

Higher Education in Vietnam:  
United States Agency for International Development  
Contract in Education,  
Wisconsin State University – Stevens Point and  
Republic of Vietnam

The Wisconsin Contract in Higher Education and other USAID/ Wisconsin Team Efforts

By Thomas Charles Reich  
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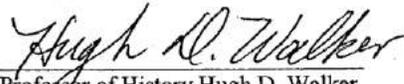
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This thesis is approved for X (6) hours of credit.

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President Lyndon Baines Johnson with Vietnamese University Rectors (seated)  
USAID officials and WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus (standing)

This thesis is dedicated to my mother,  
Betty X. Reich  
January 1, 1915 – July 5, 2001

Her educational courage and wisdom were only exceeded by the unquestioning love and support which she always gave to me.

## ABSTRACT

“Higher Education in Vietnam: USAID Contract in Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and Republic of Vietnam”

Thomas C. Reich

This thesis explores an important but little known facet of America’s war in Vietnam: the U.S. effort to reform the South Vietnamese system of higher education as part of the broader “nation-building” process in the fledgling Republic of Vietnam (RVN). Specifically it examines the interaction among Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point (now the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the government of South Vietnam to implement change. The study is based on extensive research in manuscript materials relating to the education mission in the UW-Stevens Point Archives, on oral history interviews with key participants, and on a broad range of other primary and secondary works on Vietnamese history and education, U.S. foreign policy, and America’s general effort to implement nation-building during the Cold War era.

After a brief introduction on literature and methodology, the thesis establishes context for the U.S. mission by tracing the history of traditional education in Vietnam from ancient times to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, stressing the strong influence of Chinese Confucian models. Under French colonial rule in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the French revamped higher education along European lines, but skewed it to produce a subordinate Vietnamese administrative class to support French dominance. U.S. involvement with Vietnamese higher education began with the Geneva Accords in 1954, which established an independent RVN, and the onset of the Second Indochina War. In order to bolster South Vietnamese resistance, USAID launched a multifaceted effort to develop education at all levels, contracting with American universities for advice and support. In 1967, USAID recruited President James H. Albertson of WSU-SP to head a group of educators, the original “Wisconsin Team,” to survey and report on colleges and universities in the RVN. Albertson and other members of the team were killed in a plane crash near Da Nang in March, but other WSU-SP personnel completed the survey and later that year the university signed a contract umbrella with USAID and the South Vietnamese government to continue the collaboration.

This agreement launched a six-year program by which WSU-SP was the principal institutional adviser to the South Vietnamese system of higher education. On numerous occasions, WSU-SP administrators visited the RVN, submitting detailed reports that suggested changes in curricula, faculty training, student relations, administration, and organization. Moreover, teams of leading South Vietnamese educators frequently visited the U.S., including extended stays on the WSU-SP campus. Not surprisingly, while emphasizing the importance of developing a Vietnamese blueprint, the thrust of the Wisconsin Team’s advice was to restructure public higher education in the RVN on the model of the American state university system. The Vietnamese were impressed by the organizational structure at the institutional and state system levels. They detected a model for growth from the rapid expansion of American higher education, admiring the independent nature of American universities as campus units that afforded educators and students with most necessities. While motivated in part by institutional ambitions, Wisconsin Team members revealed a strong and sincere ideological commitment to exporting American educational values, improving their Vietnamese counterparts, and widening educational opportunities in the RVN. Although limited success occurred in some areas, such as university record-keeping and administration, wartime conditions inhibited broad changes, and the mission was eventually overwhelmed by events—the gradual withdrawal of U.S. forces, the “cease-fire” of 1973, the diminished funding for USAID contractual obligations in South Vietnam, and the collapse of the RVN during the North Vietnamese Spring Offensive of 1975.

In recent years, indications of the resiliency of mission objectives surfaced with the attempted renewal of educational relations on the part of Vietnamese educators from a unified Vietnam who visited Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 1998.

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Without such special associates, friends, and cohorts one's work or story would be incomplete.

To acknowledge those who have guided, assisted, encouraged and supported my research and writing is perhaps the easiest part of this graduate project. To those with whom I have honed my skills and matured as a historian I offer my deepest acknowledgement and sincere gratitude. Top among these must be the entire University of Wisconsin Department of History, whose faculty and staff has become my extended family, and whose friendship and professionalism have truly demonstrated to me the full meaning of those two prized qualities. My graduate work and studies have taken me through a diverse realm of historiography and apprenticeship with Professors Brewer, Foret, Kent, Lewis, Mertz, Peguero, Pistono, Roberts, Skelton, Walker, Wick, Yonke, and others. Such collegueship and professional acceptance rank among the most valued commodities in both education and life. Chiefly, my special thanks go to my longtime academic adviser Professor William Skelton for his enduring advice, patience, friendship, support and willingness to share his own skills and knowledge, which have proven invaluable as models of proficiency in all realms of American history, authorship in military history, and overall editorial know-how. I wish to thank Dr. Hugh Walker for his outstanding expertise in East Asian history, exposé of Western biases, and great insight of Vietnamese history and culture. Further, I am grateful to Dr. Neil Lewis for his exceptional departmental leadership, support and humanity, and to all for their notable solidarity and encouragement. My thanks also go to Nettie and Jan, two models of efficiency as departmental program assistants and personal allies.

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My acknowledgements extend to others with who I worked and studied as a graduate assistant in the UWSP School of Education. My graduate studies in the SOE were enriched by the emblematic teaching skills of Professor Jay Price and Professor William Kirby, who modeled true openness in terms of innovative teaching methods, ideas and educational research; kind kudos to Dr. Caro, Dr. Cook, Dr. DeHart, Dr. Katzmarek, and to the entire SOE.

My personal recognition and gratitude is everlasting for those who have assisted me in building the foundations of my own chronicle of growth; for the special few who I have lost along the way I say, "*I Wish You Were Here.*" Above all, I thank those who have demonstrated true friendship by being there when needed in times of great success or loss. I acknowledge those who have been there when needed and fortified my statue with the wisdom and edification that has opened both new gates and old doors through which I and others can review and resuscitate responsibilities in history. In many ways, those special few, both mentioned and unmentioned, will always be with me in my life and work.

Education, research, and writing have become true expressions of the solid values I have found in the academic world and of the magnificence of life itself. My many hours of research and writing have been enriched by the efforts by those who have guided and assisted me, and importantly by those who stayed the course before me. The very worth of my project is due to the ideas of those educators who formed the Wisconsin Team and traveled to the other side of the world, to Vietnam, on an educational mission embodied with democratic ideals even as humanity exploded around them. The members of the Wisconsin Team truly sought to extend reform with a humane vision for education and history by bringing forth a semblance of reason and wisdom, during a time of uncontrolled change. In turn, it has become my task to carry forth this vision to others today with my thesis and life. I wish to thank those educators of a different time and

different place, those of this time and place, and those who my pick-up the banner in future times. For this reason, I thank all with whom I have traveled and will travel through history while striving to document and agelessly preserve such eternal values of education and freedom.

As a historian it is not my measure to question fate, but in terms of my thesis project, it is sheer circumstance that the namesake of my workplace, the James H. Albertson Learning Resource Center, is that of the original leader of the Wisconsin State Team. His educational leadership and integrity have left a permanent imprint on the entire university, and the LRC stands daily as a testament of President Albertson's educational and humane prowess. Working and writing within such confines has added a personal meaning to the countless hours I have spent working to articulate the story of the Wisconsin Team, and provided an added strength from which I have drawn daily inspiration and reinforcement. Historically, where would my thesis be without the very visions of educational courage, wisdom, and cultural understanding modeled by the Wisconsin Team? In a sense, one small chapter in educational reform in Stevens Point, in Vietnam, in university-Agency relations, and in American assistance programs across globe stands as a legacy for the work of this man and others associated with the Wisconsin Team, and of those they touched. They looked to open new frontiers in education; they reached for the moon hoping others would shine.

My special thanks go to longtime Wisconsin Team Chief-of-Party, Dr. Burdette Eagon. Dr. Eagon opened his home, educational dexterity and intellect to me, revealing a treasury of project-related resources and educational wisdom. I am indebted to Dr. Eagon for the courtesies extended to me. I feel privileged to have witnessed the paramount of amity and love that Burdette and Sarah Eagon infinitely have spread to countless others, from their educational presence in Stevens Point to the furthest continents of the world. The Eagons' life work, words, and actions constitute a core curriculum for educational righteousness. I turned to Dr. Eagon for historical corroboration and advice, and found a legacy of educational validation.

My gratitude, too, for the time and oral historiography contributions of Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, former Chancellor of WSU-SP/UWSP; Dr. Charles Green, former Chief of the USAID Education Office in Saigon; and Dr. Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, longtime interpreter with the USAID Vietnam Education Division and Educational Assistant to the Wisconsin Team. The work of these and other educators who came together under the auspices of the USAID and Wisconsin Team stands center stage among my acknowledgements. Their reports and reflections have proved to be an invaluable foundation for my thesis.

Irrevocably and eternally, I acknowledge the greatest gift I have received both as a historian and individual, that being the love a son receives from his extraordinary parents. The love my parents displayed for education and public service has and always will direct me on a course dedicated to working for a better world, filled with tolerance, sensitivity and compassion. With my father a lawyer-politician and mother a teacher-counselor, I was nourished on the milk of American political science and fed by a history of teaching, learning, patience, understanding, and a sharing in the construction of knowledge. The unconditional love I received from my father and mother has and will carry me through both challenge and success. It is from my mother's love, in my own heart and mind that I dedicate this thesis to my mother, Betty X. Reich. The unbending sensitivity of my mother's love has left me with the ability and wisdom to thank those around me and given me the purpose of celebrating every day as a gift with the knowledge that we all can make a difference, as we all are makers of history. Some years ago, it was through my studies in history with Professor Skelton that I found a rewarding avenue to rebuild my own generational and family bonds as I embarked on a World War II oral history project with my mother and those of her generation. I found a common ground of history that awaits us all, as we turn to and learn from those from which we are created and supported. I recollect my mother's love and devotion to education and to her sons as I carry my ideals forward. In the same light, I must thank my Aunt Jo Ann Henderson (Jodie), who has truly been a second mother to me, and whose kindness and love, stands second to none.

My own shadows and those of the world around me have faded in and out as I have embarked on a passage from an urban childhood, to a turbulent and radical young adulthood during the war-torn years of the American-Vietnam conflict, to a rural lifestyle in Wisconsin, to a return to the columns of higher education at UWSP and a profession in an academic library. Indeed, life offers a continual path for change through the construction of knowledge. History not only allows each of us to make and interpret events, it offers us an avenue to take stock of the world we all are part of. To acknowledge that we are not trapped in our own history, but that we can learn from life's lessons and do the best we can with our natural and learned abilities in a manner that contributes to those around us. In my personal journey and in my educational pursuits the winds of change have served as agents for growth. As I turn *my back pages*, in the words of another troubadour of the past, "I was so much older then, I younger than that now."<sup>1</sup> For now and all time I thank those who have aided my research and supported me through my educational and ageless experiences.

Finally, I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to the facilities, faculty and staff of the James H. Albertson Center for Learning Resources. Chief among those I wish to acknowledge the friendship and professional wisdom of Axel Schmetzke, whose timely considerations have fortified my stewardship when difficulties came my way. I have grown as a researcher and educator while finding professional derivation through the diversity of my work experiences in various areas of the University Library, including my current responsibilities in Government Documents and Special Collections. A special recognition is due to the collections held in the University Library's Nelis Kampenga Archives and the services provided by InterLibrary Loan, both departments have played key roles in my research.

It is with deep appreciation that I thank these people and areas of support that have made my research possible and enhanced by own vision. These are the people with whom I would

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<sup>1</sup> Dylan, Bob. "My Back Pages," *Another Side of Bob Dylan*, New York: Columbia Records, Inc., 1964.

ford any moat, enter any breach, and explore any frontier, they are the people and areas that unleashed a bounty of resources, support, and guidance with a character embodied by professionalism, educational wisdom, and humanism. Further, to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, I am eternally grateful for providing me opportunities for research and supporting my treatise. For any things that are open to question or criticism I bear all responsibility.

Questions of change, questions of history, and questions of time have cast me on a journey in life in search of a more harmonious world of peace, understanding, and love, with education as its heartbeat. It is with these acknowledgements that I have successfully conducted my extensive thesis research. The worthiness of my project stands as a tribute to those who dedicated their life spirit to an educational mission as members of the Wisconsin Team. Today, may we all stand together as members of such a team.

**Definition of terms/abbreviations**

ARVN: Army of the Republic of Vietnam

BAC I: Baccalaureate First Part Examination, prerequisite to grade 12

BAC II: Baccalaureate Second Part Examination, certification grade 12 graduation

CORDS: Civil Operations and Rural Development Support

DRV: Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)

EWA: Education and World Affairs

FOA: Foreign Operations Administration

ECA: Economic Cooperation Administration

FY: Fiscal Year

GNP: Gross National Product

ICA: International Cooperation Administration

IIAA: Institute of Inter-American Affairs

JUSPAO: Joint United States Public Affairs Office

MACV: Military Assistance Command Vietnam regions of Vietnam

MOE: Ministry of Education (GVN)

MSA: Mutual Security Agency

MSUG: Michigan State (College) University Vietnam Advisory Group

NLF: National Liberation Front

OFAR: Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations

USOM: United States Operations Mission, in the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon

OSS: Office of Strategic Services

RVN: Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam); GVN: Government of Vietnam (South Vietnam)

SEADAG: Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group

SEAREP: Southeast Asia Regional English Project

SEATO: Southeast Asia Treaty Organization

SIU: Southern Illinois University

STEM: Special Technical and Economic Mission, in Saigon

TCA: Technical Cooperation Administration

UF: University of Florida, Florida Team (USAID) Survey of Agricultural education

USAID/AID: United States Agency for International Development/Agency for International Development

USAD: United States Department of Agriculture

USAID/af-274; USAID/vn-77: WSU-SP USAID Contracts in Higher Education

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

VC: Viet Cong

VNQDD: Vietnam Nationalist Party (*Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang*)

Wisconsin Contract: USAID/WSU-SP/RVN Contract in Higher Education; AID/fe-274, vn-77

Wisconsin Team: USAID/WSU-SP/RVN Higher Education Survey Team members.

In January 1967, WSU-SP President James Albertson headed the seven member Wisconsin Team composed of Harry F. Bangsberg, President Bemidji States College, A. Donald Beattie, Dean of the School of Business and Economics, Wisconsin State University-Whitewater, Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard University, Howard G. Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College, Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Programs, University of Illinois-Chicago, and Melvin L. Wall, Head of Plant and Earth Sciences, Wisconsin State University-River Falls. They were joined in Vietnam by Robert LaFollette, USAID Higher Education Advisor, Saigon Office. Traveling together during the final days of their three-month study in Vietnam in March 1967 their airplane crashed in a torrential rain storm killing all members of the team. Within weeks a second Wisconsin Team headed by Dr. Burdette W. Eagon, Dean of the WSU-SP School of Education, embarked on the task of completing the report. Other members of the second Wisconsin Team were: Dr. T.C. Clark, Higher Education Officer, USAID/Education, Washington, D.C.; Dr. J.C. Clevenger, Dean of Students, Washington State University; Dr. Russell G. Davis, Assistant Director of Field Studies, Harvard University; Mr. Earl Seyler, Associate Dean of Admissions and Records, University of Illinois; and Dr. Warren A. Wilson, Higher Education Adviser, on leave from Colorado State University, USAID/Education, Saigon. Eagon went on to work on additional surveys of education in Vietnam as the Wisconsin Team evolved with several groupings of American educators involved with Vietnamese counterparts in educational reform efforts and recommendation reports for Vietnamese education. Importantly, Eagon headed a third Wisconsin Contract Team contracted to study Elementary, Secondary, Vocational-Technical and Adult Educational programs of Vietnam was composed of: Burdette W. Eagon, Chief of Party; W. Harold Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Director of Elementary Schools, Wausau, Wisconsin; Glen C. Atkyns, Assistant Dean of Teacher Education, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut; Willard J. Brandt, Director In-Service and Extension Education, University of Wisconsin-

Milwaukee, Wisconsin; John Furlong, Vice President of University Relations and Development, Wisconsin State University-Stout, Menomonie, Wisconsin; and Fred E. Harris, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio. This team, in combination with their counterparts—the *Vietnamese Committee for Curriculum Revision*—came to be known as the *National Education Study Team*. In the years 1967 – 1974 the Wisconsin Team consisted of consultants associated with the Wisconsin Contract and various contractual extensions; their efforts were coordinated by WSU-SP, as the University maintained 30-40 percent of team membership and enlisted some 60-70 percent of team membership from other American educational institutes.

WSC-SP: Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point

WSU-SP: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point

UWSP: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point



In 1966-1967, USAID recruited President James H. Albertson of WSU-SP to head a group of educators, the original “Wisconsin Team,” to survey and report on colleges and universities in the RVN.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The history of educational development of any country provides researchers with a view of long-remembered moments of inspiration, exhibiting both recognized moments of success and laborious moments of failure. In the study of educational reform, educators and researchers alike can learn from such *past* efforts in educational reform that can strengthen education *today* and in the *future*. Such efforts develop through fresh and creative ideas, and courageous attempts at innovation. Attempts at educational reform often encounter formidable historical barriers to progressive change and face being overwhelmed by the sheer momentum of larger events. By and large, this was a scenario that American universities entered as they sent educators to work as consultants with USAID missions in the Republic of Vietnam from 1966 through 1974.

The Wisconsin Team represents one such effort at change. Traveling to the other side of the world, to Vietnam, the Wisconsin Team dedicated the essence of their educational expertise and human energy to an educational mission assisting a foreign people in building national institutions and modern public universities based on what they hoped would be cultural realism. Their recommendations for the development and reformation of public institutions were deeply connected to what they saw as the essence of Vietnam's history and society, and a people's aspirations to evolve as an independent nation. The Wisconsin Team carried a vision in which such characteristics proved invaluable, but difficult to sustain. The interaction between two peoples and two nations would be tested by the uncertainties of history which accompany an era of war. Yet, even when challenged by the tests of time the educational ideals of the Wisconsin Team stand as a true testament of inventive wisdom.

The Wisconsin Team and its energetic leader, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point President James H. Albertson, accepted their mission without any second guessing. President Albertson and the Wisconsin Team exemplified educational wisdom and a natural vision for

modern education, born from the days of *New Frontiers* and *dominos*. Their ideals would carry on through the tragedy of a fatal plane crash on a stormy Vietnamese mountainside, and grow within the cloudburst of a revolution to contribute to higher education for a unified Vietnam. President Albertson's progressive educational ideals and the follow-up recommendations of the Wisconsin Team remain relevant and consequential for higher education, both locally and globally. With my research, I will show that the Team's educational foresight and astute recommendations for reform in higher education are historically relevant today.

President Albertson and the Wisconsin Team embarked not on a mission of "nation-building," but on a mission, working with their Vietnamese counterparts, to construct social institutions deeply connected to the essence of Vietnamese history, its culture and people. President Albertson's own words ring true of his qualities of leadership and insightful cultural understanding:

My position has been, if they [the USAID] want a blueprint it has to be a Vietnamese blueprint. If they [the Vietnamese] want some help from America we could come in and help provide some guidelines, some areas within which they—then could they divide and we could work with the Vietnamese one-on-one. What it means is getting a team together—and we could decide whether the five or six or four—of educators, people who have a breath experience, who are willing to bend with wind—this is a phrase you see over and over there—who want to work with Vietnamese counterparts and who have some idea of the basic tenets of an educational system, whether it is in Afghanistan or Vietnam or the United States. Then who are willing to take leadership and work these into some guidelines? The country's needs, the educational system needs reorganization; there is no question about that. Whether the country will accept the change and accept the report and put it into operation, it is going to depend upon the team and the extent in which they can work with Vietnamese educators and make it their report, and then make it practical enough for Vietnam that it is workable.<sup>2</sup>

The Albertson mission was based on the free exchange of knowledge and widening of educational opportunity. In Vietnam, such characteristics had long been denied and proved both invaluable and difficult to sustain, as their history had been tarnished by ages of warfare and

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<sup>2</sup> University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Archives, Series 17, UWSP Foundation/USAID Mission Education in Vietnam, Tape 9 #56, "Albertson Tape (1 cassette) on Vietnam," (ca. 1967). James H. Albertson led WSU-SP administrative discussion of USAID contract, Feb. 1967, transcribed by author, 2001.

colonialism. Albertson's vision of reform was to be continued under the leadership of Chief-of-Party Burdette Eagon, WSU-SP Chancellor Lee Sherman Drefyus, and other emerging members of the Wisconsin Team, USAID consultants, and their Vietnamese counterparts

The WSU-SP/USAID contracts in higher education acknowledged elements of different educational strategies, as the Wisconsin Team strove to counsel the Republic of Vietnam on the value of educational policy, and curricular and administrative change. The Team came to recognize that an accurate understanding of Vietnamese educational history called for the modification of past educational strategies in a manner that could truly stimulate new knowledge and new insights. Through this construction, both assessable education and knowledge could become end products of cultural evolution no matter which political philosophy ultimately ruled Vietnam. The Wisconsin Team hypothesized that for public higher education to succeed in the modern world, educational institutions at all levels had to strive to match the needs of a nation with the needs of its individual citizens, regional and cultural differences, and the society as a whole.

Educational change evolves out of previous experiences, both from within a country and from without. Societal forces, such as cultural, political, economic, and social changes, shape the developmental change. In 1916, John Dewey proclaimed that educational developments are in fact "part and parcel of the whole social evolution."<sup>3</sup> Historically, educational changes must be scrutinized in their interrelationship with the evolution of society. This general concept of educational research can be properly applied to the case of Vietnam, a country that has undergone dramatic periods of change in practically every aspect of its social and cultural life. Education, everywhere, can benefit from a restudy of its own formulations for modernization and in the process rediscover solutions.<sup>4</sup>

An examination of underdeveloped societies reveals that educational development is

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<sup>3</sup> John Dewey, *The School and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ryland W. Crary and Louis A. Petrone, *Foundations of Modern Education* (New York: Knopf, 1971), 11.

closely related to other forms of development and that the type of educational system found in a society can determine the way in which the society as a whole will develop and change. This was certainly the case in Vietnam. Critically, Vietnamese higher education during each period of its development endeavored to be functional to the dominant sectors of society from which it derived its reason for being. Well-defined differences in the function of formal education are revealed in the divergent periods of Vietnamese history. The Wisconsin Team recognized the fundamental importance of linking history to cultural and socio-political factors. In my thesis special consideration is given to setting forth this framework as viewed by the United States Agency for International Development and the Wisconsin Team. I found that the Wisconsin Team recommendations for educational reform played a significant role both during and after the period of heightened American involvement in Vietnamese affairs and its civil conflict.

The building of educational institutions in a developing society is a complex and difficult cultural problem. Contemporary cultural, social, and political institutions from established developed nations have historically endeavored to modify or modernize those of lesser-developed states; educational reform has been a historical element of this relationship. In 1940, Kroeder and Kluckhohn put forth the following societal analysis:

...the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas, and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.<sup>5</sup>

The contracts between the USAID and American universities and the Republic of Vietnam represented a distinctive “product of action” in terms of the social and cultural molding cast within the framework of Vietnamese history and society. USAID/WSU-SP educators held a vision of a future with great promise as they sought to assist Vietnamese educators to restructure curriculum and organizational reform in Vietnam’s system of higher education. The university-contract program held a unique position in USAID. The political and governmental crisis of the

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<sup>5</sup> G. Duncan Mitchell, *A Dictionary of Sociology* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975), 47.

times combined to place severe restrictions on the actions and policies necessary for successful institution building and reform during wartime. Yet, the residual effects of the USAID contracts provided higher education and all levels of education in Vietnam with the groundwork that has allowed curriculum to grow and potentially to flourish over time.

The nature of this relationship between Vietnam and the United States is a very complex one, as the cultural, political, and military realities of Vietnamese and American history greatly influenced the character of foreign relations and programs of assistance. Vietnam and America each has endured colonialism, revolution, civil war, and unification—proving, in part, that nations and societies can recuperate. However, while the story of societal change and movement from a traditional to modern society is a constant element of history, there was little commonality between the republics during this transformation. Education strove to be one such commonality.

Education, as a human invention, has a characteristic history, which is reflective of the particular cultural and social environment. Educational change can occur in response to cultural forces and/or as a result of social and political attempts to modify the structure of schooling.

Mitchell's *Dictionary of Sociology* refers to culture as:

that part of the total repertoire of human action (and its products), which is socially...transmitted."<sup>6</sup>

In his book, *Vietnam 1945: The Quest for Power*, David Marr notes,

History is not all epic events: 'small' people...influence the course of affairs...The only truth in history is that there are no historical truths, only an infinite number of experiences...too often...we are caught in a teleological trap...forgetting the standpoint of history as 'becoming'...history as the study of the possible.<sup>7</sup>

Education can build from an understanding of the history of the relations between Vietnam and America in a manner that moves beyond the topics of conflict and war. The consideration of the history of Vietnamese higher education, and its curricular and cultural foundations, provides a deeper insight into this relationship and into its historical context. I seek

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>7</sup> David Marr, *Vietnam 1945: The Quest for Power*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), xxv.

to analyze and add to the body of knowledge that provides a historical context to this topic. It is my quest to document the American experience in Vietnam, in new terms, as it was exemplified by two interacting entities—the higher education system in the Republic of Vietnam and that of Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point (University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point)—that came together in the problematic and calamitous international setting of the Vietnam War.

My examination of these two entities has been set within an overview of the changing environment of higher education in Vietnam, as the culture of this small developing state collided with foreign influences throughout its own history. It was into this history that the Wisconsin Team entered and proved to be one such foreign model, which, unlike its colonial predecessors, offered positive directions to blend with native ideals. The Wisconsin Team worked to institute modern educational reforms, while at the same time calling for the long overdue recognition of Vietnamese cultural values and history. The Wisconsin Team recognized that the only means for real success in educational reforms would occur if reformation was linked to the national needs of Vietnam. Only by satisfying the national need for institutional stability could the eventual universality and autonomy for higher education become a reality.<sup>8</sup>

History can, indeed, contribute to the continued construction of new knowledge, which can foster a sustained discourse concerning the role of higher education in the fundamental institution-building and nation-building processes that are part of the interconnecting stratagem joining the United States and the world's other major powers with newly developing nation-states in the contemporary world.

