

49
DEBRIEF OF A USAID ENGINEER

SAIGON, VIETNAM

1967

No. 226712

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PREFACE

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

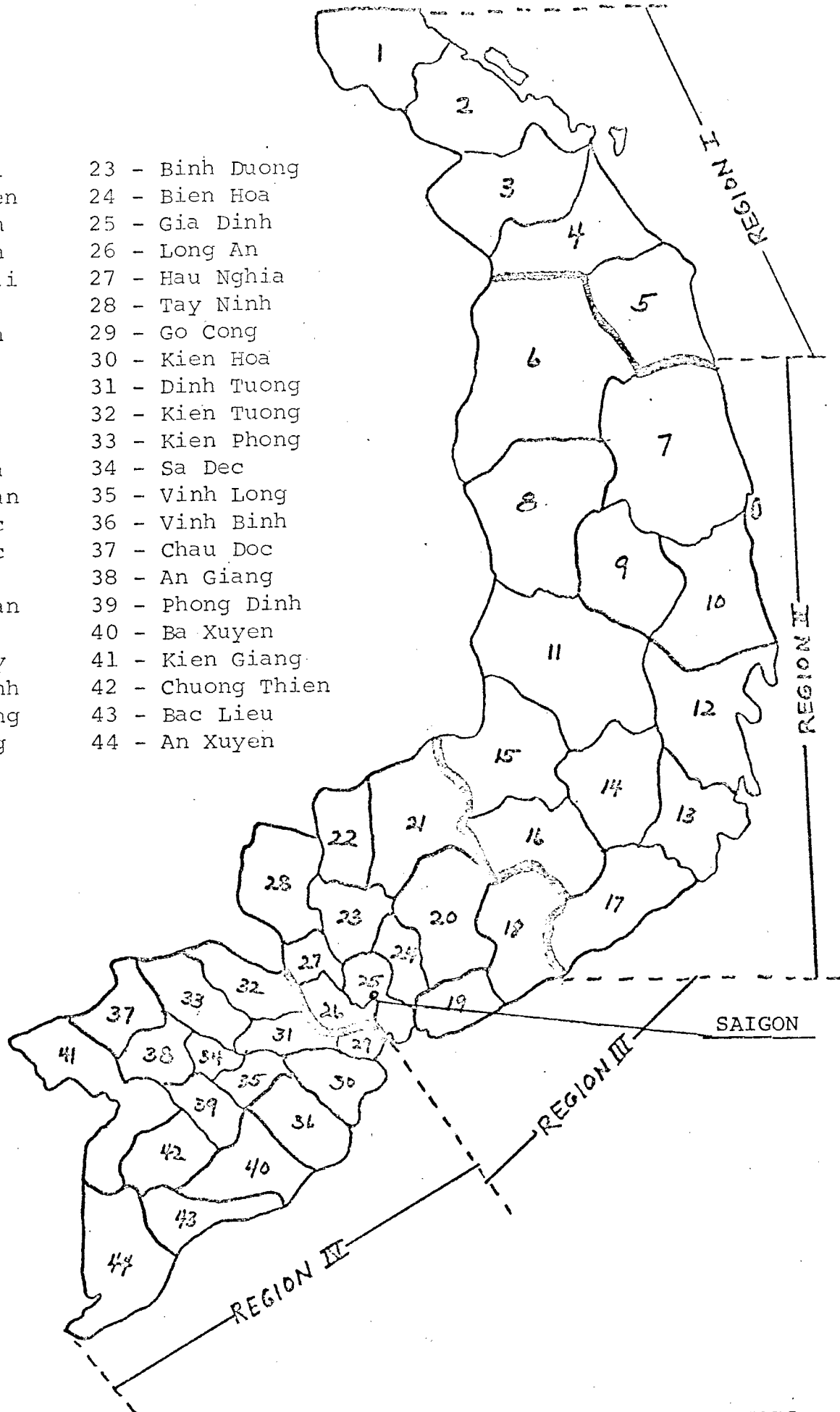
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REGIONS AND PROVINCES
OF
SOUTH VIETNAM

DEBRIEF OF A USAID ENGINEER

SAIGON, VIETNAM

1967

Preparation and Orientation for Position

I joined the AID organization because of the urgent need for people in civil engineering with my experience and background. I was in an Engineering and Public Works position in the USAID mission in Vietnam. I am a retired colonel and had done many years work with the Corps of Engineers. Much of this work was in civil works, water resources development and base construction. When I retired on my own application I became a registered civil engineer and practiced civil engineering in two states. In one I practiced with a civil engineering firm; in the other I was with a large engineering and construction company.

