

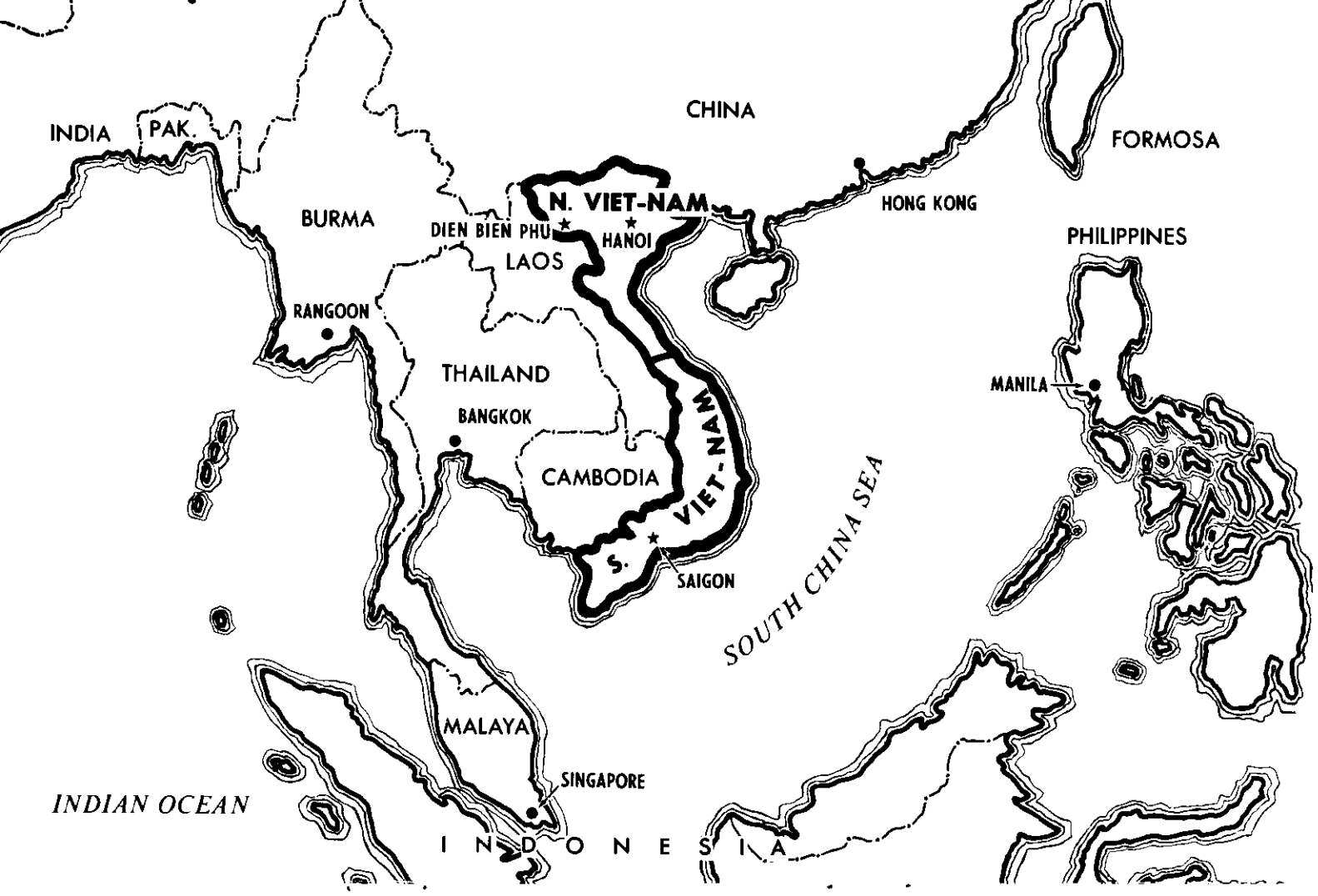
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CENTER FOR SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ASIA STUDIES
University of California, Berkeley

VIET-NAM

AT THE
CROSSROADS
OF ASIA



Foreword

Less than a decade ago, few Americans had even heard of Viet-Nam.

The Indochinese War, its dramatic last battle at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, and its disastrous results, revealed the importance of Viet-Nam to the Free World and the importance of not ignoring the aspirations and capabilities of the Vietnamese people.

Viet-Nam's role and capabilities are summed up in the following lines by an American writer:

"Among the peoples of the Indochinese peninsula, the Vietnamese are destined to play a decisive role in the struggle for Asia. Lying between the southwestern border of China and the Gulf of Siam, Viet-Nam occupies the gateway both by land and by sea between China and the vast regions of Southeast Asia. It could serve either as a jumping-off point for Communist attacks or as a block against Chinese or Chinese supported Communist aggression.

This the West has begun to realize. But only a few scholars know that Viet-Nam has been thwarting Chinese southward expansion for 2,000 years. Fewer still know that the Vietnamese have defeated at least half a dozen Chinese attempts to penetrate into the rich rice bowls of the Indochinese peninsula. Much has been written about the 100 years of Western colonial exploitation which came to an end only after one of the longest, most cruel and politically most perplexing of all colonial wars. But the Vietnamese had fought against Chinese colonial exploitation and political domination for more than 1,000 years before the coming of the French. Even partition of their country is not a new experience for them. During the last 500 years the Vietnamese had lived through two long periods of a divided Viet-Nam and have come out of them stronger and more united than before".*

Against this background, this booklet is a summary of Viet-Nam's history and geography, and of some of its achievements under the leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem in the crucial five years following the Geneva Armistice of July 20, 1954.

*Joseph Buttinger, *The Smaller Dragon, A Political History of Viet-Nam*, New York: F. A. Praeger, 1958.

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President NGO-DINH-DIEM
of the Republic of Viet-Nam

Geographical Location

Situated on the eastern flank of the Indochinese peninsula, Viet-Nam is bordered to the north by China, to the west by Laos and Cambodia, and to the east and south by the part of the Pacific Ocean called the China Sea. Despite two thousand years of continuous cultural and political history, Viet-Nam was divided at the 17th parallel in 1954 by the Geneva Cease-fire Agreement. The Republic of Viet-Nam lies south of the 17th parallel, and Communist Viet-Nam north of it.

Area

Total: 127,000 square miles

North of the 17th parallel: 62,000 square miles

South of the 17th parallel: 65,000 square miles.

Population

Total: 25,000,000

North of the 17th parallel: 13,000,000

South of the 17th parallel: 12,000,000.

Size and Population

The total size of Viet-Nam is about twice that of New England. South Viet-Nam, below the 17th parallel, is almost the size of the State of Washington.

Viet-Nam's total population of 25,000,000 inhabitants is, after Indonesia, the largest in Southeast Asia.

The Vietnamese population includes small aboriginal minorities totaling approximately 2,000,000 who live in the mountainous regions. These groups—such as the Mois, Rhades, Thos, and Mans—are the descendants of the original populations, who lived in the country many thousand years ago. The Chams, however, in the South of Central Viet-Nam, originally belonged to the Kingdom of Champa, annexed by Viet-Nam in the 17th century. The ruins of many Cham temples and palaces testify to their once brilliant culture and civilization.

Climate

Viet-Nam extends between latitudes 8°30' and 23°24' N., stretching over one thousand miles from north to south (about as far as from Maine to Georgia).

Viet-Nam has a variety of climates. In the north, it is cold and damp during the winter (from 40° to 60° Fahrenheit); warm in certain summer months (around 95°). The weather is pleasantly cool and mild in autumn, throughout the ages the favorite season of Vietnamese poets. Springtime is characterized by frequent drizzles highly favorable to vegetation, especially flowers. In the south, it is usually warm (about 92°) the year around, with the evenings cooled by maritime breezes. The weather is characterized by alternating dry and rainy seasons, the rainy season roughly between June and November resulting from the change of direction of the seasonal "monsoon" winds. The temperature averages for the dry and rainy seasons are 85° and 78° respectively. In the mountain areas, however, the temperatures are considerably lower, ranging between 68° in summer and 60° in winter at Dalat, a popular mountain resort.

Geography

The geography of Viet-Nam is as varied as its climate. Viet-Nam has two large plains: the *delta of the Red River* which flows across North Viet-Nam and the *delta of the Mekong River* which flows across South Viet-Nam. Although these plains cover only about 37,800 square miles their fertile soil supports 85 percent of the population. These two plains, mainly covered by rice fields, are united by a long range of mountains, the *Hoanh-Son Cordillera*. This mountain range rises to average heights of 5,000 to 6,000 feet. On the eastern side, steep slopes overlook coastal plains or glittering bays. To the west, it descends in steps to the plateaus of Laos. The highlands in West Central Viet-Nam form an intermediary region with temperate and cool weather and have a red soil conducive to rubber and tea planting.