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<sup>8</sup> History is an important vehicle for understanding the realities of the modern world. Yet, not all approaches to historical study provide a positive legacy to the development of international perspectives. Certain approaches to history aggrandize ethnocentrism and are troublesome to an international frame of reference. In recent years a shifting paradigm has placed an increased emphasis on social history—the understanding of interrelationships between peoples, cultures, nations, and continents that shared in the evolution of crucial concepts, ideas, or events. Appropriately used, this comparative approach highlights the parity of the commonalities in human experience and in the historical development of cultures and nations. This paradigm shift offers hope that novel insights and diligent study will acknowledge past events and recognize both old and new answers to timeless questions.

## Review of Related Works

Aside from works directly related to higher education in Vietnam, I have selected several educational monographs for their relevance to the relationship between education and culture and society. Chief among these is *School and Society*, by Walter Feinberg and Jonas F. Soltis; the authors question basic elements of the relation between school and society while tracking different approaches to educational research.<sup>1</sup> In terms of local history, Justus Paul's *The World is Ours: A History of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point* has proven to be a worthy narrative history of the institution that is the focal point of my thesis. Dr. Paul, Dean of USWP College of Letters and Science, uses his expertise in Wisconsin history and insightful perspective as a faculty member and administrator as he covers the University's administrative history, departmental and faculty development, campus growth and community relations.<sup>2</sup>

I have conducted a comprehensive literature search using a full range of bibliographical tools, indexes and databases. Necessarily, the writing on American involvement in Vietnam continues to grow exponentially, reflecting the significance of the Vietnam War in recent American history. Significantly, the scope of this history has now reached beyond viewing Vietnam as our war, beyond a simplified historically contained version of Vietnam, to recognition of its own culture and history. In terms of my research, a review of the literature related to the development of higher education in Vietnam reveals a significant collateral base of information. My search revealed an emergent underpinning of published works related to the history of higher education in Vietnam, which I used to set the historical context of my thesis. Numerous works measure educational development both in Vietnam prior to the division of the country and subsequently in South and North Vietnam singly. Correspondingly, until recent times, there had been little emphasis placed on connecting the current status of higher education in Vietnam to its

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Feinberg and Jonas F. Soltis, *School and Society* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Justus Paul, *The World is Ours*, (Stevens Point: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Foundation Press, 1994).

past history. This limitation is now changing as the growing worldwide acceptance of unified Vietnam has broken the barriers of isolation, and governments of both the United States and Vietnam are now releasing information previously classified as Top Secret. Also, the government of Vietnam now has cooperated with authors who have published several studies specifically focusing on higher education in contemporary Vietnamese society.

Prior to the 1950's, the evolution of higher education in Vietnam had been critiqued in an abridged style in certain general early analyses of Southeast Asia. First among these, were *Educational Progress in Southeast Asia*, by John Furnivall,<sup>3</sup> and *Cultural Institutions and Educational Policy in Southeast Asia*, by Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff.<sup>4</sup> These studies do provide an initial overview of the Chinese and French influences in a regional analysis, but, as such, they are restricted in their coverage of Vietnamese higher education.

With the increase of American involvement in the 1950's and 1960's, the interest in higher education progressed on a parallel plane with the rise of civilian aid programs. The United States Office of Education sponsored two studies on Vietnamese education: *Education in Viet Nam* (1955) and *Supplement: Higher Education* (1957), both authored by D. C. Lavergne and Abul H. K. Sassani. However, neither of these two studies detailed the development of Vietnamese universities.<sup>5</sup>

Notably, the Education Division of the United States Operations Mission in Saigon sponsored *Higher Education in the Republic of Viet Nam*, a provisional field study conducted by Charles T. Falk in 1956. This was the first thorough study on the historical development of universities in Vietnam, but it paid little attention to the socio-political and cultural factors

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<sup>3</sup> John Furnivall, *Educational Progress in Southeast Asia*, (New York: Institute for Pacific Relations, 1943).

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff. *Cultural Institutions and Educational Policy in Southeast Asia* (New York: International Secretariat, Institute for Pacific Relations, 1948).

<sup>5</sup> D. C. Lavergne and Abul H. K. Sassani, *Education in Viet Nam and Supplement: Higher Education*. (Washington: U.S. department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Division of International Education, 1955, 1957).

affecting their development.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, a Vietnamese report *Higher Education in Viet Nam* (n. d.) by Nguyen Dinh Hoa, also failed to address these elements even though it was presented as part of a Viet Nam Culture Series commissioned by the Vietnamese Department of Education Directorate of Cultural Affairs.<sup>7</sup> Granville S. Hammond's *A Brief Review of the Development of Higher Education in South Viet Nam* again did not examine the historical development of Vietnamese universities within the context of social and cultural forces.<sup>8</sup>

An examination of the evolution of the Agency for International Development's contractual involvement in Vietnam begins to take shape with a number of specific reviews of American university advisory projects. Robert Scigliano and Guy Fox in, *Technical Assistance in Vietnam*, provide an overview of Michigan State University's aid program. This study is a hands-on account of the Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group's technical aid in Vietnamese administrative and security matters between May 1955 and June 1962, a span of operations that closely coincided with the tenure of Ngo Dinh Diem.<sup>9</sup>

John M. Richardson provides a notable framework for the evolution of "Agency-university" contracts with his book, *Partners in Development: An Analysis of AID University Relations 1950-1966*.<sup>10</sup> Philip H. Coombs's works, *Education and Foreign Aid*, *The World Education Crisis* and *The World Crisis in Education*, view the emergence of a world crisis, as education, limited by means and time, attempts to satisfy all the expectations that individuals, societies, and underdeveloped and developed nations bring to contemporary world of education.

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<sup>6</sup> Charles T. Falk, *Higher Education in the Republic of Viet Nam*, (Washington: United States Operations Mission, Education Division, Saigon a provisional field study, 1956).

<sup>7</sup> Nguyen Dinh Hoa, Vietnamese report: *Higher Education in Viet Nam*, Vietnam Culture Series, no. 6, (Saigon: Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Department of Education, 1965).

<sup>8</sup> Granville S. Hammond, *A Brief Review of the Development of Higher Education in South Viet Nam*, (New York: Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, 1967).

<sup>9</sup> Robert Scigliano and Guy H. Fox, *Technical Assistance in Vietnam*, (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1965).

<sup>10</sup> John M. Richardson, *Partners in Development: An Analysis of AID University Relations 1950-1966*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969).

Richardson and Coombs emphasize problems of a political, social and cultural nature.<sup>11</sup>

In 1967, the USAID summoned a team of seven American university administrators, presidents and professors to conduct the field survey of the status of higher education in the Republic of Vietnam. James Albertson, president of Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, headed this team that recommended specific changes in most aspects of higher education in their report entitled: *Public Universities of the Republic of Viet Nam*.<sup>12</sup> The Wisconsin Team, with Burdette W. Eagon, Chief of the Higher Education Survey Team and Dean, College of Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, completed several key follow-up studies during a series of consecutive contracts that ran through 1973.

Other overviews of USAID assistance to Vietnamese higher education include *Higher Education in Vietnam: 1967-1971*, by C. Earle Hoshall, and *Higher Education in Vietnam: 1971-1973*, by Charles B. Green, subsequent officials with the Higher Education Branch of the USAID Mission to Vietnam, Saigon Office. Both of these reports noted little relationship between higher education and the practical needs of Vietnam, recommending dramatic reforms to its structure.<sup>13</sup>

My research located several graduate studies that focus on various USAID contracts between the American universities and the Republic of Vietnam. The Wisconsin Team is mentioned or footnoted in a few of these, but to date it has not been the primary focus of a single study. Vu Trong Phan presents a limited retort to American reforms in a thesis entitled, “Vietnamese Higher Education: Some Crucial Problems and Proposed Solutions,”<sup>14</sup> while, Doan Viet Hoat’s lengthy dissertation measures up to its title, “The Development of Modern Education

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<sup>11</sup> Philip H. Coombs, *Education and Foreign Aid*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); *The World Education Crisis*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968); and *The World Crisis in Education*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Wisconsin State Team, Burdette W. Eagon, Chief of the Higher Education Survey Team, *Public Universities of the Republic of Viet Nam*, (Stevens Point: WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. 1967).

<sup>13</sup> C. Earle Hoshall, *Higher Education in Vietnam: 1967-1971*, (Saigon: USAID, 1971); and Charles B. Green, *Some Current Observations, General Information and Data on Higher Education in Vietnam: 1971-1973*, (Saigon: USAID, 1973).

<sup>14</sup> Vu Trong Phan, “Vietnamese Higher Education: Some Crucial Problems and Proposed Solutions,” (MA thesis: University of Texas, 1970).

in Viet Nam: A Focus on Cultural and Socio-Political Forces.”<sup>15</sup> Michael C. Byron’s dissertation, “An Historical Study of USAID/Ohio University’s Teacher Education Project in the Republic of Vietnam, 1962-1972,” is impressive in its analysis of a unique American educational assistance project and the role of education in national development.<sup>16</sup>

With her dissertation “Franco-Vietnamese Schools, 1918 to 1938,” Gail Paradise Kelly conducted the first comprehensive study of colonial education in Vietnam. Her hypothesis holds that colonial schools could not permanently disrupt Vietnamese culture nor remove those educated over the long-term from the social structure as the schools were a product of their environment. Gail Kelly’s other related works include: *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, and *Education and the Colonial Experience*, co-authored by Phillip Altbach. Her findings provided a valuable foundation from which I garnered a special understanding of “Franco-Vietnamese” education and the reactionary interactions between colonizer and the colonized.<sup>17</sup>

*Education in Vietnam: 1945-1991*, was published as a result of a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contract with Pham Minh Hac (Editor-in-Chief), a representative of the Ministry of Education and Training of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Importantly, this text presents contemporary Vietnamese educational perspectives, as the book is a collection of essays written by Vietnamese scholars detailing landmarks in the development of education during this period [1941-1991].<sup>18</sup>

David Sloper, of the University of New England, and Le Thac Can, of the Vietnamese

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<sup>15</sup> Doan Viet Hoat, “The Development of Modern Education in Viet Nam: A Focus on Cultural and Socio-Political Forces,” (PhD diss.: Florida State University, 1971).

<sup>16</sup> Michael C. Byron, “An Historical Study of USAID/Ohio University’s Teacher Education Project in the Republic of Vietnam, 1962-1972,” (PhD diss.: Ohio University, 1990).

<sup>17</sup> Gail Paradise Kelly, “Franco-Vietnamese Schools, 1918 to 1938,” (PhD diss.: University of Wisconsin, 1975); *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, (New York: AMS Press, 2000); and Gail Kelly and Phillip Altbach *Education and the Colonial Experience*, (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1978).

<sup>18</sup> Pham Minh Hac (Editor-in-Chief), *Education in Vietnam: 1945-1991*, (UNESCO: Ministry of Education and Training of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1991).

National Research Institute for Higher and Vocational Education, published *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*. This is a study of educational issues, persistent structural problems, and aspirations for the future of higher education in Vietnam, compiled by key Vietnamese personnel of both pedagogy and government. Their compositions represent a long-overdue openness and professional analysis, marking an intellectual signpost in the progression of higher education from an environment characterized by social incoherence and political trauma for much of the past century.<sup>19</sup>

“Higher Education for Development: A History of Modern Education in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,” a dissertation written by Paul P. Sauvageau, contemporarily carries forth the development of higher education in Vietnam and the role of human resources into the transition economy of *doi mo*. Sauvageau examines the changing and contradictory demands, functions, and achievements of the Vietnamese university system.<sup>20</sup>

Thao Xuan Tran published a dissertation entitled “Impact of Open Admissions Policies in Vietnam,” in 1998. Thao Xuan Tran, through an examination of historical literature, official reports, documents, and interviews, analyzes the history, implementation, amendment, and termination of student open admissions policy. Thao Xuan Tran notes this was a key attempt at educational reform instituted as the unified socialist Vietnamese government changed policies directed by a centrally planned economy to a market-driven economy.<sup>21</sup>

My review of the related literature reflects several fundamental themes in the history of higher education in Vietnam. Firstly, higher education needs to serve both the state and public sectors, and the economic sector as well. Secondly, higher education institutions are reliant on sufficient funding, personnel, and infrastructure. Thirdly, higher education must diversify its

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<sup>19</sup> David Sloper and Le Thac Can, *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, (Hanoi: Vietnamese National Research Institute for Higher and Vocational Education, 1995).

<sup>20</sup> Paul P. Sauvageau, “Higher Education for Development: A History of Modern Education in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,” (PhD diss.: Harvard, 1996).

<sup>21</sup> Thao Xuan Tran, “Impact of Open Admissions Policies in Vietnam,” (PhD diss.: University of Pennsylvania, 1998).

programs so as to match the different learning needs of its society. Finally, and fourthly, reform has played a historical role, as institutions of higher education have had to restructure their objectives, curriculum, and organization.

The sphere of additional related materials includes archival documents and recorded tapes, memoirs, journal articles, USAID Office of Education briefing materials, resources and other references as cited. My thesis breaks new ground by using an aggregate of materials to illustrate the complex setting of the USAID/WSU-SP/UWSP/RVN contracts in higher education that has to this point not been presented. Further, my research will blend the before mentioned related works with WSU-SP/UWSP contract related documents and the oral history of several of the Wisconsin Team participants.

### **Methodology and Significance of Study**

At this point, for the benefit my readers, I present an explanation of my research methods as my thesis mixes historical and educational research methodologies. I have researched my topic using a wide range of primary and secondary sources, endeavoring to construct a wider context to my thesis. In doing so, I have been able to explore the full depth of the historical context of higher education's changing social and cultural foundations in Vietnam. My research methods have integrated primary documents by integrating with oral history. This approach has assisted me in elucidating the specific higher educational needs addressed by work of the Wisconsin Team within a real-life historical context.

Research has been based upon the prudent analysis of evidence and information assembled among the numerous cited published resources, archival materials, documented data, other primary and secondary sources, as well as interviews, surveys, and direct observations. Primary documents include such materials as administrative documents and contracts, written communiqués, summaries of meetings and evaluations, agency and government charts, surveys, and formal field studies. Archival materials make up the strength of my primary resources, which

include team personnel records, organizational reports, data, and correspondence cataloged in forty-eight boxes held in the Nelis R. Kampenga Archives of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Learning Resource Center.

Archival research yielded organizational outlines of the Wisconsin Team members and their Vietnamese counterparts, memoranda, letters, the project contract, communiqués from the project's chiefs-of-party to Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point administrators, written reports on specific topics by team members, project status and progress reports of assignments by returning participants, evaluation studies and specific recommendations submitted to the USAID, student data and enrollment figures at national universities in the Republic of Vietnam and a chronicle of their pedagogical faculties, and special reports on the in-service seminars held in Stevens Point, Washington, Los Angeles, and Saigon between project team members and their Vietnamese counterparts. Additional project documents include data contained in personal files of Dr. Burdette Eagon and Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, both of whom openly shared materials with me.

Of special note, I have chosen to transcribe an archival tape recording of the final administrative meeting conducted by WSU-SP President James H. Albertson held just prior to his fateful return to Vietnam. From this text of President Albertson's words I was able to get a true feeling and understanding of this educator and the original ideals that set the course for a seven-year relationship between the USAID, WSU-SP/UWSP and the RVN.

The interview and survey component of my research provided a means to draw on the direct experiences and individual perceptions of those who lived the events. Interviews were conducted with key former Wisconsin Team project members and USAID personnel. These included Wisconsin Team leader Dr. Burdette Eagon; Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, former Chancellor WSU-SP; Charles Green, former head education official USAID Saigon Office; and Nguyen Quynh Hoa, Wisconsin Team interpreter and USAID volunteer. In some instances, I sent a modified open-ended questionnaire to those parties with whom personal interviews were

not possible. Also, I was able to enhance my understanding of the local side of Team coordinated Vietnamese observation tours and Team-led seminars with WSU-SP/UWSP Professor of History Hugh D. Walker whose tenure on the Stevens Point campus began in 1965. The strength of my approach to research is its reliance on multiple sources of evidence; the incorporation of oral testimony will bring life to documents and historical narratives. Due to the subjective nature of any study based on oral history, verification is of critical importance in presenting an accurate picture of events.<sup>22</sup> Since the time of their reports, many of the project's other participants have either died or are living at distant or unknown addresses. Oral history's unique value surfaced early on in my research.

My research identified a number of sub-problems to scrutinize. The internal and external political, historical, social and cultural conditions that directly affected USAID projects, all were evaluated. Questions considered include: What were the traditional roots of higher education in Vietnam? What is the legacy of French colonialism in Vietnam, in terms of society and higher education? Was there in Vietnam a traditional resistance to educational change? What were the philosophical and theoretical foundations for higher education in a divided Vietnam? What were/are the possible philosophical and theoretical alternatives? How did the stated goals, recommendations, accomplishments, and visions of the United States Agency for International Development/Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point contracts in education in the Republic of Vietnam represent the times from which they emerged? Did the work of the Wisconsin Team have a lasting imprint on Vietnamese higher education? How can the experiences and lessons of the Wisconsin Team serve as a guideline for future higher education assistance projects to developing nations? My thesis research was conducted in a manner that sought to answer these and other questions, while providing a comprehensive historical narrative of the USAID/WSU-

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<sup>22</sup> The oral history element is designed to enable the researcher to formulate conclusions from information that distinguishes the consanguinity between project members and the Vietnamese and their level of common ground educationally, professionally, and knowledge they had concerning the cultural and historical background of Vietnam's educational system.

SP/UWSP/RVN contracts in higher education.

My exploration of these topics revealed that the dominion of education goes far beyond the walls of its schools, its teachers, and the subjects they teach. In *School and Society*, Feinberg and Soltis acknowledge that, “schools communicate implicit as well as explicit messages to their students.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, education—its practices, curriculum, and organization—directly reflects how a society operates. Following this line of thought, I endeavored to both discern and explain education’s primary relationship to the nature of American and Vietnamese culture and society. It was from this base that educators worked, interacted, and reforms emerged.

In my research, I found that cultural traditions in Vietnam presented a formidable barrier to progressive reforms in higher education. Traditionally, higher education was aimed primarily at preserving and transmitting the wisdom of the past. The ancient taproots of higher education in Vietnam were nurtured from its long association with China. For some 2,000 years Vietnam never completely resisted its giant neighbor to the north. The Vietnamese had borrowed the Chinese model of Confucianism and mandarin bureaucracy, which set high value on intellectual attainment and fostered the production of pedants who followed homogeneous patterns of thought and action, vestiges of which remained into modern times.

Later, French colonialism did little to enfranchise any level of education. France’s own cultural pride and drive for national prestige never fully appreciated the Vietnamese point of view. Indeed, France misunderstood both Vietnamese culture and its history. The French *old school* of thought limited and controlled higher education to such an extent that the enrollment of the University of Hanoi never exceeded 1,100.<sup>24</sup> My examination of the influence and lasting impact of French colonialism on Vietnamese higher education reveals that it linked the problem of administrative collaboration to that of education and its restricted curriculum offerings. To the

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<sup>23</sup> Walter Feinberg and Jonas F. Soltis, *School and Society*, (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), 3.

<sup>24</sup> Higher Education Survey Team, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam, App. A*, (Stevens Point: WSU-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc. 1967), 1-4.

French colonial Vietnamese education served two ends: 1) to supply the natives only with the commensurate knowledge to cooperate with their French protectors, and 2) to win intellectuals to the French cause.

With the partition of Vietnam, higher education's evolutionary position differed in North and South Vietnam. In the north higher education would follow the Soviet model, while in the south it would look to the American system of higher education for reformation. In and of itself, however, higher education did not have a direct causal effect on each republic's future or the outcome of their civil conflict as it instead strove to develop in a more purposeful curriculum centered on expansion and modernization. Nevertheless, higher education could not escape the effects of the expanding war zone in which it operated. Against the backdrop of the wider Vietnam conflict, United States foreign policy rapidly evolved in terms of its technical and educational assistance to the small, independent, underdeveloped nations, newly emerging after years of living under colonial rule. It is within this framework, that my research investigates the contacts between educators from Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the Republic of Vietnam, placing their work into the wider context of Vietnamese history, the documented history of the USAID/WSU-SP/RVN contracts in education, and the general history of the American Vietnam War era.

The investigation of this subject matter reveals the functionalist nature of higher education in Vietnam. This functionalist position held education to be an integral component of society, fundamental to its survival and continuation. Yet, for the functionalist, education was, and is, a tool that serves as an effective means of molding individuals to fit within existing societal norms, practices, and requirements. Tragically, in Vietnam educational policy and curriculum had often been incorporated via external (foreign) forces and influences, which neglected native internal forces and national considerations. The reforms offered by the USAID/WSU-SP/RVN contracts recognized this history and introduced a progressive mission to higher education in Vietnam, with a wider manifesto for the Vietnamese people and their history.

The USAID/WSU-SP/RVN contracts came at a time when WSU-SP President James Albertson had instituted such a new vision for higher education at his home institution in Stevens Point, which sought to expand shared governance, and extend the cultural and international involvement of the University, while pushing for internal curricular changes which placed a greater emphasis on non-western cultures. The international institutional counterparts of higher education in Vietnam and the United States, via WSU-SP, looked to establish a common ground for their experiences with expansion and modernization.



Original seven members of the Wisconsin Team: (front row) Howard Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College; A. Donald Beattie, Dean of the School of Business and Economics, WSU-Whitewater; Harry F. Bangsberg, President Bemidji State College; (back row) Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard University; Melvin L. Wall, Head of Plant and Earth Sciences, WSU-River Falls; James H. Albertson, President WSU-Stevens Point ; Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Programs, University of Illinois-Chicago.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

What shall I write? It must be universal, something to set the mode of life for the coming year, to create the tone and temper of events for my family and my country.

Ah, I have it!

"Hoa Binh" -- Peace. How perfect!



A Vietnamese scholar deeply engrossed in the thoughts of writing wishes for the New Year.

### **Traditional Higher Education**

Southeast Asia has traditionally been a meeting ground of cultures, accompanied by diverse and conflicting religious, economic, and political interests. Before the advent of European colonialism, this region was strongly influenced by India and China. Vietnam was a country least affected by India, as for almost 2,000 years China held a recurrent association with its southern neighbor. Today, Vietnam is far more geographically extensive than in its early history when the Vietnamese were centered on the Red River delta. A gradual push southward by a growing Vietnamese population was shaped by the geographical configuration of the region. Vietnam is bordered on one side by the Eastern Sea (South China Sea) and on the other by the Truong Son mountain range. Present day Vietnam occupies the eastern seaboard stretching the full length of an S shaped peninsula curving into the South China Sea on the southeastern tip of Asia to the Gulf of Siam. The vastly productive Red River delta lies in the north, its flatlands give way to an undulating coast holding small fertile plains punctuated by rocky prominences protruding out to the sea, with a thin coastal strip gradually widening and sloping into the opulent alluvial soil of the Mekong delta.<sup>25</sup>

In many ways, Vietnamese history is more a history of a people than a geographic realm as the Vietnamese have delineated themselves by reactions to influences beyond state borders. The Vietnamese are a people with distinct language and culture of their own. The origins of the Vietnamese and their early history are somewhat obscure, but their willingness to absorb higher culture gave the earliest populace of the Red River valley an important advantage over their itinerant neighbors and piratical Indonesian cousins to the south. Another commonality in Vietnamese history is that while they recognized China's physical and moral dominion, the Vietnamese never lost their disposition as a people to assert their separate identity and persevere against the threat of incursion from the north. Being such apt pupils, they gradually broke the

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<sup>25</sup> Marvin E Gettleman, *Vietnam History, Documents, and Opinions*, (New York: Fawcett Publications, Inc. 1965), 11.

power of the Indianite kingdoms to their south.

Ancient legends hold that Vietnam and its people emerged in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC as the Lord of the Sea —“the Dragon Lord” Lac Long Quan took Au Co, the Woman of the Mountains as his mate. The Vietnamese are a coastal-valley people, as 90 percent reside on land of less than 10 feet of elevation. Prehistorically, however, their culture had its earliest roots in the mountain people in the early state of Au Lac. The Vietnamese are a composite people as in prehistoric times waves of migrations occurred from southwest China and Indonesia. Any scholarly study of Vietnamese history starts with a Chinese base. The Vietnamese began to appear in ancient Chinese records during the third century B.C. with the founding of the kingdom of Nam-Viet by the dissident commander of the Qin army, in 208 B.C. China ruled much of Vietnam as a province for nearly ten centuries. Annexed by the Chinese in 111 B.C., it was ruled as the Chinese province Giao Chi until A.D. 938. A hybrid elite emerged from the amalgamated base.<sup>26</sup>

This long Sino-Vietnamese association resulted in the Vietnamese modifying much of their cultural foundations through the absorption of essentials from China. Advanced agricultural methods for the control of water and cultivation of rice were introduced from China. In Vietnam, the Chinese religions of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism took on a profoundly Vietnamese character. Buddhism offered an alternative ideological and religious reference point to the Taoist and Confucian doctrines introduced from China. Buddhist ideals penetrated deeply among the common people who held that the vital human spirit of long-departed ancestors resided in places where natural forces were most potent. Buddhism and the Buddhist hierarchy fostered natural harmony and political stability in Vietnam as even the Chinese court granted official status to local temples and spirits.<sup>27</sup>

In Vietnam, the development of an administrative structure followed the Chinese modeled mandarin bureaucracy. Customarily, the mandarin state was based on Confucian ethics, a

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<sup>26</sup> David G. Marr, *Vietnam*, (Oxford: Clio Press, 1992), xviii-xix.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, xix-xxi.

single hierarchy of values that monopolized power centering on the culmination of knowledge of the past while establishing norms defined by conformist behavior. This system and its static world-view helped to provide internal order and compensate for discordant economic and social conditions shaped by virtually interminable warfare, but had shortcomings when endeavoring to manage problems aggravated by outside events.

