### Table 10. Revenues of the Government of South Vietnam, 1969-65

[In millions of piasters*]

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct taxes</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>820</td>
<td>860</td>
<td>1,101</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>1,206</td>
<td>1,074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect taxes</td>
<td>3,176</td>
<td>3,271</td>
<td>3,772</td>
<td>1,749</td>
<td>1,814</td>
<td>2,235</td>
<td>2,372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customs duties</td>
<td>2,406</td>
<td>2,181</td>
<td>2,915</td>
<td>4,287</td>
<td>4,396</td>
<td>4,680</td>
<td>5,350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excise taxes</td>
<td>1,447</td>
<td>1,478</td>
<td>1,655</td>
<td>1,379</td>
<td>1,345</td>
<td>1,820</td>
<td>1,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts from registration fees, government properties and stamp duties</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipts from the Department of Public Works and Communications and other administrative agencies and public enterprises</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>642</td>
<td>730</td>
<td>788</td>
<td>1,021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous revenues</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>1,477</td>
<td>2,002</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>1,862</td>
<td>1,436</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribution from United States aid</td>
<td>5,051</td>
<td>4,515</td>
<td>4,163</td>
<td>7,145</td>
<td>9,620</td>
<td>7,800</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Bank of Vietnam advances</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>282</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>5,460</td>
<td>16,495</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>15,276</td>
<td>15,214</td>
<td>18,600</td>
<td>20,140</td>
<td>27,050</td>
<td>37,110</td>
<td>46,570</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For value of the plaster, see Glossary.

The public debt, at the end of 1964, stood at 24.76 billion piasters as compared to 10.68 billion in 1960. It consisted in part of South Vietnam's inheritance of 8.33 billion piasters of the debt of the Indo-Chinese treasury—a note issue which the National Bank assumed at its inception on January 1, 1955—and advances of 2.35 billion piasters which the Institute of Issue of the Associated States made to Vietnam prior to its achievement of full independence. The remainder consists of advances from the National Bank to cover budgetary deficits.

The foreign debt, on December 31, 1963, amounted to $153.4 million: $43.2 million represented various United States Government loans, payable in dollars at 3 percent interest with maturities ranging from 15 to 30 years; $50 million consisted of two 40-year United States Government loans repayable in piasters at 4 percent interest; $0.5 million represented a 6-year United States Government loan repayable in piasters at 6 percent interest; and $59.75 million comprised medium-term and long-term loans from France, West Germany and Japan.

France had granted a 15-year loan of 7 billion old (predevaluation) francs (for value of the franc, see Glossary) at 3 percent interest for financing the An Hoa-Nong Son electrochemical complex and a 5-year export-insurance credit line of 11 billion old francs at 3 percent interest plus 2 percent commission for financing imports of equipment and machinery for various industrial projects, including the Ha Tien cement plant. West Germany had granted two loans: DM50 million (about $12.5 million) for 17 years (also for financing the An Hoa-Nong Son complex) and DM15 million credit ($3.75 million) for 12 years at 3 percent interest for the purchase of German consumer goods. Japan had extended a 7-year $7.5 million loan at 5% percent interest for financing the Da Nhim Dam Project (see ch. 20, Industry).
Money in the form of coins has been in use in Vietnam for centuries, and except perhaps in the more remote montagnard villages of the highlands, most exchanges of goods and services take place through the medium of money. There is some barter in the countryside, but even the rural economy is monetized. The farmer sells for cash what rice he does not keep for home consumption, and in need he borrows against his crop. Wage labor is common in the villages, most farmers supplementing their income by seasonal employment on the farms of more prosperous neighbors and in various enterprises in nearby towns.

A banking system has existed in Vietnam since the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was, and still is, almost entirely confined to serving the business community in the urban centers. South Vietnam has a government-owned central bank, and, in addition, there are a number of privately-owned commercial banks—most of them founded during the colonial period—which are mainly engaged in serving the export-import trade. Most people keep their savings in the form of cash, gold or rice, and the popular attitude toward saving has compounded the difficulty faced by the government in accumulating sufficient capital to finance reconstruction and economic development.

BACKGROUND

Before World War II the currency was the Indochina piaster, linked directly with the French franc. The piaster, issued by the Bank of Indochina, which was owned by French private financial interests, was the first currency used in Vietnam to have nationwide acceptance and uniform value. There were a few commercial banks, largely French and Chinese, and several government organizations which provided low-interest loans. Most Vietnamese who needed to borrow, however, dealt with local moneylenders.

World War II brought about a major change in the country’s monetary situation. The Vichy French authorities, who remained in control at Japanese sufferance, issued a large quantity of completely unsecured paper piasters. There was little merchandise on which to spend them, and the result was acute inflation.

The return of the French administration in 1946, after its expulsion the year before by the Japanese, found the Indochinese piaster
thoroughly depreciated. Shops were bare of consumer goods, and much capital equipment had either been removed by Japanese occupation forces or destroyed by Allied bombing. In an attempt to stimulate the dislocated economy, the official value of the piaster was raised from 10 francs to 17 francs (1 franc equaled US$0.02), thus increasing its purchasing power on the French market and stimulating French imports. The position of the piaster in relation to the franc was further bolstered by the extensive military expenditure of the French Government in the country during the Indochina War and by the influx of nearly 250,000 members of the French Expeditionary Forces who spent a good part of their pay and allowances on goods and services available on the local market.

Outside the franc area, the market value of the piaster was closer to its prewar level. In Hong Kong, for example, it did not command the official rate of 21 piasters to US$1, but sold on the free market at the rate of 65 piasters to US$1. This disparity enabled financial operators to more than double their money by buying piasters with dollars on the free market and converting them into francs in Vietnam at the official rate, with the French treasury taking the loss.

Upon the attainment of self-government in 1949, the three states of former French Indochina—Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia—together with the French Government, established the Bank of Issue of the Associated States which assumed the issuing authority of the Bank of Indochina. The piasters of the Bank of Indochina were left in circulation, and a new piaster was issued at the same unrealistic rate of exchange with the franc.

The French administration did not impose control as a brake on currency manipulation until 1952. Exchange controls were followed by a devaluation of the piaster in 1953 which narrowed the gap between the official and the open-market rates. Following the Geneva Agreement in 1954 the Bank of Issue of the Associated States was formally dissolved. Its assets were divided among the three participating states to enable their new central banks to start functioning. In December 1954 the Republic of Vietnam notified France of its intention to withdraw from the franc zone, but did not formally take the step until 1959. On January 1, 1955, the South Vietnamese Government issued its own independent piaster through its newly established central bank, the National Bank. From that date, the piaster was directly supported by the United States. The new piaster, set at the official rate of US$0.02857, was exchanged at par for piasters in circulation issued by the Bank of Indochina and the Bank of Issue of the Associated States.
THE BANKING SYSTEM

The banking system consists of the National Bank, a few governmental financial institutions, 14 private commercial banks and a savings bank. The banks are concentrated in Saigon-Cho Lon and serve the business community almost exclusively. Otherwise the traditional money markets provided by the moneylender, the merchant and the prosperous farmer prevail. The authorities are seeking to extend the activities of modern banking institutions, both governmental and private.

The National Bank has most of the powers and functions usually attributed to a central bank. The scope of its authority is greater than the Bank of Indochina and the Bank of Issue of the Associated States which it replaced in January 1955. It has the exclusive right to issue notes and coins and is responsible for safeguarding the value of the currency, acting as agent of the government in foreign exchange control and advising the government on economic and financial matters. The National Bank is authorized to discount, rediscount, buy, sell, or make advances on negotiable instruments; to sell National Treasury bonds and securities for the government; to control the formation of new banks and changes in banking establishments; and to exercise supervision over commercial banks. Credit controls are exercised by establishing the reserve requirements of the commercial banks and the rediscount rates and by limiting the volume of certain types of loans.

The National Bank has a legal reserve requirement of 33 percent against its outstanding note issue. In December 1964 reserves in the form of gold, United States dollars and French francs had sunk to $141 million from a high of $216 million in 1960. Currency in circulation, on the other hand, had risen steadily from 6.78 billion piasters (for value of piasters see Glossary) in 1955 to 19 billion piasters by the end of December 1964, an amount substantially in excess of the legal limit.

Under regulations effective in 1964 commercial banks were required to maintain on deposit with the National Bank reserves of 10 percent of the amount of their deposit liabilities. As a measure of credit control, this requirement may be raised as high as 35 percent. In general, the commercial banks keep more on deposit with the National Bank than the required reserves.

The National Bank is concerned, not only with monetary control, but with the general development of the banking sector of the community. In December 1956 it entered the field of commercial banking through the establishment of the Commercial Credit Bank of Vietnam. Initially a deposit bank dealing in short-term transactions, it was authorized in July 1958 to deal in long- and medium-term credit.
By mid-1962 the Commercial Credit Bank was one of the largest in the country in volume of business.

Two institutions, the National Agricultural Credit Office and the Industrial Development Center, have been established by the government to serve credit needs which the private banks have been reluctant or unable to meet. The National Agricultural Credit Office was created by presidential decree in April 1957 as an autonomous public institution. It took over the assets and liabilities of certain other agencies, principally the Popular Agricultural Credit and the National Company for Agricultural Credit, Artisans and Cooperatives. By the end of December 1964 it had one interprovincial agency, 40 provincial agencies, 17 interdistrict agencies and 34 agencies at district level. The National Agricultural Credit Office is capitalized at 895 million piasters, of which 628 million piasters were allocated from United States aid funds, the remainder from the national budget (see ch. 19, Agriculture; ch. 20, Industry).

The National Agricultural Credit Office grants small loans to farmers. Short-term loans for annual crop production are from 6 to 18 months, medium-term loans from 18 months to 5 years and long-term loans from 5 to 15 years for capital invested by cooperatives, plantation owners and well-established farmers. Interest rates charged are 1 percent per month for short-term loans, 8 percent year year for medium-term loans and 6 percent per year for long-term loans. Legally established cooperatives are charged 5 percent per year, and farmers’ associations at district level are charged 9 percent. By the end of December 1964 the National Agricultural Credit Office loans had totaled 4,976.6 million piasters, of which 4,235.7 million had been short-term loans to farmers. Aid to rubber planters, a project also controlled by the National Agricultural Credit Office but terminated in 1961, amounted to 315.8 million piasters loaned to 26 Vietnamese and 10 French planters (see ch. 19, Agriculture).

In June 1964 the Pacification Fund was created within the National Agricultural Credit Office with a capital of 300 million piasters granted from the national budget. Loans under this program were intended to support animal husbandry, fisheries and the use of fertilizer. On December 18, 1964, 92 million piasters were withdrawn from this fund to establish a special fund exclusively for the relief of flood victims in 12 provinces in the Central Highlands and Central Lowlands. Loans from the Pacification Fund were issued under simplified procedures, and loans in kind for chemical fertilizers were free of interest. Under the flood-relief program, farmers and fishermen were specifically stated to be eligible and loans also bore no interest. At the end of 1964, Pacification Fund loans amounted to 117.1 million piasters.
The Industrial Development Center was established in 1957 as an autonomous government agency. It replaced the National Investment Fund which had been created in 1955 to provide financial assistance for small industries and for the development of new industries in cooperation with private industrial capital. The National Investment Fund, however, had been endowed solely with local currency and had received no support from United States aid. It thus lacked a source of foreign funds to purchase capital goods and equipment. The Industrial Development Center, on the other hand, was given an initial grant of $6 million from the United States in addition to 100 million piasters from the Vietnamese Government (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations). All loans require the approval of its board of directors. Loans are for 7 or 8 years, and interest rates are generally 6.5 to 8 percent per year. From inception to the end of 1964 the Industrial Development Center expended 1.4 million piasters of which 38 percent was equity investment. During this period it assisted or established 718 industrial establishments (see ch. 20, Industry).

