

Excerpts from the Vietnam Country Reader

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VIETNAM

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Albert Stoffel	1946-1948	Vice Consul, Saigon
Oscar Vance Armstrong	1950	Chinese Language Officer, Saigon
John F. Melby	1950	City Unspecified, Vietnam
Charlotte Loris	1950-1952	Clerk, Saigon
Thomas J. Corcoran	1950-1953 1954-1955	Political Officer, Saigon Consul, Hanoi
Paul M. Kattenburg	1950-1955 1963-1964 1964-1965	Intelligence Analyst, Indochinese Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC Country Officer, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC Political Officer, Policy Planning, Washington, DC
L. Michael Rives	1951-1952	Political Officer, Hanoi
Scott Cohen	1951-1953	Foreign Broadcasting Information Service (FBIS) Officer, Saigon
Richard C. Matheron	1951-1953 1953-1956	Special Technical and Economic Mission, Saigon Special Technical and Economic Mission, Hue
Bertha Potts	1952-1954	Cultural Affairs Officer, USIS, Saigon

William J. Cunningham	1952-1954	General Services Assistant, Saigon
Howard R. Simpson	1952-1955 1964-1965	Press Officer, Saigon Information Officer, Saigon
Samuel Clifford Adams, Jr.	1952-1955	Education Advisor, Saigon
Randolph A. Kidder	1953-1955 1955	Political Officer, Saigon Chargé d'Affaires, Saigon
George Lambrakis	1954-1955	Trainee, USIS, Saigon
Robert F. Franklin	1954-1956 1962	Radio Officer, USIS, Hanoi and Saigon Press Officer, Saigon
John A. Lacey	1954-1956 1965-1966	Intelligence Analyst, Vietnamese Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC Country Officer, Burma/Cambodia Desk, Washington, DC
Rufus C. Phillips, III	1954-1955 1957-1959	U.S. Army and Central Intelligence Agency, Saigon Assistant Director, Rural Affairs, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Vientiane, Laos
Robert J. MacAlister	1955	International Rescue Committee, City Unspecified, Vietnam
John A. McKesson, III	1955-1957	Political Officer, Saigon
Robert E. Barbour	1955-1956 1956-1957 1957-1958	Language Training, Saigon Political Officer, Saigon Principal Officer, Hue
Robert Lochner	1955-1958	Deputy PAO, USIS, Saigon
Samuel T. Williams	1955-1960	Military Assistance Advisor Group, Saigon
Christian A. Chapman	1957-1958	Political Officer, Saigon
David I. Hitchcock, Jr.	1957-1958	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Hue
Chester H. Opal	1957-1960	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Saigon

Alan Fisher	1957-1963	Motion Picture Officer, USIS, Saigon
Elbridge Durbrow	1957-1961 1961-1965	Ambassador, Vietnam NATO, Paris
John W. Kimball	1958-1960	Assistant Security Officer, Saigon
Theodore J.C. Heavner	1958-1959 1960-1961 1961-1963	Political Officer, Hue Political Officer, Saigon Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
Joseph A. Mendenhall	1958-1959 1959-1962 1963-1965 1964 1964-1965 1968-1970	Vietnam Desk Officer, Washington, DC Political Officer, Saigon Deputy Director, Southeast Asia Affairs, Washington, DC Chairman, Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC Vietnam Affairs, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC Vietnam Affairs, USAID, Washington, DC
Cecil S. Richardson	1959-1961	Political Officer/Staff Aide, Saigon
Ben Franklin Dixon	1959-1962	Political Officer, Thailand
James Howe	1959-1962	Program Officer, International Cooperation Administration (predecessor to USAID), City Unspecified, Vietnam
George F. Bogardus	1959-1963	Economic Officer, Saigon
Neal Donnelly	1960-1961	Assistant CAO, Saigon
Thomas F. Conlon	1960-1962	Principal Officer, Saigon
James Marvin Montgomery	1960-1962 1962-1964	Economic Officer, Saigon State Department; Vietnam Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Keith Earl Adamson	1960-1964	Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
John M. Anspacher	1960-1964	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Saigon

John J. Helble	1960-1961	Political Officer, Saigon
	1961-1964	Consul, Hue
	1965-1967	Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
	1973	Political Officer, Saigon
Douglas Eugene Pike	1960-1962	Assistant Motion Picture Officer, USIS, Saigon
	1962-1964	Information Officer, USIS, Saigon
	1965-1967	Assistant Chief Planning Division, USIS, Saigon
	1968-1975	Regional Information Specialist, USIS, Saigon
Thomas L. Hughes	1961	Administrative Assistant to the Under Secretary, Washington, DC
Robert E. Barbour	1961-1963	Political Officer, Saigon
William C. Trueheart	1961-1963	Deputy Chief of Mission, Saigon
Frederick Ernest Nolting, Jr.	1961-1963	Ambassador, Vietnam
James D. Rosenthal	1961-1965	Political Officer, Saigon
Henry L. T. Koren	1961-1964	Director, Southeast Asia Affairs, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
	1966-1968	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Saigon
W. Averell Harriman	1961-1963	Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, Washington, DC
	1963-1965	Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Washington, DC
	1965-1969	Ambassador-at-Large, Washington, DC
Dean Rusk	1961-1969	Secretary of State, Washington, DC
Frank D. Correl	1962-1963	Program Officer, USAID, Saigon
	1963-1964	Vietnam AID Desk, Washington, DC
Paul D. Harkins	1962-1964	General, US Army, Saigon
Kenneth N. Rogers	1962-1964	RSO General and Staff Aide, Saigon
W. Robert Warne	1962-1964	Assistant Development Officer, USAID, Saigon

Maxwell D. Taylor	1962-1964	Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC
	1964-1965	Ambassador, Vietnam
William G. Bradford	1962-1964	Administrative Officer, Saigon
	1974	Administrative Officer, Saigon
Edward L. Rowny	1962-1965	Lt. General, Saigon
Robert H. Miller	1962-1965	Deputy Chief, Political Section, Saigon
	1965-1968	Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
	1974-1977	Area Director, Southeast Asia Affairs, Washington, DC
Leonardo Neher	1962-1964	Commercial Officer, Saigon
William R. Tyler	1962-1965	Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Washington, DC
	1965-1969	Chief of Mission, The Hague, The Netherlands
Frederick W. Flott	1963	Special Assistant to Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, Saigon
Samuel B. Thomsen	1963-1964	Political Officer, Saigon
	1964-1966	Consul, Hue
Vladimir Lehovich	1963-1965	Rural Affairs Program Officer, USAID, Saigon
	1965-1966	Provincial Reporter, Saigon
Erland Heginbotham	1963-1965	Economic Policy Officer, USAID, Saigon
	1965-1967	Vietnam Desk, USAID, Washington, DC
Joseph P. O'Neill	1963-1965	Political Officer, USAID, Hue
	1965-1968	CORDS, Da Nang
George M. Barbis	1963-1966	Analyst, Laos, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
William Harrison Marsh	1963-1966	Political Officer, Saigon
	1966-1968	Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
Michael H. Newlin	1963-1968	Political-Military Officer, USRO, Brussels

John R. Burke	1963-1967 1967-1969	Political Officer, Saigon Director, Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
John T. Bennett (Interview with Rutherford Poats)	1963-1965 1973-1975	Economic Counselor, Saigon Economic Counselor, Saigon
Rutherford Poats (See interview with John Bennett)	1963-1967 1964-1966	Bureau Chief, USAID, Washington, DC Assistant Administrator, USAID, Washington, DC
Thomas L. Hughes	1963-1969	Director, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
Robert C. Haney	1964	Deputy Chief, JUSPAO, Saigon
Thomas F. Conlon	1964	Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
Broadus Bailey, Jr.	1964-1965	Provincial Advisor, Dalat, Tuyen Duc
U. Alexis Johnson	1964-1965	Deputy Chief of Mission/Deputy Ambassador, Saigon
William N. Turpin	1964-1965	Vietnam Aid Mission, Saigon
Peter M. Cody	1964-1965	Vietnam Desk, USAID, Washington, DC
Ray E. Jones	1964-1965	Embassy and Staffing Protocol Officer, Saigon
David G. Nes	1964-1965	Deputy Chief of Mission, Saigon
Richard J. Dols	1964-1966	Intelligence Analyst, Vietnamese Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
James F. Leonard	1964-1966	Intelligence Analyst, Far East Affairs, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
Philip R. Mayhew	1964-1966	Advisor, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
Clayton E. McManaway, Jr.	1964-1965 1965 1965-196?	Program Officer, USAID, Saigon Vietnam Program, Washington, DC Pacification Program Officer, USAID,

	196?-1970	Saigon DoD, MACV, Saigon
Walter A. Lundy	1964-1966 1966	Political Officer, Saigon Principal Officer, Hue
Frank G. Wisner	1964-1967 1967-1968 1968-1969	Staff Aide, AID, Saigon Program Officer, Dinh Tuong Province Senior Advisor, Tuyen Duc Province
Gilbert H. Sheinbaum	1964-1968	Political Officer, USAID, Hue, Hoi An, and Saigon
Barry Zorthian	1964-1968	Chief, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office, (JUSPAO), Saigon
John J. McCloy	1964-1968	Ambassador
Harold Kaplan	1964-1967 1967 1968-1969	Public Affairs Officer, USIS, Saigon Public Relations Officer, Vietnamese Affairs, The White House, Washington, DC Press Officer, Negotiations with North Vietnamese, Paris, France
H. Freeman Matthews, Jr.	1964-1966 1966-1970	Political Officer, Saigon Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
Richard E. Undeland	1964-1969	Field Operations Officer, Saigon
Robert J. McCloskey	1964-1973	State Department Spokesman, Washington, DC
Walter F. Mondale	1965	United States Senator, Minnesota
Ralph J. Katrosh	1965-1966	Vietnamese Affairs, East Asia Bureau, Washington, DC
Robert Don Levine	1965-1966	Embassy Spokesperson, Saigon
Richard M. McCarthy	1965-1966	Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
Patrick E. Nieburg	1965-1966	Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Pleiku
G. Clay Nettles	1965-1967	II Corps, USAID, Lam Dung

Robert B. Oakley	1965-1967	Political Officer, Saigon
Robert W. Garrity	1965-1967	Assistant Press Officer, USIS, Saigon
Howard Frank Needham	1965-1967	Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), City Unspecified, Vietnam
Leonard Unger	1965-1967	Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Far East Affairs, Washington, DC
James R. Meenan	1965-1967	Audit Branch, Office of the Comptroller, Saigon
Edward L. Lee II	1965-1968	U.S Marine Corps, Da Nang
David Lambertson	1965-1968	Mekong Delta Reporter, USAID, Saigon
John W. Holmes	1965-1968	Economic Officer, Saigon
James R. Bullington	1965-1966 1966-1967 1967-1968 1968	Provincial Reporter, Hue Aide to Ambassador, Saigon Province Representative, USAID, Quang Tri State Department, Vietnam Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Richard W. Teare	1965-1967 1967-1969 1969-1971	Political Officer, Saigon INR, South Vietnam Analyst, Washington, DC State Department, Vietnam Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Stephen J. Ledogar	1965-1969 1966 1966-1967 1967 1967-1968 1968-1969	USAID Representative, Quang Tri Province Interagency Study, Saigon CORDS, Saigon Defense Department, NMCC, Washington, DC State Department, Vietnam Information Office, Washington, DC EAP, Vietnam Desk, Washington, DC
Lindsey Grant	1965-1968 1969-1970	Political Officer, Vietnamese Affairs, New Delhi, India National Security Council, Washington, DC
William Lloyd Stearman	1965-1967	Psychological and Propaganda Operations,

	1967-1971	JUSPAO, Saigon Vietnam Task Force, East Asia Bureau, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
James G. Lowenstein	1965-1974	Staff of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC
	1967-1974	Staff of Senate Foreign Relations Committee, City Unspecified, Vietnam
Robert B. Petersen	1966-1967	Assistant Public Affairs Officer, USIA, Saigon
David G. Brown	1966-1968	Political Officer, Saigon
Gerard M. Gert	1966-1968	Psychological Operations, Saigon
L. Wade Lathram	1966-1968	Deputy Director, USAID, Saigon
David Rybak	1966-1968	Refugee Officer, USAID, Saigon
Charles H. Twining	1966-1968	Area Development Officer, USAID, Dalat
Theodore J.C. Heavner	1966-1969	Supervising Political Officer, Saigon
John M. Steeves	1966-1969	Director General of the Foreign Service, Washington, DC
Richard W. Duemling	1966-1970	Special Assistant to Assistant Secretary for East Asia, Washington, DC
James F. Mack	1966-1969	CORDS Program, Provincial Reporting Officer, Vietnam
	1969-1971	Intelligence Analyst, Washington, DC
	1972-1973	Paris Peace Accords Monitor, South Vietnam
Thomas P.H. Dunlop	1966-1969	Political Officer, Saigon
	1972-1974	Political Officer, Saigon
Frank N. Burnet	1966-1967	Political Advisor, Commander in Chief Pacific Command (CINCPAC), Washington, DC
	1967-1969	Province Advisor, Bien Hoa
	1971-1975	Intelligence Analyst, Southeast Asia, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington,

DC

Lawrence H. Hydle	1966-1967 1968-1972 1973	Consular Officer, Saigon Political Officer, Saigon Consular Officer, Bien Hoa
Frank Pavich	1966-1972	Program Officer, USAID
Michael E. Tolle	1967	Civilian, Da Nang
Anthony C. Zinni	1967	Second Lieutenant, Marine Divisions, Vietnam
David C. Miller, Jr.	1967-1968	Simulmatics (Business), Saigon
John E. Graves	1967-1968	Provincial Advisor, Rach Gia
Thomas F. Conlon	1967-1968	Head of Provincial Reporting, Saigon
Vernon C. Johnson	1967-1968	Vietnam Bureau, USAID, City Unspecified, Vietnam
Charles L. Daris	1967-1969	Provincial Advisor, USAID, Saigon
Charles T. Cross	1967-1969	Deputy, I Corps, Danang
Timothy Michael Carney	1967-1969	Rotation Officer, Saigon
Larry Colbert	1967-1969 1969-1970	CORDS Refugee Advisor, USAID, Da Nang Vietnam Training Center, Washington, DC
Thomas B. Killeen	1967-1969	Refugee Officer, Da Nang and Hue
Richard R. Wyrough	1967-1968 1968-1969 1969-1970	Forward Base Commander, US Army, Bien Hoa Vietnam, National Military Academy, Dalat Brigade Commander, Task Force South, South Vietnam
Douglas R. Keene	1967-1970	CORDS Officer, Go Cong Province
Melvin R. Chatman	1967-1970	199 th Infantry Brigade, Vietnam
Thomas Parker, Jr.	1967-1970	Deputy District Senior Advisor, Saigon

