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AID SECRETARY IN SAIGON AND
IVS TEACHER IN HUE

VIETNAM

1961 - 1967

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The interviewee had for a long time been interested in Asia and took the opportunity of going there as a secretary with AID. Perhaps because of her interests and background of associations with people who were highly motivated in the study of languages and cultures, she found the AID orientation program disappointing. Though she felt the FSI lectures were worthwhile, there was little response to them on the part of the AID personnel, or awareness of the implications. "I didn't feel that there was much real awareness on the part of anybody, either the orienters or the orientees, about the problems of appreciating the attitudes and the felt needs of the people where we were going." There was very little encouragement to study the language. She also was critical of the bureaucracy and excessive paperwork.

She feels the cultural shock for Americans is slight because it is cushioned by insulation. In her own case, what was crucial and affected her whole experience of living in Vietnam was that she didn't have any specific expectations about things; "this left the door open for all experiences to be learning situations."

AID and the Education Division 4

At the time she went to Vietnam, almost all AID personnel were stationed in Saigon; with the advent of Rural Affairs, AID moved more into the provinces. Her job was in the Education Division as a secretary to two projects and in charge of the typing pool. There were about 12 Vietnamese personnel and ten American technicians on the two projects. The turnover in American personnel was high. Most of the Vietnamese working for AID were Northerners, probably because of their immigration to the South at the time the U.S. built up its aid program in South Vietnam and because of the in-group feeling among northerners. There is kick-back and pay-off among Vietnamese.

Observations on Vietnamese Culture 5

Many Vietnamese had their education interrupted by the war with the French; some of these are trying now to finish their education because education is very important in Vietnamese society. Not all AID scholarship students upon their return to Vietnam do the job for which they were trained in the U.S. This isn't surprising in view of the Vietnamese social value that any person is obliged to take any opportunity to add to the family income. "A Vietnamese's first loyalty is to his family."

Most Vietnamese people live in extremely crowded and small living places. Even a ministry official she visited lived in a crowded area in a passageway behind store fronts. An AID employee she visited lived in a much worse situation by a canal. There the sanitary conditions are deplorable. There is much sickness in Vietnamese people.

Vietnamese society places a very strong value on personal relationships. Every effort is made to maintain a relationship; even the language reaffirms relationships. A fundamental difference in American and Vietnamese attitudes is the value placed on abstract prin-

ciples versus personal relationships. Vietnamese are pragmatic and sentimental and Americans are romantic and unsentimental.

In spite of our blundering domination of their country, many Vietnamese seem to genuinely like Americans, though they resent being "bought" and surely have frequent cause to laugh at the Americans.

Vietnamese and American Interpersonal Relationships 11

Few of the American secretaries spent social time with Vietnamese people and were often condescending in their attitudes. In American offices, "because of the high turnover of American personnel and the constancy of the Vietnamese personnel, the Vietnamese often know much more of what is going on but the Americans are in the position of running the show." However, a close look shows the American to be top dog not by virtue of position but by virtue of being American, with "the insinuation that the Vietnamese were not as well educated, not as capable, and probably not as intelligent," and by putting the Vietnamese in the position of being yes-men and having to cooperate with the Americans. "I think a great deal of American frustration is because of lack of Vietnamese initiative and action on American ideas and programs." Americans rarely learn the language of the country they go to.

An incident occurred in the Education office in which aspersions were cast on the honesty and integrity of the Vietnamese personnel. The Vietnamese responded with a letter expressing their feelings, but the letter was treated in a very offhand manner by the Americans, showing little concern for the attitudes of the Vietnamese employees. Even at ATC there seems to be little interest in the attitudes of the Vietnamese staff.

Personal Adjustment to Job 18

Language 14

Her motivation to study Vietnamese was very high and she was able to take Vietnamese language classes offered by the American Embassy. However, she learned most of her Vietnamese by practicing in the market, with her friends, and especially with her cyclo driver who drilled her from a Summer Institute of Linguistics phrase book. It is easy for Americans not to study another language and they tend to rationalize this by saying Vietnamese is not a useful language and is too difficult to learn. But a little effort goes a long way and is very rewarding in terms of personal relationships.

Relations with Vietnamese Personnel 18

She spent most of her free time with Vietnamese friends, many of whom were fellow AID workers. Her friends liked to teach her about Vietnam.

Relations with American Personnel 19

She got along well with most of the Americans in the office, but conflicts relating to her friendship with the Vietnamese arose between her and her immediate supervisor and he arranged her transfer to another office. To do this, he obtained the cooperation of "a whole element of bureaucracy. On the basis of a personal grudge, he got their cooperation in carrying out a procedure that was of no benefit to the agency and was detrimental to many personal and working relationships. The realization that this can and does happen far too often in AID missions filled me with disgust." Also the administrators weren't "open" with her.

The Public Safety Division was a very different environment from the Education Division and the discrepancy between the American personnel and the Vietnamese personnel was greater with the Vietnamese being more intellectual than the police advisors, and "there was hardly any pretense in Public Safety of friendly relations between the Americans and the

Vietnamese." She proceeded, however, in making friends with the Vietnamese in PSD. The Americans were distrustful of the Vietnamese and suspicious of her friendship; finally, her supervisor forbade her to speak Vietnamese in the office. The atmosphere in that office was gloomy and oppressive, and finally three of the Vietnamese translators resigned from USAID.

She resigned from AID in 1964 to work for International Voluntary Services.

AID - An Evaluation 24

Comparing AID with IVS, IVS puts more emphasis on the positive experiences of its volunteers, thus helping them to be more happy and effective workers than AID people.

Our purposes for being in Vietnam somehow don't come off. The weakest aspect of AID is its recruiting policies. AID needs to be more concerned with applicants' attitudes and to put more emphasis on what it expects of its people. AID should cut down on its "goodies"; they attract the wrong kind of people.

Language training is important for anyone going to Vietnam, even secretaries, who can have better working relationships with their Vietnamese co-workers as well as get along better in a foreign country.

"There should be closer communication between Washington and the various posts as to the specific needs of the post and of the country of the post." Personnel officers overseas should be trained in personnel work. "... people should be hired for specific jobs... There's too much in the government of fitting bodies into openings." This causes a lot of frustration. The Ugly American is superficial in its appraisal.

IN IVS IN HUE

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IVS 30

International Voluntary Services is much like Peace Corps, but it is a small private organization, in Vietnam under contract to AID. The interviewee began to meet IVSers while she was still in AID, and she became interested in working in IVS as an English teacher. This idea appealed to her because she wanted to work more closely with Vietnamese people, wanted to teach instead of being a secretary, and wanted to be associated with an organization like IVS.

A Vietnamese High School 31

Her job was teaching English in Dong Khanh girls' high school in Hue, a famous high school in Vietnam. The school administration was very helpful to her and open to IVS language teaching ideas, and the teachers of the school were friendly. She also enjoyed her students and, the last year taught two classes for all their hours of English thereby getting to know her students well. She also had an English class for teachers. During a period of evacuation to Saigon, she taught at the University Law School. Altogether, she taught for IVS three years.

Vietnamese Education 34

The Vietnamese education system is highly centralized in all its aspects. Public high schools are not coeducational though elementary schools are. There are a lot of private high schools and some "semi-public" schools partially supported by the government. Because of the war, teachers are at a premium. There is resistance to change on the part of the older educators, but there are young concerned educators who recognize the need for change. Some American ideas about education are applicable to Vietnam, but "there's always this

problem of our imposing our ideas." At the Faculty of Pedagogy in Hue, the resistance to change became a political thing and strongly anti-American.

Vietnamese people feel that the higher the level of school, the more important it is to have qualified teachers, that elementary school is not so important and doesn't require as much teacher training.

The People of Hue 37

North central Vietnam tends to be more conservative and strong in its regionalism. The Hue people seem to be more nationalistic than the people in the south and reacted more strongly to the French. The strongest nationalists--under the French and now--seem to come from the north central area. Hue was the imperial capital of Vietnam, and Hue people are very proud of their history and cultural importance.

There seem to be physiological as well as ethnic differences between the peoples of the different regions. The Vietnamese have been pushing south for hundreds of years and there is probably mixture with Chams, mountain groups, and especially with Cambodians in the south.

Hue people may be more sympathetic with the Communists, but this is probably an element of their nationalism and a resentment toward an inadequate government, and a sense of indignity toward a military government. The social hierarchy of Vietnam has scholars on the top, then farmers, tradesmen, and the military on the bottom. Their nationalism makes them become more and more anti-American as the Americans become more and more dominating.

Youth and Students 40

Two youth organizations in Vietnam are engaged in

the kind of constructive activities their country needs; they are the International Boy Scouts and the Voluntary Youth Association. In Hue the Boy Scouts are particularly viable, or were until the Tet offensive. The VYA has a "wonderful feeling of togetherness which is very much needed in Vietnam," and has workcamp projects to help their countrymen.

In trying to understand the motivation of the students with respect to the political struggles, she asks, "What is the future for these young people in a turbulent and war-torn country? Where can they channel their frustrations? What can they do to help themselves and their country?" Not only do the Vietnamese people feel frustrated and helpless, but they have ambivalent feelings --pride in their history and culture, inferiority in the face of Western technology.

Politics and the Struggle Force 43

"Into this atmosphere of uncertainty, ambivalence, and futility comes a group who will channel the frustrations and desires"--the Struggle Force. She believes that, although most of the students were not Communists and didn't believe themselves to be helping the Communists, the Struggle Force was manipulated by Communists. It was an extremely well-organized group, which was able to rouse and sway public feeling, even though they weren't able to achieve a martyr. The atmosphere was very tense, and the students were organized to defend the town against the government troops.

The Americans don't understand the difficulty of the situation for the citizens and the reasons for unwillingness to commit themselves to one side or the other; the Americans don't understand the high stakes --the interdependency of Vietnamese families and the uncertainty and danger in which they live. This lack of understanding caused at least one Vietnamese woman

trouble at the very time she needed help. (A case in Quang Tri further illustrates American lack of understanding of Vietnamese cultural values.)

Typical of protest groups, feeling in Hue is often more anti-everything than it is pro-anything. One "monk" was obviously a protest type.

Attitudes since the Tet Offensive, 1968 48

Following the Tet offensive, the Hue people apparently hated both the VC and the Americans. Later, they tended to put more blame on the Americans for taking revenge on Hue people. The Vietnamese Communists--the Northern army and the members of the Southern Liberation Front--seem to work closely together.

Tet 1968 49

The IVS girl staying in Hue and a Quaker friend were captured by the VC after hiding in the house for a few days. The VC treated the girls with respect when they went into the house and treated their prisoners, after capture, as well as possible in the rugged mountain situation.

The behavior of the American Marines in Hue at the time of the Tet offensive was needlessly destructive and insulting. Further, they and the South Vietnamese government troops stole and looted. The VC did not indulge in this wanton destruction and stealing. Discipline and morale seemed to be relatively good. American lack of ideology, of respect for the Vietnamese people, and of understanding of the situation in Vietnam "only served to worsen the American image and position."

Youth Programs 52

The interviewee read "Debrief of a Youth Advisor, Vietnam," which optimistically discusses youth,

programs prior to 1966 and remarks on anti-American feeling among youth. She is impressed with the extent of American domination of these programs and feels that, to be basic and effective, these programs must be Vietnamese-initiated and organized. The American government should play as small a role as possible. These youth movements are crucial, but unless our government thoroughly understands Vietnamese values and the complexities of the situation, we might as well throw in the sponge.