At some time in the future the loan functions of the Industrial Development Center will be largely taken over by a new investment bank, the Financial Company for the Development of Industry in Vietnam (Société Financière pour le Développement de l’Industrie et Viet-Nam—SOFIDIV). Half of the initial capital of 400 million piasters is being subscribed by 10 local commercial banks—Vietnamese, French, British and Chinese. The remainder is to be made available by the United States Agency for International Development (AID). SOFIDIV’s objectives, broader than those of the Industrial Development Center, will be to encourage private enterprise, foreign investment and the creation of new industries through offering long-term loans and direct financial participation. The SOFIDIV will administer the newly created Vietnam American Private Enterprise Development Fund, which will be maintained by government repayments in piasters of United States Mutual Security Loans which have come to maturity.

banks—French, British, Nationalist Chinese, Japanese and Thai. Leading banks in the United States have correspondent relations with some of them, and two United States banks—the Bank of America and Chase Manhattan—have filed applications with the government to open branches. In addition to the government-owned Commercial Credit Bank of Vietnam, there are three other South Vietnamese-owned banks—the Bank of Vietnam, the Commercial and Industrial Bank of Vietnam and the Trust and Loyalty Bank. The 14 banks operate 36 offices, 27 in Saigon-Cho Lon and 9 in the provinces. The Commercial Credit Bank of Vietnam has branches in Can Tho, Long Xuyen, Ba Xuyen, Rach Gia, Phan Thiet, Nha Trang, and Da Nang; the Commercial and Industrial Bank of Vietnam at Da Nang; and the French-Chinese Bank for Commerce and Industry at Khanh Hung.

The country's only savings bank is the Savings Bank of Saigon, founded in 1887. It is governed by a board of administrators, the chairman of which is prefect of Saigon. The board is formally subject to the control of the treasurer general of Vietnam. The minimum savings deposit is 10 piasters and the rate of interest is fixed at 1.5 percent a year. In December 1964 deposits totaled 166.5 million piasters, almost 2 million piasters more than in 1960.

OTHER CREDIT INSTITUTIONS

There are a number of other credit institutions in South Vietnam outside of the formal banking system. In December 1955 the government abolished all private pawnshops, which charged very high rates of interest, and replaced them with a greatly expanded system of pawnshops of its own.

The major source of credit in terms of number of borrowers, however, remains the private moneylenders. People continue to turn to the moneylender, notwithstanding his often usurious charges, both because he is a familiar figure and because his services can be had without the red tape connected with the government institutions.

Mutual aid societies are also of some importance. The most common type is the giap, a term once applied to an administrative subdivision of the village but now signifying an association of men or women who have banded together for financial self-help. The organization's funds and other assets come from the contributions and bequests of its members. In addition to its insurance and benevolent functions, the giap is a vehicle for ceremonial and social activity.

Another type of association, the ho ("family" and, by extension, "cooperation" or "mutual association"), is often formed by women and combines speculation with mutual assistance. There are various types of ho. The ho hieu, or filial piety associations, are somewhat like burial insurance societies in the United States. Other ho help the peasant with the purchase of seed and agricultural implements.
Another form of mutual aid society is the bang of the Chinese community. A charitable and mutual aid association for its established members, the bang also provides the newly arrived Chinese with food and shelter until he finds employment, lends him money and gives him advice. The Vietnamese authorities have found it a convenient channel through which to deal with local Chinese groups.

CURRENCY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE

The Vietnamese piaster (called dong in Vietnamese, but referred to as piaster in all other languages) consists of 100 Vietnamese cents, but inflation in recent years has driven coins out of circulation. The piaster circulates in the form of notes printed by the Security Banknote Company of the United States in denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500 and 1-piaster coins made of an alloy of copper and nickel.

The money supply increased from 6.78 billion piasters in 1955 to 23.7 billion early in 1964. It rose steadily in subsequent months to 28.6 billion piasters in August, the sharp rise resulting from a 2 billion piaster increase in the note issue during that month. By the end of 1964 the money supply had fallen to 27.4 billion piasters as notes were withdrawn from circulation.

The official exchange rate, established in May 1953, is 35 piasters to US$1. The exchange system was modified in January 1962, and a new rate was established which, in effect, devalued the piaster. Technically, the official rate continued to stand, but a premium of 25 piasters to US$1 on purchases of foreign exchange and a tax of 25 piasters to US$1 on piaster sales introduced an effective rate of 60 piasters to US$1. The rate was made applicable to all trade transactions and certain transfers of funds. As established in 1953, a controlled rate of 73.5 piasters to US$1 applied to other specified transfers of funds.

The highly complex and variable structure of administered multiple exchange rates remained unchanged. The rates varied from commodity to commodity and also by category of importer. Certain preferred capital goods imported on government account were accorded the official rate, and other commodities, including luxuries, were imported by private persons at much higher rates. The free market rate in Hong Kong ranged, during 1964, from 130 to 180 piasters to US$1, in comparison with a range between 80 to 105 piasters to US$1 in 1961.

In August 1965 the United States military and civilian personnel were no longer paid in United States dollars but in Military Payment Certificates (MPC) or "scrip." MPC could be used by United States personnel only to purchase goods in United States Army canteens, clubs, or commissaries in Vietnam or to purchase piasters through United States disbursing officers at the rate of 118 piasters to US$1.
Since the emergence of the Republic of Vietnam as a state in 1955 the Communist campaign against it has greatly magnified and aggravated the problems of public order and safety. The growth of the internal Viet Cong into an aggressive military force brought new problems associated with an expanding war effort. The large increase in military support facilities and installations created more targets for the Viet Cong.

At the same time the influx of refugees as well as bona fide jobseekers into the principal towns and cities produced conditions which caused sharp rises in the ordinary crime and vice rates. In addition, the greatly inflated economy, primed by the inpouring of foreign aid and personnel, encouraged the appearance of speculators, hoarders, blackmarketeers, tax evaders and other war profiteers. To counteract the actions of these undesirable elements, a Special Court was activated by special decree in early 1966 to deal specifically with these crimes.

By 1966 the Viet Cong controlled or moved freely over large areas of the country, and other members of their organization operated clandestinely in the principal towns and cities. In addition to organized armed action, they used terrorist tactics involving assassination, sabotage, kidnaping, robbery, arson, intimidation and blackmail.

The role of maintaining public order and safety assigned to the principal enforcement agencies (National Police, Regional Forces and Popular Forces) continued to be an increasingly important one, and, with extended United States aid, they developed and enlarged counter-insurgency programs to complement those of the military (see ch. 27, The Armed Forces).

Although the operations of the public order and safety forces bear some resemblance to military operations in their execution and purpose, they have retained their basic defensive concept of providing protection and service to the country and its people. The law enforcement agencies attack by force only in a very restricted sense and in special situations.
The Police System

Development

At the beginning of World War II large cities, such as Saigon, had municipal police departments administered by the mayor for the municipal council. The National Security Police, modeled after the French Sûreté Nationale, were responsible for maintaining public order in the outlying areas. Ordinary police functions were performed by men recruited from the local population. They had their own officers, but these were closely supervised by their French superiors. The development of uniform police procedures was hindered by frequent changes of the French supervisors who were transferred to other foreign stations or to France after a short tour of duty.

When the Japanese in 1941 occupied the southern part of what is now South Vietnam (then called Cochin China), they permitted the old French police organization to continue to function under the Vichy French administration. After the fall of Vichy France in 1945, a short-lived nationalist regime was established under the former emperor, Bao Dai, who retained the existing police organizations. This regime was tolerated by the Japanese, but as Japan's position in the area deteriorated, Communist Viet Minh (see Glossary) forces in the North, led by Ho Chi Minh, increasingly took control. In August 1945, Bao Dai abdicated in favor of a Viet Minh government. In September the British, who, at the Potsdam Conference in July of 1945, had been designated to accept the Japanese surrender in the southern portion of the country, arrived in the area and exercised police powers until the French Expeditionary Force arrived a short time later (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

This turbulent period, with its successive changes in the application of law enforcement authority, was accompanied by much disorder. Many records, including criminal files, were lost or destroyed. Moreover, Communists infiltrated into many key positions in government agencies, including the military and the police.

Reinstalled in Vietnam, the French were confronted with a widespread and growing sentiment for independence and an active Communist movement which knew how to exploit it. French efforts to impose strict controls, especially in the urban centers, contributed to the intensity of the rising nationalist sentiment. The Communists consolidated their control in the North in 1946, and in 1949, when France recognized Vietnam's independence within the French Union, ex-Emperor Bao Dai returned from voluntary exile in France to assume office as Chief of State.

Some police powers were acquired by the Bao Dai government, but these proved to be more nominal than real. For one thing, the French continued to maintain a police apparatus of their own. For another,
many Vietnamese, though potentially capable, lacked experience in responsible positions; others were unsuited for their jobs. Criminal and subversive elements took advantage of the opportunities which the situation provided.

By June 1954, when the Indochina War ended with the establishment of a military Demarcation Line which had the effect of partitioning the country, the police had ceased to be effective, even in the cities, and the villages were virtually controlled by the Viet Minh forces. In Saigon, control of both the Municipal Police and the Security Police had been turned over by Bao Dai to the Binh Xuyen, a political and racketeering organization which had agreed to carry out police functions in return for a monopoly on gambling, opium traffic and prostitution in the metropolitan areas. The group also collected fees for visas, licenses and permits of various kinds. It also profited from the control of imports and the sale of rice, fish and pork.

Two strong politicoreligious sects, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, controlled large areas of the countryside, maintaining their own police and security forces. The Cao Dai operated in Tay Ninh and neighboring provinces north and northwest of Saigon; the Hoa Hao was dominant in the provinces southwest of Saigon. Both of these groups are so-called reformed Buddhist movements (see ch. 11, Religion).

By the summer of 1954 the Binh Xuyen organization, supported by the French and Bao Dai, then in Paris, threatened to take control of all government functions. The state of public order deteriorated further, particularly in Saigon where there was a concentration of the agents, sympathizers and hangers-on of the contending groups—all of them hostile to government efforts to make its police powers effective. Another source of tension was the presence of the French Expeditionary Force with its European, Indian, Algerian, Moroccan and other African troops.

In June 1954, Bao Dai appointed Ngo Dinh Diem as prime minister, vesting him with full military and police powers. The new prime minister set about to win the loyalty of certain army battalions and of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao leaders and troops, and in this he achieved some success. A few leaders of the sects and of the Binh Xuyen, however, were uncooperative. Prime Minister Diem’s position was strengthened when he was elected president in October 1955, replacing Bao Dai as Chief of State of South Vietnam, which he proclaimed a republic.

By April 1956 the Binh Xuyen had been defeated as an organized armed insurgent force, and dissident remnants of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao were also crushed or forced into exile. These victories, followed in mid-1956 by the trial and execution of the Hoa Hao leader, Ba Cut, helped to restore considerable confidence in the effectiveness
of the government's police and other law enforcement agencies. Meanwhile, arrangements were made to acquire the services of a police advisory group from Michigan State University to replace the French advisers, whose contracts were due to expire in 1956. In 1959 this group was replaced by personnel operating under the Public Safety Division of the United States Agency for International Development as part of the United States Operations Mission (USOM).