The AID organization gave me a couple of weeks of orientation in Washington, D. C., a rather intense course which was heavily slanted toward social and cultural aspects of the country. I was already somewhat familiar with this area, having served for about a year as engineer in the 14th Air Force in China. I also had had experience in North Burma, building the Ledo road during World War II. I had served more than two years in the Orient, both in Burma and China, in building roads and airfields, so I had had some background in the Orient which may have qualified me for my appointment.

Because I was urgently needed, my orientation period was cut to two weeks. They cut it down to just a minimum amount of things they thought I could get by with--the background, the culture of Vietnam, and the reasons why we're over there and what we're doing in what particular areas. It was a broad brush orientation but was very good. There were several of us in my category that had a fairly short orientation. Most of the students continued--I think some of them for several months.

I was part of a group of about 25. It was organized by weeks and there were two or three groups being oriented there in Washington at the same time. My course was patterned to a certain extent on my personal requirements. I would sit in, say, a day or two with a certain group that was taking "Experiences of a Provincial Representative," or the training films on conditions

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I was part of a group of about 25. It was organized by weeks and there were two or three groups being oriented there in Washington at the same time. My course was patterned to a certain extent on my personal requirements. I would sit in, say, a day or two with a certain group that was taking "Experiences of a Provincial Representative," or the training films on conditions

in the country and environmental information which was quite important. We had mostly lectures, which were fine. We also had some role-playing and committee work in solving problems, and this compared favorably with other training schools that I've attended in the army. The orientation course was a very realistic course--very practical and very beneficial.

I did think the orientation course was a little short on subjects concerning obligating funds and in planning, programming and preparing for the accomplishment of actual construction or planning. Another criticism of the course I have is that I think they should try to give more exposure to Vietnamese people. I missed the one hour in which we had a Vietnamese instructor there to meet us. I went through my whole orientation course of two weeks and never saw a Vietnamese person. I felt very disappointed in this. I felt I had missed something that was vital. Also, very little time, of course, could be devoted to language, which I found was quite a serious impediment. The language barrier and difficulty in communication has, of course been well described and is well known to everyone so I would just endorse the fact that a vital factor in being able to accomplish anything in Vietnam is to be able to understand or possibly speak the language. They couldn't give much time to this in the orientation course, but the course was good nevertheless.

Personal Adjustment and Living Conditions

I feel that my having been in Asian countries reduced the culture shock for me. I probably knew a little bit more of what I was getting into than a lot of the people being oriented. I had been out of the country so much and particularly I had been over a year in Asia, in Burma and in India. The living conditions in Vietnam are better than I had in World War II while I was in the army. There we lived in a tent, had to dig our own roads, make our own latrines and provide our own water supply in the woods or out on the steppes and the prairies of China. There is a culture shock to be experienced in many Asian countries. Europe and South America--I've travelled extensively in both areas--are quite different; the culture shock is almost lacking. All you feel in Europe and South America is a little homesickness. The food is good and the communication between peoples is not too difficult--it's easy to pick up a little Spanish or French. The people physically resemble us and their reactions in their religion, their history and their culture are much closer to ours than are those of the Orientals. It's very easy to define culture shock in Vietnam. The whole environment is very different from what we are accustomed to in this country. First of all, the climate is quite different and it takes time for the body to adjust to the heat, the humidity, the odors, the sanitation

the people, and so on. The total environment is so different and the inability to communicate is a frustration. The heat is oppressing and the lack of sanitation is repugnant to us. The intense fumes in Saigon, due to the traffic and the congestion of people were hard to take. The lack of physical comforts was frustrating. We didn't have hot water in the morning; we had to be careful about the water we drank; etc. There were so many of these things we took so much for granted. They all added up to quite a change in environment and in our exposures in day to day life.