The Vietnamese educational system bore the imprint of Chinese rule and cultural influence. The Vietnamese language and writing style were influenced and enriched by that of the Chinese. These were, however, modified by local pronunciation and characters. Chinese remained the official script until the nineteenth century A.D. The weakening of Chinese central authority produced a series of revolts. Vietnamese noble families and followers held strongholds in the mountains and swampy delta resisting Chinese authority for decades. Following sufficient military success, Ly Bi named himself emperor of Nam Viet, only to be killed in 547 A.D. China's powerful Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.) imposed administrative reforms resulting in the establishment of the Protectorate of An Nam. However, recurrent Vietnamese challenges to the Chinese culminated with a victory at the battle of Bach Dang in 938 A.D., in which Ngo Quyen defeated the Southern Han army, ending direct Chinese rule.

Until the time of the French invasion of Vietnam a central kingship nominally united the country during a period of national independence. Wars between noble families exasperated dynastic efforts, while the threat of external invasion remained in the Red River delta and the need for land for its expanding population pushed the Vietnamese territorial domain southward. Various dynasties held sway during this period, with the most noteworthy being: the Ngo dynasty (939-965), the Dinh (968-980), the early Le (980-1009), the Ly (1009-1225), the Tran (1226-1440), the Ho (1400-1407), the later Le (1428-1778), the Nguyen Hue (1788-1802), and the Nguyen (1802-1945). A series of invasions by Chinese dynasties were repelled, as Le Hoan defeated Sung troops in 981, Tran Hung Dao repulsed the Mongols in 1258, 1285, and 1288, Le

Loi warded off Ming troops in 1428, and Nguyen Hue defeated the Ch`ing army in 1789.<sup>28</sup>

Vietnam, in truth remained a tributary state of China even with the victory in 938 until the time of French conquest. Even Le Loi, established a requisite excise to China to forestall direct intervention, procure the Chinese emperor's blessing, and ensures the simultaneous guarantee of assistance in times of military calamity. The tributary bond with China proved compatible with independence, so too was the extensive acceptance of Chinese political and cultural borrowings.<sup>29</sup>

Education was not developed comprehensively for the duration of the Ngo, Dinh, and Early Le dynasties, as it was limited to private and Buddhist schools. During the Ly dynasty education was centered in the capital Thang Long, [Hanoi], as in 1076 the Ly Court established the Royal College (Quoc Tu Giam) in the Temple of Literature. In 1253, the Tran dynasty established the National Institute of Learning, also in the Temple of Literature. The Royal College persevered into the early twentieth century, having moved to Hue late in the eighteenth century, capital of the Nguyen dynasty. Public schools were established in Vietnam's administrative divisions by an early proclamation of the Ho dynasty, 1400 - 1407. In the fifteenth century, the Le dynasty established public schools in the provinces for young male commoners. By and large, there were three kinds of schools during these periods: the Royal College operating directly under imperial authority; a limited number of public schools in the provinces and districts; and numerous private schools. During its definitive period education was elitist in nature, as few commoners became exceptional scholars. It was a structured system focusing on a series of examinations, with the state managed by scholarly civil servants.<sup>30</sup>

Confucianism, with its emphasis on filial devotion and learning, became a central force in a Vietnamese social order that gave the highest place to the scholar. The principal means for a

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<sup>28</sup> Pham Minh Hac, "The Educational System of Vietnam," in David Sloper, (ed.) *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 43.

<sup>29</sup> Gettleman, 11-13.

<sup>30</sup> Pham Minh Hac, "The Educational System of Vietnam," in Sloper, (ed.) *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, 45.

young man to move upward in the social scale was by education. In ancient Vietnam, the aims of education were in accordance with the social and political structure of the society. Higher education's traditional function was to provide the formal training necessary to prepare young men for the examinations through which they might gain entry to the mandarin state. A more esoteric purpose of education correlated to the cultivation of high moral character molded by an appreciation of the wisdom of the "Golden Past." The program of study focused on the Confucian classics. The opening phrase of *Ta-hsueh* (the *Great Learning*) is a representative example:

The way of learning to be great consists in shining with the illustrious power of moral personality, in making new people, in abiding in the highest goodness.<sup>31</sup>

By centering on Confucian ethics and literary study, the transmission and preservation of wisdom became eternal. The Four Classics and the Five Canons served as the sources for questions in the triennial examinations. In part, the popular motive of being successful in these examinations caused the moral purpose of higher learning to be gradually lost. Tradition held firm from days of antiquity to colonization, with vestiges remaining throughout Vietnamese history, testing both the persistence and limitations of functionalism. Over its history, however, it was from the literati that Vietnam found able leaders to defend its autonomy versus the constant threat from China or to lead resistance movements against the French.<sup>32</sup>

Excluded from the curriculum were practical skills and knowledge, although some courses on ancient poetry, Chinese history, Vietnamese history and military tactics were also taught. Instruction was conducted in the pagodas, homes of scholars, or in a common building provided by the village council. Traditional Vietnam lacked a clear-cut division of educational institutions into primary, secondary schools, and universities. In ancient Vietnam, education was neither closely controlled nor financed by the government except for the Imperial College and a

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<sup>31</sup> E. R. Hughes, *The Great Learning and the Mean-in-Action*, (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1943), 146.

<sup>32</sup> Doan Viet Hoat, "The Development of Modern Education in Vietnam: A Focus on Cultural and Socio-political Forces," (PhD diss.: Florida State University, 1971), 18-20.

few other schools in Hue. Hypothetically, anyone could seek instruction, as there was no age limit for schooling, yet enrollment was minimal and the sons of the mandarins had more opportunity to acquire an education. Buddhist studies gradually gained ground as Vietnam attained its independence from the Chinese, and Buddhist priests instructed the sons of many noble families. Formal instruction culminated in a series of competitive examinations. The first competitive exam was organized by the Ly dynasty in 1075. During the fourteenth century three levels of exams were implemented: 1) *thi huong*, the inter-provincial examination, 2) *thi hoi*, the pre-court competitive exam, and 3) *thi dinh*, exams organized by the royal court; candidates for scholarly rank were tested first in the provinces, then, if successful, in the capital city of Hue, and finally, at the highest level, in the Imperial Palace. Strictly depending upon which of the examinations they passed, successful candidates became low-, middle-, and high-ranking government administrators. The examinations took place every three years, with preset quotas of graduates. The feudal system of Confucian education prevailed through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries until under French occupation the Education Act of 1917 was instituted.<sup>33</sup>

At the highest level of traditional education in Vietnam, students' academic quality was judged in terms of their ability to provide philosophical answers to selected national issues. The best students in ancient Vietnam, like those in China, were multi-talented, studying philosophy, literature, history, medicine, astrology, military strategy, and administration. They developed a practical knowledge that seemed to be functional to the orderly and spiritual society of which they were part. In terms of the relevancy and practicability of formal education in ancient Vietnam, students were not bereft of professional training.<sup>34</sup>

The Vietnamese of the traditional era put a heavier weight on moral conduct and virtues

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<sup>33</sup> Tran Phuoc Duong, "Renovation of Higher Education in Vietnam and a Lesson to Survive Crisis and Prosper," in Phaithun Sinlarat, Chawalert Lertchalolarn, and Panta Chaitiamvong, *The Proceedings of International Conference Reinventing Higher Education*. (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University, 1998), 58-59.

<sup>34</sup> Doan Viet Hoat, 22.

than on the accumulation of wealth and material gain. These morals and virtues were founded on wisdom that was in turn derived from basic Confucian theological knowledge. In such a system it became natural that the intelligentsia (literati) obtained the highest social status over the three other classes (farmers, artisans, merchants). In theory, the mandarinate were recruited from the wider populace, but advanced into a distinct group of officials. As an educated oligarchy it maintained some level of exclusiveness, but for functional purposes it remained accessible to the influence of the non-elite and recruited new personnel from society so as to retain its position of power. Wealthy families had tutors in place, while promising students often found financial sponsors. The mandarin was burdened with debts while visions of enlightenment were fogged by opportunities for profit driven by complacent pedantry and an effusive formalism. It took the work of a lifetime to retain a moral, literary, and philosophical essence that had little bearing on the office one sought. In effect, higher education contributed to an elitist character of leadership within traditional Vietnamese society. The triennial examinations perpetuated a rigorous process of elimination, with many of those who failed quickly filling the ranks of those ready to revolt in opposition to the existing order and the corruption it bred.

In 1487, the royal examination posed “questions on the administration of the country.”<sup>35</sup> Practical issues like intensive agriculture and flood control were addressed during this period. Yet, real administrative reform was not considered until the royal examination of 1865, as King Tu Duc set forth the most critical problems to which he was contemplating answers,

At the present time our nation is frequently stricken by national disasters and food shortages. I am deeply concerned and have not found any solution to these problems. Do they occur because of many mistakes committed by my administration? Or because of the corruption and injustice of the officials, which creates distrust and discontent among the people? It is all my fault to let these things happen due to inadequacy of my knowledge and virtues... Your studies, and your lectures and discussions on economic issues, which you have been diligently doing so far, should not be aimed only at

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<sup>35</sup> Viet Nam Cong Hoa, the royal examination posed “Questions on the administration of the country,” 118 (in Hoat, 1971), 20.

instruction. Think over these problems carefully and express your opinions in sincerity; do not be concerned with superficial ideas neither with pleasing me.<sup>36</sup>

The winning essay of Tran Bich San (1865) pointed out that, because of the incapability and corruption of the mandarins, an improvement was needed in the administrative system. Reform still stressed moral conduct and virtues, rather than pedantic knowledge. Traditional higher education's relative emphasis on philosophy and the classics had not provided for the direct training of individuals in the methods of government.

Beginning in the middle of the sixteenth century Vietnam encountered a long period of disorder and internal change marked by the division of the country and its expansion toward the south. Land-hungry Viets inundated the Red River Valley by the fifteenth century, moving south to defeat the Cham people on the central coast and colonizing the south in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. China had introduced its religious and Confucian doctrine, and its agricultural techniques for the cultivation of rice, and the Chinese language had enriched the Vietnamese vocabulary and historical annals. China had imparted classical attitudes that the Vietnamese were taught to value, but through history the record of Vietnamese triumphs over invading Chinese armies was equally treasured. These external influences and internal replications all contributed to the character of Vietnamese society and the corresponding development of its institutions.

Vietnamese education, by grounding prospective mandarins in the ethical principles that served as the foundations of Vietnamese society, neglected technical and vocational education. The emphasis on the triennial examinations had a profound influence on the content and the goals of all levels of education in Vietnam. By culminating in a series of mandarin [civil service] examinations, attainment through higher education was limited by its philosophical and absolutist nature. The number of graduates was set in advance by imperial edicts. For aspiring young

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<sup>36</sup> Nguyen Van Truong, "Essay Subject for the Royal Examination in the Year At Suu in the Reign of King Tu Duc," in Van Hoa A Chau, (Asian Culture), New Series, Vol. III, No. 9, Dec. 1960, 129, (in Hoat, 1971), 20-21.

males, acquiring the mantle of a governmental official was often the only pathway to prestige and power. In traditional Vietnam, rather than encouraging the creative abilities of members of society, intellectual despotism set higher education's greatest responsibility was the maintenance of the status quo.<sup>37</sup>

Higher education in traditional Vietnam failed in this respect to meet the interests, needs, and abilities of the majority of the people. Traditional Vietnamese higher education lacked the conceptual tools for solving problems; its philosophical confines instead reflected societal indecision and cultural paradoxes. This lack of adaptability by the mandarin class, who firmly opposed social change and technical progress, facilitated the eventual inaction as the French imposed their rule over the Vietnamese.

The French would use to their advantage this inherent weakness of the essentially conservative function of higher education and educational organization. Yet, education stood in waiting as a transmitter of cultural tradition and innovation and change as social values. In the nineteenth century another period of changes and disorders—a period of contact with the West—had a lasting impact on education in Vietnam and its curriculum, the societal forces it reflected, and a growing national identity for Vietnam.

### **French Colonial Rule and Its Lasting Influence**

As noted, Vietnamese history is a chronicle of a people dominated by conflict external and internal in nature. This conflict whetted the Vietnamese sense of identity. Their ancient history is a record of war with the Chinese and Chinese predominance from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, B.C., to 938 A.D., at which time the ultimate attempt of the Chinese to seize the Red River Delta was repelled. Through the fifteenth century, A.D., Vietnam often deferred to the Chinese, but assiduously asserted its own national identity against these same Chinese, the Mongols of Kublai Khan, and then with similar fortitude against European aggressors. During the sixteenth century

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<sup>37</sup> Vu Trong Phan, "Vietnamese Higher Education: Some Crucial Problems and Proposed Solutions," (Austin: University of Texas Press, thesis, December, 1970), 9-11.

western influence had permeated into the region. The western convention of supplying military support and advisers to the Vietnamese began as the Portuguese aided the Nguyen faction in its war against the Trinh faction who linked up with the Dutch. The Trinh held possession of the capital and controlled the agricultural base of the Red River delta, while the Nguyen possessed the port at Hoi An (south of present-day Da Nang), a strong source of income and technical enrichment during a time of rapid commercial expansion across Asia. The conflict was finally resolved with a truce at the end of the seventeenth century. The Dutch, English, and French joined the Portuguese in an unbridled competition for trade in Vietnam, with the French to emerge as the dominant foreign entity. Yet, the Chinese continued to dominate trade with Vietnam through the eighteenth century. In 1771, three brothers in the village of Tay Son initiated an insurgent movement that unfolded with the collapse of both the Trinh and Nguyen. With millenarian undercurrents, the Tay Son movement promised the punishment of autocratic mandarins, more general prosperity, and justice and equality. The most able of the brothers, Nguyen Hue, proclaimed himself ruler under the name Quang Trung and captured Hanoi on the eve of TET in 1789. He published a host of edicts aimed at revitalization of agriculture, management of a new census, reorganization of taxes, and the replacement of classical Chinese in official communiqué and educational functions with the incorporation of *nom*, the demotic writing system. Quang Trung's untimely death at the age of forty, in 1792, ended dynastic plans, spawning court factionalism and causing Tay Son leadership to decline into limited spheres of regional hegemony. By the early nineteenth century, the French assisted Emperor Gia Long in the deposition of the Tay Son dynasty.

During the nineteenth century, Vietnam was swept into disarray by its second major external influence—colonization by the French. The intrusion of French culture signaled the retreat of traditional higher education in Vietnam. The desirability of a French military outpost in Southeast Asia had evolved out of a skeletal idea with vague principles born from strategic considerations. Vietnam had nominally managed to sustain its independence until the French

gradually secured all of Indochina as a colony between 1858 and 1900. French administrative control of Vietnam was divided into three regions—Tonkin, the north; Annam, the center; and Cochinchina, the south. Each was given different status, as Tonkin and Annam were designated as French protectorates, and Cochinchina declared a French colony. French governmental policies, however, were similar for Vietnam as a whole. As the two cultures interacted and clashed fatefully, civil conflicts and colonial restrictions continued to aggravate the development of educational policy and its institutions.

Three entities originally directed French involvement in Vietnam: the Paris Missionary Society, the Paris Geographic Society, and the French Navy. In time, two groups epitomized French colonization in Vietnam: 1) the *colons*, French businessmen, such as bankers, merchants, land speculators, and plantation owners; and 2) different French functionaries who filled the growing ranks of profitable colonial administrative positions. The earliest French civilians were infamous adventurers and those attracted by opportunities to profit in arms trade. Political patronage was extended to individuals not qualified or talented enough to hold office in the homeland to fill administrative offices vacated by the uncooperative Vietnamese.<sup>38</sup> Inspectors of Native Affairs replaced mandarins, wielding power arbitrarily. Artificially created administrators had a talent for abuse. Hostilities throughout Vietnam caused the decline of the protectorate mode of government and its replacement with the doctrine of direct administration. Most evidence of the traditional administrative system vanished with the destruction of records and tax registers by the flight of mandarins being replaced by the French military and officials who lacked any previous knowledge of the Vietnamese frame of mind. Vietnamese civilization was an unknown quantity to the French, whose colonial history abounded in a cycle of crises resultant from protracted negligence of fundamental reforms.<sup>39</sup>

The primary antecedents of French domination in Vietnam can be traced to the Roman

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<sup>38</sup> Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled, Vol. I From Colonialism to the Vietminh*, (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc. 1967), 3-4

<sup>39</sup> Virginia Thompson, *French Indochina*, (New York: Octagon Books, 1937, reprinted 1968), 58-59.

Catholic missionary activities during the 1780's. In the sixteenth century Spanish priests struggled to secure converts in Vietnam. In 1615, the brief appearance of a group of Jesuits sponsored by Portuguese merchants marked the beginning of long-term changes. Jesuit Christopher Borri wrote the first Western depiction of Vietnam and the Vietnamese people. The French Jesuit priest Alexandre de Rhodes built upon Borri's inroads, by training a large number of lay priests, baptizing thousands of Vietnamese, and codifying the Vietnamese language into a phonetic Roman script, *quoc ngu*, while compiling bilingual dictionaries and catechisms. More than a 100,000 Vietnamese had converted to Catholicism by the end of the seventeenth century, but further expansion of the new credo met with strong governmental disapproval, adopting policies of persecution, expulsion, and execution. Only with the advent of French colonization did Catholicism rise upward again after 1860.<sup>40</sup>

French missionaries had increasingly played a critical role in the developing relationship between the French and Vietnamese. Missionaries lobbied for military protection, while the navy pushed for privileges equal to those of the British, and French merchants demanded possessions comparable to Hong Kong and Singapore. France moved to establish in Indochina a position other European powers were acquiring elsewhere in Asia. By 1843 the French fleet had been permanently deployed in Asian waters. In 1852, France conducted a series of military expeditions in support of its religious missions and to gain trade concessions. An imperial ban had not stopped missionary activity in Vietnam. In fact, the missionaries became more militant and looked to their government for support, as some of their number were imprisoned or executed and periodic persecution of Vietnamese Christians occurred.

In 1857, Louis Napoleon employed French participation in the Second Anglo-Chinese War as an instrument for instituting the French flag in Southeast Asia. In 1858, Admiral Rigault de Genouilly commanded the French fleet, first bombarding Da Nang, and then capturing Saigon

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<sup>40</sup> Marr, *Vietnam*, xxvi.

with the defeat of the Vietnamese army at the battle of Ky Hoa in 1861. In 1862, under the Treaty of Saigon, Vietnam granted the French broad economic, political, and religious concessions, and ceded the three eastern provinces of Cochinchina to France. By 1867, France annexed the western provinces of Cochinchina. The French found that the rapids of the Mekong River made it unsuitable as a trade route to China, so they turned their attention to the Red River. In 1874 a treaty gave French traders exclusive rights to the Red River, but the value of this concession was nullified by the actions of Chinese pirates. Economic constraints mandated the recruitment of Vietnamese as administrative staff. In 1861, the College of Interpreters opened as the first French-supported school in Indochina; it later grew to be the Lycee Chausseleoup-Laubat.

As it took two decades for the French to complete their conquest of Vietnam, colonial administrative control was uneven. Finally in 1883, a French expeditionary force brought Vietnam under French rule, formally ending Vietnam's independence. With the Treaty of Hue, in 1883, France established a protectorate over Annam and Tonkin and took control of Cochinchina as a colony. In 1887, France created the Union Indo-Chinoise, administratively unifying the Vietnamese states of Cochinchina (southern), Annam (central), Tonkin (northern), and Cambodia. Cambodia had been a French protectorate since 1883, and in 1893, and Laos was annexed by France and added to the Union. A French governor general, being directly responsible to the Ministry of Colonies in Paris, administered the Union.

The French retained the feudal system of Confucian education during the early stages of colonialism. By 1900, the French had firmly influenced every element of Vietnamese society. Administration was superimposed from the center. Governor-General Paul Doumer consolidated political power by unifying colonial services and establishing a general budget for the whole of French Indochina—laying the foundations for economic exploitation, by raising the head tax on Vietnamese subjects by five hundred percent. Doumer was widely heralded in France and the West for his ambitious public works projects, railways, and “successful” economic programs. Yet, the colony did not exist for its own sake but for the sake of the mother country.

Under the impact of colonialism the values of traditional Vietnamese education swiftly declined. For the colonizing power education became a method for training collaborators and a means for the moral conquest of the native population. For the indigenous people, education served as a method for gaining insight into a foreign civilization and a possible means for emancipation. For both parties, education cross-culturally led to either mutual understanding or ineradicable aversion. The French ideals *de civilisation* functionally set the structure of schools to serve colonial self-interests, by both ignoring and rejecting traditional Vietnamese cultural values. In doing so, French-colonial educational policy imposed its own brand of institutional racism. It viewed native culture, traditions and history as inferior and disadvantageous to the society it sought to institute. In Cochinchina, the French moved most rapidly from military occupation to a policy of assimilation and direct administration. They set forth to destroy the mandarin administrative network and abolish traditional education. French ideas of fraternity, liberty, and equality preordained a different equation to shape colonies after its own image. French bureaucracy looked to divide the spoils of the region and breach any creed of assimilation. Native law was to be retained for suits between indigenous people, but justice was arbitrary with the colonial governor's approbation for fixed penalties buttressed by tight resources and the lack of trained collaborators needed to put republican ideas into custom.<sup>41</sup>

A primary obstacle to making higher education "public education" in colonial Vietnam was the French language. The French, effectively, closed the door of higher education to the majority of Vietnamese people by enforcing the use of the French as the standard language in secondary and higher education. A second obstacle for access to higher education was economic. Simply put, not many students could afford higher education. In addition, the development of higher education constituted a very small part of the colonial budget.

Major curriculum changes occurred, as the French colons replaced the Confucian system

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<sup>41</sup> Thompson, *French Indochina*, 60.

with schools of French lycee education. At first the French replaced Chinese characters and writing style with *quoc ngu* as it was easier to learn and it enabled the French to exercise control over Vietnamese publications. The French viewed this as an efficient tool for control by colonial authorities and cultural advancement, training interpreters in French and *quoc ngu*. *Quoc ngu* had the political function of cutting the Vietnamese off from Chinese influence and accustoming their thought to Western ways. It was an instrument for mass literacy as it permitted students to write Vietnamese in several months, while it took a lifetime to become versed in Chinese characters. Yet, *quoc ngu* proved inappropriate for the expression of abstract ideas and the more scholarly language employed in secondary and higher education. The French disapproved of any reversion to Chinese, a culture the French viewed as stagnated. Instead, they opted for French to become Vietnamese higher education's primary language.<sup>42</sup>

Early on, missionary antagonism exaggerated mandarin abuses of power and cultivated official distrust for the *scholar* group. The advent of the French regime in Indochina brought with it a highly centralized bureaucracy that undermined the parallel mandarinate. Vietnam's mandarinate had been built not by the sword but by a scaffolding of merit and morals; privilege was offset by responsibilities in a microscopic reproduction of imperial authority. The self-effacing scholar-official was to devote himself to studies and the welfare of the people. Over time, this turned out to be too austere of a principle. With the French conquest, the French admirals were absorbed with administrative and economic considerations, instilling abstract assimilation theory, while putting a practical emphasis on the training of government clerks and interpreters.

Initially education was no longer voluntary, as villagers were "required" to send their children to the French schools. In *Revue Indochinoise*, CL. E. Maitre notes one contemporary French administrator who testified that, "Students were recruited like soldiers, and instruction

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 284.

was like a tax form.”<sup>43</sup> Yet, any substantial revival of the traditional higher education was prohibited by the French pursuit of making colonial peoples French. This policy met with little success; instead it sufficiently damaged the traditional system of education while failing to provide new schools. Despite French claims of increasingly providing some form of education, French intervention had exacting negative results. In pre-colonial Vietnam some eighty percent of the Vietnamese had some level of literacy. Mass education ceased as the native scholars and mandarins disappeared and the French admirals choose to train only clerks and interpreters.<sup>44</sup> By the 1920’s, just one in twelve boys was literate, and just one out of one hundred Vietnamese girls was admitted to any type of school.<sup>45</sup>

Early colonial educational policy lacked unity and chaos prevailed, with several regionally based educational systems emerging in Cochinchina, Tonkin, and Annam. The main commonality was that top priority was given to sustaining civil peace. Initially, the French colonial officials did not object to indigenous schools if the system and its teachers would desist from political action. It was in Cochinchina that the French took their first actions modifying educational policy. While politically controlling all the internal and external matters in Annam and Tonkin, the French chose initially to preserve the administrative network and traditional education in these regions. New schools were established in these regions, but only to meet the needs of the French administration. These needs, which supported French norms, included the education of French children, training interpreters, and the provision of French-speaking mandarins.

Over the period of French colonization, the theory of assimilation gradually replaced that of association. The advocates of assimilation recommended transforming and modernizing native institutions, rather than destroying them. Cooperation of the indigenous population, especially its

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<sup>43</sup> CL. E. Maitre, “L’Eseignement Indigene dans l’Indochine Annamite,” *Revue Indochinoise*, No. 64, August 30, 1907, p. 1139, (in Hoat, 1971), 35.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled*, Vol. I, 46-47.

<sup>45</sup> Thompson, *French Indochina*, 286, 293.

leading elite, was to be secured to achieve the main objective of colonization, developing the colony for the benefit of the mother country.

Institutional racism thrived in this association of peoples [and races]; each would do what its capacities could best offer. The native population was to believe in the “civilizing” mission of France and blissfully accept French protection. It was at this point in the history of Vietnam that a lasting resistance movement emerged, driven by a reaction to an external culture. Winning the “hearts and minds” of the native people was considered as educationally fundamental to the success of the policy of cooperation through association. French policy would have the long-term effect of alienating colonials from the local people whose cooperation was deemed to be the “secret” of the economy. Education created little sense of belonging or virtue; colonial policy gave little credence to such values. Education offered no avenue for the resolution of personal or national issues. Cultural discord increased as civil conflict gripped Vietnam.<sup>46</sup>

The consequence of French colonial policy was the ruin of the Confucian-based authority systems of mandarin administration and education. In the absence of an effective alternative system, individualism ran wild. Accustomed to high mandarinal participation and control, which had been achieved through accomplishments in competitive examination, the Vietnamese were acutely aware by contrast of their loss of direction and participation in decision-making. Intellect and education were the primary commodities that traditional Vietnamese had treasured within Confucian social hierarchy. The logic of that hierarchy had reinforced the functional nature of social norms. The selection of high administrative positions by bribery or foreign patronage, rather than ability or knowledge, now became the colonial standard.