Walter L. Cutler	1967-1971	Political Officer, Saigon
Arthur A. Hartman	1967-1972	Staff Officer, Planning and Coordination, Washington, DC
Stephen T. Johnson	1967-1970 1970-1973 1973 1973	Political Officer, Saigon Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC International Control Commission, Saigon Political Officer, Nha Trang
Hugh G. Appling	1967-1968 1973-1974	Provincial Advisor, Tay Ninh Deputy Chief of Mission, Saigon
Joseph C. Walsh	1967-1969	Executive Officer, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), City Unspecified, Vietnam
Roger Kirk	1967-1969 1970-1971	Political Officer, Saigon Vietnamese Affairs, Washington, DC
John Sylvester, Jr.	1967-1968 1968 1969 1970-1972	White House Staff, Washington, DC Political Advisor, Vietnamese Affairs, Chau- doc, Mekong Delta Binh-long Political Officer, Saigon
Francis Terry McNamara	1967-1968 1968-1969 1969-1971 1974-1975 1975	Chief, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Vinh Long Deputy Senior Advisor, Quang Tri Consul General, Da Nang Consul General, Can Tho Refugee Work, Guam and the U.S.
Ellsworth Bunker	1967-1973	Ambassador, Vietnam
Richard T. McCormack	1968	Head of Operations Research, Philco-Ford, Saigon
Charles Lahiguera	1968-1969 1969	CORDS Refugee Officer, Phouc Long Province Refugee Reporting Officer, First Corps, Saigon
Parker W. Borg	1968-1969	Deputy District Advisor, CORDS Vietnam

William Lenderking	1968-1969	Advisor to Vietnamese Information Rep., Pleiku
	1969	Joint US Public Affairs Officer, USIA, Saigon
Edgar J. Gordon	1968-1969	Economic Officer, Saigon
Carl C. Cundiff	1968-1969	Economic Officer, USAID, Saigon
Galen L. Stone	1968-1969	Political Counselor, Saigon
Samuel Vick Smith	1968-1969	Deputy District Advisor, Bien Hoa
Lloyd Jonnes	1968-1969	Counselor for Economic Affairs/Associate Director, USAID, Saigon
William Veale	1969-1969	Captain, U.S. Army, Vietnam
Andrew F. Antippas	1968-1970	Political Officer, Saigon
Dennis G. Harter	1968-1970	CORDS Officer, Ba Tri District, Vietnam
	1970	Special Assistant to Ambassador Colby, Saigon
Stan Ifshin	1968-1970	USAID Officer, Saigon
Stevenson McIlvaine	1968-1970	Province Advisor, Camau
Thomas Macklin, Jr.	1968-1970	Youth Affairs Officer, Saigon
William A. Weingarten	1968-1970	New Life Development Program, My Tho
James J. Gormley	1968-1970	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Da Nang
Eugene Rosenfeld	1968-1970	Chief of Mission, Press Center, Saigon
Charles S. Whitehouse	1968-1970	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Saigon
George A. Anderson	1968-1971	Political-Military Affairs Officer, Saigon
Lawrence J. Hall	1968-1972	Deputy Director, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
Theresa A. Tull	1968-1970	Political Officer, Saigon

	1970-1972	Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
Frederick Z. Brown	1968-1970	Province Advisor, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Vinh Long
	1971-1973	Consul General, Da Nang
Carl Edward Dillery	1968-1969	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Quang Ngai
James B. Engle	1968-1970	Province Senior Advisor, Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Phy Yen
	1970-1973	Director, Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
	1973	Consul General, Nha Trang
Morton I. Abramowitz	1968-1969	Staff Member, Senior Interdepartmental Group, Washington, DC
	1972	Director, East Asia Division, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC
	1974-1978	Political Advisor to Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command, Washington, DC
Robert S. Zigler	1968-1975	Program Officer, USAID, Saigon
Richard Sackett Thompson	1968-1972	Provincial Reporting Unit, Saigon
	1974-1975	External Affairs, Saigon
Clarke McCurdy Brintnall	1969-1970	Major, U.S. Army, Phouc Vinh
Charles Stuart Kennedy	1969-1970	Consul General, Saigon
Eugene Kopp	1969-1970	Deputy Director, USIA, Washington, DC
Lange Schermerhorn	1969-1970	Consular Officer, Saigon
James W. Chamberlin	1969-1970	Artilleryman, U.S. Army, Vietnam
Lacy A. Wright	1969-1970	Political Officer, Saigon
Frederick (Ted) G. Mason, Jr.	1969-1970	JUSPAO Affairs Officer, Saigon
	1970-1971	CORDS, Saigon
J. Richard Bock	1969-1970	Refugee Officer, Bien Hoa

	1970-1971	Special Assistant, Saigon
William K. Hitchcock	1969-1970 1970-1972	Director, Refugees and War Victims, Saigon Political Counselor, Saigon
Bruce W. Clark	1969-1970 1970-1971 1971-1972	Deputy District Advisor, Tuy Hoa Office of Inspector General, Foreign Assistance, Washington, DC Vietnam Working Group, Washington, DC
Ernestine S. Heck	1969-1971	Political Officer, Saigon
William A. Root	1969-1971	Transport/Communications Officer, Saigon
Ints M. Silins	1969-1970 1970 1970-1973	Vietnamese Language Training, Washington, DC District Senior Advisor, Duc Thanh District, Mekong Delta Aide to Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, Saigon
James D. Phillips	1970	Vietnam Inspection Team, Da Nang
Parker W. Borg	1970	Policy Programs and Plans, CORDS, Saigon
David Lazar	1970-1971	Director, CORDS Region I, Da Nang
Dell Pendergrast	1970-1971	Psychological Operations Advisor, Saigon
Maurice E. Lee	1970-1971	Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
John M. Reid	1970-1971	Political Officer, JUSPAO, Saigon
Michael W. Cotter	1970-1971 1971	CORDS, Mekong Delta Staff Aide, Saigon
Richard A. Virden	1970-1971	Wireless File Correspondent, USIS, Saigon
Natale H. Bellocchi	1970-1971 1971-1972	CORDS, Da Nang Commercial Attaché, Saigon
David Winn	1970-1972	CORDS, Long Khanh
John Gunther Dean	1970-1972	Deputy, CORDS, Danang

Michael E. Tolle	1970-1972	Refugee Officer, Saigon
Richard Funkhouser	1970-1972	CORDS, Saigon
Howard H. Lange	1970-1971 1972	Pacification Program, Hue Political Officer, Saigon
Harry Haven Kendall	1970-1972	Economic Policy Officer, Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
Frank E. Schmelzer	1970-1972	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Tuy Hoa
Roy T. Haverkamp	1970-1972	Area Development Advisor, Saigon
Anthony C. Zinni	1970-1974	Company Commander, Marine Divisions, Vietnam
Donald McConville	1970-1974	Economic Officer, AID, Saigon
Arthur Mead	1970-1975	Foreign Agricultural Service, Washington, DC
Melvin R. Chatman	1970-1976	Senior District Advisor, Cuchi and Bien Ho
Robert H. Nooter	1970-1975	Assistant Administrator, USAID, Washington, DC
Charles Higginson	1971	Junior Foreign Service Inspector, Vietnam
Lillian E. Ostermeier	1971	Secretary to Ambassador Bruce, Paris
Craig Dunkerley	1971-1973	Consular/Political Military Officer, Da Nang
Douglas Watson	1971-1973	Province Development Officer, Saigon
Robert A. Lincoln	1971-1973	Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), Saigon
Irwin Pernick	1971-1973	Office of Political Military Affairs, Washington, DC
Michael G. Wygant	1971-1973	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), Pleiku
Gary L. Matthews	1971-1973	CORDS, Da Nang

John A. Bushnell	1971-1974	Program Analysis, NSC, The White House, Washington, DC
David Lambertson	1971-1973 1973-1975	Spokesman, Paris EAB, Regional Affairs, Washington, DC
J. Richard Bock	1973	TDY, Bien Hoa
Michael W. Cotter	1973	Vice Consul, Can Tho
Douglas R. Keene	1973	Temporary Duty from Warsaw, Saigon
Richard W. Teare	1973	Deputy Principal Officer, Nha Trang
Samuel B. Thomsen	1973 1973-1974	Principal Officer, Saigon Liaison, Joint Military Commission, Hue
Marshall Bremont	1973-1974	Public Affairs Officer, Saigon
John N. Irwin, II	1973-1974	Ambassador to France, Paris Peace Talks, France
Hugh Burleson	1973-1975	Program Officer, USIS, Saigon
Theresa A. Tull	1973-1975	Deputy Principal Officer, Da Nang
Fred Charles Thomas, Jr.	1973-1975	ICCS Liaison Office, Saigon
Charles Lahiguera	1973-1975	Peace Accord Monitor, Third Corps, Bien Hoa
James R. Bullington	1973-1975	Vietnam Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Wolfgang J. Lehmann	1973-1974 1974-1975	Consul General, Can Tho Deputy Chief of Mission, Saigon
Moncrieff J. Spear	1973-1975	Consul General, Nha Trang
Frank G. Wisner	1973 197?-1976	Deputy Consul General, Can Tho Vietnam Task Force, Washington, DC
Parker W. Borg	1974	Member of Peace Agreement Monitor Team, Pleiku
Francis J. Tatu	1974	Principal Officer, Chiang Mai

David Michael Adamson	1974-1975	Rotational Officer, Nha Trang
Robert A. Martin	1974-1975	Political Officer, Nha Trang, Saigon
Lacy A. Wright	1973-1974 1974-1975	Acting Consul General, Chun Tien Province Political Officer, Saigon
Richard E. Thompson	1974-1977	Diplomatic Courier, Bangkok
Charles Lahiguera	1975	Refugee Evacuation Officer, SS Blue Ridge
Parker W. Borg	1975	Assistant to Assistant Secretary Habib, Washington
Robert V. Keeley	1975-1976	Deputy Director, Task Force for Vietnam Refugees, Washington, DC
John Hogan	1976-1977	I Corps, Da Nang
Edmund McWilliams	1978-1980	Desk Officer for Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, Washington, DC
Stephen T. Johnson	1984-1986	State Department, Vietnam Desk Officer, Washington, DC
Charles H. Twining	1988-1991	Office Director; Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, Washington
Marie Therese Huhtala	1990-1992	Office director, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, Washington, DC
G. Eugene Martin	1992-1996	Consul General, Guangzhou
Dennis G. Harter	1994-1996 1997-2001	Director, Office of Laos, Vietnam and Cambodian Affairs, Washington, DC Deputy Chief of Mission, Hanoi
Marie Therese Huhtala	1996-1998	Deputy Director, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand & Vietnam Affairs, Washington, DC
Thomas R. Carmichael	2001-2002 2002-2004	Vietnamese Language Training, FSI, Washington, DC Public Affairs Officer, Hanoi

MERRITT N. COOTES
Temporary Consul
Saigon (1936)

Merritt N. Cootes was born in Virginia in 1909. Educated in France, Austria and Princeton, he joined the Foreign Service in 1931 and served in Haiti, Hong Kong, Italy, Portugal, the Soviet Union, Pakistan, Algeria, and Washington, DC. He retired in 1969. He was interviewed by Lillian Mullins in 1991-1993.

COOTES: I was just about to go back to Hong Kong when a cable came in on January 1, 1936. I said to Henry, "Oh, you can decode this thing tomorrow. Don't bother about it today." Henry said, "No, I think we'd better go down there right now." It's a good thing that we did, because the telegram covered my transfer to Saigon, to fill in for the Consul, Quincy Roberts, who had not been back to the U.S. for 17 years! In those days, if you took home leave, you paid your own way back to the U.S. and then to your post. Roberts decided that, rather than pay his way home from his previous posts in Fiji or Indonesia, he'd stay where he was. So he hadn't been home for 17 years. He wrote to the Department and asked that somebody be assigned to replace him. He received no answer and, three months later, he sent a telegram. That was unheard of in those days. So the answer was a telegram to me in Manila, ordering me to Saigon to take over while the Consul went on home leave. Finally, his home leave was paid, as a special consideration. So I spent seven months in Saigon. It was a one-man post. There were such posts in those days -- they don't any more, as we all know.

Of course, when I arrived in Saigon on January 6, 1936, I thought that I would have to do all of the end of the year economic reporting. I thought that this was going to be a terrible burden. I knew nothing about Indochina -- I barely knew where it was. But when I was met at the dock by Consul Quincy Roberts, he said, "Look, I've got all of my reports lined up. I didn't realize that I was going to get to go on leave so quickly. I've got all of that done. I'd suggest that you go up to Hanoi, because that's where the Governor General lives. You can establish contact with the office of the Governor General and the Customs, Police, and all of the rest of the officials. So if anything happens while you're down in Saigon, you will have your contacts up at headquarters in Hanoi." At that time Indochina effectively belonged to the French. Cochin China [now southern Vietnam] actually belonged to France, by treaty. Annam [now central Vietnam], Cambodia, and Tonkin [now northern Vietnam] were French protectorates. For some reason the capital was established in Hanoi, rather than Saigon, although Cochin China was the wealthy part of Indochina, where the rice exports were produced. So I stayed there for seven months...

Q: *In Saigon?*

COOTES: In Saigon.

Q: *How did you get to Hanoi -- by train?*

COOTES: By ship from the Philippines, from Manila. I went from Manila to Saigon, and then,

when I returned to Hong Kong, it was by ship from Saigon to Hong Kong.

Q: *I just wondered how you got to Hanoi from Saigon.*

COOTES: I went part of the way by train, but the railroad had not been completed. So after traveling by train some distance we all got off and onto buses and traveled something like two hours by bus to Nha Trang. From Nha Trang we took the train to Hue and so up to Hanoi.

Q: *I see.*

COOTES: When I was in Hanoi, I met the Frenchman who was the agent for Chrysler cars. He said that he had just taken delivery on some automobiles which he had to drive down to Saigon. Since I was going back to Saigon, would I drive one of the cars for him? So I drove a car, and it was very interesting. We went through the "pays des insoumis," in the hills of Indochina. It was called "insoumi" because the French had really never done more than occupy the towns. At night it was not safe to walk around. The so-called "natives" had never really been subjugated by the French. So I drove back to Saigon with the Chrysler agent. He was delighted to have someone to drive the car for him.

Q: *There were roads?*

COOTES: Oh, yes, quite decent roads. The French have always been good at that in all of their colonies, as I found out later on when I was in Algeria. What the French had done in that area in terms of transportation and communications was literally fabulous.

Q: *So you were back in Saigon for another few months.*

COOTES: I was back in Saigon for another few months. Quincy Roberts came back from home leave, and I returned to my post in Hong Kong. As I said, your transportation on home leave was not paid by the Department. I was entitled to some leave, after three years. My father was a great friend of one of the personnel people who served under Mr. Byington. He arranged to have me transferred from Hong Kong to Montreal, with instructions to proceed via Washington.

KINGSLEY W. HAMILTON
Consular Officer
Saigon (1940-1942)

Kingsley W. Hamilton was born in 1911 to Presbyterian missionaries in the Philippines. He attended high school in China, the Philippines and Ohio. He graduated from the College of Wooster in 1933. One of his favorite history professors topics on world history influenced his interest in international affairs. This led him to graduate work at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and his taking the Foreign Service Exam. He has also served in Hungary and Switzerland. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy on December 9,

1994.

Q: *Then where were you assigned?*

HAMILTON: Saigon.

Q: *You were there from '40 to '42. How did you get to Saigon?*

HAMILTON: Well, by train to Genoa, and got on an Italian liner, the Conte Biancamano, and then to Singapore. We had the Italian minister of colonies aboard, he was on an inspection trip to their then colony Eritrea, on the Red Sea.