Viet-Nam's entire coast is washed by the waters of the South China Sea. It is noted for its numerous beautiful beaches and bays, an important fishing industry, a maritime climate in the coastal plains, and its excellent coves for commercial harbors such as *Saigon* and *Haiphong*.

Viet-Nam is on one of the most important sea routes of the world which connects Europe with China and Japan to the northeast and with Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand to the southeast.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The strategic importance of Viet-Nam was fully demonstrated during World War II. In the resistance against Japan, the Chungking Government of Nationalist China was substantially aided by Allied supplies funnelled through the Vietnamese harbor of Haiphong and from there by rail across the valley of the Red River in North Viet-Nam to Kunming and Nanning in South China. This supply line was severed when the Japanese established the military occupation of Indochina in 1940. From bases in Viet-Nam, Japanese planes sunk the British battleships *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, paving the way for Japanese sea control of the Far East. Also from their bases in Viet-Nam, Japanese armed forces launched the conquest of Malaya and Burma, initiating their military successes throughout Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Often described as "the gateway to Southeast Asia," Viet-Nam's strategic position in the struggle between communism and democracy is even more critical today. Saigon, the capital of Viet-Nam, is only a few hours' flying time from such important Free World bases as Manila and Singapore. Long regarded as the bulwark against further Communist expansion, Viet-Nam constitutes the main geographic and military obstacle to Communist designs in Southeast Asia. As President Eisenhower stated in April 1954, if Viet-Nam falls, "the rest of Southeast Asia will go like a set of dominoes."

More recently, in his address at Gettysburg College in April 1959, President Eisenhower said: "Strategically, South Viet-Nam's capture by the Communists would bring their power several hundred miles into a hitherto free region. The remaining countries in Southeast Asia would be menaced by a great flanking movement. The freedom of 12,000,000 people would be lost immediately, and that of 150,000,000 others in adjacent lands would be seriously endangered. The loss of South Viet-Nam would set in motion a crumbling process that could, as it progressed, have grave consequences for freedom."



Historical Background

The history of Viet-Nam has its roots in the misty legendary period almost three thousand years before the birth of Christ.

According to legends, the first dynasty to reign over Viet-Nam was the *dynasty of Hong Bang*, who ruled from 2879 to 258 B.C.

From that period until the present, the history of Viet-Nam may be divided into 5 eras:

1. The early establishment of the Vietnamese nation: 2879 B.C.-111B.C.
2. The Chinese domination: 111 B.C.-938 A.D.
3. The great national dynasties: 939-1883
4. The French administration: 1883-1945
5. The Post-World War II Period.

I. *The early establishment of the Vietnamese nation.*

According to many historians, the Vietnamese nation was established in the first millenium B.C. mainly by the Viets who emigrated from Central China. In 207 B.C., it became known as the kingdom of Nam Viet.

That period was particularly rich in legends, which are the inspiration for poets and writers, as well as for the folklore still popular today.

II. *The Chinese domination: 111 B.C.-938 A.D.*

Viet-Nam fell under the domination of its huge Chinese neighbor in the year 111 B.C., after the Chinese General Lo Bac Duc destroyed the Kingdom of Nam Viet. That domination lasted until the year 938 A.D. interrupted by two short lived successful rebellions:

1. The first one was the rebellion from 40 to 43 A.D. led by two *national heroines, the sisters Trung Trac, and Trung Nhi*. They restored the independence of Viet-Nam for 3 years, but were later defeated by overwhelming Chinese forces.
2. The second successful rebellion was that of Ly Nam De who reigned over the liberated country from 544 to 602. During the Chinese administration, Chinese culture was popularized by two well-known governors, Tich Quang and Si Nhiep.

III. *Era of the great national dynasties: 939-1883*

This era of national independence lasted 944 years. The man who established this turning point in Viet-Nam's history is Ngo Quyen, who defeated the Chinese forces in battle on the river Bach Dang in 938. He became emperor of the liberated country the following year.

Ngo Quyen was succeeded by seven different royal dynasties: the Dinh Dynasty (967-8), the Le Dynasty (980-1009), the Ly Dynasty (1010-1224), the Tran Dynasty (1225-1400), the Ho Dynasty (1400-1407), the Posterior Le Dynasty (1428-1788), the Tay Son Dynasty (1788-1802), and the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945), of which ex-Emperor Bao Dai was the last reigning descendant.

Since *the 11th century*, under the Ly Dynasty, great progress has been achieved in different fields. The country was unified: the economic, administrative, and military organizations were increasingly perfected. This was also the period of great cultural development and extension of Buddhism in Viet-Nam.

The famous Temple of Literature was built in Hanoi in 1070. The first literary examinations were organized in 1075. In the following year, the National University was created.

In the military field, Viet-Nam annexed the Provinces of Quang Binh and Quang Tri from the Kingdom of Champa in 1069. In 1075 Vietnamese armed forces, under General Ly Thuong Kiet, thwarted the Chinese invasion organized by the Sung Emperor.

Under the succeeding *Tran Dynasty*, Vietnamese armed forces, under Marshal Tran Hung Dao, defeated the *Mongolian Armies of Kublai Khan* repeatedly in 1257, in 1285, and at the decisive battle of Bach Dang Giang in 1288. By these victories over those fierce conquerors Viet-Nam saved South-east Asia from Mongol domination.

Due to internal strife, Viet-Nam's national development was interrupted by a short return of Chinese domination, from 1407 to 1427. Independence was restored, however, by Le Loi, who founded the Le Dynasty.

Under the *Le Dynasty*, in the 15th century, Viet-Nam witnessed what is often called the "Great Century", comparable to the period of great development in France under Louis

XIV. During that period, the *national legal code* was promulgated in 1470. The taxation system was reorganized. Agrarian reforms were put into effect. Literature and philosophy were greatly encouraged through the establishment of a *National Library* and the formation of *literary clubs*.

During this era of national dynasties, Viet-Nam twice experienced a regime of political partition: The first time from 1532 to 1592, when the Le Dynasty, which controlled the southern part of the country below Thanh-Hoa (near the 20th parallel), fought the Mac Dynasty which occupied the northern part of the country. The partition was ended by the victory of the Le, and the restoration of the Le Dynasty over the whole of Viet-Nam. The second time, Viet-Nam was partitioned along the Danh River, at approximately the 19th parallel: The Princes Nguyen in the south opposed the Princes Trinh in the north, although both recognized the nominal sovereignty of the Le Emperors. This second partition lasted from 1674 until 1802, when Gia-Long, of the Nguyen Family, became Emperor of a unified Viet-Nam.

IV. *The era of French administration*

Under the Nguyen Dynasty, Viet-Nam came into contact with the West, in particular with France, following Western expansion to Asia in the 19th century.

As with many Asian countries, Viet-Nam committed the error of ignoring the scientific and industrial revolution which had contributed to the might and prosperity of the West. Like China, Viet-Nam remained in the "splendid isolation" of her ancient civilization.

Isolationism, based largely on national pride, brought the Chinese colossus to repeated defeats in her clashes with the Western powers. Viet-Nam suffered a similar fate when hostilities broke out with France in the second half of the 19th century. After many battles, the Vietnamese, overwhelmed by the gun power of French troops, were forced:

in 1862 and in 1867 to yield their southern provinces, or Cochinchina, to France as a colony;

in 1884 to accept the status of a French Protectorate for the rest of Viet-Nam, that is Annam and Tonkin.

Active or passive resistance, however, continued long afterwards, and the French had to suppress many revolts, the most

important of which were led by Emperor Ham-Nghi (1885-1888), nationalist leaders Phan Dinh Phung (1893-1895) and Hoang Hoa Tham (1889-1913), and the Nationalist Party in 1930.

This period of French administration was characterized by two facts:

1. Viet-Nam was exploited only as a provider of raw materials and was not given opportunities for any significant industrial development;
2. The Vietnamese were practically excluded from the administration and defense of their country to such an extent that when World War II broke out, there was not a single Vietnamese as head of a province, of a city, of a battalion, or even as police commissioner in Viet-Nam.

This made Viet-Nam an easy prey to communist subversion at the end of that war.

V. *The Post-World War II Period*

During World War II, the French continued to administer the country under Japanese military occupation, which began in September 1940.

Toward the end of the war, however, on March 9, 1945, the Japanese disarmed and removed the French from the administration.

The whole country was thus suddenly deprived of all its public services, for all of them had been run by the French for over sixty years.