**Organization**

From the time of its establishment as an independent state until June 27, 1962, when President Diem signed a decree integrating all the then-existing police agencies into a single national police organization, South Vietnam depended upon a multiplicity of law enforcement groups with overlapping responsibilities. Before 1962 ordinary police functions had been performed mainly by the National Security Police, the Municipal Police and a paramilitary group known as the Civil Guard. All three forces were under the Secretary of State for Interior until 1960 when the Civil Guard was transferred to the Department of National Defense. Along with its transfer went a change to a strict military posture. The National Security Police and the Municipal Police were responsible to the Director General of Police and Security Services who reported to the Department of Interior. In addition, there was a directorate of police and security in each of the headquarters of the three regions into which the country had been divided. Each province also had a local chief of police and a security service. All the larger cities, such as Saigon, Hue, Da Lat and Da Nang, had municipal police forces.

With the signing of the integrating decree in 1962, all of these various law enforcement units were consolidated into a single police agency, called the Directorate General of National Police, under the direction of the Director General of National Police, responsible directly to the Department of Interior. As of early 1966 the Directorate General was composed of the headquarters proper, six regional directorates and a municipal directorate which included the police within the Saigon metropolitan area and the surrounding province of Gia Dinh. The regional directorates' headquarters were located at Hue, Nha Trang, Ban Me Thuot, Bien Hoa, My Tho and Can Tho. They were charged with the supervision of the police units located within the provinces making up the region, as well as the municipal police forces in the larger towns such as Hue, Da Nang, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, Da Lat and Vung Tau. Each province had a police chief who was responsible for the police activities within his province and also supervised the police organized in the various districts of the province.

The strength of public order and safety forces has increased substantially since 1963, when the National Police numbered 21,000, keep-
ing pace with the general increase of insurgency within the country. In early 1966 the National Police totaled about 52,000, and plans were in existence to increase this total to about 72,000. Of the 52,000 total, about 6,000 were allocated to the Directorate General proper, and approximately 14,000 were assigned to the Saigon Municipal Directorate. The six regional directorates varied in strength from about 3,000 to 7,000, depending on the number of provinces and of large population centers located within each.

**Responsibilities**

**Directorate General**

The headquarters of the Director General of National Police is located in Saigon, where he maintains a staff consisting of a deputy director and four assistant directors, one each for administration, intelligence, telecommunications and operations. Operating also at the assistant director level are the chiefs of the two major police counterinsurgency organizations, the National Police Field Forces and the Resources Control Service. Directly under control of the Director General is the Internal Activities Division, which deals with headquarters security, public information and inspections. It also contains the Internal Affairs Branch, which investigates alleged irregularities and complaints within the entire police organization.

The Assistant Director for Administration is responsible for general supervision and administrative control over personnel services, logistic support services, fiscal affairs, training, a crime laboratory and the identification and record service, which furnishes technical and scientific support for crime detection throughout the country. The Assistant Director for Intelligence is generally concerned with affairs relating to national security, including counterintelligence and countersubversive activities. The Assistant Director for Telecommunications supervises the countrywide communications service provided for the National Police and conducts a cryptographic bureau to fulfill police requirements. National Police communications are operated independently, but they are an integral part of the Combined Security Telecommunication Directorate which provides, operates and maintains facilities, systems and services for various government civil security agencies.

The Assistant Director for Operations is responsible for the supervision of the activities of the Judicial Police, Administrative Police, Rehabilitation Service, Immigration Service, Uniform and Traffic Police Service and Order Police.

The Judicial Police is the investigative arm of the National Police. Under Vietnamese law, investigation privileges are not given to all police, but to a limited number who conduct thorough and detailed investigations of criminal offenses and prepare cases for trial.
The Administrative Police perform functions derived from French practice, only a few of which are found in the American police system. These functions include assisting in the supervision of price regulations, the issuance of passports, visas, identity cards, radio licenses and weapons permits. They also make clearance checks on applicants for government positions.

The Rehabilitation Service is a relatively small group which is concerned only with those police matters relating to the incarceration of prisoners while in the custody of the National Police. The prison system is the primary responsibility of a separate Rehabilitation Directorate under the Department of Interior which assumes full control of prisoners who have been turned over to them to await trial or have been convicted and sentenced.

The Immigration Service of the National Police is responsible for all exit and entry matters, including those dealing with residence permits. It is also charged with the maintenance of supervisory control of foreigners for the purpose of extending or revoking resident permits as may be necessary.

The Uniform and Traffic Police Service deals exclusively with those problems relating to the uniformed municipal police. It assists in all matters involved in basic law enforcement, such as traffic control, patrolling, guarding of public property, investigation of ordinary crimes and the enforcement of local ordinances.

The Order Police, formerly known as Combat Police, represent a centrally controlled force whose various elements are strategically located throughout the country. They number about 500 and are organized and lightly equipped along military lines. Their primary mission is to assist in the quelling of riots and civil disturbances, but they are also used in protecting visiting dignitaries, reinforcing municipal police and assisting in large-scale search and security activities and the exploitation of intelligence collected by other elements of the National Police.

The National Police Field Forces represent a relatively new and major police advancement in counterinsurgency work. This quasi-military group was organized in 1962 as part of the Combat Police to help cope with the growing police problems brought on by the intensification of the Communist insurgency. Reorganized and separated from the Combat Police in 1965, these forces are planned to have an eventual strength of about 15,000. The mission of the National Police Field Forces is similar to that of the Order Police, but, in addition, they help local authorities consolidate government control in areas cleared of Viet Cong by regular army troops. These company-sized units are assigned to a province with the mission of detaching roving elements to various cleared villages for a temporary period of time to assist the rural police in firmly reorganizing the security of the
villages and reestablishing law and order. In early 1966 six companies of the Field Forces had completed training and were employed in the field.

The second major police effort in the field of counterinsurgency, the Resources Control Program, also was initiated in 1962. It was created as a defensive security measure to regulate the movement of people and goods and thereby restrict the flow of information and supplies to the Viet Cong. This system of controls has operated with considerable success in the Saigon and northern Mekong Delta areas, and appropriate elements of the system are being expanded throughout the country, consistent with the availability of police resources. The general program is based on several contributory programs—the National Identity Card Program, the Family Census Program, the National Checkpoint Program and the Police River Control Program. Each of these subprograms is centrally controlled, but operations are decentralized to the greatest practicable extent.

The National Identity Card Program consists of issuing identification cards to each of the nearly 8 million persons in the country who are 18 years of age and over. Printed on specially prepared paper for protective purposes, the card is laminated in plastic under heat and pressure and contains a photograph, two fingerprints and a physical description of the individual to whom it is issued. By early 1966 nearly 7½ million of these cards had been issued.

The Family Census Program was initiated in 1963 as an independent security measure and incorporated into the Resources Control Program approximately 1 year later. This subprogram consists of registering in a family booklet all pertinent data relative to all members of a particular family. A group photograph of the entire family is also included. Mobile processing teams have been utilized in this project, and over 1.5 million families had been registered through 1965.

As of early spring 1966 the National Checkpoint and the River Control Programs operated from a series of mobile and fixed control points strategically placed on land and in the offshore waters surrounding the major port and transshipment areas. Along extensive waterways a system of mother ships was employed, the ships serving as base points and extending the range of the smaller assigned patrol craft.

In carrying out their normal police duties, all elements of the National Police work in close cooperation with other governmental agencies which have limited police powers. One of the most important of these is the Directorate of Customs Service, which is part of the Ministry of Finance. This Directorate is responsible for smuggling and narcotics control, registration and inspection of commercial shipping, and border control. All of these responsibilities are closely
allied with the mission of the National Police in the overall national effort to maintain security and public order.

**Regional Directorates**

Each of the six regional directorates operates a scaled-down version of the headquarters of the Directorate General which furnishes supporting services and supervises police activities in the provinces within the region. It is headed by a Director who is assisted by a Deputy Director, a Chief for Administration, a Chief of Uniform Police and a Chief of Special Police. The Chief for Administration is responsible for personnel, supply, training, and document and laboratory services. The Chief of Uniform Police is responsible for judicial, traffic immigration, order and security police functions. The Special Police department concerns itself primarily with counterintelligence, countersubversive and counterinsurgency problems.

**Saigon Municipal Directorate**

The Saigon Municipal Directorate is the largest within the police system and performs the most varied and complex functions. Essentially, it serves in the role of a large reinforced Municipal Police department for the metropolitan area of Saigon, while at the same time discharging the many special tasks assigned to it as the principal operating arm of the Directorate General. It is organized into a headquarters, eight precincts, the Harbor Police, the Airport Police, the Traffic Police and the Gia Dinh provincial police. The normal uniformed Saigon city police force numbers about 10,000 and is charged with the maintenance of law and order within its eight precincts. Heavy emphasis is placed on antiterrorist security measures and control of black-market operations, vice and crimes of violence.

The Harbor Police are engaged in general law enforcement, and criminal investigation in the port area, performing passport checks on arriving ships, issuing passes for port workers and conducting security patrol of the Saigon railroad station and port installations. They also participate in the Resources Control Program with their harbor craft, concentrating on the control of the movement of contraband goods. The Airport Police, relatively small in number, have the primary duty of operating the civilian security controls at Tan Son Nhut international airport just outside Saigon.

Traffic of all types in the Saigon area multiplied manyfold in 1965 with the expansion of port and governmental activities, and slightly more than 700 Traffic Police are now assigned to cope with it. Like the Harbor Police they collaborate in the Resources Control Program and have contributed considerably to the success of that work. The police of Gia Dinh Province are utilized to a great extent in maintaining a general security belt around the Saigon area and its expanding environs.
Training

The general rapid expansion of the National Police has been accompanied by the development of an appreciable number of comprehensive training programs with the assistance of United States advisers. In 1966 these programs included courses in basic police work, command and leadership techniques, firearms and such technical subjects as photography, fingerprint classification, riot control procedures, communications, countersubversion and counterinsurgency. The principal training centers, including the National Police College, are situated in and around Saigon, Da Lat and Vung Tau, and each regional directorate operates a police school at its headquarters location. In early 1966 the total trainee capacity of the system was slightly greater than 5,000, and the annual output exceeded 20,000. More than 80,000 police officers and Regional Force personnel have been trained under these programs. All police recruits attend a standard 12-week basic course before being assigned to duty.

Improvements in training have been accompanied by equal advancement in the equipment furnished to the National Police. By the end of 1965, weapons types in use had been reduced in number from 36 to 7; weapons maintenance and repair services had been modernized; and an up-to-date system of storage and distribution had been put into effect. The reduction in the variety of weapons also simplified the stocking of ammunition and spare parts. Similar improvements were also made in the fields of transportation and specialized police equipment.

The National Police have a complicated rank and grade structure which reflects a primary division between the three functional categories: command, administration and operations. It is patterned basically after the French system and has two definite groups which can be compared to officers and enlisted men. The titles of rank are also a French heritage, but the great amount of United States assistance provided by the USOM Public Safety Division has introduced American equivalents, which are gaining in use.

Because of their national character and the nature of their work, the police are a visible symbol of the government and are in a position to influence public attitudes to an appreciable degree. This factor has been weighted heavily in the development of police counterinsurgency programs since 1963. Training programs also stress the "public servant" image of the police and have the goal of continually improving the "people-oriented" character of the police through increased efficiency and competence.

