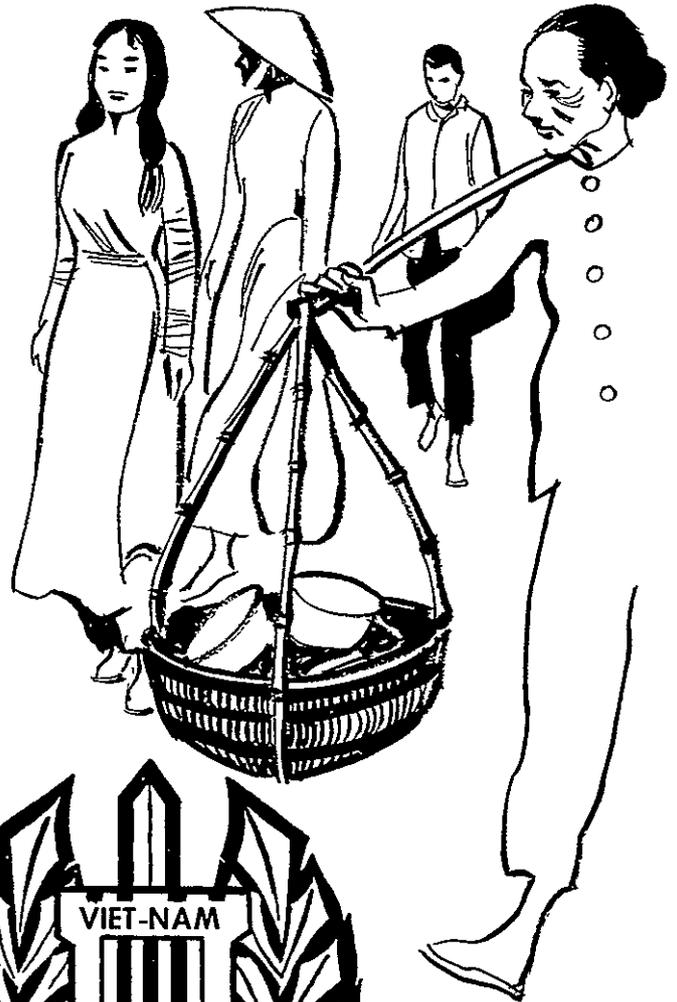


The Role of Public Safety in Support of The National Police of Vietnam



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Washington, D.C.

April 1, 1969

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OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OF VIETNAM

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FOREWORD

In the turbulence of a wartime South Vietnamese society, the tasks of the nation's policemen are extremely difficult. Their conventional role -- enforcing the law and maintaining public order -- is complicated by the impact of the war on all levels of society, plus the debilitation of the government's efforts by the Viet Cong.

The National Policeman is the "thin gray line" of civil authority between the disruptions of enemy activities and the peace of law and order. Ably assisted by professional Public Safety Advisors, the National Police help the Revolutionary Development groups protect villagers against sporadic VC aggressions; its Field Force seeks out and engages the enemy who would terrorize the villager; its Judiciary Police perform regular law enforcement duties; its Special Police seek to surface and isolate the enemy infrastructure; and its Resources Control officers interdict the enemy's logistical and economic activity. Together, they form a powerful force conceived as the builder/protector of the orderly social, economic, and political development of Vietnam's newly emerging democracy.

THE PUBLIC SAFETY ADVISOR

The quiet coastal city of Phan Thiet was engulfed in pre-dawn darkness on February 17 of this year when Public Safety Advisor Gerald Marcotte was awakened by a knock at the door. A Field Forces policeman gave him a message from Marcotte's PFF counterpart that the VC were moving in to attack the compound of the nationalist Chinese Medical Team. Marcotte woke up his two American housemates. They grabbed their weapons and headed for the Medical Team Compound. Before they could reach it, the VC had begun their attack on the building.

Marcotte worked his way slowly to the compound gate and with his shotgun blasted his way into the compound and dashed for the building under attack. The others were pinned down by VC rifle fire and grenades.