The Tran Trong Kim government was then formed on April 16, 1945, in a desperate attempt to restore law and order, to reorganize the country, and to give it a Vietnamese administration, a Vietnamese head.

Although formed under Japanese occupation and during a world war, this nationalist government proclaimed the independence of Viet-Nam and formally declared that as its independence was newly reborn, Viet-Nam was too weak to wage war on any other country; that its main task was internal reorganization.

But it was too late.

As they were on the brink of defeat, the Japanese had become more and more suspicious and more and more hesitant

to give back to a Vietnamese National Government the arms, money, tools, services, and buildings which they had taken from the French and which the Vietnamese Government needed to keep law and order.

The Tran Trong Kim government was thus forced to resign about a week before the end of World War II. Emperor Bao-Dai abdicated on August 25, 1945, and the communist-led Viet-Minh had only to step into power in the vacuum that had been created.

The Viet-Minh "Revolution"

The Viet-Minh, abbreviation for "*Viet-Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh*", or "League for the Independence of Viet-Nam", was formed during World War II by Vietnamese refugees in China.

Unfortunately, as the Communists were in the Allied camp at that time, the communist Nguyen Ai Quoc was given in 1943 (by the Nationalist Chinese General Chin Fa Kwei) a small quantity of arms and money and the task of reorganizing that Viet-Minh League as a clandestine anti-Japanese network of espionage and resistance in North Viet-Nam, and Nguyen Ai Quoc took the new name of Ho Chi Minh in order to conceal his long communist past for he knew well that the Vietnamese had no taste for communism and only wanted national independence.

In this way, Vietnamese nationalists were lured and trapped into that so-called "League for the Independence of Viet-Nam" which pretended to fight only for Viet-Nam's independence, and this camouflaged communist organization was swept into power in Viet-Nam at the end of World War II as a natural consequence of the Allied victory, a little in the same way that Tito came to power in Yugoslavia.

There was, however, a great difference between Tito's partisans and the Viet-Minh: Tito did fight against the Germans whereas the Viet-Minh only pretended to fight the Japanese, did not harm them much, and did not achieve anything glorious.

Only at the very end of World War II did the Viet-Minh assassinate a few isolated Japanese sentinels. And even after the Japanese defeat, when the Viet-Minh staged a huge demonstration in Hanoi in order to "conquer power", they did not

have to conquer it as the Tran Trong Kim government had already resigned and Emperor Bao Dai had issued a statement to invite the Viet-Minh leaders to make themselves known and to form a new government. The Viet-Minh had only to step into the unguarded public offices and buildings which they pretended to “storm”, and . . . they did not even dare to seize the Bank of Indochina—(which they needed the most)—although it was guarded by only one Japanese sentry.

Indeed, the Viet-Minh had not done anything remarkable in World War II and Ho Chi Minh himself had never been heard of in Viet-Nam when his government was proclaimed in Hanoi on September 2, 1945. To take over power in a country which had been completely paralyzed and disarmed it was enough for them to have sided with the all-powerful victors of World War II, to be believed their proteges for this reason, to pass for a “league for the independence of Viet-Nam,” and to have some fire-arms.

That extraordinary concurrence of circumstances was enough to enable those false nationalists to take power without having to fire a single shot.

However, as soon as they had assumed power, they discarded their nationalist masks, purged and killed most of their potential opponents—especially the nationalists—and started a communist revolution in the same pattern as other communist revolutions even though they did not have to “conquer” power, but only to take it.

Having taken power by surprise and deception, by concealing their names, their past and their communism and by falsely pretending to be nationalist, they had to strangle their victims before the latter could recover from their surprise. Therefore, they plunged Viet-Nam into the most untimely and shameful communist revolution at the very moment when the Vietnamese only needed unity and order—not hate and anarchy—to resist the French reconquest and to rebuild their country which had been ruined by four years of Japanese occupation and devastation by Allied bombardment.

That bombardment was so terribly effective towards the end of the war that it destroyed all bridges and means of transportation, cut off the overpopulated North from the

granaries of the South and indirectly caused a million deaths from starvation in less than six months.

Ho Chi Minh, however, chose to ignore Viet-Nam's need for peace, order, unity and independence. He was not a patriot but a communist and all he wanted was to establish a communist dictatorship through a communist revolution.

Therefore, on his very first day in power:

a) *all convicts were released*, even thieves and murderers who soon became the most active elements of that revolution and the censors of the new society!

b) *all taxes were abolished and replaced by confiscations and "voluntary contributions"* which were pronounced or were exacted by sinister committees and were much higher than the abolished taxes;

c) *all regular judges and functionaries were summarily dismissed and replaced by mushrooming self-appointed "peoples' tribunals" and "peoples' committees"*, and then recalled after a period of ugly anarchy and bloody terrorism.

The entire framework of the Vietnamese family and society was shattered in a matter of weeks.

A communist dictatorship was thus established which purged and killed almost all potential opponents and crushed in advance all possible organized resistance.

This shameful communist revolution was contrary to all Vietnamese needs and aspirations, but the Vietnamese people could not resist it for two reasons:

1. They had been deprived of all police, of all administration, of all fire-arms, whereas the communist-led Viet-Minh had been given arms during World War II by the Allies themselves.
2. They had to face the French attempt at reconquering their country and most of them were more inclined to join their own government, even a communist one, and fight a foreign conquering army rather than to join a foreign conquering army and fight their own countrymen.

The Indochinese War, 1946-54

Immediately after the Japanese surrender, the French came back to "reestablish French sovereignty" and their clash with Ho Chi Minh's government made that government the stand-

ard-bearer of Vietnamese independence, which was a disgrace and injustice to the Vietnamese people.

First, the French signed an agreement with Ho Chi Minh on March 6, 1946, whereby the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam was recognized as a "Free State within the Indochinese Federation and the French Union". But no subsequent agreement could be reached on the scope of freedom to be left to Viet-Nam within these two frameworks and, after many bloody incidents, the Indochinese War broke out on December 19, 1946.

During that war the Viet-Minh were very poorly armed; they began receiving some external communist help only in 1949 after China had fallen under communist rule, but they never received a single Chinese or Russian "volunteer", tank, ship, or plane. However, they did have the active or passive support of most of the Vietnamese people because they were resisting foreign domination and this was enough to make them invincible.

The French, therefore, tried to deprive them of that support and to separate the non-communist Viet-Minh from their communist leaders by asking former Emperor Bao Dai to be Chief of State of a non-communist Viet-Nam and by offering him, in an agreement dated March 8, 1949, Viet-Nam's "independence within the French Union."

Unfortunately, the regime established in Viet-Nam under that name was only a regime of false independence. It was much worse in that form than outright colonialism, and only succeeded in pushing more nationalists into the ranks of the communist-led Viet-Minh. Politico-religious sects, for instance, were armed by the French to help in the fight against the Viet-Minh, but since they could not be adequately or regularly paid, they were allowed to maintain their own private armies either by exacting illegal taxes or "contributions" from the population, or by running gambling houses and houses of vice, or both.

A so-called Vietnamese National Army was also created, but only as a complement to the French Expeditionary Corps. It was given a Chief of Staff who was a Colonel in the French Army. "National" governments were formed, but all real power remained in French hands.

Thus, the Vietnamese were never given a choice between clear-cut communism and genuine independence and freedom, but only the choice between communist-led nationalist resistance on the one hand, and a most unsavory mixture of colonialism and feudalism on the other.

That is why most Vietnamese chose to side with the communist-led Viet-Minh and to help them to victory against a common foe, and in so doing, they chose what they wrongly believed to be the lesser evil. They reacted during the Indo-chinese war very much as did the Russians, the British, the French and the Americans in the second World War.

All these French and Vietnamese errors led to the Viet-Minh victory of Dien Bien Phu on May 8, 1954, to the Geneva Conference, and to the armistice agreement of July 20, 1954, whereby the French High-Command abandoned to the Viet-Minh High-Command approximately half of the territory and almost 60% of the population of Viet-Nam

This was a major defeat for the Free World and a great injustice to the Vietnamese people.

Except for a handful of communist leaders, almost all of the Viet-Minh officers and soldiers fought that eight-year war as their ancestors fought and defeated the Mongol armies of Kublai Khan in the 13th century, that is, heroically and successfully against overwhelmingly superior material strength, and with the single purpose of expelling foreign conquerors. But their sacrifices and victory were of benefit only to their communist leaders.

The Geneva Armistice and the Partition of Viet-Nam

a) *Framework of the Geneva Agreement:* Because of the importance of the event and its repercussions on world peace, the Geneva Conference was attended by the representatives of Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam (the Viet-Minh), France, Laos, the People's Republic of China (Communist China), the State of Viet-Nam (non-communist Viet-Nam), the U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, and the U.S.A.