ROLE OF THE ARMY AND PARAMILITARY UNITS

In the years immediately following the end of the Indochina War in 1954, the Communist insurgents deliberately left behind in South
Vietnam were relatively weak and only sporadically active. The government, during this period, continued to utilize the National Gendarmerie that had been inherited from the French and organized two additional paramilitary groups, the Regional Force and the Popular Force, for the primary purpose of relieving army units of internal security duties. With the substantial increase in Communist insurgency after 1963, these paramilitary groups, except for the National Gendarmerie, were reorganized, modernized and strengthened in order to meet the growing Viet Cong threat.

**Gendarmerie**

The Gendarmerie was established by the French as a relatively small, uniformed, well-trained police organization, charged with civilian as well as military investigative functions. It was equipped by the army and operated throughout the country as an agency of the Department of Defense. Apparently because its highly specialized functions could be performed equally well within other existing organizations, the Gendarmerie was disestablished on January 1, 1965, 900 of its approximate 1,200 personnel being absorbed by the National Police and the remaining 300 being assigned to the Military Police.

**Regional Force**

The Regional Force is a national paramilitary group organized to provide internal security at the province level. Activated in 1955 under the Department of Interior, as the Civil Guard, it was transferred to the Department of Defense in 1960 and redesignated in 1964. Since that time it has grown in strength from 80,000 to about 119,000 men. It is a uniformed, lightly armed force, centrally administered by national and regional headquarters, but normally under operational control of the province chief. When employed jointly with units of the regular armed forces, however, it comes under operational control of the military commander.

Although organized into squads, platoons, companies and battalions, the company is the basic combat unit employed in offensive security operations. Included in its overall counterinsurgency mission is the collection of information, participation in civic action programs and the furtherance of confidence of the rural population in the central government.

**Popular Force**

Similar in general purpose to the Regional Force, but operating at the village and hamlet level, the Popular Force is a more static village defense organization. Recruited in villages, the men in this force are not uniformed and are less well armed. They are organized into squads, platoons and companies, with the squad the basic
unit used for employment, usually in local offensive and counterattack roles. Operational control is exercised through sector and subsector headquarters. As in the case of Regional Force, units of the Popular Force come under the operational control of the military commander when employed jointly with units of the regular armed forces.

The Popular Force is an outgrowth of the Self-Defense Corps which was created in 1956 as an adjunct to the regular security forces. In 1964 it had a strength of about 90,000; at that time it was combined with other local defense organizations, and by early 1966 it had grown to a strength of approximately 140,000. It receives extensive assistance from the United States Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV).

CRIMINAL COURTS AND PROCEDURES

Courts

Persons accused of criminal offenses generally are tried in one of three types of courts, depending on the nature and seriousness of the charge: a Court of First Instance, a Court of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction or a Court of the Peace. There are also special military tribunals which have jurisdiction not only over military offenders but also over apprehended Communists and all persons regarded as a threat to national security. Also, in February 1966, the government activated a Special Court for the duration of the war to deal with crimes relating to war profiteering and corruption. Seated in Saigon, this court has territorial jurisdiction throughout the country and is empowered to try both civilian and military personnel. It is composed of a presiding judge, two assistant judges, a prosecutor and one or more assistant prosecutors. It may impose sentences ranging from imprisonment to the death penalty (see ch. 13, The Governmental System; ch. 27, The Armed Forces).

There are seven Courts of First Instance in South Vietnam, and they sit in Saigon, My Tho, Vinh Long, Bien Hoa, Hue, Da Nang and Nha Trang. Courts of First Instance have jurisdiction over civil, commercial and criminal cases, including felonies and misdemeanors. They are also authorized to rehear cases previously tried in a Court of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction or in an ordinary Court of the Peace. A Court of First Instance is composed of a presiding judge, at least three assistant judges and an examining magistrate. The examining magistrate makes preliminary investigations and prepares the evidence for presentation by the prosecutor at the trial. A prosecuting attorney—not a member of the court—represents the state in pressing the charges against the accused. The prosecuting attorney or his deputy must be present at all sessions trying a criminal or civil case. In criminal cases he is responsible for carrying out the court's decisions.
There are 20 Courts of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction. Each of these appears to exercise judicial control over the Courts of the Peace within a specific territory. The Courts of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction have jurisdiction over civil and commercial cases, including labor disputes and litigation over work accidents, and also over felonies and misdemeanors. The latter jurisdiction, however, seems to overlap with that of the Courts of the First Instance. In practice, the Courts of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction appear to hear misdemeanor cases and cases involving the less serious felonies, while serious criminal cases of national or regional interest are normally placed before a Court of the First Instance.

A Court of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction is ordinarily composed of one magistrate who functions in the triple capacities of presiding judge, examining magistrate and prosecuting attorney. He is assisted by a court clerk. For criminal cases two assistant judges from a Court of First Instance or two justices of the peace may be added.

Courts of the Peace, each consisting of a justice of the peace and a court clerk, are the lowest courts in the judicial system. Besides trying minor civil cases and cases involving petty penal offenses, they are authorized to conciliate disputes brought before them by local citizens. When a misdemeanor or a felony comes to his attention, the justice of the peace makes a preliminary inquiry into the case and forwards his report, together with the complaints, charges and other data pertaining to the case, to the prosecuting attorney of the Court of First Instance or to the magistrate of the Court of the Peace with Extended Jurisdiction, depending upon which has competence. Appeals to decisions rendered by a justice of the peace in a Court of the Peace are heard by the court having jurisdiction over him.

**Criminal Laws**

The legal code consists of a body of decrees, legislation and court rulings, some of which date from the colonial period. Juridical concepts and practice combine indigenous Vietnamese, traditional Chinese and French elements. In the absence of a uniform code of criminal law, judges, particularly those in the lowest courts, often mete out sentences which vary greatly for the same offense and which reflect nonlegal considerations, such as the social status or national or ethnic origin of the offender.

Formerly even those convicted of serious crimes could pay a fine in lieu of other punishment, and, since the law tended to be moralizing and general rather than prescriptive and specific and the discretionary powers of magistrates were great, it was often difficult to distinguish a fine from a bribe. This tradition has been disountenanced in modern times, but the attitudes associated with it have proved to be per-
consistent, and charges of venality in the court system are common. A complete review of legal codes and procedures was undertaken in late 1955. In 1958 the Department of Justice published the Reformed Rural Code, the Civil Procedure and the Explanatory Background of the Civil Law. By early 1966, however, a uniform body of criminal law apparently still had not been adopted, although study reportedly was begun in 1962.

The organization of the courts suggests that four general categories of criminal offenses are recognized: petty offenses, misdemeanors, felonies and crimes against the state. Important legislation passed by the National Assembly in 1959 fixed penalties for various crimes against the state, such as sabotage, loss or damage of public property and assassination of public officials. To try persons charged with offenses which had been defined by these laws, special military tribunals were created. There is no press coverage of such trials, and it appears that they are often held in secret.

Rural Justice

In the villages of the lowlands and in the mountain regions many disputes and petty offenses are dealt with informally by family heads and local leaders. Under existing conditions such customary proceedings seem to have at least the tacit approval of the authorities, although they are not entered in the records of the formal court system.

Lowland Village Justice

In the lowland villages the district chiefs have limited judicial powers. When using their authority to gather evidence and to bring offenders to court, they function as assistants to the prosecuting attorney. They are not authorized to hold trials of any kind, but they may arrest anyone caught in a criminal act, interrogate witnesses and prepare an official statement for the prosecuting attorney. When a serious crime has been committed, the district chief makes a personal investigation on the scene and informs the prosecuting attorney of the facts. Where public safety or morals are involved, the provincial governor must also be informed. Village chiefs are authorized to mediate disputes between villagers, but criminal offenders are customarily turned over to the police for investigation to determine what further action is to be taken.

Most disputes in lowland villages are settled informally by hamlet chiefs or village councils. Differences between members of the same family are probably most often settled within the family to avoid the disgrace attached to airing family troubles in public. Angry villagers seeking a settlement of their differences commonly take their cases first to the heads of the families involved or to the hamlet chief. If settlement cannot be agreed upon, they then may go to the village
council, which serves as an informal court for petty offenses or minor litigations. The limited information available indicates that most complaints or infractions arise from quarrels within or between families, disputes over property ownership or damage, defaults in debts or services, altercations over the use of land or irrigation water, jealousy and marital infidelity.

The informal judicial role of the village council is an important means of preserving tranquility. Moreover, hearing cases enables the council to keep closely in touch with village attitudes and activities. Procedures are extremely informal, with no ritual and seemingly with no particular person in charge. The contending parties on entering the village hall may begin telling their stories to the first councilman they meet. Onlookers may interject statements, and the councilman may make suggestions for settlement or refer the disputants to the police chief, who, though without specific legal authority, also acts as adjudicator in village quarrels.

In serious disputes the entire council may meet and listen to the complaints of the parties. After questioning them the council may ask the hamlet chief to investigate further, delegate the case to him for settlement or itself try to effect a reconciliation. It may also require indemnity for loss or damage, levy fines or impose other sanctions, such as contributions of labor to village projects. Unresolved cases are forwarded to the district chief for further consideration.

A threat to refer a case to the district chief, who may place it before a court, often brings a settlement. Village justice, which costs nothing, generally seems to be administered effectively, and villagers prefer its relatively mild operation to the expense and possible severity of the regular courts.

Montagnard Justice

Among the montagnards in the highland areas customary law and the manner of settling disputes varies among the different ethnic groups. It appears, however, that everywhere the local council of elders combines juridical with governing functions.

So-called Highland Customs Courts, some of which may even dispose of felonies, were reactivated in early 1966 in the provincial capitals of the Central Highlands. These courts apparently were closed in 1963, toward the end of President Ngo’s regime, in accordance with its policy of intensifying centralized control of the country.

The president of one such court was reportedly a member of the dominant ethnic group in the province. He was assisted by several other representatives of his group and by a court clerk. The court convened on certain days each month to hear disputes between montagnards. Altercations between families about property were said to be common, but the most frequent and troublesome cases apparently
involved marital infidelity. Vietnamese who came to this region from urban areas reportedly regarded the justice meted out by the customary courts as unusually harsh. Information pertaining to incidence of crime and penalties imposed is not available.

THE PENAL SYSTEM

The prison system, referred to as the Rehabilitation Directorate, is headed by the Director General of Rehabilitation Centers, who is directly responsible to the Secretary of State for Interior. The headquarters of the directorate is located in Saigon and is responsible for the overall administration, security, the selection and training of staff personnel and the rehabilitation of prisoners to include vocational training.

Forty-one prison centers are scattered throughout the country, 34 of which are under control of the provinces. Seven centers, including the major one, Chi Hoa, in Saigon and the prison island of Con Son (about 140 miles south of Saigon), are centrally controlled by the Directorate General. In addition, municipal jails and village police centers also serve as places for the detention of light offenders and persons awaiting trial. Prison installations and facilities, with only a few newer additions, consist almost entirely of those inherited from the French. With USOM Public Safety Division assistance, plans have been developed for an expansion and modernization program for the entire system.

In early 1966 the prison population had been reduced to a total of about 16,000 after a steady decline from a previous high of 30,000 in 1963. Most of this reduction resulted from the emphasis placed on the rehabilitation and reeducation of "political" (Viet Cong) prisoners, who make up the single largest category of detainees. Prisoners are transferred from one center to another, depending upon length of sentence or crowded conditions. The policy in the past has been to send to the Con Son island prison all political prisoners who have been sentenced to over 3 years and have that much time left to serve. Convicted criminals with sentences of 5 years or more are also sent to Con Son, but may be maintained in the prison serving the province of their origin, if conditions permit.