With Marcotte's help, the Chinese medics were able to hold off the enemy for several hours until the military were able to drive the remaining VC off. As a result of this Advisor's heroism and superior performance under enemy fire, the medical team was saved, the VC thwarted and the Government honored Marcotte with the Award for Heroism.

On January 31, Jack Sanders, Public Safety Advisor assigned to the City of Hue, was awakened by the sound of gunfire. He made a fast check of the situation and quickly concluded that the size of the VC forces attacking the city made it imperative that he evacuate his quarters -- in fact, escape was vital.

For one whole day, he evaded enemy units scattered throughout the city as he moved from one location to another. Eventually, Sanders and another American found themselves trapped in a private home by North Vietnamese regular troops. The North Vietnamese attacked the house with grenades. In trying to take the house, the VC sustained losses to Sander's marksmanship from a captured AK-47 assault rifle. They gave up the attempt.

Meanwhile, the enemy attacks inside Hue mounted and spread. Sanders, with his companion, waited until dark and headed for the canals to escape. In the darkness, the two became separated. Sanders finally reached the Perfume River only to find himself caught in the middle of intense crossfire between GVN and North Vietnamese forces. Throughout the next day, he doubled back up the river, frequently having to conceal himself from enemy units. Finally, on February 2, he was able to reach a GVN River Assault Group and spent the next two days with the Group in combat operations against the enemy.

In such a hostile environment as Vietnam, a few advisory experiences do not end peacefully or in awards. At 0730 hours on November 5, 1960, Public Safety Advisor Dolph Owens became the first civilian casualty in Vietnam. Enroute to the USOM Counter Guerrilla Training Academy at Cat Lo, he and his Vietnamese driver were ambushed and killed. All together, 25 PSD Advisors have been killed or wounded in action.

Police advisors often find their work routine, repetitive and frequently filled with frustrations as often as with success. But on occasions, their experiences vary. The experiences of the three advisors described above indicate the unusual level of violence which can be encountered and the exceptional adaptability that may be required of the Public Safety Advisor. Yet, deaths and injuries of PSD advisors excite little notice in the public press. The missions of these men are little known, even in the U.S.

The Public Safety Advisor in Vietnam functions at all levels: national, regional, provincial and municipal. His duties encompass both urban and rural areas. He may be required to function at the highest National Police staff levels in the field of logistics, operations, training, programming or communications. He may be involved with an individual commander or police officer. His schedule will be the schedule of police operational necessity.

Currently there are more than 200 such PSD advisors operating in Vietnam with minimum visibility. Most often drawn from the executive levels of U.S. police forces, many have university degrees and speak one or more foreign languages. All have been carefully screened and trained to undertake a job that requires considerable courage, stability, resourcefulness and initiative in order to rapidly adjust to the daily strain, danger, frustrations and problems inherent in this unique operating environment.

History and General Background

It is axiomatic that a free society depends upon its police to regulate the behavior of its members in accordance with its laws. The effective response to this end by the civil police is a primary prerequisite to orderly government, economic growth and the nurturing of opportunities for the people of the country to

realize their aspirations. The achievement of these ends for South Vietnam are goals held in common by the governments of Vietnam and the United States. Consequently, the U.S. is heavily engaged in assisting the Government of Vietnam to develop the National Police organization to carry out its responsibilities for the protection of the populace in time of war and achievement of goals attendant to a future peace.

The U.S. Government assigned major policy emphasis and direction to the AID-administered Public Safety programs in 1962. Subsequent policy and program guidance has continually emphasized the urgency of assisting the GVN police institutions as basic to achieving internal security.

The Public Safety Program in Vietnam began in 1959, superseding the police advisor effort conducted by Michigan State University under an ICA contract beginning in May 1955. On May 9, 1967, PSD was organizationally incorporated in its entirety by Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) under MACV.

The Public Safety Division (PSD) provides advisory and technical support mainly to the GVN Directorates of Police, Rehabilitation and Telecommunication under the Minister of Interior. The overall PSD objective is to assist these directorates to achieve maximum self-sufficiency in achieving an effective national level of civil policing, law enforcement, security communications and prisoner rehabilitation. Allied with this are PSD efforts to insure that an effective counterinsurgency capability is maintained and utilized in these agencies.