I'd say the most traumatic thing for a man my age (52) in Vietnam is the lack of ability to communicate--the language barrier. It is most frustrating. Also being separated from your family is a very important and vital factor in personal adjustment, particularly for the men.

I personally feel very strongly about age. I think the culture shock--and there definitely is a culture shock--is much more intense in older people. If I have anything to say about appointments or assignments to Vietnam I am going to be very, very careful regarding the physical condition and mental attitude of people over say 55 or 58 years of age. I think the people should be younger and more flexible. Of course, balanced against this you have to be careful because the person must be experienced and mature. This is a problem of trying to strike a happy medium or a balance between maturity and old age, really. Some people are old at 55 and some aren't old at 65, you know, so I think you need to be a little circumspect about this.

There isn't any optimum age but when I see an application from a man that's over 60, I am inclined to disapprove his appointment. I have discussed this with medical officers. We have one man in our organization who is having physical problems. He's well qualified and is an excellent man, but he has been ill for quite a while and he's only been over there a few months. Now he has a serious case of pneumonia and is in recuperation in a safe haven post. He's in a high position, filling an important slot, and we aren't getting any benefit from his services at all. This is one specific instance where it has been brought home to me that there are so few of our people in Vietnam in engineering, especially well-qualified people, experienced people, that we just can't afford to get one over that's going to be ill and can't adjust to the culture shock.

I lived in a hotel similar to the Park Hotel where many Americans are housed. All of the people living there were Americans, with a few women residents. One of the women was in the programming section and there were four secretaries from the public health section. There was somewhat of a transient population there as well.

those of us who were there over an extended period, awaiting our permanent housing. This was a fairly new seven-story hotel with possibly 50 rooms just recently built and owned by a Vietnamese colonel in the army. It is rented by USAID for USAID employees. No room rent is charged.

One thing that was unfortunate was that we were led to believe that after three or four months we would be able to get permanent quarters with some cooking facilities, etc. This had not yet materialized when I left and I'm told that it may be another four or five months before permanent headquarters are secured. But I wasn't terribly unhappy as far as my living conditions were concerned, I was close to my work. While it wasn't the best part of town, it wasn't really much worse than any other part of Saigon. The dirt and the people sleeping on the sidewalks and the defecations--people relieving themselves in the gutters, etc.--were a little worse where I lived, but not much. I had a single hotel room--about 11 by 18 feet--with a small refrigerator and air-conditioning. The bathroom was not well-arranged at all, but I normally had warm water in the morning and I could take a shower. The toilet always worked, at least it worked in the last four months. The electric power didn't work all the time and the elevator in the hotel worked about half the time.

I felt that my belongings there were fairly safe. The maid on our floor was quite dependable. She looked like a Chinese-type maid and she had a Vietnamese girl who did the laundry. I gave her a little tip every week and she took care of my laundry and bedding, cleaned the bed, swept and tidied up the room a bit. I did, however, lock my valuables up in the cupboard for which we were provided keys. I had left money and other valuables out though from time to time and they didn't touch them. I was very fortunate for I heard of people who lost things in these hotels. I guess it paid to be pretty careful. The hotel was a boxed-in structure. The maids and servants lived out in the back on the alley and in front it was only accessible directly from the street. There was normally a person at the desk so that no Vietnamese were allowed in except by authority of a guest or by approval from the desk-clerk. We didn't have a security guard.

Travel Security

I did most of my travelling out into the country by air. It was possible to get down to Region IV from Saigon over the road but it was quite a rough trip--especially in getting across the ferry that crossed the Mekong. You could get out into Region III, I'd say, maybe on the average of ten or fifteen miles from

Saigon by road, but then you couldn't get any further. Saigon was sort of an isolated island as far as highways were concerned, so I traveled mostly by air. I drove my own Scout as I was not yet authorized a sedan. I didn't ask for one but I was given a new International Scout when I got out there and I didn't mind driving it, although it was risky driving around Saigon.