Q: *Italian Somalia?*

HAMILTON: Massawa was the port where we stopped and Asmara was the capital of the area.

Q: *That would have been Ethiopia, or Eritrea. The Italians had all of Ethiopia at that time.*

HAMILTON: Yes Eritrea. Then we went on making stops at Aden, Bombay, and Ceylon; so it took a while, a pleasant cruise. At Singapore I got off, and then waited a week until I could get a small French ship to Saigon.

Q: *So you were in Saigon February '40. What was your job?*

HAMILTON: There were two of us. The consul at first was Peter Flood, I was the vice consul. We did everything. The Cochinchina government operated fairly independently. The Governor General was in Hanoi, but we were responsible for the reporting and other actions as a legation or an embassy would have been. We communicated directly with the Department but sent copies of some things to Paris while the embassy was still there.

Q: *What was the situation in Saigon like in early 1940?*

HAMILTON: It was a pleasant and interesting situation, except that we felt cut off. It was all right up until May 1940 when Paris fell. There was regular steamship travel; a ship called once a week or every ten days en route from France to China and Japan and back. Other ships also called. People weren't worried particularly about anything. So life was good; a few shortages but quite pleasant calm. Then, after the German armistice in June, the French really felt cut off, left high and dry. Admiral Decoux, a Vichy sympathizer, became Governor General and General Catreux left and joined the Free French

Admiral Decoux was given a large measure of authority and was also appointed High Commissioner for all French possessions in the Pacific. He had authority but meager resources, physical contact with France having essentially ceased. Supplies began to be short, so he had to try to develop increased commercial relations with the Philippines and Hong Kong particularly.

Within a month after the fall of France the Japanese began moving into Tonkin, the northern part

of Indochina, in various ways, first with inspectors on the railway running to Yunnanfu in China. There were military clashes in September 1940 at Caobang and Lang Son on the Indochina-Chinese border.

Then the Japanese began making economic demands. They wanted all the rubber and much of the rice, and other things. They promised to pay, but actually all they did was to give vouchers. Generally they needed all their own supplies for themselves and sent little to Indochina.

By the beginning of '41 gasoline was running short. The French began mixing some rice alcohol in with it, and developed what they called gazogenes, an engine able to run on charcoal gas used first in buses and then some cars. Other things began to be scarce, including new movies. Life was more somber than it had been, with fewer balls and parties.

Q: From your observation, how was the French Colonial world? Were Vietnamese integrated into the colonial structure, or were you dealing with the French?

HAMILTON: We dealt with the French almost exclusively. Even in the provinces the top man was always French. Outside of Saigon the French themselves, however, mingled more with the native people than the British tended to do in their colonies. The French also seemed to marry natives more often than the British did. But the French had their schools, their lycee system. There was a university at Hanoi, but the French usually went to universities in France.

A certain amount of unrest developed among the Vietnamese towards the end of 1940. It got rather serious. I don't know who was behind it. There was considerable feeling that the Japanese were. French officials referred to "communist" disturbances. The French arrested a large number of people and put many of them on an island off the coast, Poulo Condore, where they had a penal colony.

Q: Like Devil's Island.

HAMILTON. Yes. Poulo Condore is about 90 miles east of the southern end of Indochina.

Q: Were Vietnamese coming to you as an American representative to let you know how much they resented the French? Were they using this, or were we pretty much a neutral?

HAMILTON: We were pretty neutral. The Vietnamese hardly ever showed up at the consulate, or elsewhere. We had a few Chinese who would come over and whom we knew fairly well -- businessmen, or commercial folks, rice dealers, or something of that sort. But it was rare when a Vietnamese came into the consulate.

Q: What was the major work you were doing then?

HAMILTON: Well, there was no visa work and practically no passport work. Most of the time it was political and economic reporting. There was quite a bit of economic reporting because Indochina was a rich country with a lot of production and export of rice, rubber, metals, and various things of that sort. A lot of political reporting was necessary at that time. It got so heavy

and we were so far from Hanoi, the capital, that the Department sent down Charles Reed from Shanghai primarily to do political reporting in Hanoi. He got a room or two, opened a little office in a hotel, and took over much of the political reporting. Normal consular matters he would usually refer to us in Saigon. People visited him but he did not really operate an office for the public, particularly not for consular services.

Q: When you say political reporting, was this basically about what the Japanese were up to more than anything else?

HAMILTON: Yes, plus the policies and attitudes of the French and problems with Thailand.

Q: What was your attitude, and others with you in the consulate there, towards the French, after the fall of France? The British during 1940 were going through the Battle of Britain and it was a very difficult time, and the Vichy French and the British went in and attacked the French navy in Algeria and in Dakar. I'm not talking about our attitude. I'm talking about your attitude and people around you towards the regime in Saigon at that time as this news came out.

HAMILTON: Personally we were naturally pro-British and Free French. The local government people, of course, could only present one front but not always with much enthusiasm. It was pro-Vichy, and Petain still had the respect of a good many people, even though it turned out he couldn't do much. On the other hand, there was also quite an anti-British feeling. Many felt that the British had let them down. Then there were plenty of the French looking to the U.S., and many were friendly towards it. Others just wanted to wait and see...they were completely taken aback about what had happened, and didn't feel up to much of anything. They were worried about the Japanese coming into the north. Initially they didn't think this would cause problems in the south.

Q: How did that play out?

HAMILTON: Well, the Japanese did come down. From behind the scenes, they had good control of things up north by September 1940, and then gradually worked down to the south. They had control there by August of '41, and began landing troops.

An AP correspondent, Relman Morin, tried to trail around the country to find out where all these Japanese soldiers and equipment were going. You could see that they had largely taken over the Saigon airport. This was the only place in the Saigon area where they constructed barracks and kept troops and planes. They also built or improved airfields and barracks in other parts of Cochinchina and Cambodia, took over other buildings and some homes by working through the French, erected small radio stations, and strung telephone and telegraph lines widely.

In November, the Japanese began following us to see where we were going. You'd see them not far behind when you moved about Saigon or out into the countryside.

Q: Was it still technically French government there?

HAMILTON: Oh, yes.

Q: Were the Japanese calling the shots?

HAMILTON: To a very large extent, yes. When they wanted something they got it. They asked for it, and the French pretty much obliged. Various economic and other agreements were the front for things the Japanese wanted. There was little else the French could do if they wanted to maintain at least nominal control. No help was available from France.

The French were never heavily armed in Indochina. Some 40,000 native troops and workmen had been sent to France after the outbreak of war in Europe, and by the time the Japanese moved into southern Indochina their forces exceeded the French.

Q: What was the general feeling? Why were the Japanese there? Why were they putting troops in?

HAMILTON: Well, that was the question. There was some speculation that they had in mind Malaya, now Malaysia, but nobody knew and that really didn't seem likely. Although things were pointing in that direction, people couldn't believe it. In fact, however, that was what it proved to be all about.

Q: Did we have military attachés down there?

HAMILTON: No. The nearest military attaché was in Bangkok. He came over once, I don't remember just when, for a few days, probably shortly after the fall of France.

Q: This would be June of 1940.

HAMILTON: I think it was soon after. All I remember is that he came for a brief visit. He may have gone on to Hanoi, I'm not sure about that either.

Q: This is before Japan went to war with us, any problems with our operation, outside of being followed a little?

HAMILTON: On the whole, no. On Sunday evening, November 23, 1941, however, the Japanese gendarmerie, which was a military police organization, put a bomb against the door of the consulate (which was in an office/apartment building) and blew the consulate apart.

I had an apartment across a little park, about a block away, so I heard the noise. Our American clerk, who lived a floor or two above was badly scared and shaken up. I went over and saw the office was essentially demolished. A lot of smoke and dust were pouring out the door.

In the morning we got in touch with the French who knew all about it by that time. We were able to get some space in the Bank of Indochina on its top floor. We operated there from November 24th to December 8th, when the Japanese took us into custody and stopped all our operations.

Q: Were the Japanese seen to do this? I mean was this blatant, or was this supposedly done by

Vietnamese terrorists? How did this bomb...

HAMILTON: I know of no witnesses. The French looked into it and told Sidney Browne, the consul, what we all thought, that it was the Japanese gendarmerie who had done it. I don't know how firm the evidence was. We never had any evidence, I don't believe, of any animus among the natives toward us. We thought it quite unlikely that any of them who were operating against the French would have done it. Why the Japanese would have, is hard to say too. It might have tipped their hand. I do not recall that the Department responded to our reports, but it must have even though it would have been very busy.

Q: Yes, by the time it was absorbed the balloon had gone up. In that part of the world it was December 8th when the Pearl Harbor attack came. What happened with you all?

HAMILTON: I guess it was about 2:30 in the morning in Saigon that low flying planes awakened me, and soon a Japanese squad (a lieutenant, an interpreter, and several men with fixed bayonets) pounded on my apartment door, and said, "Open up." When I opened up they handed me a mimeographed statement from the Headquarters of the Nippon Army that said we were at war and that I had to stay there until further word.

They did the same with Sidney Browne and the British, although they missed one of the British vice consuls. We were all kept in our quarters until arrangements were made.

The British owned a large residence for their Consul General. The U.S. didn't own any property, and I don't know just how it was arranged that we would all be put into the British residence. But after three or four days later we were moved over there, with our servants and a radio. The AP correspondent, Relman Morin, was also brought in, as well as the head of the British and American Tobacco Company office.

Q: What did you do? What were you up to?

HAMILTON: We weren't up to anything. The British Consul General and Sidney Browne negotiated a little bit with the Japanese who said they would put a couple of guards in the front of the house, and they would not go into the rest of the house at all. So our guards sat there in a small room and we organized ways of passing the time; some reading, some writing, listening to the news which wasn't very encouraging, and often bridge in the evening (which is how I learned to play the game).

Q: The first six months particularly.

HAMILTON: One bad military situation after another. But the servants were allowed to go out marketing every day, so we had a good food supply. They could also do the laundry regularly. There were shortages, of course, which affected everyone.

The residence had a fairly large grounds so we could get out and exercise every day. We made a deck tennis court and a miniature golf course.

It was somewhat monotonous, but not too bad a life. You had no responsibilities, nothing you had to do. The AP man, of course, was accustomed to being on the go all the time; so found it very restricting. The rest of us didn't find it quite so bad in that respect. We got along all right together for the most part.

Q: How big was the Consulate General, or was it a Consulate?

HAMILTON: For the British it was a Consulate General.

Q: For us it was a Consulate. How big was the American staff?

HAMILTON: Americans, just the two of us (officers) and an American clerk.

Q: So the two of you and the American clerk was a woman. She was also interned too?

HAMILTON: No, she wasn't. She had to check into the police once a week, but stayed in her apartment. I don't know that it was particularly agreeable, especially going out. People couldn't be too friendly with her. But anyhow, she was on her own. The whole staff of the Consulate was still very small. We had a French clerk, a lady, who kept the accounts, and acted as an administrative officer; an Indian clerk who helped handle the mail room, helped gather data for some reports, and a few other things; a janitor/messenger. That was it.

Q: How did this play out? You could hear the news, they didn't take your radio away.

HAMILTON: No, we always had a radio. In fact we had a couple. Well, the Swiss consul was finally put in charge of American interests and became the contact between the Department, the Japanese, and ourselves. I don't know just when that occurred, but it was a while before he was able to get over to see us. Even then what he could say was restricted since the Japanese listened in. He was the outside contact and if we needed money or anything else, we had to get it through him. He could arrange for us to go to a dentist, or a doctor if necessary, accompanied by a guard, which we had to do a few times. All the information regarding the exchange arrangement that came along ultimately, came through him.

Q: But how did it play out? I mean, how did they get you out? How did you leave?

HAMILTON: Well, the Japanese finally started two exchange ships, the Asama Maru in Yokohama and the Conte Verde in Shanghai. Passengers were mainly diplomatic personnel, but also many missionaries and some newspaper correspondents. The Asama Maru stopped at Hong Kong before reaching Saigon on July 3rd when we were put aboard. On July 4th we went back down the Saigon River to Cap St. Jacques where those who had been brought over from the Bangkok Legation also boarded. We then went on to Singapore to meet the Conte Verde with its passengers.

Q: This would be 1942.

HAMILTON: Yes. We couldn't go ashore and didn't dock in Singapore, but anchored out in the

harbor for a day or two, on one of which the Japanese gave a military air display. From Singapore the ship was all lit up and marked. We were routed south through the Sunda Straits, and across the Indian Ocean into Lourenco Marques in Portuguese East Africa, or Mozambique, on July 23rd. We were saluted by sirens, streams of water and cheers from the many ships in the harbor.

The Japanese diplomats from the U.S. had arrived on the Gripsholm the day before and the exchange was made the following day. They left fairly promptly but it was about a week before the Gripsholm was ready to start back. Then it was still a long way around Cape Horn, over to Rio, and then up to New York, staying out of regular shipping lanes as much as possible. We finally sailed into New York harbor past the Statue of Liberty on August 25th.

Q: What did they do with you? Here you were obviously waiting for another assignment, but we were well into the war by this time. What happened?

HAMILTON: Well, when I got back here I resigned from the Department and found that although I was hardly an expert on Indochina, most people in Washington were less so. So I started spending half my week on Indochina with what was first the Board of Economic Warfare and then the Foreign Economic Administration, and the other half working also on Indochina in the Pentagon with G-2. Sometime in '44, I went back to the Department as desk officer for the Dominions except Canada in the Division of British Commonwealth Affairs. Soon after the UN conference in San Francisco in 1945 I became an assistant to the Under Secretary of State for Economic Affairs and later moved on to President Truman's Point-4 Program.

Q: I think with people who were fired when Stassen came in, the term was they were Stassenated. This interview covers the time particularly I wanted to pick up about Saigon which I found very, very interesting. I served in Saigon much later in '69-'70, and it was quite a different ball game. This was to give you an idea. I was Consul General in Saigon and I ranked just in the upper half of the diplomatic list. I don't think I talked to the ambassador more than once or twice. It was a huge embassy.

HAMILTON: The only other thing I mentioned in that letter I wrote you was fighting between Thailand and Indochina.

As indicated earlier today, the Japanese had established their control of Tonkin by September 1940. In November, military skirmishing broke out between Thai and French frontier forces on the Cambodian border, soon reaching the scale of undeclared war. The apparent immediate source of the situation was a Thai demand, which the French refused, for an adjustment of the frontier, particularly with regard to some islands in the Mekong River. Many people saw a connection between this development and the arrival of the Japanese in Indochina.

Any remaining French reserves were called up and put on the fighting line. At least in southern Indochina, the principal cities were blacked out at night and there was some air activity. Civilians were evacuated from some border towns and the inhabitants of the picturesque Burmese precious stone mining village of Pailin, just within Cambodia, abandoned their homes to return to Burma. It was still deserted when I visited the area in March 1941.

After about two months of relatively heavy military activity between the French and Thai forces in which the Thais were gaining, the Japanese Government offered to mediate. They called a conference aboard a Japanese cruiser at Saigon where an armistice was signed on January 28, 1941.

Under the final peace agreement signed in Tokyo on March 11, 1941 the French ceded to Thailand about one-tenth of the total area of Indochina. This was mostly in Cambodia, and included its richest province of Battambang but excluded the ancient Angkor ruins. I believe Thailand had to give up this territory at the end of World War II.