PREFACE

The material contained in this debrief represents the personal observations, experiences, attitudes and opinions of the person interviewed. The Asia Training Center (ATC), the University of Hawaii, the Agency for International Development (AID) and the United States government in no way approve or disapprove of the actions reported or opinions expressed; nor are the facts or situations reported verified.

The purpose of debriefing personnel returning from Asian assignment at the Hawaii ATC is to:

1. Provide AID with management insights suggesting alterations in current policies and practices and to identify patterns, trends and problems which, when analyzed, will provide guidance for future assistance plans and programs.
2. Accumulate new or updated information for an institutional memory, for fundamental research and for application to future development assistance programs.
3. Provide material for understanding the cultural framework of a country, and the dynamics of its mode of social change. And, as a correlate, to discover customs, mores, taboos and other relevant factors which affect interpersonal relationships between Americans and members of a host community.
4. Provide material suitable for instructional purposes.
5. Obtain information which will be of value--generally and specifically--to American overseas personnel in their future assignments.

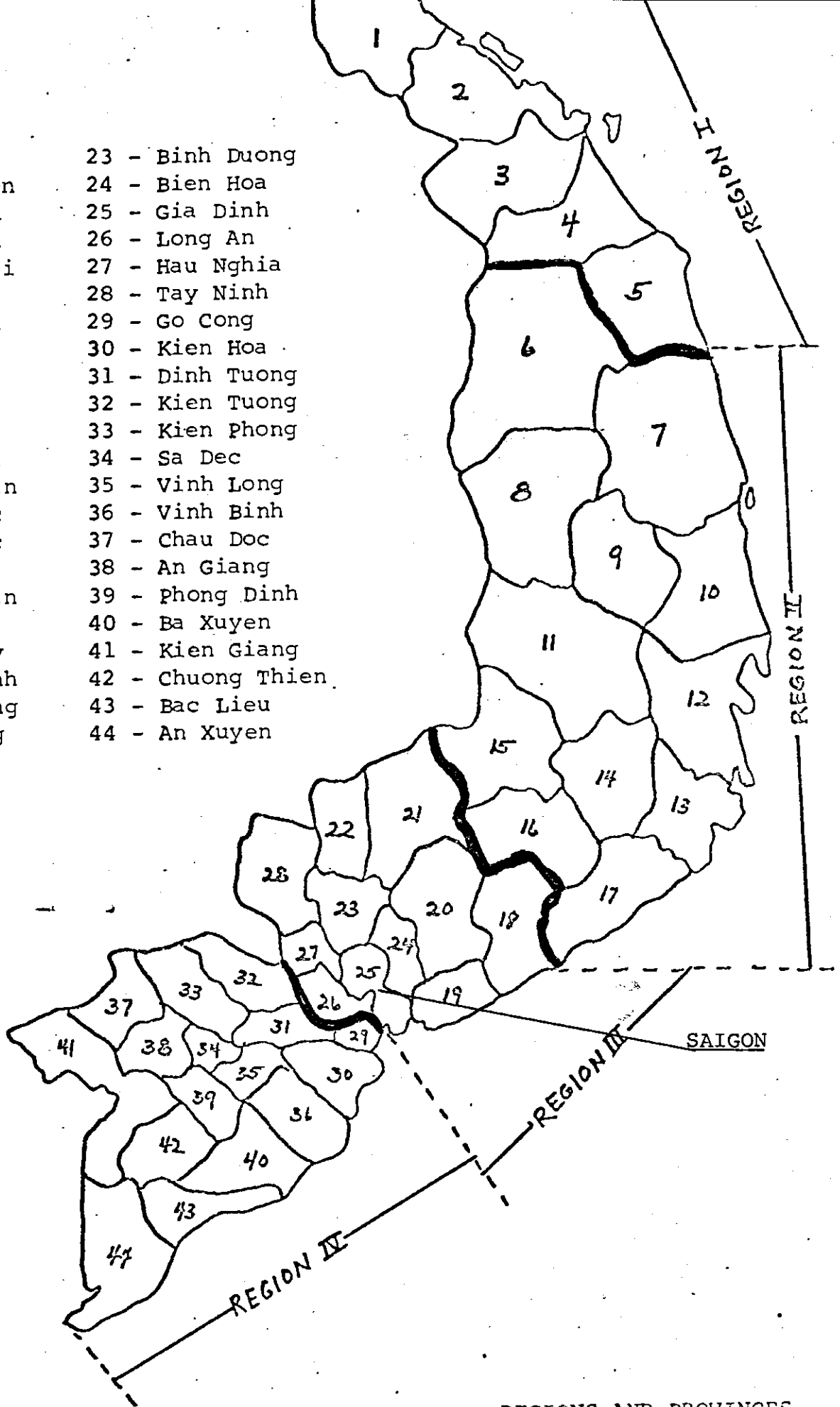
In order to obtain frank and open discussion, interviewees are promised that every effort will be made to prevent disclosure of their identity. For that reason, debrief reports are identified by a code number, unless explicit permission is granted to reveal identity.

In the event, for some legitimate reason, responsible persons desire additional information regarding material presented in this debrief, the ATC in Hawaii will attempt to contact the person involved to obtain the required information or establish

direct contact. Requests for additional information, or direct contact, should outline the reasons for the request and should indicate what use will be made of the information if obtained.

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| 1 - Quang Tri | 23 - Binh Duong |
| 2 - Thua Thien | 24 - Bien Hoa |
| 3 - Quang Nam | 25 - Gia Dinh |
| 4 - Quang Tin | 26 - Long An |
| 5 - Quang Ngai | 27 - Hau Nghia |
| 6 - Kontum | 28 - Tay Ninh |
| 7 - Binh Dinh | 29 - Go Cong |
| 8 - Pleiku | 30 - Kien Hoa |
| 9 - Phu Bon | 31 - Dinh Tuong |
| 10 - Phu Yen | 32 - Kien Tuong |
| 11 - Darlac | 33 - Kien Phong |
| 12 - Khanh Hoa | 34 - Sa Dec |
| 13 - Ninh Thuan | 35 - Vinh Long |
| 14 - Tuyen Duc | 36 - Vinh Binh |
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REGIONS AND PROVINCES
OF
SOUTH VIETNAM

AID SECRETARY AND IVS TEACHER

VIETNAM

1961-1967

AID - SAIGON

Recruitment and Preparation for Assignment

At the time I was recruited for AID, I was working as the secretary of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan. It was my fourth year there in that capacity. Actually, I would say that my primary motivation in going to Asia was to learn about things and about people--how they think and how they live. I had for a long time been interested in much of Asia and had done a lot of reading about Tibet and at that time I was taking a course in Chinese language. Then I took a couple of courses in Chinese history and social studies, but I don't remember much of it because I didn't do very much of the reading since I was only visiting the course and was also working.

My contact with AID (at that time, it was ICA) happened in rather a funny way. Since our department was an area studies department, we always got notices of overseas-type jobs. One came through about AID needing secretaries and stenographers in Asian countries. My first thought was, "None of our graduate students are stenographers; I won't even bother the chairman with this." And the other secretary said, "Well, Marybeth, you want to go to Asia; why don't you go?" So I went and interviewed for the job and in time I was processed. It took a little while because I had to pass a civil service typing and shorthand test; I wasn't quite up to the speed required so I had to do more studying. I took an inservice shorthand course during the spring of 1961 and passed my test in late spring.

They had asked me where I wanted to go and I said Nepal, but they said that was a very small post and that probably openings wouldn't be as available as in Korea or Vietnam. Not knowing much about either country--only knowing that Korea was cold, I chose Vietnam. Before I left Ann Arbor, I talked with a number of friends there; one had been born in Vietnam, the son of missionaries there. He told me something about Vietnam and the political situation. And I met a couple of Vietnamese people; but my background was very slim--I didn't do much of any reading on Vietnam before I went there.

The initial interview was in January or February of 1961, but because of the delay on the shorthand test, I didn't go to Washington for orientation until August. The three-weeks orientation in Washington involved a lot of paperwork and was mostly a waste of time.

However, I enjoyed particularly a couple of lectures we had at FSI which I thought were very good. One was on language and the other was on social values and attitudes and how these values come into conflict, or rather, how people's relationships are disturbed by the difference in social values of their different cultures. He discussed a meeting between Indians and Americans in India and the various things that happened because of the lack of understanding--the Americans did not understand the Indian attitudes and the Indians didn't understand the American attitudes; certain behavior that was natural to one group caused ill feelings and frustration in the other group. That was a very good lecture. But the thing was I didn't feel there was any response to these lectures within our orientation group and I felt that in their own sessions AID didn't elaborate on or stress these ideas.

We had lectures on many other things--on AID purposes and on health and sanitation and what precautions we should take. That was a very good and useful lecture on health. I remember that we had a problem to work on which concerned increasing rice production in India. We divided up in groups to work on that. One discussion, which I remember because a disagreement arose among the orientees and between a minority of the orientees and the speaker, was about what was the best thing to do in a particular situation involving project implementation. When the minority became vocal, the discussion was sort of turned off and a decision was given us. I felt it represented some sort of rigidity, that this was the way we were supposed to think.

Another thing that was extremely frustrating was the bureaucracy and all the paper work. A few other things disturbed me about the orientation, but I didn't have any background in overseas living or in foreign aid work so I couldn't be too critical, though I had many of the same feelings toward the orientation after I had been overseas quite some time. The whole atmosphere of the orientation seemed to be one of, well, we have a job to do, it's a big job, it's an important job, we've got to get at it, and this is the way we should do it. I didn't feel that there was much real awareness on the part of anybody, either the orienters or the orientees, about the problems of appreciating the attitudes and the felt needs of the people where we were going. I felt as though the Americans were going to decide what the people needed, and try and get their cooperation to give it to them, rather than making it a learning situation and finding out what was really happening in those places.

In our orientation group there were technicians of all kinds. There were six to eight secretaries going to different places. There were four of us going to Vietnam--one Communications Media advisor and his wife and their children--I include her in the four, a malaria specialist who was single, and myself as a secretary. Other people were going everywhere all over the world--South America, other Asian countries, and all kinds of jobs within AID. So the orientation was quite general. Other than the encouragement of the FSI speaker on language

to study the language of where we were going, very little was said about that, except the usual pat phrases that make everybody feel that the proper things have been said. There was no pressure at all; whether or not a person studies a language would depend on the person's own motivation and the situation and attitudes of the AID post where the individual goes. There were no training programs as we have here at ATC. Some special cases were given language training at FSI.

In all fairness, I should say that what I say now about the orientation is of course colored by the attitudes that I've had since, so I can't be too clear about what I felt at the time except that I felt frustrated in these directions. Also I realize that I went into AID with prejudices already, which probably slanted much of my observations. Many of my associations at the university were with scholars who had done a lot of overseas work, many of them were language specialists, and those who weren't at least were fluent in several languages or whatever languages were necessary for the areas in which they were working. There was a typical university or intellectual snobbish attitude toward government workers overseas; and many of them had had contacts with the sort of general picture that the American government employee overseas presents and had very little use for the type of thing represented. One is the tendency to live in an American community, to recreate as much as possible an American environment, and associate primarily with each other--the lack of learning the language, the lack of becoming a part of the community--the country in which they live.

This rubbed off on me, especially since I already had pretty strong ideas about learning about people you're going to live with. And I had read The Ugly American, which I decided after living in Vietnam for awhile was very superficial, but I guess they accomplished what they set out to do, which was make an issue. Whether it changed anything or not, I'd be very skeptical.