I never traveled armed but I traveled with officers senior to me who did carry weapons. I don't recommend carrying a weapon. My reasons are purely practical. During World War II, of course, I carried my .45 and I'm an expert with it. I think from a practical standpoint, from my army training, I'm told that to do any good against the person that's really attacking you intensely you need a powerful weapon like a .45, but it's so bulky and weighty that I just didn't feel like packing it around all the time. I think the chances of having to use it were very slim, and rather than being bothered with it all the time, I just didn't take it.

I was never forced to stay overnight in an insecure area and I was never shot at or under attack while in Vietnam. When I was up in Da Nang you could hear the bombing very close by. One day I was up there and they had had a bombing in the enlisted men's mess where we had been only two days before--right in town. I had no personal sensation of being a target but we could hear bombing and shooting--heavy artillery--from Saigon almost every day at the time I left. I feel that personal fear was a significant item in terms of a person's adjustment out there. Those big guns were going off at night all the time. They started around dawn or shortly before--around 4 o'clock. This could have a psychological effect, especially on a young secretary just over from the United States who's never been exposed to anything like this before.

Changeover from OCO to CORDS

I was in Vietnam shortly after the changeover from OCO to CORDS. Whether or not CORDS is working well is a little bit above my level. I'm not sure I understand why it was necessary for there to be separate organization of that sort. But I've had no serious problems with them so far as I'm concerned in my operations. I've been able to work with them. I'm a friend and fellow worker with people on the CORDS staff and get along well with the personnel. I like them and we work together the best we can. We had a few differences of opinion on some policy matters on the highway program. There is a healthy difference of opinion on how the highway situation should be improved in Vietnam but this probably is a very healthy, stimulating thing--to have two different points of view.

Corruption

I don't know specifically any examples of corruption in letting contracts on engineering commodities, etc. An article in the December 12th issue of the Wall Street Journal contains a description of the way some companies are awarded contracts and the way they subcontract for the construction of buildings--billetts in this case. There is a statement in here with which I disagree. That statement is that "the company that has been awarded the contract arranges to pay the Vietnamese subcontractor in dollars. In return, the subcontractor supplies his goods and services at the rate of about 150 piasters to the dollar." To my knowledge, in the five months I was over there and in the contracts with which I was concerned (and there are a lot of them), I do not know, from the AID standpoint, that this practice existed.

Contract management and supervision is a tough problem in the AID organization out there. I was just beginning to get into it with both feet. My new supervisor, the Assistant Director for Engineering, was quite interested in this activity and I think I know the way he feels about it because his background is quite similar to mine in managing contracts. I don't know of any such practice as the one mentioned in the newspaper but if this situation exists, we're certainly going to try to change it.

Role and Function of an Engineer

Engineering practices here and in Vietnam are as different as night and day. In the first place, if engineers are assigned to provinces or towns where there aren't many Americans, they have to spend a lot of time getting themselves a decent clean place to live, getting their water supply assured, getting their electricity so they can read at night. These things take time. They may have to scrounge their own food, water, generator and transportation. They're going to have to keep their own vehicle running--they'll have to be mechanics to a certain extent. If they don't grease that vehicle themselves they have to take it to a place where they'll be assured it will get greased or they'll not have it running long. They have to be much more self-reliant and self-sufficient than they can possibly have conceived of being. I can assure them of that.

Assuming they can get themselves so that they can produce a little bit and do something outside their own survival, you might say--they're not going to have any lumber, nails, hammers, shovels, cement, steel, pipe, valves--they're not going to have anything unless they get it themselves. They may have to go to

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Assuming they can get themselves so that they can produce a little bit and do something outside their own survival, you might say--they're not going to have any lumber, nails, hammers, shovels, cement, steel, pipe, valves--they're not going to have anything unless they get it themselves. They may have to go to

Saigon to get it; they'll have to get the trucks to haul it up; they'll have to arrange to have the people to unload it. I can hardly overemphasize the requirements for self-sufficiency and self-reliance and productivity of the individual in these areas. I'd say the shortage of skilled labor, as we call it in the United States, was the biggest problem there. That went across the board in our engineering skills---electricians, mechanics, carpenters, welders, and even masons, although they're better equipped with masons than with any other skilled laborers. The greatest shortages were in mechanics that knew how to handle a gasoline or diesel motor. There is also a terrible lack of tools. What tools they have are not very efficient. Since they don't have the steel-making capacity in their country you might say they just don't have many tools.

