

SUMMARY

THE INTEGRATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

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The author of this article attempts to point out how and why administrative integration is considered the most salient characteristic of the Office of the Prime Minister in the present revolutionary period. It is partly his attention to remind executives at high level of the pros and cons of integration. The article is also written to emphasize the development of the Office of the Prime Minister, ranging from the Constitutional Revolution of 1932 to the present period. The author disagrees, with some others, that "integration" and "coordination" are somewhat to be used interchangeably. Integration specifies only a strong degree of coordination.

The article is divided into six parts. Part one is a general statement of the existing situations in Thailand which created a varied set of changes in the country, especially in the government administration. The period following the October 20, 1958 Revolution was a time of great change in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Part two attempts to show the impact of integration on the main policy of the government. It is quite evident that the present government has declared its intention to reform the administrative machinery to serve the revolutionary purposes. Such reform requires a strong degree of decisiveness from the chief executive; a strong degree of coordination and timely communication among various executive agencies, and administrators; and instant obedience from lower administrators. These requirements lead to the necessity of integration because of its useful characteristics, some of which are as follows:

1. provides for enveloped hierarchy in the internal structure of the organization;
 2. integrates activities concerning policy control under the same higher organization after the essential division of work;
 3. concentrates activities of policy control at the chief executive level;
 4. provides for the chief executive's control over auxiliary and staff;
 5. provides a strong degree of co-ordination;
 6. provides unity of administration; but
 7. may also provide for positively real "Empire building."
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This part also deals with the principles and some important characteristics of effective executive offices in both the United States and Thailand in order to confirm the significance and necessity of integration. The most salient point is that the Prime Minister, as the chief executive, has many responsibilities in serving his people by acting as the head of the Government, according with the Chiefs of states, and representing the nation in various ceremonies and social meetings.

Part three describes the development of Thai Chief Executive's office ranging from the Constitutional Revolution of 1932 to the present revolutionary period. Two important points are stressed:

1. to change the title of the organization from the "*Cabinet Office*" to the "*Prime Minister Office*" which shows that the executive power is in the hand of a strong Prime Minister and the staff is changed from the "*Institutional Staff*" to the Prime Minister's "*Personal staff*";
2. to reorganize and enlarge the office greater than at any previous time by attaching 23 departments.*

Part four deals with administrative principles, procedures and methods used by the Prime Minister in accomplishing the purpose of the revolutionary government. They are as follows:

1. delegation of authority to two Deputy Prime Ministers and one Assistant to the Prime Minister;
2. establishment of the "*personal staff*" available to the Prime Minister;
3. using special administrative control through the personal staff in the form of councils, boards, and commissions;
4. establishment of a government inspection service;
5. provision of good incentives in the form of higher salaries and special meeting allowances;
6. utilization of the outstanding leadership of the Prime Minister;
7. using both patronage and merit systems wisely, so as to select the right man for the right job;

* After this issue went to press the Meteorological Department was added (*Royal Gazette* No. 79, Part 78, dated 28 August) to the Office of the Prime Minister. The number of departments is, therefore, 24.

8. establishment of the position of the Assistant to the Prime Minister as a checking centre of all paper works;
9. utilization of the helpful characteristics of integration; and
10. establishment of special positions to assist the Prime Minister in routine paper work.

Part five deals with the result of the author's analysis and his suggestions based on general principles of public administration and actual fact about the Prime Minister Office. He suggests that the essential factors affecting general basic reorganization of all integrated organizations are as follows:

1. problems of division of work;
2. special characteristics of administrative integration including its pros and cons.

They are:

(a) Advantages

- (1) As a result of integration, the large organization is more economical than several small ones each with its overheads.
- (2) The larger an organization is the more comprehensively can it plan.
- (3) The large organization achieves coordination within the span of control.
- (4) The large organization reduces the numbers of interministerial boundary disputes.

(b) Disadvantages

- (1) A large organization is fictitious when it merely houses a heterogeneous collection of odd offices.
- (2) "Integration" may become positively harmful, real "Empire Building" for it may involve the suppression of some valuable and independent agencies.

Integration provides a tendency to concentrate power at the top rather than to distribute it throughout the enterprise. It raises such vital question as freedom and the right to experiment and be different. Too much integration tends to dry up the stream of delegation to lower levels, thus throttling initiative and encouraging in efficiency and red tape. The problem of delegation is, therefore, very important.

To-day the range of government activity is so large that autonomous action is impossible, for each Government agency tends to affect its neighbour's policy. The trend of the present period is thus towards increasing use of "integration". The seamless web of government is easily torn to shreds by "specialization". It must be knit together again. All differentiation requires increased integration.

The author suggests that there are important limitations to the Prime Minister's control over his subordinates. Therefore, in order to organize sub-units considered necessary to the Prime Minister, such organization should have as its purpose the rendering of assistance in decision making; administrative planning; and policy control.

Based upon this principle, the Prime Minister Office can be more appropriately reorganized to include all the necessary three categories of services; namely, (1) general management services, (2) specific management services, and (3) policy and security services, the functions of which should also be properly and proportionally redistributed.

Moreover, the volume of work assigned to both Government officials and agencies must be commensurate with the span of control. As for the Prime Minister Office, the volume and complexity of work of the various sub-divisions merge and intermingle into a complex network, inevitably producing a variety of difficult problems in both mailing and direct contact procedures. This problem may be solved by a distribution of work manuals.

The study concludes that the Office of the Prime Minister has nevertheless adopted most of the important characteristics of integration.

Government is a trust, and the officers of the Government are trustees;
and both the trust and trustees are created for the benefit of the people.

Henry Clay.