As far as the orientation is concerned, I don't think it lessened cultural shock. I felt that I learned something out of the two FSI lectures, especially the one on social values, but I feel my appreciation of these lectures was tied in with the attitudes I already had, and I think it was these attitudes that reduced any cultural shock I might have had. One thing that seems to me to be rather crucial as far as I was concerned personally and that affected all my experiences and the whole general experience of living in Vietnam, was that, when I went I didn't really have any specific expectations about things. I just wanted to see and to learn and to find out, so I didn't have already in my mind some expectation about what people were like or what my life would be like or what my job would be like. This left the door open for all experiences to be learning situations. Since I was interested in learning lots of things, I could get out of any situation what I wanted; no matter how negative a situation might turn out to be, there was always some way in which I benefited from

it and learned that it was positive in some respects. This helped a lot. It made everything lots of fun because everything was a discovery.

As for cultural shock, I soon discovered after I got to Vietnam that there were other Americans who, though they didn't have as strong a tendency as I had to learn the language and get close to the people, felt that their greatest cultural shock came from other Americans and from the American structure--the American bureaucracy--rather than from Vietnam itself. But, of course, any shock is rather cushioned for an employee who is going to Vietnam--I don't know about other countries--but Vietnam is such a big post and there are so many facilities --PX, American movies, housing was good, we were even provided transportation to and from work. So we were insulated from any sudden thing. The shock might come if you really start working closely with people. Of course, a lot of advisors and technicians work with Vietnamese officials and Vietnamese counterparts, but even there I think the Americans are a little bit protected by the security of being a part of the agency and identifying themselves with the American community.

AID and the Education Division

My experience with AID was in Saigon. At that time AID didn't have offices out in the provinces. Some advisors, particularly nursing advisors, would go out and travel, but they were usually based in Saigon. I heard of, I think, a malaria worker who lived in Hue during that time, and I think that a few other individuals were scattered throughout the country. But it wasn't until 1962, I think, when the Rural Affairs program had a big impetus and got underway, that AID really began to move out in province areas, and then they had Rural Affairs workers and people living out in the provinces. Then, even later than that, they began to establish big offices which have become more and more bureaucratic and top heavy. Now, out in the regions especially and sometimes in the provinces, they get a little if not completely office-oriented; the regional headquarters, particularly, are a reflection of Saigon bureaucracy.

I was assigned as the second secretary in the Education Division. There was one American secretary who was secretary to the Chief of the Division and secretary to the Division as a whole, and I was secretary to two major projects in the Division: The Higher Education and Teacher Training Project and the Vocational Education Project. Also I was in charge of the pool of Vietnamese typists. We had four men who were typists for the Division. Most of their work was on these two projects, but they were also sort of a general typing pool. In the office where I worked, all together there were about a dozen Vietnamese personnel. Besides the four typists, there were translators, interpreters, and assistants working with the American technicians. Most of the time there were about ten Americans. Two of them were supervisors of the two projects, and there were seven or eight

technicians who were advisors in elementary education, higher education, vocational training, business education, home economics, and English teaching. The elementary education advisor was involved in teacher training and gave many workshops with Vietnamese teachers. She travelled out to the provinces much more than the other advisors and worked with Vietnamese officials in the provinces. In the Education Division there are more women than most other divisions except Public Health. Some of these advisors stay in Vietnam for a long time and others only a short time--not more than two years, then they are gone and someone else comes in. There is a high turnover in American personnel in foreign aid; consequently, there is not much continuity in programs.

There are a great number of northern Vietnamese working for AID. I think there are two reasons for this. One is that, in 1955, soon after the partition of Vietnam into north and south, the U.S. built up its economic aid program in South Vietnam. Of course this required all kinds of Vietnamese help in interpreting and translating, and secretarial and clerical help. At the same time there were all these refugees from the North. Some of the refugees would be like whole villages if they were Catholic communities, but the urban people from Hanoi and Hai Phong tended more to be middle-class Buddhists or Buddhist intellectuals. All these people came down who had some degree of education, no means of income, and they were all looking for white-collar jobs, and here was this need for people with education. I think this was the major factor.

Another thing was that the Vietnamese man in the personnel office of the embassy was a northerner, and northerners tend to hire northerners, southerners tend to hire southerners. People said that if you weren't a northerner or if you didn't know him you had to slip something under the table for him to get you a job in AID. To what extent this is true I don't know, but this is a customary practice in offices of this sort with someone who has some pull, some connection. Later, when I was in Hue, I heard that to get a job in AID in Hue, it cost your first month's salary. I don't know how true these things are, but I take them to be pretty true because this is pretty general. Well, during the Diem regime I heard that there was buying of promotions in the army, and there were also a lot of people who became nominal Catholics to get promotions. I suppose that helped, and perhaps a little purchasing too.

Observations on Vietnamese Culture

The education level of the Vietnamese working for AID was varied. I would guess that the age then of the majority was probably the late twenties and early thirties, especially late twenties. I think any American who has never been in an Asian country is amazed at the young ages of the people working in such jobs--until one becomes accustomed to the fact that Asian people look younger to us. They look much younger--perhaps ten years younger--than they really are. So the peo-

ple working in the office seem like quite young people, but actually, this wasn't so. One who seemed, when I first knew him, to be close to twenty was much older and had a wife and children.

At any rate, when the northerners came down from the North, which was about half a dozen or so years before I knew them, they were probably just in their late teens and early twenties, which means that they were probably being educated in high school, perhaps just finishing, perhaps beginning university; and then their education was interrupted and they could no longer continue but had to work. So they didn't have enough education to get the type of jobs that they should have qualified for in the Vietnamese government or school system. But they had some education and the intellectual wherewithal to be useful to the American agencies. I knew several who were working for AID and at the same time taking courses at the University to finish up a degree. One girl I knew got her degree in law. Another employee was studying for his examinations. If they pass these examinations, they can often get a higher paying job (strange as it may seem to many Americans) in the Vietnamese school system or in business or in government, and also a job of much more prestige within the Vietnamese community. It is very good if they can move into that rather than being dependent on the American presence there.

On the other hand, there are other scholarship students who AID sent to the United States and who came back and who would have, say, a bachelor's degree or perhaps even a master's degree from an American college--well educated people--but for political or personal reasons the relevant ministry somehow just didn't have positions for these people, or positions that these people would accept, even though they are supposed to sign an agreement that they will work for the government of Vietnam for ten years in order to make this training in the United States valuable to Vietnam. I knew one student who had a degree in economics here--very intelligent fellow--who went back and, at the time, my understanding was that the Ministry of Economics just didn't have any place for him, and he was left out in the cold. So he got a job with Caltex, which is an American industrial firm. I knew of another girl who had studied here in one field and when she went back she discovered that she could make more money teaching English in a private high school than in the ministry position for which she was trained. That cost her a tidy sum, of course, to buy off the contract. Apparently she made enough in the private teaching.

I used to have very strong feelings about this. I thought the Vietnamese should be more dedicated to the welfare of the total country, but this is the system--the way it works. A Vietnamese's first loyalty is to his family. If he is in a fortunate position where he can bring in some additional money to add to the family coffers, he is almost morally bound to do so. The Vietnamese family is usually an extended group; a member of the family with an income often provides, at least to some degree, for members beyond his immediate family. All Viet-

nameese would understand and expect a certain amount of taking on the side, and few would be critical. I say, "a certain amount;"--someone has made the observation that there is a distinction between graft, which is within the bounds of the values of the society in which it is practiced, and corruption, which is beyond those bounds.

Well, as I indicated before, Vietnamese people are very highly oriented toward education. Education is very important, and prestige follows. You have prestige if you have money, but it is nothing like the prestige that you have with a lot of education or if you come from an old, high family. This is particularly true in Hue but general throughout the country. An education and an old family are more important than almost anything else. Of course there isn't as much of the concern with family in the south, but education is important, and a person is respected or not respected very often according to the level of education he has, regardless of what use he might make of it.

Most of the areas in Saigon in which Americans lived and moved about were spacious and well kept. The street I lived on was swept twice a day by a city civil servant, but there were other streets in Saigon that were never swept. I lived in the area that the French had built up and where they had created beautiful wide tree-lined boulevards. Many of the wealthy influential Vietnamese live in this area. The homes are large and have yards or gardens around them. But this fashionable facade, which accounts for a very small minority of the population of Saigon, hides--if one stays in the fashionable area--a shocking contrast: The extremely crowded and small living places of the vast majority of the population.

I went to visit a friend who was a government official in one of the ministries. His street address was on a main thoroughfare lined with store fronts. The stores in a commercial area are one right up against the other and the homes of the store owners are in the back rooms of the stores, sometimes also in the front. The rooms in these city houses are one behind the other, so that the width of the store front is one room. Finding an address in Saigon isn't very difficult--usually. The numbers are consecutive, the even on one side and the uneven on the other, but the corresponding numbers aren't across the street from each other necessarily. The houses are numbered one after the other regardless of width. Many homes have addresses such as 91/225. That means that 91 is probably a lane or alleyway and 225 is one of the hundreds of houses down the alleyway which may extend in and around for a quarter of a mile. Sometimes there'll be three numbers for lanes branching off lanes--that's when it gets a little complicated hunting for a house.

My friend's house was such a number. To find it I went between two of those store fronts through a passageway that a person could wheel a motor scooter through but that's about all. I went back between the high walls of the buildings and when I got back to the end of the

passageway (which would be the depth of a house), the passageway jogged and opened up a little more so that there was a roadway almost wide enough for a car. Here it was no longer paved or the pavement was broken, and there was a vista of tiny houses also one right next to the other and each with a little front area that would be the width of the whole house (which is the width of one room) fenced in with a little tree or something--it would be a very definite little front area that belonged to that house. I'm not very good at measurement, but those houses were probably not as wide as the front of one of those stores.

This wider passageway went back for a long ways and then there was an area where the road was worse, the houses were smaller and falling apart and had fewer facilities in the way of wire fences in the front area, then the passageway jogged again. This was all within what would be a city block with stores and homes on the outside of it. There are just hundreds of families living in a place like that. Well, the way jogged again and I came out into an improved area, a little wider and the houses looked better than any I had seen inside the passageway. But still they were small and crowded together. Then I came to my friend's home. This trip was very revealing to me--this was rather early in my stay. My friend was a very well educated man. I don't know how high a job he had in his ministry, but he had a relatively good position. He had a very large family--they all lived in that house. I think there were about eleven children; one son was married --he was a doctor. That's the way Vietnamese people live, and that family was what I would call upper middle class.

Another friend whose home I visited several times had been with AID quite a while. In spite of this and the fact that his wife also worked, he lived in very poor circumstances. Perhaps he was helping to provide for other relatives--that's so common in Vietnam. They lived down on the street that ran along beside the large canal that came off the Saigon River. It was typical of many crowded, poor Vietnamese residential areas: The houses right next to each other, sometimes little fences between their front yards, such as they were. A front yard might be a matter of a couple of feet between their door and the street--usually a clean-swept hard-packed earth area, never any grass. Of course, their windows don't close. The weather doesn't demand windows that close, and so there are only iron bars on the windows. So all the dust and dirt from the street comes in.