Well-defined differences in the function of higher education were replicated in the divergent role that education as a social institution had assumed in the varied periods of pre-colonial and French colonial history in Vietnam. Education provided the central means of

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<sup>46</sup> Jules Harmand, “le Problem de l’ Instruction Publique on Indochine,” *Revue Politique et Litteraire*, (*Revue Blue*), March 16, 1908, in Hoat (1971), 59.

moving above the subsistence level for Vietnamese. Traditionally, positions with the highest status were those necessitating the highest level of education. The community canonized local intellectuals. Families recognized that teachers had been as meaningful an influence in their lives as had their ancestors. At Tet (the lunar New Year), each family set a place at the table for the teacher, just as it did for its forebears.<sup>47</sup> Traditionally, life has been largely rural based in Vietnam with the fundamental social and administrative unit being the village, an almost autonomous unit, facilitating rice cultivation while satisfying economic, political, religious, and social necessities. The French meddled with this traditional base, breaking the hallowed network of Vietnamese society and failing to recognize the significance of old Vietnamese lore that had declared, “The Emperor’s writ stops at the bamboo hedge [of the village].”<sup>48</sup>

Any comparison of pre-colonial and colonial history offers a picture of two different patterns of cultural and curriculum development. Conflicting growth accompanied the bureaucratic compartmentalization commensurate with French intervention. French colonial compartmentalization meant a relative lack of economic and social intercourse, threatening the very fabric upon which society is built—social mobility. In terms of centuries-old traditions, education had been the pathway to the mandarin. From the period of the first contacts French educational authorities faced innumerable difficulties in Vietnam. A paucity of teachers and an unevenly distributed population added to the strain on expenditures and curriculum development. While traditional Vietnamese culture was characterized by its distinct selective adaptability, colonialism stirred particular cultural transformations in Vietnam, in which the problems of administrative collaboration became closely linked to those of education. The colonials schemed to tolerate a native intelligentsia that maintained its traditional cultural base and evolved under

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<sup>47</sup> Moncrieff Cochran, “Education, Social Conflict and Foreign Policy in Vietnam,” *Occasional Papers No. 3 Study Group on Education and Nation-Building*, (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1970), 7-8.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard B. Fall, *Last Reflections On a War*, (Garden City: Doubleday & Company, 1967), 45.

French tutelage, but held it would be ill-advised to demonstrate any ideas of political liberty.<sup>49</sup> Colonial educational policy was the result of complicated interaction between French colonial officials, French residents—colons—and dissimilar echelons of the Vietnamese social order. As previously noted, to the French colons education served two purposes: 1) to equip the Vietnamese with sufficient knowledge to collaborate with their colonial protectors, and 2) to win a Vietnamese intellectual elite to the French cause, while not simultaneously training the masses for citizenship.<sup>50</sup>

In 1906, French Governor-General Paul Beau spoke of earning the respect from the Vietnamese people as in “the feeling of students for teachers who instruct them.”<sup>51</sup> This teacher-student relationship, however, stood in stark contrast to the distant past, taking on an entirely new meaning during the colonial period as the Vietnamese were subjected to a system of institutional racism in which they were deemed to receive only an education that was suited to their subordinate mental ability. In 1903, a French administrator of the civil services in Indochina spoke of a policy of association by stressing,

...it will be in vain to want to change anything in the Annamese society... Indeed, we shall not attempt, through instruction, to raise the Annamese to our intellectual level. There are in the cerebral organization of races the limits that cannot be passed.<sup>52</sup>

A true public education system did not exist in French-colonial Vietnam. “Publicly-supported” elementary schools were located in provincial capitals, but they were open only to selected Vietnamese children—those of military officers and civil servants. Primary education was the equivalent of half or less of the length of today’s elementary education. Programs consisting of one or two grades of primary education were established in villages with substantial populations. Some district capitals had six-year schools. Vietnam’s largest cities had schools of

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<sup>49</sup> Nguyen Dinh Hoa, *Higher Education in Vietnam from the early French conquest to the Japanese Occupation*, (New York: New York University-School of Education, 1948), 3-6.

<sup>50</sup> Hoat, 60.

<sup>51</sup> Paul Beau, “Discours de M. Beau,” 1903, (in Hoat, 1971), 61.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

higher elementary education equivalent to lower secondary education; only Hanoi, Hue, and Saigon had schools of upper level secondary education. Generally, secondary education was available only through private schools and only to the elite class who could afford the costs of private schooling. Only the elite of these children were sent to France for additional secondary and higher education.

Existing schools were modeled in-part after those of nineteenth century France, with the curriculum emphasizing classical academic subjects. A series of examinations began as children were admitted to the third grade. Those children who could not qualify through this examination were eliminated from additional formal education. Admission examinations were held every year, with children being subject to elimination at the fifth, ninth, and eleventh grade. Children who qualified for the twelfth year of school were considered well prepared for higher education; yet few actually completed the twelfth year due to a very rigid final examination.

Economic barriers prevented most Vietnamese from studying abroad in France, but the lack of higher education institutions in Indochina set off an exodus of Vietnamese students toward Japan and Hong Kong. Japan, had absorbed ideas from the West and having defeated the Russian forces in the Russo-Japanese War, emerged as a western-style power. Japan's victory served notice on the presupposed limits "in the cerebral organization of races" and intended "moral conquest" of Beau and others. In 1905, inspired by the Japanese victory, dissident Phan Boi Chau traveled to Japan where he wrote *Viet Nam Vong Quoc Su* (History of the Loss of Vietnam), which had a lasting impact on the Vietnamese literati. Phan Boi Chau had placed first in the mandarinal examinations at Hue, but refused a governmental position and was exiled to China. Phan Boi Chau's published a series of nationalistic pamphlets analyzing Vietnam's loss of independence and calling for Vietnamese students to come to Japan and study Western methods of science, industry, and political action.<sup>53</sup> French administrators reacted in Vietnam,

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<sup>53</sup> B. Scott McConnell, *Not Collaborators, But Rebels: The Education of Vietnamese Students in France, 1919-1939*, (New York: Columbia University, 1987), 28-30.

seeking to solidify their position and cut the possible influence of Asian neighbors and nationalist ideas. In 1907, the French shut down the Dong Kinh Nghia Thuc, a private free school in Hanoi, only ten months after it had been established by Vietnamese intellectuals. The 10 June 1907 Franco-Japanese Treaty recognized both nations' "situational and territorial rights" on the Asian continent. The French viewed any prolonged exposure to Asian higher educational institutions as a threat that could cause possible political dangers, with the Vietnamese subject to a different foreign influence. Japan, itself, would continue to look outward for resources and territory, even looking toward Vietnam where it would encounter strong native resistance.

In Vietnam, the French had made little provision for the study of science in the colonial schools. The irreconcilable facade of "Franco-Vietnamese education," was exposed by Gail Paradise Kelly's groundbreaking historical research of colonial Vietnam. It was Kelly who first coined term "Franco-Vietnamese education," previously called Indochinese or Franco-native education. Kelly notes that the particulars of this period were such that they superseded any organic rationale of functionalism, as in colonial society one political system and culture dominated another, with interactions between colonizer and the colonized being unharmonious. Yet, Kelly's hypothesis holds that colonial schools did not permanently disrupt Vietnamese culture or remove those educated over the long-term from the social structure, as the schools were a product of their total environment. By nurturing uneven regional and educational development, colonial administrative infrastructure undermined national ties and integration. Kelly's study of the Franco-Vietnamese system of education is notable because it demonstrates the importance of analyzing both the vertical and horizontal impact of education on national integration. Franco-Vietnamese schools worked to dampen Vietnamese expectations of jobs and nationhood. French development of education policy brought out in the open divisions within Vietnamese society.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Gail Paradise Kelly, "Franco-Vietnamese Schools, 1918 to 1938", (diss. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 45-47.

The needs of one group in society were not the same as those of the entire society, and policies adopted were not necessarily the policies enacted. Colonialism proved to be but a disruption within Vietnamese history as Vietnamese culture persisted and the colonized resisted change mandated by the colonizer. Schools and education traditionally played an imposing role in Vietnamese society and that the teachers in traditional schools played a significant role in resisting French colonial rule. It was natural that teachers performed such a role, as throughout Vietnamese history they had helped to integrate the village with the nation. Teachers provided villages with ties to the Vietnamese government, as they taught youth Confucian moral codes, prepared the best students for state service, and helped implement government policy at the local level. The teacher became the backbone of a political network that early on fomented rebellion when the government became unjust. For twenty years, teachers and their village schools were used to recruit resistance fighters, as French armies invaded southern Vietnam in 1858. The pre-colonial “Schools of Characters” served as the mobilizing point for what the French labeled as the “scholars revolt.” By the turn of the century, traditional education served as a mobilizing link in the anti-French resistance. Despite the resistance’s initial failure, village teachers remained a resilient force in mobilizing class and regional rebellions against colonial rule.<sup>55</sup>

In part, French colonial educational policy became a matter of colonial survival, with the French committing some 15 percent of the colonial budget to education. The Franco-Vietnamese school system was planned not as a replica of French schools or even a diluted version of the European world, but was a distinct system appropriate not merely to the colonized but to a redesigned Vietnamese society and culture. Schools were shaped by the circumstances the French found themselves in Vietnam, not policy made in Paris and or standardized for all colonies.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Gail P. Kelly, *French Colonial Education: Essays on Vietnam and West Africa*, (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 2000), 1-9.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

The short lived Dong Kinh Free School movement represented a Vietnamese response for autonomous reform and modernization. The School saw the means to modernization as mass education that stressed technical and scientific training within a Vietnamese cultural and historical context. In terms of educating the populace the School taught in *quoc ngu*, rather than Vietnamese in Chinese characters, partially blaming Sino-Vietnamese traditions for the demise of nationhood. Much in tune with the Vietnamese disposition, the Dong Kinh School suggested that the future of Vietnam be sculpted by drawing on three contemporary schemes: Japan's growing national identity; American and European scientific and reformist ideals; and the Chinese self-reliance mindset. For the French the Dong Kinh Free School represented what independent experimentation could formulate given the deficiency in governmental monopoly on educational policy.

With the development of the Franco-Vietnamese system of education and the stringent control of private school laws the French ended any chance for modernity. Modernization was viewed as the reformation of Sino-Vietnamese education. In effect, for future generations of Vietnamese, any "modern" vision weighed the choice between Franco-Vietnamese schools or contemporary French institutes, with the latter seen as the lesser backward and as the lesser of two evils, despite risking any hope for an autonomous future. Franco-Vietnamese schools were designed to replace the widespread Sino-Vietnamese village schools. They were to be modeled as *quoc ngu* medium institutes teaching French as a subject, while emphasizing moral instruction and vocational studies. The French had no intention of providing universal education. Even when taking credit for doubling the enrollment in the Franco-Vietnamese schools, French officials claimed that this amounted to some 15 to 20 percent of school age children.<sup>57</sup> Other findings note that actual enrollment amounted to only 2.6 percent of the school age population.<sup>58</sup>

Post-primary education evolved slowly, first as a three-year program with French as the

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<sup>57</sup> Kelly, "Franco-Vietnamese Schools, 1918 to 1938", 21-25.

<sup>58</sup> Pham Minh Hac, "The Educational System of Vietnam," in David Sloper, (ed.) *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, New York: St. Martins Press, 1995, 48.

medium of instruction, and no second non-European language. In colonial society most Vietnamese were powerless to set terms. For the Vietnamese elite, French education did offer a measure of comfort, prestige, economic security, and a role in society. Gail Kelly noted, "...the very fact of domination leads to doubts about whether the [Vietnamese] culture will or ought to survive. Colonialism exacerbated a crisis of identity because it limited possibilities and presented Vietnamese with a *fait accompli*."<sup>59</sup>

The French closed the Dong Kinh Free schools and the indigenous schools of character as the development of the colonial schools became a process of preemption and substitution for native institutions and attempts at modernization. In 1917-1918, Governor General Albert Sarraut introduced a series of reforms centralizing education. Sarraut's reforms totally shifted any vestige of association policy to assimilation by requiring French serve as the medium of instruction. The 1917 Code of Public Instruction used the Cochinchinese Franco-indigenous school system as the model for the three regions of Vietnam. Educational standardization, from elementary to higher education, was the goal of the Franco-Vietnamese system. While French became the medium for instruction, the curriculum was noticeably different from that of French metropolitan system. The content presented was calibrated for the presupposed Vietnamese mindset and colonial environment. The private school laws of 1924 enacted further constraints. The Franco-Vietnamese system that was set into place between 1917 and 1924 held ground as the major educational route within Vietnam until the French withdrew in 1954.

Differentiated schooling had a disintegrative impact. The French magnified regional, class, and ethnic frictions. General conditions, however, provided a common ground upon which students came to resent the secondary roles obtainable for them in colonial society. A "hidden curriculum" cultivated an embryonic nationalism, anti-French, rejecting colonial power and the circumscribed roles likely for those educated. Colonial educators had a political mission of

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<sup>59</sup> Kelly, "Franco-Vietnamese Schools, 1918 to 1938," 365-366.

keeping Vietnamese dependent on French colonial order. French-language curriculum countered native aspirations by defining modernity as subsistence rice farming, requiring unskilled labor and trade in handicrafts. Schools seldom taught science, technology, or about French factories, cities, social or political organizations. Colonial schools were “reactive” and blocked traditional autonomy, as well as that orientated toward change, by moving to dampen expectations and co-opt or preempt native institutions and any efforts at alternatives.<sup>60</sup>

In 1906, Governor General Paul Beau had opened the Indochinese University. Higher education was viewed as part of the political and economic infrastructure that was to allow the French to rule and benefit from colonial enterprise. Governor Beau, seeking to ease the fears of French colons that Vietnamese educated at a university would insist on equality and a right to rule Vietnam, quickly noted that the colonial university was not like institutions in France, but would serve as an advanced primary school. The School of Medicine and Pharmacy of Indochina was founded in 1902 for the purpose of educating native physicians, yet its entire faculty consisted of three French doctors and two *charges de cours*, and its graduates were called public health officials, not doctors. Governor-General Paul Beau viewed the *Universite` Indochinoise* as a center for the interpretation of Western ideas to the Vietnamese.<sup>61</sup> The University was to be “the center of European culture,” with its mission to increase the influence of France in the East, and to meet the practical needs of training native personnel for the growing administrative services. The French Governor-General of Indochina had direct control over the University. In 1908, Governor General Klobukowski closed down the university after it became linked to anti-French plots and tax protests and was racked by political agitation. It reopened in 1917, as Governor Albert Sarraut rebuilt the institution, opening it as Hanoi University in an effort to stem the flow of Vietnamese to France for higher education, where they learned to reject colonial rule. It then

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 21-22, 71-75, 76, 79-80.

<sup>61</sup> Nguyen Dinh Hoa, *Higher Education in Vietnam from the early French conquest to the Japanese Occupation*, (New York: New York University-School of Education, 1948), 6.

closed periodically thereafter as colons viewed any increase in Vietnamese enrollment with great apprehension. The goals of the Vietnamese and colons became ever more irreconcilable with the elite of both groups striving for upper level administrative jobs.

Higher education faced the unfeasibility of planning away inequalities through university development, whether it was the Indochinese University in Franco-Vietnamese society, or Hanoi University, or even as part of the later day “public universities;” it would be a lesson the Wisconsin Team would learn decades afterward. Gail Kelly noted that higher education:

...could not overcome inequalities; it could merely reflect them. No amount of educational planning could have smoothed over [or decided]...who would have the better part of a system based on inequality...While we can speak of the role of universities in promoting equality—either within nations or between nations—let us be clear that we are speaking of what we would like universities to do, not of what in reality they have done or can in fact do. University development...reflects power relations both domestically and internationally...To try to plan an institution like a university for equality—or development—is admirable, but the planning act itself nonetheless will end up, until the sources of inequalities are themselves dealt with, a juggling act between interests of the elite and the aspiring elite of developed and developing nations. Planning itself, as in Indochina, can reflect struggles for equality; it can not erase inequality.<sup>62</sup>

Within the vacillating policy of the French administration, growth in the field of higher education proceeded very slowly. The break with traditional culture was nearly complete in the 1920's as curricula and teaching methods were exclusively French. The French-oriented *Universite` Indochinoise* and University of Hanoi became “a nursery for functionaries.”<sup>63</sup>

During the first three decades of the twentieth century, professional education often was the equivalent of vocational education, as it consisted of two years of basic training for skilled workers and secondary-style professional schools for technicians. The central objective for colonial education remained the training of employees for the administrative machinery. A number of educational institutes and colleges, popularly termed universities during this era, were established early in the twentieth century on the model of the College of Medicine and Pharmacy: Teacher Training College in 1917; College of Veterinary Medicine, College of Law and

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>63</sup> Thompson, 297.

Administration, College of Agriculture and Forestry, and College of Civil Engineering, all in 1918; College Literature and College of Experimental Sciences in 1923; and College of Fine Arts and Architecture in 1924. Several technical schools also opened such as the School of Decorative Fine Arts, the School of Industrial Techniques, and the School of Practical Industry. It was not until 1919 that the first pre-university classes of chemistry, natural science and physics were established. Normal Schools were established in 1924, but were largely unsuccessful in training teachers academically in Vietnamese civilization and psychology. This was true as well at the Higher School of Pedagogy and the School of Decorative Arts, where the professorships were based on favoritism rather than credentials. The first enrollment for comprehensive training as a doctor in medicine started in 1923. Degree level enrollments began in the College for Training of Licentiates in Sciences and the College of Law in 1941; the College of Agriculture in 1942; and in the College of Civil Engineering in 1944.<sup>64</sup>

For the most part, centrally governed urban institutions neglected the natural needs of the largely rural Vietnamese society. Enrollment figures during the French colonial period amounted to only 2.6 percent of the school age population, through 1943.<sup>65</sup> Higher education's lack of autonomy and highly centralized nature continued as key impediments to any reform measures aimed at opening or diversifying the structure of higher education in Vietnam.

When Governor-General Albert Sarraut succeeded Paul Beau, the Committee on Native Education moved away from higher education. Instead, it centered on primary and professional preparation. The 1917 Education Act ended the use of Chinese script in schools and abolished *thi huong* (inter-provincial) and *thi hoi* (pre-court) competitive examinations. Two long-term characteristics emerged during the Sarraut administration: there was little cooperation between government and educational authorities and there was a critical shortage of teachers. Efforts to uphold French principles took precedence over any conciliatory understanding. Royal decrees by

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<sup>64</sup> Pham Minh Hac, "The Educational System of Vietnam," in Sloper, (ed.) *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, 47-48.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

the Vietnamese emperor, in 1919, canceled all facets of traditional native education, establishing the Department of General Public Instruction. This department established the Charter of Indochinese Education (*Code de l' Instruction Publique*). A lack of capable teachers further magnified the problems of the indigenous people, who were now to be instructed in French. Following World War I, Sarraut had reopened Hanoi University, expanding its faculties with colleges of Public Works, Law and Administration, Forestry and Agriculture, and Veterinary Science.<sup>66</sup>

In the 1930's and 1940's, reflecting French *fonctionairisme*, the University concentrated on training professionals (lawyers and doctors), for whom the demand was greater in the administrative services than in the economic or social spheres. In the 1930's the University became more theoretical, finally being consolidated and separated from the technical schools of a secondary level. As technical schools were separated, they were relegated to a lower status. Technical education was usually offered in vocational and agricultural apprenticeship situations. Regular technical schools were only located in northern Vietnam, though selected children from the south did attend these. Higher education, in general, did not have a secure foundation in the southern part of Vietnam prior to 1955.

Under French domination, higher education in Vietnam failed to respond to the economic needs of the country and its native people. Standards of instruction and assessment at the highest educational level of achievement at the Indochinese University lagged far behind any French university. Higher education remained under French rule into 1954. Throughout this colonial period the French maintained two salary schedules: one for the French, who occupied all leadership positions, and one for the Vietnamese. As noted, despite its pretentious name, the Indochinese University did not include a higher school of fine arts until 1924, and the higher school of sciences was finally added in 1941. Not only did degrees fail to be the equivalent to

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<sup>66</sup> Hoa, 8.

those in France, the number conferred was small. For example, in 1925 only twenty-five Bachelors of Arts were issued, and only nine were granted in 1926. Enrollment in Hanoi grew minimally, as a result of limited accessibility imposed by the French: in 1926, 369 students; in 1927, 438 students; in 1928, 490; in 1929, 512 students; in 1931, 551 students; in 1938, 631 students; in 1939, 700 students; and in 1944, 1,528 students.<sup>67</sup>

As Vietnamese society underwent massive changes under French rule, the deepest consequences of French colonization would be exhibited in increased societal discrepancies, between rural and urban populations and between the rich and the poor. Economic activities brought about the emergence of new social classes. In ancient Vietnam, the Confucian value system had placed merchants at the lowest social status. Under the French administration, more people engaged in commercial activities in urban areas, and this commercial group increasingly succeeded in gaining social status. With new industries a new class of wage earners emerged. Many of them worked in the mines in Tonkin or on large plantations in Cochinchina. A growing number were employed in new factories. They were recruited often by force. They became direct victims of French colonization, as most colonials did not honor labor regulations. Colonial education functioned for the development of human capital, but not in terms that added to the total wealth or enrichment of Vietnamese society.

Not only did those economically poor Vietnamese suffer under French rule, the new elite and the rich Vietnamese were targets of French discrimination against native development, both in education and the economy. They had to compete not only with the French, but also with the more established and powerful Chinese merchants. A true Vietnamese capitalism could not develop under these circumstances dictated by colonialism. In turn, economic stagnancy reinforced stagnancy in the growth of higher education.

Under these economic and social circumstances, Vietnamese higher education in the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

colonial period did not contribute to the development of a vital economy. Instead, it was developed as a “function” of French colonization. Yet, colonial policy and imperialism could not be carried out in Vietnam without eventually confronting strong reactions among the Vietnamese people and intelligentsia—reactions that would eventually bring forward the collapse of the French Empire in Indochina. Strong French influences combined with the widespread lack of public education, separated the newly educated elite even further from the masses than the educated elite had been during the pre-French epoch.

A significant common attitude began to emerge among most Vietnamese—educated or uneducated, rich or poor—an attitude of growing hostility toward French policy in Vietnam. Organized dissent, expressed in one form or another, became a constant in Vietnamese society. Nationalist movements initially surfaced as early as 1885. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, urban intellectuals stirred active resistance in the form of boycotts, demanding that educational reforms occur in Vietnam. Nationalist groups drew inspiration from the Chinese nationalist movement. The Vietnam Nationalist Party (*Viet Nam Quoc Dan Dang*—VNQDD) was established in Canton and then, in 1927, in Hanoi by Nguyen Thai Hoc, a schoolteacher. Resistance resulted in a great cost in lives. The French severely repressed any uprisings. After the 1930-Yen Bay insurrection, much of the VNQDD was wiped out with remnants fleeing to southwest China, only to return after World War II to confront both the French and the Vietnamese communists. Following the Yen Bay rebellion, the Indochinese Communist Party (*Dong Duong Cong San Dang*) took on the leadership role of the clandestine nationalist movement. It had united various independent communist groups in Hong Kong in 1930, under the leadership of Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nguyen the Patriot), later known as Ho Chi Minh.<sup>68</sup>

French colons unified with French administrators in Vietnam to form a powerful and exclusive colonial society. In 1937, although the French in Vietnam only numbered about 10,000, they controlled all-important activities in Indochina both in industry and in the

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<sup>68</sup> Hoang Van Chi, *From Colonialism to Communism*, (New York: Praeger, 1964), 48-49.

government. Grounded in institutionalized racism, strongly conservative, and firmly entrenched in their “civilizing” mission towards colonial subjects, both the colons and their French administrators defined the native Vietnamese as inferior. The French opposed any liberal measures in their native policy and created a strong barrier against the employment of native university graduates and Vietnamese returnees from French universities.<sup>69</sup>

Returnees found themselves uprooted and even alienated from their own country. The nature of economic development and discrimination in Vietnam blocked the new Vietnamese intelligentsia from playing a functional role in their society. In effect, they were unable to use their knowledge and talents for the benefit of their people; they were denied a place in the development of their country that had been monopolized by French colonials and administrators. This was a dramatic contrast to the experiences of the returnees who had viewed democratic government in France. Vietnamese society lacked a decompression mechanism to reduce the incompatibility between the old normative structure and new demands for change. The result ran parallel to what David Goslin notes in *The School in Contemporary Society*,

...the alternative to gradual modification of social norms and values appears to be the complete dissolution of existing norms resulting in a chaotic and anomic (normless) state in which the absence of normative integration reinforces itself and may lead to even greater change (the phenomenon of revolution and counter revolution).<sup>70</sup>

Universities in France became political training places for many Vietnamese students, and the French experience served as a death notice for any concept of Franco-Vietnamese collaboration. Vietnamese students in France founded their own organizations influenced by Communism. They protested against colonial practices and educational programs in Indochina, calling for an education that responded to the conditions and aspirations of the Vietnamese people. France’s imperial cultural policy, economically, politically, socially and educationally seemingly opened only one alternative to patriotic Vietnamese, whether peasant or intellectual—

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<sup>69</sup> Phillippe Devillers, *Histoire du Viet Nam de 1940-1952, [History of Vietnam from 1940-1952]* (1952), in Hoat, (1971), 135.