The Chief of State has the power to mitigate sentences and grant pardons. In exercising this power, he has been generally guided by the recommendations of the Pardon Commission, of which the Secretary of State for Justice is the presiding officer. Announcements of amnesty and executive clemency are usually made on national holidays and other memorable occasions.
Treason and other major offenses against the State, particularly those directly affecting national security, are regarded as the most serious crimes. The greatly expanded wartime conditions within the country since 1963 have brought a great increase in those crimes directly related to this expansion: speculating, hoarding, black-marketeering, smuggling, desertion, forgery of documents, draft evasion, and corruption among officials and war suppliers. Crimes against the state are commonly given wide publicity, as are convictions resulting from corruption and war profiteering. Infractions against persons are treated more nearly as general news items and receive limited press notice.

Crime statistics are lacking, but the offenses having an economic background apparently have increased with the war effort in far greater proportion to crimes of violence. Petty offenses and misdemeanors are quite common, and their rates are usually directly related to population increases caused by war dislocation.

**Types of Punishment**

The most common punishments are fines, imprisonment and confinement at hard labor. Information is scanty regarding the penalties attaching to various offenses and the maximum punishments that different courts may impose. The death sentence is still applied in accordance with the French criminal code and is carried out with the guillotine. Death sentences imposed by the Special Court dealing with war profiteering and corruption are carried out by firing squads.

**Political Offenses and Punishments**

A presidential ordinance of January 1956, still believed to be in effect, provided that persons regarded as "dangerous to national defense and common security" could be imprisoned or compelled to reside at a specific place under police supervision. The application of this ordinance, which contained no provisions for hearings, in cases involving mass demonstrations or other civil disturbances has resulted on occasion in numerous arrests and detentions. Ringleaders or suspected troublemakers have been effectively divorced from their base of strength by being placed in "forced residence" in selected provinces or towns or by being exiled from the country for periods of time.

Another decree of the same year authorized heavy fines and prison sentences up to 5 years for persons convicted of publishing statements which could endanger security and public order; journals or newspapers in which such statements were printed could also be suspended. The provisions of this latter decree were reinforced by the government of Prime Minister Ky on June 24, 1965, when it promulgated a series
of State-of-War (National Emergency) regulations. These regulations specifically prohibited the distribution of books, newspapers, leaflets and other publications, photographs or documents harmful to national security. On the date of promulgation the Secretary for Psychological Warfare suspended 36 South Vietnamese newspapers for 3 days for violating these regulations (see ch. 16, Public Information).

Criminal Offenses

Gambling and other offenses not regarded as involving moral turpitude are generally punished with no more than a fine. Vice is more severely dealt with, and such offenses as opium smoking, prostitution, embezzlement and robbery are apt to bring prison sentences. Murder and aggravated assault are among the most serious crimes and may be punished with sentences ranging from 5 years' imprisonment to death. Crimes against the state, as defined in Law Number 10 of May 1959, call for the severest punishments. In furtherance of an effort to reduce crimes against the public interests, Chief of State Nguyen Van Thieu, in June 1965, announced that a forced-labor camp was being opened on Cu Lao Re (an island in the South China Sea, 75 miles southeast of Da Nang) for black-marketeers, corrupt officials and lesser criminals.

The death penalty and confiscation of property are prescribed for persons guilty of murder, poisoning or abduction of public officials, or of sabotaging (by explosives or fire) public buildings, dwellings, storehouses, factories, churches, temples or pagodas. The same sanctions apply to persons guilty of willfully damaging air, land or water transport facilities; mining installations, communications and power systems; agricultural crops, cattle or machinery; dikes, dams, bridges, canals or port facilities.

Life imprisonment with forced labor and confiscation of property (all or part) is decreed for those convicted of interrupting transportation on land, air or water by terrorism or intimidation, threatening assassination, abduction or arson (burning of dwellings or crops); disruption of public markets; and plundering. Membership in any group plotting against the state is also a crime. If persons involved in such groups help to bring the principals to justice before authorities begin action on the case, they may be given reduced sentences or immunity from prosecution in return.

Smuggling and Black-Marketing

Smuggling and black-marketing in normal times reduce internal revenue collections and thus indirectly retard development of the national economy. As serious as the peacetime effects of these illegal actions are, their effects under the wartime stress experienced by South
Vietnam in early 1966 were extraordinarily serious in terms of inflation, war supplies diverted to the Viet Cong and huge losses in needed revenue. Both kinds of activity are difficult and costly to control. The opportunities for black-marketing are as broad as the scope of trade itself and are even more dangerously enlarged with the influx of massive foreign aid into South Vietnam. Smugglers have the same advantages as those exploited by the Viet Cong in their general infiltration tactics—a long coastline almost impossible to police and land frontiers which are relatively inaccessible, sparsely settled and overgrown with dense tropical cover.

Opium, most of it apparently produced in Laos and Cambodia, is historically the most important item of the smuggling trade. The drug is introduced into the country on foot, in land vehicles, by airplane and by coastal craft. The main distributing point for retailers in South Vietnam is Saigon. A greater variety and volume in smuggled goods has also been brought about by the intensified Viet Cong insurgency. The most important of these items are gold, watches, cigarettes, medicines and foodstuffs.
CHAPTER 27

THE ARMED FORCES

The Armed Forces of South Vietnam were actively engaged in early 1966 in countrywide warfare against strong Communist-led and -controlled insurgent forces. The extensive military aid rendered by the United States had resulted in noticeable modification of much of the French heritage of the South Vietnamese forces as they had developed and expanded in the previous few years. While appreciable progress was made in improving the overall framework and posture of the military forces on the field of battle and off, limitations still existed, and the government was striving to overcome them through improved and more effective training and administrative procedures.

South Vietnam in early 1966 maintained a military establishment of approximately 585,000 officers and men, almost equally divided between the regular armed forces (Army, Navy and Air Force) and the paramilitary forces composed of three well-developed groups. Within the regular forces the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (commonly referred to as ARVN, or the Army—see Glossary), predominated, with an estimated strength of nearly 264,000. Naval strength (including Marines) was about 25,000, and the Air Force totaled slightly more than 11,000. The paramilitary groups, which supplemented the regular forces, included the Regional Force (formerly Civil Guard) of about 120,000 men, the Popular Force (formerly Self-Defense Corps) of approximately 140,000 and the Civilian Irregular Defense Group of nearly 25,000. These paramilitary organizations were utilized almost exclusively for regional security, static defense and special counterinsurgency operations. All components have been provided equipment supplied by the United States. Since 1954 training in the regular forces, with the assistance of United States advisers, has closely followed United States military concepts adapted to accommodate specific Vietnamese capabilities and modified to meet the country's needs in its prolonged struggle to defeat the Communist insurgency within its borders.

Throughout the history of Vietnam the people have regarded their precolonial warriors with great respect, second only to that accorded to their scholars, because of their part in the centuries-long struggle
for independence from the Chinese. The people also supported the military expansion against their neighbors to the South, the Chams and the Khmers (Cambodians), in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. National holidays commemorate military leaders’ successes, and lyric poetry praising war, honor, loyalty and Confucian morality has always been a favorite literary form (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The Army of the Republic of Vietnam in 1966 was a relatively young army, with an increasing number of combat-seasoned officers and men. Many general officers were still in their forties and had held a variety of assignments in operation field units. A large proportion of the officers had received commissions after attending Da Lat Military Academy, had been commissioned from officer candidate schools or had received battlefield commissions. Educational requirements were being revised in order that more combat-experienced soldiers and noncommissioned officers could qualify for officer training. Most of the enlisted men were youths who had enlisted or had been drafted after 1957 and who had only limited experience in counterinsurgency action against the Viet Cong (a condensed form of the term Viet Nam Cong San—meaning Vietnamese Communists—see Glossary).

Since 1954 the Army has gradually developed from a rudimentary force serving within the French Union Forces into a regular military establishment, well-organized, cohesive and reflecting a broad, nationally based character. The necessity of dealing with increasing Viet Cong activity over the past 6 years has done much to increase battle worthiness, but it has also served to deprive the military forces of the training time necessary to improve their all-round effectiveness. The introduction of United States combat troops in 1965, to help check the increasing counterinsurgency effort, has contributed to a spirit of mounting general confidence within the Army and within the country.

BACKGROUND

The Vietnamese pride themselves on the courage and fighting ability of their men, and they look back on a long history of bloody wars, generally defensive but sometimes offensive in character. In the tenth century they expelled the Chinese who had ruled them for nearly 1,000 years and thereafter, except for a later brief period of reasserted Chinese occupation, resisted both Chinese and Mongol invasions (see ch. 3, Historical Setting).

The first Vietnamese military academy was established in the mid-thirteenth century. The government at that time had a dual hierarchy of civil and military mandarins under the emperor. Many generals distinguished themselves in successful defensive actions against stronger enemy forces. Vietnamese historians take special pride in their country’s forces which stopped the formidable Mongol army of Kublai Khan in 1285.
During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Vietnamese engaged in intermittent wars with the Chams and the Khmers, their neighbors to the south, who occupied most of the southern part of what is now South Vietnam. Eventually, the Vietnamese decisively defeated the Chams, occupied their lands and all but exterminated them. The Khmers were also subdued, and Vietnamese control was extended throughout the Mekong Delta.

A cult of military heroes eventually developed; their exploits are celebrated in song and story, and temples have been erected in their memory. These celebrated events include heroic defeats as well as great victories, as in the case of the Trung sisters who led a revolt against the Chinese in the first century A.D. and chose suicide rather than surrender (see ch. 3, Historical Setting). The episode has long been a source of inspiration to Vietnamese artists and writers, and it is commemorated annually as an example of self-sacrificing devotion to country.

Throughout most of the long period of French colonial rule the Vietnamese served primarily as indigenous auxiliaries within the French Union Forces. These organizations were mixed with French units and performed general field and garrison duties. This subordinate status of the Vietnamese military remained essentially unchanged during the greater part of World War II since, by agreement, the Japanese permitted the French to continue to exercise control over the country during that period. Although the Japanese took over full control in March 1945, French authority was restored in September of the same year after the surrender of the Japanese.

Meanwhile, the Viet Minh (see Glossary), under Communist leader Ho Chi Minh, gained control of the nationalist movement and sought to establish a so-called independent Vietnamese government. When the French returned to power, they were unwilling to grant independence to Vietnam outside the French Union, and continued Vietnamese resistance led to the Indochina War. The growing demands of that war caused the French, in 1949, to alter their previous policy of not permitting independent indigenous forces and to form the first Vietnamese regular military units under French officers and noncommissioned officers.

By the close of the war, in 1954, the Vietnamese army had grown to an appreciable force of well over 200,000, but it had little or no artillery, armor, communications or other support troops. It was weak in staff and command positions above the rank of major, and its morale and prestige had been adversely affected by having participated in a losing war.

After Vietnam was declared a republic in 1955, French cadres were withdrawn, but French advisers remained until 1957, when they were replaced by those from the United States. Since 1955 the Army
has continued its progressive development into a competent fighting force despite the harassment and interference to training caused by the Viet Cong insurgency.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Manpower

Early in 1966 the strength of the military establishment was approximately 585,000, or about 3.6 percent of the total population. This included those on duty with the paramilitary forces as well as those in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force. Further increases in both the regular and paramilitary forces have been forecast as a result of the upsurge in Viet Cong activity. It is estimated that there were approximately 4,371,000 fit males between the ages of 15 and 49 in South Vietnam as of January 1, 1965. About one-half of this total were regarded as fit for military service. Each year about 140,000 males reach military age. This manpower base is sufficient to keep units up to their authorized strength. A source of general reserve manpower exists in those individuals who have served on active duty with elements of the armed forces and have since been demobilized. The government in 1965 initiated a census of males in this category between the ages of 20 and 45.

