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signed to leave the highest level (full Cabinet) to deal with only the most important and widely-impacting issues.

Ministries are relatively independent. Where they are following the constitution, the laws and accepted practices, they are able to issue regulations, implement government policies and take all relevant decisions, including those with financial implications, within their sphere of competence. Where a decision impinges on another Ministry's competence, the ministry will consult with the other ministry (s), often at ministerial policy group meetings. Deputy ministers are in charge of departments within their ministry.

#### Civil Service System and Management

As in Japan, the civil service system is based on position classification and civil servants are selected through policies set by the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC). However, the actual recruitment is done by the ministries/departments. In consultation with the RCSC, they set examinations and interview/choose candidates, who spend their entire careers within the same department. There are extremely rare and special cases of people who jump to another department (e.g. trade/commerce person jumping to foreign affairs and posted specifically to Belgium to handle trade and commerce issues with the EC). There is virtually no lateral entry from the private sector. Each ministry has its own public enterprises and there is movement between the departments and the public enterprises, especially from department to public enterprise and especially upon retirement from the department, within the same ministry. People in pub-

society is relatively homogeneous and values harmony, consensus and lack of conflict.

#### REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Republic of Korea is 99,274 sq. km. with a population of 43,520,199 in 1990. The per capita income rose from US \$289 in 1971 to US \$5,659 in 1990.

#### Organization of Executive Authority

Unlike Japan and Thailand, South Korea has no constitutional monarchy and its form of government is presidential. The president is both the head of the state and of the government and executive authority is vested in the president, who has to work through a cabinet consisting of a Prime Minister and other ministers with the requirement that the Prime Minister must be approved by the National Assembly.

Under the constitution, the president represents the state vis-a-vis foreign states as head of state and heads the executive branch of the government. He has the responsibility and duty to safeguard the independence, territorial integrity and continuity of the state and the constitution; has the duty to pursue sincerely the peaceful unification of the homeland; refers important policies relating to diplomacy, national defense, unification and other matters relating to the national destiny to a national referendum.

The president also acts as the commander-in-chief of the armed forces and issues presidential decrees concerning mat-

ters delegated to him by law with the scope specifically defined and matters necessary to enforce laws. The president may proclaim martial law and grant amnesty, commutation and restoration of rights as prescribed by law.

The State Council headed by the President, Prime Minister as Vice-Chairman and other ministers as members is the highest

institution, communication, government administration, science and technology, environment, information, political affairs, legislation, patriot and veteran affairs.

In the Korean case, unlike in Japan and Thailand, there are several special purpose ministries such as unification, veterans, political (security), which are peculiar to

South Korea.

