong Party was formed in North Vietnam to take control of the unwieldy Viet Minh coalition.

Groups Potentially Subversive

In almost every segment of Vietnamese society there are non-Communist elements, varying in political orientation from socialist to right-wing nationalist, with grievances against the government. Some of the remnants of the armed religious sects which President Ngo repressed after he came to power also have scores to settle. The Communists apparently have had some success in exploiting these dissatisfactions and resentments.

The leaders of several former political parties are angrily critical of President Ngo and his administration, insisting that radical reforms and a new government are essential to peace and economic development in South Vietnam. None of them, however, appears to have the popular support necessary to challenge the government successfully. Although these critics generally profess opposition to the use of violence as a means of achieving their objectives, their followings no doubt include some extremists who might be induced or incited to use illegal and reckless methods in an effort to install a new regime.

The Free Democratic Party (Dang Dan Chu Tu Do) reportedly is the leading non-Communist political opposition group. Founded about 1949, it was loosely organized in December 1961 under the
leadership of Pham Huy Co, a physician who was then living in exile in Paris. In pamphlets and statements, he condemns President Ngo's administration as incompetent, corrupt and unpopular, and argues that it must be overthrown if the Communists are to be defeated in South Vietnam. He advocates, without specifying details, drastic economic, political and social reforms. He would also halt United States aid until a completely new government is installed. Press accounts in mid-1961 suggest that Phan Quang Dan, a physician and former president of the Party, was then in prison awaiting trial on charges arising from his participation in the attempted coup of November 1960. Indications are that at least a section of the party—calling itself the South Vietnam Democratic Party (Dang Dan Chu Viet Nam)—has been incorporated into the Communist-supported National Front.

The Vietnam Nationalist Party (Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang—VNQDD) was formed in 1927 by a group of intellectuals and journalists who advocated a political program similar to that of the Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang. The VNQDD soon became involved in assassinations, blackmail and bombings—first in opposition to the French and later against the Viet Minh. When the Viet Minh gained control of the North, the VNQDD shifted its activities to the South where it declined in importance. By 1962 it hardly existed as an organized entity, but some of its adherents probably were still active in harassing both the Communists and the government. The father of one of the pilots in the air attack against the presidential palace on February 27, 1962, was formerly a prominent member of the VNQDD.

The nonpolitical subversive elements in South Vietnam are mainly limited to scattered and disorganized fragments of the religious sects and bandit gangs that were overcome and dispersed by President Ngo just after he came to office. All are generally nationalist in outlook, but the groups into which they are divided have been unable to cooperate with each other or to avoid factional strife among themselves. Thus, for some years, they have been more a nuisance than a threat to the government (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety).

The Cao Dai sect, named after the title assumed by its founder, was created in 1926 by a group of Vietnamese clerks in Saigon. By 1945 its members were concentrated mainly in Tay Ninh and other provinces north of Saigon. During the Indochina War the majority of forces supported the French, but a sizable minority sided with the Viet Minh. Early in 1955 the commander of the Cao Dai military organization proclaimed his loyalty to Prime Minister Ngo and agreed to incorporate his group into the government's forces. His sentiments were apparently not shared, how-
ever, by many members of the sect, including its leader, "Pope" Pham Cong Tac. Government officials reportedly have been assassinated by members of the sect. Pham Cong Tac is said to spend much time in Cambodia, and some of his followers reportedly maintain contact with the Viet Cong. Saigon press accounts in 1962 occasionally mentioned the surrender or capture of Cao Dai sect members operating with Communist guerrillas.

The Hoa Hao sect, formed in 1939 in An Giang Province on the Cambodian border west of Saigon, is named after the home village of its Buddhist founder, Huynh Phu So. The French authorities, who called him the "mad Bonze," confined him to a psychiatric hospital in Cho Lon in 1940 and later moved him to Laos. The sect nevertheless continued to win adherents among the peasants in the provinces west of Saigon. In September 1945 a Hoa Hao force of 15,000, armed with knives and agricultural implements, attempted to set up a kingdom in Phong Dinh Province but was defeated by Viet Minh and Japanese troops. When President Ngo came to office the Hoa Hao, which had fought both the Viet Minh and the French, resisted his demand that it submit to the authority of the government. Its leaders were disappointed, however, in their hope of provoking defections from army units and rallying Bao Dai supporters to the sect's cause, and in June 1955 Hoa Hao forces were soundly defeated by government troops in the Can Tho area, about 85 miles southwest of Saigon. Some Hoa Hao leaders took refuge in Cambodia; others went to Saigon and surrendered to President Ngo. Only a leader named Ba Cut with a few followers held out. He was captured in April 1956 and on the following July 13 he was beheaded. Since then the sect as a group has been virtually inactive politically. Some members, however, remain hostile to the government, and the Communists reportedly have exerted themselves to establish cells and win recruits among them.