<sup>70</sup> David Goslin, *The School in Contemporary Society*, (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co, 1965), 74.

revolution. Communist success with students of higher education was not unique for the Vietnamese, but a phenomenon that occurred simultaneously in China and in Russia a generation earlier.<sup>71</sup>

Student and social agitation increased in Vietnam beginning in the 1920's and 1930's. Students made good cadres as they were inspired by new political, nationalistic and revolutionary ideas imported from the West. The French viewed reform and change as a threat to their colonial power, and suppressed all reasonable demands of the new elite. French authoritarian policy both prevented the evolution of a middle-class political system and set political conditions that became more and more conducive to the development of anti-colonial movements. Concurrently, the Sixth Comintern recognized that,

...an important if not predominant part of the Party ranks in the first stage of the movement is recruited from the petty bourgeoisie, and in particular from the revolutionary inclined intelligentsia, very frequently students.<sup>72</sup>

France viewed Vietnamese student migration with ambivalence, because it was feared that any exposure to French ideas would make colonial subjects more difficult to rule. The French Communist Party, aided by Moscow, filled the gap in political education and had an ideological effect on the Vietnamese independence movement. Many Vietnamese university students joined nationalist and revolutionary groups: Ho Chi Minh briefly attended the *Lycee* in the Protectorate, then lived in Paris, and then attended the Oriental University in Moscow; the famous theoretician of the Vietnamese Communist Party, Truong Chinh, was a student of Vietnam's School of Commerce; and General Vo Nguyen Giap, studied law and political economy at the University of Indochina.

Other Vietnamese university graduates played an important part in the culturally biased relationship between Vietnam and France. Just as the universities inadvertently produced the nationalist and revolutionary elite, it was in them that France found front line collaborators and

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<sup>71</sup> McConnell, 340.

<sup>72</sup> *Imprecor*, Vol. VIII, No. 88, Dec. 12, 1928, as quoted in Morris Wattnick, "The Appeal of Communism to the Peoples of Underdeveloped Areas," in McConnell, 341.

defenders of their interests in Vietnam. Through their experiences in higher education these students both assimilated and responded to Western ideas that transformed Vietnamese society and traditions.

Concurrently, the new political elite provided the most capable and ardent leaders for the anti-French movement. Through higher education the new elite were imbued with new ideas and new knowledge, becoming evermore sophisticated in its intellectual capacity and revolutionary strategy.<sup>73</sup> Bottomore, in *Elites and Society*, discusses sociological concepts of elites, noting:

It is the political elite in underdeveloped countries, which has been pre-eminent in deciding the course of their development. The origins of this elite are to found, in...

The nationalist leaders and the revolutionary intellectuals—which in some cases are associated or merge with one another. In almost all the Asian...countries intellectuals have taken a prominent part in the struggles against colonial rule. University students were often the shock troops of the independence movements, and those who studied abroad created or helped to create the new nationalist parties.<sup>74</sup>

With the fall of France in June of 1940, the Vichy government acceded to the establishment of Japanese controls over the French Indochina peninsula. The occupation by the Japanese and the French collaboration had the effect of further stimulating nationalist sentiments. The French administration, seeking to deny the Japanese the benefit of strong anti-French feelings among the Vietnamese, moved to liberalize certain of its repressive policies. It opened new schools, added vocational and technical educational programs, offered more civil service posts to the Vietnamese, and launched a youth movement. The French sought to reinforce their colonial order through these token offerings while they continued to enforce limitations on nationalistic actions.

In May of 1941, the Indochinese Communist Party broadened its social and political bases by adopting a policy of collaboration with the non-communist nationalists. Nguyen Ai Quoc emerged as the dominant political figure in Vietnam, as he directed this alliance to the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 342.

<sup>74</sup> T. B. Bottomore, *Elites and Society*. (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 92.

formation of a united front organization, the Viet Nam Independence League (*Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Min Ho'i*), commonly known as the Vietminh. The Vietminh formed guerrilla units and intelligence networks operating in Vietnam against the Japanese and the French, under the direction of Vo Nguyen Giap. The Vietminh increasingly gained popular support, even when Nguyen Ai Quoc was jailed in China for his communist activity in 1942. In 1943, the Chinese released him in exchange for his promise to help them against the Japanese. Promptly, he took the name of Ho Chi Minh (He Who Enlightens), and capitalized on the widening anti-colonialist predilection of the period, as the Vietnamese communists fought for national liberation.

### **The Fall of Colonial Education in Vietnam**

In September of 1944, the Tokyo government, increasingly fearful of anti-Japanese activities by Vietnamese nationals, decided to displace the French and set a date for the independence of Vietnam. On 9 March 1945, at the prompting of the Japanese, Emperor Bao Dai avowed the independence of Vietnam under Japanese “protection.” In Hanoi, in late August 1945, Ho Chi Minh and the Vietminh partisans seized administrative control over Tonkin. On 25 August 1945, Bao Dai abdicated, assuming that the nationalistic character of the Vietminh had Western Allied support. On 2 September 1945, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed independence for Vietnam and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.<sup>75</sup>

As World War II ended, the Potsdam Conference of July 1945 set the arrangement for Japanese surrender to the British south of Vietnam’s sixteenth parallel and to the Chinese north of it. The Chinese Nationalists recognized Ho Chi Minh in the north, but Britain’s General Gracie allowed the French back into the south to prevent anti-Colonial activity in the region. The British sympathized with colonial interests since they still held India until 1947. In February 1946, a Franco-Chinese agreement concluded that China would withdraw from the northern region. In March 1946, France and Ho Chi Minh signed an accord recognizing the Democratic Republic of

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<sup>75</sup> Archimedes L. A. Patti, *Why Viet Nam? Prelude to America's Albatross*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 248-253.

Vietnam (DRV) as a “free state” within the French Union and the Indochinese Federation. With this agreement, French forces were allowed to land in the north. Tensions between the DRV and France developed immediately over the definition of a “free state.” The Paris Conference in early June 1946 came to a halt as French separatist elements established the Republic of Cochinchina in the south. In September, 1946, Ho Chi Minh signed a *modus vivendi* which, he described as “better than nothing,” as it covered economic issues and the cessation of hostilities. This agreement facilitated the resumption of French cultural and economic activities in exchange for promises of liberal French reforms. The *modus vivendi* made no mention of Vietnamese independence or unity. Soon, French enforcement of customs controls aroused new hostilities, and in November disturbances broke out in Haiphong. More than 6,000 Vietnamese were killed during the subsequent French bombardment of the city. On 19 December 1946, the DRV launched its first attacks on the French, deciding to risk a long war of liberation rather than accept French rule.<sup>76</sup>

On 23 December 1946, John Vincent, the director of the U.S. State Department Office of Far Eastern Affairs, sent a memorandum to Under Secretary of State Acheson.

For the past six days, open war has been raging...the Vietnamese Government has fled Hanoi and the French are endeavoring to clear the city of remaining Vietnamese guerrillas with planes and tanks...*For your information:* Although the French in Indochina have made far-reaching paper-concessions to the Vietnamese desire for autonomy, French actions on the scene have been directed toward whittling down the powers and the territorial extent of the Vietnam “free state.” This process the Vietnamese have continued to resist.<sup>77</sup>

On 3 February 1947, the new U.S. Secretary of State John Marshall sent a ‘Secret-Urgent’ telegram to the U.S. Embassy in France.

There is reason for increasing concern over the situation as it is developing in Indochina...We have only the friendliest feelings toward France and we are anxious in

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<sup>76</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam, 1954-1975, Vol. 1*, (Washington D.C.: Report by Asia Bureau Office of Residual Affairs Vietnam Desk, 1975), 8-10.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1946, Vol. VIII, The Far East*, “Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs (Vincent) to the Under Secretary of State (Acheson),” Washington, December 23, 1946, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971), 75-76.

every way we can to support France in her fight to regain her economic, political and military strength and to restore herself as in fact one of the major powers in the world. In spite any misunderstanding in regard to our position concerning Indochina they must appreciate that we fully recognized France's sovereign position in that area...At the same time we cannot shut our eyes to fact that there are two sides this problem and that our reports indicate both a lack French understanding of the other side (more in Saigon than in Paris) and continued existence dangerously outmoded colonial outlook and methods in area. Furthermore, there is no escape from the fact that trend of times is to effect that colonial empires in XIX Century sense are rapidly becoming thing of past.<sup>78</sup>

Even on the verge of their political collapse, the French would do all they could do to retain the presence of French culture in Vietnamese education. The importance of culture and education was reflected in all agreements that France formed with Vietnam during its final years in Indochina, as France always required a safeguard of its franchises in the areas of culture and education. The *modus vivendi* of 1946 had guaranteed France the right to open free French schools of all levels in Vietnam. In August 1946, at the Conference of Dalat, France demanded that French be maintained as the standard language in secondary and higher education. Within the French Union higher education maintained its federal centralist character. In 1949, in the Agreement of Elysee, French interests were supreme in educational and cultural questions, while Vietnamese education was allowed to develop "autonomously." It was not independent of French education and was to merge eventually with the latter at the university. The Agreement called for a dramatic expansion of higher education and a limited amount of instruction was started in Saigon. By 1950, higher education had significantly developed, encompassing schools of medicine and pharmacy, law and administration, veterinary science, pedagogy, agriculture and forestry, public works and commerce, fine arts, and sciences. Most subjects continued to be taught in French.

Education could not thrive in a land suffering from civil and military conflict. The Vietminh had gained the military initiative in Indochina, controlling two-thirds of the countryside while the French held tenuous control of the cities and major production centers.

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<sup>78</sup> U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1947, Vol. VI, The Far East*, "The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France," Washington, February 3, 1947, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1972), 67-68.

Guerrilla warfare mixed with conventional combat across Vietnam. Those areas under nominal French authority were subject to Vietminh attack after dark, as power plants and factories were sabotaged, grenades were tossed into theaters and cafes, and French officials were assassinated. In 1949 alone the French spent 167 million francs on the war and suffered 1,000 casualties per month. France, unable to defeat the Vietminh militarily, looked to undercut it politically.

Using the Bao Dai solution, France revealed its strategy of fixing Bao Dai as a rallying point and an instrument for retaining its political, cultural and educational interests by empowering the pro-French new elite in the French controlled regions. The French sought to nourish Vietnamese anticommunist nationalists to stand against the Vietminh, but the effort failed to gain much cooperation as the French refused to clarify their policy with respect to future Vietnamese independence and unity. On 8 March 1949 representatives of France and the new Associated State of Vietnam signed the Elysee Agreement. The new “associated state” had nominal independence entering the French Union, with France retaining control of finances, foreign relations and national defense. Bao Dai, the last Emperor of Vietnam, assumed the office of Head of State of the Associated State of Vietnam. On 14 January 1950 Ho Chi Minh countered by declaring the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as the only legal government. Ho would capture the standard of Vietnamese nationalism, while France, under the guise of the Bao Dai solution, looked to the United States for aid.<sup>79</sup>

American officials were skeptical, seeing Bao Dai as a smoke screen for sustained French domination. According to Secretary of State Dean Acheson, American support of Bao Dai could not guarantee his success; however, the lack of it would ensure his certain failure. Acheson advised President Truman that, if the United States did not support France and Bao Dai, Southeast Asia could be lost, resulting in an even more “contracted” line of defense in the region

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<sup>79</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services, *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*, Book 1, IA, “U.S. policy, 1940-1950, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971), A-36-43.

and a “staggering investment” to hold the line.<sup>80</sup>

On 29 March 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Acheson sent a ‘Secret’ telegram to the American Embassy in France noting,

It is evident from reaction of Asian states to US and FR effort to secure their recognition Bao Dai...that large segment of public opinion both East and West continues to regard Bao Dai as French puppet not enjoying or likely to enjoy degree of autonomy within Fr Union accorded them under Mar 8 agreements...US Govt has used its polit resources and is now engaged in measures to accelerate its econ and financial assistance to IC states. As you know Dept has requested Joint Chiefs of Staff to “access the strategic aspects of the situation and consider, from the mil point of view, how the United States can best contribute to the prevention of further Communist encroachment in that area.”<sup>81</sup>

Just how tenuous of a line had been drawn was revealed in defeats that stretched from 1950 at Cao Bang to the spring of 1954 at Dien Bien Phu. Correspondent Bernard Fall described French losses at Cao Bang as the “greatest colonial defeat since Montcalm had died at Quebec.” The toll was more than 6,000 French troops and sufficient equipment to supply an entire Vietminh division. On 7 May 1954 after fifty-five days of merciless pounding from Vietminh artillery and a series of human-wave assaults, the French surrendered their fortress at Dien Bien Phu, ending more than seven years of war in French Indochina. The French had dramatically underestimated, both militarily and culturally, the resolve and ability of the Vietnamese people.<sup>82</sup>

Geneva now became the center of attention as the belligerents and interested outside parties met the following day for the previously scheduled conference on Indochina. The conference was attended by representatives of France, Laos, Cambodia, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Associated State of Vietnam, the People’s Republic of China, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom, and the United States. On 21 July 1954 the conference concluded with a series of provisions aimed at restoring peace in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. The aggregate of the terms resulted in: 1) a military agreement on a cease-fire in Indochina,

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<sup>80</sup> Acheson (1950), George C. Herring, *America’s Longest War*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996), 19.

<sup>81</sup> U.S. State Department, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1950, Vol. VI East Asia and the Pacific*, 1363. “The Secretary of State to the Embassy in France,” Washington, March 29, 1950, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1976), 768-769.

<sup>82</sup> Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy*, (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1994, new edition of 1961), 325-327.

provisionally partitioning Vietnam by a demarcation line at the seventeenth parallel; 2) pending political settlement to be achieved through nationwide elections in 1956, under the direction of the International Supervision and Control Commission; 3) foreign military bases and alliances were prohibited.<sup>83</sup>

The Geneva Agreements failed to settle the major issues over which the war had been fought. The terms were vague in critical places, and different interests interpreted their meaning differently, reflecting the tenuous nature of the understandings. The agreements functioned more as political instruments than terms of settlement. For reasons of their own, the Chinese and the Russians moderated Vietminh demands. The United States and South Vietnam refused to sign the formal Accords, both holding that negotiation with any Communist nation was an anathema.<sup>84</sup>

While not approving the agreements, from the American point of view, the accords were better than had been anticipated when the conference opened. The agreements placed some limits on outside intervention, but U.S. officials did not view them as prohibitive. Partition was unpalatable, but it gave American administrations the opportunity to bolster non-Communist forces in the South. The two-year delay in elections was seen as advantageous, because if elections had been held immediately, Ho Chi Minh would have been an easy victor.<sup>85</sup>

After the Geneva Conference, in the south few Vietnamese nationalists remained while most had been either killed by the French or eradicated by the Communists. Others were aligned with the Vietminh or had gone to France. Ngo Dinh Diem, underwritten by American support looked to fill the void in Saigon. The Geneva accords would be both misinterpreted and misunderstood as the documents only served as a provisional truce between the Vietminh and the French while a long-lasting political resolution was dependent upon nationwide elections

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<sup>83</sup> Katsiaficas, George. (ed.) *Vietnam Documents: American and Vietnamese Views of the War*, "Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference, July 21, 1954," (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), 28-30.

<sup>84</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*, Book 1, "Sino-Soviet objectives and strategy," C-18-26, "GVN status and negotiating position at Geneva," B-5-16, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, "The intent of the Geneva Accords," D-1-2,

scheduled for July of 1956. Elections were held in the north, but not in the south as France pulled out in June. Technically, at that point there was no South Vietnam except for the fact that the U.S. installed Diem as a puppet regime, while creating SEATO to bolster his position.<sup>86</sup>

Secretary Dulles and President Eisenhower viewed the demise of French colonialism with equanimity. The Franco-American partnership in Indochina had been characterized by mutual suspicion. Fearful of antagonizing its European ally, the United States had refused to acknowledge Ho Chi Minh's appeals for support and to use its leverage to end the conflict. The Truman administration had provided post-World War II "indirect" military and financial assistance by allowing wartime lend-lease ships to transport French troops and weapons designated for use in Europe to be employed in Vietnam, while Marshall Plan funds enabled France to divert its own resources to the Indochina War. From 1950 through 1954, the United States distributed more than \$2.6 billion in military aid, yet the partnership with France had indeed turned out to be a "dead-end alley." From the American viewpoint, France's failure was attributed to its erroneous colonialist tenets. Freed from the problems posed by France, America could build a viable non-Communist alternative in the South and prevent a loss in North Vietnam from extending throughout Southeast Asia.<sup>87</sup> Diem had rebuffed the Geneva accords and Communist control of the north, charging that "another more deadly war" awaited Vietnam.<sup>88</sup>

At a 7 April 1954 Presidential News Conference Dwight D. Eisenhower was asked to comment on the strategic importance of Indochina to the free world and what it meant to the U.S. The president spoke of the threat of the spread of Communism and the possible loss of the natural and human resources. He warned:

First of all, you have the specific value of a locality in its production of materials that the world needs. Then you have the possibility that many human beings pass under a dictatorship that is inimical to the free world. Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the

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<sup>86</sup> Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 220, 234-235.

<sup>87</sup> Herring, 47.

<sup>88</sup> Karnow, 221.

certainty that it will go over quickly...the loss of Indochina, of Burma, of Thailand, of the Peninsula, and Indonesia following...only multiply the disadvantages that you would suffer through loss of materials, sources of materials, but now you are talking about millions and millions and millions of people...the geographical position achieved thereby does many things. It turns the so-called island defensive chain of Japan, Formosa, of the Philippines and to the southward; it moves in to threaten Australia and New Zealand...the possible consequences of the loss are just incalculable to the free world.<sup>89</sup>

To the United States the preservation of an independent South Vietnam took on an increasingly important function as a means to demonstrate the superiority of American ideology and as a testing ground for the viability of American-modeled institutions in underdeveloped nations. It was not accidental that America employed a metaphor from a game of European aristocracy in describing Vietnam as a domino. The pieces in this game represent the player's power and are named for the "master," dominus. In effect, the United States hoped to Americanize the Vietnamese:

It was this sort of representation of the United States that we wanted in Vietnam: a mirror-image of ourselves that, however distorted, would confirm our existence...We did not go to Vietnam in search of raw materials, cheap labor, new commercial markets. Unlike the French, we didn't want Vietnamese rubber. Unlike the Japanese we didn't want their hardwood. Unlike the Chinese, we didn't want the fertile lands of the Mekong Delta. We wanted something abstract, utterly immaterial, and (finally) fantastic: "a sphere of influence," a counterweight in the imaginary game of "balance of power."<sup>90</sup>

Vietnam, its people, its culture, and its educational system had become entangled in a global struggle, as the United States formally recognized the Associated State of Vietnam, later renamed the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam), while the Republic of China and the Soviet Union established diplomatic relations with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam).

### **Ngo Dinh Diem**

After Geneva a mass emigration of northern Catholics and other refugees into

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<sup>89</sup> Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954, "The President's News Conference of April 7, 1954," (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1960), 382-383.

<sup>90</sup> Rick Berg and John Carlos Rowe, *The Vietnam War and American Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 3.

predominantly Buddhist South Vietnam added new religious and ethnic tensions. It was truly a volatile mix, as the Vietminh held deep pockets of control not far from Saigon, and politico-religious sects ruled areas of the Mekong Delta and even the suburbs of Saigon as fiefdoms.

Politically and educationally, the South failed to recognize its basic cultural incongruities, instead choosing to adopt a simplistic paradigm of imposed cultural congruence first imposed by the French and then instituted by Ngo Dinh Diem and a succession of inept leaders. Native government had been a fiction under Bao Dai. In 1954 Ngo Dinh Diem assumed the premiership, inheriting antiquated institutions patterned on French despotism and ill suited to the needs of an independent nation. The Diem government would set a pattern in motion, as the Southern government struggled with its own instability while failing to meet the needs of its people. From its onset, the government of the Republic of Vietnam lacked experienced civil servants and any base of support in the countryside. In the South political fragmentation had been a fundamental aspect of classical imperialism employed by the French to rule their Indochinese colonies. This legacy was not to be one easily shed, especially as war raged on. In the midst of the turmoil caused by factional divisions and the resettlement of refugees U.S. moved to shore up the stability of the new GVN through an infusion of economic aid, field advisors, and administrative training.<sup>91</sup>

Ngo Dinh Diem was “a virtual exile in his own land.”<sup>92</sup> A child of an official at the imperial court of Hue, he attended French Catholic schools in Hue and the School of Public Administration in Hanoi. Finishing at the top of his class, he received a bureaucratic appointment in the French protectorate of Annam. He became a strong opponent of communism before being recognized as a nationalist. In 1929, as a village supervisor, he uncovered a Communist-inspired rebellion and harshly punished its leaders. As a reward the French appointed him as minister of the interior, the highest native position in the government.

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<sup>91</sup> USAID, *U.S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam, 1954-75, Vol. I*, 29-30.

<sup>92</sup> Herring, p. 52.

He resigned when the French refused to enact reforms that he had proposed. Diem concurrently turned down offers from the Japanese, Vietminh, and Bao Dai to serve in various governments. Lecturing extensively in the United States, he settled at a Maryknoll Seminary in Lakewood, New Jersey, where he attracted such dignitaries as Democratic Senators Mike Mansfield and John F. Kennedy and Francis Cardinal Spellman.

Diem's growing nationalism and administrative experience did not equate to the mettle required for the striking challenges the Republic of Vietnam faced. He lacked the flexibility needed to deal with the deep-seated conflict and its intractable problems. He had little sensitivity to the needs of the Vietnamese people, as he was an elitist who looked back to an imperial Vietnam that no longer existed. His own personification led him to policies he labeled as *personalism*, from which he dictated the ideals for Vietnamese society. He failed to recognize the extent to which the French and Vietminh had eradicated traditional values and political processes. Diem's own favoritism led him to employ divide-and-conquer tactics and authoritarian policies, which rewarded loyalty rather than merit.<sup>93</sup>

Diem, like his French predecessors, would have done well to recall an ancient Vietnamese Proverb, "*The Emperor's laws stop at the village gate.*" In a misguided effort to consolidate central authority he abolished traditional local elections by moving to appoint village and provincial officials, while at the same time instituting ineffective land reforms. Traditionally the backbone of Vietnamese society, the villages had enjoyed virtual autonomy for centuries. Diem continuously demonstrated he was out of touch with rural Vietnam. In 1959 he launched an ill-fated *agrovillage* program to stem the rising violence in the countryside by relocating peasantry. The government sought to make the program attractive by furnishing the new communities with electricity, medical facilities, and schools. As with the later American-aided strategic hamlet program, the large-scale uprooting of the peasantry from sacred ancestral lands

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<sup>93</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*, Book 2, IV A5, "Ngo Dinh Diem: Basis of Power," 10-16.

only added to the discontent that prevailed among the rural population. By 1962 the narrow Ngo family oligarchy had done very little to bind the people of the Republic of Vietnam to the government. The family claimed it represented a new *communal personalism* for the Republic; instead, inefficiency, corruption, obfuscation, and alienation characterized the nation and challenged official claims of optimism.<sup>94</sup>

Diem's ruthless suppression of dissent spawned discontent in the cities as well as the countryside. Using authority vested by various presidential ordinances, the central government established a reeducation program of incarceration for anyone who challenged its policies. Diem refused to permit any exchange with the North, and the division of the country increasingly took on features of permanency. Yet, insurgency and revolution sprang from its indigenous roots in response to oppression and grew in strength with support from the North. As noted, Diem's flawed "personalism" corrupted this ideal of synthesizing international culture and obstructed the development of a clear Vietnamese personality, when traditionally the Vietnamese identity had been honed in resistance to external rule. The authorities in South Vietnam had fallen into a cultural trap, instituted by French predetermined colonial educational traditions of assimilation and association and concurrently maintained by neocolonialist patterns.<sup>95</sup>

Deterioration in South Vietnam was gradual, as the United States assumed from France the role of protector and the burden of nation-building, committing itself firmly to a succession of regimes in South Vietnam as bulwarks against Communist expansion. With Ngo Dinh Diem a troubled pattern had been instituted for governing the Republic of Vietnam.

South Vietnam and America faced insuperable difficulties of nation-building in a domain with only a fragile basis for nationhood. The morass deepened as ignorance-bred confidence mixed with illusions of success, progress, and stability, while both administrations often ignored Vietnamese history and culture. Fixed in this environment higher education in the Republic of

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., Book 2, IV A5, "Rural Pacification," 21-31.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., Book 2, IV A5, "Urban Political Alienation," 31-44.

Vietnam would now be called upon to function in a manner that both served the needs of the emerging nation and society. A balance between these two concerns would be elusive as the absence of a clearly stable system of governance discouraged effective administrative leadership and the coordination of social institutions. The problem of creating order in a chaotic society was to be a French legacy inherited by the Government of South Vietnam (GVN) and their ally, the United States.

A National Intelligence Estimate in August of 1959 showed that Diem was unpopular, the economy of the RVN was developing at a lesser rate than that of the DRV, and the GVN was under increasing pressure from VC guerrillas supported by North Vietnam. Yet, the NIE reported Diem would hold the presidency “for many years.” The U.S. Department of Defense study, *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967*, reveals the scope of GVN problems and the growing American commitment during the Diem period:

In the summer of 1959, it was hard to find an American official worried about Vietnam. This was not because things were going well. They were not...From then on, the classified record through the end of 1961 shows a succession of bleak appraisals of the regime’s support in the cities, and among the military, almost always accompanied by increasingly bleak estimates of VC strength and activity in the countryside...by late 1960, it was a quite widely held view that the Diem government was probably going to be overthrown sooner or later...Short of encouraging a coup, we seemed to have two alternatives: attempt to pressure Diem or attempt to win his confidence that he would accept our advice willingly. The only effective form of U.S. pressure, however, was to withhold aid, and doing so would sooner or later weaken the war effort...in this review of actors that would affect policy-making in Vietnam...South Vietnam (unlike any of the other countries in Southeast Asia) was essentially the creation of the United States. Without U.S. support Diem almost certainly could not have consolidated his hold on the South during 1955 and 1956. Without the threat of U.S. intervention, South Vietnam could not have refused to even discuss the elections called for in 1956 under the Geneva settlement without immediately being overrun by Viet Minh armies...from 1954 on there had been repeated statements of U.S. support for South Vietnam of a sort that we would not find in our dealings with other countries in this part of the world. It is true there was nothing unqualified about this support: It was always economic, and occasionally accompanied by statements suggesting that the Diem regime had incurred an obligation to undertake reforms in return for our assistance...after the U.S. stepped back in Laos, it might be hard to persuade the Russians that we intended to stand firm anywhere if we then gave up on Vietnam...if the U.S. suspected that the best alternative was to seek an alternative to Diem, no one knew who the alternative might be, or whether getting rid of Diem would really make things better.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., IV. B1. “Evolution of the War,” 1-8.