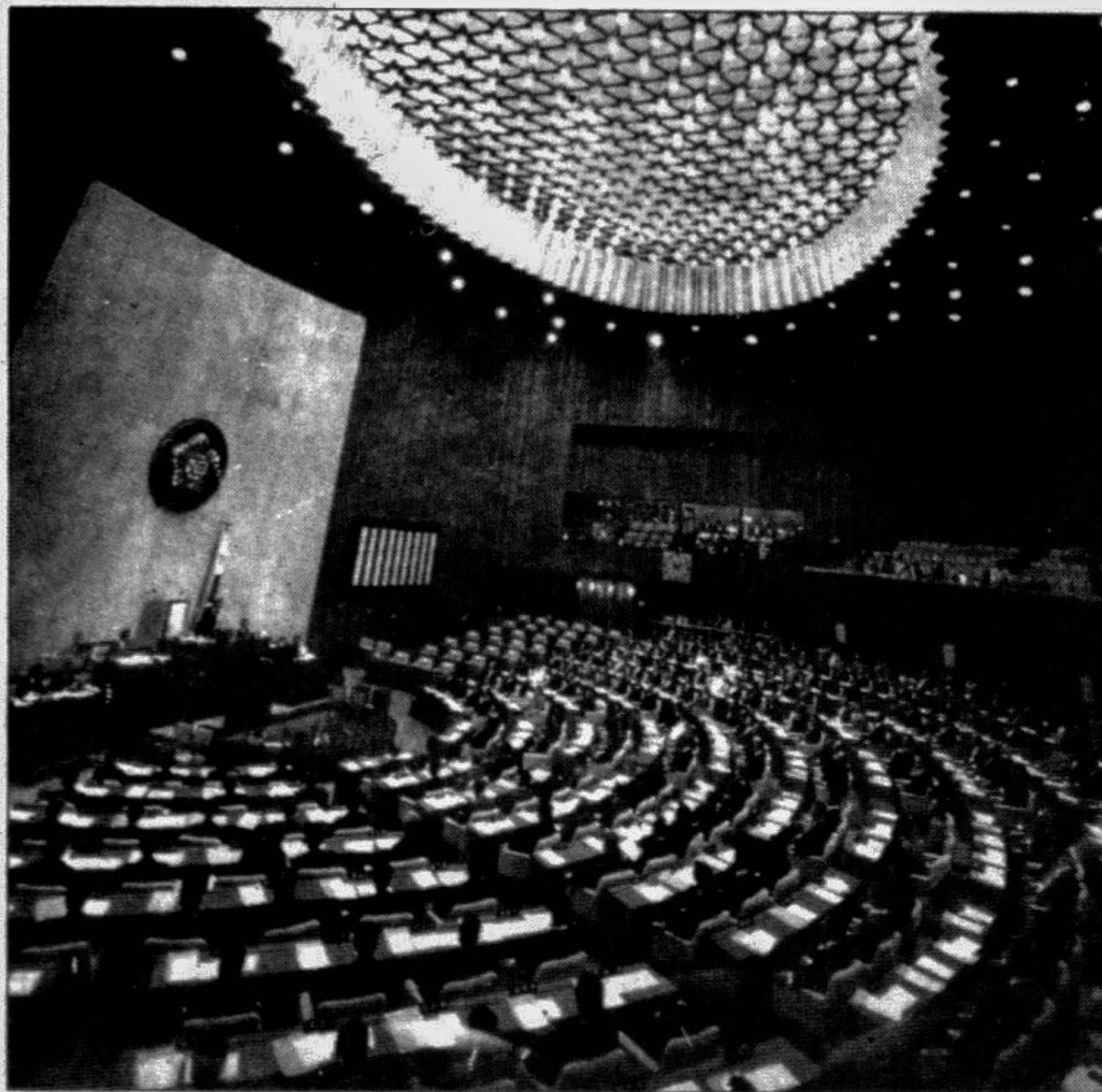
#### Administrative Organs

A ministry is led by a minister and a vice minister, who are political appointees, but mostly drawn from technical experts or senior civil servants. The president appoints ministers on the basis of recommendations made by the prime minister. A minister and vice minister of a min-

istry limited and their proportion to other ordinary staff varies from ministry to ministry.

National government officials retire at the age of 61. Many of those who have retired from the national government do not hold any occupations and live on income from the pension scheme. In case of separation before the retirement age, the government assists them in

Several years later, however, this system was put in abeyance except for the office of President and Prime Minister since the experience showed in efficiency of this system. The inter-ministerial transfer did not cause serious inefficiency in groups of officials at a low level in the government structure. On the other hand, many officials at middle and high echelons who had acquired long experience in certain ministries encountered difficulties in settling down after their transfer to other ministries.



South Korean parliament.

**In the Republic of Korea, sectoral ministries have policy research institutes to offer advices and ideas on the policy formulation process. At present, there are ten such institutes, each composed of 101-300 officials, serving as think tanks.**

by the Ministry of Administration for several different fields of specialities. Each examination is designed for a specific level of entry to the government. The junior level examinations are designed for candidates at high school graduate level and those who passed this level of examinations will be appointed to a post at the ninth grade, which is the lowest rank of the national government. The middle level examinations are undertaken for candidates at college graduate level, who will be appointed, if successful in the examinations, at the seventh grade. The highest level of examinations is for candidates at the graduate school level, and the successful candidates will be appointed at the fifth grade at the entry. Entry at the fifth grade is also organized from internal candidates through promotion examinations.