The Binh Xuyen organization was formed during World War II by a group of bandits operating from hideouts in the coastal mangrove swamp of the Binh Xuyen administrative district south of Cho Lon. Unlike the sects, it had no religious base and made no appeals for popular support—one of its contingents went so far as to march in a parade in Saigon in 1945 under a banner inscribed, "Binh Xuyen Bandits." Its ample funds were derived mainly from banditry and vice racketeering operations and from protection money extracted from wealthy Chinese businessmen (see ch. 21, Public Order and Safety).

Falling out with the Viet Minh, with which it initially cooperated in the struggle against the French, the Binh Xuyen, in return for racketeering and other monopolies, offered its services as a police force to Bao Dai; the offer was accepted in 1953 and
the Binh Xuyen leader, Le Van Vien, took charge of the Saigon city administration. In 1954 another Binh Xuyen man became director general of the Saigon-Cho Lon police force. In 1955 the organization joined the sects in opposition to the government of President Ngo, and it was the first group to be defeated by the government forces (see ch. 19, Constitution and Government). Driven from Saigon, an unknown number of its members scattered to their old hideouts in the swamps of Bien Hoa and Phuoc Tuy Provinces and Le Van Vien fled to Paris. What is left of the group is no doubt hostile to the government, but it is not in a position to threaten and its banditry is conducted more on an individual than an organized basis. There have been reports that small Binh Xuyen groups have been cooperating with the Viet Cong which finds their skills in robbery, extortion and kidnapping useful.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

In North Vietnam, as in other Communist countries, what is regarded as subversion includes not merely acts, thoughts or attitudes regarded as damaging to the regime, but failure or refusal to act or think in officially approved ways in matters regarded as important. The Communist doctrine of class war and the technique of eliminating opposition by treating it as treasonable have made the charge of subversion at once one of the most familiar and the most feared.

The official attitude is reflected in Article 7 of the Constitution of 1960:

The state strictly prohibits and metes out severe punishment for all acts of treason, opposition to the people’s democratic system, or opposition to the reunification of the fatherland.

Moreover, the Constitution, in Article 29, states that all citizens “have the right to complain to any organ of state concerning, or to denounce, unlawful acts committed by members of organs of state. These complaints and denunciations must be investigated and dealt with rapidly.” Article 38 forbids anyone from making use of “democratic freedoms to infringe upon the interests of the state and of the people.” These provisions are made specific in numerous restrictive decrees and are implemented by a multiplicity of agencies which maintain constant surveillance over the activities of all citizens.

The Lao Dong Party presents itself as the only safeguard against forces that “seek to rob the people of the achievements won by their long struggle for independence.” The people are indoctrinated to believe that the most dangerous threat is from the “traitorous Diem clique” in South Vietnam and from the “war mongering United States imperialists.” They are also told that
the struggle for "reunification of the fatherland" by overthrowing
the "United States-Diem clique" is a fully justified people’s patri­
otic movement.

Information regarding the popular attitude toward subversive
activity against the regime is fragmentary. The rigor and per­
vasive ness of official surveillance would in any event make the
disaffect ed careful to conceal their opinions. The controlled press,
however, from time to time reports acts of disobedience to the
authorities and violations, usually of an economic nature, which
suggest indifference, if not opposition, to the official policies and
goals. In December 1961 Hanoi newspapers published a list of
recent economic offenses. Among them were embezzlement of
public funds, gross mismanagement and waste of materials in
certain state enterprises and failure to report or reveal the short­
comings of managerial boards. In February 1962 the press also
reported the trial in the Hanoi People’s Court of a factory man­
ger for refusal to obey instructions from higher echelons, mis­
management of funds, recruitment of disloyal persons into the
Party and creating dissension among Party members. In May
1962 the principal Hanoi newspaper editorially criticized the
prevalence of trading in smuggled or stolen bicycles and bicycle
parts. Even some cooperatives, the press said, had bought parts
at favorable prices from the state trade service, and, in violation
of economic regulations, had sold them on the open market at
prices much higher than the fixed price.