However, the truce agreement proper was signed only by the French High Command and the Viet-Minh High Command.

The Viet-Minh demanded and obtained from the French that Viet-Nam be partitioned and that about half of its territory, all the territory north of the 17th parallel, which is the most populous part, be abandoned to the Viet-Minh "pending the general elections which will bring about the unification of

Viet-Nam." Evacuation of French and non-communist troops from the North and of Viet-Minh troops from the South was to be completed within 300 days, in May 1955. Free choice of residence was to be left within the same period to the Vietnamese who wanted to go north or south; and both the north and south were prohibited from receiving any troop or arm reinforcements, from establishing any new military bases under the control of a foreign State, and from adhering to any military alliance.

The American delegation, however, did not adhere to this truce agreement. It only made a separate declaration promising that the United States would refrain from the threat or the use of force to disturb the truce and would view with grave concern any violent breach of it.

As for the delegation of the State of Viet-Nam, it refused to sign this truce agreement. It vainly protested against the partition of the country and against the principle of general elections being agreed upon when more than half the voters were being abandoned north of the 17th parallel to communist rule. It vainly asked that the whole territory and population be placed under the control of the United Nations until the reestablishment of peace and security would permit the holding of really free general elections

There was, however, a bright spot in this sad story: for the first time, unequivocal recognition of full Vietnamese independence was made in articles 10, 11, and 12 of the final declaration of the Geneva Conference, and in a letter addressed to the Vietnamese Delegation by the French Premier, Mendes-France, on July 20, 1954.

b) *The Flight to Freedom and Communist Violations of the Armistice Agreement*: The unequivocal French recognition of Viet-Nam's independence and the leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem—who became head of the Vietnamese government on July 7, 1954—brought about a sudden and complete change in the thinking and attitude of the Vietnamese people; they fled the Communist-led Viet-Minh as soon as they could, at last, turn to a truly national government and choose genuine national independence.

As long as there were French and American ships to transport them, 880,500 refugees succeeded in fleeing South, abandoning all their belongings and sometimes risking their lives. The Viet-Minh put all kinds of obstacles in their way, some-

times even firing at them, in violation of the truce agreement which promised free choice of residence within a 300-day period. The Viet-Minh have also violated the truce agreement by infiltrating the territory of independent Laos and by doubling their military forces instead of keeping them at their cease-fire level. This has been ascertained by the representatives of India on the International Armistice Commission.

In the meantime, Free Viet-Nam requested and obtained the withdrawal of the 170,000-man French Expeditionary Corps. It reduced its own army from 170,000 to 150,000 men, and has disbanded all the private troops of the politico-religious sects which had been armed by the French to help them fight the Viet-Minh before the Geneva Armistice. Thus, the anti-Communist forces in Viet-Nam had been reduced by more than half, whereas the Viet-Minh have doubled their military strength in violation of the Armistice Agreement.

c) *The Issue of Vietnamese Reunification:* While violating their own truce agreement, the Viet-Minh have loudly invoked it to ask for reunification of Viet-Nam through general elections.

At the Geneva Conference, however, it was the Ngo Dinh Diem Government which asked, in vain, that Viet-Nam not be partitioned and be placed instead under the United Nations' temporary control pending general elections under the same supervision; and it was the Communists who demanded and obtained from the French, together with a vague promise of reunification through future general elections, the partition of Viet-Nam along the 17th parallel, that is, immediate delivery to the Communists of the most populous part of the country or the absolute majority of the eventual voters.

They have now secured this absolute majority through five years of brainwashing and terror, and it is only natural for them to ask for general elections, which could only be a mockery in their zone and would automatically deliver to them the rest of Viet-Nam. Neither morally nor legally, is the Republic of Viet-Nam bound to follow such a scheme. It is not bound by an agreement to which it was never a party and which it strongly and formally opposed and denounced at the Geneva Conference.

It should be recalled here that there can be in Communist-ruled North Viet-Nam neither free elections nor effective

control. The Viet-Minh regime is such that, in January 1946, even the presence in North Viet-Nam of an occupying Chinese Nationalist army could not prevent Ho Chi Minh from having all his Communist candidates elected by overwhelming majorities and *without opposition*; it could only pressure him into decreeing the dissolution of his own Communist Party, which was only a mockery, and into *giving* a Vietnamese Nationalist Party, the *Viet-Nam Quoc-Dan-Dang*, 70 seats out of 350, as a deal and outside the elections, which was another mockery. As soon as the Chinese Nationalist army left, the Vietnamese Nationalists fled or were killed.

Indeed, it is meaningless to speak of free elections or of international control to insure free elections in a Communist-ruled country.

President Ngo Dinh Diem

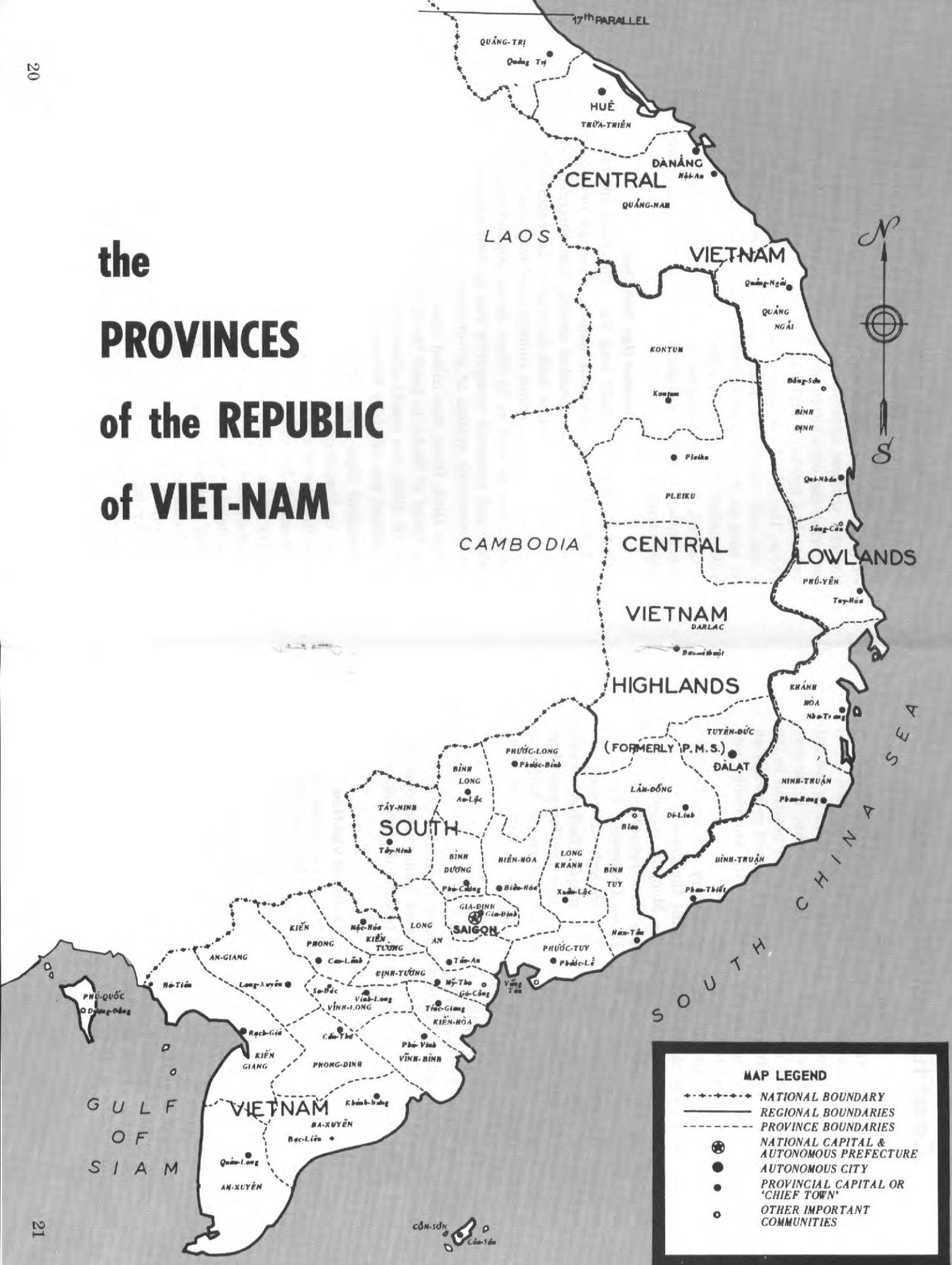
Out of an exceptionally long war, Viet-Nam emerged again as a sovereign independent nation, although devastated and divided. From that troubled period also emerged *President Ngo Dinh Diem*, whose task is to provide leadership for the rebuilding of his war-torn country, and to prove to his fellow countrymen as well as to other Asian populations that social justice and economic prosperity can be best achieved under a free democratic system of government.

