

TO: Mr. Howard W. HOYT

DATE: April 17, 1956.

FROM: Jack E. RYAN

SUBJECT: General Information Regarding the VBI and  
Its General Headquarters.

PURPOSE: To present some current information regarding the VBI  
and to briefly record its existing headquarters adminis-  
tration, organization, and operation.

### PREDICATION

This report is an attempt to present some general information about the VBI as it is today, as well as to briefly describe its General Headquarters in Saigon in terms of its administration, organization, and operation. This is the second of a series of reports being submitted by the writer regarding this particular law enforcement agency. Upon completion of the necessary research and study, the resulting reports may be of some utility to the MSU Police Advisory Team in the recommendation of changes in the VBI.

The information set-forth herein is based upon numerous interviews of various VBI personnel, three field inspection trips, and information given by Mr. Charles LE CAN, who is a Principle Commissaire assigned to VBI Headquarters. The details included in the report cannot be considered completely accurate because of lack of actual confirmation. This information will be subject to almost continuous future revision.

Attention is called to the fact that VBI Headquarters personnel, in general, are employed in supervisory capacities only and are not to be considered as operational or field personnel.

### THE MISSION OF THE VBI

The mission of the VBI in the Republic of Viet Nam is to correlate all information regarding the security of the state and to discover, the plots and activities which are capable of compromising public order; to manage political information services; to assure control of foreign nationals; to control the functioning of all Police Services of the nation and to coordinate their efforts in the accomplishment of the tasks with which they are encumbered; and to study all questions which concern the organization of the various national Police Forces.

GENERAL INFORMATION

At the close of calendar year 1955, the VBI had an approximate total personnel of 5,500. These people were assigned to general headquarters in Saigon, to the Southern Region of Viet Nam with headquarters in Saigon, to the Central Region of Viet Nam with headquarters in Hué, and to the PMS region with headquarters at Dalat. It is expected that the total available personnel in the VBI will soon be increased to about 6,500.

In December of 1955, VBI Personnel were distributed as follows:

General Headquarters	181
Southern Viet Nam	2,179
Central Viet Nam	1,701
P.M.S.	<u>409</u>
Total	5,475

In the field, agents are assigned to some 45 field brigades, which are somewhat comparable to our own FBI field offices, and they are also assigned to some 135 annexes, which are comparable to FBI resident agencies. There are approximately 3 annexes for each field brigade. In general, VBI agents are poorly selected, poorly trained and almost wholly lack necessary equipment with which to perform their duties in an appropriate manner.

With the exception of the telephone in Saigon-Cholon, the telephone from Saigon, to My Tho, the public telegraph system which does not cover the entire country, and the Vietnamese Army Radio Net, the VBI lacks adequate communications facilities. In fact, the VBI does not have any radio equipment whatsoever. The lack of adequate transportation equipment available to the VBI is equally glaring. As of March 1956, VBI transportation equipment was as follows:

General Headquarter	
Automobiles and Jeeps (60o/o worn-out)	42
South Viet Nam	
Automobiles and Jeeps (nearly all in good condition)	57
Central Viet Nam	38
Automobiles and Jeeps (nearly all in good condition)	

P.M.S.		
	Automobiles and Jeeps (60o/o worn-out)	25
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	TOTAL	162

It is to be noted that none of these vehicles is equipped with communications facilities. Each brigade is allotted only 300 litres of gasoline per month per vehicle.

In the matter of available firearms, the VBI is somewhat better off. In general, nearly all firearms inspected by the writer in Saigon, Southern Viet Nam, and Hué left much to be desired in terms of proper maintenance and care. Among the deficiencies noted in the matter of weapons were poor quality, lack of standardization, and poor firearms training. In some of the provinces, antique weapons are still being used and much of the ammunition is pre-World War II. Of ten rounds fired by VBI personnel of the GoCong Brigade in January, 1956, 4 rounds failed to fire. The weapons utilized were old pistols.