Working with the Vietnamese poses another adjustment. I would urge a replacement for me to try to learn as much of the Vietnamese language as possible. I would also urge him to be patient--above all have patience. A few Americans, in a little while are not going to have a tremendous impression on the culture overnight. You've got to be patient and keep trying and trying. Those would be the two primary efforts that I think would be required on your part. Try to be understanding and try to put yourself in their shoes, remembering all the time that they come from a background of lack of resources and lack of almost everything, except possibly food--there's no great lack of food over there at the level of people with whom we deal. The idea of having an automobile or having a pipe that runs water or electric wires in the house are things that are of the wildest luxury from their viewpoint. You get discouraged and frustrated but my advice would be to learn the language and be patient.

In terms of engineering projects, I would say that sanitation is without a doubt the greatest current need in Vietnam. This is really in the area of public health, but we, as sanitary engineers, were quite close to the public health situation. I would also say they need some schools, but sanitation is first. They need sanitation and then schools to teach the kids to use the sanitation.

In talking about sanitary engineering, I'm talking about potable water supply, water treatment, sewer systems, and sewage treatment. Now, sewage is the excrement and the water after it's been through the sanitary facilities--in the U.S. when we use the toilet, etc. it becomes sewage. The sewage then goes into a system of pipes (sewerage) to a treatment plant. The sewers collect the sewage and the sewage is treated in a sewerage treatment. You have to have fresh, potable water and a water distribution system to supply the water in order to convey the sewage out to the treatment plant. It all goes

together--the water supply and sewage. All of our cities in the United States have such a system. Not all of them treat their sewage in the United States and it may be that a lot of towns in Vietnam will not require sewage treatment, but they should have sewerage. They should collect the excrements and the wastes and dispose of them in an economical but sanitary manner--either by dilution in the rivers or ocean or in a settling tank. As in other Oriental countries, the people are so intensely packed together in towns that refugee settlements develop overnight in terribly unsanitary and tightly congested areas that would just be unthinkable in this country. Even in the ghettos in this country, the sanitary conditions are not nearly as bad as the conditions that exist over there.

I personally feel that public works and engineering form really one of the basic areas of difference in the American and Vietnamese cultures. Take sanitation, for instance: we provide potable water--we have the ability to do this. We develop water wells, pumping plants, sewage treatment plants and water distribution systems so that people can drink water out of the faucet. It is all possible--we do it in our culture and we take it for granted. The Vietnamese don't take these things for granted. Another basic thing we take for granted is electric lights. There, when the lights go out you light your candles or use your flashlight. Lights are an engineering or public works function. Highways, bridges, railroads, airfields, even air-conditioning--all these things also develop through engineering and we take all of them for granted. The Vietnamese need and lack so many of these things that it causes a cultural gap between us in materialistic things alone. In the economics and materialistic sense, I feel my work was vital in its attempt to get the environment over there up to the 20th century.

Evaluation of the U.S. Engineering Function in Vietnam

As an engineer and having come up through a great deal of training and experience in the proper design and the preparation of plans and specifications and cost estimating, I felt we were not permitted enough time to prepare good plans and specifications and/or to make estimates of costs, both in time and in money, for the projects we were trying to build over there. We were trying to go about it too fast; this was a serious problem. I realize that the exigencies of the situation and the timing and requirements to try to accomplish something in a hurry--these always exist in an engineering job of any type, but they were particularly intense over there. There was waste--we had to guess at how much money something might cost, based on our experience in a similar situation maybe in a different

country or back here in the States. If we had a big bridge that had been blown out and we had to estimate how long it was going to take, how many people, how much money it was going to take to repair that bridge or if we had to try to build a water system for a town, we had to try to guess what it was going to take in the way of funds, to determine where the best source of water was, how extensive a system to put in, and then to prepare the plans and specifications--we never had enough time or money to adequately prepare for these jobs so that we wouldn't waste money. A little more money spent in designing, planning, studying, preparing, and scheduling the job could have saved a great deal in the long run when you got into the construction phase. We just didn't have time to do it over there--that's why there sometimes was waste and inefficiency and sometimes corruption.

