

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
FOR EUROPEAN MIGRATION

as
Personal file

THE DIRECTOR

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

PERSONAL

12 May 1972

Dear Ogden:

Thank you very much for your letter of 2 May 1972. I had heard that Franklyn Stewart had left Saigon and I had wondered on who would be replacing him. I do not think they could have picked a better man than you and therefore I hesitate to offer any advice. You always appeared to me as being very competent, dedicated to the humanitarian aspects of your work and these are the ingredients which make for success. I found the work with refugees in Viet Nam to be one of the most rewarding experiences in my life and I envy you in your new assignment.

However, since you were kind enough to ask, I should at least offer a few ideas:

- 1) I always looked at myself as being an adviser to the person who had the real responsibility for refugee care, i.e., the Minister.
- 2) The problem is a total one and therefore there should be a total response. I never could sympathize with the independence in which Voluntary Agencies worked. Therefore I put a great deal of stress on the Voluntary Agency Council and of relationships between them, AID and the Ministry.
- 3) Full knowledge of the problem was necessary so that I, and the Minister, spent a great deal of time in the field and in orienting and educating province people.
- 4) Welfare was always a "dirty" word with AID but one of the toughest problems you will face is what to do about orphans and family life. We never could get enough money out of the American Aid chapter and we never could get the US military to take a proper stance. Now this is all up in the air with legislation in the hopper but a sound policy must be worked out.
- 5) I suspect your field personnel has been dissipated but you must have an independent cadre in the field. Otherwise one

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cannot get sound policy nor effective implementation when one is working with people who are responsible to someone else, particularly for evaluations!

6) I may be wrong and the news of the day might make a difference but I have the feeling that WVD lost its Washington clout. You cannot work in Viet Nam if you cannot reach someone in DC higher than the VN Bureau.

You should get to DC periodically, particularly at Budget preparation time and have access to at least Maury Williams. Your job is too important to lose the way in the bureaucracy of US AID Saigon.

All this has the essence of pontificating but I do not mean to. I am intensely interested in the Viet Nam refugee situation and I wish you well. If there is anything more that I can do, please do not fail to write.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely yours,


John F. Thomas