Military Budget

The struggle against the Communist insurgency imposes a burden of military expenditure which the country's economy can carry only with extensive foreign aid. Since its emergence as a national entity in 1954, South Vietnam's yearly contribution toward the development and maintenance of its military establishment has been well under 20 percent of the actual cost, and the percentage has decreased with rising costs as the security forces have been enlarged and strengthened (see ch. 23, Foreign Economic Relations; ch. 24, Public Finance).

The funds allocated for defense in the annual budget remained fairly constant from 1958 to 1962 when they mounted sharply because of a substantial increase in the armed forces. After 1962 military expenditures rose steadily from this higher plateau and by the end of 1965 were expected to have doubled the 1962 rate. In relation to the total budget, the portion allocated for defense declined from 44 percent in 1958 to less than 39 percent in 1961, but, as an indication of growing concern over the security situation, it increased to approximately 50 percent in 1962 and continued to mount through 1965. Forecasts for fiscal year 1966 indicate that close to 63 percent of the total national budget will be earmarked for defense.

In 1965 the military budget amounted to approximately 25.7 billion piasters (for value of the piaster, see Glossary). The United States
aid program, however, provided about 70.35 billion additional piasters, exclusive of the cost of such materiel as weapons, vehicles, aircraft, naval craft and ammunition, which was also acquired under the air program. Including the cost of these items, the South Vietnamese Government actually paid for about 10 percent of the national defense costs. Meanwhile, the allocation to the military establishment was larger, by far, than for any other single governmental agency.

Military expenditures have not roused any significant popular criticism, although the subject is exploited overtly and clandestinely by Communist propagandists. The human and material sacrifices required to counter Viet Cong aggression are felt keenly among the rural population, but few people are in a position to reflect on the division and expenditures of government revenue.

MISSION AND ORGANIZATION

Mission

The dual mission of the armed forces is to defend the nation's sovereignty and to eliminate the Communist insurgency within the national territory. Since the withdrawal of the French Union Forces from Vietnam in June 1956, the principal task of the military has been the internal one of ending threats to the security of the state—first from armed religious sects and lawless groups and currently from the Viet Cong (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety).

The Army, as the major component of the armed forces, is expected to exert the main effort in offensive operations against the Viet Cong and at the same time to act as a ready reserve in support of the operations of the local Regional Force and the Popular Force against insurgent forces. In addition, elements of the Army perform many important noncombat functions, most of them indirectly related to the improvement of internal security. Most district, provincial and regional chiefs are army officers, and many others are on temporary duty with government civilian agencies. The Army also participates in many aspects of various civic action projects and provides considerable assistance in the overall rural reconstruction program (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

The official mission of the Regional Force is to enforce the law and maintain public order and security in rural areas. It is also responsible for assisting other components of the armed forces in the reestablishment of internal security throughout the national territory.

The local Popular Front groups are charged with helping the authorities in the villages and other administrative units in which they are organized to maintain public order and security. They guard against sabotage and terrorist activities and protect public works. They are also used on emergency relief missions to local areas stricken
by fire, flood and devastating storms. Despite their wide range of responsibilities their police powers are limited to the apprehension of offenders and turning them over to the police (see ch. 26, Public Order and Safety).

The Civilian Irregular Defense Group has the broad mission of preserving national security through territorial border surveillance. These units are also employed in other special operations.

The general mission of the Navy is to provide for the security of the sea approaches to the country and for the protection of the inland waterways in the Mekong Delta. It may also be called upon to furnish water transportation for Army personnel and materiel. It is charged with maintaining a marine group capable of conducting operations either alone or in conjunction with Army forces. The Navy also is responsible for maintaining coastal and inland waterway counterinsurgency patrols and to assist, when called upon, custom officials or internal security authorities operating against smugglers or others engaged in illegal activities.

The Air Force, besides providing close air support for ground troops, has additional missions which include: attacking guerrilla groups and installations; transporting ground forces and their supplies; airlifting airborne troops; aerial reconnaissance; and search and rescue operations.

**High Command**

Pending the promulgation of a permanent constitution, supreme command of the armed forces, as a part of the national sovereignty, was vested temporarily in a Congress of the Armed Forces under the provisional government established on June 19, 1965. The Congress of the Armed Forces, in turn, delegated to a National Leadership Committee the exercise of all power and authority over the affairs of the nation, including military (see ch. 13, The Governmental System).

The Chairman of the National Leadership Committee acts as Chief of State and, upon recommendation of the Minister of War and Reconstruction and with the approval of the Committee, appoints and promotes all general officers. The Chairman is also empowered to award decorations and grant amnesty, and, based on the approval of the Congress of the Armed Forces, he also has the authority to declare war, make peace and conclude international agreements. A National Security Council was created to assist and advise the Chief of State in carrying out his duties concerning states of emergency, martial law or actual law in parts or in the whole of the national territory.

The position and title of Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces was not established within the provisional government, but the military authority commonly associated with that office is apparently discharged by the Minister of War and Reconstruction within the complex of the Central Executive Committee (Cabinet). Air Vice
Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, as Chairman of the Central Executive Committee, acts as Prime Minister and has retained the position of Commander of the Air Force. The Minister of War and Reconstruction, Lieutenant General Nguyen Huu Co, concurrently holds the position of Secretary of Defense and in October 1965 was designated Deputy Prime Minister. Upon this latter appointment he was relieved of the post of Chief of the Joint General Staff, an office which in practice also included the functions of Commander of the Army (see fig. 12).

The Minister of War and Reconstruction has an extensive staff organization through which he directs the defense establishment and pacification efforts of the government. With concurrent control of the office of Secretary of Defense, he has direct control of all aspects of military activities, both administrative and operational.

Directly subordinate to the Minister of War and Reconstruction (and Secretary of Defense) is the Chairman of the Joint General Staff, with a Chief of Staff through whom he directs the commanders of the Air Force, the Navy and the Marine Corps, as well as the commanders of the principal field commands, installations and facilities. The so-called Joint General Staff is in fact an Army general staff composed almost entirely of Army officers who also perform staff functions for the Navy and Air Force. As in the case of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, the title and position of Commander of the Army is nonexistent. The responsibilities of such an office are included for all intents and purposes within those of the Chief of the Joint General Staff.

The Joint General Staff is organized along United States Army staff lines, adjusted and modified to meet the particular requirements of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces. There are four deputy chiefs of staff who have supervisory responsibility over the general staff divisions and offices. The Deputy Chief of Staff, Personnel, supervises J-1 (personnel) as well as the Staff Judge Advocate and the Adjutant General; the Deputy Chief of Staff, Logistics, is responsible for the Logistics Division and the Technical Services; the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, directs J-2 (intelligence), J-3 (operations), J-5 (plans) and J-6 (communications); and the Deputy Chief of Staff, Political Warfare, supervises the work of the Political Warfare Division.
Figure 12. High Command of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, 1966
FIELD COMMAND

Army

Direct channels operate between the Joint General Staff and field commands. This centralized chain of command extends from the Chief of the Joint General Staff through the Chief of Staff to corps commanders. From corps level it passes to commanders responsible for the conduct of tactical operations who may be either division commanders or commanders of specially designated forces (see fig. 13).

Territorially, the country is organized into four corps areas and a Capital Military Region, for purposes of command, administration and logistics. Each corps area embraces several provinces and has two or more divisions assigned to it. The Capital Military Region includes the Saigon-Cho Lon metropolitan area and the surrounding Gia Dinh Province. The corps areas function as tactical military zones, and corps commanders are responsible for the conduct of all security operations against the Viet Cong within their respective zones.

At the end of 1965, corps designations, with the location of corps with their headquarters and areas of responsibilities, were as follows: I Corps, Da Nang—northernmost provinces; II Corps, Pleiku—the central provinces; III Corps, Saigon—provinces between the central provinces and the Mekong Delta, except for the Capital Military Region; and IV Corps, Can Tho—Mekong Delta. The Army’s 10 divisions are allocated to corps areas generally in proportion to the density of population and the intensity of Viet Cong insurgency activities in the areas. As of late 1965, I Corps and II Corps each had two divisions; III Corps and IV Corps, in the densely populated southern portions of the country, each had three divisions.

The corps areas are divided into divisional tactical zones, each generally comprising several civil provinces. Most civil provinces are headed by military officers who serve concurrently as commanders of troops within their provinces and, in such capacity, are subordinate to their respective division commanders for the conduct of security operations. When special security measures dictate, certain areas within provinces are designated for intensified counterinsurgency operations. Two such sectors, Zones “C” and “D,” have been so designated in the III Corps area because of the heavy concentration of Viet Cong elements located there.
Figure 13. Field Command of the South Vietnamese Armed Forces, 1966.
Navy

The Navy, under a Chief of Naval Operations, is composed of Operating Forces and the Shore Establishments. The Operating Forces include the Sea Force, the River Force, the Coastal Force and the Marine Corps. The Sea Force consists of three squadrons (patrol, amphibious and minesweeping) and includes various types of small ships, such as escort vessels, patrol boats, minesweepers and shallow-draft landing craft. The River Force is divided into a number of River Assault Groups, a River Escort Group and a River Transport Group. This force is assigned light armed and armored patrol boats, as well as LCVPs (landing craft, vehicles, personnel). The Coastal Force is a former paramilitary group (Junk Force) which was incorporated into the Navy in 1965 and operates more than 400 junks in 28 divisions. It is charged primarily with the surveillance of intracoastal shipping.

The Marine Corps, composed principally of a marine group with headquarters in Saigon, is organized into several battalions with infantry, artillery and support elements; these are similar to units of the United States Marine Corps. The Shore Establishments include the Naval Headquarters, Supply Center, and Shipyard, all in Saigon, and the principal naval training center at Nha Trang.

Air Force

The Air Force is organized into five tactical wings and a depot wing. Operating units include transport, helicopter, tactical and liaison squadrons distributed among the major air bases throughout the country, including Saigon, Nha Trang, Ban Me Thuot, Bien Hoa and Pleiku. The principal air training center is at Nha Trang. Air Force Headquarters, with supporting staff elements, is in Saigon.

POSITION OF THE MILITARY IN GOVERNMENT

The overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem by a military coup in 1963 projected the military into a position of overall political control which it has continued to maintain, although no less than seven abrupt changes in governmental leadership have taken place since that time. The previous constitutional position of the armed forces, subordinate to the authority of a civilian president, was initially set aside by the military coup of 1963. Since June 1965 supreme authority has been vested in a Congress of the Armed Forces of South Vietnam (see ch. 13, The Governmental System; ch. 14, Political Dynamics).

The Vietnamese have long preferred civilians as a source of national leadership, and they feel that they have had good leaders in the historical past. Since the creation of South Vietnam as a republic in 1955 it has been beset with political, economic, social and security
problems which have increasingly threatened its national survival. The extent of dissatisfaction with President Diem's regime and the intensification of the Communist insurgency brought the intervention of the military.

Before the seizure of power in 1963 none of the military leaders of the country played an important part in the formulation of national policy. Under President Diem the military forces were an instrument of rule, but they played almost no part in formulating that rule. Since taking over governmental control the military have taken little part in civilian political activities and movements and, as a group, have succeeded in retaining their collective strength and unity. With the passage of time this corporate unity may be subject to dilution through the reemergence of general political activity.