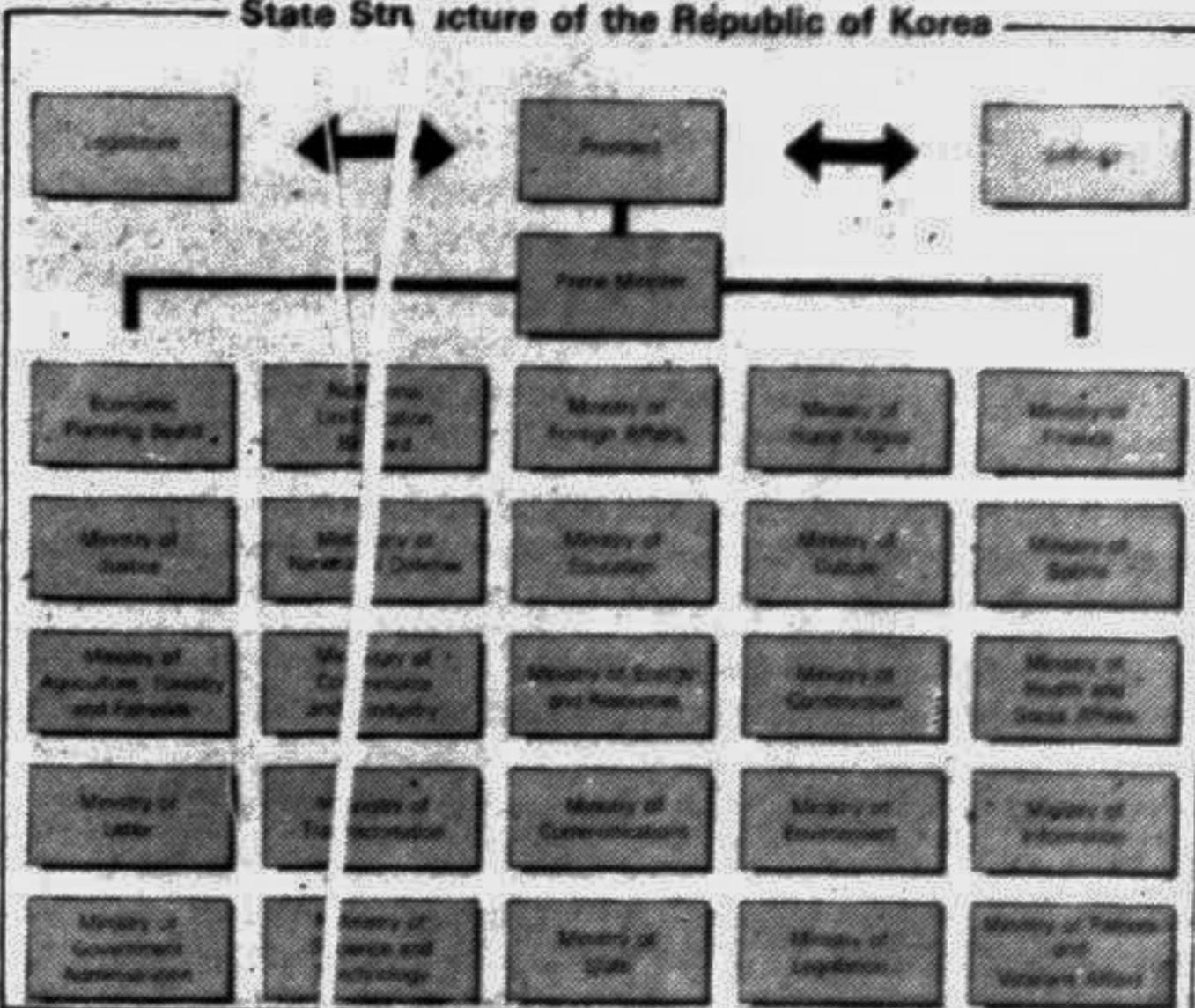
However, application for any of these examinations do not require any academic certificates.

In South Korea, sectoral ministries have policy research institutes to advise the ministry on its policy formulation process. At present, there are ten policy research institutes, each composed of 101-300 officials.

#### Civil Service Organization and Management

The civil service system is based on position classification system and composed of nine grades of personnel. The first grade is for assistant ministers, and the second and third grades are for those occupying posts at director-general's level.