As of March 1956, firearms available to the VBI were as follows:

General Direction

STEN machine gun	85
MAT 49 (German) sub-machine gun	505
MAS (German) rifle	2,896
MA8 36 (German) machine gun	395
FM (French) automatic rifle	100
U.S. carbine, 30 caliber	1
12 Gaufe Shotgun (double barreled)	1
Colt 1911 45 Caliber automatic pistol	50
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TOTAL	4,033

Southern Viet Nam

Colt 45 caliber pistol	1,115
Revolver (caliber not indicated)	86
FM (French) Burp gun	291
Medium machine gun (make and model not indicated)	12

Heavy machine gun (make and model not indicated)	4
Rifle (make and model not indicated)	224
U.S. Garand rifle - M1	25
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TOTAL	1,757

P.M.S.

Colt 45 caliber pistol	298
Sub-machine gun (make and model not shown)	105
Rifle (make and model not indicated)	100
Breech-loading rifle	3
Bazooka	1
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TOTAL	507

Central Viet Nam

Pistols (make and model not indicated)	1,000
Sub-machine gun (make and model not indicated)	250
Medium machine gun (make and model not indicated)	10
Carbine (U.S. 30 caliber)	250
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TOTAL	1,510

GRAND TOTAL: 7807  
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It is to be noted that the VBI does not have one tear gas gun in its possession. A total of nine or ten different types of weapons are available, with different models of some of the types. The cost of using and maintaining such a variety of weapons becomes prohibitive. Many of the weapons cannot be used because of lack of parts and because of the lack of trained armament personnel. Only four standard types of firearms are used throughout our American FBI, namely: 38 Caliber Revolver Remington model 30 Caliber Rifle model 61, Thompson 45 Caliber sub-machine, standard gas gun.

The VBI uses outmoded records systems, and its accounting methods are old-fashioned. A great deal can be done for the VBI in the development of standard forms, standardized reports,

and standard operating procedures.

The VBI currently lacks an inspection service. It is commonly accepted in American law enforcement organizations that the efficiency of men and equipment can be brought up to a high level through the development and implementation of a sound method of inspection. No reasons have come to the attention of the writer which would indicate that such a service should not or could not be suggested to the appropriate Vietnamese VBI officials. On the contrary, numerous instances have come to the attention of the writer of poor investigative techniques, poor administrative techniques, poor maintenance and care of buildings and equipment, lack of standardization, and lack of proper follow-up of assigned responsibilities to warrant that the matter of inspection be favorably considered.

It is firmly believed that such an inspection service, if handled as a positive administrative device, would eventually aid the VBI in the discharge of its responsibilities efficiently and expeditiously.

It should be noted that in many of the provinces of Viet Nam, the province chief interferes in the operations of the VBI even to the point of actually controlling its operations. In some of the areas of the P.M.S. and Central Viet Nam, official VBI reports must clear through the province chief or the délégué before being forwarded to Saigon. The efficiency of the VBI could be greatly enhanced through the elimination of this political interference.

Accurate crime statistics do not exist because of the lack of a uniform crime reporting system in Viet Nam. Throughout the entire VBI, an estimated 550 arrests are made each month, of which some 90o/o are for purely political violations.

In the Southern region, each brigade has an average case load of between 125-150 cases, 80o/o - 90o/o of which are security type cases. On the average, each brigade in this region opens and closes about 50 to 60 cases per month.

More accurate and complete information of this nature will be developed and reported at a future date.

### LOCATION OF VBI HEADQUARTERS

VBI Headquarters are located in two buildings of two stories each at the intersection of Dinh Tien Hoang (Ex Albert I) and Hien Vuong (Ex Rue Mayer) in Saigon. The actual location is approximately 200 yards from the Gia Dinh bridge. According to General Nguyen-Ngoc-Le, Directeur General of the VBI, it is expected that the Sureté Headquarters will be moved to a new location by April, 1956. He stated that the exact place to which this move would be made was not as yet known. Lack of space and the fact that the central records are not in the present headquarters building were two principle reasons cited by General Le for the necessity of securing a different location.

### ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND

#### The Director General

The Director General of the VBI is General Nguyen-Ngoc-Le, who has held this position only since April of 1955. He was born in Hué; he is now approximately 42 years of age; he is married and the father of six children. General Le's son is a captain in the Vietnamese Army, his youngest daughter is only five years old.

He is a former brigadier general in the Vietnamese Army and is a graduate of the French Military Academy which was formerly located in Saigon. He reportedly entered this Academy when he was only about fifteen years of age and was graduated as a second lieutenant in the French Army at the age of 21. He began his active field duty in the Infantry in 1933 or 1934, and became a captain in about 1947. It is to be noted that in the French Army, Vietnamese Officers were never promoted above captain and they were allowed to command Vietnamese troops only.

In about 1949, General Le transferred to the Vietnamese Army as a captain and was promoted to major the following year. He became a colonel in 1952 and was promoted to general in June, 1955.

According to Charles LE CAN, General LE is highly regarded by the agents of the Sureté. He is considered to be a highly

dynamic leader, who is hard but fair in his dealings with personnel of this organization. Additional biographical information regarding General Le will be supplied at a future date.

### The Cabinet

General Le is aided in the administration of the VBI by a group known as the cabinet. The cabinet is headed by a Chief of cabinet, Mr. TONG NGOC CHAC, who is about 53 years of age and has had 32 years of service in the VBI. The other members of the cabinet are as follows:

<u>Personnel Secretariat</u>	: Lt. Huynh Tu	37 yrs. old	-	5 yrs. exp.		
Mail Bureau	: Mr. Nguyen-van-Truan	52 yrs. old	-	33	"	"
Code Bureau	: Lt. Nguyen-van-Minh	30 yrs.	"	5	"	"
Accounting Bureau	: Mr. Le-van-Chinh	49	"	30	"	"
Personnel Bureau	: Mr. Hoang -khan-Sen	43	"	25	"	"
Internal Services	: Mr. Nguyen-van-Thong	37	"	19	"	"
Garage	: Mr. Nguyen-van-Chay	47	"	20	"	"
Records Bureau	: Mr. Nguyen-van-Tung	45	"	7	"	"
Information Bureau	: Lt. Nguyen-bich-Luu	35	"	15	"	"
Political Information:	Mr. Nguyen-van-Duc	27	"	9	"	"
Press Bureau	: Mr. Duong-van-Minh	39	"	10	"	"
Translation Bureau	: Mr. Nguyen-van-Luoi	37	"	3	"	"
Administrative Control	Mr. Nguyen-van-Thong	37	"	20	"	"
Immigration Bureau	: Mr. Cao-van-Lang	52	"	30	"	"
Central Police School:	Mr. Nguyen-van-Huong	54	"	5	"	"
Identification Center:	Mr. Nguyen-van-Chanh	38	"	12	"	"

The word Cabinet as it is applied here by the Vietnamese does not necessarily mean an administration body alone, since the Cabinet includes typists, stenographers, drivers, janitors, and switch-board operators. The total number of people in the cabinet at General Headquarters is about thirty.

Every Saturday afternoon from 1600 to 1800 hours, a staff meeting is held in the General's Office. Only the heads of the various bureaus are permitted to attend these meetings. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss the various operations of the VBI, with the view of solving problems as they arise. General Le always asks for recommendations and suggestions from his staff. These staff meetings are actually the same as those with which American administrative personnel are very familiar.

### Personal Secretariat

This bureau numbers about 10 people. Its mission is to handle matters assigned to it directly by General Le in those cases requiring utmost discretion and secrecy. Besides handling special assignments, routine matters can also be assigned to this bureau through the Chief of the Cabinet. All arrangements for social affairs are handled by this bureau.

