

MEMORANDUM FOR: MR. LEONARD MAYNARD
(As Requested by Mr. Jacobson)

SUBJECT: O. Williams - AID Career Highlights

1. Joined AID in May 1962, Mission Director to Laos. Was sworn in as Mission Director to Laos. Laos at that time had just established a neutralist regime under Souvanna Phouma which provided for Pathet Lao (Communist) participation in the government. The US had pledged itself publicly to support the Souvanna Phouma experiment in good faith. Mr. Williams had previously visited Laos in 1956 and 1957 in connection with anti-Communist intelligence operations and was known as such to a few prominent Lao. After much reflection, he decided to discuss this matter with William Sullivan, aide to Mr. Harriman and now Ambassador to Laos. It was Sullivan's feeling that Williams' appointment as Mission Director ~~could be~~ misconstrued so as to throw doubt on the good faith of the US in its announced intention to support a neutralist regime. Williams therefore submitted his resignation from the assignment in the best interests of AID and the Government and was succeeded by Charles Mann.

2. Special Temporary Mission to Vietnam - Montagnard Relief. During October and November 1962 Mr. Williams headed up a special Montagnard relief operation in which he organized and directed a ~~crash~~ program to get needed aid supplies to approximately 100,000 destitute Montagnards who had been uprooted by the war. (The attached letter testifies to the success of this program, and Mr. Williams was cited by Mr. Seymour Janow, Assistant Administrator for Far East on the former's return to Headquarters.)

3. Special Assistant to the Director, USAID/Saigon (1963-64). Mr. Williams was asked to return to Vietnam as Special Assistant to the Director and did so in April 1963. During this period the Mission was shifting its primary focus from long-term economic development to more war-related aid programs. This caused inevitable stresses within the Mission, and Mr. Williams acted as the Director's principal representative and peacemaker among the various Technical Divisions and the new office of Rural Affairs. He also served for six weeks as Acting Deputy Director, and for one week as Acting Director of USAID/Vietnam. As Acting Director he was called upon not only to direct overall Mission affairs but also to handle special representational requirements, including a one-hour interview on Swedish television and an oration at a Chinese funeral honoring an assassinated Chinese technician!

4. Assistant Director for Rural Affairs (January-July 1964). Mr. Williams was asked by the Mission Director to accumulate the functions of Assistant Director for Rural Affairs in January 1964. This placed him in direct command of all USAID Provincial Representatives throughout Vietnam. At this time the Revolutionary Government which succeeded Ngo dinh Diem's regime fell to a coup d'etat by General Nguyen Khanh. In the confusion which ensued, the entire administrative structure of the GVN was threatened. Money ceased to flow from Saigon to the Provinces; orders were disobeyed, or were never even sent, by officials who had no clear idea as to their powers and authority. During this period which was Mr. Williams' first major managerial assignment in 1.2 Vietnam, he personally spearheaded the effort to keep the New Life Hamlet

Program alive. By the most intense efforts of persuasion, encouragement, pressure and direct action Mr. Williams kept the GVN Rural Affairs program moving ahead at a time when paralysis was the prevailing condition in Vietnam, and thereby made it possible for the Government of Vietnam to continue to function at the Province level, avoiding a vacuum into which the Viet Cong would have flowed before effective US military assistance could be brought to bear. This contribution was recognized and is still remembered by responsible officials in Vietnam at the time, though its significance was not widely known in AID/Washington. Despite Mr. Williams' later contribution to the US effort in Vietnam as Director of the Chieu Hoi Program in 1966-69, these few months in 1964 were his major and most significant personal contribution to the survival of South Vietnam. Although Mr. Williams was decorated by the GVN at the time, this contribution was not forgotten by the Vietnamese, and four years later General Hoang Van Lae again decorated Mr. Williams in recognition of his earlier services.

5. Deputy Mission Director - Tunisia (1965-66). In recognition of Mr. Williams' reputation for action and because of his fluency in French, he was assigned as Deputy Director to Tunisia in January 1965. Judgment of his performance there must depend upon one's judgment as to what the proper function of that Mission should have been. There were two schools of thought on this question. One held that US aid to Tunisia should primarily consist of development loans centrally managed from Washington, with the Tunis Mission acting as a transmission channel to the Government of Tunisia. The other felt that

emphasis should be placed on technical assistance and local initiatives, with the Mission playing a more aggressive role. While Acting Director of the Mission in July-August 1965 Mr. Williams presented his own analysis of this question in the Mission Director's Monthly Letter to the Assistant Administrator. No reply was ever received. The question remained largely unresolved, and in due course Mr. Williams requested transfer to Vietnam, feeling that in his position as Deputy Director he could not make the policy changes in ~~the~~ Tunisian aid programs and its administration which he believed were needed. His reputation with the rank and file of the Mission's officers, clerical help and local personnel reflected the great contribution they felt he had made to the Mission's program. One specific contribution presumably survives to this day. While Acting Director, Mr. Williams directed that a compendium be made of all US aid programs and accomplishments in Tunisia since the beginnings of the US effort there, complete with overlay maps and charts. At the time no such record existed and personnel then preparing to depart the Mission would have carried away much of this history with them. If any official history of US aid in Tunisia exists, it is because of Mr. Williams' initiative and desire that our immense contributions to that country not be lost sight of. Also, his relations with Tunisian officials with whom he could converse fluently in French were marked by great warmth, understanding and cooperation.