It was in the midst of the hostilities with Thailand that the internal native disturbances that I mentioned earlier occurred in parts of Cochinchina and to some extent in Tonkin. Their rather severe suppression and sending some of those rounded up to the Poulo Condore penal colony undoubtedly had a correspondingly unfortunate attitude and temper of many Vietnamese.

Q: I think you're adding some interesting areas that aren't covered; the Thais fighting essentially the French to take over part of Indochina, and also what happened to our Consulate in Saigon. Just to be clear, up in Hanoi, we had a Consulate General up there.

HAMILTON: Well, all we had was the political officer, Charles S. Reed, who was sent down from Shanghai, plus an American clerk, Iris Johnston. I don't think the British had anybody up there. The Japanese moved Mr. Reed around a good deal under harsher conditions than ours in Saigon. Then on June 18 he was brought to join us.

Mr. Reed had not really operated an office for the public. He was there to report and have direct contact with Admiral Decoux's office. This caused some problems for Miss Johnston. She was at liberty until January 29, 1942, but then the Japanese held her in solitary custody for two months during which she was severely questioned in an apparent effort to learn about Mr. Reed's sources of information. She was then allowed to go to the mountain resort of Da Lat in Annam because of her health, and was brought to join the rest of us in Saigon a few days before the Asama Maru's departure.

1. Outbreak of the War:

The Department has been informed of developments through December 6, 1941. On the morning of December 7 the Japanese military authorities completely closed off the Saigon airport which had hitherto been partially accessible to the public. By the same afternoon very few Japanese vessels were left in port. Between 2:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m. December 8 a large formation of Japanese planes flew over the city. Later that morning the inhabitants of the city awoke to find notices posted in French, Chinese, and Annamite indicating that war had broken out between Japan and the United States.

2. Treatment of Consular Officers:

All consular officers, with the exception of a British Vice Consul, were roused from their beds

and placed under custody by the Japanese military authorities about 3:00 a.m. December 8. In Saigon they were presented a mimeographed sheet giving the reasons for this action and outlining the conditions of the treatment to be expected. The American Consul had some slight contact with two French policemen stationed before his residence, but was soon cautioned not to speak to them. The American Vice Consul never saw any French official. The acting British Consul General was able to deal through a French liaison officer for about a day. When one of the British Vice Consuls reported to the acting Consul General at his residence about 9:00 a.m. December 8, he was taken into custody.

American consular officers were taken to the temporary quarters of the Consulate for a few minutes on the morning of December 8 while the office was given a preliminary search, their living quarters having been previously searched.

The two American consular officers in Saigon were held in their respective residences until December 11 when they were removed to the British consular residence. Here they remained quite comfortably until July 3, 1942 when they boarded the M.S. ASAMA MARU.

The American Consul in Hanoi was held for a time alone in a room of a building not far from the Hotel Metropole where he had resided. Later he was moved to a house furnished for him by the French Government General but where he was still under Japanese guard. Still later he was removed to the premises of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company in Haiphong; from there to a Japanese military camp on the outskirts of Haiphong; and from there to a private house in Haiphong. He received much harsher treatment than the officers in Saigon. Much of the time he was alone; the rest of the time the British Reuters correspondent was with him. On June 18, 1942 he was also transferred to the British consular residence in Saigon.

The British consular officer in Haiphong was at first confined with his family above the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, but was soon removed to a small private house where he has remained with other British subjects in Haiphong. The men have been obliged to remain within the premises, but the women have been free to go into the city during the day. The French wife of one of the men actually boards with her family.

3. Treatment of American Consular Personnel Other Than Officers.

In Saigon American clerk Miss Carolyn C. Jacobs was not molested. She lived normally in her apartment and reported once weekly to the French police.

In Hanoi American Clerk Miss Iris Johnston was at liberty until January 29. She was then held in solitary custody for about two months when she was allowed to proceed to the hill station of Da Lat in southern Annam for reasons of health. She was subjected to severe questioning apparently with the primary object of obtaining information regarding the sources of information used by Consul Charles S. Reed II.

Other employees of the Consulate in Saigon have not been hampered in their movements. French Clerk Mme. Petra has been re-employed by the Swiss Consul, but other employees are finding it difficult to obtain new positions.

4. Treatment of Other American and British Nationals:

With the following exceptions American and British nationals in Southern Indochina have been at liberty and obliged merely to report to the French police once weekly. They have had to abandon commercial activity but have been able to carry on missionary work.

The exceptions are: (1) The American correspondent of the Associated Press was taken into custody on December 12 and brought to the British consular residence on December 13 to remain until July 3; (2) The British manager of the French Manufactures Indochinoises des Cigarettes, an employee of the British and American Tobacco Company, was held with the American Consul from the first; (3) All officers of the British banks in Saigon were held from December 8 to December 31; (4) The Canadian representative of the Singer Sewing Machine Company was held in jail under harsh treatment for 59 days from January 29; (5) A British accountant of the Standard Vacuum Oil Company was similarly held for about 68 days; (6) A British employee of the firm until recently known as Dreyfus and Cie. was similarly held; (7) A Filipino no longer entitled to the protection of the United States while abroad was held for a month and then turned over to the French on a charge of illegal possession of firearms. The object of the treatment given the three British subjects, as well as one Dutch subject not mentioned above, was to obtain information regarding the affairs of their firms and to break their spirit so that they would consent to work for the Japanese as one or two are now reported to be doing.

In northern Indochina the treatment given American and British nationals differed only in the fact that men have not been at liberty at all while women have been able to go shopping, et cetera during the day. A naturalized Philippine citizen of Swiss-American origin by the name of Corvissiano was picked up by the Japanese on January 29 and apparently held in much the same manner as those taken into custody in southern Indochina at that time. The British Reuters correspondent has been held from the first, part of the time alone, part of the time with the American Consul, and latterly with the other British in Haiphong.

5. Treatment of Chinese:

The Chinese Consul at Saigon, who had remained closely sheltered in a villa at the hill station of Da Lat for some time prior to the outbreak of war, is reported so far to have eluded the Japanese together with his subordinate officers. However, it is not positively known whether he managed to escape the country and, accordingly, the Japanese are holding three of the local clerks in jail until they give information regarding the consul's whereabouts. The treatment given these men is so severe that it is not believed they can long survive.

Other Chinese in Cholon (Saigon) are also harshly treated. They are picked up indiscriminately, imprisoned, and tortured until they consent to report weekly on anti-Japanese activities.

6. Treatment of Consular Establishments:

The American Consul in Saigon refused to open the consular safes, but on December 12 or 13

the Japanese Gendarmerie delivered to the consular officers their personal belongings which had been in the safes. Evidently the safes were forced open and the Japanese obtained the Brown and Grey codes, readings and copies of all telegrams, blank passports, and all confidential matter.

The Japanese always pretended to know nothing of any other regular office of the Consulate. Accordingly, the only other archives which they seem to have obtained were the current files. All other archives and most of the furniture were still in the office damaged by the bomb explosion on November 23. The Consulate's French clerk, Mme. Paulette Petra, managed to remove these to her home in the first day or two following the outbreak of war and is believed still to have them in her possession.

The Japanese also obtained consular files in Hanoi. The safe has been returned to the Swiss consular agent in Haiphong, but is believed to have been previously opened.

The British Consulate General in Saigon was taken over by the Japanese naval rather than military authorities. British officers have never been taken back to the office and do not know what action has been taken with regard to it. Since the British Vice Consul in Haiphong is an employee of the Chartered Bank, it is presumed that any documents he had were taken over with those of the bank.

7. Political and Military Developments:

A further Franco-Japanese agreement was signed on December 9, 1941, but its contents are not known. Somewhat later the Vichy Government appointed Governor General Jean Decoux as High Commissioner for all French possessions in the Pacific.

It is reliably reported that the French cruiser Lamotte Picquet has remained continually in French waters. The sloop Amiral Charner has probably so remained. Nothing is known regarding the movements of the single French submarine which was in Indochina and under repair on December 8 except that it has been repaired and was in Saigon on July 3.

It is reliably reported that much of the Japanese air offensive against the Allies in the early weeks of the Pacific war was directed from Indochina. The planes which bombed Manila are understood to have left from Nha Trang just north of Camranh Bay in Annam and those which bombed Singapore from Baclieu and Soctrang just south of the mouth of the Mekong in Cochinchina. In the early days of the war damaged planes were frequently seen to return to these points, often to crash before landing.

Most of the active planes have now left the Saigon area for unknown destinations, but there is every reason to believe that Saigon itself is being used as a repair base not only for planes but also for trucks and other mechanized equipment. It is definitely known, for instance, that the foundry belonging to the French firm of Faci (Forges, Ateliers, Chartiers Indochinois) and located about 300 yards up the Arroyo Chinois from the Saigon River is straightening propeller blades for the Japanese.

The Japanese have completed the 60 kilometers of railway between Mongkol Borey in the

province of Battambang, formerly in Cambodia, and the Thai city of Muong Aran Pradhet thus linking Phnom Penh with Singapore by rail. They are now reported to be bringing their supplies and troops down the Chinese coast by vessel and through the channel between Hainan Island and the mainland to Haiphong. From Haiphong transportation is by rail to Saigon, by truck from Saigon to Phnom Penh, and by rail from Phnom Penh to points beyond in Thailand or Malaya. Thus the hazardous voyage down the Indochinese coast and across the Gulf of Siam is avoided.

It is probably because of this increased traffic that express shipments have been suspended on the Saigon-Hanoi-Haiphong railroad. The extra wear on equipment which cannot be replaced is also probably responsible for the increased number of wrecks which are occurring on the Indochinese railways.

It was reported on July 3 that the Japanese plan to move most of their troops from Indochina to other fronts, leaving only a police force of about 6,000 men. This would ameliorate conditions for the French considerably, but would not necessarily affect the transit of supplies through Indochina. Accordingly, the railway, which is extremely vulnerable at several points, particularly where it runs with the highway, would remain a worthwhile bombing objective. (1)

A Canadian artillery unit of about 1,000 men from Singapore, as well as Australian and Indian troops, has been in Saigon for some time as prisoners of war. The men are employed on the docks, in general throughout the port area, and at the airport. Their quarters except those of the Indians are in the port area about 200 yards from the river. Six have died; two have tried to escape -- with what results is not known. Their food is believed to be poor. A considerable group outside is working secretly to ameliorate their conditions. In this the Annamites took the initiative under the leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Tranh van Doc, 16 Boulevard de la Somme, Saigon, but there are also French working through several men in the Surete and Mme. Gaillard, the Vogue Dress Shop, Rue Catinat, Saigon. The Indians are quartered at Nhabe on the Soirap River 15 kilometers south of Saigon.

Practically all French merchant shipping has been taken over by the Japanese and now flies the Japanese flag. Most of the vessels have left Saigon and some are reported to have been damaged already. Efforts are being made by the Government General to locate the 850 men from their crews in shore positions in Indochina.

Allied submarines appear to be effective off the Indochinese coast, for the French now consider Saigon a dangerous port from which to sail.

The Allied bombings of the Hanoi airport are reported to have done considerable damage in spite of the offhand manner in which they were treated by the French press. At least one American pilot by the name of Bishop from California is now interned at Saigon.

Japanese participation in the administrative affairs of Indochina has increased since the beginning of the war. They censor the postal and telegraph services, using a French stamp, and listen to telephone conversations. On one occasion they even arrested the Director of Posts and Telegraphs and held him a few hours because one of his subordinates had interfered with one of their own telegraph lines. Later the director was replaced.

The Japanese seem particularly anxious to take over the administration of justice. To prevent their having any excuse for doing so the French are becoming increasingly severe in law enforcement, generally convicting and inflicting heavy penalties, particularly on Europeans.

There is good reason to believe that the Japanese are compiling evidence for a "White Book" or some such document to be issued in justification of their action when they are ready openly to take over the administration of Indochina. The basis of this book is apparently to be an exposure of French morals; for, in the questioning to which they have subjected many persons this has been one of the principal points on which they have endeavored to obtain statements.

It also appears that the Japanese may be trying to gain influence with certain sections of the population by selling them drugs in much the same manner they adopted in North China. The French opium monopoly is short of opium and the Japanese have brought some heroin and cocaine into the country. The French are reported to have increased the area devoted to poppy cultivation in Laos, but the crop is not yet ready. In this connection it is also reliably reported that opium smoking has increased greatly in Hanoi since the outbreak of war, particularly among the women who have lost hope of returning to France.

8. Economic Developments

Economic conditions in French Indochina have steadily deteriorated since December 8, 1941. Business activity is negligible. Supplies of all imported products are extremely low or have already been exhausted. What remains is generally strictly rationed. Wheat flour was exhausted within a few weeks after the outbreak of war; butter and margarine can no longer be purchased except occasionally on the black market; potatoes are a rarity; medical supplies are very low; wines are exhausted and liquors practically so; chemicals for the manufacture of matches are deficient; lubricating oils have to be cleaned and re-cleaned because fresh oil is lacking; iron and steel for construction purposes can scarcely be had; and machinery is not obtainable. Even supplies of some domestic products such as fruit, charcoal, fish, and vegetables are inadequate, primarily because they are bought up by the Japanese. Milk supplies are exceedingly low. What canned milk remains is reserved solely for infants and the sick. All fresh milk in the Saigon area is now being pasteurized for the same purposes, but it is doubtful whether it will be adequate for the need.

Although the Government General endeavors to prevent profiteering and to control prices, it does not try to maintain prices at any given point. Accordingly, both prices and the cost of living have greatly increased since December 8, 1941.

The Government General has also intensified its efforts, begun some time ago, to encourage the development of substitutes for deficient commodities. Thus, a relatively satisfactory flour is now made from a mixture of 70 percent rice and 30 percent maize flour. The production of oil from peanuts, castor beans, coconuts, fish, and millions of rats caught in the rice fields has greatly increased and is used for illumination, other household purposes, and industrial fuel. Soya bean milk, certain toilet articles such as powder, and food side-lines such as jams and jellies and some alcoholic beverages are also being produced. The production of industrial alcohol, principally

from rice, for motor fuel has been further increased, but it is now being mixed with 10 percent water according to the Swiss Consul in Saigon. This has probably become necessary because the Japanese are known to be using alcohol and charcoal in some of their trucks.

The Government General has also established an agricultural credit society organized on a sectional basis to foster the production of various crops in different regions throughout the country, to lend money for this purpose, and to purchase the resulting output.

Even fewer supplies than before the war are arriving from Japan, although the higher prices keep goods in the stores longer. Some shipments reported to have left Japan have never arrived, and one cargo of milk is said definitely to have been sunk.

The 1941-1942 rice crop is reported to have been good and the maize crop poor. Further details are not available, but a good rice crop is one which would provide about 1.5 million tons for export after domestic consumption had been provided for in all the territory formerly belonging to Indochina. Without the Cambodian province of Battambang ceded to Thailand in 1941 a good exportable surplus would be about 150,000 tons less. All rice exports are going to Japan, or Japanese occupied areas. It seems probable that much of it goes by rail to Haiphong and only from there by the empty vessels which have brought military supplies.

It is understood that most of the rubber is being stored for the time being.