Urgency existed, partly as a result of VC action. They would come in at night and blow up some bridges or a lot of culverts and a section of road. You didn't have time to prepare plans--you just went ahead with what you had to do. You knew you were going to need some culvert pipe, and other materials; you knew you were going to need a lot of labor, dump trucks, graders, rollers, etc. You tried to get them by asking people to try to send them and maybe you get too much out there or maybe it was slow getting out there. Some of it might get diverted or stolen through a lack of guards--if you had time you could plan for guards on the equipment. There are one thousand and one things that can happen on a job that's not thought through well. You might take a wrong alternative in preparing a foundation if you didn't explore it adequately enough. You might develop a water well field that may run dry in two or three years, whereas if you had had time to study it more carefully and do your geological investigations you wouldn't have wasted time and money in building your well field where you did. It just goes on ad infinitum. An experienced person, if he could have a good program of investigation, planning, scheduling, and cost estimating, could save money.

I think--I'm sure I'll be accused of bias and prejudiced judgment here--we need more experienced engineers that can be given more time and more man-hours of experienced engineering effort in the designing, planning, cost estimating, scheduling, and the actual supervision of construction on these projects. It's just about that simple. The more exposure you can get of a good experienced brain to these problems the less inefficiency, the less corruption, and the less waste you are going to have.

The Vietnamese in Engineering Projects

When the Vietnamese built a house themselves, it was really quite an operation. They tried to get some cement from around

the delta and coastal areas. Lumber was very scarce and was not a commodity they knew how to use very well, except for bamboo as stilts for supports. If they were down near a body of water and were refugees they were likely to try to get some bamboo or some wooden posts and stick them out over the stream. If they could scrounge some boards or some matting they'd build a little platform. Then they'd stick up some posts and try to find some flattened beer cans to make siding out of or they'd put on a flimsy wooden or woven mat structure. Sometimes they'd just weave grass mats or wide leaves so they'd have a partition which would cut off the view (which was all it did) and then get a thatched roof over their heads--this would be a hut for them. They'd get a little charcoal burner in one corner and a mat on the floor for sleeping. They'd relieve themselves in the water in the stream and then go right out and wash in it--the stream they were over served as a water supply and a washing facility. That was their house.

The Vietnamese do not have the strange, unusual engineering customs that are hard to change as have been found by Americans in other Asian countries. I don't think I've encountered any phenomenon or practice or any structure that's unique or unusual to their way of doing things in that country.

I was not in the instruction business, but I observed the Vietnamese as trainable. They are quite agile, dexterous, and have good minds. They have a great ability to learn--the most obvious evidence of that is that they apparently can learn our language so much easier than we can learn theirs. They are not strong people, unfortunately. They are small and their strength is limited. They can't put heavy torque on a wrench and they can't lift a heavy crankshaft or something like that, but that is the only limitation on their ability to become good mechanics. They turn out good work but it is hard to teach them maintenance and responsibility for anticipating trouble. This is very hard for them to grasp. If an engine is running, they'll run it until it goes dry and burns up. The idea of shutting down while something is still running and greasing it or changing the filters, etc. is a very difficult thing to get through to them. I think it would be fair to say that the Vietnamese treat everything as being expendable, to be used and used up. I think they treat their horses pretty much that way. They just run them until they drag. They do take pride in their work. I think they're a very proud people. They also have a personal sense of satisfaction in doing good work.

There is a definite shortage of skilled laborers. Some of these stories you hear about having a flat tire and a mechanic jumping out and trying to work on the battery or the starter

were not jokes. They were true. You would have a car break down for an obvious reason and the Vietnamese mechanic would get out and do something that was just wild. There are good training programs for laborers but due to the requirement for people to serve in the Vietnamese army, we had a great deal of difficulty in getting students assigned to these schools.