The Quynh Luu Uprising

In mid-1962 nearly 6 years had passed since the uprising in
President Ho’s home province of Nghe An, but the episode was
perhaps a reminder to the authorities that there were limits to
the endurance of the peasantry. Living conditions in the country­
side in 1955, a year after the end of the Indochina War, had shown
no signs of improving. On the contrary, goods became scarcer,
prices mounted and production almost stopped. Matters were
made worse by the land-reform policies which were ruthlessly
applied. Finally, President Ho, apparently inspired by the Chinese
Communist interim of “let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred
schools of thought contend,” announced that constructive ideals
and criticisms of mistakes would be welcome. Complaints, spoken
and published, were quick in coming, and they fanned resentment
at the confiscations of land, interrogations, arrests, imprisonments
and executions. The regime’s prestige, high just after the Dien
Bien Phu victory, dropped rapidly, particularly among the intel­
lectuals and the peasants (see ch. 12, Public Information and
Propaganda).
By November 1956 farmers in many areas were openly manifesting hostility to the reforms. Serious disorders developed in the small village of Quynh Luu, south of Hanoi, where some 4,000 aroused inhabitants of the area seized arms from local guards, disrupted communications, prepared defensive positions and erected roadblocks to delay the arrival of regular troops. Some police and soldiers reportedly cooperated with the peasants. The uprising was quelled only after a reinforced infantry division had been sent in. Both sides suffered heavy casualties. Later in the month another disturbance occurred in the same province when the authorities took reprisals against the villagers who had presented to the International Control Commission (ICC) a petition requesting consideration of their grievances. Troops employed against the poorly armed peasants restored order only after inflicting many casualties on them during 3 days of fighting.

Meanwhile the regime had started to take corrective measures. On November 1, 1956, the secretary-general of the Lao Dong Party resigned after confessing his "errors in carrying out the land reforms." The special People's Courts formed to try the land cases reportedly were abolished. Many who had been jailed for resisting confiscation were released, and their property was restored to them or they were paid for it. By the end of 1956, however, not only had the publication of critical articles ceased, but the editors and writers who had responded to the "hundred flowers" slogan were arrested. Some were let off with an admonition to practice self-criticism. Others were sent to labor camps along an irrigation canal east of Hanoi (see ch. 25, Agricultural Potential).

Subversive Control Measures

Chief responsibility for countersubversive measures rests with the People's Supreme Organ of Control, authorized by Article 105 of the Constitution of 1960 (see ch. 19, Constitution and Government). With subdivisions at all administrative levels, this agency has authority to take steps to ensure that all state organizations and all citizens obey the law. Decrees promulgated in 1957 (after the Quynh Luu uprising and the surge of criticism which marked the "hundred flowers" period) make a wide range of conduct punishable as disloyal. Military units, as well as the police, are empowered to help enforce the regime's policies. Other agencies having important countersubversive missions include the Lao Dong Party itself (which, in its internal organization, parallels the government's administrative structure and has cells in all state enterprises) and the various mass organizations headed by the Fatherland Front (see ch. 19, Constitution and Government; ch. 20, Political Dynamics).
Party spokesmen, aided by radio broadcasts and the press, repeatedly urge every citizen to be constantly on guard against enemy agents and spies and to exercise vigilance in watching for any indications of disloyalty. Citizens are instructed to report any suspicious actions promptly to the nearest security agency. Village administrative committees are held responsible to mobilize villagers vigorously and promptly in exposing and exterminating spies and those who befriend them.

Groups Potentially Subversive

Indications are that all potentially subversive groups are unorganized and weak because of the ubiquitous official surveillance and control and a lack of leadership. Information is too scanty to determine the extent of activity or even the potentialities of various groups. Pronouncements of Party leaders suggest, however, that they view certain shortcomings in the execution of Party programs as having subversive implications. Failures to meet production goals or to support certain policies are frequently ascribed to the work of subversive agents—usually from South Vietnam or the United States.