The financial position of the Government General of Indochina probably deteriorated further during the first seven months of the war, but may not be as bad as might at first be supposed. On the one hand charges incurred on behalf of the Japanese army continued; revenue from import and export duties was low and, as from July 1, the Government General assumed the payment to landlords of the rent due on premises which had been requisitioned and which continue to be requisitioned for the Japanese and on which the Japanese seldom pay more than a month's rent. On the other hand large sums of money normally sent to France, particularly by business firms, have remained in Indochina; payments due abroad for imports are negligible; and taxes have been increased either through raising the rates, lowering the exemptions, or both.

9. Axis Propaganda:

Two types of propaganda are being conducted in Indochina; the Japanese in favor of themselves and co-property for all Asiatics in a greater Asia, and the French in behalf of French administration in general and the Vichy government in particular.

The Japanese propaganda consists principally in showing Japanese motion pictures, news reels of the war, and educational films; staging exhibitions of Japanese art, particularly painting; bringing dramatic and other artists from Japan; distributing pamphlets and other literature; and publishing a large illustrated weekly newspaper. The Japanese also allow nothing derogatory of themselves or especially favorable to the Allies to appear in the French or vernacular press or to go over the radio. The French press, in fact, features Domei despatches and for the most part prints its selected Allied despatches in the final page. It is doubtful whether this Japanese propaganda is effective.

French propaganda features motion picture films and the publication in various forms of material on the achievements of France in Indochina. A fair which served this purpose was held in Hanoi in December 1941 and another is to be held in Saigon in December of this year. Every effort is being made to make the natives believe that the French still control the country, while social and other functions are staged to convince the natives of the French interest in them and of the cordial relations which have existed between the two peoples.

French propaganda is directed both towards the natives and toward the French and, in accordance with the Nazi-Vichy stress on youth, special emphasis is being laid on youth organizations and the value of sports for both the French and native young people. Numerous youth demonstrations and sporting spectacles have been staged. Summer camps are being developed, a youth code has been drawn up, uniforms designed, and the responsibilities of youth stressed. The immediate response to this type of propaganda is strong, particularly among the natives who love spectacles, but how effective it will actually prove to be cannot yet be told.

Pictures, posters, quotations from, and laudatory statements regarding Marshal Petain are to be found everywhere. The French Legion, composed principally of small business men, clerks, mechanics, and low salaried government employees, is striving ever harder to set itself up as the leader of French life and chief interpreter of the Vichy code. The press and radio are extremely critical of the democracies and frequently violently anti-Ally, yet they seldom are positively pro-Axis.

It is doubtful whether French propaganda has been very effective except in its anti-British aspects, which have featured it since June 1940, and in the immediate response to its youth program.

10. Attitude of the French and Annamites:

So far as is known the Government General never made any attempt, at least in southern Indochina, to assist or communicate with American consular officers after the outbreak of war, although on March 23 the Japanese Consul called because, he said, the Governor General wished information regarding the welfare of consular officers and the conditions of their internment.

There were always two policemen, usually Annamite, stationed opposite the house in which the consular officers were interned, but their object appeared to be more to note those who made friendly signs to the internees or attempted to communicate with them than to guard them in any way. On one occasion in particular the Consulate's French clerk, Mme. Petra, came to the fence, and the next day, when she was out, the French police questioned her two young daughters in an effort to ascertain why she had called.

In this connection there is now reported to be an extensive Gestapo organization in Indochina particularly designed to detect those who express pro-Allied sentiments. Persons have on occasion been reported by their servants, and even in small private gatherings people are extremely careful in expressing opinions. In the early days of the war friends of British and American citizens were generally careful not to show undue friendliness or interest in their fate

for fear of the possible consequences and, since that time, the French authorities have let it be known that it was not advisable to be seen in the vicinity of the British consular residence.

Nevertheless, British and American consular officers never observed any signs of hostility among the many persons who passed the house daily, nor on the several occasions when sporting or other events brought considerable crowds before the house. A competent observer who had had an opportunity to question many people since the outbreak of war has reached the conclusion that the French in Indochina may be divided into four groups: (1) 20 percent who are totally pro-Ally, (2) 20 percent who are pro-American but anti-British, (3) 20 percent who are totally indifferent as long as their own immediate welfare is not in question, and (4) 40 percent who are pro-Pétain and the majority of whom are wholly pro-Axis. The pro-Ally group is predominantly commercial and the pro-Axis group predominantly governmental.

The majority of the native population is undoubtedly indifferent to the political aspects of the present struggle. Nevertheless, there is an appreciable group of upper class Annamites, particularly those who had relatives working for British or American interests -- some of whom have been interned by the Japanese because of "disloyalty" -- which is strongly anti-Japanese. There is also a lower class group which is anti-Japanese because the Japanese have made it difficult for them to obtain their normal articles of food and because the Japanese treat hired labor harshly and pay poorly.

(1) In this connection the following data is given regarding the most vulnerable points on the railway and highway between Haiphong and Saigon, proceeding from Haiphong to Hanoi and south to Saigon: leaving Haiphong there is one railway bridge and one small highway bridge. About 15 kilometers east of Haiphong, there is an important combined railway and highway bridge. Entering Hanoi there is an important railway and highway bridge which is 1.7 kilometers long. South of Hanoi there is a small but important railway and highway bridge 6 kilometers north of Thanh-Hoa. Immediately south of Vinh (at Benthuy) there is a large railway bridge where road traffic uses a ferry. A few kilometers south of Dong Hoi there is a railway bridge where road traffic again uses a ferry. Just north of Quang Tri there is an important railway and highway bridge. At Hue there is a railway bridge slightly west of the city and a highway bridge in it. At the Col des Nuages about 65 kilometers south of Hue the railway and highway run together along the cliffs, the railway under the highway in about three tunnels. At Quang Ngai there is one railway and one highway bridge. At Cap Varella the railway and highway run along the cliffs, the railway below the highway in the Baxbonneau tunnel. This is perhaps the most vulnerable spot in the whole line, since repair would probably be the most troublesome. It was the last section of the railway to be built and caused the French the greatest difficulty. One and a half kilometers south of Tyhoa and 128.5 kilometers north of Nha Trang a steel railway bridge runs close beside a concrete highway bridge. Each has long spans and both would be vulnerable to a single powerful bomb. Between Bien Hoa and Saigon about 5 kilometers south of Bien Hoa are two important combined railway and highway bridges about half a mile apart.

On the highway between Saigon and Phnom Penh there is one concrete bridge about 120 meters long about 85 kilometers west of Saigon and another similar bridge about five kilometers east of

Phnom Penh.

Other possible bombing objectives outside of Haiphong, Hanoi, and Saigon are: a distillery 10 kilometers south of Hanoi on the Mandarin Road to Nam Dinh; a distillery near the railway and highway bridge at Than Hoa, and the railroad yards at Vinh which is more important than Saigon as a repair center.

ALBERT STOFFEL
Vice Consul
Saigon (1946-1948)

Albert Stoffel was raised in Rochester, New York. He graduated from the University of Rochester in 1938 with a degree in economics. In 1941, he entered the Royal Air Force Civilian Technical Corps in England. After several months there, he decided to return to the U.S. and join the Air Force as an aviation cadet. While in the service, he decided to take the Foreign Service Exam. He has also served in Canada, Germany, and France. He was interviewed by Thomas Dunnigan on May 9, 1994.

Q: Very interesting, because I don't think there are many of our colleagues who had the experience you did, with the RAF, before the war.

Now your first assignment in the Foreign Service was to Saigon, in French Indochina. A city which has become famous since that time. Can you describe what Saigon was like physically when you arrived there in early 1947.

STOFFEL: As you perhaps know, Saigon had been known as the Paris of the East, before World War II. It still had elements of that atmosphere after World War II. The living was good, the social life was active, the French were in reasonable control. It was fairly typical, I think, of certain Foreign Service posts at that time.

I was the second Foreign Service Officer to arrive in Saigon after World War II. My chief was Charles S. Reed, an old-time Foreign Service Officer, in every sense of the word. He did the political work and I did the economic work. That sort of set my career throughout the Foreign Service. I was either on the economic side or, eventually, involved in aviation diplomacy.

Q: Was Saigon at that time a Consulate General? Or was that under Embassy Paris in any way?

STOFFEL: We were a Consulate General of a French colony. However, I don't recall that we had any direct connection with our Paris embassy. We did get guidance from the office of Southeast Asian Affairs in State.

Q: At that time, was there not a consulate in Hanoi?

STOFFEL: Yes.

Q: Did you have links with them?

STOFFEL: To a degree, yes. But because of the poor connections between the two places, we didn't travel there. There were occasional courier runs.

Q: Were the French suspicious of our motives at that time in Indochina?

STOFFEL: They were. For example, later, when I'd been transferred to Paris in 1955 I discovered that two Americans, myself and Laurie Gordon, an oil company director in Saigon, who had earlier served with the OSS in Southern China and Northern Vietnam, had been named in, I believe it was, the National Assembly as spies. The suspicious work that I was doing, according to this allegation, was preparing World Trade Directory Reports for the Department of Commerce.

Q: Very suspicious work I would say.

Did we have any line to the Viet Minh at the time?

STOFFEL: One month after I arrived Mr. Reed went on leave and left me in-charge. At that point, within the first or second day that I was in-charge, a representative, who purported to be from Ho Chi Minh, came to the consulate to talk about Ho Chi Minh's political intentions. Cooperation with the French, of course, had already broken down on December 19, 1946. Next he would go to the Americans. Finally, only reluctantly, according to this story, would he go to the Soviets for support.

Q: Was there any confidence among the people, in the Consulate General, that the French could suppress the revolt?

STOFFEL: At that point yes. Security was fairly good in Saigon. Beyond the city proper there was a lot of unrest. We lived on the edge of the city. Every night my wife and I would play cards with a loaded 38 caliber pistol lying between us, because there was no protection from hand grenades or shots through the barred windows. When bullets would start coming through the garden, we would then raise a large American flag on the front porch. However, we never had to use our gun and we got fairly used to the sporadic shooting.

On one occasion coming home from dinner, as we turned a corner in my convertible Peugeot with the top down, something hit the car right under my left elbow. It turned out to be a poor quality hand grenade that didn't explode, fortunately, until it hit the ground and only put two small holes in the car. I just took off, not waiting to see what might follow.

Q: I can understand. Do you have any unusual experiences in your line of work there?

STOFFEL: Yes. Shortly after my arrival, we got a report that an American airplane had been

found in Saigon harbor, in connection of the clearing of wrecks from that harbor. I was designated by the Consul General to go out in a small native canoe with a native diver and see what he would bring up.

He started out by bringing up 2 skulls, other bones and eventually 2 dogtags and a silk map of the area (which our military fliers carried at that time) to aid escape. We also recovered some other items from the cockpit of what turned out to be a U.S. navy TBM, a dive bomber, that apparently had been shot down about 2 years earlier before while strafing ships in the harbor.

At that time the consulate didn't have any funds for this purpose, so I had to pay for the diver and for the removal of the airplane. Sometime later, a U.S. Navy grave registration team arrived. They laid out the bones on the floor of my office and showed me that I, in effect, had 3 skeletons. They also reimbursed me for these funds. Letters from two of the families thanked me for personal items and especially for the fact that the relatives now knew that their loved ones had, at least, not suffered capture or a lingering death.

OSCAR VANCE ARMSTRONG
Chinese Language Officer
Saigon (1950)

Oscar Vance Armstrong was born in China of American parents. He entered the Foreign Service in 1946 and initially served in China. He had a short tour in Vietnam in 1950. A Chinese language specialist, his career was mainly in Asia. He was interviewed in 1991 by Willis Armstrong.

ARMSTRONG: I came back on home leave and then had a temporary assignment to Saigon. They wanted a Chinese language officer and the person who was assigned there wasn't going to arrive for some months so I had about four months in Saigon. This was back, of course, during the French involvement.

Q: Still French territory. This was a consulate.

ARMSTRONG: No. It became...I am not sure I am going to get my chronology right...we had an ambassador there, Ambassador Heath.

Q: I guess that was about when Vietnam had been set up, about 1950.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, this was 1950. That is about right. So I had about four months there.

Q: What was your impression of Saigon in those days?

ARMSTRONG: In Saigon, itself, it was not like Saigon of the late '60s and early '70s during our time there, because life went on fairly normally. There were limitations of travel. I did get up to Hanoi, but I did it by air, not by road. This was still some years away from Dienbienphu.

Q: Dienbienphu was 1954. So this was before the French power had really been broken.

ARMSTRONG: Yes, that is right. The French presence was still very strong. I was there for a sort of China watch. Watching the Chinese population, etc. There was also a large contingent of Chinese Nationalist soldiers that had retreated there and been interned there. My main contact with local officialdom was with the French civilian officer who was their man dealing with Chinese affairs.

Q: Basically an intelligence operation.

ARMSTRONG: Not intelligence in the normal sense. It was one more of trying to figure out the mood of the Chinese population and what their role was in Vietnam, etc. I wasn't there long enough to become very knowledgeable about the situation.

JOHN F. MELBY
City Unspecified, Vietnam (1950)

John F. Melby was born in Iowa in 1913. He joined the Foreign Service in 1937 and served in Mexico, Venezuela, the Soviet Union, China, and Washington, DC. A victim of McCarthyism, he left the Service in 1953. He was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1989.

Q: I inadvertently forgot to ask Mr. Melby some questions about an important phase in his later times with the State Department. Mr. Melby, we didn't cover a trip you made to Vietnam. Could you tell when and what were the circumstances?

MELBY: Well, the French had been asking for military assistance, as they always were. And the government had been sort of stand-offish on the question of whether we should get involved. This was 1949. And even before then, we had an OSS mission in there with Ho Chi Minh, which was very close to him. And they were bringing out a lot of good information, as well as they were actually helping Ho Chi Minh in the war against Japan.

But even so, as soon as the war was over, the anti-communist forces in Washington started mustering strength. The whole bit with Ho Chi Minh came to nothing in the end. The mission was withdrawn. And we sort of were taking a position of supporting Bao Dai as the emperor, but not really getting involved. And General Marshall, the Secretary of State, didn't much want to be involved either. However, there came the development as to whether we -- when we got formal requests for aid for Indochina -- because it wasn't Vietnam then. There was a split in the Department between the Bureau for Far Eastern Affairs and Bureau for European Affairs. Europe, of course, wanted to give the French anything they wanted. And the Far East was adamantly opposed to becoming involved at all. After all, we were still smarting from the whole China debacle, where we knew we had a lot of lessons to learn. It was pretty uncertain whether we had to learn, really, most of them. Any of them!

So we just simply were not prepared to become involved in Vietnam, to which was added the fact that there was no Vietnamese experience in the Department. There was nobody who spoke Vietnamese. In fact, in the United States there was nobody who knew any Vietnamese. Of course, that would change over the years. But at this time, we literally didn't know what we would be getting into. But this didn't seem to bother Europe. You didn't have to know anything about Asia.

Q: When you say, "This didn't bother Europe," these were the people who were in the EUR Bureau. In the Department of State.

MELBY: Yes. That's right. After all, if you knew France and French, that was enough. You didn't have to bother knowing anything about Asia. After all, they were the lesser breed without the pale, you know.