We instituted a training program in our own engineering section, about 15 kilometers from town at the maintenance center. We had what was called the National Highway Institute, where we tried to train mechanics and equipment operators--bulldozers, graders, cranes, etc. But we had a greater capacity for training students there than we had for obtaining students. We had excellent training aids--we had books translated, we had the proper handbooks and manuals also translated into Vietnamese. We had training films translated into Vietnamese. It was a wonderful school--as good as anything we have in the United States as far as training is concerned. They had carburetors ready to be broken down and re-assembled by the students; they had cut-away parts assemblies, etc., they had engines. They would give several students a diesel engine, let them take it apart and put it together again. This all existed out there but we just couldn't get enough students to put through it.

Sometimes our student body was down to zero. I was out there four or five times in the six weeks before I left and we had a class of 15 surveyors for the civil engineering department in the Highway Directorate. The day I was there they had about 12 mechanics and we had a capacity to handle up to 50 easily at one time. As I say, the largest number of students I ever saw was 12 in mechanics classes and sometimes there were no students at all. We had two American engineers (highly qualified) with a mixed staff of Chinese and Vietnamese to staff this school. We had some good Vietnamese instructors and we had some Taiwan Chinese and some Filipinos. It was hard to keep the Vietnamese instructors because they were drafted.

Observations of the Vietnamese People

I'm not so sure that a few Americans, in a little while, are going to have a tremendous impression on the culture over there. We have to be very patient--above all have to have patience. I think one has to admit that religion is a very basic factor in the difference in cultures of the East and West. One has to be a pretty good student of religion and Oriental cultural history to explain Vietnamese culture to any great extent. I think cleanliness to a certain extent is attached to Christianity, although I may be over generalizing or making a wrong conclusion.

Cleanliness must not be an aspect of the oriental religion at all. Another aspect lacking among the Vietnamese is concern for others. Most are so poor and lacking in material wealth that their principal concern from their very earliest consciousness is for themselves and possibly for their immediate family, but not beyond that. They are intensely self-centered.

I think the Orientals who have traveled widely in the West or have been educated in our institutions are by far the most approachable ones and are the ones who are much more pleasurable to deal with. Those that had not been exposed to Western influences; those that were intensely religious, say from the standpoint of Buddhism or Confucianism; those that had a deeper emotional attachment to the older traditional forms of religion in the Orient, I found a little tougher and a little more difficult to reach, to work with, and to cooperate with than those that had been exposed to Western cultures and social patterns.

I think you've got to realize that to them a friend is a person who will do almost anything for them. Their morals and this business of corruption, etc., is rather alien to their way of thinking. A person should benefit from a transaction or a friendship--this is just the normal way the oriental minds work--it is expected. Most of the people we dealt with knew that we had a different sense of values and that honesty and integrity were important to us.

The oriental mind is a little bit elusive; it's not as inclined to approach things head-on and try to solve them; it's not as inclined to try to figure out how to do something, it's more inclined to figure out how to avoid having to do something that requires work or effort or that may be difficult. The oriental mind is inclined to just to try to exist until tomorrow, you might say. There are probably good reasons why this has developed. They are less inclined to think of the long-range benefits of a certain line of action; they are more inclined to think of it in terms of their own family or their immediate surroundings or their own location. The broader and the long range aspects of any line of action are not nearly as attractive to them nor as acceptable nor as likely to occur to them as they are to us.

I have done some socializing with the Vietnamese a time or two--not too much, not as much as I would have liked. I would have liked to know them better. I have been in the homes of at least four officials. One in Da Nang, one in Nha Trang, and two in Saigon. A couple of them have entertained me in their homes and then several of the ministers have had me to dinners--

more or less business and official affairs in the evenings. I was getting to know them better but I didn't have any of them who were friendly yet--but they were friendly officially. The one that I was exposed to the most was recently named Minister of Public Works and I feel that I was beginning to achieve a rapport with him. It was a little difficult to gain rapport with them because of the language barrier. This was something that was always present and they were naturally shy and, as I said, self-centered people. They always seemed a little suspicious. You could never tell quite what they were thinking. Social affairs were usually stag; they kept their women very much in the background--but not their children. They seemed to like to have their children be exposed to Western influences. I found that the ones I dealt with seemed to be quite flexible, pleasant, amenable, and accommodating. They seemed to me to be trying. Of course, they realized they were benefiting tremendously. We were very generous with them and I think they appreciated this.