Let me tell you about this street. It is quite narrow, and every kind of vehicle goes along there: Buses, loaded to the gills; automobiles; pony carts; ox carts, which are very slow moving; bicycles; and we have in Vietnam what we call cyclos. There are the pedal kind --what you might call pedicabs. They are sort of like a bicycle, although in place of the front wheel is a passenger seat between two wheels, and the driver pedals behind. Then the motor cyclos--the front seat is wider and it is a motor affair. They use mixed gas and oil so there is a very noxious kind of exhaust. There are many of

these, particularly around in this area because a lot of marketing goes on. The exhaust and the dust were terrific. The road was only paved in the middle and I am sure it was broken up. It was so narrow that if a bus came along and a car came along at the same time, they had to slow down and squeeze by each other. There were hundreds of pedestrians of all kinds--some carrying things on baskets from shoulder poles, others going in both directions on both sides of the road, and children, children everywhere. Immediately across the street, at a stone's throw, there was some construction project going on. There were a couple of sand piles and two or three women were engaged in carrying sand in small baskets from one pile and putting it in another pile. All this was going on, and there was a tremendous commotion.

Probably most of the homes don't have sanitary facilities in this area, and the children are pretty free anyway about going to the toilet on the edge of the road and running around barefoot. So many children have skin diseases or ring worm on their legs especially. The sanitary situation in places like this is just really bad. Little babies pick up things with their hands and test them in their mouths. It's a miracle that they survive, it seems to me.

This man had two or three children. It seemed to me that he was often sick himself. I presume that a lot of this was genuine, but then of course there was the other aspect, too: The work wasn't all that interesting to him, and I think he took time off and called it being sick. But it wouldn't surprise me that he would be quite sick. Vietnamese talk a lot about "getting sick from the wind." I was amazed when I heard this from a nurse when she had some intestinal difficulties. Of course most Americans realize that these intestinal difficulties which happen a lot in Asia are often from parasites in food or water. But she spoke of "catching the wind," that she got sick from the wind. To myself, I thought, "Well, that's a pretty uneducated sort of attitude," and in respect to some illnesses it probably is. But when I thought back to the situation in which this man lives and in which many other Vietnamese live--just think, in the air and in the atmosphere there must be so many germs--I decided there may be something to "catching the wind."

Most Vietnamese who live in larger houses live with more than just the immediate family in one house. Invariably, there are parents, in-laws, or other relatives. This saves housing and it's cheaper, but it means, of course, living in very crowded situations usually. There is a lot of personal and intimate contact among Vietnamese. This may account, to some extent, for the strong value placed, in Vietnamese society, on personal relationships. After coming back I have realized this more than all the time I was there, how important these things are to the Vietnamese people. If two Americans should get into an argument over some kind of abstract principle, they will argue it out, each one trying to prove himself right; and the most important thing is somehow the truth of some abstract principle--settling it, or proving

something. But I think, generally speaking, to Vietnamese, though they become very concerned with ideas of this sort, it's not necessary for one to be right and one to be wrong, and they would never break or damage a personal relationship for the sake of an abstract principle. One just doesn't do that. The underlying value in a relationship is to keep the rapport--to maintain the relationship. The Vietnamese language is very revealing of this value. Except in close very familiar situations like between schoolchums, there is no second-person pronoun, and the first-person pronoun is used only in formal relationships. People address one another and refer to themselves always in terms of the relationship between speaker and listener. For example, friends of the same age call each other "older sister" and "older brother", showing familiar respect, and refer to themselves as "younger sister/brother." A young student, speaking to his teacher, refers to himself as young brother and addresses his teacher as teacher/master--never the use of "I" or "you". Strange as it may seem to Americans, this sets up warm friendly relationships, and, in any conversation, the nature of a particular relationship is constantly reaffirmed.

Now, of course, there are times when relationships break down, as in any human relations, but people strive against this. The business of being polite and not disagreeing is not a means of being dishonest or obsequious or inscrutable; it's a business of having consideration for the other person's ideas and feelings. One wouldn't come out directly and contradict another person. In some ways this is very good; we too, have the belief that each person has a right to his own ideas, but in our conversational behavior we often don't behave that way. We don't want the other person to have ideas that differ from ours. The Vietnamese way is sort of saying, "Well, yes, you may be right," no matter how wrong one thinks the other person is. I think this is a very fundamental aspect of the differences in attitudes, and these differences affecting relationships. I think I myself made many faux pas because I was insisting on the rightness of this or the rightness of that.

A number of Vietnamese who I got to know quite well said to me that the Americans are friendly but they don't make real friendships; they come and they're friendly and then they go away and they forget. Their friendships are not deep, they don't have as deep feeling. I've heard this expressed many times and somehow I begin to wonder if there isn't a good deal of truth in it. The Vietnamese are very sentimental. I think we're not very sentimental, but we're very romantic--the great American dream and all that. It seems to me Vietnamese are pragmatic and sentimental and we're romantic and unsentimental--if that makes sense.

What surprises me as I look back over my experiences in Vietnam, especially the last couple years is that so many Vietnamese like the Americans so much I began to wonder what there was about the Americans; how did the Vietnamese know that we weren't the French all over again?

How can they know from the blundering way we do things that we really don't want to take over their country, even though many of them feel that in essence we can if not actually do run the South Vietnamese government. Now I think that, in spite of all our mistakes and our sort of little boy belief that, "Well, if I give this person enough candy (cement, bulgur wheat,...) then he'll love me and then we'll all be friends together forever,"--I think they can tell that generally speaking the Americans have good intentions and have good will no matter what mistakes we make, and I think this is important to them. I'm guessing at all this, of course.

In a way, I think the thing the Vietnamese feel is the greatest indignity is that the American is always trying to buy them--as though we were going to win loyalty by giving material goods. Of course they want the material goods because they need them, but what seems important to them is a person's sincere interest in Vietnam or in them as individuals. This is the thing that is most often said or implied when they mention Americans, and they'll say, "That person likes Vietnamese people" or "That person has a warm heart."

Another American returning from Vietnam thinks the Vietnamese are totally flabbergasted by the Americans and have "no understanding whatsoever of what the crazy Americans are doing." If they don't feel this way, I don't know why they don't. I must confess in reading through some of the debriefs and the attitudes toward the Vietnamese and the society as a whole and its needs, it just occurred to me: I wonder that we haven't wiped out all the Vietnamese just by giving them cause to laugh themselves to death. Sometimes our appraisals just seem so far out. But, then, I make myself a big authority on Vietnam and Vietnamese attitudes and, of course, I'm not;--these are just my own prejudices and my own experiences.

Vietnamese and American Interpersonal Relationships

There were a few of the American secretaries who were very friendly and sociable with Vietnamese people and spent leisure time with them, but it was a very small minority. Most of the girls' only contact outside the office was when a Vietnamese girl would go with them to help buy something because they didn't want to pay as much money as an American pays. Most of the girls were involved in the social life of the American community--the endless cocktail parties, or parties with the American military. At this time there were not large numbers of American military; there were MAAG advisors--Military Assistance Advisory Group--and these were career military men, most of whom were stationed in Saigon and held office-type jobs, I presume. A lot of the girls went out with these men. Of course, as the military complement increased tremendously, the parties did too.

In my office, the other secretary was friendly with the Vietnamese in the sense that she would talk and laugh with them. But she was

not socially friendly with them and rather looked on them as cute little children. The Vietnamese man who worked most closely with her, who was sort of in charge of the secretarial/clerical work in the Division and in that office, was a married man with children and an intelligent person, but I'm sure she looked on him as you might look on a high school student: "He's a good kid, but he makes mistakes and he has a lot to learn." I'm sure that he had been through countless numbers of American secretaries, all of whom were different and all of whom he would have to go along with in their way, doing the same things he has always done but adjusting every year or two to a new "boss" who didn't know the ropes but thought she knew how things should be run.

This is a common situation in American offices in Vietnam and probably elsewhere. Because of the high turnover of American personnel and the constancy of the Vietnamese personnel, the Vietnamese often know much more of what is going on but the Americans are in the position of running the show.

On the whole, relations between the Vietnamese and Americans in the Education Division were fairly good, at least they seemed so on the surface. At Christmastime the American personnel gave a Christmas party for the Vietnamese personnel, and at Tet, the Vietnamese New Year, the Vietnamese personnel treated the American personnel to a New Year's dinner; and, otherwise, relations in the office were at least quite cordial. However, though the Americans were very friendly and talkative with each other they frowned on being talkative with the Vietnamese as interfering with the work. There was always the pressure of a lot of work needing desperately to be done in a short time. Americans are panic-button happy. Furthermore, a close, cool look showed the Americans to be top dog, not by virtue of position, but by virtue of being American. There was always the insinuation that the Vietnamese were not as well educated, not as capable, and probably not as intelligent.

This was a very subtle sort of thing, coming to the surface only occasionally and in little ways. For example, Vietnamese personnel in an American office are always yes-men. The American is always right. Vietnamese assistants are seldom consulted on the best way in a given situation to approach Vietnamese ministry officials or on other aspects of project work. There are two aspects to this business about the American always being right. One, I think, is that Americans are very direct and outspoken and a Vietnamese person, because of his culture, will not directly contradict somebody, particularly if he is working for them. The other thing is a general atmosphere of American-ness--even though we're foreigners in their country--having the answers or working on the answers and the Vietnamese people should go along and cooperate. I found this attitude to be pretty general throughout the American AID effort, even to some extent in IVS--that the task of the Americans was to get the Vietnamese to cooperate with the Americans, rather than the Americans thinking in terms of cooperating with the Vietnamese. I think a great deal of American frustration is because of lack of Vietnamese initiative and action on American ideas and programs.

Another criticism is a criticism of almost all American offices overseas: The prevalence of the attitude, "This is an American office and English is the language spoken here." I can't imagine a foreign office here in the United States, especially one hiring Americans, in which they don't use English, the language of this country. Why can't we learn to communicate in the language of the country we go to work and live in?

I want to tell about an interesting incident which happened in the Education office, probably around late 1962. There were a couple of problems that came up. My memory is quite foggy on the details, but I think, for a very short period of time, there was some obligatory checking as the Vietnamese personnel left the office at noon and at the end of the day--checking to make sure that they were not carrying office supplies with them. I don't want to be too definite about this because my memory is very vague, but I do recall that there was some matter of questioning the integrity and honesty of the Vietnamese personnel in the office, and at a different level than which the Americans were being questioned. There was a definite distinction between the Americans and the Vietnamese--the Vietnamese were open to more suspicion, aspersions were cast upon the honesty and integrity of the Vietnamese personnel. This was naturally something of an indignity.

Well, I was good friends with one of the assistants. One day he brought me a letter and asked me to go over it to make necessary corrections in the English and to see if it expressed in English the feelings that they wanted to express. This letter was composed with the cooperation and the soliciting of the feelings of the other Vietnamese personnel in the office. There was a sizeable group which definitely wanted to submit this letter to the chief of the division. It was quite a long letter, trying to give, as I recall, some background to some of their feelings and their feelings about the immediate problem. I wish I could remember more. My feeling was that it was a very well-expressed letter and it was quite justified under the circumstances, and I was very happy to help them by correcting the English. I was a little surprised--and now as I look back on it with further experience in Vietnam, even a little more surprised--that the Vietnamese employees decided to stand up and present their feelings to the Americans, instead of just taking it and going along in the sort of yes-man situation that I have referred to.