Ngo Dinh Diem was called upon by ex-Emperor Bao Dai, then Chief of State, to head the Government of Viet-Nam on June 16, 1954, one month after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, and his cabinet was officially formed on July 7, 1954.

President Ngo Dinh Diem was not an unknown political figure in Viet-Nam. In 1933, then at the age of 32, he was made Minister of the Interior of Viet-Nam, and resigned when his demands for reforms aiming at the modernization of the country and a real participation of the people in public affairs were refused by the French.

On October 23, 1955, in a popular referendum held to choose a Chief of State and a form of Government, Ngo Dinh Diem was elected by an overwhelming majority. The Republic was proclaimed by President Ngo Dinh Diem on October 26, 1955. One year later the Vietnamese Constitution adopted by the Constituent Assembly was promulgated by the President on October 26, 1956.

the PROVINCES of the REPUBLIC of VIET-NAM



MAP LEGEND

- +—+—+— NATIONAL BOUNDARY
- REGIONAL BOUNDARIES
- - - - - PROVINCE BOUNDARIES
- ⊙ NATIONAL CAPITAL & AUTONOMOUS PREFECTURE
- AUTONOMOUS CITY
- PROVINCIAL CAPITAL OR 'CHIEF TOWN'
- OTHER IMPORTANT COMMUNITIES

Constitutional Organization

Background

A basically democratic tradition has characterized Viet-Nam throughout the centuries. Indeed, Viet-Nam never had social castes or tightly drawn social classes as such. Even in ancient days, no matter how humble his origin, any man, if he was sufficiently qualified, could aspire to the highest position in the realm. The real aristocracy in Viet-Nam has been generally an aristocracy of intelligence and learning, with knowledge and virtue as the surest titles of nobility.

In the critical hours of Viet-Nam's history, the people traditionally have been called upon to decide the great issues confronting the nation. Thus when the Mongols invaded Viet-Nam in the 13th century, the people were requested to send their representatives to the Dien Hong Congress. There the national representatives decided unanimously to resist the aggressors. That was one of the major factors which accounted for the Vietnamese victory over the famous Mongolian Armies of Kublai Khan. Because the people had participated in the decision to resist the enemy, national unity was achieved at a critical hour.

The Vietnamese Constitution, as a juridical document, was unwritten under the monarchy, but its underlying principles offered remarkable stability to the governmental organization. After World War II, however, broader issues destroyed the rule of the monarchy, which ceased to exist *de jure* since the Viet-Minh Revolution of 1945.

Main Features of the Present Constitution of Viet-Nam

Based on universal suffrage and the secret ballot, general elections were held in Viet-Nam in March 1956 for a National Constituent Assembly which drafted and adopted the National Constitution, promulgated on October 26, 1956.

In his message of April 17, 1956 to the Constituent Assembly, President Ngo Dinh Diem established the major philosophic cornerstone of the Constitution:

"We affirm that the sole legitimate end and object of the State is to protect the fundamental rights of the human person to existence and to the free development of his intellectual, moral and spiritual life."

President Ngo understood, however, that the adoption of a Constitution in itself does not insure the practice of democracy. In his final Message to the Constituent Assembly on October 15, 1956, he said :

“We conceive the working out and the promulgation of the Constitution as only a first step on the path to democracy and its edification. This work calls for ceaseless efforts from everyone, because democracy is essentially a state of mind, a way of living. The vital issue is to establish an effective state apparatus capable of solving in due time complex problems of a modern nation’s daily life.”

The Constitution of the Republic of Viet-Nam proclaims that Viet-Nam’s civilization “rests on spiritual foundations” and that it is based upon “the transcendent values of the human person whose free, harmonious and complete development on the individual as well as on the communal plane must be the object of all state activity.”

The Constitution lays down the following principles :

—“the consolidation of national independence and the struggle against all forms of domination and imperialism ;

—“the safeguard of liberty for each individual and for the Nation ;

—“the erection of a political, economic, social and cultural democratic regime in respect for the human person, for the benefit of all classes of the population.”

Spirit of the Constitution

The Vietnamese Constitution is a unique combination of Western forms and practices adapted to national Vietnamese traditions and local conditions. The framers of the Vietnamese Constitution adopted a Presidential system, where, as in the United States, the Chief Executive directly elected by the people is also the Chief of State. However, certain constitutional features are inspired from French practice, such as the provisions relating to the National Economic Council.

It is significant that the Vietnamese Bill of Human Rights is included in the text of the Constitution itself rather than in the Preamble, as in the French Constitution, or in the form of amendments, as with the Constitution of the United States.

This precludes future debate over whether the safeguards for human rights have actual force of law.

The Executive

Free Viet-Nam is a Republic with the President and Vice President elected directly by the people for a five-year term. The Cabinet is appointed by the President.

The President is also Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, which now number about 150,000 men, most of whom are veterans of the long Indochinese war.

Viet-Nam is divided into 36 provinces. A provincial administrator appointed by, and responsible to the President, is at the head of each province.

Civil Servants are recruited by examinations with the concurrence of the interested Department and the Civil Service. Administrators are selected largely from graduates of the Law School of Saigon or of the National Institute of Administration presently under contract with Michigan State University.

Judicial Organization

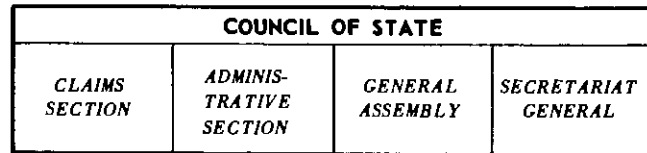
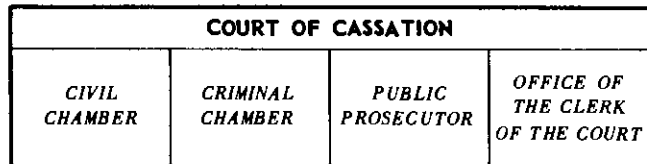
The judicial organization of Viet-Nam is based on the dual system of judiciary and administrative courts, the former under the supreme authority of the Court of Cassation, the latter under the Council of State.

The Legislative

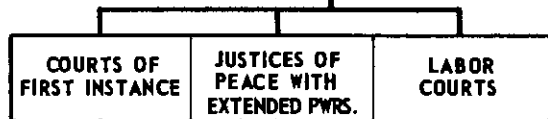
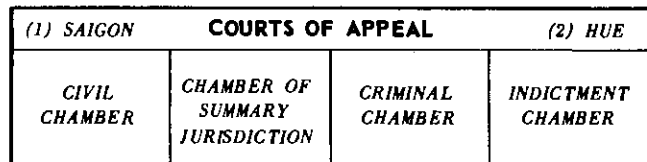
The Vietnamese Constitution provides for a unicameral Assembly whose powers are to vote laws and to approve international treaties and conventions. The Deputies to the National Assembly are elected by universal, direct and secret ballot for a three-year term. They may be reelected.

After the Geneva Armistice, the first election in Free Viet-Nam was the referendum of October 1955, in which the Vietnamese people were asked to choose a political regime and a national leader. In the next elections, held in March 1956, deputies to the Constituent Assembly were chosen and it was this body that established the present Constitution of the Republic of Viet-Nam. Upon the promulgation of the Constitution on October 26, 1956, the Constituent Assembly became the first Legislature of the Republic, whose three-year term of office terminated at the end of September 1959. The present

JUDICIARY ORGANIZATION OF VIET-NAM



ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS



JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

MILITARY TRIBUNALS
(1) SAIGON (2) HUE (3) BANMETHUOT

As of October 1958, there are in South Viet-Nam:

- 6 Courts of First Instance: in Saigon, Dinh Tuong, Vinh Long, Hue, Quang Nam, and Khanh Hoa*
- 23 Justices of Peace with Extended Powers*
- 13 Justices of Peace*
- 7 Labor Courts*

National Assembly, elected on August 30, 1959, is therefore the second Legislature, whose term of office runs until 1962.

Among the 123 members of the present National Assembly, 76 belong to the National Revolutionary Movement, 4 to the Socialist Party, and 1 to the Social Democrat Party. The remaining 42 elected deputies stood as independents. Of the present members of the Second Assembly, 50 are incumbents out of 73 of the members of the First Assembly who had sought reelection. Nine of the newly elected members are women, the highest number of women deputies in any Asian country, with the exception of Japan. This is an indication of the ever increasing importance of the role of women in the democratic development of the country.