Since its inception, the PSD program has continuously developed and broadened the scope of its advisory and material assistance. Total dollar support of PSD assistance reached \$95,417,000 through FY 1968, while the numbers of advisors increased from six in 1959 to 47 in November 1963 and to 204 by the end of FY 1968, with 225 authorized positions. In this same period, major progress was achieved in telecommunications, resources control, waterborne police, identification and prison rehabilitation.

The effectiveness of PSD assistance was clearly demonstrated in the February 1968 Tet offensive and subsequent actions. With few exceptions, the performance of the National Police received wide praise from U.S. military and civil organizations in Vietnam for heroism, professionalism and self-sacrifice under fire. From

January 1, 1967 to May 31, 1968, the National Police sustained 3,177 casualties, including 1,334 killed in action, 1,604 wounded, and 239 missing. During the same period, three U.S. advisors were killed and several wounded. There is room for optimism for future excellent police performance if quality leadership can continue to be developed in the quantities needed, if necessary construction progresses and advisory and technical assistance is maintained at the required levels.

The civil security structure initially advised by PSD in 1959 consisted largely of the Civil Guard, plus a conglomerate of municipal police organizations and other security units. There was no central structure to unify national police efforts against the VC threat until the Directorate of National Police was established on June 27, 1962, by national decree.

A serious early setback was the transfer of the Civil Guard from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Defense on December 12, 1960. This removed the Civil Guard from PSD advice and assistance and placed it under the Military Assistance and Advisory Group. Since the Civil Guard was the largest civil security force in Vietnam, their subsequent basically military orientation and training under military auspices greatly lessened the civil policing capabilities of South Vietnam.

In this atmosphere, the Chief of Public Safety Division proposed a "National Police Plan" for Vietnam in March 1964. This plan called for a nationwide police structure to provide standard law enforcement and police services, extensive police and paramilitary counterinsurgency capability, a waterborne police force and a total police structure with 86,000 personnel by the end of 1969.

The National Police expanded rapidly. From a force of 19,000 in 1963, the National Police increased to 52,000 by the end of 1965, 60,000 in 1966 and 70,000 in 1967. By 1968 there were 80,000 men and women within the civil police establishment. These include the regional police and paramilitary units, such as National Police Field Force, Marine Police and Special Branch Police who also perform civil police functions and maintain internal security as their primary missions.

The priority objective of PSD is to upgrade the professional capability of the National Police to preserve law and order and to develop police ability to perform as the government's first line of defense against subversive insurgency. The individual Public Safety Advisor assists by providing technical know-how, training and certain commodities assistance. The ultimate aim is to encourage the civil law enforcement establishment to be a modern apolitical and professional career service oriented to contribute to the development of a successful representative government.

Multiple Functions

The national public safety services provided by the GVN consist of the National Police with its multi-purpose force of 80,000 officers; the Prisoner Rehabilitation Service; and the Combined Telecommunications Directorate. These three agencies function as high-level directorates under the Minister of the Interior (Chart A).

The National Police Directorate (Chart B) is responsible for maintaining law and order and the performance of those civil tasks required to conduct counterinsurgency activities in all South Vietnamese cities, principal towns and villages. It has been gradually extending its presence into rural areas, especially since its force level began substantially increasing in 1964.

One element of the NP, the Immigration Service, is responsible for the control of persons entering and departing Vietnam. Another element, the Police Field Force, formerly called the "Combat Police", conducts police operations in rural areas after the military has cleared them of most of the enemy forces. It is charged with primary efforts against the VC infrastructure. Its newest element, the Marine Police, was recently organized to control river traffic, primarily in the Delta region.

The Prisoner Rehabilitation Service operates the GVN's prisoner rehabilitation centers and administers rehabilitation programs for some 34,000 inmates.

The Combined Telecommunications Directorate is an integrated telecommunications service which assists and supports the civil security forces throughout the nation. It provides the basic communication facility at the village/hamlet level and primary communications for government agencies at all levels.