Well, the squabbling finally reached the Secretary, who took the matter to the President for a decision. And as was usually the case in those days, FE lost. And Mr. Truman signed an executive order saying that the United States was prepared to aid the French in their war against the Viet Minh -- it wasn't the Viet Cong then; it was the Viet Minh -- and he instructed the Department to put together a joint State-Defense military mission to go out there. Survey the situation, make recommendations as to the specific kinds of military aid that the French wanted and needed in that area.

In the end, I drew the assignment. I was pretty junior at this time. But, partly I got it, I guess, because of my China experience. They thought that might be helpful in analyzing what was going on in Vietnam. Partly it was that nobody who outranked me wanted to go at all, anyway. So that I went out as the chief of mission and my deputy was a lieutenant general of Marines. He was Bobby Erskine, which posed a few protocol problems in the beginning. Because the pentagon took a very dim view of a Foreign Service officer of my rank. I was class 3 at this time.

Q: Equivalent of a colonel.

MELBY: After I came back from there, I was promoted to class 2. I went up very fast in the Service, as a matter of fact.

We put together this mission. And I realized that -- when we started right out as we left from San Diego -- that I was going to have to have it out with the general and reach some sort of understanding. So we withdrew to our private compartment up front on the plane. We had our own plane. And Bobby and I battled it out and reached an understanding, and from then on, there was absolutely no problem. He and I became great friends and colleagues. Even in the troubled times, Erskine came to my support when I was having security problems. So the mission, from that standpoint, was a great success. It worked very well. When we arrived out there, it was ostensibly a military mission to Southeast Asia, but the real point was Vietnam. Let's face it, the whole thing was a cover. And we actually did go to every country in Southeast Asia, except Burma, which wouldn't let us in.

And, the job on the working level, I had a staff of about 20 officers with me, plus a couple from ECA and some people in the State Department. So it was a good big group. But at that level, they worked with their French opposite numbers very well. And actually, in three weeks, we really had everything that we needed to have in the way of information.

One of the things that we found we had to do was that the quality of intelligence that we were getting out of the area was so poor that we simply had to do it all ourselves.

Q: But why was the quality poor?

MELBY: Because the intelligence officers there -- Army, Navy, and so on -- all the attachés were incompetent.

Q: It was sort of a backwater to which we sent backwater people?

MELBY: That's right. And just one example, it was in Bangkok. I was trying to locate one of the dissident Kuomintang generals who had taken refuge in northern Thailand with a very sizable number of Kuomintang army troops. So I asked the military attaché where this man was and he said, "Well, he's up north now." I then, later on, asked the Marine Corps attaché -- who was also the Naval attaché -- if he knew. And he said, "Oh, no, he's over here," someplace else. And I asked a third attaché, and he gave me another answer. I said, "Well, that's fine. That's what I wanted to know." Because I'd had lunch that same day with this particular general in Bangkok. But they didn't even know that. This was the kind of intelligence that we were getting out of the area.

And we then proceeded from Saigon, where we spent three weeks.

Q: Saigon? Rather than Hanoi?

MELBY: The French headquarters were in Saigon. Everything was located in Saigon. The governor general was there, the commanding general of the French forces. They were all based in Saigon.

I went to Hanoi, which was a very charming, kind of French provincial sort of city.

From Saigon, we then stopped off in the Philippines, en route. But we went back to the Philippines because we had a pretty active military program there. And then we went on to Singapore, where the British were very anxious that we make a contribution to their guerrilla warfare against the Chinese dissidents there in Malaysia.

The headquarters for the Malaysian Federation was in Singapore, when McDonald was the High Commissioner for Southeast Asia. But Washington wasn't disposed to do anything for Malaysia, because Malaysia was the biggest dollar-earner in the British commonwealth. Therefore, the British presumably had the dollar exchange to buy their own equipment for Malaysia. But we had a nice time in Singapore. And McDonald was a very cordial guy.

From there we went to Indonesia. And then back to Thailand. Thailand was a place where, unfortunately, we stayed too long. We sort of wore out our welcome a little bit. Ed Stanton was ambassador there, who disapproved of the mission, to begin with. We were just there too long. Not only was the embassy fed up with having us around, but even the Thais were beginning to get a little bored with us, too. We were there almost a month.

Q: *What were you doing?*

MELBY: It ended up, we were providing as much military hardware for the Thai Army and Navy and Air Force as we were for Vietnam.

Q: *You were looking at the Thai requirements and sending recommendations? And seeing whether it made sense to continue it or not?*

MELBY: Yes.

Q: *How did the ambassador take this?*

MELBY: He was opposed to it entirely.

Q: *Was he opposed to our sending military equipment to Thailand? And your mission said yes, to do it?*

MELBY: Yes.

Q: *Why was the difference? What was the issue?*

MELBY: The Pentagon decided that we were going to equip the Thai forces.

Q: *Why didn't the ambassador want it? Usually ambassadors like to hand over things if they can.*

MELBY: Ed Stanton was a China language officer. He had gone through the whole China bit, and he thought it was a waste of money and time. There wasn't any point in arming one faction in Thailand to fight another faction in another coup d'état, that we ought to keep our hands out of Thai politics.

Q: *So there was not a matter of looking upon building this up as a bulwark against communism, as much as giving them weapons? You didn't feel that, without weapons, there was an immediate threat that might take over?*

MELBY: Not an immediate threat in Thailand, no. The Thai armed services were a pretty competent bunch, incidentally. And the police, which had its own army, they were the most impressive military forces we saw in Southeast Asia.

Q: *So you didn't feel that there was an imminent danger in Thailand. Were you under pressure from Washington to approve the sale of arms to Thailand, to keep a foot in the door? Was there*

a reason why?

MELBY: It was contingency aid, really. In case things went sour in Vietnam. And as it worked out over the years, there were big American bases in Thailand. About half of southern Thailand was one huge American Air Force base. And an awful lot of secret operations, bombing raids, were conducted out of Thailand.

Q: So contingency actually paid off.

MELBY: From that standpoint, yes, if you thought the war in Vietnam was worthwhile. Of course, I didn't.

Q: Let's go to your report on Vietnam. What did you see?

MELBY: The working stiffs got along fine with their French counterparts. We had trouble at the top, between me and Don Heath, who was the minister.

Q: He was my ambassador for a little while in Saudi Arabia, a long time ago.

MELBY: Well, Don was new to Southeast Asia, but I must say, he was trying to learn Vietnamese, which nobody else in the embassy was doing. And the French high commissioner and the commanding general of the French forces. And we just didn't see eye to eye on what was going on. Because my whole reaction -- and it didn't take more than a couple of weeks -- was that we were getting ourselves involved in something that we were totally without expertise to handle. We didn't know what we would be getting into. We didn't have anybody who really knew anything about Vietnam or what it was.

Q: You weren't saying, "This is a lost situation." The main thing is, we just don't know, and let's not go into something unless we know what it is.

MELBY: It isn't a question, "We don't know," but that what we do know is, "We're going to lose." Don Heath and I just disagreed because he'd been sort of taken into camp by the French. I made my report; I cabled it back to Washington -- and you could still do this. I cleared it with him, and he filed his dissent with it. And he cleared it with me. This was the kind of situation that didn't last very long, you know, as we got into the McCarthy period. But officers still did trust each other. And I just said, "We're getting ourselves into a totally untenable situation. It's all very well to say that this is step one. We go this far and no farther. Because it doesn't work that way. If step one doesn't work, then you've got to take step two. And it goes on and on. And once you become committed, there's no backing out, and we're just headed for disaster."

Q: Did you have a feeling, looking back on this with some objectivity, Heath had been ambassador before that in Bulgaria and had been kicked out of there. But anyway, he was a European hand more than not. You came out of, particularly your China experience, where you saw a very successful movement taking place. And I think all of us are traumatized by things that we have seen. Do you think that maybe it was because you were coming from two different perspectives of how things worked in the world? You saw that unless you had a very strong

government, for instance, you saw that the communists had something going for them in Asia. And there wasn't much to stop them.

MELBY: The communists had something going for them because they had a nationalist appeal. They were first nationalists and second communists.

Yes. I was convinced that the French were going to lose, because they, too, never understood Asia or Asians. And they were conducting a positional warfare against a guerrilla army and they had no more chance of winning than Chiang Kai-shek had at winning against the communists. Because you're dealing with a situation in which conventional warfare just simply doesn't work.

Don Heath, of course, I think he was just taken in by the French. Ed Gullion was there. He was Counselor. Ed and I were classmates in the Service. Although Ed didn't say very much, I happen to know from talks I had with him that he thought we were making a mistake in becoming involved, too. Ed would later change his mind on a lot of things. But he hadn't done so yet.

My recommendation back to the Department was, "Please pass this on. Ask the President to reconsider his decision to go ahead and help the French."

Q: How about General Erskine?

MELBY: Erskine was of two minds. Being a Marine Corps general, force was always the answer. But on the other hand, Bobby was not without his insights. And he would say to me, "In the end, this has to be a political solution here. Anything we do militarily is only a holding operation. There has to be a political and economic solution to this whole question of Vietnam." So Erskine was basically backing up my position.

Q: What happened when you made this report?

MELBY: What happened was, I asked that the President read my report and reconsider. But you have to remember the time and the context, because I never got an answer out of it. You've got to remember that this was the summer of 1950. And Washington was just overwhelmed with the Korean War.

Q: June 25, 1950 was the invasion of North Korea into South Korea. And of course, we were thinking them in terms of stopping the communists wherever they were on the march.

MELBY: Yes, but nobody was thinking of Vietnam one way or the other. Before the Korean invasion ever started, mind you. On Vietnam, the President had decided as far back as February. This was based on NSC-68, that we were going to rearm the world. So any recommendations that I made, they were noted and nothing happened.

Q: You were mentioning to me yesterday that you had also sent something in about our intelligence operations.

MELBY: Rusk, the Assistant Secretary for the Far East, had asked me on the side to do an evaluation of our intelligence operations in Southeast Asia and send the report to him, because he'd been in intelligence on the Far East in the pentagon. Which I did. And it was a pretty strong statement that I made. Maybe I just stated it more strongly than it was, at least politically-wise. Because my comment was that the quality of our intelligence is so bad that it approaches malfeasance in office, and something had to be done.

And this, of course, though it was just for Rusk and Bill Lacey -- who was head of the Bureau for Southeast Asian Affairs -- eyes-alone for them, got circulated all over the government. It was a slip that happened in the code room someplace, I never knew just exactly where. And this is the way it came to Bedell Smith's attention. Bedell Smith was director of CIA. And Bedell was livid.

Finally one day, after I got back, Acheson called me in and said I'd better make an appointment to go over and see Bedell Smith and try to quiet him down because, "He's out to get you." Which I did, and it didn't get me anywhere. Bedell Smith wasn't buying it.

Q: What was his reaction when you saw him?

MELBY: "What do you know about intelligence, young man? Who are you to criticize intelligence?" If there was any satisfaction in it, incidentally, it was that within three months of my return from Southeast Asia, every intelligence officer in the entire area was replaced, including all the CIA operators, too. There was a whole new crew sent out. Not only CIA, but all the attachés were changed. So what it was worth, I don't know.

Q: Once again, I want to thank you very much for this. You were at interesting places at interesting times!

MELBY: Well, one of the little sidelights on the thing was, when I was over with Bedell Smith, Alan Dulles was over there. He was then Deputy Director of the CIA. He just sat in the corner and didn't say anything or participate in the conversation at all. He was just present.

The phone rang. And from the conversation, I could tell that the man who was calling Smith was the head of G-2, a major general, who was also livid. He'd seen the telegram on intelligence. And Bedell was trying to calm him down. He was saying, "Don't get excited now. We'll take care of it. We'll investigate this young man and find out what goes on."

CHARLOTTE LORIS
Clerk
Saigon (1950-1952)

Charlotte Loris was born in 1924 in Pennsylvania. She joined USIA in 1950 and served in Vietnam, Japan, Libya, Zaire, Indonesia, Korea, Switzerland, and Washington, DC. She was interviewed in 1989 by Max Kraus.

LORIS: This is the end of 1949, beginning of 1950. So I went back to Washington and got socked into the red tape, getting ready to go overseas and they said it would take months and months to have a security clearance, all of this. But actually three months later I left on an Air France plane for Paris and Saigon, which was located in what was then French Indochina. I was to replace a girl who had been murdered, an American girl.

Q: Had been murdered? In Saigon?

LORIS: She and a friend were entertaining and they were having a party and they went out to pick somebody up. They never solved it. They apparently were ambushed in their jeep.

Anyway, I arrived in Saigon -- .

Q: Just a minute. Before you arrived in Saigon, didn't that give you some pause about taking the kind of job that you -- .

LORIS: No, I wanted adventure.

Q: All right. So you arrived in Saigon when?

LORIS: Let me backtrack just a brief bit.

Q: Okay.

LORIS: I was assigned to Saigon. In those days you had a choice; I could have gone to Munich or to Rio or Saigon. Having always wanted to go to the Orient, to China, I picked Saigon. And they grabbed me with their arms, aha, we have one. So I went through the preparation and then went over to get my medical shots for old Saigon, which was still a French colony. While sitting in the Naval Department barracks waiting to get my shots, they asked me where I was going and I said Saigon. Well, this man came up to me and said, "Did I hear you say you were going to Saigon?" I said, "Yes." And this man said, "Well, I'm going to be the new American consul in Hanoi." Well, in those days, American consul, what's that? Hanoi? Where's that?

So we chatted a bit. I was going out to Saigon as a clerk, class FSS-13, I think it was, that paid \$2,850 a year. But all your transportation was paid. So this very kindly gentleman, who sort of walked like a penguin, gave me his name, which was Wendall Blanke. He asked me when I was leaving and I said I was going up to New York for a few days and then to Paris where I would be spending three days and then I was booked for a flight from Paris to Saigon. He said, "I will meet you at the airport in Paris and buy you a drink." I thought, this is great, what a way to go. So I had an exciting trip from New York to Paris but I won't go into detail on it.

On the day I came to leave Paris I went to the airport and was checked in. I sat down at a bench, because it wasn't a fancy airport in those days, and this man sort of walked up to me, waddling like a penguin, sat down beside me. No cocktail lounge. He pulls out a flask and we have a drink of brandy from the flask, which I had never had before.

Q: So he did make good on the offer of a drink in Paris.

LORIS: Yes, he bought me a drink out of his flask.

Q: And that was Wendall Blanke.

LORIS: It was Wendall Blanke. Then we get on this little DC-3 plane -- we didn't have jets in those days -- and we flew across France and into Tunis, Morocco, Algiers. The plane, except for Wendall and myself, was loaded with French Foreign Legionnaires going to French Indochina to help the French.

So we're on this plane and we're leaving Tunis and I said, Wendall -- he's sitting next to me -- there's something wrong with this plane. And about that time the pilot announces, we've lost an engine. It's a two-engine plane. So we went back to Tunis and stayed a few days. They flew down a new engine from Paris. We took off again and went via North Africa to Cairo, one of the stops. Cairo was an all-day stop and it was Easter Sunday. It was hot, sticky, with no air conditioning. I had with me an Agatha Christie mystery book, which I read three times in the airport, and drank hot citronade with flies sitting on the rim of the glass. We finally --

Q: What?