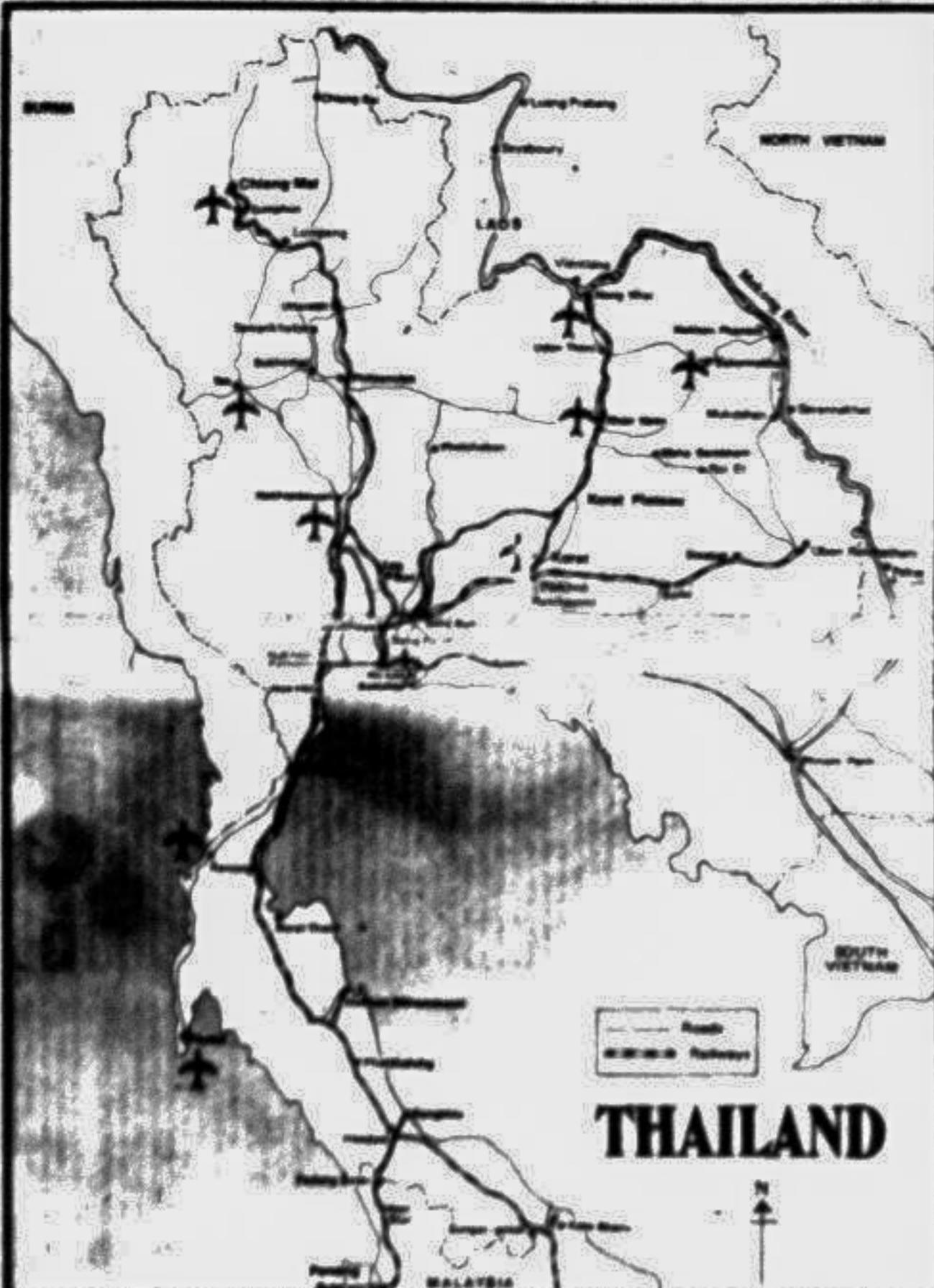
There is another way of recruitment, which is for specific posts for which candidates do not have to go through national civil service examinations. Posts under this category usually require specific expertise and experience. For example, the Ministry of Information has to be staffed with a certain number of those who are trained as journalists. The national civil service examinations are apparently not functional to recruit personnel already qualified for such posts requiring professional backgrounds. Therefore, these professionals are recruited without taking the examinations. The number of such special posts is rather



Despite their frequent turnover, continuation of policy of a ministry seems to be adequately maintained due to the fact that a senior officer of the ministry is scheduled to be replaced by an official who also has long working experience in the same ministry.

#### Field Administration

Services of the national government at local levels are rendered either through provincial governments or by special regional bureaux of ministries of the national government. In other words, provincial govern-



Enterprises get larger salaries, but no pensions.