With unification and independence for Vietnam still illusions, a period of internal disunion had begun in earnest. Two conflicting political fronts had become firmly instituted; one in the rural and remote areas under the control of the Vietminh, and one in urban areas under the auspices of the French. Confusion and instability led to a corresponding decrease in general security throughout the country. Vietnam was not only politically divided; it was abruptly culturally and educationally partitioned.

### **Higher Education in a Divided Vietnam**

In Vietnam, institutionalized higher education had its roots in Hanoi, where the French colonialists established the underpinning for western-style universities. With the partition of Vietnam, institutions of higher education became fixed to the separate political ideologies ruling North and South Vietnam and higher education expanded in both regions of Vietnam. Within Vietnam, functionalism and Marxism would interplay and influence reform in higher education, as the divided nation reexamined its own history and new definitive ideological differences served as the driving forces behind North Vietnam's aspiration for unification and South Vietnam's dream for independence.

Vietnam's first function for modern higher education was in the field of medicine. At the beginning of the twentieth century, colonial Indochina had only some 200 European doctors, all of them in the military, for a population of more than twenty million.<sup>97</sup> France looked to aspiring Vietnamese to fill this paucity in medical professions as Public Health Officers, establishing the Hanoi School of Medicine in 1902.

As noted previously, French administrators had created the Indochinese University at Hanoi in 1907, as a local alternative to foreign study in France and Japan for educating students from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The University of Hanoi was the site of a rapid growth of

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<sup>97</sup> Thompson, *French Indochina*, 279.

Vietnamese nationalism, causing the university to close quickly in 1908 and not reopen on a permanent basis until 1917. By 1919, the University of Hanoi had developed seven schools: medicine and pharmacy, veterinary science, pedagogy, law and administration, public works and commerce, agriculture and forestry, and civil engineering.<sup>98</sup> In 1942, University enrollment peaked at 1200.<sup>99</sup>

Following the Franco-Vietnamese agreements and conventions of 1949-1950, the caliber of education now was set at a higher level of instruction. Classes affiliated with the University of Hanoi were now offered in Saigon. Under the colonialist policies of the French authorities, higher education in Vietnam was systematized for colonial administrative and political purposes, rather than functioning on behalf of the authentic national needs of the Vietnamese people and society. Hanoi was the original site of the Vietnamese National Technical Institute. Technical schools were located both in Hanoi and Haiphong, as technical and vocational training was fixed in proximity to Vietnamese industrial sites. These sites served both as trade schools and centers for vocational teacher training. Vocational and agricultural apprenticeships were accentuated as the primary means for technical training.

### **Ideology and Higher Education in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam**

During the period of Vietnamese partition the education system in French-controlled areas remained fundamentally the same as in the era of French colonialism. In the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) education played an important role in the period of transition that aimed at unifying Vietnam and transforming it into a socialist country. While traditional education provided the north with a strong base for the development of higher education, new ideology now determined both its nature and evolution. When in 1953 the government of North Vietnam launched literacy and agrarian reforms, higher education became a new instrument to implement national reform and act as an effective means of indoctrination.

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<sup>98</sup> Pham Minh Hac, "The Educational System of Vietnam," in Sloper (ed.), 47-48.

<sup>99</sup> Vu Van Tao, "Higher Education in Vietnam," in Pham Minh Hac (ed.), 100.

Le Duan, in *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*, explains that three revolutions occurred simultaneously in North Vietnam:

First, the revolution in the relation of the means of production to liquidate the exploitation of man by man; second, technological revolution, chiefly to develop the production forces...and transform our backward agricultural country into one with modern industry and agriculture; and third ideological and cultural revolution to make Marxism-Leninism gain supremacy in our people's intellectual life.<sup>100</sup>

These revolutions relied on political and social tactics, which were both directly and indirectly related to education and culture. In a large context, the success of the socialist revolution was dependent on educational development. To accomplish such an important function, education and culture took on new forms, which were shaped by Marxist conflict theory. By linking the war and production work to the daily life of the people, education and culture were to reflect the realities of society. Only if the people understood society, could they then transform it into a new society, a cooperative communist society.

Marxist scholarship served as an influential resource for North Vietnamese strategists. These theorists held that the active force in complex societies was the perpetual struggle between different groups to hold status and power. In contemporary society, schools act as a vital instrument in this struggle, as education reproduces the predilections and attitudes that were essential for both the persistence of the present system of domination by the favored class and new empowerment for its opposition.

Marxist strategists believed schools had assisted the authoritarian privileged class by contributing to the social reproduction of a functionalist status quo that provided an illusion of opportunity, objectivity, and neutrality. According to conflict theorists, the problem with functionalism is that it takes the perspectives and interests of dominant social groups within a society and advances them to the eminence of universal norms. In this manner these interests are

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<sup>100</sup> Le Duan, *On the Socialist Revolution in Vietnam*, Vol. III, (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1967), 154.

misrepresented as representative of society as a whole, and supportive to the maintenance of the privileged position of the dominant class.

Educators in Vietnam, whether they be the North Vietnamese conflict theorists or the South Vietnamese functionalists, valued talent built upon education as a determinant element of one's economic and social position, but differed on what the principles guiding education truly offered for their society.

In educational and societal terms:

...this principle...that in modern society it is achieved, rather than ascribed, characteristics that are to rewarded. However, the differences between the Marxists and the functionalists on this point must also be remembered. The functionalists believe that this principle serves as a real universal norm, one that evolved and governs the selection of talent in modern society. In contrast, the Marxists believe that the principle is best seen historically as a weapon in a class struggle used first to overcome one's assigned place in life and used later by the newly advantaged groups to maintain their gains and by the still disadvantaged ones to assert their claims to equal treatment.<sup>101</sup>

Marxists view basic cultural concepts in direct relation to the productive possibilities of a particular society. Within any given stage of cultural development, education plays a central role in ensuring that a society shares the culture's most vital concepts. The Marxist relationship between changes in the constitution of thought and changes in the mode of production, illustrates how conceptual differences evolve historically within the social classes of a society. The links between the way individuals think about the world around them and the way society produces goods open the possibility for new production methods to accelerate positive human growth. Historically, this means that educational, political, economical and other social institutions are addressed in terms of whether they enhance or hinder human development in a particular time period. Orthodox Marxists conclude that each social system inherently has the seeds of its own ruin; barring this, basic social change would not occur. Emerging from its colonial period it seemed only sensible for Vietnamese nationalists and revolutionaries to embrace radical stances

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<sup>101</sup> Feinberg and Soltis, 53.

as they worked to establish native control.

Marxist educational thought recognized that, in modern society, schools are more than instruments for reproducing needed technical skills and levels of expertise. Public schools, as state-run educational agencies, are set in correlation to the role the state performs as an arm of the dominant ruling class. This certainly was the case in French-colonial Vietnam. Through its laws, its police, its courts, and its army, the state sustained exclusive possession of repressive powers. The effectiveness of these repressive apparatuses had limited utility, being dependent upon the willingness of functionaries to *have the right thoughts*. Both in Vietminh and Marxist terms, the French and their collaborators saw the development of false consciousness as an essential component of sustaining the Associated State of Vietnam. North Vietnam strove to set a new consciousness, and a new society and culture, drawn from a mix of nationalist and Marxist ideas.

In North Vietnam, a school became much more than a place for the transmission of knowledge and the teaching of skills. Under the firm control of the Party and government education and culture were assigned key functions for the socialist revolution. Ho Chi Minh viewed schools as, “the tool of the proletarian dictatorship in the field of ideology and culture.”<sup>102</sup>

With the advent of the August Revolution of 1945, President Ho Chi Minh declared:

An ignorant race is a weak one; we must launch the anti-illiteracy campaign to overcome the obstacle of having 95 percent of the population illiterate. At the same time we have to lay down as a policy, the educational reform and the construction of a people’s democratic educational system by keeping to three principles: that education be national, scientific and popular.<sup>103</sup>

By July 1948 the anti-illiteracy campaign had begun in Vietminh controlled areas. The program focused on different stages of development: elementary literacy—being able to read and write; preparatory literacy—the equivalent of early primary education; first level of

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<sup>102</sup> Ho Chi Minh, “Letter to educational Cadres, Pupils, and Students in all Schools of General Education and Complementary Education,” *Appeals by President Ho*, (1962), 104, in Hoat, (1971), 190.

<sup>103</sup> Nguyen Khanh Toan, *Twenty Years of Educational Development (1945-1965)*, (Hanoi: Education Publishing House, 1965), and Pham Minh Hac, “The Educational System of Vietnam,” in David Sloper, (ed.) *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 49.

complementary education—four years of primary education; second level of complementary education—lower level secondary education. In July 1950, the Governmental Council established a nine-year system with an emphasis on infusing vocational education upon the completion of general education—grades 1 to 7. Between 1945 and 1954 several schools of secondary professional education were instituted, including centers of pedagogy and teacher training, and institutes of agriculture. The number of secondary professional schools swelled to over 100 in 1965 and some 200 by 1975. The number of vocational schools increased from 50 to about 200 during the same time period.

Between 1950 and 1954, three higher education centers developed in resistance regions: Thanh Hoa had a pre-university class and a high level teacher training class; Viet Bac had the College of Medicine and Pharmacy; and in Quantsi, China, the province of Nanning had a Teacher Training College and the College of Fundamental Sciences. The three higher education centers were unified with the University of Hanoi in 1954 as the North of Vietnam was liberated from French rule. Building upon the unification of the three centers from liberated areas and the University of Hanoi, in 1956 additional educational institutes were established: the Teaching Training College of Hanoi, the University of Technology of Hanoi, the Hanoi College of Medicine, the Hanoi College of Agriculture, the College of Fine Arts, and the College of Economics.<sup>104</sup>

Higher education was to serve as an enhancement to Vietnamese culture as training centers linking efficient production work to the daily life of the people. The people were to address the long overdue realities of society by building knowledge and better skills so as to transform an indentured society into a new society more in tune with its needs. One must question, however, if one elite—Party leaders—had replaced another—the French. Their basic tenet was that schools in connecting themselves with the daily life of the masses were more able

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<sup>104</sup> Pham Minh Hac, “The Educational System of Vietnam,” in Sloper, *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*, 50-55.

to respond to the needs of the country. Ideological education's function was to transform the Vietnamese people into diligent and faithful socialist workers. To formulate this new generation of socialist workers, intellectuals were to be "workerized," and the worker and peasant "intellectualized." Political courses were organized for groups of intellectuals and civil servants. Ho Chi Minh, in 1956, explained that the intellectuals were trained via ideological campaigns in higher education aimed at establishing this firm truth:

...achieving...a righteous mind and close relation with the people...after everyone's view has been expressed and truth has been established, freedom of thought turns into freedom to obey the truth.<sup>105</sup>

The ultimate aim of higher education in North Vietnam was tied to both nationalist and Marxist strategy in order to formulate a new elite — a socialist intelligentsia, with whom the Workers' Party could be entrusted with the revolution and its mission of building a new culture for an independent Vietnam.

The study of elites and society has shown:

Where revolutionary intellectuals have attained power it has usually been through the adoption of Marxism as a political creed and by the formation of Communist parties or similar organizations which brought them into close association with the industrial workers and especially the poorer peasants...a creed which states clearly the ends pursued, and supplies a moral justification of the governing elite and its actions...a modern view of the world that is irreconcilably opposed to ancient superstitions, an egalitarian creed which has had the power to enthuse men...in those countries where immense wealth and the most degrading poverty co-exist.<sup>106</sup>

Both North and South Vietnam lacked vital infrastructure and resources. Higher education in North Vietnam became political education. Higher education underwent fundamental changes both in curriculum and organization, but the commitment to ideology limited its scale and success. Higher education was to be practical education, in that practical knowledge and skills were deemed essential to socialist construction. Higher education needed to

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<sup>105</sup> Ho Chi Minh, "Talk with Intellectuals Attending the Political Course of the Vietnamese People's University," July 21, 1956, in *Selected Works*, Vol. IV, (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 175, in Hoat, (1971), 190-192.

<sup>106</sup> Bottomore, 94.

be more pragmatic and institute a curriculum adaptive to the demands for economic development. New colleges were opened and new methods of instruction were developed, seeking to break traditional and colonial bonds, while increasing the effectiveness and productivity of higher education. Each college was linked to a local production unit, which supplied it with facilities for training and practical problems for study.

With the onset of its major conflict with the Republic of Vietnam and the United States, however, North Vietnam's state plans became wartime plans aimed at national preservation, while satisfying people's primary needs. Pham Van Dong admitted that the three revolutions, which Le Duan had considered essential for socialist construction, would be postponed:

The realities of war and construction work in wartime require that we think over these three revolutions more intensely, deeply and all-sidedly... (while fighting against the U.S.) we think over, and prepare for the solutions of the future.<sup>107</sup>

In 1975, after the cessation of hostilities, the government of North Vietnam made vigorous efforts at reconstruction. In higher education, the government issued a series of directives to colleges and technical schools: they were to focus on teacher training and retraining, with an emphasis placed on on-the-spot training; all students were to receive scholarships; and the training of economic cadres to meet the needs of economic restoration was to be given top priority in programs of study in colleges. Higher education in Vietnam became an important tool of the government and the Party for cultural and economic development. Its ultimate function and goal was to form the new elite entrusted with the mission of building a new culture for Vietnam. The new elite, socially visible, was to possess the valued characteristics of intellectual ability, military power, administrative position, moral authority, high prestige and influence — to be imitated by society.

International politics and the issues of neocolonialism versus nationalism complicated the

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<sup>107</sup> Pham Van Dong, *Forward: Final Victory Will Be Ours!* (Hanoi: The Democratic Republic of Vietnam Government Report National Assembly 3<sup>rd</sup> Legislature: 4<sup>th</sup> Publishing House, 1968), 38, 41, in Hoat, (1971), 212.

civil conflict between North and South Vietnam. By adopting communism, a doctrine of economic supremacy and revolutionary action, the North patterned a set policy for their programs in all areas. By adapting the ideology to the nationalist aspirations of the Vietnamese people, the communists succeeded in rallying the people to their cause in their struggle with the French and then with the Americans. In the face of foreign intervention, both in war and in national construction, the North possessed an effective alternative instrument for educational, cultural and economic development and captured the standard of Vietnamese nationalism. Based on the decision to follow the Eastern bloc model of specialized, mono-disciplinary colleges, however, higher education was difficult to integrate at the system level, as institutes and universities were too small, dispersed academically, too unarticulated to efficiently exercise sparse resources and grant wide-ranging access.

### **Higher Education in South Vietnam: The Setting**

While higher education in North Vietnam took new shape within the firm control of the Party and government, higher education in South Vietnam experienced a lack of clear policy and stable leadership, suffering through a crisis of unplanned development. In many ways higher education in the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) represents a microcosmic illustration of the stress and turmoil that accompanied the state's struggle for institutional legitimacy, as a society and nation.

South Vietnam, just like North Vietnam, suffered from a stark deficiency in trained teachers and multi-disciplinary institutions. Across Vietnam, generally, the distribution of education, whether primary, secondary or higher, was unbalanced, being clustered in a few cities and provinces; yet 80 per cent of the Vietnamese population remained rural residents. In the Republic of Vietnam, moreover, chaos reigned due to its lingering colonial heritage and the ongoing destructive effects of war and frequent political upheavals. The years following World War II had brought selected independence in much of Southeast Asia, but had brought neither prosperity nor peace to Vietnam.

In Vietnam, conflict was more than just a war of independence against a colonial power; it was a war not only for home rule but a war over who should rule at home. Each new republic (North and South Vietnam) faced a multitude of dilemmas, some as a result of war; others lay buried within Vietnam's heritage. Vietnam was not widely industrialized, and its economy was fixed extensively on one-crop agricultural base—rice. Its colonial economy had been dependent upon exports of rubber and rice to finance essential imports. World War II and emergent post-war nationalistic conflicts ruined its plantations, and depleted its transportation system slowing the advent of goods at markets. When both North and South Vietnam turned their attention to reconstruction and nation building, each experienced great difficulties due to deficiencies in financial resources, skilled technicians, and trained leadership. Each republic turned to education functionally to meet these needs. Educational development was retarded, however, as resources and energies were continually diverted to military purposes.

In 1954, South Vietnam remained principally an agricultural state. Its predominantly rural population of some 11 million and per capita GNP of about \$160 placed it firmly in the class of the less developed nations, but atop the least proficient in terms of living standards. Rice and rubber still accounted for about 85 percent of its exports. The South also produced a broad array of secondary crops, such as fruits, peanuts, sugar, corn, tea, coffee, and it garnered a plentiful fish supply. The South, however, was not self-sufficient in food production, and its agricultural potential had been diverted by French colonialism and by rapid population growth, which was accentuated by the influx of refugees from the North. Its exports only covered 20 to 30 percent of its imports; its foreign trade deficit had been sheltered by French and ultimately American aid. The South had very little in the way of known mineral resources, while its industrial development consisted of small-scale light manufacturing in the Saigon-Cholon area. South Vietnam's transportation network, which had been fairly well developed, was debased as 60 percent of its roads and one-third of its railroads had been destroyed by the French Indochina War.

The Republic of Vietnam turned to the United States for foreign capital and technical

assistance. In essence, this contributed to ongoing national institutional problems, as native culture continued to be circumvented by a new form of alien edification. For the South, this culminated in a mounting “rise of expectations,” which was expressed in ascension of pressures to attain swiftly the levels of social and economic prosperity of modeled by Western countries. In the Republic of Vietnam reconstruction was conducted under the burden of a troubled history that commingled with a rise in national aspirations.

The upsurge in expectations was especially significant in the realm of education. The 1950’s and 1960’s were decades of widening educational opportunities when contrasted to the colonial period. Education, functionally, was viewed as a critical element in the passage toward social change and accelerated economic development. The magnitude of the educational task was amplified by a rise in both the birthrate and the school-age population. Furthermore, the uneven educational opportunities of the preceding decades had left a legacy of illiteracy.

A marked increase in enrollment occurred at all levels of education in Southeast Asia, with a corresponding growth in third level education, as more than 60 percent of the universities of the area were instituted after 1945. The new motives for establishing institutes of higher education coincided with the new aspirations for economic and national development, and the traditional respect for learning arising from the belief that the possession of intellect placed one in a superior standing.<sup>108</sup>

With the partition of Vietnam in 1954, the Saigon regime encountered the same monumental problems in the realm of education as it did in all sectors of its social institutions. To the difficulties generated by Vietnam’s conflict with the French and its colonial legacy, the South now added the burden of accommodating the children of nearly one million refugees who had fled North Vietnam.

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<sup>108</sup> Series 17 Box 31 Folder 16, Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, Granville S. Hammond, “A Brief Review of the Development of Higher Education in South Vietnam,” (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1967), 3-5.

## Higher Education in South Vietnam as an Institution

South Vietnam recognized that as a developing nation it could only prosper if the majority of its people became educated. The Government of Viet Nam (GVN) had to build educational facilities and train additional teachers rapidly. The GVN had to develop new national objectives for education, and thereby begin to institute modifications to the educational offerings of the French colonial period. South Vietnam had a deficiency of trained personnel so acute in both the private and public field that many observers predicted the Republic could achieve neither perfect political-economic stability nor survive Communist aggression. The GVN, as it strove for institutional validation, enlisted the full-scale assistance of the United States. With the growth of American foreign aid, South Vietnam's institutions would now be predisposed to look toward the American system of higher education for seriously needed reforms. In South Vietnam, success was not a certainty in any sphere of institution building, however.

Just as the success of institutions of government were dependent on their ability to serve the needs of the nation, the success of educational institutions in Vietnam was dependent upon these institutions' ability to serve the needs of those individuals who made up that nation. As South Vietnam strove for stability, it gradually recognized that its present kind of educational investment had not yielded desired results. Educational reform was instituted, with questions of accessibility and autonomy surfacing as educators sought to achieve a new functional balance between popularizing basic knowledge—so as to provide individuals with practical standards, understandings, and professions—while at the same time providing a continuing critique of its society and history. In 1990, Byron summarized the existing legacy of Vietnam's educational problem in terms of its lack of educational facilities:

The long period of hostilities in Vietnam—the Japanese occupation during World War II (1940-1945), the war for independence from France (1946-1954), and the continued conflict with the Communist led Democratic Republic of Vietnam—resulted in the destruction of many schools and the poor condition of many others.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Byron, 36.

After “independence” the separate governments in the North and South each took steps to nationalize education and to expand educational opportunities for their populace. A rise in the birth rate had led to a renewed interest in education, causing a spiraling financial burden on the central government and resulting in the construction of far fewer schools than were needed. While the direct and full-scale involvement of the United States both in civilian and military affairs in South Vietnam sought to alleviate this problem, war and civil strife continued to retard the growth of institutions.

In the face of foreign intervention, both in war and in nation-building, the North possessed an effective alternative ideological philosophy for educational, cultural and economic development, set in the context of Vietnamese nationalism, and the government mobilized a strong and effective following, capable of passing any test of attrition.<sup>110</sup>

On the Southern side of the conflict, the non-communist nationalists had rallied to the wrong cause in supporting the French, thereby failing to provide effective native leadership or any clear program of national action. The French, by reappearing and delaying the granting of total independence to Vietnam, had divided the nationalists and discredited the honest ones. A cultural and ideological vacuum arose in South Vietnam. The regime was sustained by corruption internally and external economic and military support that continued as South Vietnam became a client state of the United States. Authoritarian figures turned to illusionary politics and contradictory concepts to maintain power and order. United States educational assistance to this lesser-developed state resulted in a divergent form of neocolonialism. Unlike the economic dependency of the colonial past, neocolonialism involved a substantial awareness and cooperation

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<sup>110</sup> Contemporary international politics combined with the issues of neocolonialism and nationalism to make the civil-conflict between the North and the South a “hot war,” an abscess of the burgeoning Cold War. By adopting communism and its doctrine of economic determinism and revolutionary action, the North had obtained both a clear medium for their nationalistic aspirations and an avenue for outside assistance from the Soviet Union and Peoples Republic of China. The North had chosen the Soviet mono-disciplinary model of higher educational institutes, which in time would prove to lack system level integration. Through a transformation of ideology and the appeal of nationalist principles to the Vietnamese people, however, the communists succeeded in holding a fix on popular support for their cause and struggle against the French, then the Americans, and the GVN.

between the donor nation and host country.

In 1977, Altbach noted several points that when paraphrased can serve as a useful characterization of this neocolonial educational relationship:

- 1) The organization of education systems of the host nations reflected western education models. The preferred language of instruction and research techniques reflected Western tradition and methodologies.
- 2) Elites associated more closely with the culture of their former colonial rulers than with their own and discovered that the use of European languages in schools was advantageous to their political and social positions.
- 3) Many western external assistance groups imported their own style of instructional materials and education curricula.
- 4) The educational leadership of undeveloped nations had earned degrees from western institutions of higher education.
- 5) The structural model of higher education in developing countries was the western Land-grant College, but its research capability was not actualized.<sup>111</sup>

These components were reflected in the evolution of institutions of higher education in South Vietnam. Unlike higher education in North Vietnam, which had adopted an altered shape and mission, higher education in South Vietnam evolved in a cultural and ideological vacuum. Ngo Dinh Diem had turned to a flawed doctrine of personalism clouded in attractive slogans and phrases drawn from western abstractions. He set the mission of higher education as one that combined his brand of humanism with a cultural synthesis between East and West. His declaration for an international cultural synthesis became a dangerous cultural game. The Republic of Vietnam increasingly lost its own cultural personality, as it was passed from one cultural protector to another. The regime's communal personalism had little room for individualism as it molded its "model" citizens. The regime in South Vietnam declared its intent to create people faithful to the responsibilities of the day. It assured French and American

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<sup>111</sup> Philip G. Altbach, "Servitude of the Mind? Education Dependency and Neocolonialism," *College Teaching Record*, 79, (1977), 187-204.

representatives that a new era of international cultural cooperation had begun in South Vietnam, an era of international cultural integration.

A stark contrast in philosophical foundations surfaced within the founding documents of North and South Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh, in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's Declaration of Independence, had paraphrased Thomas Jefferson's historic words:

All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. This immortal statement was in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.<sup>112</sup> (see Appendix I)

The Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam in 1956 declared:

Conscious that our nation being located at the crossroads of international lines of communications and migration, our people are ready to receive all currents of progress with a view to perfecting before the Almighty and before Humanity its mission which is the edification of a humanistic civilization for safeguard and the development of man in his entirety.<sup>113</sup>

French-educational preparation and French culture had provided the restricted basis and structure for institutionalized higher education in Vietnam. The French had established Vietnam's first university in Hanoi. Subsequently, units of study were transferred to Saigon, either as part of the process of educational expansion or due to the war with France and sequential partition.

In 1947, a Center for Medicine Studies opened in Saigon. On 9 March 1949 the Associated State of Vietnam was created, and it became necessary to develop a new set of regulations for governing higher education. Following the Franco-Vietnamese conventions of 1949-1950, the French and the Vietnamese government agreed that the new *Statutes of the University of Hanoi* would go into effect on 12 October 1953. These *Statutes* then served as the basic constitutional document for the universities that started at Saigon, Hue and Can Tho.

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<sup>112</sup> *Vietnamese Declaration of Independence*, (1945), in U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*. (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971) Book 1, B-33-36.

<sup>113</sup> Series 17 Box 33 Folder 2, *Constitution of the Republic of Viet Nam*, (1956).

It was within this context that the Wisconsin Team would enter and work to bring a new vision to higher education. By 1973, a wide range of universities and institutes of higher education had been established in the Republic of Vietnam, much of this was done with American assistance and advice. Like most things in the struggling Republic, quantitative progress did not necessarily equate with qualitative progress. Higher education operated in overcrowded, borrowed facilities, with antiquated instructional tools, and standards maintained through the use of difficult examinations, so the ratio of graduates to enrollments was very low.