The newly elected deputies to the Assembly represent a wide range of professions; 27 of the new deputies are members of the teaching profession, including 2 university professors; 5 are engineers; 3 are lawyers; and 5 are pharmacists. Journalists, writers, landowners, businessmen and former city councilors are also represented in the newly elected group.

The youngest deputy is twenty-seven year old Mrs. Xuan Lan, a graduate of the University of Paris, and the oldest is Mr. Luong Trong Hoi of Quang-Nam, a scholar seventy years of age who, because of his age, automatically becomes Dean of the Assembly.

Although there were some attempts by the Viet-Cong (the Communists) to sabotage the elections, their attempts failed. In contrast with the democratic process in the Republic of Viet-Nam, it should be noted that elections have not been held for 14 years in Communist North Viet-Nam.

The Economy Of Viet-Nam

Economic development to raise the living standard of the people has become the main target for the countries of Asia, and may constitute, in the long run, the testing ground for different systems of government and opposing political philosophies.

The issue is the more acute perhaps in Viet-Nam, where the partition of the country into a Communist North and a non-Communist South tends to make the competition even keener.

At the end of World War II, Viet-Nam remained an essentially agricultural country where some 81 percent of the population earned their living from agriculture.

Agriculture

Rice culture comprises three-fifths of all agricultural activity, practiced in the two large plains of Viet-Nam—the delta of the Red River in the North, and the valley of the Mekong River in the South—as well as in the narrow coastal plains of Central Viet-Nam. The majority of Viet-Nam's people are grouped in these plains.

Another important agricultural product is *rubber*, cultivated in large plantations in Southern Viet-Nam. The "red soil" area in which rubber is grown covers a total area of about 160,000 acres, stretching from the northeast edge of the Mekong delta northwest-ward into Cambodia.

Other agricultural products are *corn*, *kapok*, *tobacco*, *tea*, *pepper*, *copra*, and *oilseeds*. The livestock includes mostly draft animals, especially water buffaloes.

Fishing and Forestry

Fish is very abundant in Viet-Nam's rivers and along the sea coast. It forms an important part of the Vietnamese diet and is used to make a traditional sauce called *nuoc mam* with a high nutritive content.

No virgin forests exist in Viet-Nam because they were extensively exploited. The forested areas are estimated to cover approximately 4 to 5 million acres in Central Viet-Nam. They provide some hard and precious woods for cabinet work and construction and such by-products as pine oil, pitch, tur-

pentine, natural rosin, waxes, balsams, and beeswax, which are used mostly in the local market. Small amounts of turpentine and lac are exported.

Lumber production is still deficient. In 1953, it was estimated to be 600,000 cubic meters, approximately two-thirds coming from forests South of the 17th parallel.

Industry

Viet-Nam has a large variety of *mineral resources*, providing great potentials for industrial development.

Most of the mineral resources, however, are in North Viet-Nam, which has large deposits of *coal* and *iron*. Other deposits are *manganese*, *zinc*, *lead*, *copper*, *calamines*, *silver*, *phosphates*, *tungsten*, *tin*, *wolframite*, *antimony*, *steatite*, *barite* and *kaolin*.

South Viet-Nam has some coal (mine of Nong Son), phosphates, gold, kaolin, and salt. It has numerous waterfalls, which are an excellent potential source for hydroelectrical development. The government of South Viet-Nam is planning the construction of the Danhim Dam, which is expected to provide, after completion, a hydroelectrical power capacity of 350,000 Kw.

MANUFACTURING is, at the present time, insufficiently developed in Viet-Nam, and most manufactured products are imported.

North Viet-Nam is reportedly speeding up production in textiles, cement and paper, as well as in the extracting of mineral resources for the establishment of an industrial economy. North Viet-Nam is also reported to have received major Soviet Russian and Chinese Communist aid for this development.

South Viet-Nam possesses factories and plants for processing rice, rubber, and chemicals, as well as tobacco factories, shipyards, textile mills and distilleries.

South Viet-Nam has also *sugar refineries*, *paper* and *textile industries* and some *chemical industries* (oxygen, acetylene, carbon dioxide, absorbent carbons), which are produced in quantities approximately sufficient to satisfy the local demand.

Traditional handicraft industries are carried on by specialized artisans in the cities, and also in the countryside by farmers and family groups. The handicraft industries include

Geographical Representation of the Economic Resources of Viet-Nam



such products as lacquerware, mother-of-pearl inlay, carved ivory, porcelain, embroidery, hammocks, clothing, hats, mats, baskets, fans and copper articles. The great taste and skill of Vietnamese craftsmen is known throughout much of Asia and Europe and is now becoming appreciated in the United States.

Private Investment and Viet-Nam's Development

In the economic development of Viet-Nam, encouragement is given to private enterprise. Viet-Nam has also adopted a policy of economic cooperation with friendly nations. In March 1957, President Ngo Dinh Diem, in an important declaration on the national policy toward foreign investments, formally welcomed foreign capital to participate in the economic development of Viet-Nam. The Declaration, which reiterates the constitutional reliance on private initiative, provides for incentives and guarantees for domestic and foreign capital. Among these incentives is a guaranty against nationalization and expropriation without due compensation as well as exemption from certain taxations. Provision is also made for repatriation of foreign capital, industrial and commercial profits, as well as savings and bonuses of foreign technicians.

The Republic of Viet-Nam's friendly disposition towards foreign capital is noteworthy in view of the nationalistic trend prevailing in Asia today.

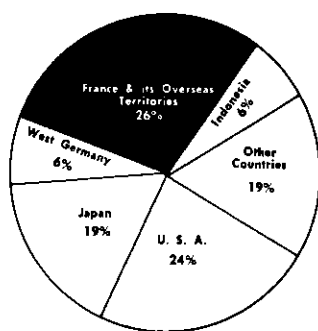
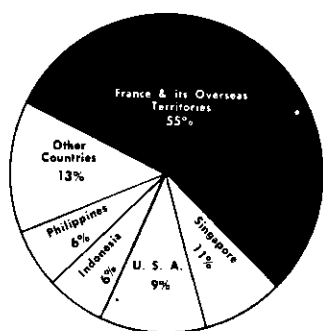
President Ngo, in an address* before American businessmen, best summed up this approach when he stated:

"Let me say here and now that my Government and the Vietnamese people do not share the hostility toward the West which is so much more the vogue in some countries. We regard the United States, in particular, as our friend. Perhaps the most tangible test of this is our attitude toward private business. We recognize the crucial role which private enterprise has historically played in raising the living standard of all people. We do not regard foreign private investment as a threat to our national integrity. On the contrary, we welcome it as a necessary and cooperative factor, in the development of free Viet-Nam and we will do everything within our means to create a hospitable climate for foreign investors who wish to cooperate in strengthening the economy of Viet-Nam."

*Address before the Far East America Council of Commerce and Industry, New York City, May 14, 1957.

Subsequent proclamations by President Ngo have put these principles into practice. In November 1957, Viet-Nam and the United States signed agreements guaranteeing American investments in Viet-Nam against expropriation, currency inconvertibility and war risk. The U.S. Government now issues insurance policies at low premium rates to American investors in Viet-Nam for these categories. Major efforts are currently being pursued in the establishment of new enterprises for the domestic production of textiles, paper, glass, wallboard, rubber tires, cement, pharmaceuticals, sugar refining, handicrafts and other light industries.

Viet-Nam's basic development has been largely in the agricultural area, where it is richly endowed. Almost all of the 880,500 refugees who fled from Communist tyranny in 1954-5 have been successfully resettled. They have played a decisive role in opening up new agricultural areas and in reclaiming old ones. Under the recent Five Year Plan, an increasing area for development has been assigned to the industrial sector. The Industrial Development Center has been created to encourage and support new industrial investments. All these efforts are destined to raise the standard of living of the population and to provide the solid foundation for a stable and modern democracy.



1958 EXPORTS 1958 IMPORTS

Education In Viet-Nam

In the past, education in Viet-Nam was based essentially on the study of humanities. Teaching in almost every village was done by private scholars. Literature, history, and philosophy formed the basic program, aiming at the formation of "wise gentlemen," considered as the supreme attainment in life. Severe examinations organized at the higher level by the Emperor himself conferred degrees on the most meritorious scholars, and at the same time, constituted the method of selection of civil servants.

After Viet-Nam came under French Administration in 1884, the Vietnamese education system was reorganized according to the French pattern, especially in higher education.