Public Safety Program

The U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) assists the National Police and related directorates through its Public Safety Division (PSD) with representatives at the national, regional and provincial levels. PSD is the only USAID Division which operates entirely under CORDS control.

The Public Safety program strives to develop GVN capabilities to train police recruits at a rate of approximately 12,000 man increase per year. Presently, the Public Safety program is authorized

a complement of 225 U.S. advisors along with several British and Australians. The PSD advisors are experienced police officers drawn from county, city, state and federal law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. In PSD, one might find an Inspector of Detectives from the Detroit Police Department, a Captain from the Los Angeles Police Department, an Inspector from the U.S. Border Patrol, a former FBI agent, an Investigator from the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics, and a former military man assisting the Vietnamese to solve their security and administrative problems. They consider themselves police-management consultants. They are expected to keep in the background and avoid taking credit. It is their technique to "prime the pump", developing the accomplishments of their Vietnamese counterparts who must shoulder the police burden. PSD provides a variety of training of police personnel and also vital commodity assistance in the form of telecommunications equipment, weapons, ammunition, vehicles, boats and training aids.

The government's security telecommunications network, centered in the National Police Headquarters in Saigon, is a significant US/GVN accomplishment. It connects with every provincial and district capital in South Vietnam. From these, the network extends to over 11,000 villages and hamlets.

National Police Priorities

All U.S. efforts - training, advisory assistance and commodities support - are designed to further specific national priority programs. These include Resources Control, Identification, Family Census, and the overall urban and rural police operations.

Interdicting Enemy Resources

The individual Public Safety Advisor may be involved in the control of Resources at the National, regional, provincial or municipal level. The control of resources is not currently a specialized function, but involves all members of the National Police in some form. In the existing environment, the individual police advisor, on whatever level he is working, will face the problem of coordinating control actions with both GVN and U.S. military elements. This will include a thorough knowledge of the program and adaptability to control operations on land, at sea or even in the air on occasion.

One major change made in the National Police to meet the needs of the insurgency was the institution of a program to control critical resources and population movement. This program aims to inhibit

material assistance to the Viet Cong and minimize their freedom of movement. Police participation in resources control began in 1963. Police efforts in this operation indicated the practicability of fixed and mobile police checkpoints in controlling population and material resources. In October of 1964 a national decree assigned the responsibility to the National Police for controlling the movement of all critical national resources, including manpower.

Currently, 7,700 police man some 650 checkpoints at key locations on roadways and waterways, and operate mobile checkpoints to trap those who evade the fixed locations. Contraband seizures and arrests of Viet Cong and persons moving illegally have steadily mounted. The VC have reacted to increased police effectiveness by stepping up their attacks on police installations, and checkpoints. US/GVN current emphasis is to expand and reinforce the resources control capabilities of the police on the Mekong Delta waterways.

In the past four years, the National Police have confiscated more than 22 million units or kilos of VC contraband consisting of foodstuffs, equipment, medical supplies and firearms and ammunition. More than 468,456 persons have been arrested, including over 28,000 VC and VC suspects.

National Identification

An integral part of the population and resources control program is identification of the populace. A 1957 law requires all persons 18 years old and older to carry identification cards. Since beginning in 1959, the National Police have registered and issued national identification cards to more than 7,600,000 Vietnamese. In 1963, registration was declared completed with the exception of approximately 1 million persons under VC control and about 25,000 persons reaching the age of 18 each month. Through the passage of time and the exigencies of the struggle in Vietnam, many identification cards have been mutilated, lost, defaced, confiscated by the Viet Cong or have otherwise lost their usefulness.

In 1967 it was decided to institute a complete, new National Identification System to include: serial numbering of cards to prevent duplicate numbering; backup biographic data; plus greatly improved tamper-resistance, in addition to the already existing photographs and the two fingerprints on the cards. The registration age was lowered to include persons of 15 years of age. Approximately 10 million Vietnamese will be reached by a registration/identification project which began in October 1968 and

terminates approximately three years later. At the time the new cards are issued, a full 10-finger set of fingerprints is obtained from each applicant, thus providing the National Police with positive identification.