FOREIGN INFLUENCE

Late in 1954 the South Vietnamese Government requested the United States to undertake training functions on an equal basis with the French. By 1957 all French training missions had been withdrawn, and a United States Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) took over the major task of training the Vietnamese forces and substituting United States methods for French ones. The training mission increased steadily in size from about 800 in 1960 to about 2,000 in 1961; to nearly 11,000 in 1962; to approximately 15,000 in 1963; and reached more than 23,000 in 1964. The number decreased in 1965 to about 5,000 when the United States assumed a more direct combat role in aiding South Vietnam. The great interest and continued determination of the United States was expressed in 1962 when the United States Military Assistance Command for Vietnam (MACV) was formed in order to deal more effectively with the problems of increased military support.

In 1965, with South Vietnam critically involved in an evermounting struggle, the United States initiated direct participation in the war against the Viet Cong with combat troops, in addition to supplying advisers. United States troop strength increased to more than 160,000 in 1965 and had almost reached 230,000 by early 1966. In addition, major United States naval forces were deployed off the coast in a direct support combat role. Extensive United States Air Force elements were moved to South Vietnam, and others were assigned long-range bombing missions against Communist targets in North and South Vietnam.

Direct United States combat troop presence has fortified the United States influence imparted by the American advisers operating at all command and staff echelons of all components of the South Vietnamese armed forces. Also, over the past few years, a sizable number of Vietnamese officers and men have attended military schools in the United
States or have been sent on orientation visits to American military installations.

Aside from the United States, which is carrying the main burden of support for South Vietnam, foreign influence of a far less significant degree has resulted from the assistance of some 32 other nations. These nations have contributed various amounts of military and civilian aid in one form or another. Australia, New Zealand, and South Korea have contributed limited numbers of field troops, and a small unit is likely to be made available by the Philippine Government. Other assistance has included aviation crews, police and counterinsurgency instructors, surgical teams, and various forms of noncombat aid (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations).

South Vietnam has no military alliances with other nations, but, although it is not a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), it receives protection as a protocol state under Article IV as a result of military aggression by North Vietnam (see ch. 15, Foreign Relations).

**INSURGENCY**

The end of the Indochina War in 1954 left Communist North Vietnam with a highly developed composite politicomilitary organization, under the direction of Ho Chi Minh, capable of waging war both as a guerrilla underground force and as a conventional land army. This organization was then deployed throughout Vietnam, with about 90,000 military troops occupying portions of South Vietnam. With the signing of the Geneva Agreement in 1954, which partitioned the country, most of these troops were regrouped and evacuated to North Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh left many thousands of specially selected men (variously estimated from 5,000 to 10,000) and numerous caches of arms and equipment behind in hideouts in the remote jungles of the Mekong Delta and the mountainous region north of Saigon. When the government of the newly formed Republic of Vietnam refused to participate in the referendum, those men known as the Viet Cong served as the nucleus of military and subversive efforts to overthrow the government.

During 1956 and 1957 the Viet Cong elements devoted most of their time to recruiting and expanding their bases throughout South Vietnam. Many South Vietnamese Communists who had withdrawn with the North Vietnamese forces in 1954 and had completed instruction courses in subversive tactics returned to the South to take up responsible positions in the Communist movement. Military units were strengthened in manpower and equipment, and strong efforts were made to exploit the unrest and confusion which accompanied the establishment of the new government of South Vietnam.

Having received substantial increases in men and materiel in 1958, the Viet Cong embarked on a new campaign of terror and intimidation.
Their strength mounted to about 12,000, and with relatively small units they increased the tempo of guerrilla harassment, sabotage and intimidation of additional areas of the country. By 1960 the Viet Cong began attacking in company-sized units and, on occasion, in groups of up to several battalions in strength. Meanwhile, reinforcements infiltrated from the North in increasing numbers, and more local recruits were obtained.

By 1962 the Viet Cong numbered more than 75,000 and were divided into three main categories: full-time guerrillas, part-time guerrillas and village activists. The full-time guerrillas, organized into companies and battalions, numbered over 18,000 and constituted the hard-core of the Viet Cong forces; the part-time guerrillas, approximating 40,000 in strength, were organized on a district basis into platoons or company-sized units. They were provided with small arms, grenades, landmines and explosive charges and received some training while assembled in hideouts or guarding cached supplies.

The village activists, also with an approximate strength of 17,000, were, in effect, an active reserve in the villages. Working at their regular occupations during the day, they participated in night missions on the orders of the area guerrilla leader. Their usual arms were knives and machetes, but a village group on occasion possessed several submachine guns as well as rifles, grenades and landmines. Viet Cong of this latter type played an important role, identifying lucrative military targets, procuring recruits and food supplies and furnishing information on the vulnerability of village defenses as well as the activities of local government officials and security forces.

These three groups have become known as main force units, local units and guerrillas and have steadily intensified the campaign of Communist aggression by stepping up the number of armed attacks and increasing terrorism and sabotage despite vigorous governmental countermeasures.

Between 1963 and 1965 the armed conflict in South Vietnam reached new high levels of intensity. Internal political difficulties in the country's government gave the Viet Cong opportunities which it exploited. Increasingly, it enlarged its scope of activity on a broad basis. In 1964 alone, 436 hamlet chiefs and other government officials were killed outright, and 1,131 were kidnapped. More than 1,850 civilians were killed in bombings and other acts of terror, and at least 8,400 civilians were kidnapped by the Viet Cong. This level of activity continued well into 1965.

By the end of 1963 total Viet Cong personnel in South Vietnam rose to about 30,000, exclusive of local irregulars and part-time guerrillas. Since that time, the figure has steadily mounted. Military infiltration from the North continued in growing numbers, and the flow of weapons from North Vietnam and Communist China increased,
particularly those of larger caliber. The hardcore Viet Cong force in early 1966 was estimated to be close to 90,000, reportedly including between 12 and 15 regiments of the regular People's Army of North Vietnam. The number of irregulars, including sympathizers and Communist party workers supporting the hard core troops, probably had reached 150,000 or more.

QUALITY OF MANPOWER

The average South Vietnamese soldier has given a good account of himself in battle over the years. Exhibiting many basic soldierly qualities, he has always responded to good leadership with determination and courage. He is a peasant, accustomed to hard work, inured to hardship, highly realistic and possessed of a well-developed sense of field craft. As an individual, he is hospitable, human and moderately aggressive. As a result, he is fairly fatalistic about war, accepts pain and death with a high degree of patience and endurance and responds to adversity with self-discipline. On the other hand, he shows little initiative in unexpected contingencies and relies to a great extent on leadership.

Despite his many favorable qualities the average South Vietnamese soldier possesses some physical limitations. By United States standards he is small—only slightly more than 5 feet tall and weighing about 120 pounds. Accordingly, he is, comparatively, somewhat less strong and finds some difficulty in using many items of United States equipment. The introduction of the light United States Army AR-15 “Armalite” rifle, however, did much to alleviate this situation in the field of individual weapons. On the whole, the strong individual qualities of the South Vietnamese soldier far outweigh his weak ones.

CONSCRIPTION

The Military Mobilization Ordinance of 1953, which prescribed the military service obligation in wartime for all male citizens between 18 and 33 years of age, is the basis for all subsequent conscription programs. The first of these programs was initiated in 1957 and established compulsory peacetime military service for all males 20 and 21 years of age. Under this program all individuals served a total of 12 months, which included 4 months devoted to basic training and 8 months of duty in units. In January 1959 the service period was extended to 18 months and in July 1961, to 24 months.

This 1957 program has been subject to further changes and modifications, largely in accord with the country’s expanding needs to counteract the long-term Communist insurgency with which it has been confronted. In 1964 the term of service was lengthened and applied on a graduated scale between the regular and the paramilitary forces.
The maximum term was prescribed for those members of the paramilitary forces who served closest to their home villages.

A further modification by special decree in August 1965 made all males between the ages of 18 and 37 subject to military draft. Considerable opposition to this decree was voiced, principally by students, university professors and civil servants. To lessen the impact on these groups, which were heavily affected, the government has allowed certain personnel to be drafted "in place," subject to later call, and has permitted others to return to their former occupations after a 4-month training course at the Infantry School.

The Viet Cong have been using every means to disrupt conscription in South Vietnam. They conduct intensive recruitment for their own units, utilizing numerous techniques, including false promise, intimidation and terror. Their propaganda campaigns urging draft evasion are both subtle and direct, and in certain areas they have employed carefully executed civic action programs to sway the loyalties of the youthful peasant population.

TRAINING

The increased tempo of military action against the Viet Cong and the gradual expansion of the armed forces have caused the establishment of a comprehensive system of training installations and military schools. These installations and facilities are improving steadily and are turning out increasing numbers of trained officers and skilled technicians available to the armed forces. American advisers and instructors have introduced United States training methods and have assisted in the development of special counterinsurgency doctrine and techniques.

Although the intensification of Viet Cong activity has placed heavy emphasis on counterinsurgency training, technical skills have not been neglected, and after completing basic training about 40 percent of the conscripts are enrolled in technical courses. Army, Navy and Air Force units receive intensive training in the operation and maintenance of equipment received from the United States. While their training is primarily within their own service, combined training is conducted in preparation for joint actions against the Viet Cong.

The Command and General Staff College, which was organized in 1956 at Saigon, is the highest institution in the military educational system. Its course for field-grade officers offers instruction in staff and command techniques, in combined operations and in general academic subjects. The course for selected company-grade officers provides training in staff procedures. Short refresher courses are available to selected officers in the grades of colonel and lieutenant colonel to keep them abreast of important changes in policy and acquaint them with the employment of new weapons.
The National Military Academy was established by the French in 1948 at Hue and moved to Da Lat in 1950. Originally a 3-year institution, its program was extended to 4 years in 1961. In August 1962, however, because of the shortage of junior officers in field units, the government placed the Academy on a wartime basis and reduced its curriculum to 2 years. The first United States advisers were assigned to the academy in 1955, and since that time much has been accomplished in converting the school into a true academy that can produce officers with a sound, if limited, basic college education and a broad knowledge of military subjects.

The Thu Duc Officers' Candidate School was established in the mid-1950's to prepare students for reserve commissions. The installation was expanded progressively with the addition of special courses in artillery, engineering, ordnance, transportation and signal communications, and by 1958 it had graduated almost 3,300 reserve officers. Branch schools developed out of these special courses, and the combined schools became known as the Thu Duc Military Schools Complex. Increased military needs have caused further expansion, and the development of additional facilities for more diversified training at the Complex, which has become one of the most important military training institutions in the country. The Complex provides theoretical instruction and practical training for officers and enlisted men in the use of equipment and the handling of units in their respective services.

The Air Force Training Center at Nha Trang conducts basic training courses for pilots, observers, mechanics and other specialists. A limited amount of on-the-job training in various technical specialties is also performed at some of the major airbases throughout the country.

Aside from practical shipboard training, naval personnel receive most of their basic and intermediate training at the main Naval Training Center located at Nha Trang. In addition to the Naval Officers' Candidate School, the Center conducts basic technical training courses for naval specialists and for potential petty officers. The Navy also operates a training center at Saigon, primarily for on-the-job training of ship and boat crews.

The Armed Forces Language School was established in 1956 as an English-language school, and its courses are designed to give officers and enlisted men a working knowledge of English before they enter foreign military courses or engage in advanced training with United States military units.

