

VIET NAM

Date of Elections: 26 April 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament under the new Constitution and Electoral Law adopted in December 1980, as well as pursuant to decrees adopted in February 1981*. In anticipation of these developments, the National Assembly elected in April 1976 had, in December 1979, voted to extend its term of office by one year.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, the National Assembly, comprises 496 members elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

All Vietnamese citizens at least 18 years old are entitled to vote, with the exception of the insane and persons deprived of this right by law or court decision.

Electoral registers are revised before each election. Voting is not compulsory. Persons confined to hospitals or to their homes because of illness or paralysis are permitted to vote in their place of confinement.

All qualified electors at least 21 years of age are eligible for election to the National Assembly. The parliamentary mandate is not deemed incompatible with any other function or office. Candidates appear on lists presented by the Viet Nam Fatherland Front.

Deputies are elected in 93 constituencies on the basis of absolute majority, with each elector voting for as many candidates as there are seats to be filled in his constituency and crossing out names of those listed on the ballot paper whom he does not favour. If, within a constituency, not enough candidates to fill the available seats obtain an absolute majority of the valid votes cast on the first ballot, or if less than half of the total number of registered electors have voted, a second ballot is held within 15 days.

By-elections are held to fill seats of the Assembly which become vacant between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On 18 December 1980, the National Assembly adopted a new Constitution* to replace that of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam of 1959, which had been in force throughout the country since the reunification of Viet Nam in 1976. A new Electoral Law was

*See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 30-31.

promulgated the same month and, in February 1981, decrees adopted by the Standing Committee of the Assembly fixed, *inter alia*, the number of Deputies at 496*.

Candidates for the 496 Assembly seats totalled 614. In accordance with the Electoral Law, they were nominated by the Viet Nam Fatherland Front "on the basis of consultations with the local collectives of the working people and with political parties and mass organizations". This Front is a mass political organization aiming at national unity and the building of socialism; it embraces the Communist Party of Viet Nam (formerly the Viet Nam Workers' Party), other parties, trade unions and peasants', youth and women's organizations.

Subsequent to polling day, the Election Committee reported a nationwide voter turnout of nearly 98%. At its first session, the new Assembly elected the Council of State, the country's collective presidency, from among its members and also selected the Council of Ministers. The Prime Minister is Mr. Phan van Dong.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Voters	97.96%
Valid votes	97.78%
Political Group	Number of Seats
Viet Nam Fatherland Front.	496

2. Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category

Political officials.	121
Intellectuals.	110
Workers.	100
Peasants.	92
Members of the armed forces.	49
Democratic and religious personalities	15
Craftsmen	9
	496

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 30-31.

3. *Distributing ofDeputies according to Sex*

Men. .	388
Women	108
	496

4. *Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group*

23-35 years .	90
36 and over.	406
	496