Once completed, the identification system will provide for a national repository of fingerprints and photographs and biographic data. It will be one of the most complete national identification systems in the world, and one of the most badly needed. An indication of the efficacy of the identification program is the past and continuing VC efforts to frustrate registration efforts by ambushing registration teams and conducting anti-registration propaganda campaigns.

Family Census

Allied with identification of individuals is the identification of family groups. This is accomplished by the National Police through the Family Census Program wherein families are photographed and registered in police booklets with an indication of the family material wealth. Changes in the family and wealth are subjected to questioning to discern illegal residents, illegal activity or VC suspects. To date, more than 1½ million families have been registered and the process continues.

National Police Field Forces

The individual public safety advisor at the province level will be involved with the NPFF since there is considerable interaction with other branches of the uniformed police. On occasion, provincial advisors are required to advise the NPFF in the absence of NPFF advisors and vice-versa.

To provide civil government security and to continue pacification activities following GVN military pacification of contested areas, the National Police Field Forces (NPFF) was formed on June 21, 1965. Its nucleus was the Combat Police, which had been formed in 1961 to fill the gap created by the transfer of the Civil Guard to the Ministry of Defense. The PFF consists of independent paramilitary trained police companies assigned to the operational control of individual Provincial Chiefs. It constitutes a decentralized tactical arm of the NP.

The initial utilization of the NFFF included:

1. Security for Resources Control activities.
2. Quick reaction to enemy terrorist activities.
3. Offensive operations against the VC infrastructure.
4. Intelligence gathering.

On August 12, 1967, the primary mission of the NFFF was stated to be action against the VC infrastructure. When properly utilized, the NFFF now functions effectively in this role.

As of January 1969 the NFFF had 75 companies with a total of 11,683 personnel. Plans call for a total of 22,500 personnel, including 33 additional companies by the end of 1969.

All commodities support to the NFFF is provided on a reimbursable basis by MACV due to the military commonality of most items needed to equip the organization. CORDS/PSD provides advisory assistance at the national, regional and provincial levels.

Waterborne Police

Following an April 1965 study of the resources control problem in the Delta region, formation of a waterborne police element was again recommended to adequately police approximately 2,500 miles of waterways navigable by larger river craft. To meet this requirement, the River Police (also called Marine Police) was activated on April 20, 1966. Formed originally as an integral portion of the Resources Control Bloc, it assumed its own identity on October 18, 1967 when the RC Bloc was phased down to bureau status.

The River Police is designed to patrol the Mekong and Bassac Rivers and associated deep-water-tributaries in the Delta. Expansion of this service to suitable bay and river areas of I and II Corps is underway. The organization has received 34 of 76 authorized 40-foot patrol craft and is now receiving 140 seventeen-foot fiber glass interceptor boats equipped with 75 hp outboard motors. All boat deliveries are scheduled to be completed in 1969. Associated with the River Police activities are approximately 250 interceptor craft used by other National Police for patrolling over 2,200 miles of lesser streams.

The River Police strength reached 1,000 in 1967. Plans call for 3,000 in 1969. It promises to be one of the most productive elements of the National Police organization as its equipment, manning and training develop.

Female Police

The experience gained in resources control indicated that many women were used by the VC for logistic support. The difficulty of intensive searches of women at checkpoints, together with the increasing manpower shortage countrywide, encouraged the introduction of women into the National Police.

Women have proved highly effective in fulfilling a number of National Police functions, especially in resources control, fingerprint classification, administration, identification. By the end of 1966, 1,542 women had been absorbed in the police structure; by December 1967, 3,002. Currently, nearly 2,000 trained Policewomen are assigned to resources control fixed and mobile checkpoint activities, general NP administration, and regular police duties. More than 1,000 have become assistant inspectors.

Intelligence reports have indicated that possibly 90 per cent of the VC logistic cadre in the Saigon/Gia Dinh area are women. Consequently, the National Police established a special group of Policewomen trained in body search techniques. They uncovered 15 female VC agents (interdicting two supply channels) within their first sixty days on checkpoint duty.