Thanks to the initiative of Mgr. Alexandre de Rhodes, one of the missionaries from the papal city of Avignon, who came to Viet-Nam in 1627 long before the establishment of the French Administration, Viet-Nam adopted the romanization of her ancient written characters. It therefore requires a very short time for someone who already speaks Vietnamese to learn how to read and write the romanized language, which is based on the phonetic transcription of the spoken language. This permits many practical applications and is a powerful instrument to combat illiteracy.

Unfortunately, under the colonial administration, the number of schools was limited. The University of Hanoi was perhaps one of the best in Southeast Asia, but it was the only University for the whole of Indochina, including Viet-Nam and the two neighboring countries, Laos and Cambodia. High schools were established only in a few large cities. This lack of educational opportunities led to an alarming decline of the literacy rate, which dropped to 15% of the population in 1945.

Since regaining independence, Viet-Nam has made great strides in educational development, despite the numerous other problems it faces. By 1957, the literacy rate had been raised to 72% of the population, by the end of 1959 to 90%. It is expected that illiteracy will completely disappear from Viet-Nam in the near future if the literacy campaign continues to score the satisfactory results it has achieved so far. In higher education, four Universities have been recently established in

Free Viet-Nam: two in Saigon, one in Dalat, and another in Hue. French culture retains the place it deserves along with other important foreign cultures, but the educational system has been reorganized to respond more adequately to Vietnamese needs, with a view to the revival of the Vietnamese ancient cultural heritage.

While the curricula of secondary and higher schools include a strong emphasis in the natural and physical sciences, and in mathematics, considerable attention is also paid to Oriental philosophy and history.

In 1958 the Department of Education established a special Textbook Publication Service and a Planning and Statistics Service. Between the academic years 1953-54 and 1955-56 the number of Elementary and Secondary Schools, as well as the number of students and faculty members, have approximately doubled. Between the academic years 1957-58 and 1958-59 the number of students increased by 20% in elementary education and 25% in secondary education. In 1958-59, 1,046 new elementary schools were built, and secondary schools were equipped with new laboratories. Aside from public schools, there are at the present time in South Viet-Nam 600 private secondary schools, attended by 110,000 students. In addition, centers for the education of handicapped children and juvenile delinquents have been organized.

The rapid growth of the school population has led to an intensive development of Teachers' Colleges, in particular the "Normal School" in Saigon, and the Higher Center of Pedagogy which was transformed into a Faculty of Pedagogy in August 1958.

In higher education, the progress is no less striking. In 1954, there were hardly 2,000 University students in all Viet-Nam. In December 1957, the University of Saigon alone numbered nearly 4,000 students, including a large number of female students and some foreign students from China, India, France and the U. S. At the beginning of the academic year 1958-59, it had 6,541 registered students. The University of Saigon consists of various departments including the Faculty of Letters, Faculty of Sciences, Teachers' College, Law School, Medical School, School of Pharmacy, and School of Dental Surgery.

The National Institute of Public Administration was founded in 1955 in Saigon, with the cooperation of the staff of Michigan State University. The Institute is preparing administrators for the different branches of the Vietnamese Government.

Two new Universities were founded in 1957, one at Dalat, in the temperate Highlands, and the other at Hue in Central Viet-Nam. The University of Hue, established in the former imperial city and near the 17th parallel bordering the Communist North, is another manifestation of the educational development in Viet-Nam, as well as a challenge to the Communist ideology across the nearby Bamboo Curtain.

Education in Viet-Nam today is a dynamic force for the country's development and for the achievement of real democracy.



Viet-Nam As A Tourist Center

Viet-Nam has long been regarded as one of the world's most fascinating tourist attractions. The great diversity of its landscapes and its people, the contrast between its ancient historic ruins and its modern urban centers, the variety of its climate and its flora, captivate the tourist everywhere in Viet-Nam.

The immense plains where the green rice fields stretch to the horizons, the pine-covered plateaus bejeweled with shimmering lakes, the magnificent beaches where the dark blue waves of the Pacific caress the golden sand, in each, the tourist will find relaxation and comfort, in an ideal atmosphere. The mosaic of ethnic minorities who inhabit Viet-Nam's rugged mountains also constitutes an unending source of interest to the tourist and the scholar alike.

Facilities for hunting big game, including tiger, elephant and wild buffalo, have made parts of Viet-Nam's highlands a world-wide attraction for those seeking undiluted adventure.

By contrast, cosmopolitan Saigon, the port of entry to Viet-Nam, is one of the leading international harbors in Southeast Asia. Besides the vibrating activity common to any large commercial and industrial center, Saigon has for centuries lured tourists by its large boulevards, its charming residential quarters and its famous restaurants and night clubs. This unique mixture of Asia and the West has justly earned Saigon the designation of *Pearl of the Orient*.



Viet-Nam In International Relations

The Republic of Viet-Nam maintains friendly relations with all the nations of the Free World.

In October 1957, Saigon, the capital of the Republic of Viet-Nam, was the seat for the IXth Colombo Conference, in which 21 countries participated to seek solutions for the economic development of South and Southeast Asia.

Viet-Nam is a member of numerous international organizations, including the specialized agencies of the United Nations, such as the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization, World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, International Labor Organization, International Telecommunications Union, Universal Postal Union, International Civil Aviation Organization, World Meteorological Organization, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, and Economic Committee for Asia and the Far East.

The overwhelming majority of the U.N. Member Nations adopted several resolutions in the General Assembly calling for Viet-Nam's membership in the United Nations. However, the admission of Viet-Nam into the U. N. has been, since 1952, blocked five times by the veto of the Soviet Union.

The bonds of friendship between the United States and Viet-Nam have grown steadily closer since 1954. American assistance has been instrumental in the establishment and training of Viet-Nam's defensive forces, as well as in the nation's economic development. American voluntary organizations and governmental aid were major factors in the resettlement of nearly one million refugees which the South absorbed after the Geneva Conference of 1954. Perhaps more important has been the moral support for Free Viet-Nam which the United States provided from the earliest days of her independence.

To demonstrate the close friendship between Viet-Nam and the United States, President Ngo Dinh Diem made, in May 1957, an official visit to the United States, which took him to

Washington, D. C., New York, San Francisco, Detroit, Chattanooga and Los Angeles.

In May 1959, Viet-Nam signed with Japan a war reparations agreement, whereby Japan settled her war debts with the Ngo Dinh Diem Government considered as the legal government for all Viet-Nam. In August 1959, at the Conference in Warsaw of the Interparliamentary Union of which Free Viet-Nam is a member, the application for membership of Communist North Viet-Nam was discarded.

Viet-Nam's relations with France have become remarkably more amicable since independence was regained. Vietnamese frustrations born under colonialism and French frustrations resulting from military setbacks are fading away to give place to a sincere friendship between the two nations having an equally old civilization and a mutual respect for spiritual values. This friendship is, perhaps, the more remarkable in the light of painful memories and in view of the rising tide of triumphant nationalism in Southeast Asia.

In the economic field, France remains one of Viet-Nam's most important partners, coming first in Vietnamese exportations for the years from 1955 through 1958; first in Vietnamese importations for the years 1954 and 1955, third in 1956, and first in 1957 and 1958. Profits of French investments in Viet-Nam were valued at 43 billion francs in 1956.

During his good will tours to India, Thailand, Korea and Australia in 1957, President Ngo strengthened the traditional bonds of friendship between Viet-Nam and her Asian neighbors. He also defined on many occasions his conception of the common tasks and ideals of Asian nations.

In a speech in Bangkok, at a reception in honor of the King of Thailand, August 16, 1957, President Ngo Dinh Diem said:

"In the present state of the world, it becomes our duty as Asians to reaffirm our ancient friendship and our common purpose which must not be based on the changing alliances of political opportunism, but on those eternal values which are the foundation of Asian civilization, its *raison de vivre* and also its glory."

On arriving in Seoul, September 18, 1957, for his state visit to *Korea*, President Ngo Dinh Diem said:

“The stake of our common struggle is all the more important as we have not only to defend our independence and our liberties, but also to preserve the very foundations of Asian culture, to contribute to its renaissance by giving it a new orientation toward the active respect for the human person and, thereby, within the limits of our responsibilities, to prevent the Asian revolution from being deprived of the fruit of its efforts, its sacrifices and its legitimate hopes.”

On the occasion of his visit to *India*, President Ngo Dinh Diem issued with Prime Minister Nehru of India, a joint communique of November 9, 1957, which contained this declaration:

“The President of the Republic of Viet-Nam and the Prime Minister of India are agreed that, with the terrible advances in the development of weapons of mass destruction, the most urgent problem before the people of the world is the maintenance of peace in the world which is vital for their survival. To both their countries, as well as to the other countries in Southeast Asia, maintenance of peace is a primary need to enable them to devote their energies wholeheartedly to the social and economic advancement of their peoples. The essential task is to give while maintaining spiritual values, economic and social content to their freedom and independence.”