### **Universities and Institutes of Higher Education in South Vietnam** **The University of Saigon (Vietnam) (1955)**

According to the Geneva agreements of 1954, Vietnam was partitioned temporarily at the Seventeenth Parallel. With French and American support Ngo Dinh Diem had bypassed the promised elections of 1956 and assumed the leadership role in the South. Many students and the larger part of the faculty of the University of Hanoi transferred to the Saigon institution, which was then named the National University of Vietnam. The full university was established in 1955 with Dr. Nguyen Quang Trinh, a graduate of the University of Paris, as rector. National University of Vietnam became the University of Saigon in 1957, when another public institution of higher education was established in Hue to which the former title was transferred.

The University of Saigon was composed of eight Faculties: the Faculty of Letters, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Pharmacy, Faculty of Dentistry, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Pedagogy, and Higher School of Architecture.

As noted, the University of Saigon's history was closely tied to the inception and growth of the University of Hanoi, and looked to the *Statutes of the University of Hanoi* for its legal foundation. A set of statutes for the University of Saigon was debated and accepted by the University and submitted to the Republic of Vietnam, which struggled with its approval. The University of Saigon, having no corporate charter, followed the old colonial rules and regulations

of the University of Hanoi, along with a series of Governmental Arête [orders]. Vietnamese professors, educated abroad, primarily in France, staffed the new university almost entirely. There were no buildings especially constructed for the university, so it operated in a variety of buildings, ranging from military barracks to primary schools located in different parts of Saigon.

As the University operated within this troubled situation, there were attempts to develop a core curriculum and make the programs more relevant to the needs of the new nation. During the period of war from 1954-1973, the University of Saigon increased its enrollment over twelve-fold. Yet, with the war as the dominant focus and the tremendous growth of enrollment, the qualitative changes were often ineffective. The University of Saigon's enrollment of 26,916, in 1967, was greater than that of the entire Republic's other higher education institutions combined. In 1973, it claimed an enrollment of almost 64,000 among its eight faculties.<sup>114</sup> The loose collection of faculties scattered around the city operated as almost separate institutions, virtually independent of the University's Rectorate. This fragmentation and the archaic regulations resulted in an inadequate legal base, marked by inefficient practices and duplications. The faculties of Law, Letters, and Science had an open-enrollment system in which they accepted all students wishing to enroll if they had completed secondary school and passed Baccalaureate Two examinations. With the huge increases in enrollments, the faculties had far more students than they could provide for in terms of classroom space, which correlated to very low rates of academic progress and graduation. On the other hand, the faculties of Pharmacy, Medicine, Dentistry, Architecture, and Pedagogy limited the number students enrolled to just what the facilities could accommodate, selecting their students through a very exacting examination system. These faculties had a very high retention rate, with most students graduating, though not in a timely fashion due to a very severe grading system. During its period of growth serious reforms were introduced in an effort to modernize the institution.

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<sup>114</sup> Charles B. Green, *Some Current Observations, General Information and Data on Higher Education in Vietnam*. (Saigon: USAID Education Division, 1973), 2, 15.

A growing dialogue between Vietnamese institutes of higher education and American universities would generate much of this reform. Within this setting, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point entered into an advisory relationship, lasting from 1967-1974, which found the University of Saigon the most difficult to work with and reform of the five major institutes of higher education in the Republic of Vietnam.

### **The University of Hue (1957)**

Presidential Decree No. 45-GD established the University of Hue on March 1, 1957, with Father Cao Van Luan (Paris Asian Linguistics School) as rector. The University operated under the *Statutes of the University of Hanoi*, as modified by decrees, arrêtés and customs. The university was charged with developing Vietnamese culture and coordinating it with foreign ideologies, and providing qualified training for the citizens of central Vietnam. The institution was given the challenge of establishing a university of culture in the national language. The selection of Hue hinged on the fact that it was the old Imperial City, which, located close to the demilitarized border with North Vietnam, could serve as a model of “spirit” for the Republic. The University of Hue had an Institute of Sinology and Faculties of Law, Letters, Science, Pedagogy, and Medicine. The University’s library collection and its projected center for the translation of documents placed an emphasis upon the historical development of Vietnamese culture. From 1957-1973 enrollments grew from 350 to 5,949 students. Like their counterparts in Saigon, the faculties were divided between open and selected enrollments.<sup>115</sup>

The University did not have a centralized campus, but most of its buildings were in the same section of the city. New buildings were constructed, but not on a pace that equaled the increasing enrollment or the impact of the war. The University of Hue was the site of serious political and military turmoil, as events such as the Tet Offensive in 1968 and the Easter Offensive of 1972 disrupted and badly damaged university facilities. It often housed several

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 4, 17, 26.

thousand refugees, and during the April Offensive of 1972, the government evacuated the entire city of Hue, forcing the university to set up its offices in Da Nang and Saigon. While the University of Hue was quite entrenched in its cultural mission, and hesitant to accept foreign assistance, it was a focal point for the studies and exchange visits of the Wisconsin Team.<sup>116</sup>

### **The University of Dalat (1957)**

Also, in 1957 a private university was established in the central highlands at Dalat under Roman Catholic auspices. Privately managed by the Body of Bishops of Vietnam, the University received assistance from such notable Catholic ambassadors as Cardinals Spellman and Agagianian and the Archbishop of Cologne, as well as from foundations and governments. The first chancellor was Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc, the brother of President Diem. Archbishop Thuc declared that Dalat's function was "to contribute its share to the important assignment of forming an Elite for the Nation."<sup>117</sup> The campus was situated in a resort community with its buildings interspersed with Japanese cherry trees and pines.

The University of Dalat and the Vietnamese government had a close relationship, as the Ministry of Education provided guidance and the University of Saigon supplied professors on a part-time basis. When the Diem regime was overthrown the University languished, as some of its Saigon property was confiscated. In 1962, the University's enrollment was 463 students divided among Faculties of Pedagogy, Letters, and Science.

### **The University of Van Hanh (1964)**

The University of Van Hanh opened in 1964, as a private institution operated by the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam/Vien Hoa Dao (the Organization for Executing the Dharma). The University, located outside of Saigon, was open to all people regardless of religion. In 1973, enrollment exceeded 3,375 students, housed in modern structures along the tidal flats of northwest Saigon. The University of Van Hanh placed an emphasis upon Buddhist

<sup>116</sup> C. Earle Hoshall, "Higher Education in Vietnam," (Saigon: USAID Higher Education, 1971), 12-59.

<sup>117</sup> Higher Education Team, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, (Stevens Point: WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., 1967), Appendix 1, 16-17.

philosophy and Oriental Studies, as well as ancient and modern languages, and social services.<sup>118</sup>

### **The University of Can Tho (1966)**

The University of Can Tho, located in the Mekong Delta, was created in 1966. There had been no university opportunities in the largely agricultural Delta, which contained one-third of the Republic's population. The University opened using facilities obtained from other agencies, housing its faculties in an old French military hospital and two former school buildings. Can Tho was the result of a grassroots drive for higher education, as from the outset it demonstrated a belief that the University should serve the unique needs of the Mekong region through a different type of educational format than had existed in Vietnam. It fashioned itself after the U.S. land-grant model, a change from the French elite tradition to the American-inspired concept of popular higher education.<sup>119</sup>

Historically, the Delta was known as the “West,” an area and segment of southern Vietnamese society that retained many frontier characteristics, including a receptivity to change. The rural sections of the Republic had suffered both in the quantity and quality of educational institutions at all levels. The Delta did have some specific educational facilities that were incorporated into secondary and post-secondary educational programs, all of which lacked adequate resources. These included: some rural trade schools, the Can Tho Vocational Agricultural High School, the Ving Long Polytechnic School, and the Ving Long Normal School. Eagon, writing for the Higher Education Survey Team in 1967, documented the grassroots movement for a university in the Mekong Delta, which came from educational leaders, PTA's, chambers of commerce, and other leading citizens with ties to the region. Organizational meetings drafted and submitted petitions to the government. One typical petition, emanated on March 6, 1966, is very indicative of the needs of Delta:

Often we have not asked things of the central government because we have appreciated

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<sup>118</sup> Green, 8.

<sup>119</sup> Higher Education Team, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, Appendix A, 6.

its difficulties. But now something must be done for the people of the West who have been forgotten in the development of the nation, especially through the absence of a university...

Such universities now exist in Hue and...Saigon...

Such a condition is not good for the development of the nation, and there must be a popularizing of education at all levels throughout the nation. Many rural people in the Delta do not have the opportunity to send their sons and daughters to Saigon and Hue. The intellectual life of the area suffers, and its economic development is stifled, even though it is the breadbasket of Vietnam and needs specialists. Furthermore, the Declaration of Honolulu emphasized the need for improvement in national welfare. We want a university...in the Delta in 1966 and it should have faculties of letters, law and science.<sup>120</sup>

Decree No. 62/SL/GD declared that a state university would be established in Can Tho, with all the colleges and faculties of a state institution, and the technical colleges necessary for its regions development. The March decree departed from the abridged Saigon form of the Statutes of the University of Hanoi, by structuring the university through the establishment of a major committee to develop the overall university plan, and technical committee to more specifically develop academic programs and scheduling issues.

The technical committee recommended that the university be organized on the basis of an annual academic calendar rather than being based on the accumulation of certificates of the traditional French/Vietnamese system. The use of the credit-hour system was eventually to be implemented. Other features centralized activities within the rectorate and bolstered its clerical staff, to reduce duties of faculties. In 1966, Can Tho had 974 students and 47 faculty within its four faculties: Sciences, Letters, Pedagogy, and Law and Social Science (an innovative combination). Can Tho experienced phenomenal growth, opening three campuses by 1972; including its new Faculty of Agriculture, the enrollment reached 4,520 in 1973.<sup>121</sup>

Can Tho emerged as a focal point and model university during the Wisconsin Team's advisory era, with WSU-SP serving as its virtual agent. Today, in a unified Vietnam, Can Tho remains as an important model institute of modern higher education, striving to demonstrate a

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, Appendix A, 7-9.

<sup>121</sup> Green, 5-6.

mission that serves both local needs and national goals.<sup>122</sup>

### **Minh Duc University (1970)**

In 1970, Minh Duc University was founded in Saigon under private auspices. Earlier private universities had charged students a reduced rate of tuition. Minh Duc set a policy that the student fees should cover full operational expenses. Minh Duc rented all of its classroom and office space. It established Faculties of Applied Science, Agriculture, Medicine, Philosophy, and Economics and Business. Its enrollment was 1,569 in 1972-1973.<sup>123</sup>

### **Hoa Hao University (1970)**

In 1970, the Hoa Hao religious sect founded Hoa Hao University in Long Xuyen near Can Tho. It instituted Schools of Letters, Pedagogy, Commerce and Banking, and International Relations and Management. It also housed a Language Center and an Institute of Hoa Hao Studies. In 1972-1973, its enrollment was 2,004. In 1973, its Schools of Commerce and Business opened a branch in Saigon, which accepted Baccalaureate I (eleventh grade) graduates, where it reported an enrollment of over 1,500.<sup>124</sup>

### **Cao Dai College (1971)**

Cao Dai College was located in Tay Ninh and was sponsored by the Cao Dai religious sect. It began in 1971-1972, with 260 students enrolled in its two-year programs in Education and Agriculture. During the 1972-1973 its enrollment jumped to 505.<sup>125</sup>

### **The Polytechnic University of Thu Duc (1973)**

Newest of the public universities, the Polytechnic University of Thu Duc was established by a decree of the Prime Minister on March 29, 1973. It inherited some on-going institutions, as the National Agricultural Institute became its School of Agriculture, the National Technological

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<sup>122</sup> Tran Phuoc Duong and David Sloper. "Serving National Goals and the Local Community: The Case of Can Tho University," in David Sloper, *Higher Education in Vietnam: Change and Response*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 211-228.

<sup>123</sup> Green, 8.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Institute's Engineering program became its School of Engineering, and the University of Thu Duc incorporated the Higher Technical Vocational Teacher training program at the Nguyen Truong To Center. Nguyen Truong To was recognized for having traveled to Europe in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to bring back modern science and technology, but had been stifled by Confucian traditionalists. Also, housed at the institution was a Pedagogy complex, a demonstration school, and a science complex. The university, like Can Tho, was designed as a version of the U.S. land-grant university—a unified institution focused on practical programs vital to national development.<sup>126</sup>

### **Normal Colleges**

Vietnam faced a shortage of trained teachers of historical proportions. New normal colleges were located at Saigon, Vinh Long, Qui Nhon, Ban Me Thuot, Can Tho and Long An. These colleges worked in the role of training teachers for the public school system. The National Normal School, located in Saigon, originally served as the principal source of new elementary level schoolteachers; its maximum capacity was the production of 500 teachers per year. The need for rural normal schools was evident, and plans called for schools to be built in the other cities, as teacher training was critically linked to any measure of successful reform.

### **Community Colleges**

Decrees in 1971 instituted two public community colleges: the Upper Delta Community College in My Tho and Coastal Community College in Nha Trang. Both colleges started with moderate curriculums in the 1972-1973 academic school year. Upper Delta had four programs for training first-cycle (middle school) secondary teachers. Coastal Community College, operating in quarters borrowed from the Oceanographic Institute, had three programs to train first-cycle secondary teachers and a transfer program in natural science. The development of junior colleges became one of the focal points of American assistance to higher education.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 67-68.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

## **Other Institutes**

In addition to the universities, South Vietnam established higher education institutions patterned after the *Grandes Ecoles* of France. A number of these were to be eventually included in its system of higher education, but first opened outside the Ministry of Education. These institutes were specialized training centers. They included the National Agricultural Center, Phu Tho National Technical Center, National Oceanographic Institute, National Institute of Administration, College of Social Welfare, Higher School of Fine Arts, National Military Academy, National War College, and the Political Warfare College.

### **National Agricultural Institute (1959)**

Formerly the National Agricultural Center, the National Agricultural Institute started in 1959, in Bao Loc, and later moved to Saigon. It developed a four-year university level program for the preparation of experts through its Schools of Agronomy, Animal Science, and Forestry. It developed an experimental farm and campus at Thu Duc, which was to come under the auspices of the University of Thu Duc. Budget difficulties prevented its new campus from obtaining adequate equipment for its projected enrollment of 2,000 in 1973.<sup>128</sup> In 1969, the University of Florida undertook a USAID contract to assist in the development of agricultural education at the National Agricultural Center.

### **National Technical Institute (1947)**

The National Technical Center, founded in 1947, in Hanoi, was upgraded to become the National Technical Institute as it set two levels of programs: for technicians and engineers. In July 1954, the Technical Schools of Hanoi and Haiphong were relocated below the seventeenth parallel, in Hue and Nha Trang. The technician program had developed in 1957, in a suburb of Saigon as an USOM project, and the National Technical Institute was now instituted as a junior college level element of the Phu Tho Polytechnic Institute. In 1969, the University of Missouri,

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 8.

Rolla, under contract with the USAID began to assist engineering education at the National Technical Center.<sup>129</sup> Phu Tho trained vocational teachers, who were to spearhead the nation-wide effort to establish rural trade schools, designed to provide educational opportunity for youth to continue their formal education beyond the elementary level. The engineering division, with its Schools of Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, and Chemical Engineering, was to become a College of the new University of Thu Duc. By 1973, plans called for the separation of these two programs as both facilities needed upgrades with Phu Tho Junior College and the University of Thu Duc anticipating further expansion. The University of Missouri Team also held a USAID contract to assist in the development of technical and vocational-industrial education and its educational planning in relation to workforce needs in South Vietnam.

### **National Institute of Administration (1962)**

In 1962, the Prime Minister's Office established the National Institute of Administration (NIA), to train officials for various ministries. Change to higher education was put on hold as the most extensive initial USAID projects in Vietnam were those associated with the training of elementary and secondary level teachers and civil servants. The NIA was at the forefront of the latter, it had two programs: an undergraduate program, divided between two years of study and two years of internship, and a two year graduate plan, with a three month internship. NIA students, selected by competitive examination, became regular civil servants. In 1973, the enrollment was limited to 170, and was anticipated to climb to 440 within five years.<sup>130</sup> In 1968-69, a University of Tennessee team undertook a survey of the NIA, Saigon, for the USAID. The Tennessee Team interviewed NIA students and found that some 50 to 60 percent were concurrently enrolled at the University of Saigon seeking the higher status associated with a

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<sup>129</sup> Joseph W. Dodd, "Aspects of Recent Educational Change in South Vietnam," *Journal of Developing Areas*, 6 (July 1972), 562, from Joseph W. Dodd, Hans E. Jensen, and Nelson M. Robinson. "Education in Vietnam," chapter three, *Education for Public Administration in Vietnam: A Report Submitted to the Agency for International Development by the University of Tennessee under Terms of Contract No. AID/vn42*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, Division of International Education, 1969).

<sup>130</sup> Green, 10.

degree granting institution, while the NIA had awarded only certificates of completion. The team prepared a wider survey of USAID endeavors dating back to 1954 looking at the USAID role as change agent for social and institutional development, and reported that there were inherent problems within the educational and administrative systems that existed both in pre-French and French-controlled Vietnam. The Tennessee Team called for more efforts aimed at long-term change, faulting the USAID for its philosophy of setting short-term goals in order to “get in and get out.” They called for new programs with an “emphasis on the creation of new agents for socialization,” employing a strategy of attrition between new and old social agents, a natural process that included not only changing the orientation of existing agents of socialization, but an element of outright destruction for old approaches. They characterized traditional educational attainment as elitist and philosophical in nature, with the mandarin class being firmly opposed to technical progress and social change. The Tennessee Team attributed the ease with which the French imposed their rule to a long-standing lack of adaptability by the mandarin administrative system, concurring with two earlier USAID surveys, Robert LaFollette’s *Higher Education Facts in Vietnam* (1966), and the 1967 of the National Education Study Team (Wisconsin Team) *Education Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization*, both of whose findings had attributed a high rate of failure at all educational levels to traditional French and Vietnamese elitist restrictions in training opportunities to the minority, the ruling, educated-cultured class.<sup>131</sup> The Tennessee Team noted that new programs and methods had met with resistance at all levels of society, citing a 1959 article by Elon Hildreth, the first head of the USAID Education Division in Vietnam, who had found resistance in 1953 to the community pilot school concept. Concessions in respect to traditional curriculum fundamentals required extensions to daily programs or an after-school basis. Efforts to improve the quantity and quality of education encountered the traditional emphasis on “academic” education and its emphasis on memorization and rote learning, rather

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<sup>131</sup> Dodd, “Aspects of Recent Educational Change in South Vietnam,” *Journal of Developing Areas*, 6 (July 1972) 555-570.

than a more comprehensive or practical education and modern teaching methodologies.<sup>132</sup>

A **College of Social Welfare** operated under the direction of the Ministry of Social Welfare; the College of Social Welfare acted as a fledgling institution of higher education directly serving the social welfare system.

### **The Vietnamese National Military Academy (1948)**

In 1948, the Military Academy was established to train officers for the top leadership of the Army. In 1966, its programs were raised to that of a four-year university level institution. At that time it initiated training programs for all three services: Army, Navy and Air Corps. Besides military training, the Institute provided students with a general education and an engineering program. Upon graduation students received a commission and a diploma, which was the equivalent to a university degree. In 1973, with its enrollment at approximately 1,000, the Ministry of Education authorized the Academy to grant regular degrees in Applied Science. The Ministry of National Defense had two other colleges that could also be recognized as higher education institutions. The **Political Warfare College** was a two-year institution, while the **National Defense College** was a senior officers' institution. Summer military training was required of all high school students, and became a required subject at graduation examinations. For university students, military service was unavoidable; draft deferment was granted only to those who passed their annual final examinations. Offices of Military Training were instituted at public universities in South Vietnam, as higher education took on a new function for the state. Traditional higher education in Vietnam had not incorporated military training. By 1970, the Offices of Military Training had become focal points of student protest on all five of South Vietnam's public universities.

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<sup>132</sup> Elon Hilderth, "Challenge in Education," 1959, 145-47, in Dodd. "Aspects of Recent Educational Change in South Vietnam," *Journal of Developing Areas*, 6 (July 1972) 563.

## **Higher Education in Search of a National Mission in the Republic of Vietnam**

Questions over university autonomy and a general hostility toward the war increased tensions between the university community and the government. Vietnamese universities, as social institutions, were constant reflections of the environment from which they developed, tenuously struggling to achieve academic knowledge and credibility, in a time of violent conflict. Higher education in the Republic of Vietnam, under the auspices of its Ministry of Education (MOE) looked to USAID assistance for a reformed vision. The willingness of Vietnamese and American educators to operate under the shadow of the violence of the era contributed to the viable construction of new curricula and educational base. Vietnam replicated its own history by adapting and molding its own character from a melding of internal and external forces and ideals. The road would be a gradual one, as educators met in the “big muddy,” searching for a common ground for reform and modernization.

The USAID and RVN sought to set higher education on a corrective course, on a national mission to enhance workforce skills, expand expertise in leadership, increase teacher training, and propagate societal norms; central to these were those affiliated with the duties of citizenship and an adherence to prescribed social responsibilities.

Autonomy was a myth for higher education, as the universities had inherited from the French a system in which the colonial central government, and now the Government of Vietnam (GVN), held direct control of budgetary matters, appointed professors and administrators, approved programs, and issued decrees directing the institutions. The institutions of higher education operated without charters or governing councils and there was very little legal definition of the relationship between government and the various institutions in the system or of the roles of administrators at all levels. The absence of a clear system of governance and leadership resulted in a pattern of ineffective coordination of the services and resources of institutes of higher learning. This situation left unpacked crates of equipment and unused

buildings at one location, while another lacked materials and facilities. Styles and systems varied from institution to institution. Overriding problems, in an age of war and urgent needs and demands, resulted in an uncertain status for the entire educational system as it looked to modernize.

The universities were clouded with tension and questions of permanence and stability. Protests on the campuses were most often directed at the government rather than the institutions. The frequent invasion of armed police to disperse student protests further undermined the autonomy of higher education. While autonomy had been guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam in 1967, it was never clearly articulated in legal terms. Students and professors increasingly engaged in politics. They signaled the need for change and improvement in higher education and in the Vietnamese government, itself. Protests closed the universities for months in 1969 and 1970.

In 1969, tensions over the war coincided with the assassination of two professors of the University of Saigon, Le Minh Tri, Minister of Education, and Tran Anh, Acting Rector of the University of Saigon. The National Liberation Front, citing their pro-American stances, had targeted these two leaders of the republic's top higher education institution. Both were members of the Faculty of Medicine, the University's most modern faculty, which had received substantial American aid. The faculty continued to operate under increased pressure as it struggled to establish both French and English sections in its curriculum.

The University of Saigon and the University of Hue were initially entrusted with their nation's cultural mission. Other institutions gradually formed in response to the RVN's developing needs. Higher education's cultural and social mission would not be easy in a land and society torn by war and a legacy of foreign intervention. Even as higher education's main purpose was to restore and develop the traditional culture of Vietnam, its programs were dominated by non-Vietnamese studies. In 1966 only seven of the 27 certificates programs at the university level dealt with Vietnam in any related manner, while courses related to Vietnam

totaled less than one-fifth of the aggregate of courses offered by its faculty. By 1967, five universities had been established in the Republic of Vietnam, with two more in the formative stages. From 2,910 in 1955, enrollments had increased to more than 38,000 for the 1968-1969 academic year. Yet, accompanying this growth were numerous problems. High rates of failure were apparent at the university level. For example, of the 3,055 first-year students enrolled in the University of Saigon Faculty of Law in 1963-1964, only 118 (less than 4 percent) passed the first-year final examinations; of the 38,000 university students enrolled in the academic year 1968-1969, only 1,924 received diplomas.<sup>133</sup>

Higher education struggled to adjust to a wider conception of its responsibilities and duties. It was being called upon to provide a new leadership in public administration, commerce, industry, politics, and other levels of education. In South Vietnam, higher education had incorporated the concept of cultural synthesis that seemed to provide it with a new mission. This orientation toward international cultural synthesis had attracted South Vietnamese intellectuals during the early 1960's. It was a safe outlet for the fledgling republic, as it did not require a complete break from the French cultural family. From a historical perspective, however, international politics had long interfered with Vietnamese affairs. An international orientation was a natural evolution of circumstances and not a cultural innovation. By failing to initially articulate a strong national culture, South Vietnam lost its own cultural personality and, in part, passed from one cultural protector to the other. In higher education there is often an association between philosophy and policy that, "enables those responsible for the course of higher education to guide by intelligence rather than by hazard and happenstance."<sup>134</sup>

The Republic of Vietnam needed to reformulate higher education's function to create "a necessary balance between tradition and experiment, between stability and change," all keys to a

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<sup>133</sup> Green, 24, 29.

<sup>134</sup> John S. Brubacher, *Bases for Policy in Higher Education*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), x.

more vital philosophy.<sup>135</sup> Educators and government administrators interested in reform and the development of modern society, in South Vietnam, instinctively turned to a functionalist mission as a theoretical guide and justification for educational reorganization.

It is common for educational reformers to turn to functionalism for guidelines:

The use of functionalism by educational reformers is quite understandable. Once it is recognized that modern schooling is required to meet the needs of contemporary society, and then it is a quite natural step to try to identify the precise nature of those needs and to mold educational policy to try to meet them more effectively. Much of educational reform has been built on the functionalist view that schools serve to help people adapt to the changing life of modern society. When adaptation becomes a problem and dysfunction results, it is reasonable...to think of schooling as a way to correct it.<sup>136</sup>

South Vietnam moved to mandate a curriculum that stressed national purposes rather than local ones, hoping to develop a national identity, with social integration as a function of education. Reform in higher education was rationalized in a manner that served the purpose of role differentiation, to identify and train the higher-level skills demanded by a modern state with the most promising students being offered the liberty to attend higher institutes of learning and move on to professional positions in society and government. Lower-level education became compulsory in an effort to develop new social habits and attitudes more in-line with the changing times; education performed the function of social re-integration.<sup>137</sup>

Degrading economic and social conditions compounded the continued destruction of war in South Vietnam and the new demands for nation-building programs. The rigid government regimes in the South responded with corrupt policies and repressive measures. Further, the failure of the South to develop a vital and independent economy impeded the evolution of a more functional system of higher education. Technical higher education was neglected, while the university curricula remained orientated toward administrative and literary areas. Higher

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<sup>135</sup> Vu Trong Phan, 23.