According to my advice and his own feelings too, the assistant, rather than sending the letter directly to the chief of the division, sent it through the supervisor of his project. For quite some while he did not hear anything at all--no reaction--about the letter, which seemed a little odd. But later we learned that the supervisor, being extremely busy and apparently not reading the letter carefully enough to realize--or perhaps just was not aware--how important this might be, gave the letter to one of his technicians to take care of. Again here my memory is hazy. I am not clear whether or not this letter ever reached the division chief, but I think perhaps it did at a later date--

really rather late, considering the nature of the letter.

This is the thing that I want to emphasize particularly: the attitude that these Americans in responsible positions took toward this very legitimate expression on the part of the Vietnamese. Even if the Americans felt that they were not expressing a lack of trust in the Vietnamese, even if the Americans felt that the Vietnamese feeling was not justified, nonetheless, the Vietnamese felt this way, and it is only proper in any kind of situation anywhere in the world to take this into account, particularly in a situation in which we are foreigners working in a country and purporting to be helping a people; that we could not put more attention to paying respect to their attitudes and, if not seeking out their attitudes, at least listening to them when they are brought to our attention. I think this letter was treated in a very offhand manner, as though these people were just being a little uppity and speaking out of turn--that was the impression I got.

Later, when nothing happened or nothing was said, then I did encourage the Vietnamese people to bring it up again--at least for this person to call it directly to the attention of the chief to make sure that he knew about it and for the Vietnamese person to express his concern that he had heard nothing. But now at this late date I can't quite remember whether he actually did talk to the chief or not, but I do remember that, after second thoughts, the Vietnamese were rather reluctant to be very aggressive on this point. Here again was the business that it's almost better sometimes to suffer indignities than to make an abrasive quality in a relationship, particularly relationships that have to continue on. What I don't remember, and probably what is rather important, is whether there was any apology ever made to the Vietnamese. I rather suspect not, because I think the attitude was more that the complaint was rather petty.

There seems to be some of the "superior American" here at the Asia Training Center. Even though a great deal of money and effort is spent bringing competent Vietnamese teachers here from Vietnam, they are made to feel that they are nothing more than "resource personnel" --handy to have around for specific needs but actually just second-class citizens in the ATC community, their needs and attitudes taken into little account. I think we Americans, being direct and idea-oriented, often forget that the Vietnamese aren't Americans and, being relationship-oriented, find it difficult to speak up for themselves in such a competitive atmosphere.

Personal Adjustment to Job

Language

I didn't have language study before I went to Vietnam, but when I went there I was sort of determined to learn Vietnamese. I had had such positive experiences during my two days in Japan with a few

Japanese words and in Hong Kong with a little Chinese. At any rate, on the plane going over I met a Vietnamese student returning home, and within the first week I was there he came to call and brought his sister. They taught me a few words of Vietnamese and they were obviously very interested in my learning more. So I realized that if you once get your little toe in the door you can swing the door wide open and it's great. My motivation was increased a thousand-fold just by these little conversations I had with people. My facility with Chinese was pretty lame but it started a kind of relationship with the Chinese people I met and they would teach me more. It was the same with Vietnamese. People are usually so anxious to teach you their language it's marvelous.

The American Embassy in Vietnam provided language training four hours a week during office hours for any American government employees who wished to take it and who had the approval of their supervisors. I was very fortunate--I got the approval of my supervisor, though he told me I wouldn't learn enough to use and it wouldn't be any use anyway, but he signed the sheet so I could then study in those classes, which was good for a beginning. However, it wasn't expert language teaching by any means, and if I had done all my language learning in class I wouldn't be able to speak much at all. (Although my language teacher was a very fine person and became a good friend, his interests were not in language teaching and he had not been exposed to modern language teaching methods.)

But very soon after I got there I struck up an acquaintance with a cyclo driver (cyclos are the pedicabs that they have in Vietnam) who worked the commissary. On my first trip to the commissary I came out and what looked to be a young boy pulled up and I climbed in. I had been taught by my friends to say my address, so I told him my address in Vietnamese. (It was only several months later that I learned that people often don't use addresses except officially and for mail. They don't usually say they live at such and such a number, they say they live at such and such a place; sometimes it is a street but more often some known place or a market to identify an area.) He grinned and took off, but of course I didn't pronounce it correctly and he had to ask me the street again. When we got to the street, he asked which way to turn. I refused to tell him which way to turn but insisted on saying my number in Vietnamese over and over. Finally he got down and peered in at me, and when he understood, he made me repeat it after him until I said it correctly. This was the beginning of a friendship and a lot of language learning.

The next time I went to the commissary, he tried to talk to me in a little pidgin English and asked if he could work for me--taking me places I wanted to go. I thought, well, why not? And that was really one of the best things I ever did. Eventually, I quit using the USAID transportation to work and rode with him every day. This cost me a little money, but it was such a very small amount compared to what I was getting out of it and what it was doing for him. When my language

classes ran out because I was the only one left and the embassy could not afford to teach language to one person, he became my principal teacher. I had picked up a phrase book put out by the Summer Institute of Linguistics for their people to learn Vietnamese and found the phrases and conversations in there much better and more relevant than the ones in the Jones & Thong book put out by Yale University, the book we had been using in our classes. The phrases in the Yale book were not particularly applicable to a speaker of Vietnamese in Saigon. I felt they might have been more useful in New Haven if the people of New Haven spoke Vietnamese. My teacher didn't use the useful little pattern exercises between the conversations.

When I would ride in the cycle I'd take this phrase book along. My friend, the cycle driver, had had enough education so that he could read and he would read a phrase to me for me to try and understand and to repeat after him. I taught him to drill me, so he would repeat it until I said it well enough to satisfy him. I did a lot of my learning this way. Also, I went often to the central market, which fascinated me. I practiced in the market with people who couldn't speak much English, which is the best way to practice a language. And then, also, the Vietnamese people who worked in the AID Education office were a wonderful bunch of people, and I became very good friends with several of them. They were very kind and patient with me and would help me practice, and I would stumble along.

Language learning is both fun and frustrating. At one point early in my stay there, when I felt discouraged and felt as though I hadn't made any progress for weeks, another American who was studying Vietnamese said to me, "Well, I think there are sort of plateaus. You charge ahead for awhile and just seem to be learning like mad, and then you just go along at a level pace and it seems as though you are not moving anywhere, but I think you are absorbing things. And this gives you some background and all of a sudden, wham, you go ahead again." And this seems to be true.

So often in other countries Americans go to, people learn to speak English--they accommodate themselves to us--so that there isn't quite the need for speaking the language there that would require a foreign person to speak English here. So people tend to become very lax about studying the language of the country; there isn't the pressure, and if they are not highly motivated it's easier not to study, and this is a very natural thing, of course.

Following naturally on the tails of this is rationalization for not studying. The first and very valid rationalization is that, where can you use Vietnamese except in Vietnam, and if you're going to be there for two years you learn a little bit and then you go somewhere else and what use is it? But I think that in two years--even in two months--you can learn even a tiny bit that opens the door to learning more and also to establishing a happy relationship with Vietnamese people. If you are willing to make a little effort and are inter-

ested, Vietnamese people will go more than half way to help you communicate. It enriches the whole two years; it makes it worth it just for that, even if you're not going to become attached for a longer period of time as I did.

The other rationalization, which is threatened by a person like myself learning any amount in a short length of time and then learning a large amount in a long length of time, is always that, "Well, Vietnamese is too difficult to learn. It's a very difficult language to learn. You can't learn enough in two years to do any good. You might as well learn French; it's easier and you can use it somewhere else." Well, any foreign language is difficult to learn, and any language learning takes some effort. But it's not all that difficult. And after studying Vietnamese and after teaching English as a foreign language, I feel I would a thousand times rather study Vietnamese than try and learn English as a foreign language.

English has so much inflection--so many different forms. And our writing system is so out of date. Pronunciation is so different from spelling. One thing about Vietnamese which helps is that they have a romanized writing system which is still pretty phonetic; that is, it reflects pretty accurately the sound of the spoken language, so that once you have learned how to pronounce the spelling system, you can recognize words in writing and also produce them. And another thing is that Vietnamese doesn't have inflected verbs. Of course there are other things that are difficult: As I mentioned before, there is no such thing as a second-person pronoun, and you have to learn what to call everybody--Mr. or Miss or Big Brother or Big Sister, and this is very, very complex and gets into the cultural aspects, which is very interesting; but it is very difficult for a foreigner to learn just what to use when. But there are certain polite forms that can be used generally and that are almost never wrong, so, if you learn those, like Mr., Miss, or Mrs., then you can carry on a conversation.

Learning to converse makes such a difference, if only in making an image of an American in a foreign country--a person who has come rather presumptuously to help them and to show them the way--an image of a person who is a helper and a teacher and advisor but who is also a learner with respect for other people. This creates an entirely different image of the American than is usually had. Some people are particularly concerned about our image. For those who are more concerned with the personal aspect, the rewards are proportionate to the amount of interest and effort invested and are worth any amount.

Sometimes it's an uphill battle, particularly in the early stages, to get Vietnamese people to help practice speaking Vietnamese, because many Vietnamese are very highly motivated to learn English and want and need to practice because conversation is very difficult. (Much language instruction is by Vietnamese teachers so that they don't hear American pronunciation.) Naturally, they want to take advan-

tage of the opportunity of practicing with a native speaker of English. And, then, the American speaking Vietnamese less well than the Vietnamese person speaking English is at a disadvantage just from the standpoint of communication; both parties will more quickly move to English for communication.

However, I consistently found at all levels of English ability, a delight in talking to me in Vietnamese and being anxious to help me--also enjoyment in laughing with me at my bad American accent. This included people whose English was much better than my Vietnamese and non-English-speaking people in the market who needed to learn at least a little market English to sell their goods to the increasing number of Americans. Naturally, when we would get into discussions, we would talk in the language most common to us both.

Relations with Vietnamese Personnel

The Vietnamese personnel in the office--and in the rest of AID--were generally very approachable and I got along quite well with them. In addition to helping practice speaking Vietnamese, they would do many things to help me learn about Vietnam. They would take me to the reformed opera and help me understand. One girl took me to the market several times just because she had to go shopping for fruit for her family, and she would take me along. She had a large family to care for as well as working full time so she was a very busy person, but she was the sweetest, most generous person I have ever known. And she would do these things--take me down to the market with her, show me how to buy this or that, what fruits are good and when to buy them and about prices and so on. She was just lovely.

Many of the Vietnamese who worked in the office would come to visit at my house and bring me gifts, very Vietnamese types of things, like fruits from their gardens or little cards with Vietnamese paintings on them--many lovely little things, and what was most lovely was the gesture. They would come and talk to me, and always this patience, to help me learn Vietnamese even though their English might be much better than my Vietnamese.

I spent most of my free time with my Vietnamese friends, occasionally with some American friends, but mostly with Vietnamese friends. I don't know of any of the other American secretaries who were as friendly as I was. In fact, I dated one of the Vietnamese AID employees, something that American girls usually don't do. "Those Vietnamese men. How can you like them?" Their attitudes are rather funny.

The man I dated is a very fine person, and I have a great deal of respect for him. He taught me many things about Vietnam; he took me places in Saigon and for rides out on the Bien Hoa highway. Most of the country areas around Saigon were questionable security-wise,

and also, the roads were not so good. But this big, new four-lane highway that the Americans had put in was well travelled and was where many Vietnamese would go in the evening to cool off after a hot day in the city. There were places like parkways along the side. This was in the good old days before industry cluttered the highway from Saigon to Bien Hoa. I had a Vietnamese girl friend and the three of us would go out and buy pomelo or something on the highway, or take along tiny, delicious little bananas, and eat and talk and enjoy the cool evening after a hot day. This was just the sort of thing that Vietnamese people do.