The ethnic minorities in the highland areas—the montagnards—constitute the largest group of potential dissidents. Like the montagnards in South Vietnam, they tend to view any Vietnamese authority, and especially that nearest at hand, with suspicion. The Communist leaders, aware of their potential value to any force challenging the regime, are seeking to win their trust and cooperation. There is evidence that some of the montagnards have collaborated with agents sent into their areas to harass and attack the Communist authorities. Communist military bases in the mountainous areas along the Laotian frontier have been raided by Meo and Nung groups, particularly at times when the base defenses were weakened by the departure of their regular garrison troops.

The most bitter dissidents probably are expropriated businessmen and relatives and friends of the victims of the agrarian reforms of 1955-56. They are unorganized, however, and are in no position to offer any effective resistance to the regime. Moreover, their feelings may be expected to moderate with the passage of time unless they become subjected to another Communist program of oppression. There are also indications of opposition in the Catholic population concentrated in the Red River Delta area where sabotage is occasionally reported in state enterprises and even in defense installations. Catholics are numerous in Nghe An Province, scene of the 1956 uprising. The strongest Catholic dissidents, however, are believed to have fled to South Vietnam in the refugee exodus from the North after 1954. The regime's
apparent solicitude for the opinion of the remaining Catholics suggests some apprehension regarding their loyalty (see ch. 11, Religion).

Party leaders, in speaking of production lags and difficulties, have frequently criticized the peasants for malingering, apathy and noncompliance with instructions. Disorders requiring the use of the police reportedly occurred in 1961 in Hai Duong Province north of Haiphong and in Cao Bang Province north of Hanoi. To avoid a serious clash, the regime promised to meet some of the peasants' demands. Official exactions and the continuing pressure on farmers to move quickly into new ways of life and work make for continuing tension in the villages; there is no clear evidence of widespread active discontent in the countryside, although that could develop if a number of bad crop years were to add serious food shortages to Communist political and economic pressures.
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SECTION III. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

CHAPTER 24

CHARACTER AND STRUCTURE OF THE ECONOMY

Since 1955 the war-ravaged agrarian economies of both South Vietnam, a partner of the Free World, and North Vietnam, ideologically attached to the Communist bloc, have made remarkable progress. Each has reconstructed its transportation and communications infrastructure and expanded agricultural and industrial production while maintaining a sizable military establishment. Each has been confronted with special problems posed by the 1954 partition which ruptured the traditional economic interdependence of the northern and southern parts of the country. South Vietnam's gains have been made despite the rising pressure of Viet Cong terror and subversion, while North Vietnam's gains have been inhibited by the strains inherent in recasting a peasant and free enterprise society into the Communist mold. In neither segment of the divided country could the progress registered in the last 7 years have been achieved without large-scale assistance from abroad.

For more than 10 years prior to 1955 Vietnam had been the scene of international war and civil strife. Roads, railroads, bridges, industrial and power plants, irrigation and drainage works had been destroyed. Farm lands had been abandoned, and farm families had crowded into the cities, swelling the ranks of the unemployed. Thus, in 1955 reconstruction alone presented a formidable and costly burden to both South and North Vietnam. But, in addition, each faced economic consequences which stemmed both from partition and from the differential development of the two areas under French colonial rule.

France viewed Annam and Cochinchina (now South Vietnam) and Tonkin (now North Vietnam) as an economic unit. Since climate, fertile soils and availability of new land in Cochinchina favored agriculture, the French developed ricelands in the Mekong Delta and rubber plantations in the Central Highlands. In Tonkin, which was rich in coal and ores, mines were exploited and some industries established. The transportation network was designed to carry the products of the hinterland to the port of Saigon in Cochinchina and to the ports of Haiphong and Hon Gay in Tonkin and to facilitate exchange between the agrarian South and the more industrialized North. Thus, partition deprived South Vietnam, a food surplus area, of its domestic source of coal, paper,
cement, textiles and glass; North Vietnam, a food deficit area, lost access to the agricultural surpluses of South Vietnam.

**REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Most of South Vietnam's 14.6 million people are farmers living in scattered villages and hamlets which are largely concentrated in the Mekong Delta, the most fertile area of the country, and along the coast in the narrow deltas of the Central Lowlands. Of 7 million acres under cultivation, 5.7 million are in irrigated rice. Plots generally do not exceed 5 to 12 acres. They are usually located near the villages and are cultivated by the farmer and his family with the help of water buffalo for plowing and harrowing. The farmer supplements his diet with vegetables from the family garden, fish from the canals and some livestock and poultry. Productivity and per capita income are generally low.

Tea and rubber plantations on the slopes of the Central Highlands cover some 300,000 acres and employ about 50,000 persons. Most of the plantations are still French-owned. In the sparsely settled Central Highlands, where the area of fertile uncultivated land is estimated at 5 million acres, some 500,000 to 700,000 montagnards practice a shifting agriculture. In the villages along the coast there are approximately 190,000 fishermen.

About 15 percent of the population lives in the cities, mainly in Saigon-Cho Lon which has grown to approximately 2 million. The metropolis is not only the capital of the country but also the major seaport and a road, rail and air center. Commerce and industry, including handicrafts, employed about 520,000 persons at the end of 1961. Most of these enterprises are located in or near Saigon-Cho Lon which is the focal point for all commercial and financial activity.

In the summer of 1961 the South Vietnamese and the United States Governments jointly announced an economic and social program for South Vietnam which gave first priority to strengthening the economy and eliminating the Communist assault. The main provisions of the program included: the establishment of training facilities for village officials; a rural health program aimed at ultimately making maternity clinics and first-aid stations available to everyone; a program to increase the number of public primary schools until every village in the country had one; improvement in radio communications between villages; the building of new roads linking the rural areas with the main highways; expansion of the agricultural credit system; extensive pest and insect control measures in central Vietnam (where rice crops had suffered in the past two years); the resettlement of the montagnards of the Central Highlands; the rehabilitation of the flooded areas in the
Mekong Delta; a large program of public works to relieve unemployment; and the continuation of industrial development.

Between 1955 and mid-1962 South Vietnam's production of food crops had increased by 32 percent and had surpassed all pre-war records. A number of recently introduced industrial crops had also prospered. Livestock and poultry production were increasing. Rice and rubber still provided the main exports, but the government had considerable success in finding foreign markets for other products as well.

The gains in the agricultural sector of the economy can be attributed almost entirely to the government's program of land reform and land reclamation. The program was designed to bring back into cultivation 2.5 million acres of abandoned rice land in the Mekong River Delta and to extend cultivation in the Central Highlands.

Land reform measures began in 1955 with the issuance of new land ordinances establishing rent limits and providing security of tenure to tenants. Landowners were required to declare their uncultivated land and, if they failed to bring their unused holdings into production, the properties were subject to government requisition for the settlement of refugees from North Vietnam. More than 500,000 refugees have been settled on such properties.

A presidential decree in 1956 limited individual ownership of rice lands to a maximum of 284 acres and provided that land in excess of this amount was to be purchased by the government for resale in small plots, preferably to tenants who were already working the land. By mid-1960 over a million acres had been distributed to 124,000 farmers, mostly former tenants, and an additional 1.5 million acres was subject to transfer to the government for redistribution.

The government established a land-reclamation program in the Central Highlands, and approximately 100,000 people from the crowded Central Lowlands have been settled on farm plots there. Under the same program some 25,000 montagnards have been resettled in permanent locations.

Other factors resulting in increased crop production are better cultivation methods, improved water resources, the use of chemical fertilizers and pest control. New agricultural technics and new varieties of crops have been introduced through agricultural extension services and local training centers which have been established in all the provinces. The average farmer had demonstrated his willingness to accept new ideas and technical innovations which will improve his livelihood, but by the close of 1961, security conditions in the countryside prevented extension agents from visiting many rural areas and the benefits of experimental work could reach only a limited number of farmers.
Fishermen have benefited from the creation of government credit facilities and cooperatives which have made it possible for them to purchase modern gear and market their rapidly expanding catch. The availability of credit has also stimulated forest industries which supply firewood, charcoal and bamboo. Exploitation of the forests which cover 30 percent of the country is limited, however, as no adequate survey of timber resources has been made.