### Mail Bureau

This Bureau has a total personnel of fifteen people. All incoming and outgoing mail is handled by this bureau. Incoming mail is sorted and block-stamped giving time of arrival. Outgoing mail is placed in franded envelopes and sealed here. Between two and three hundred special letters are handled daily by this bureau, necessitating seals, the use of couriers, and return receipts. This is the result of a poor communications system.

### Code Bureau

This bureau has a complement of 10 people. Its primary responsibility is the encoding and decoding of special messages to be sent out or which are received either by mail or wire.

### Press Bureau

The Press Bureau reviews all Vietnamese, French, Chinese and Cambodian newspapers printed in Viet Nam for any worthwhile information. It is responsible for keeping General Le informed of important or noteworthy events. It keeps abreast of various activities taking place in the country and will investigate the basis upon which certain newspaper articles were written.

This bureau also investigates the sources of information of newspaper reporters. It conducts physical surveillances on suspected reporters.

About 30 newspapers are received by this bureau daily, and approximately ten people are employed in this office. This bureau is under the control of the Central Information Bureau. (see Chart I)



### Translation Bureau

The ten individuals employed in this bureau are responsible for translating all articles of importance appearing in foreign newspapers. Leaflets or other forms of enemy propaganda are also translated here.

The Translation Bureau is also under the control of the Central Information Bureau. (see Chart I)

### Central Information Bureau

This Bureau correlates all information received throughout the VBI including all official reports, anonymous letters, written complaints from citizens regarding crimes, political operations, misfeasance, malfeasance, non-feasance, embezzlement, bribery, etc.

All incoming official reports are sorted in this bureau for distribution to the proper section. A total of 30 people are assigned here. In addition, this bureau controls the activities of the Political Information Bureau, the Press Bureau, and the Translation Bureau. (see Chart I)

### Political Information Bureau

The employees of this bureau handle all matters relating to political activity in Viet Nam; both regarding political parties and specific individuals. The principal political parties which are the subject of continuous VBI investigation are as follows: HOA HAO, BINH XUYEN, CAO ĐAI, ĐAI VIET, (Kuomintang Vietnamese), VIET MINH, DISSIDENT CATHOLICS, and CHINESE COMMUNISTS. Twenty people are employed in this bureau.

This Bureau is under the control of the Central Information Bureau (See Chart I)

### Administration Control Bureau

Handles all applicant and clearance type matters. Its supervises field operations with regard to the investigations regarding prospective employees for all Vietnamese Government agencies; also with regard to various administrative investigations requested by other Government agencies; and finally,

clearances for prospective Vietnamese employees of foreign governments. Approximately 15 employees are assigned to this bureau.

#### CENTRAL IDENTIFICATION BUREAU AND CRIME LABORATORY

This bureau is located at 27 Philipini street in Saigon. It is responsible for fingerprinting and measuring (Bertillon system) all prisoners or suspects of both local and national police agencies. This particular bureau is approximately 60 years old. Old fashioned methods are still employed. About 30 individuals are employed here, either in taking fingerprints, taking physical measurements, or in searching fingerprints.

A visit was made to this building on December 8, 1955 by the writer and Mr. Corey DYMOND. The interior of the building was found to be dirty, poorly lighted, and crowded. Mr. CHANH, head of the Identification Bureau, stated that a total of 6,000,000 fingerprint cards are on file at the present location of the bureau. The old POTTECHER classification system is still being utilized, a system which has never been used in the United States and is reported to have been discarded in France shortly after 1900. Both Mr. DYMOND and the writer seriously question whether there are in fact such a large number of fingerprint cards in the present Identification Bureau.

The file room is approximately 75' x 100" in size. It is dusty and dirty. The fingerprint cards themselves are filed in wooden boxes which are placed upon wooden shelves. One set of cards are filed alphabetically by the subject's name, while another set is filed according to date of birth. The classification system currently being utilized requires the Bertillon measurement data in order to achieve a positive identification of questioned fingerprints.