Commenting on President Ngo Dinh Diem's role in Asia, the *Hindustan Standard*, in its issue of November 4, 1957, described President Ngo Dinh Diem as not only “a champion of resurgent Asia but a philosopher who could guide Asia to attain economic progress without sacrificing essential human liberties.”

VIET NAM'S HISTORY AT A GLANCE

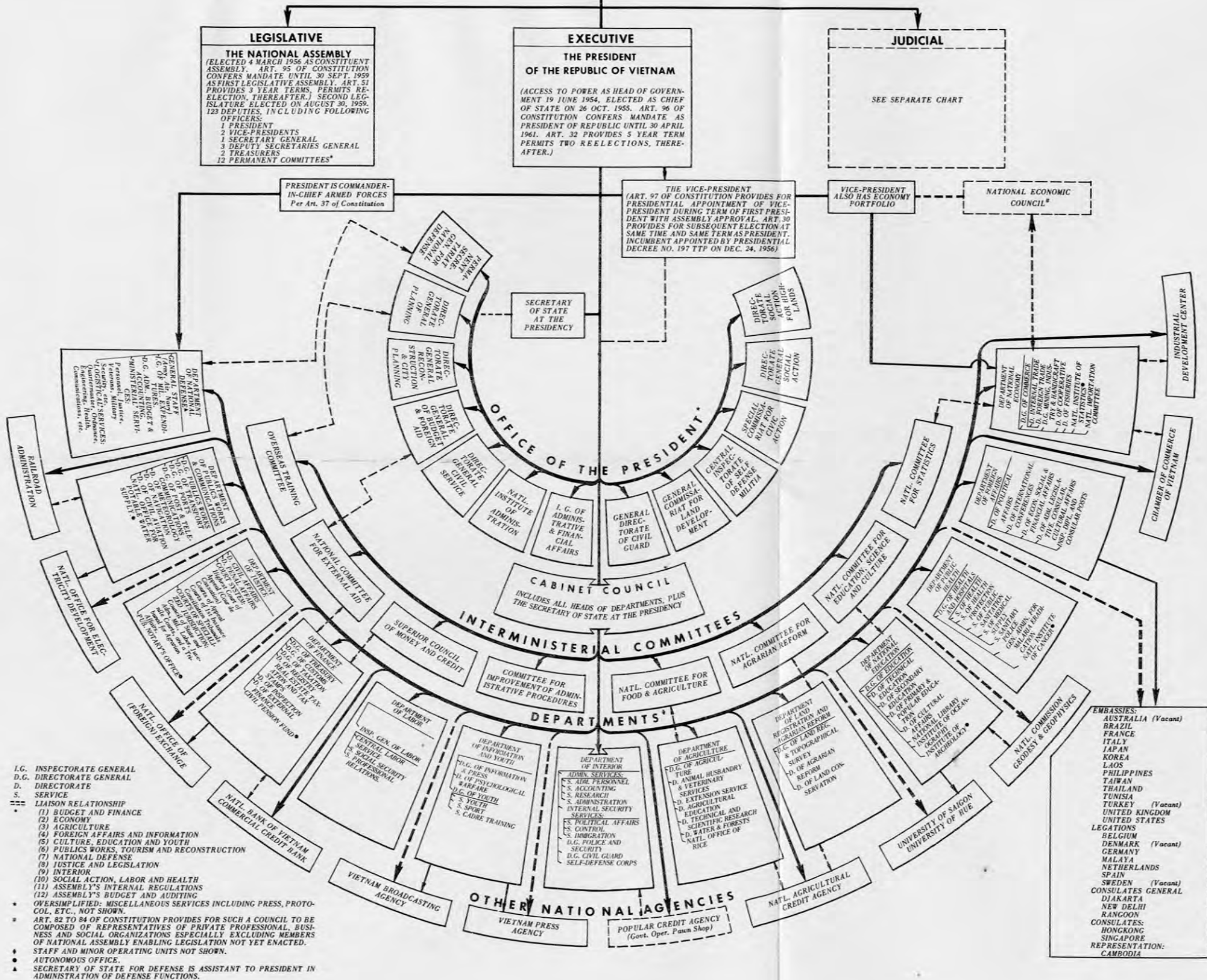
- 2879-258 B.C.**
Legendary Period
- 207 B.C.**
Formation of Kingdom of Nam-Viet
- 111 B.C.**
Conquered by Chinese Empire.
- 40-43 A.D.**
Short Independence under the Trung Sisters.
- 544-602**
National Independence restored by Ly Nam De.
- 938**
Viet-Nam regains independence: Beginning of the era of great national dynasties
- 939**
Ngo Dynasty.
- 967**
Dinh Dynasty.
- 980**
Earlier Le Dynasty.
- 1010**
Ly Dynasty.
- 1225**
Tran Dynasty.
- 1288**
Viet-Nam repels Mongol invasion under Tran Dynasty: Victory of Bach Dang Giang over Kublai Khan's Armies.
- 1407**
China invades Viet-Nam.
- 1428**
Le Loi becomes Emperor after successful struggle against Chinese invasion.
- 1532-1592**
First partition of Viet-Nam: Le Dynasty in the South, Mac Dynasty in the North.
- 1592**
Reunification of Viet-Nam under the Le Dynasty.
- 1674-1802**
Second partition of Viet-Nam: Princes Nguyen in the South and Princes Trinh in the North.
- 1802**
Reunification of North and South Viet-Nam. Nguyen Anh becomes Emperor Gia-Long of Viet-Nam, the founder of the last royal dynasty.
- 1867**
Southern Viet-Nam becomes French colony.
- 1883**
French Protectorate over Viet-Nam.
- 1940-45**
Viet-Nam occupied by Japanese Forces.
- 1945**
French authority in Indochina overthrown by Japanese. Proclamation of the Independence of Viet-Nam under nationalist Premier Tran Trong Kim. Viet-Minh Revolution. Emperor Bao-Dai abdicates in favor of Viet-Minh. Proclamation of the "Democratic Republic" by the Viet-Minh.
- 1946**
Negotiations between France and Viet-Minh.
France recognizes Viet-Nam as a Free State within the French Union.
War breaks out between France and Viet-Minh.
- 1948**
France recognizes Viet-Nam as an independent State within the French Union.
- 1949**
Ex-Emperor Bao-Dai returns as Chief of State of non-communist Viet-Nam.
- 1954**
French defeat at Dien Bien Phu: Ngo Dinh Diem assumes premiership. Geneva Armistice ends war between French and Viet-Minh, and partitions Viet-Nam along the 17th parallel.
- 1955**
Ngo Dinh Diem elected in national referendum Oct 26; Proclamation of the Republic of Viet-Nam.
- 1956**
Viet-Nam elects Constituent Assembly. Adaption and promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of Viet-Nam, on October 26, 1956. Ngo Dinh Diem sworn in as first President of the Republic. Constituent Assembly became first Legislature after promulgation of Constitution.
- 1959**
Election of Second National Assembly.

**Press and Information Office
Embassy of Viet Nam, Washington 8, D. C.**

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

THE CONSTITUTION

ADOPTED ON OCTOBER 26, 1956



I.G. INSPECTORATE GENERAL
 D.G. DIRECTORATE GENERAL
 D. DIRECTORATE
 S. SERVICE
 LIAISON RELATIONSHIP
 (1) BUDGET AND FINANCE
 (2) ECONOMY
 (3) AGRICULTURE
 (4) FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION
 (5) CULTURE, EDUCATION AND YOUTH
 (6) PUBLIC WORKS, TOURISM AND RECONSTRUCTION
 (7) NATIONAL DEFENSE
 (8) JUSTICE AND LEGISLATION
 (9) INTERIOR
 (10) SOCIAL ACTION, LABOR AND HEALTH
 (11) ASSEMBLY'S INTERNAL REGULATIONS
 (12) ASSEMBLY'S BUDGET AND AUDITING
 * OVERSIMPLIFIED: MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES INCLUDING PRESS, PROTOCOL, ETC., NOT SHOWN.
 * ART. 82 TO 84 OF CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR SUCH A COUNCIL TO BE COMPOSED OF REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIVATE PROFESSIONAL, BUSINESS AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS ESPECIALLY EXCLUDING MEMBERS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ENABLING LEGISLATION NOT YET ENACTED.
 * STAFF AND MINOR OPERATING UNITS NOT SHOWN.
 * AUTONOMOUS OFFICE.
 * SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEFENSE IS ASSISTANT TO PRESIDENT IN ADMINISTRATION OF DEFENSE FUNCTIONS.