In the industrial sector the Republic, with financial support and technical assistance from the United States, has sought to develop a number of hitherto unexploited natural resources and to reconstruct the roads, railroads and waterways. It has also begun to establish a few industries, such as sugar refining and the manufacture of textiles, pottery, glassware and other household articles.

In mid-1962 South Vietnam's mineral resources, although thought to be meager, were being surveyed, and its one coal mine was producing sufficient coal to supply the country's thermal power plants. Hydroelectric power plants were under construction. The reconstructed transportation system, however, was suffering from Viet Cong guerrilla interference with shipments from the rural areas to Saigon and from Saigon to Hue. Large areas of the countryside were infiltrated by Viet Cong, and the prospects for further progress clearly hinged on mastering the Communist threat. Some light industries had been established, and marked gains had been recorded in industrial production which were reflected in the declining share of consumer goods in total imports. Additional industrial installations were under construction or were planned.

Various forms of assistance have also been provided by the government for the development of industry and handicrafts. Important steps were the establishment of the Industrial Development Center and the Handicraft Development Center. A further stimulus to industrial growth was President Ngo Dinh Diem's foreign investment policy which gave foreign investors assurance against war risk, expropriation or possible nationalization and also offered incentives of various types. The government itself has either entirely or partially financed investment in industries, public utilities and transport facilities considered basic to the economy.

A serious deficiency hampering development of all sectors of the economy has been the shortage of trained technical, professional, managerial and administrative personnel. Technical schools and colleges have been established, on-the-job training programs have been initiated and Vietnamese students have been sent abroad for advanced study.
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

The Communist regime owns and operates most industrial installations and transportation facilities, and it closely regulates farm activities and handicrafts. Official communiques indicate that in 1961 the performance of the economy was mediocre. "Natural calamities" began affecting the rice crop in 1960, according to the Communist authorities, and in spite of the efforts made since partition to expand food production, rice output had increased only 2 percent in comparison with 1956, while production of corn had fallen by 18 percent and sweet potatoes by 35 percent.

Although industrial production appears to have risen sharply—possibly as much as 150 percent in the 1956–61 period—it fell far short of the stated goals. Contributory factors to the progress which had been made were: the country's rich mineral resources, already partially exploited in the colonial period; the relatively extensive industrial base created by the French; and the equipment and technical assistance given by the Sino-Soviet bloc. On the whole, however, industrial output represented no more than a recovery to prewar levels. Rising industrial production seems to have had little effect on the austere living standards imposed on the people, even though they are repeatedly promised more consumer goods of better quality. It is likely that the increased output is exported. The heavy indebtedness to the Sino-Soviet bloc, however, indicates that exports continue to pay for only a small portion of imports.

Most of North Vietnam's population of 16.4 million are farmers living in more than 5,700 villages. More than 10 million of them are engaged in the cultivation of rice in the Red River Delta. In the Northern Highlands about 3 million farmers, including over 2 million montagnards, grow cereals and raise livestock. Farm practices are much the same as in South Vietnam, although the average farm plot is smaller—usually not more than 1 or 2 acres. Individual holdings, never large in this part of the country, were further fragmented by the Communist regime's land reform program. Although the measures taken under the program served in part to establish the rights of peasants to abandoned land, on the whole they simply eliminated the moderately prosperous peasants by distributing their land in small parcels to others.

The family farm still appears to predominate in spite of the Communist regime's stated policy that the peasants are to be grouped in cooperatives as a transition to ultimate collectivization. The first step in "socialist transformation" of the peasantry is the work-exchange team organized by the local Lao Dong Party cadres. Under the supervision of the Party, the work-exchange team is intended to form the initial basis of the rural cooperative.
Official statements indicate that the development of work-exchange teams has been slow and that the number of farm cooperatives remains small. By 1960 about 60 state farms with a fair degree of mechanization appeared to have been established for the dual purpose of training cadres for farm cooperatives and setting standards and production norms which the cooperatives are expected to equal or surpass. The authorities have criticized cooperatives as less productive than individual farms but show no signs of abandoning the long-range collectivization policy.