Mr. Dymond has worked-out a method by which these old fingerprint cards can be searched, and in cases of positive identification, can be made a part of the modern Henry system now being installed in the VBI.

The Crime Laboratory is located on the second floor at

27 Philipini Street. This installation was found to be completely lacking in necessary equipment for the operation of a modern laboratory. Nearly all of the available equipment is old, some of which dates to around the year 1900. This laboratory was found to be far below minimum standards of neatness and cleanliness.

The entire building at 27 Philipini Street was found to constitute a security risk because of its adjacency to numerous private homes, and because entry could easily be gained over adjoining roofs and walls in the rear of the building. The new Identification Bureau should have a fresh start in acceptable quarters. The old fingerprint cards should be left on Philipini Street from which occasional prints can be made part of the new Bureau as needed.

This Bureau is directly under the control of the Administration Control Bureau at VBI Headquarters (See Chart I). Approximately 30 people are employed here.

#### IMMIGRATION BUREAU

This Bureau is located on Đường Vo-di-Nguy (ex Rue Georges Guynemer), about 2 blocks north of the U.S. Embassy. In principle, this Bureau is under the control of the Administrative Control Bureau. In practice, however, it is responsible directly to General Le.

The responsibility of this Bureau is the control of the immigration, length of stay, and emigration of foreign nationals. A total of 60 people are employed in this Bureau. (A detailed report as to physical lay-out will be submitted at a later date). About ten members of this Bureau are Hindu, Malayan, and Chinese; the remainder are Vietnamese.

#### NATIONAL POLICE SCHOOL

All information regarding the National Police Academy can be found in reports submitted by Charles Sloane and Fred Wickert.

### ACCOUNTING BUREAU

This Bureau is located at VBI Headquarters and is under the control of the Chief of Cabinet, Mr. CHAC. The head of the Bureau Mr. LE VAN CHINH, reports directly to Mr. CHAC. (see Chart I)

Approximately 20 people are employed in this office, whose responsibilities consist of handling all financial matters regarding the operation of the VBI. (Budgetary information will be reported in a subsequent report).

### INTERNAL SERVICES BUREAU

This Bureau is located at VBI Headquarters. The head of the Bureau reports directly to Mr. CHAC, the Chief of Cabinet. Approximately 15 people are members of this Bureau, whose responsibilities consist of properly maintaining VBI Headquarters buildings, equipment, furniture, etc. Internal security of VBI Headquarters also falls within the purview of this Bureau, as does the operation of the telephone switchboard.

### MOTOR POOL

The Central motor pool for VBI Headquarters is actually located behind the Ministry of Interior on Rue Catinat. The repair and maintenance of Surete vehicles is handled here, providing the nature of the repair work does not exceed and expenditure of over 10,000\$ or where the repair job is not overly complicated. In these instances, bids are sought from private automobile garages, the lowest bidder getting the work. Vehicles assigned to the provinces are also repaired here. This garage lacks space for experienced mechanics, proper tools, and an adequate supply of spare parts.

Figures regarding the cost of operation of this garage will be obtained and reported by separate report.

The motor pool personnel consists of about six mechanics, twenty drivers, and four desks.

A special agent is in charge of the motor pool and is directly responsible to the Commissaire in charge of the Internal Services Bureau.

#### RECORDS BUREAU

At the present time, the records bureau of the VBI is located at the headquarters for the Southern Region of Viet Nam on Đường TƯ-DO (ex Catinat). The matter of this organization is sufficiently complex as to warrant a separate study and a separate report thereon will be submitted at a future date.

#### C O N C L U S I O N

Further analysis of current VBI organization, administration, and operation is continuing. When completed, re-organizational suggestions will be formulated for approval and implementation. It may be well to point-out at this point that a very fundamental need of the VBI is adequate building space for the eventual centralization of all its headquarters bureaus, several of which are scattered throughout the city of Saigon. An effective reorganization of VBI headquarters must include proper buildings.