The permanent secretaries have a four-year term, which is usually served out unless they reach retirement age before the end of the term or there is some conflict with the politicians (usually over issues of fairness of serving populations with services and benefits, based on neutral to political criteria). More than fifty per cent serve out their four-year terms and retire at that point. After "retirement" and out of courtesy and not wanting to lose expertise, the Government usually places these ex-permanent secretaries as special advisers in the office of the Prime Minister, on boards or commissions or in management of public enterprises.

Many also go to the private sector. Similarly for deputy permanent secretaries.

At the Director-General level, who heads departments in the ministry, there is also a four-year term, but they can move laterally to other Director-General positions in large ministries where the subject matter of the ministry or departments is not too specialized. Where there background or the departments are very specialized they usually are made deputy permanent secretaries and given more general responsibilities for "training" in the work of other units in the ministry. At the director of a division level, they may stay well beyond the four-year period until they are promoted.

There are several service commissions, but all civil servants in most of the ministries are under the central RCSC. The exceptions are police, military, judicial, interior, foreign ministry, etc. But as the incumbents virtually always stay in the same ministry, they are similar to a cadre system, but not called that and they do not have the characteristics of trade unions.

We must note that the

In Thailand, ministries are relatively independent. Where they are following the constitution, the laws and accepted practices, they issues regulations, implement government policies and take all relevant decisions, including those with financial implications. Where a decision impinges on another ministry's competence, the matter may be taken up at ministerial group meetings.



Source: All-Asia Guide



Bangkok - Venice of the East

experience and expertise. Appointment to these posts is usually highly competitive.

Although the high mobility of officials is observed within a ministry, inter-ministerial mobility of officials is very low. The Ministry of Administration, which is responsible for personnel administration of the national government, once introduced inter-ministerial rotation system on a trial basis.

Activities of the national government authorities at local levels are coordinated by provincial governments. For this purpose, provincial Governors hold consultation meetings with the participation of heads of local offices of the national government organizations. Increasingly, central government functions are being transferred to local governments, thereby reducing the role of the central government.

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## Lessons from Three Countries

The brief review of administrative structure and civil service systems in Japan, Korea and Thailand reveal certain interesting features. The number of ministries is kept between 13 and 25, and their size does not vary widely. Ministries in Japan and Thailand are sector-oriented (e.g. education, health, agriculture, forestry and fisheries) with cross-sectoral activities like planning, personnel are kept as a separate entity under the Prime Minister's office. In Japan and South Korea, Ministry of Industry and Trade is one Ministry and in Bangladesh there are four Ministries of Industries, Commerce, Jute and Textile. In all other countries local government is a part of interior or Home Affairs. In Korea, all sector and cross-sectoral subjects are placed under ministerial management. But in case of

Thailand and Japan, the size of the cabinet is around 20 as there are some ministers attached to the Prime Minister's office. This relatively small size of the cabinet makes the cabinet function more effectively.

The size and scope of Prime Minister or President's office seem to depend on tradition, government priority and probably individual preference. Central policy-making framework, rules and standards as reflected in economic planning, personnel are kept either with Prime Minister in Japan and Thailand or with Deputy Prime Minister in case of Korea (e.g. Economic Planning Board).

All three countries emphasize consensual decision-making process with significant involvement of outside group in policy formulation and

implementation process. This is significant to note such involvement was initiated by government agencies and over the years, these councils/committees have grown into active partners in decision-making process. Such system and practice may be one way to preserve and reinforce the homogenous character of the society which are usually threatened by divisive forces unleashed by competitive market forces in resource-scarce countries.

Regarding civil service organization and management, all three countries follow position classification system and not cadre system and ministries and agencies perform most personnel management functions in cooperation with a central personnel agency. Usually, personnel do not move outside their Ministry and the length of

their tenure in each position vary depending on the nature of job, with senior-most position in Thailand fixed for four years.

Local administration in Japan is usually run by locally elected governments who also carry out functions of the central government and their relationship is governed by law. Ministries organize the number of field offices depending on the need and not automatically in each administrative sub-division.

In conclusion, the system of government in these countries show considerable administrative and management rationality as reflected in smaller size of the cabinets, limited but viable ministries and agencies having full control over its resources (personnel, finance) so that it can perform its job and be held accountable.