Deprived by partition of the rice surpluses of the Mekong Delta, North Vietnam has made a major effort to increase food output. The area of double-cropped rice has been expanded, and a third rice crop, a novelty in North Vietnam, has been introduced, but acreage is still limited. Farmers are also urged to plant supplementary crops, mainly corn and sweet potatoes. All produce is required to be sold through cooperative or state-owned stores, but officials frequently complain of peasant hoarding and black market sales.

Industrial crops, such as sugar cane, kenaf and ramie, have been introduced on the state farms, and attempts have been made to settle the montagnards in cooperative centers in the Northern Highlands for the production of fibers, coffee, tea and peanuts. The montagnards, like those in the South, apparently have been reluctant to abandon shifting agriculture, although some have done so.

Within a year after partition, all French-owned mines, factories, power plants and transportation facilities had been taken over by the Communist regime and re-equipment had begun. It is claimed that this phase of reconstruction was completed by 1957. The regime’s commitment to the “continuing socialist industrialization” of the economy was formulated in the Three-Year Plan (1958–60) and in the Five-Year Plan (1961–65), both emphasizing the expansion of heavy industry. Advances have not kept pace with goals, however. The Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Works, for example, which was planned as the keystone of the country’s industrial structure and was to have been completed as part of the Three-Year Plan, was still not in operation in mid-1962. In spite of the establishment of a metalworking plant at Hanoi, a gift of the Soviet Union, and an “industrial complex” at Viet Tri, a gift of Communist China, most expansion in heavy industrial production seems to be the result of an increase in the output of ore and coal mines. Other than a few modern plants producing textiles, food products and miscellaneous items, most consumer goods are still produced by artisans. In 1961, 758,000 persons were reported to be working in factories or engaged in handicrafts; of these only 88,000 were employed in modern plants.
Although at the time of partition most of the experienced and skilled workmen, technicians and artisans were in North Vietnam, their numbers proved inadequate. The shortage of trained engineers, managerial personnel and skilled workers continues to be felt in all sectors of the economy. Numerous technical schools have been established and trainees are being sent to China, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia for advanced instruction. On-the-job training is stressed, and specialists from the Sino-Soviet block are playing a major role as instructors.
CHAPTER 25
AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL

Vietnam is predominantly an agricultural country. More than 80 percent of the people are farmers, most of them engaged in the cultivation of rice. The largest areas of cropland are found in the alluvial plains of the Mekong River in the South and the Red River in the North. The North, with a population of 16.3 million, has a cultivated area of around 4.5 million acres as compared to the South with a population of 14.6 million and a cultivated area of 7 million acres.

In the Red River Delta of North Vietnam, where the forerunners of the present-day Vietnamese first began to raise irrigated rice, almost all of the fertile land has been under intensive cultivation for centuries. The typical farm unit was a small one- or two-acre plot owned by the family which worked it, and a holding of 10 acres was considered large. Within the agricultural cooperatives which are being developed in North Vietnam as a preliminary step toward collectivization, family units continue to be small. In order to meet minimum food requirements, much of the land is double cropped. The fertility of the fields is maintained by the use of human and animal manure and the careful conservation of all organic compost material.

Southward along the narrow coastal strip—the historic path of Vietnamese settlement—are the small deltas formed by the short rivers flowing out of the Annam mountains. Here, the pattern of the Red River Delta is repeated with a high density of population, small fields and villages closely clustered in the narrow alluvial plains.

Farthest south is the Mekong River Delta where the largest rice crop in Vietnam is grown (see fig. 12). Land in the Mekong Delta is generally more fertile than in the North, and the area is less densely populated. The large-scale settlement and agricultural development of the region dates only from the last century when the French constructed an extensive system of canals and drainage ditches. By 1900 the delta was producing a substantial surplus of rice for export. Landlordism and tenancy were characteristic of the area during the colonial period, and although the land-reform program of the Republic has broken up estates of more than 250 acres, individual units remain larger than in the North. Cultivation is also less intensive, farmers generally depending on the monsoon rains to flood their fields and letting the land lie fallow during the dry season.

Supplementing the income from the rice exports of South Vietnam is that derived from rubber production which was intro-
Figure 12. Chief Rice-Growing Districts of Vietnam.
duced by the French on the southern slopes of the Central High-
lands at the beginning of the present century. Most of the rubber
is grown on large plantations, and though relatively few people
are employed in its cultivation, rubber continues to be an impor-
tant export product.