LORIS: Flies.

Q: No, what did you drink?

LORIS: Citronade. Without gin or vodka, just plain citronade. Sticky stuff. And flies swarming around. Finally we take off and we go via Burma and what have you. We finally get to Saigon and it was three days later, four. But remember, this was a DC-3.

Q: All the way on a DC-3 from Paris to Saigon.

LORIS: Greatest plane ever made.

Q: I know.

LORIS: They're still flying.

Q: I know.

LORIS: So we finally arrived in Saigon in the morning and it's hot and sticky. We get off the plane and this young man comes out and he says, "are you Charlotte Loris." And I said, "yes." He said, "well, I'm here to meet you." I said, "oh, well, there's another gentleman with me." He said, "Who?" I said, "Wendall Blanke." He said, "Oh, my God, the new consul for Hanoi." And nobody was there to meet him. But we pile in the jeep together and go into Saigon to this funny little consulate general. Sticky and hot. But that's the way Wendall and I arrived in town.

Then I was taken up -- I dropped my bags off, they took me into the consulate general and Ed Gullion was the chargé d'affaires.

Q: And that was approximately what date?

LORIS: About April 2nd, 1950.

Q: 1950. So you are in Saigon -- .

LORIS: And I'm at the consulate general. We go up these little stairs and we arrive in this small office and go into this bigger office where Ed Gullion was charge. And there sits my friend, Wendall Blanke. So Ed Gullion says, "Oh, Wendall, I would like you to meet our new clerk-typist, Charlotte." He said, "Meet her? I've slept with her on a plane for three nights." Great hilarity. Anyway, Wendall and Ed and I were friends from then on.

Then I was in Saigon, oh, about two weeks, assigned to the information division where the peripatetic Francis Cunningham was the PAO, a State Department man. There weren't many people in Saigon and I think I was the only female that knew shorthand. So I'm sitting at my desk about two weeks after I'm there and a car comes and they said, "are you ready to go, Miss Loris?" I said, "Go where?" "Oh, you're taking the minutes of the meeting." "What meeting?" So I grabbed a couple of shorthand notebooks and a bunch of pencils. Now remember, our offices were not air conditioned and it was sticky hot. So Francis Cunningham says, "Charlotte, you have been elected to take the notes of this meeting." So he takes me downstairs and bundles me into this small car which we had in those days. And it's a meeting of the French High Militaire and the Commandant and the High Commissioner, an American military group and high Vietnamese officials to discuss the French Indochina War.

I arrived and was swept through the palace gates by the gendarmes, Mademoiselle Loris? Yes. On I went, up and pattered down this marble hallway in my sandals, which were clipping-clapping, and my legs were running sweat. They escort me down to big double doors, I open the doors, and there sit 40 men.

Q: Palace?

F: This was the High Commissioner's Palace.

Q: French High Commissioner's Palace in Saigon?

LORIS: In Saigon. And I collapse in a chair at the door, realizing the meeting is now in session, I got out my notebook and started taking notes. Then there was a break shortly after I arrived, and Ed Gullion came over and escorted me to the center of this big table where all of the interpreters, the maps and everything else were, and for one solid week -- five days -- all I did all day was take notes. There were many strange names of the battlefields in northern Indochina which of course I did not know. But Gullion was very kind. I would put a number down and he would write the name down and put the number so that when I transcribed the notes later I was able to fit the whole thing together.

Q: Who were the other participants in this meeting?

LORIS: The French High Commissioner, high French military command, and I can't remember all the names, and high American military, generals, and the highest Vietnamese in those days. There were about 40 people in all. We did not in those days have tape recorders or computers or anything like that, and I was the only person who was taking the notes.

Q: Only person among all of these -- ? Nobody else?

LORIS: Nobody else. And they used to wrap me up in an armored vehicle, take me back to the Consulate, shut me up in a room where I'd type up these notes which later became history.

Q: I bet.

LORIS: I felt like Mata Hari.

Anyway, life proceeded. A few weeks later I walked down the street to my office, went around the corner, and a machine gun gunned down the head of the French Surate right in front of me. I jumped in a doorway to avoid the bullets, and survived.

After that, because the French did not have many people, the Korean War had started, and communiques were coming in from Korea and Hanoi, again I was selected to go. The French did not have anybody and neither did the Vietnamese. I used to get up at 4:30 in the morning, ride a cycle downtown to the French Chamber of Commerce and type on a French typewriter, which I had never seen before, in French, the communiques. Then I would leave there about 10:00 --

Q: The communiques about the war?

LORIS: About the war in Hanoi and the Korean war.

Q: And the Korean war?

LORIS: It had started. Then I went back to my office about 10:00 and worked all day there. It was a very exciting time.

Q: What were these communiques for? Were they for --

LORIS: For the French, for the government, the French, and released to the press.

Anyway, it was a very exciting two years in Saigon and many adventures. I'm not going to tell you all of them. Too bad. You would love it.

Q: Well, I think that I know some of the ones that you want to leave off the record.

LORIS: Right.

Q: However, if I'm not mistaken, and I hope you will put this on the record, I think you told me once that while you were in Saigon you got acquainted with Graham Greene and he took you to an opium den.

LORIS: Oh, very much so. I met Graham Greene at a cocktail party where, you know, there were many cocktail parties. He is a great reprobate and loves to have somebody listen to him. Well, I like to talk, but I also like to listen. So we got together a number of times and one evening we were discussing the ethnic background of Chinese and Asians and I said, I've always wanted to go to an opium den. He said, let's go tonight, after dinner. I said fine. So we go down after this cocktail party and we have dinner in a restaurant. Then he said, we won't drive, we'll just take a bicycle chair which is called a cyclo. So we get in the cyclo and the guy pedals us out to this opium den. Graham Greene was an habitue of opium dens and he knew Asia.

So we get out in this dimly lit place and go in. Mamasan, or madame, didn't want me to come in because she recognized that I was American. So we sat in this little overheated room with stuffed settees, drank brandy and soda with no ice, and she wouldn't let us into the big room where the habitues go. But we went into a private room.

It was just like I expected it to be. Absolutely fascinating. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I did want Graham Greene to buy me the silver opium pipe but he didn't. So he smoked nine pipes and I smoked three. But I didn't inhale because I was scared shitless. But it was fun.

Q: Since you are retired, they will not --

F: Fire me.

Q: -- start a security investigation for drug abuse.

LORIS: Why not find out what the people do? I can understand. As Graham Greene, when we used to talk, he said try to understand these people that live in these overpopulated, crowded areas of the world, half of them sleep at day, half at night, there's not enough room for them all to sleep at night, so smoke opium or whatever. Go out on cloud nine.

Q: Graham Greene wrote a novel about Saigon called, if I'm not mistaken, The Quiet American.

LORIS: There are several composite characters in there, all of which I recognized. It was a good book. Read it.

Q: Including -- is one of the composite characters at least in part Charlotte Loris?

LORIS: Yes.

Q: I'll have to read it.

LORIS: Then I left Saigon after many exciting adventures. I wish I would recount them all, they

are in my mind.

Q: We are now talking about what year?

LORIS: I left in 1952. And I went to -- but first I made several trips. I went to Bangkok as a side trip. I wanted to meet the writer of the Bangkok Editor, which is one of the things that convinced me to go to that area of the world. He had been a former member of the OSS and a friend of Jim Thompson's. I did meet him and his Thai mistress, and a few other interesting people, for a glorious weekend.

Anyhow, I was finally taken out of Saigon and assigned -- .

Q: Jim Thompson, was he already at that time into Thai silk?

LORIS: Oh, yes, but he just had a very small shop which was about as big as a three-cornered closet. It was fabulous. It was nothing like it is now. He had not done "The King and I" or any of those costumes. But he was a very interesting person. I met a lot of interesting people. In spite of the fact that I was an FSS-13. I did play a lot of tennis and met people that way. Some interesting stories about that but I won't go into it because I had the right to play on the Palace courts and a few other places.

THOMAS J. CORCORAN
Political Officer
Saigon (1950-1953)

Consul
Hanoi (1954-1955)

Thomas J. Corcoran was born in New York in 1920. He entered the Foreign Service in 1948. He served in Spain, Laos, Cambodia, and Burundi, where he was ambassador. He served three times in Vietnam: in Saigon (1950-1953), Hanoi (1954-1955), and in Saigon (1965-1966).

Q: I want to concentrate mainly on your time in Indochina, because this is where you did spend I can almost say an inordinate amount of time for a Foreign Service officer. How did you get into this particular corner of the woods?

CORCORAN: That started in Spain. The consulate was inspected by Foreign Service inspector Wilson Flake, who asked me where I would like to go next. I said that having started in a consular post and learned Spanish, I'd like to go to a diplomatic post where I could use French, which I had already studied in school for many years. He said, "Fine." Shortly thereafter, I got orders to Saigon, which had not been a diplomatic post when we were discussing this, but which had been converted from a consulate general to a legation right about that time in 1950.

Q: I'm confused. How was Indochina divided up then? I thought Hanoi was sort of the center.

CORCORAN: In the French period, Vietnam was really in three parts. You had the empire of Annam, the middle, which had a French resident.

Q: That was Hue?

CORCORAN: The capital of Annam was Hue. You had North Vietnam (Tonkin), which was largely under military administration, although it was technically under the imperial crown, but was run by the French Army. Then you had South Vietnam, which was a French colony, Cochinchina. So you had three different administrations there.

But with the French reoccupation at the end of World War II, after the Japanese had taken it over, the Chinese Nationalists in the north and the British in the south had accepted the Japanese surrender. The French went back in. There was a very complex period of negotiating with Ho Chi Minh, who was the leader of the Communists, who had come out of the bush and taken over Hanoi initially at the end of the war. They followed on the Chinese Nationalist occupation and coexisted with them for a while. But then the French moved in there. It was a very complicated period of negotiations between the French and the North Vietnamese, first starting with the French admiral, D'Argenlieu, who was General de Gaulle's representative and commander in chief. Then he was replaced eventually by General LeClerc. General LeClerc was the Army commander in the north.

All of these details have to be sorted out, because I've been in that area three times over a period of 30 years, actually four times, with three desk tours. It needs sorting out of the different periods.

The original sort of *modus vivendi* which the French worked out there began to break down in 1946. Jean Sainteny, who had been in the French colonial service, and who was the son-in-law of Albert Sarraut, who had been the governor general of Indochina and a French cabinet minister, went back in and tried to deal with Ho Chi Minh and re-establish the French presence in the north. For a variety of reasons, that broke down in 1946, and that's when the war really started.

Q: I want to come back now to what you were doing. This gives an idea that it was a complex situation. You were sent to Saigon as what?

CORCORAN: Initially, there had been a consulate in Hanoi and a consulate general in Saigon. As I understand it in the old days, during the hot season, the government moved to the north, and consular representatives would follow them there. But when the war ended, we maintained a consulate in Hanoi and a consulate general in Saigon, two consular posts. Then in 1950, when the French union concept was being established, the other two countries, Laos and Cambodia, had their own problems. Laos had also been divided into three parts, Luang Prabang, the kingdom in the north, Champassak, the kingdom in the south, and Vientiane, a sort of expired kingdom, in the middle, which was under direct French administration. The French union concept was that these three separate countries, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, would be members of the French union, each with its own monarchical form of government, a king in Laos,

a king in Cambodia, and the ex-emperor of Annam, who was supposed to be accepted as the ruler of Vietnam.

As part of supporting this, in 1950 we agreed to diplomatic recognition of each of these countries, and we sent one minister, Donald Heath, who resided in Saigon. He kept a small branch office with a junior officer in Vientiane and one in Phnom Penh. So I first went to Saigon when it was a legation, and I was a political officer. I was, at that time, a third secretary. But after a few months there, I was sent up to relieve the man who was in Vientiane.

Q: When were you in Hanoi?

CORCORAN: I was there from about the beginning of September 1954 until about December 12, 1955. I was there about 14 months.

Q: We had some trouble on the previous tape. Some of this may be repetitious. How would you describe your principal job there?

CORCORAN: The main thing was to point out that we were not pulling out, we weren't prejudging the Geneva Conference as the end of everything. It was an armistice. We were going to wait and see what happened. We were supporting the government in the south, but we were keeping consular representation in the north. According to tradition and custom, the people holding the real power in the north, the Communists, could have expelled us if they had chosen so to do. But they chose, instead, to say that they just did not recognize us. But of course, we did exist, and we had employees, we had our buildings, two buildings which we owned, and for a while, a couple which we leased just as an anchor to windward, and had people spread out. We obeyed the curfews and we paid our electricity bills and things of that sort. But our main purpose there was to wait and see what happened, rather than just climb aboard airplanes and get out. They did, in effect, deal with us through the municipal Military and Administrative Council of Hanoi, which was, in effect, a municipal government with both military and civilian functions.

At one point, they actually sent troops into my house during preparation for a parade. My house was on the big Place Ba Dinh, a central place where Ho Chi Minh's tomb is now. I was awakened in the middle of the night by my house boy who said the Viet Minh had arrived. They explained to me that in preparation for a parade the next day, they were putting troops and machine guns on the roofs of the building. I said, well, I couldn't argue with that, I suppose, and they could go up there on the roof. I couldn't stop them. I said, "Please use the back stairs and stay out of the house," which they did. They stayed there until after the parade. They did the same thing on some other buildings in the area. Actually, when the parade came by, I went out to watch it, and a French-speaking Communist policeman gave me a running description of what was going on, obviously part of the propaganda department. So there again, they knew who we were and what we were up to.

As I say, we were very careful not to try to do anything clandestine or subversive or anything of that sort. It would have been hopeless in that situation. Our main purpose was just to stay there

and then keep the possibility of dealing with whatever came up.

As time went on, a difference developed between the way they treated us and the other non-Communist representatives. You had the British consul general, who, as I said, was an ipso facto agent of Anthony Eden, who was the co-chairman of the Geneva Conference. You had the French Sainteny mission (his *nom de guerre*) and he was accredited by Mendes France personally to the government of North Vietnam.

Q: Mendes France was the prime minister.

CORCORAN: Yes, who had forced the Geneva Conference in 1953. There was also the French military mission, actually a liaison mission with the International Control Commission, headed by General Groot de Beaufort. There was the Indian chairman of the international commission, Mr. Desai, who later became number two in the Indian foreign office. And there was the Canadian delegate, Brigadier Sherwood Lett, who was a war hero, who took part in the famous Canadian landing at Dieppe, was a lawyer, and who later ended up and died as Chief Justice of British Columbia. He was the Canadian representative on the commission. Then there was a Polish delegation headed by a man named Ogrodinszki. He was a complete Communist doing the bidding of the North Vietnamese. At that time I don't think you could expect anything else.

On the other hand, the Canadians, who were trying to defend the free world's interests, were not in the same relationship with us at all. They were trying to help us out as much as they could, but they had their own standards of propriety.

The Indians were somewhat in between. The Indians represented the personal policy of Nehru, which was that the important thing was the end of colonialism and the independence of former Asian countries, and the Communist thing wasn't to be worried about too much; that it would sort itself out later. Actually, Nehru came through on a visit. I met him briefly on this one occasion. He came through early on and talked to everybody.