Relations with American Personnel

Anyway, I had a very good and, I thought, a very discreet relationship with this Vietnamese man. But there were Americans in the office who were suspicious of such atypical behavior. I usually get along pretty well with the people with whom I work, and I got along quite well, I thought, with the Americans working in my office as well as the Vietnamese personnel. My immediate supervisor and I got along in face-to-face relations, but it developed rather soon that there were some differences in attitude toward many things. I think there were a number of aspects to this. One, I'm a rather independent person, and I like to take my own responsibility for the jobs I do and have the opportunity to use my head about some things. He, on the other hand, was a person, who, I think, needed very much to have people look to him and take direction from him. I was immediately responsible to him, but I was also supposed to be responsible both to his project and to another project, the Technical Vocational Education project, and he was rather jealous of things I did for the other project.

I would like to digress a bit to tell about the man in charge of the Tech-Voc project, who was a very effective technician. I wish we had many technicians like that--a very admirable person. He was knowledgeable and interested in his field. He was a very responsible and responsive type of person who got along very well with all the Americans under him and above him and got along with the Vietnamese ministry officials with whom he worked and with the Vietnamese in the office under him. They all liked him very much. He treated other people with respect and was very dedicated to his job and to doing what would be the best thing for technical education in Vietnam. He gave all the credit to the man who preceded him for designing a good project and setting up the program for years to come and looking ahead, but he followed through very well and continued to prepare the Vietnamese vocational schools in terms of equipment and layout and also in terms of training teachers to work in them. They planned everything far ahead, consulting continually with the Vietnamese people concerned. Eventually he was, unfortunately, reassigned to Washington. He is now no longer in AID but in HEW in Washington.

Why does it always happen that someone has to be jealous of a person who is very effective? I'm sure that this was the case with my super-

visor. And just as he was jealous of the other technician's effectiveness and his popularity with the Vietnamese, so was he jealous of my language ability and popularity with the Vietnamese in the office. So all these differences sort of piled up and eventually, unbeknownst to me, he went about seeking ways of getting rid of me.

Finally he was able to convince a Vietnamese girl who had worked in the office before to leave her job with a business firm downtown and come back and replace me. He justified this on the grounds that we Americans are supposed to be working ourselves out of jobs and that we should be replaced by what was called "local hire." This is true and quite legitimate, but the whole purpose behind it wasn't this at all, and it was very evident that it was not the purpose, not only as far as he was concerned but as far as the personnel office was concerned. When the personnel office called me over to tell me, they didn't have the finesse or grace to say, "We are in desperate need of secretaries over here, and so we asked various offices, particularly those offices that have two American secretaries, to try to replace one of their American secretaries with a Vietnamese secretary so that we can spread the Americans out more where they are needed." Now they could have approached it this way very reasonably, and said, "And so, therefore, we're sorry to move you. We hear you've been doing a good job, and blah blah blah." But they started right out with, "Well, we were able to get this other person to replace you and so you're going to be transferred to this office where we need some other secretaries." The other office, incidentally, already had one American secretary and were getting another; I was going to be the third American secretary in that office.

The Education office was extremely busy and had a tremendous amount of work. Of course, I was involved in it and was very much interested in what was going on so I was very much upset to be transferred, and for such obviously phoney reasons. And the thing that really distressed me and disgusted me was the fact that this man obtained the cooperation, whether under pressure of influence or what, of a whole set of people -- a whole element of bureaucracy. On the basis of a personal grudge, he got their cooperation in carrying out a procedure that was of no benefit to the agency and was detrimental to many personal and working relationships. The realization that this can and does happen far too often in AID missions filled me with disgust. Also, I am quite sure that as more ammunition against me, he gossiped with them about my friendship with the Vietnamese man I dated. There were things that happened that made this very evident. I tried to get them to come out in the open with me and they would not; they just maintained an awkward silence. Furthermore, someone -- probably the woman personnel officer (there were both a man and a woman who were personnel officers and with both of whom I talked) gossiped outside the personnel office, because I got feedback from other secretaries. Well, in some ways I wanted to laugh at them. If this is the sort of thing that's going to occupy their minds and time...

What disappointed me in respect to these administrators was that they were not open. They were acting upon information--right or wrong--about me, but provided me no opportunity to speak for myself. They went ahead and acted. The fact is that this reflected on them as administrators. My feeling is that this sort of thing can happen so easily in an AID organization. I'm sure it does happen many times in small ways and also in big ways, because there are enough little odds and ends of things that I've known about people who are in really big positions--well-known people--who have run into difficulties because they have a different way of thinking than the ordinary administrator and bureaucrat. I suppose it's inevitable that these things happen in this kind of business where you have a top-heavy bureaucracy as we have in the government. So many things and ideas get lost in the shuffle of "my career vs. your career."

In the new office I proceeded, naturally, to make friends with the Vietnamese people in the office, and they were fun to get to know. The Public Safety Division was quite a different situation from the Education Division, and my work was so different. To me, a lot of it was pettier stuff, and a lot of little things that everyone seemed so concerned about seemed to me to be just petty little things. Also, the type of American personnel who worked in Public Safety were different from the educators. A lot of them were policemen from back home. Some of them were very nice, very fine guys, but it was just a different kind of environment. And the discrepancy between the type of personnel on the American staff and the type of personnel on the Vietnamese staff was much greater than in the Education office. The Vietnamese employees in Public Safety Division were, like the Vietnamese employees in the Education Division, people who had progressed as far as they could in their education until the war interrupted it and, were it not for the war and the unstable economic situation in Vietnam, would most likely have gone on to college and been highly educated people. And they were working beneath police advisors, some of whom were also quite competent people, but as I said, it was just a different kind of environment.

I, myself, welcomed the small amount of contact that I was able to have with the Vietnamese employees. I was working most of the time in a small office where the classified materials were filed so no Vietnamese were allowed in there, a little cubbyhole between two offices. But whenever I had a chance, I would get out for a few minutes and I would talk with them. By this time my Vietnamese was much improved and I had gotten to the stage where, even though my vocabulary was limited, I could appreciate puns, which are so easy in the Vietnamese language because of the tonal business and compound words. It's lots of fun, and we would do this and they would teach me new words and expressions. It was a nice relief for me from a job that I thought was very unimaginative. (I was really not a secretary but a file clerk.)

After a few months in Public Safety, my immediate supervisor left and was replaced by a man who was apparently bothered by my speaking Viet-

namese, though I didn't realize it for a long time. He was bothered for different reasons from the cause of my trouble in Education. With the exception of three or four of the American police advisors, there was hardly any pretense in Public Safety of friendly relations between the Americans and the Vietnamese. There was much more of an element of distrust toward the Vietnamese and looking on them as inferior creatures. Because he couldn't understand what I was saying and because he couldn't understand why I would wish to be so friendly with the Vietnamese, he was suspicious.

Apparently, it bothered some of the Americans that I had all this access to classified material and that I spent so much time talking to the Vietnamese. What they didn't realize and which they would probably never understand is that I loved nothing better than to get away from all that stuff. I've never shared the passionate preoccupation with "juicy information that only a few of us know" that inflicts some Foreign Service personnel. (As a matter of fact, in that office I sometimes typed material classified as "Confidential" which I had heard a month or two before as common knowledge in the Vietnamese community. I found this to be not uncommon, in Hue as well as in Saigon: Americans pull long faces and tippy-toe around over information that is often commonly known among the Vietnamese and is in all probability insignificant. If the Vietnamese become aware of the American attitude, they get a good laugh. If the Americans living in Vietnam would become more a part of the Vietnamese community, they would get a better perspective of what's happening and the relative significance of happenings.)

As I said, I didn't realize for a long time that my supervisor disliked my speaking Vietnamese in the office. One day I did a very rude thing: In front of him I spoke in Vietnamese to a Vietnamese person. Since the Vietnamese person could speak English and since my superior could not speak Vietnamese, I should have spoken in English. Well, my supervisor blew his stack. I apologized, and he said, "Don't you speak Vietnamese in this office any more." I said, "You mean when I'm talking in front of you. Of course I won't again." "No," he said, "I mean anywhere in the office." I protested, "But this is Vietnam." And he said, "But this is an American office and these people have to learn English, so you speak to them in English. No speaking Vietnamese in the Public Safety Division office. And you shouldn't talk to the Vietnamese anyway because you have work to do and they have work to do." (Never any complaint about my talking to Americans.)

I was very upset and cried over my typewriter most of the afternoon until the Vietnamese interpreter to whom I had spoken in Vietnamese stuck his head in the door and said, "Don't worry." The way he said it I realized that he was very understanding of my situation and that these are the things you have to put up with if you're going to work in this office. He had been there a long time and was familiar with the attitudes in the office.

After I recovered from my shock over this stupendous kind of dictum, the irony that struck me was my supervisor's justification that "these people need to learn English." But one of the noticeable things to me in that office was that the Americans, except a few technicians who worked directly with Vietnamese assistants, rarely had any conversation at all--even in English--with the Vietnamese except when it was necessary to tell them, "Do this and do that." The first thing that comes to mind when I think of that office is the Vietnamese word "buon" which means "sad, lonely, gloomy." I don't think the Vietnamese people there were really happy at all in their work, and a lot of them were unhappy because of the unfriendly atmosphere and because they were so subordinate.

Another situation that added to the oppressive atmosphere was that the American secretary in charge of the Vietnamese translators and typists was very gung-ho for putting the Vietnamese in their places. She distrusted them as non-Americans and was always afraid that they were goofing off and cheating on their responsibilities. Because she was lacking in imagination herself, she didn't give them credit for any imagination, and she didn't give them any respect. One sweet-faced typist, who was the most prone to goofing off and was jealous of two girl translators, complained about them frequently to the American secretary and accused them of goofing off and not doing enough typing. Instead of checking up on the translators' duties and trying to see what was behind the accusations, she believed the typist and became even more oppressive. This was distressing to me because I was friendly with all the Vietnamese, including the typist, and knew that the two translators were responsible women and were actually much more conscientious than the typist. I tried diplomatically to point out the actual situation to the American secretary, but she didn't want to listen to me. She figured I was prejudiced to begin with. I'm sure she was quite sympathetic with the restriction on speaking Vietnamese, and, when I tried to defend the two Vietnamese girls, she became even more suspicious of me.

All in all, the situation for the Vietnamese personnel in Public Safety was not too happy. Finally, the distrust and lack of respect went too far when the Chief of the Division required the Vietnamese translators to give a written account of their time at the end of each day. Imagine. What an insult this was to intelligent responsible people. A few days of this and three men--three of the most competent translators in the office--submitted their resignations. USAID Personnel Office tried to persuade them to stay in USAID and work in another office, but they said "No." They'd had it; they just weren't going to work for USAID any more. They all got good jobs elsewhere, at least one of them doing profitable free-lance translating. This is a deplorable thing to happen in an American office where there are supposed to be responsible Americans who presume to advise other people on how to do things.