During the Indochina War much of Vietnam's rice land was
abandoned, and output in both the North and the South fell dras-
tically. Since the war rice production has been restored, and both
sectors of the country now report paddy production figures in
excess of prewar levels. In South Vietnam, government statistics
show the rice crop to have been 5.3 million tons in 1959 as com-
pared with 2.5 million tons in 1954 at the end of the Indochina
War and 4.2 million tons in 1939 on the eve of World War II.
Similar increases have been reported from the North.

A substantial portion of the increase in both areas is the direct
result of restoring to cultivation land abandoned during the war
years. Other factors are better cultivation, improved water re-
sources, use of chemical fertilizers in some areas and pest control.
The increases, however, may be more apparent than real. In both
North and South Vietnam production figures were customarily
used as a basis for tax collection and so were usually understated.
In the past few years, improved communications and methods of
reporting have contributed to more accurate recording of output,
and there has undoubtedly been some inflation of production fig-
ures for propaganda purposes.

Economic growth and self-sufficiency are basic objectives of the
authorities in both areas. In the South particular emphasis has
been placed on diversification of the country's basic two-crop
economy—rice and rubber. In the North special attention is given
to increased food production and the development of industrial
crops.

Physical conditions for diversified agriculture are more favora-
ble in the South than in the North (see figs. 13 and 14). Through-
out the country climate varies from tropical in the deltas to cool
subtropical in the mountains, but of the highland areas, only those
in the South include much arable land. A relatively level plateau
called the Central Highlands is sparsely settled by montagnard
groups and is believed to be capable of supporting a much larger
population than it did in 1962. It has been demonstrated that
various temperate climate crops thrive in the area (see ch. 3,
Geography and Population).

Agricultural development in both North and South has been
fostered by substantial foreign aid. North Vietnam has received
financial and technical assistance from Communist China and the
Soviet Union for the development of cooperatives and state farms.
Progress in the direction of total collectivization, a stated goal of
Figure 13. Secondary Agricultural Resources of North Vietnam.
Figure 14. Secondary Agricultural Resources of South Vietnam.
the regime, has been cautious, and since the excesses which accompanied the forcible redistribution of land in 1956, the authorities appear to have preferred a policy of persuasion and exhortation to open coercion. In the South direct assistance has been given by the United States Agency for International Development (AID) to a land-reform program, the establishment of agricultural credit and various technical programs designed to increase production and introduce new crops.

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

Land Utilization

Physical geography has largely determined the pattern of agricultural settlement in South Vietnam. The country south of the 17th parallel may be divided roughly into three regions: the Mekong Delta, the coastal plains of the Central Lowlands and the Central Highlands portion of the Chaîne Annamitique (see ch. 3, Geography and Population). The principal farming areas are the alluvial Mekong River plain and the small deltas along the narrow coast of central Vietnam. In contrast, the Central Highlands area is sparsely settled and contains a large area of uncultivated fertile land, much of which is forested.

Of South Vietnam’s total land area of approximately 43 million acres, a little more than 7 million acres are under intensive cultivation. Of the total cultivated land, 5.7 million acres are in irrigated rice. Rubber plantations on the southern slopes of the Central Highlands account for 0.3 million acres, and the remainder produces such crops as sugar, tea, coffee, vegetables, hard fibers and fruits.

In the Mekong Delta the annual flood of the river, which starts in June and reaches its first peak at the end of July and a second peak in September and October, establishes the agricultural cycle in the delta. Its flow is relatively gentle, and its rise and fall is gradual because a portion of the flood water is caught in the Tonle Sap upstream in Cambodia. There have been only eight instances of destructive floods in the past 60 years on which hydrographic observations have been made. The most recent flood—one of the most destructive—occurred in October 1961. Since the delta is extremely flat with a slope of approximately 1:100,000, the chief problem is that of drainage rather than actual containment of flood water (see ch. 3, Geography and Population).

Because of the relative abundance of land in the Mekong Delta, most of the farmers produce only one crop a year, relying on rainfall and the annual flood of the Mekong for the necessary water supply. Villages in this region are strung out along the river banks and the canals which crisscross the area.