Then, of course, the Indians also had a consul general. They had a vice consul there, and they sent a consul general, who was a man named Sahay, Anand Mohan Sahay, accompanied by his very beautiful daughter. He had an interesting history. He had been at one point the private secretary to Rajendra Prasad, who later became vice president of India. He had also been involved in the Indian National Congress of Subhas Chandra Bose, a Japanese collaborationist, and he had actually fled to Japan and was caught by the British and sent back to India to be tried for treason. But Nehru was his lawyer, the lawyer for all of these people, and they could handle that. So he was a nice man on the surface, very friendly, but he wasn't too realistic. At one point, I guess I can tell you this now -- is this going to be published?

Q: It will be in transcript form, and researchers will be able to use it.

CORCORAN: Well, then, he wanted to give a reception for all hands, including me and the government officials of North Vietnam, and they, of course, wanted to receive the invitation list in advance. They saw my name on it and they wouldn't come if I showed up. I told him, well, forget it, I wouldn't come. I didn't want to embarrass him. But he said, "Yeah, but that's not good

enough. I've got to be able to prove to them that you're not coming." I said, "Okay, I'll write you a letter saying I'm diplomatically ill," which I did, and that solved that. This man's background was general good will for all occasions, but he didn't realize what he was dealing with. Some of the people in the Indian delegation to the control commission were a lot more sophisticated, and they had a certain range of opinions.

Q: I'd like to go back, if we may, again, because I'm concerned this might not have come out on the previous tape, about your knowledge of and reporting on the land reform, which was reportedly quite a bloody affair.

CORCORAN: The real details on that didn't come out until much later, when a Frenchman wrote a book, and when the government itself admitted they had made a mistake and killed a lot of people they shouldn't have killed. But it was just beginning to come out. In some cases, there were trials of people reported on in the press. There was one trial, which I saw part of in Hanoi. But we had to rely largely on the press for those reports, and in some of them, the main charge was being a rich exploiter of the poor, a capitalist exploiter. But this varied. The main problem, I gather, was that standards varied from province to province and district to district. Somebody who might be a cruel, wicked landowner in one area might be just one of the people in another, because the property values and income values varied. This may have been the root of their problem. They had an open-air application of the land reform on the Chinese model, but it became clear that some people were being punished for what other people were not being punished for in a different area.

Q: You mentioned that you tried to attend one open-air meeting and were sort of run off.

CORCORAN: Yes. I couldn't have really understood, anyway. I didn't have Vietnamese. But I was recognized as an outsider.

Most of the other trials were held out in the countryside, and you'd get reports on them in the press. As it emerged later, I didn't realize it at the time, but I realized later that one of the main problems was an awful lot of people were killed and the standard kind of varied from province to province. So this had a general unwholesome effect on the people themselves, because some of them could figure out that somebody was being punished for being a poor miserable landowner, instead of a rich landowner. The standards were off.

As I say, the government recognized this at one point. But some experts who followed this more closely than I did later on took the line that they really got in trouble when they eased up on the land reform program. There were some demonstrations in the countryside, really tough ones. Some reporting by some of the French writers indicated that there was a pretty violent uprising. But some of the Sovietologists took a look at these things and said that they had the real trouble after they pulled back on the land reform, in other words, when they showed signs of moderation. That encouraged people to protest more. I really would have to go back into the files.

Q: How did you leave?

CORCORAN: We were there for a total of 14 months. We left in early December. But in September, we could see signs of tightening up. For example, they required all of us, including Americans, to register as aliens with the government. They sent a big form about the size of that map.

Q: Pointing to a large map.

CORCORAN: Filling in all your personal history and whatnot. We could see this was the initial step of closing in on us. Then they wanted to come and interview us, each individual American. I said yes, but I would sit in on all the interrogations as though they were my own, and they agreed to that. They were asking sort of nuisance questions, and I would intervene after a while. They said, "You said you didn't speak Vietnamese." Well, I didn't speak Vietnamese, but I could just see the way they were going, just wasting time and harassing people. We filled out these forms, and they inspected the place and saw we had a lot of radio equipment, which they obviously knew we had. We had been broadcasting every day for the last year as our only means of communication. We couldn't use the mail. So I could sense by the tone of this, something was going to happen.

Early on, after the British started making trips, we had applied for permission to send people in and out. None of them were accepted or refused, but we had gotten a bad publicity campaign as our only reply, so we let that ride; figured that could wait; we'd rely on the radio. But at this point, with the detailed census statement things became tough. At one point, they came in and the Army tried to inspect the place. We asked them out, and they left. When they moved into my house, they had a really plausible pretext, security for the parade. They were doing it to the Russians and the Poles and everybody else, so I couldn't complain. But it became clear that on this occasion, they were getting ready to do something. I could sense that things were tightening up.

What we did was make a plan, which we just sent in by telegram saying, "if this happens, we will do thus and so," and try to destroy classified material, of which we had very little. We would try to communicate by other means, a very simple code.

Sure enough, I suppose it was not more than a week or so after that, I was summoned in one rainy day to the municipal commission, and I had to walk through a flooded street to get to my car. The committee was sitting behind the table there, and they said, "We brought you in to tell you that you're not authorized to use your radio. Stop using it."

I said, "I don't know, this is interesting. When did this become effective?"

"Right now."

I went back and did not use the radio to report that, because that would have been a technical trap I'd have been walking into. What I did was draw up a telegram and send it through the post office, PTT, thinking that if we could survive in that old-fashioned way, that would be all right, too. They held the telegram for several days and then returned it unsent, said no route existed, which was quite false, because they had routes through Peking and Moscow, and then on to the

outside world, and to Hong Kong. So what I did was send copies also to my various colleagues and the British, who were supposed to be our protecting power if we got out, sent theirs off, and the French sent theirs off, and the Canadians sent theirs off, so Washington got the news. They wondered why we'd gone off the air, but they got the news pretty quickly.

Then it was a question of getting out. I thought the appropriate thing was not to act in terms of just slam, bang, everybody out. It's easier said than done in a case like that. I said, "We ought to go slowly." In fact, one of the Indians told me, "I'm sure they don't really mean this. You ought to just hang on. Maybe they want you to stay." I said, "Well, I'll try." My other reason for trying it that way was I didn't want to show any signs of desperation to get out. I think if I tried to hang on, they would be less likely to keep us there. So we sent out people one at a time until I got down to one vice consul, who was also the administrative officer and the cashier. He, the man I wanted to keep with me, and I left together, turning it over to the British in due form. We had the regular transfer of the two buildings we owned, and a transfer of our consular function. With the approval of the foreign office, the British consul and I cosigned this. We went out to the airport and left.

Q: Were these done under instructions from Washington? Were you able, through the other: British, French, Canadians, to keep some . . .

CORCORAN: After this initial report, we narrowed it down to the British, since they traditionally, we understood, would represent us. I did it through the other people just to make sure the word got out. But it was pretty clear that we would have to do this. We developed the details with the British, and we left the two buildings there. They were taken over, I gather, later on. My house was used by some Communist diplomat, I think, or by some Communist agency. The office became the headquarters of the liberation front of South Vietnam for many years.

Then, strangely, when I was in Burundi, I was asked by somebody in the department for information about property. This is when Jimmy Carter was thinking of reopening there. I said, "Look in the files for 1955. It's all there." They did. They kept the files in Milwaukee or someplace. They got it quickly, and they had all the documents, inventories, titles for the two buildings, and the Department said the Vietnamese would let us have those two back. These were the two we owned. We had rented some others just to give us alternatives. They had progressively moved foreigners out at different times. But the rented buildings they took over pretty quickly. These two buildings, which we turned over at the end, which we retained title to, we made it clear that we did, otherwise, there was no way we could have them back. I think the plans were proceeding to move some sort of diplomatic representation in there. Then, of course, the North Vietnamese moved into Cambodia.

The only suggestion I gave to anybody immediately when I left, and also at this much later date, was if you do go in there with any sort of representation, you've got to insist that you have your own territory. A lot of European countries were operating in hotel rooms for years, and considered it a great victory if they got a second hotel room. This is preposterous. You can't function unless you can have a certain degree of . . .

Q: Space.

CORCORAN: Certainly a degree of space, and a certain degree of security, even though the security would always be a problem. So there it is. This goes back to the last days of the Carter era, about 1980.

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Washington, DC (1950-1955)

Country Officer, East Asia Bureau
Washington, DC (1963-1964)

Political Officer, Policy Planning
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Dr. Paul M. Kattenburg was born in Belgium in 1922 and came to the United States in 1940. He joined the Department of State in 1950 as a research specialist and entered the Foreign Service in 1956. He served in Germany, the Philippines, and Washington, DC. He was interviewed in 1990 by Charles Stuart Kennedy.

KATTENBURG: We had reasonably good relations with Indonesia in the period '50 to '52.

On Indochina that is quite a different story.

Q: Okay, let's move to Indochina then.

KATTENBURG: I switched with Al Seligmann, who was quite tired of Indochina business, and none of us had been Wristonized at this point. We were civil servants. I was more than willing to change my scenery from Indonesia to Indochina. Here I fell into quite a different story because of the struggle between the bureaus that we in the Division Research Far East supported: the Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, on the one hand, and the various personalities in that bureau including Mr. Reed the head of Southeast Asian Affairs, who had at one time been consul general in Hanoi, and the European Bureau on the other hand. Relations were quite strained.

I spoke French and I was sort of a natural in a way to do Indochina as so much of the documentation and the analysis had to be through French material. Jack Lydman and I established a pretty close relation with the working people on the Indochina Desk in the Far East Bureau -- this was the period '52 through early '55. I had spent the summer of 1952 in Saigon at the Embassy under Don Heath, the ambassador. This was a period of conflict within the Embassy as well because Ed Gullion, who was his DCM, opposed the pro-French policy. He supported greater independence for Bao Dai's Associated State of Vietnam. We had provided the French support since early 1950, when we had started giving them economic and some military assistance. We increased the military assistance a couple of years later when the French started having a tough time with the war. In any event, as far as the relations within the Department, we

had a fairly tough time holding a point of view which on the whole, I think, was supportive of assistance to Bao Dai's Vietnam. We felt we should move faster towards independence. I don't know if this is the place to go into detail on all that...

Q: What was the situation in Vietnam? You talked about the Associated States.

KATTENBURG: These were created in 1948 under the Baie d'Along Agreement, and all this is recorded in a lot of literature so it is easy to get a hold of. Our policy anchored itself in support of the French when we recognized Vietnam -- Laos and Cambodia were secondary problems. They didn't really achieve full recognition. We maintained merely Chargés in Vientiane and Phnom Penh. In fact they were in many ways dependent on the Embassy in Saigon.

Q: Our Embassy was in Saigon and not in Hanoi?

KATTENBURG: No, our Embassy was in Saigon where the French had re-established the capital.

Q: I see.

KATTENBURG: Bao Dai was in Saigon with a summer home in Dalat. We maintained a Consulate in Hanoi until the summer of 1955. Here, before I forget, I would like to clarify something because some of the literature incorrectly assumed that we closed the Consulate in Hanoi after the Geneva Accords of July 20, 1954. South Vietnam took what had been the French territory south of the 17th parallel or the Bao Dai area under the French, if you want. But we did not close the Consulate in Hanoi. It remained under Tom Corcoran, who closed it in the summer of 1955. I was the person on the Desk at that time who recommended him for the Superior Service Award, which he got for the remarkable job he did in quietly, efficiently and thoroughly closing the Consulate operation.

The Embassy, in those intervening years, '52 when I started working on Indochina and first went out there on detail through '55, when I went back again, was under Don Heath virtually the entire time. He may have left in 1954, but I don't think so. In any event there was a mission sent out by the President and Secretary Dulles in 1954, under General J. Lawton Collins, a famous mission.

This leads us to a very interesting episode about a key meeting on Vietnam that I described somewhere in my book, but not in great detail. The meeting took place in late April or May, 1955 during the Sect Battle, so called, in the city of Saigon. When Ngo Dinh Diem, who had by then returned, that is, post-Geneva, as the new President of the Republic of Vietnam, was under siege by the Sects, so called Binh Xuyen. A meeting was held in the Department in late April or early May 1955, chaired by Under Secretary Robert Murphy, to consider a report by General Collins who had been sent on that mission by the President and his political advisor Paul Sturm. They recommended going easy on support for Ngo Dinh Diem and a possible change in government if someone able to handle the situation could be found. I think that was the essence really of the meeting.

At that point Brig. General Edward Landsdale had already been moved from Manila, where he

had supported Magsaysay under auspices of the Agency, of course, to Saigon where he and a number of other Americans, some of whom played a very important role and were private Americans, not necessarily directly linked with the Agency, had supported Ngo Dinh Diem. During the time of the meeting a general who had been loyal to Ngo Dinh Diem was able to take care of the city and push the Binh Xuyen back and out of the city, thereby actually solving the situation on the ground in favor of Ngo Dinh Diem. The meeting just naturally gravitated in that direction.

I, myself, during this time in INR supported the Diem regime. I thought Diem was quite capable of holding the situation and I would have hated to see a change made which would have brought in some uncertain military leaders -- as happened ten years later.

Q: Yes.

KATTENBURG: Immediately after this particular meeting, I went out to Vietnam. It had been decided that I would take the Desk in the fall of 1955 to succeed the two people who had been working on Indochina in the Bureau. The director of the Bureau of Southeast Asian Affairs was Philip Bonsal and his Indochina Desk officer was an army colonel, who came into the State Department at the end of the war, but did not join the Foreign Service, to the best of my knowledge. This was Robert Hoey who played a key role in the whole period of the French war. He was assisted, and very ably so, by FSO John Getz, later U.S. Ambassador to Malta before retirement [who can be interviewed, living in North Carolina], with whom I was very close from the INR vantage point during this whole period.

Somewhere or other it was decided, I think with Jack Lydman and other Bureau people, that I would go to Saigon. Now in the summer of '55 I was involved with the question of how to handle the provision of the Geneva Accords of 1954 which required consultation between the two zones of Vietnam, the Peoples Republic of Vietnam north of the 17th parallel, temporary demarcation line, and the government south of that line, that is the Republic of Vietnam. The political part of the Accords had called for interzonal consultations which would lead to all-Vietnam elections to be held in July of 1956, two years after the signing of the Accords. The consultations, of course, had to bear on the question of what the elections were for, what kind of body, what sort of constitution would there be, what method would be used for these elections, was there to be a parliament elected, etc., none of which was determined in the Accords, except that the elections would be by secret ballot. During the year '54-'55 I, from my desk in INR, worked together with Ed Gullion, in the Policy Planning Council, on preparing various papers for the Secretary. The policy in the end shuffled itself out to support for Ngo Dinh Diem. Whatever he wanted, we would support. That was what was essentially confirmed in the 1955 meeting that Murphy held. While the general in Saigon, who was Little Minh or Tran Van Minh, won the war against the Sects in support of Diem, Landsdale supported Diem, Wesley Fishel from Michigan State University, who was the other very important American there, supported him. It was decided at that meeting, although no details were forthcoming that day, but I recall very clearly a discussion of the replacement of the ambassador and designee, Freddy Reinhardt, who went out almost immediately afterwards.

Q: What was your impression of Donald Heath? Both how he ran the Embassy and also how we

viewed the situation because he was there during an important time.

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