Special Police

Identifying and isolating the VC from the law abiding citizenry is the primary job of the NP's Special Police Branch. These specially trained officers use intelligence collection, political data, dossiers compiled from census data, and counter-subversive operations to separate the bad guys from the good. Male and female citizens from the age of 15 and up are registered and issued an identity card. They are then classified into one of five criteria:

1. "element of good will"
2. "fence sitting escapist"
3. "known to have had relations with VC"
4. "dissatisfied citizen"
5. "hoodlum or crook"

The Special Police conduct surprise identity checks of family census cards; maintain surveillance of suspected VC; and apprehend VC suspects. SP agents penetrate subversive organizations and assist hamlet officials in orienting citizens toward pro-GVN attitudes and actions.

Training

U.S. assistance to the National Police also includes training, not only in Vietnam, but in the United States and in selected third countries. Training includes: general police administration and organization, police patrol, traffic regulation, prison administration, records and identification, communications, equipment maintenance, riot control, logistics supply, river policing, criminal investigation, scientific aids and other police techniques. Eight police training schools now operating in Vietnam graduate some 2,000 trainees each month. To date, some 121,423 Vietnamese police have been trained locally, while nearly 1,500 have received training outside Vietnam. Of more than 200 trained in the U.S., most studied at the International Police Academy managed by the A.I.D. Office of Public Safety.

Prison Rehabilitation and Detention

Prison Rehabilitation is a Directorate of the Ministry of Interior and has been advised and assisted by the Public Safety Division since January 1961. The GVN interest in prisoner rehabilitation could be described as minimal although the decree implementing the Directorate of Rehabilitation in 1960 was revised in 1963. PSD advisory assistance consisted of a single advisor until 1967 when a total of six were authorized. The dollar value of assistance was \$311,000 in 1967, and \$919,000 in 1968.

~~The major problem in rehabilitation was overcrowding of inadequate~~ prison facilities and lack of prisoner segregation. In 1963 the prisoner population was considered approximately 70 per cent "political" (VC suspects), 21 per cent criminal, and 9 per cent military. The prison population was reduced from approximately 30,000 to 16,000 following the death of President Diem in 1963. Subsequently, as military activity progressed, the prison population again increased. By December 1966, it was over 34,100 and again overcrowded.

To help relieve this congestion, and provide a method of handling the many persons suspected of aiding the VC, in early 1968, the National Police was given the additional task of providing facilities for controlling civilian detainees.

Telecommunications

In 1959 the Public Safety Division assumed responsibility for a former Michigan State University communications advisory effort to provide communications support to civil security efforts. The concept included the establishment of a single integrated civil security telecommunications network under a Combined Telecommunications Directorate (CTD). In 1961 the CTD was given the added requirement to implement a system of radiophone communications between villages and districts. This system, called the Village/Hamlet System, established a major communications system of more than 10,000 radios. By 1963, it included 2,190 radios; by the end of 1969 it should have 34,000.

Since 1963, the emphasis of PSD telecommunications has been toward improving the reliability of equipment and decentralization. In 1964 a major decision was reached to procure a line of Very High Frequency - Frequency Modulated Radio equipment for use by the police in each province to aid their increased role in counter-insurgency efforts. Since 1964, the CTD has provided the major communications support for the USAID effort in the field.

Construction

Supplemental to advisory, training and commodities assistance to the National Police is the construction of facilities through the provision of counterpart funds and assistance in the design and supervision of construction. Included are: firearm ranges in the Saigon area and each Region, a central warehouse, national and provincial identity facilities, interrogation facilities, High Command School, CTD Headquarters, Central Saigon police garage, Saigon Municipal Training Building, ammunition reloading plant plus modifications to many existing structures. Construction is also underway at the Thy Duc National Police Academy, the Danang Training Center, the Trai Mat Police Field Force Training Center, Marine Police bases at My Tho and Can Tho, Regional Headquarters and the Harbor Police in Saigon.

THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR

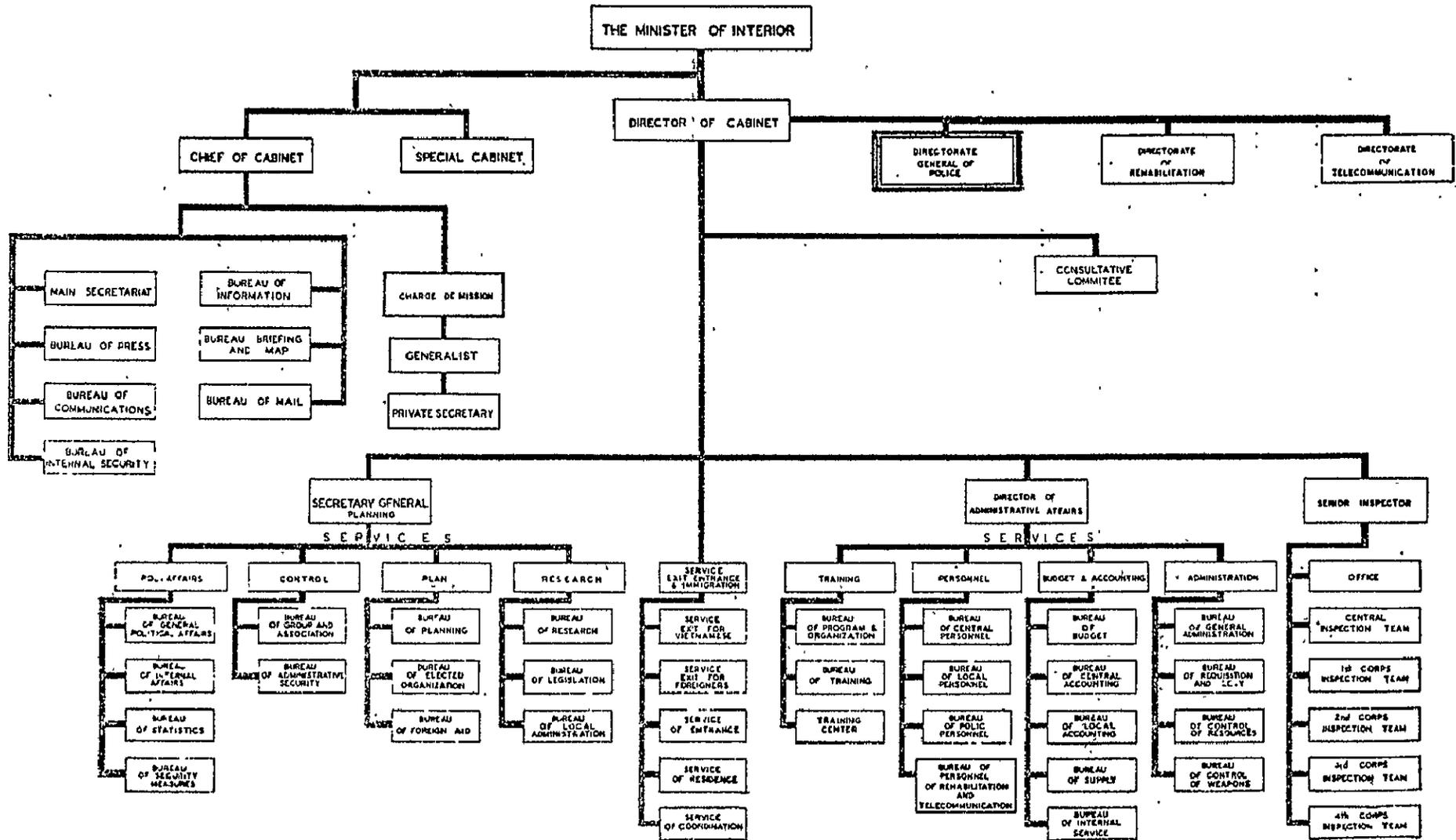


Chart A

ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE NATIONAL POLICE OF VIETNAM

CHART "B"