I left USAID and Saigon in the spring of 1964. I resigned from AID because I had applied to go into International Voluntary Services as

an English teacher. Earlier, I had requested to stay in AID and return to Vietnam as a Rural Affairs worker because one of the RA people suggested that I try to get into rural work. I had put that on my request partly to legitimize my subsequent resignation in order to work closely with Vietnamese people and not in an office in Saigon. I made it clear that I was interested in project work more closely related to grass-roots development. The executive officer responded to my request with, "Well, that's fine, but we really have nothing open right now." He just wasn't interested in this switch and I'm sure he thought I'd dutifully submit to remaining a secretary. However, when I submitted my resignation to AID in order to work for IVS, the executive officer and other administrative people were very pleasant and supportive.

AID - An Evaluation

In looking back over my experiences in AID and IVS and comparing the attitudes in both organizations, I am impressed with the emphasis in IVS on the value to the IVSer of the overseas experience as well as the value of his contribution to overseas work. I think AID should not overlook the positive factors of its employees having positive experiences themselves. As well as creating a good image of this country, I think as individuals they can be more effective in their own work if they're having positive experiences. I felt this very much when I first met IVS--International Voluntary Services--workers in Vietnam when I was there with AID. One thing that struck me when I associated with them, visited them outside of Saigon at their stations, was how happy they seemed to be. It just struck me as a contrast to so many of the Americans I worked with who seemed to be so frustrated in so many ways. I didn't feel this so much with the IVSers; they were just more at ease and enjoying themselves. They lived more in the Vietnamese community and were not so much at odds with the community. It just seemed to me that they were having experiences that were valuable to themselves as individuals, and out of this kind of positive business they could be more effective in whatever they were doing, and in their relationships with Vietnamese.

We can ask, what are the Americans doing over there anyway? I think it's sort of a dual kind of business. One, a very idealistic--and a good part of the time an uninformed--notion that we can do something good for somebody. I think the primary reason we're there is we have the idea somehow that we can protect ourselves by this business of containing Communism, and that we can contain Communism by developing a country. I think that theoretically and even practically this is true, but somehow it doesn't come off the way it's supposed to.

I tend to agree with Thomas Loeber who wrote the book, Foreign Aid--Our Tragic Experiment: The weakest aspect of AID is their recruiting policies; we tend to get people who have little or no idealism, people who are not highly motivated to study language or to have an attitude of learning as well as going and advising, or just as working people.

It seems to me the attitudes of people going abroad are as much if not more important than their technical abilities and skills, though those are important if you're going to presume to advise people; but the attitudes with which you attempt to impart these skills to somebody else make all the difference in whether or not your advice is even accepted at all, much less acted upon. So that a person's attitudes toward the language and communication and toward customs and ways of behavior and being polite and considerate of other people--all these things are a very crucial part of whether or not you can be effective on your job.

In recruiting AID workers for overseas, there should be much more concern with the applicant's attitudes toward other people and toward foreign aid work--as much concern with that as with the applicant's ability in his specific area of work (and I think there should be more concern with that, too). Personal recommendations should reflect an emphasis on these aspects. Also, there is available now a tremendous variety of tests--aptitude and attitude tests. There's no reason why AID cannot use tests of this sort in reviewing candidates. Tests would probably be more revealing than references.

In its brochures and recruiting materials, AID should put less emphasis on what it offers and more on what it expects of its people. Nearly always you get higher quality people when you make demands. High quality people want to be associated with organizations which demand high quality. Once you begin to get quality, you can get more--quality attracts quality. Higher caliber people will be more interested in going partly because of the reputation of the organization and because they can work with people they would like to work with. I don't know whether this is possible in such a bureaucratic organization.

AID always makes a lot of the goodies it offers to its employees--making it seem that AID is hard up for people and therefore not too concerned with quality, and tending to attract people who join AID just for those goodies. They shouldn't talk so much about the advantages. In fact, I'm inclined to believe that AID shouldn't give so many advantages. They ought to cut way down on their advantages, particularly in Vietnam. Vietnam has become more and more just a big place to make money. It's been that way for about three or four years--a very upward drive in that direction. Of course, before that, it was a money-making place, but it's really that now.

Of course, you can't ask people to be volunteers such as the IVSers are, especially people with families--they can't do that. People like to think they're not only making enough money to live on but are saving up for other things in the future. But it seems to me this can be done without padding everything so much. For example, when I went to Vietnam, we were getting a fifteen per cent increase for hardship post. At that time I thought that was a little ridiculous because, in the first place, you could live off the PX--even locally grown vegetables were

sold in the PX, like the supermarket at home. Prices at the PX were sometimes lower, sometimes not; at that time, it depended a lot on the product. In the second place, if you didn't live off the PX, there was everything on the local economy. Saigon is a big commercial city and there's everything there. And servants were phenomenally cheap according to American standards. It wasn't a hardship post--we were not out in the mountains somewhere or where it was difficult to get supplies. We had all the advantages. Then we had a security scare--grenades were thrown into a couple bars; that time no Americans were injured, a couple Germans were injured, and, of course, as always, there were more Vietnamese hurt than anybody. But then they upped the hardship post allowance to 25% because of the problem of security. My feeling was that the people who manage these things--whoever it is who pushes these things--were just sort of making a case to increase the income. I was on the bottom income bracket in AID, but I had plenty of money for living and travel and, in addition to accumulated savings, \$800 for summer school after I left AID.

Besides concern with attitudes, I think I would have somewhere in the literature an indication that prior knowledge of a foreign language--any foreign language whether it has to do with the area where you're going or not--would be looked upon with favor. I think there should be all the encouragement possible in this direction. I certainly don't mean to indicate that because a person has learned a foreign language or because they're willing to learn a foreign language this will make them good AID workers. I think attitude is more important than language. But knowing one foreign language--especially if it's a non-European language--helps to broaden a person's perspective in regard to the way people think. The way we think is expressed through our language, and when we learn another language we learn a little bit another way of thinking. This is good--it helps to broaden a person.

It would even be good to ask for this in a secretary, though secretaries generally speaking probably aren't as likely as technicians to have prior language training. Regarding the recruiting of secretaries, for the sake of office efficiency, I would make minimum requirements on typing and shorthand speeds and this sort of thing. But I think again I would put more emphasis--in letters of recommendation and in the recruiting brochures--on the person's attitudes. For instance, in asking for letters of recommendation, ask for a judgement about how well the recommender thinks the person would be able to live with different kinds of people, what kind of attitudes does the person have toward foreigners--all this sort of thing. It should be stressed that all AID people--secretaries and everybody--should go as interested students as much as anything else--to learn so that we will know what it is that is need of us.

AID needs to encourage this kind of interest in a person seeking employment. I know myself that there are a lot of people who have never considered working for AID who might consider it and might be very good workers if the emphasis would change and there would be an

emphasis on higher quality--and if there was less bureaucracy, but I don't know if that's possible.

I think an orientation program is a valuable thing if it tends to encourage the person towards the attitudes I talked about. I like the idea here at ATC of language training for secretaries. There are secretaries who have these attitudes or the potential and can be encouraged. Also, other secretaries who aren't particularly interested might become interested, or at least their eyes are opened to a wider view of things. I think it's inevitable that you get a lot of secretaries going to Vietnam who are very interested in the American military there because most of them are single women and Vietnam is good hunting ground, for fun or for a husband. That's inevitable, but nonetheless, I think it's definitely worthwhile to train secretaries.

The criticism has been made that it's a waste of time and money to teach secretaries Vietnamese when they're going to be working for Americans who are going to be speaking English. It's hardly necessary to say I don't agree. For one thing, the secretary, though she's working in an American office and working for Americans, is quite likely to be working with as many if not more Vietnamese people than she is with Americans. Of course, the Vietnamese working for the Americans speak English to one degree or another, but they're Vietnamese and it is their country and they appreciate interest in their language. I think it's important for everyone going there in any capacity to have some kind of awareness that there might be attitudes different from their own, and ways of looking at things and languages that are just as valid as their own. Also, in a working situation, even though she may use English with the Vietnamese personnel in the office all of the time, the fact that she has learned some Vietnamese and especially if she continues to make some effort to learn and use it a little bit, this could make a big difference in the relationship with the people with whom she's working. They very quickly know how sincerely interested a person is; we all can feel these things. When they feel this interest, it can change a whole working relationship, a whole personal relationship. I think that's a very important point.

The other thing is, she lives a life outside the office and even if it's entirely with Americans, she has a servant who is Vietnamese or Chinese and one would hope that she would have contacts outside her job with people in the local community, if only in shipping or only peripherally if not close friendships or a lot of social contacts. There are just many, many instances when she can use Vietnamese--if she goes in a taxicab or pedicab or something, she has some contact with the people there. It seems to me a narrow attitude to say, well, an American's going to be working in an American office with American people. But the Americans are not living in America, they're living in another country. I think that for everybody going overseas, it's worth the spending of money on training and orientation if the training and orientation are applicable and attempt to do really relevant things.

Within AID, as far as personnel are concerned, I think we should recognize that there is an apparent difference in goals between AID Washington and AID in the field. (This has been apparent in IVS lately, too.) Washington naturally has to think in broader terms but often fails to come down to specific needs. They seem to think in terms of numbers or the distribution map on the wall. There should be closer communication between Washington and the various posts as to the specific needs of the post and of the country of the post. This requires closer communication between the Stateside recruiters and the personnel officers in the field.

That brings me to another thing--the personnel officers in the field. If you hire a technical advisor, you expect him to be competent in his field. This should be true of administrators, too, especially in personnel. Personnel officers should be trained in that field and should not just be Foreign Service personnel who have moved up to this rank because of tenure or Foreign Service rating. Here again there's the practice of putting available ratings into available openings--filling slots. Instead, personnel people should be trained for personnel work, trained to work with people. It's a very complicated business, assigning people to the right places and making judgments about people, handling personnel problems in a complex situation. We should try to cut down on the use of the personnel office as a means to manipulate people for personal ends and power play. The personnel office is the most dangerous place for this because it can so easily manipulate people, and it should not.

In this regard, more attention should be paid to matching people and jobs. In my observation there seem to be two or three major frustrations for AID technicians going overseas. The first and most obvious is that people are hurried through processes, everything is urgent, and then they get to their stations and often, not only are they not expected, but there's not even a place for them. Some people, as told in a number of debriefs, even have to go around looking for jobs. This is ridiculous. If AID is going to hire people, AID should know where and into what jobs the people are going at the time they're hired. In other words, people should be hired for specific jobs--people and jobs should be matched. There's too much in the government of fitting bodies into openings--fillers for slots. I think this causes a lot of frustration: People feel that they aren't being used for what they were hired for, for what they believe they were hired for, and often feel that they aren't doing anything useful. I feel this has to be ironed out if AID is going to be an effective development organization.

As I said before, I read Lederer and Burdick's The Ugly American and thought it was superficial in that the Americans they portrayed in the book--the ones concentrated on--were stereotypes to the point of creating black and white contrasts. I didn't feel they were real. His objectionable people were the type of Americans who blow them-

selves around and drink and say nasty things to Vietnamese people--or Sarkanese people. And a good man, such as Ambassador White, was the good naive man who was just a little too naive. And the ugly American himself, the man who was physically ugly but had a good heart and all that, seemed a little unreal, too. This was especially true in the way he went about helping. After I had lived in Vietnam I felt that Lederer and Burdick themselves had not gotten very close to the realities of a country like that. For example, they had the ugly American running around collecting spare bicycle parts to make a water pump. Well, I just know of no situation in Vietnam where you have spare things lying around; everything that's usable at all is used. But the authors just didn't seem to be aware of this fact.