The Logistics Management School and the Psychological Warfare School train personnel in these two important specialties in courses of varying lengths. Logistics management is a comparatively new doctrine which is taking on increasing importance in South Vietnam,
and much of the instruction has been devised by United States advisers. Psychological Warfare has long been recognized at all levels as a most important ingredient in the type of insurgent warfare faced by the South Vietnamese. In recognition of this fact and of the rising need for more personnel trained in this specialty, the intelligence training, a part of the former Intelligence and Psychological Warfare Schools' curriculum, was transferred to a school of its own, permitting the scheduling of additional classes at both facilities.

The Military Medical School, an adjunct of the University of Saigon, has modern, up-to-date facilities and conducts a comprehensive program of medical instruction with a capable staff of instructors. Of the 13 courses taught during the 1964 calendar year, only one was offered to medical officers. This course, lasting 26 weeks, dealt with the techniques of field surgery, and it qualified graduates as unit surgeons. Three other courses ranging from 4 to 12 weeks in duration, offered orientation to medical students and enlisted men in general medical subjects. The remaining 9 courses trained enlisted technicians as general medical attendants, aid men and litter bearers, or as medical specialists in the fields of general medicine, dentistry, anesthesiology and laboratory and X-ray techniques.

The Military Medical School is also responsible for the conduct and supervision of a program designed to procure doctors, dentists and pharmacists for the armed forces. Each year a 3-day competitive examination is given at the school to select medical, dental and pharmacy students for direct commissions.

Students selected under this program are commissioned and receive regular military pay in accordance with their rank while they continue their studies at the Faculty of Medicine. Upon graduation they are required to pay back each year of training under the program with 2 years of active duty. Since medical students study for 6 years, a student could enter the program in his first year of study and be given the rank of student officer. At the end of his first year he would progress to second lieutenant, and at the end of his third year he would be promoted to first lieutenant. He would continue as a first lieutenant and, after 3 additional years, graduate and enter on active duty with a 12-year obligation. Similar rank progression takes place for pharmacy and dental students, but their course of study lasts for 4 and 5 years, respectively.

The Quang Trung Military Center near Saigon is a major training facility for all conscripts and enlistees. Short courses, lasting about 2 months, are given in basic military subjects relating to military combat, after which the majority are sent to combat units. About 40 percent are selected for further training in branch or technical courses.
LOGISTICS

Within the Joint General Staff the Deputy Chief of Joint Staff, Logistics, exercises overall staff supervision of the logistic support system. The Army maintains a logistical command in each of the four corps areas, which supports all units and facilities throughout the corps area. Each logistical command operates a number of forward field depots from which supplies are distributed to using units. The five Technical Services (Signal, Ordnance/Chemical, Quartermaster, Engineer and Medical) operate base depots which serve as central distribution points for issue of technical service items to field depots. The Technical Services also provide common-item support to all elements of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force.

The receipt, storage and issue of supplies follows a pattern similar to that employed by United States forces. The supply system is seriously affected, however, by Viet Cong interdiction of a large portion of the available ground transportation, requiring the extensive use of helicopters to alleviate the situation. An additional complicating factor is the increased difficulties being experienced by the United States in bringing in heavily expanded quantities of military aid. In early 1966 new port areas under development since mid-1965 still lacked deepwater piers and warehouse space, causing long delays in unloading cargo and subjecting supplies to deterioration from open beach storage.

The armed forces in general are equipped with United States equipment. Actual armament in all services approximated that utilized by corresponding United States military units. This equipment is of modern design and has been furnished in considerable quantities. Maintenance of equipment is a continuing problem, and emphasis is being placed on the training of more maintenance personnel.

The Chief Surgeon, Vietnam Armed Forces, is responsible for medical care in all three of the military services. All hospitals in the armed forces are Army facilities; the other services operate only dispensaries. The Regional and Popular Forces retain only limited patient-holding capacities, in small attached medical sections.

The military medical program includes general, station and field hospitals and is being expanded to cope with casualties which have increased with the intensification of the war effort against the Viet Cong. Thirteen station hospitals are located throughout the country, and four field hospitals are serving strategic areas in which major counterinsurgency operations are taking place. For battlefield evacuation, heavy use is made of helicopters because of the inaccessibility of many operational areas and the insecurity or inadequacy of the road network.

Indicative of the role the Army plays in the program of rebuilding the country is the participation of military personnel under the
Medical Civic Action Program (see ch. 8, Living Conditions). These medical teams have been very effective in convincing the rural population of the governments' interest in their welfare.

PERSONNEL SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Ranks

The structures of rank in the Army, Navy and Air Force broadly resemble those of the corresponding French forces, but since 1962 increasing numbers of changes based on the United States systems have been introduced (see figs. 14, 15, and 16). The normal duties and responsibilities of officers and enlisted men in the various ranks and grades parallel those in the United States Forces. There are no warrant officer grades, and only a few active-duty officers occupy senior general officer ranks as high as lieutenant general. Being the predominant service element, the Army has more senior officers on duty in both command and staff positions. Because of its limited size, the Navy is commanded by a captain. The command of the Air Force was retained by Major General Nguyen Coa Ky when he assumed the position of prime minister in 1965. General Ky also enjoys the title of air vice marshal, an honorary distinction awarded him in 1964.
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**ENLISTED MEN**

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</tr>
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<td>Thuong Si (6)</td>
<td>Superior Grade NCO</td>
<td>First Sergeant</td>
<td>(8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Si Nhat⁶</td>
<td>Senior Grade NCO</td>
<td>Sergeant First Class</td>
<td>(9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Si (6)</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade NCO</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>(10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha Si Nhat⁶</td>
<td>Junior Grade NCO</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>(11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha Si (6)</td>
<td>Low Grade NCO</td>
<td>Private First Class</td>
<td>(12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Nhat</td>
<td>Private First Class</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>(13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Nhi</td>
<td>Private Second Class</td>
<td>Recruit</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Dinh</td>
<td>Able Bodied Man</td>
<td>None (Conscript)</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Silver stars.  
(2) Silver plum blossoms.  
(3) Gold plum blossoms.  
(4) Gold disc with raised letter in gold.  
(5) Gold disc with raised letter in red.  
(6) "Si," the Vietnamese term for "student," is also applied to NCO's.  
(7) Gold disc.  
(8) Silver disc.  
(9) Three silver chevrons.  
(10) One silver chevron.  
(11) One silver, two gold chevrons.  
(12) Two gold chevrons.  
(13) One gold chevron.

*Figure 14. Ranks and Insignia of the South Vietnamese Army, 1966.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese Title</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>United States Equivalent</th>
<th>Rank Insignia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFICERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do Doc</td>
<td>Senior Admiral</td>
<td>Admiral</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pho Do Doc</td>
<td>Intermediate Admiral</td>
<td>Vice Admiral</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Doc</td>
<td>Junior Admiral</td>
<td>Rear Admiral</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pho De Doc</td>
<td>Sub Admiral</td>
<td>Commodore</td>
<td>(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Quan Dai Ta</td>
<td>Senior Grade Naval Officer</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Quan Trung Ta</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade Naval Officer</td>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Quan Thieu Ta</td>
<td>Junior Grade Naval Officer</td>
<td>Lieutenant Commander</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Quan Dai Uy</td>
<td>Senior Grade Junior Naval Officer</td>
<td>Lieutenant</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Quan Trung Uy</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade Junior Naval Officer</td>
<td>Lieutenant Junior Grade</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hai Quan Thieu Uy</td>
<td>Junior Grade Junior Naval Officer</td>
<td>Ensign</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Uy</td>
<td>Student Officer</td>
<td>None (Cadet Naval Academy)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENLISTED MEN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuong Si Nhat(3)</td>
<td>Senior Grade Superior Petty Officer</td>
<td>Senior Chief Petty Officer</td>
<td>(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuong Si</td>
<td>Superior Grade Petty Officer</td>
<td>Chief Petty Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Si Nhat</td>
<td>Senior Grade Petty Officer</td>
<td>Petty Officer First Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Si</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade Petty Officer</td>
<td>Petty Officer Second Class</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Si Nhat</td>
<td>Junior Grade Petty Officer</td>
<td>Petty Officer Third Class</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho Si</td>
<td>Low Junior Grade Petty Officer</td>
<td>Seaman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuy Thu</td>
<td>Low Grade Seaman</td>
<td>Seaman Apprentice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) Silver stars.
(2) Gold colored stripes.
(3) "Si," the Vietnamese term for "student," is also applied to NCO or petty officer.
(4) Center stripe: white.
(5) Center chevron: light blue.

*Figure 15. Ranks and Insignia of the South Vietnamese Navy, 1966.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnamese Title</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>United States Equivalent</th>
<th>Rank Insignia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OFFICERS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai Tuong</td>
<td>Senior General</td>
<td>General</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Tuong</td>
<td>Intermediate General</td>
<td>Lieutenant General</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thieu Tuong</td>
<td>Junior General</td>
<td>Major General</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Tuong</td>
<td>Sub General</td>
<td>Brigadier General</td>
<td><img src="1" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai Ta</td>
<td>Senior Grade Superior Officer</td>
<td>Colonel</td>
<td><img src="2" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Ta</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade Superior Officer</td>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
<td><img src="2" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thieu Ta</td>
<td>Junior Grade Superior Officer</td>
<td>Major Colonel</td>
<td><img src="2" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dai Uy</td>
<td>Senior Grade Junior Officer</td>
<td>Captain</td>
<td><img src="3" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Uy</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade Junior Officer</td>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
<td><img src="3" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thieu Uy</td>
<td>Junior Grade Junior Officer</td>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
<td><img src="3" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chuan Uy</td>
<td>Student Officer</td>
<td>None (Cadet Air Force Academy)</td>
<td><img src="4" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinh Vien Si Quan</td>
<td>Student Officer Candidate</td>
<td>None (Cadet Air Force Academy)</td>
<td><img src="5" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>ENLISTED MEN</strong></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thuong Si Nhat[6]</td>
<td>Senior Grade Superior NCO</td>
<td>Sergeant Major</td>
<td><img src="7" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thuong Si[6]</td>
<td>Superior Grade NCO</td>
<td>First Sergeant</td>
<td><img src="8" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Si Nhat[6]</td>
<td>Senior Grade NCO</td>
<td>Sergeant First Class</td>
<td><img src="9" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Si[6]</td>
<td>Intermediate Grade NCO</td>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td><img src="10" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha Si Nhat[6]</td>
<td>Junior Grade NCO</td>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td><img src="11" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha Si[6]</td>
<td>Low Grade NCO</td>
<td>Airman First Class</td>
<td><img src="12" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Nhat</td>
<td>Private First Class</td>
<td>Airman</td>
<td><img src="13" alt="Star" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binh Nhi</td>
<td>Private Second Class</td>
<td>Recruit</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trung Dinh</td>
<td>Able Bodied Man</td>
<td>None (Conscript)</td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| ![Star](1) Silver stars. | ![Star](2) Silver plum blossoms. | ![Star](3) Gold plum blossoms. | ![Star](4) Gold disc with raised letter in gold. | ![Star](5) Gold disc with raised letter in red. | ![Star](6) "Si,” the Vietnamese term for "student,” is also applied to NCO’s. | ![Star](7) Gold disc. | ![Star](8) Silver disc. | ![Star](9) Three silver chevrons. | ![Star](10) One silver chevron. | ![Star](11) One silver, two gold chevrons. | ![Star](12) Two gold chevrons. | ![Star](13) One gold chevron. |

Figure 16. Ranks and Insignia of the South Vietnamese Air Force, 1966.