There was another case in which there was a priest who was supposed to have the Right Attitude. He was going to eat the native food and live like the natives, so he went out into the countryside and proceeded to get dysentery and everything that you can get; the implication was you can get it and get it over with and get in there and really live with those people. In the first place, this is unnecessary--you can naturally adjust your body to different things by going into it easily. And the other thing is, once you get amoebic dysentery you don't get it and get it over with; it reoccurs. That seemed to me to be very unrealistic and artificial. Loeber's Foreign Aid-Our Tragic Experiment is a much more realistic appraisal of the American program in other countries.

IN IVS IN HUE

When I had been in Saigon for almost a year, the first IVS education team came to Vietnam--the summer of 1962. Before that, International Voluntary Services had had only an agriculture team in Vietnam--since 1957. Now they brought in young college graduates to be English and science teachers in Vietnamese schools, primarily public high schools. (IVSers work much the same way as Peace Corps volunteers. In fact, Peace Corps was patterned after IVS, the main difference being that PC is part of the State Department and trains large numbers of volunteers; IVS is a small private organization, in Vietnam under contract to AID.)

I began to meet these education IVSers. I had already felt that IVS was a tremendous organization but I didn't know a lot about it. When I discovered that the English teachers were not professionals in the field of teaching English as a foreign language--many of them were political science majors, some of them had done some teaching but not in this area--I thought, well, maybe even I could teach English in Vietnam. The idea grew in my mind, and, as I became more acquainted with IVS and met more IVSers, I became more and more interested.

My first visit to Hue, when I was still working in AID in Saigon, was to visit the three new IVS teachers who had just been assigned there. Besides them, there were two agriculture team members who had been there a long time. One of them is a wonderful person who just made himself at home with the Vietnamese people of Hue--talked with everybody everywhere. We all went running around out in the countryside and talked with people; we went out in a boat on the river in the evening and talked and joked with the old ladies who came out to sell us food. I walked in the market, and the women there, instead of saying "Madame" as they often did in Saigon, spoke to me in Vietnamese and smiled those wonderful warm Vietnamese smiles. All these experiences and warm contacts opened up a wonderful world to me, and I thought, "I want to be in IVS and work in Hue." At the time I never thought such a thing would be possible. But shortly after that one of the members of the IVS Board of Directors came to Vietnam for a visit and I talked to him; it seemed possible that I might be able to join IVS as an English teacher.

The reasons why this would appeal to me more than working for AID were several. One, during my stay in Saigon I gradually fell more and more in love with Vietnam, enjoyed myself tremendously, and wanted to stay. With IVS I could work more closely with Vietnamese people instead of working in an American office. Two, I could teach, which is something I preferred to being a secretary. And three, I felt I would like to be associated with the kind of organization that IVS is. Naturally, since it is a volunteer organization, there is a lot of idealism and individuality in its members even though they have differences and there are varying degrees of how well IVSers get

along in their situations. But, all in all, it looked like a good deal, so I began to think in these terms. I extended my stay in AID for six months so that I could stay in Vietnam through the winter and so that the timing would work out for me to visit my family in the spring, go to summer school and return to Vietnam in time for the beginning of the school year in the fall. I wanted to prepare myself for this English teaching and decided that I would go to summer school at the University of Michigan English Language Institute and take their summer program in teaching English as a foreign language.

There were moments of doubt--not on my part, however. At one point IVS had about decided not to take any more volunteers because the women made problems that IVS wasn't accustomed to--housing, etc. I think the agriculturalists were sort of thrown off their balance. And then there were some persons both in IVS and AID who thought that volunteer work in the field was not for women. But the rough period passed, and I became an IVSer. I not only never regretted making the change, I was always very happy with my decision to go into IVS. I won't say, however, that IVS doesn't have its frustrations; they're just of a different nature: instead of having professional bureaucrats, we have non-professional people as administrators.

A Vietnamese High School

On my return to Vietnam I spent a few days in Saigon doing such things as getting my Vietnamese driver's license, etc., and then went to Hue to replace the girl I had visited two years before. This was teaching English at Dong Khanh girls' high school. Dong Khanh school is the oldest girls' high school in South Vietnam. It's directly across the river from the Citadel, next to Quoc Hoc boys' high school, which is the oldest high school. Both these schools are quite prestigious, partly because of their age but especially because they are the high schools of Hue, the old imperial capitol. They're public schools which require entrance examinations. Now, there are several more public high schools in Hue--one girls' junior high school in the Citadel, one boys' full high school, and two or three more boys' junior high schools. Junior high school is the first four years and senior high is the last three years. (This follows five years of primary school.) Dong Khanh is famous throughout the country for its Hue locale and for its beautiful students. And they certainly are lovely with their white dresses, their long black hair, their beautiful eyes and their sweet smiles.

Ann Wright (now Parsons; she married the IVSer who taught at Quoc Hoc school) was very well liked at Dong Khanh school. She's quiet and gentle and had respect for the school's desires. This helped me a great deal because the school was very open to doing anything I asked for and tried in every way to make things pleasant for me. The IVS education team chief took me to the school for my first visit and in-

roduced me to the principal, and from the first the school was so cooperative. My feeling was that it was I who should cooperate with them. They have a tremendously difficult task--they have almost 3,000 students but not enough teachers and not enough classrooms. The classes are very large and scheduling problems are immense, but the administration was so generous and open to IVS attitudes about language teaching. Their tendency is to group at least two hours class time together because often their teachers would like to have all their teaching hours on two or three days of the week so that they can have the other days free--many of them are married and have families and like to spend time at home. But we try to put forth the idea that language classes need to be spread out--having them every day, if possible--especially the pronunciation and conversation hours that we IVSers specialize in. In this respect, they were so cooperative and helpful to me. They were so wonderful and wanting to make me happy there, and they certainly succeeded.

In connection with the language used in conversation, I'd like to tell about one incident. There were two teachers at the school--sisters--who taught English; I had heard of them but hadn't met them. One day during class break when I was sitting in the teacher's room drinking tea and talking in Vietnamese with a couple teachers beside me, another teacher spoke to me in English. After we talked for a few moments, I told her I would like to meet the two sisters who taught English. She laughed and pointed to the two teachers I had been talking to in Vietnamese and said they were the sisters. Everyone laughed, but it pointed up how self-conscious Vietnamese English teachers are about speaking in English to an American--they're self-conscious about their own pronunciation and feel embarrassed to be English teachers when their own English isn't very good. So I took their lead and continued to talk to them in Vietnamese usually, not wanting to put them in an embarrassing position. There were other teachers who preferred to talk to me in English.

I must say that all the teachers, regardless of whatever their political feelings might have been or their attitudes toward Americans, were always at least very gracious, and often very warm and open and friendly. Even during the struggle movement I was able to maintain friendly relations with anti-government teachers. It was a very rewarding experience to know the people at Dong Khanh school and to have them as friends. When my two years were about to be up I decided it was too early to leave Vietnam and extended another ten months in order to be able to teach the following school year. Then the following June I still was not ready to leave so I extended another two months to August 1967, so that I was there a full three years with IVS.

The last year I was there was the most personally rewarding as far as my school experience went, and it was the best school year that anyone in Vietnam had had for several years. It was the most settled politically--we had no political interruptions during the full year--the first

time in four to five years. There just seemed to be much more stability and continuity. I got to know my fellow teachers much better, attended the teachers' meetings, spent more time with my students, and became more of a fixture in Hue.

There was another thing. The IVS teachers usually don't teach all the hours of English, but only two or three of the six hours a week, and the Vietnamese teacher teaches the other hours for grammar. (Every high school student must study one foreign language, either English or French, throughout high school. In junior high, they have six hours a week. In senior high, they begin the other foreign language and continue the first foreign language. With all that language training they should be able to speak well, but the teaching methods leave something to be desired and they seldom have native speakers of English to practice with.) I requested my last year there to be allowed to take two of the beginning classes for all their hours of English. They very generously let me do that, and I took the three other beginning classes for the usual two hours a week each. Actually I had my two classes seven hours a week; I requested an extra hour that was to be voluntary for the students and in which I planned to do great things --have English games and songs, make our own visual aids, all sorts of ideas, but always that hour was needed to keep up with the regular programs. There were interruptions to class time, such as teachers' meetings, floods, and odds and ends, so I never got around to my big plans except here and there.

So I was with these students seven hours a week--there were just over 60 students in each class--and I got to know them much better which was good not only for teaching purposes but my relationship with them was so great. They're wonderful sweet little kids--12 and 13 mostly. Sometimes a group of them would turn up at my house about a half hour before time to go to school and want to walk to school with me, or they would stop by other times just to visit me. Also I got to know them more as individuals. I wish I could have had more time and perhaps fewer students so that I could have gotten to know more of their families and been able to understand more of their personal problems. It was a wonderful experience for me--I'll never forget their wonderful smiles--I miss those girls.

My last year there I was able to teach a class of Dong Khanh teachers in English conversation. It was a very rewarding experience for me because of the friendly relationships I had with those teachers and being closer to my colleagues in the school. A few times the class met in my home and we had very informal and enjoyable sessions. On these occasions we would eat, often fruit from the trees in my yard. Eating together is an important aspect of hospitality and friendship in Vietnam, as I suspect it is in many non-American cultures.

I had a little university teaching, too. Early in 1965, when President Johnson ordered the American dependents out of Vietnam, the American Consul in Hue decided that he didn't want to be responsible for Ameri-

can women in Hue, and three of us, though we weren't dependents, were evacuated to Saigon with no assurance of ever being able to return to Hue. In Saigon I taught two English classes at the University of Saigon Faculty of Law which had requested an IVS teacher. These classes were good language classes because I had requested to have no more than 20 students to a class, and they were highly motivated and quick. They had a little background in English and they needed conversational facility. We had a lot of fun, they were very responsive, and I learned a lot, both about teaching and how to use the textbook I subsequently used in Hue. It was a very rewarding experience and many of the students became my friends.

Being in Saigon for three to four months gave me the opportunity to become acquainted with a number of active youth groups and with the 1965 Summer Youth Work Program, assisted in part by USAID. After the end of school in May, IVS requested permission from the American Consul for me to return to Hue. Permission was granted and the first of June I returned "home".

Vietnamese Education

I'm not very familiar with the upper echelons of the Ministry of Education, but, like most things in Vietnam, it's highly centralized. The teachers are appointed to their specific schools by the Ministry of Education in Saigon. They're sometimes appointed to the town they come from if they request it, but not always. The ultimate decision is in the hands of the ministry, not the individual school. The curriculum is decided pretty much on a nation-wide level. This is very important, particularly in senior high school, because the baccalaureate examinations are national exams. The textbooks are standard throughout the country. For example, when upon USAID's recommendation a Vietnamese teachers' committee said that a certain series of books was the best for teaching English, the Ministry of Education issued an order that all high schools would use that series. So all the schools adopted this series even though few of the teachers had been trained in how to use those texts. I don't know how general this sort of thing is--perhaps, in this case, it was pressure from USAID. But I understand that in other subjects textbooks are standardized. There are teachers who write their own texts, but I would suspect that they use these texts in addition to the standard text. I don't know very well what the situation is in subjects other than English.

Here is another example of centralization. During the week of the national holiday in November, if a teacher wants to leave his province--even though the schools aren't in session because of vacation--he has to get permission from his province chief through his school principal. The first year I was teaching in Hue, IVS began having, during this holiday, seminars in Saigon for teachers of English. Each IVS teacher would invite a couple of interested English teachers--Vietnamese--from his school. These Vietnamese teachers would be the guests