<sup>136</sup> Feinberg and Soltis, 22.

<sup>137</sup> This approach was reinforced by academic, technical and economic assistance from the United States under contractual agreements with the United States Agency for International Development. As noted, reform operated under the shadow of civil strife and military conflict. The stage was set for monumental diversification of American foreign aid and academic assistance efforts across South Vietnam.

education in the South failed to meet the needs of national development or address Vietnamese realities. The RVN turned to the U.S. for military assistance in defending itself from Communist attack. The RVN found a common commitment from the U.S. on a second front as South Vietnam became increasingly coupled to an ever widening range of American foreign assistance programs. The United States Agency for International Development would offer distinct means for reform. Under the umbrella of USAID contracts, America's academic community moved to advise the South Vietnamese on higher education and its other social institution.

### CHAPTER III

#### U.S. AID TO SOUTH VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE PRELUDE OF THE WISCONSIN MISSION

The next chapter, devoted specifically to the Wisconsin Team, will discuss the development of the Wisconsin Contract in relationship to the wider environment. At this point I seek mainly to provide a review of the general background in which USAID involvement transpired in the Republic of Vietnam. In the course of American history, cultural programs abroad habitually served to be functional to the foreign policy of the United States. Foreign aid goes in hand with foreign policy. In international politics no country normally assists another country whose policy threatens its interests or security; this was the case for American aid to South Vietnam. As the United States set its own agenda, foreign aid led to a strategy of development that was good for the recipient, and also good for the donor. American aid, in theory, sought to achieve a multiplier effect of getting benefits that were disproportionate to the amount invested, through a careful diagnosis of foreign situations and selection of optimum forms of aid.

The roots of cultural aid activity by the United States of America on a governmental basis originated in Latin America, with the United States recognizing the latter's important impact on "the security and welfare of the United States."<sup>138</sup> During World War II American cultural activities abroad matched the propagandistic objectives of winning world opinion to the American cause. The Marshall Plan successfully provided emergency relief and assistance to Europe after World War II, serving as an impetus for a similar strategy with newly created states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Congress endorsed an educational and information exchange program, which would complement U.S. foreign policy, passing the Fulbright Act in 1946 and the Smith-Mundt Act in 1948.

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<sup>138</sup> Charles A. Thompson and Walter H. C. Laves, *Cultural Relations and U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1963), 32-33.

United States assistance in Vietnam began in the latter stages of World War II with Office of Strategic Services (OSS) advisory teams supplying and instructing Vietminh resistance groups against the Japanese occupiers. Ho Chi Minh was officially appointed OSS Agent 19, as he welcomed the OSS officers warmly, hoping to enlist the United States of America against the reestablishment of French colonial rule. OSS officers endorsed self-rule for the Vietnamese, and OSS Major Archimedes Patti actually assisted Ho Chi Minh draft Vietnam's *Declaration of Independence*, dated 2 September 1945.<sup>139</sup> With only minor changes, Vietnam's founding father set the context of the statement as he quoted Thomas Jefferson, one of America's founding fathers: "All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."<sup>140</sup>

President Franklin D. Roosevelt had expressed reservations on the continuation of European colonial polices, endorsing the placement of Indochina in an international trusteeship in preparation for independence. Roosevelt mistrusted France and its leader Charles de Gaulle. Under Secretary of State Edward R. Stettinius, Jr., noted in his diary on 17 March 1944 that FDR regarded France as "poor colonizers" who "badly mismanaged" Indochina and had exploited its people.<sup>141</sup> President Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage on 12 April 1945, leaving the fate of Indochina and doctrine of American foreign policy to Harry S. Truman.

The Truman administration was largely unsympathetic to the ideal of self-rule, and gave way to French and British actions crushing an independence movement in Saigon. President

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<sup>139</sup> Archimedes Patti, *Why Vietnam.*, 223-224. Ho Chi Minh's choice of an eighteenth century anti-colonial American instead of a nineteenth century scientific socialist from the Rhineland underlines several things about modern Vietnam. First, American independence served as a model for Vietnam emerging from French colonialism. Second, is the particularity of the Vietnamese home-brewed Marxist-Leninism-Ho Chi Minh Nationalist Thought. Third, is the paramount importance of national identity. The *Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam* is an important historical document, from which Ho Chi Minh sets a lengthy understanding of the Vietnamese historical drive for identity forth. (Full text is included in thesis appendix.)

<sup>140</sup> Ho Chi Minh, "Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam," in U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense.* (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971) Book 1, B-33-36.

<sup>141</sup> Herring, 9.

Truman scrapped any ideas of a trusteeship plan, perceiving that the Soviet Union had emerged from World War II as the most powerful nation in Europe and Asia, and with its subjugation of Eastern Europe, had begun to institute global designs. Truman and American strategists sought to build a balance of power by supporting its European allies. France assumed a special importance in the new realm of power, and American skepticism about French policy in Indochina was outweighed by European concerns as the United States committed itself to a policy of containment. The State Department's Asian experts recognized the explosiveness of nationalism in Southeast Asia and urged the administration to pressure France to adjust its policy and come to terms with Vietnamese nationalism. Yet, the recommendations of the Asian experts in the State Department were overridden on both Vietnam and China by the department's European experts who favored France. Charles de Gaulle had refused to accept the Marshall Plan unless the U.S. helped restore its colonial empire. It was too late for Vietnam; even as Truman told Hopkins at Potsdam that the U.S. would not assist Churchill rebuild the British Empire.

Ho Chi Minh and other Vietminh leaders hoped that the friendly attitude of OSS representatives might carry over to influence official American policy toward their revolution. In Paris, on 12 September 1945, Ho Chi Minh met with First Secretary George Abbott. Abbott's official Memorandum regarding the meeting revealed Ho Chi Minh's sentiments:

Ho Chi-minh first discussed his contacts with Americans dating back to his guerilla warfare against the Japanese when OSS and Army officers parachuted into his jungle headquarters...He emphasized his admiration for the United States and the respect and affection for President Roosevelt which is found even in the remote villages of his country. He referred particularly to or policy toward the Philippines and pointed out that it was only natural that his people, seeing an independent Philippines on one side and India about to gain its freedom on the other, should expect France to understand that similar measures for Indochina are inevitable. He then took up the question of his supposed Communist connections which he, of course, denied. Ho Chi-minh pointed out...that the Viet-Nam constitution opens with a guarantee of personal liberties and the so-called rights of man and also guarantees the right of personal property...With regard to the modus vivendi...agreements had been reached regarding French economic and cultural rights in Viet-Nam, a customs union for Indochina, and a common currency...The French, however, have not accepted the Viet-Nam demand that "democratic liberties" be restored in Cochinchina. Ho Chi-minh explained that by this he meant freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the release of political prisoners...Ho Chi-minh spoke at various times of the aid which he hoped to get from the

United States, but was vague except as regards economic aid. With regard to the latter, he explained that the riches of his country were largely undeveloped, that he felt Indochina offered a fertile field for American capital and enterprise. He had resisted and would continue to resist the French desire for a continuation of their former policy of economic monopoly...he would insist on the right to approach other friendly countries. He hinted that the policy might apply to military and naval matters as well and mentioned the naval base at Cam Ranh bay...Ho Chi-minh stated that he hoped that through his contacts with the Embassy the American public would be informed of the true situation in Indochina.<sup>142</sup>

Such inducements had little impact on Washington's diplomacy, which drew its values from political and racial ideals that were becoming institutionalized. In 1947, Secretary of State George Marshall sent a request to American diplomats in Saigon and Hanoi for an appraisal of the situation in Indochina, particularly in regards to French concerns and the nature of Ho Chi Minh and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Charles S. Reed, the American Consul in Saigon, responded with a discerning analysis of French actions but a stereotypical view of the Vietnamese capacity for self-government:

The American Vice Consul at Hanoi has reported his opinion that the French military successes in the north are more apparent than real, and, as I have reported, the French successes in the south have achieved but a very small part of the task that confronts the military...So long as Vietnam has the will to fight the French will find themselves mightily mistaken if they think they can control the country and restore its shattered economy by holding only the larger urban centers...Observers here feel that any concessions the French will make, in admitting participation in what could be a most lucrative economy, will be forced from them...The past record shows no willingness...It is possible that the French, while in France, are more liberal minded, but something seems to happen to them when they get to Indochina...a French return to power will not be exactly for the benefit of the natives...the alternatives are not entirely pleasing...intervention...may be the only possible solution...I do not believe that many people find the Annamites attractive and even lovable...few of the Annamites are particularly industrious...not noted for their honesty, loyalty, or veracity...This is not to say that there are not many worthwhile natives and that the natives should not have more of an opportunity than they have had in the past. They should! But given the rank and file it is queried as to what would happen in Indochina if they were given independence with no measure of check and control...there would be misgovernment and chaos and...a fine opportunity for a third party, be it Soviet or Chinese, to gain a foothold in this country.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> George M. Abbott, "Memorandum of Conversation with Ho Chi-minh," Paris, September 12, 1946, U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*. (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971) Book 1, C-103-104.

<sup>143</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947 Vol. VI*, "The Consul at Saigon (Reed) to the Secretary of State," Saigon, July 11, 1947, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1972), 110-116.

In part, American paternalism would replace French colonialism, as nation-building and containment became fundamental tenets of United States foreign policy. The United States pushed for the economic and strategic reintegration of Japan and Southeast Asia into the Western sphere. With China having fallen to communism, the United States drew a line of defense for this region within the “great crescent” of containment extending from India to Japan. The Soviet Union recognition of the Vietminh on January 30, 1950, seemed to confirm perennial institutional beliefs about Ho Chi Minh’s allegiance. Secretary of State Dean Acheson held that this act “removed any illusions as to the ‘nationalistic’ nature of Ho Chi Minh’s aims and reveals Ho’s true colors as the mortal enemy of native independence in Indochina.”<sup>144</sup>

Containment moved to involve a policy of assistance and guidance. In his *Memoirs*, President Truman recalled the Point Four statement on American foreign aid that he had presented in his 20 January 1949 inaugural address: “We must now embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of scientific and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas.”<sup>145</sup> This policy quickly became known as the “Point Four” program for technical aid and assistance to the newly developing nations of the world, as it was the fourth of four courses of action Truman set forth in the address. Truman explained his rationale for the “bold new program,” which he saw as the first such policy in world history.

I knew from my study of American history that this country was developed by the investment of foreign capital by the British, the Dutch, the Germans, and the French. It seemed to me that if we could encourage stabilized governments in underdeveloped countries in Africa, South America, and Asia, we could encourage the use for the development of those areas some of the capital which had accumulated in the United States. If the investment of capital...could be protected and not confiscated, and if we could persuade the capitalists that they were not working in foreign countries to exploit them but to develop them, it would be to the mutual benefit of everybody concerned.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. XXII, No. 554, Publication 3753, “Kremlin Recognizes Communist Movement in Indochina,” February 13, 1950, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O.), 244.

<sup>145</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs, Volume Two: The Years of Trial and Hope*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc. 1956), 230.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 230-231.

Point Four would be referenced as the foundation for the development of the agencies which would evolve to become the USAID. Indeed, the Truman's Point Four program was historical, yet seemingly it paid little notice to the America's own colonial war for independence. Also, the new stratagem for American foreign policy of assisting undeveloped countries developed a distinct personality shaped by the milieu of the Cold War and the alliances associated with Mutual Security Assistance Acts.

The United States Congress set the official framework for foreign assistance through legislation. In 1950, the Act for International Development amended the Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, and established economic and technical assistance as a central part of American foreign policy. The act set a design for the "freedom...economic and social progress of all peoples...[and] the development of international understanding."<sup>147</sup>

Sec. 502 of the Act for International Development stated:

It is the declared to be the policy of the United States and the purpose of this title to aid the efforts of economically underdeveloped areas to develop their resources and improve their working and living conditions, by encouraging the exchange of technical knowledge and skills.<sup>148</sup>

Sec. 504 declared:

The President is authorized to undertake and administer bilateral technical cooperation programs carried on by the any United States Government agency and, in doing so—  
(c) to make and perform contracts or agreements with, and make advances and grants to, appropriate persons, corporations, or other bodies of persons, or to State, local, or foreign governments for technical cooperation programs.<sup>149</sup>

In the 1950's, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union reinforced the propagandistic concept of cultural and educational exchange programs. In 1951, the United States Congress ratified the Mutual Securities Act. Section 2(a) of this legislation reveals the American intent on extending its influence abroad in specific terms of its own self-interest and new role as leader of the free world.

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<sup>147</sup> United States Congress, Public Law 535, (81<sup>st</sup> Congress, 1950), Sec. 402a.

<sup>148</sup> U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Act for International Development*, Eighty-First Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O. 1950), 1.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

The Congress declares it to be the purpose of this Act to maintain the security and to promote the foreign policy of the United States by authorizing military, economic, and technical assistance to friendly countries to strengthen the mutual security and collective defenses of the free world to develop their resources in the interest of their security and interdependence and the national interest of the United States and to facilitate the effective participation of those countries in the United Nations system of collective security.<sup>150</sup>

President Truman asked Congress to link military and economic assistance to “other free nations” with “this mutual security interlock. The one builds upon the other.”<sup>151</sup> In Asia, Truman declared:

Free countries are struggling to meet Communist aggression in all its many forms. Some...are engaged in bitter civil strife against Communist-led guerrillas...rebellion is raging in Indochina...they are trying to exploit deep-seated economic difficulties—poverty, illiteracy, and disease...considerations make it essential for the United States to help the free countries of Asia in their struggle to make good their independence and bring economic and social progress to their people.<sup>152</sup>

For Truman, the security interlock demanded that: “Of our military assistance, a large part will go to Indochina where the troops of the French Union and of the Associated States are battling valiantly against the Communist-led forces.”<sup>153</sup>

Through direct cooperation with the French, the U.S. had been supplying economic and military aid to Vietnam since the end of World War II. Several special agreements were drafted between the U.S. and the governments of the Associated States of Indochina that served as the foundation for economic and military assistance that continued for more than twenty years. In 1950, President Truman had asked that an assessment be made of needs for emergency assistance in Southeast Asia. Acting on the findings of that brief, United States officials recommended that economic assistance be designated for South Vietnam. On 23 December 1950, representatives of the two countries signed an Agreement on Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina. On 7

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<sup>150</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee of Foreign Affairs. “Text of H.R. 5113, Mutual Security Act of 1951, as reported by the Committee on Foreign Affairs to the House of Representatives, August 14, 1951,” *Mutual Security Program Part I*, Selected Executive Session Hearings of the Committee, 1951-56, Historical Series, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1980), (Sec. 2 (a)), 87.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, Appendix I, “Message from the President of the United States recommending a Mutual Security Program,” (May 24, 1951), 77.

<sup>152</sup> see *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>153</sup> “Message from the President of the United States Transmitting recommendations for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1953,” (March 6, 1952), see *Ibid.*, 513.

September 1950, another agreement was signed that established the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Saigon, as the United States pledged its own resources to afford the South Vietnamese technical and military assistance. Under the Pentalateral Mutual Defense Assistance Pact, signed the U.S., France and the Associated States of Indochina, MAAG advisers were to work as inspection teams observing the use of American equipment by the French and Vietnamese.<sup>154</sup> In 1950, the Economic Cooperation Agency had established the Special Technical and Economic Mission (STEM) in the South Vietnamese capital of Saigon. STEM became the first official American economic mission to negotiate directly with Associated States of Indochina. Early economic aid programs focused on advice and technical aid in the development of adult literacy programs, government information, health services, civil aviation, marine fisheries, and improvement of the Port of Saigon. From 1951 to 1954 U.S. aid to Indochina increased annually. The major part of American aid during this period, however, was reserved for military purposes, which included 80 percent of total French military expenditures by 1954 and totaled some \$2 billion over the eight-year period of 1946-1954.<sup>155</sup>

Soon after the Geneva Accords, a new era of American assistance to Vietnam began. With the accords, the United States Operations Mission (USOM) was created to deal specifically with the problems of the newly established Government of South Vietnam, a country inundated with problems that weighed on U.S economic assistance programs. On 8 September 1954, the alliance took on new dimensions as South Vietnam pledged its own resources to the defensive strength of the “free world,” and placing itself under the protection of the newly created Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty and Protocol set a regional alliance promoting economic well-being and development, independence and self-government and its responsibilities, and a formal sense of unity by all parties in the collective

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<sup>154</sup> Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and Support: The Early Years 1941-1960, United States Army in Vietnam*, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, G.P.O., 1983), 115-116.

<sup>155</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam, 1954-1975, Vol. 1*, (Washington D.C.: Report by Asia Bureau Office of Residual Affairs Vietnam Desk, 1975), 22-30.

defense against any aggressor. The Protocol to the Treaty unanimously designated Cambodia, Laos, and the free territory of the State of Vietnam. All parties and plenipotentiaries agreed that those states and territory were eligible in respect of the Treaty's economic measures.<sup>156</sup>

On 15 September 1954, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles discussed SEATO as delivered an address to the nation on radio and television.

Our quest for peace took us last week to Manila... The United States was in a special position... because it was the only one of the signatories which did not have territorial interests in the treaty area. For others, the pact was not only an anti-Communist pact but also a regional pact... Any expansion of the Communist world would, indeed, be a danger to the United States, because international communism thinks in terms of ultimately using its power position against the United States. Therefore, we can honestly say, using the words that President Monroe used in proclaiming his Doctrine, that Communist armed aggression in Southeast Asia, would, in fact, endanger our peace and security and call for counteraction on our part. The treaty recognizes the importance of economic welfare... Congress... by the Mutual Security Act... already provided a fund to be available... to assist the free governments of Southeast Asia... The protocol also extends the treaty benefits to Cambodia and Laos and the free territory of Viet-Nam. The Indochina armistice created obstacles to these three countries becoming actual parties... The treaty will, however, throw the mantle of protection over these young nations.<sup>157</sup>

In 1955 an economic assistance treaty was signed between Vietnam and the United States. American economic aid during this period was primarily relief-orientated, as nearly one million refugees entered the republic in its first 300 days of existence. The U.S., also, moved to relieve Vietnam's inflationary pressure with programs of import assistance. The USOM and its administrative agency, the Mutual Security Administration, grouped South Vietnam's troubles into four areas: internal and external threats, war victims, economic problems, and civil administration. All areas were augmented with the changing military situation, which hindered long-term economic development and the stability of social institutions.<sup>158</sup>

From 1954 through 1958 the cumulative economic aid to Vietnam amounted to one

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<sup>156</sup> U.S. Department of State, *American Foreign Policy, 1950-1955*, vol. 1, Department of State Publication 6446, "Southeast Asia Collective Defense Treaty (Manila Pact)," Text of Treaty, September 8, 1954, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1957), 912-916. Ratification advised by Senate, Feb. 1, 1955; ratified by the President Feb. 4, 1955; entered into force Feb. 19, 1955.

<sup>157</sup> John Foster Dulles, "Address by the Secretary of State, September 15, 1954," see *ibid.*, 919-920.

<sup>158</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam, 1954-1975, Vol. I*, (Washington D.C.: Report by Asia Bureau Office of Residual Affairs Vietnam Desk, 1975), 30-32.

billion dollars. By 1958, the USOM had developed 42 cooperative projects with the GVN: 11 in public works, 11 in agriculture and natural resources, 6 in education, 5 in public administration, 4 in industries and mining, and 2 in information. USOM direct hire U.S. advisors expanded from 27 in 1955 to 164 in 1958. Most were agriculturalists, educators, and medical personnel. Additional American specialists worked specific USOM contracts.<sup>159</sup>

Educational aid was now intensified. In 1951, the United States began to provide aid to specific educational projects in the Republic of Vietnam. In 1957, the Saigon Office of USOM identified the American educational aid program in the Republic of Vietnam as the largest United States educational assistance program in the world. By the FY 1968 educational projects totaled some \$9.3 million or four percent of the \$219.0 million U.S. economic project programs budgeted for Vietnam.<sup>160</sup>

Over the period of a decade American foreign aid would lose most of its overt propagandistic nature as it turned to focus on the development of institutions and human resources in emerging nations directly through educational and economic efforts. American efforts at nation building and containment had put Vietnam in an important position in the Free World. On 1 June 1956, Senator John F. Kennedy attended a Conference on the future of Vietnam, sponsored by the American Friends of Vietnam, an organization of which he was a member. He noted that timely political events were reaching a climax both in Vietnam and in the U.S. Congress, yet news about Vietnam had “virtually disappeared from the front pages of the American press, and the American people have all but forgotten about the tiny nation for which we are in large measure responsible.”<sup>161</sup> He proclaimed that the United States had a special obligation to Vietnam:

Vietnam represents the cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia, the keystone to the arch, the finger in the dike... Vietnam represents a test of American responsibility and

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., Vol. I, 35-36.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., Vol. II, 73-78.

<sup>161</sup> John F. Kennedy, “America’s Stake in Vietnam: The Cornerstone of the Free World in Southeast Asia,” July 1, 1956, *Vital Speeches of the Day*, 22, (New York: The City News Pub. Co.) 617.

determination in Asia. If we are not the parents of little Vietnam, then surely we are the godparents. We presided at its birth, we gave assurances to its life, we have helped shape its future. As French influence in the political, economic, and military spheres has declined in Vietnam, American influence has steadily grown. This is our offspring, we cannot abandon it, we cannot ignore its needs.<sup>162</sup>

Building upon the successes of the Marshall Plan in rebuilding Europe, developmental specialists directed their thoughts to assisting Latin America, Africa, and Asia. As former colonies emerged as independent nations their immediate needs were most often expressed as economic in nature, focusing on the expansion of industrial and agricultural output, an improved standard of living, better health care and education. Societal development was regarded as an economic process. In 1960, American economist Walter Rostow examined modern history, designing a paradigm of economic assistance by characterizing a nation's development in five stages: "traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive for maturity, and the age of high mass consumption."<sup>163</sup> Rostow served as a special assistant in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, where his strategic advice was staunchly anti-Communist. Rostow perceived that in modern history nationalism transcended old regional or clan ties, and was manifestly crystallized from a collective aversion to colonial rule. Wars of independence were associated to the dynamics of the precondition stage: "the exit from imperial status...took the form of bitter, bloody war...The experience of colonial administration created not merely ties of economic advantage but human memories of cumulative effort, and achievement and status—as well as of national power and prestige—extraordinarily difficult to sever: as Britain, France...have all found since 1945."<sup>164</sup> Rostow's viewpoint of modern history saw the process of transition, or the preconditions for take-off, as occurring through the external intrusion of ideas and actions by highly developed societies. In part, transition was initiated by the invasion of ideas that shock traditional society and hasten the development of conditions and sentiments that

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 618-619.

<sup>163</sup> Walter Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-Communist Manifesto*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 4.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 111-112.

set in motion processes from which a modern alternative society emerges. Ideas come forward that progress is both possible and necessary. Education changes and broadens during this transition process to match the needs of development.<sup>165</sup> Rostow rationalized that societies failed to develop because they lacked an educated elite leadership who held the attitudes and values necessary to lead their nations to modernity. For emerging nations a capable central government with a vigorous leadership was essential for the modernization of its economy and society.<sup>166</sup>

Developmentalist theories set the central role of education as socializing the population with appropriate values and the right kind of skills, as a skilled labor force could create a modern society for themselves. Western modernization theorists and development planners found “stages” to be congenial, viewing the concept of development in terms beyond the strictly economic sphere. Conferees at the 1961 Washington Conference on World Development set education as the primary means of assisting underdeveloped societies to fulfill modernization beyond economic terminology. Education was seen as a prerequisite to political development; in functionalist terms it would develop both secular attitudes and the skills needed to build social unity. Education was to be a social leveler; development experts felt schooling could alleviate the social conflicts that characterized the pluralistic societies of underdeveloped nations and move in tune with values of modernization.<sup>167</sup>

On 27 February 1961, John F. Kennedy noted the value of education in foreign exchange:

As our own history demonstrates so well, education is in the long run the chief means by which a young nation can develop its economy, its political and social institutions. There is no better way of helping the new nations of Latin America, Africa, and Asia in their present pursuit of freedom and better living conditions than by assisting them to develop their human resources through education. Likewise there is no better way to strengthen our bonds of understanding and friendship... than through educational and cultural interchange.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 30-31.

<sup>167</sup> A. Peshkin and R. Cohen, “The Values of Modernization,” *The Journal of Developing Areas*, No. 2, (October, 1967), p. 7-22.

<sup>168</sup> Office of the Federal Register. National Archives and Records Service. General Services Administration. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, John F. Kennedy, 1961*, John F. Kennedy, “Remarks at a meeting with the Board of Foreign Scholarships and the U.S. Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange, February 27, 1961,” (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1962), 126.

## **United States Agency for International Development and the Role of American Institutions of Higher Education**

Development of institutions of higher education increasingly occupied a significant portion of American cultural and educational assistance programs. After World War II, American institutions of higher education had expanded their international affiliations. American universities developed such activities as faculty exchanges, foreign research projects, study abroad programs, and the interchange of instructional materials. The Fulbright Program, grew from 84 grants in 1948, its first year, to 5,100 award recipients in 1966. American faculty abroad evolved from 637 in 1954 to more than 11,000 in 1966. During this same timeframe, the number of foreign students studying in American institutions of higher education rose to over 110,000 by 1966.<sup>169</sup>

Universities looked outward in other ways, too. In 1958 the United States Congress approved the National Defense Education Act, providing federal funding to language and area studies programs at American colleges and universities. Title VI, in 1965, allocated \$13 million for these programs. Private organizations such as the Rockefeller, Carnegie, and Ford foundations underwrote many area and language studies projects. Between 1953 and 1966, the Ford Foundation's International Training and Research Program donated more than \$270 million to 34 American institutions of higher education.<sup>170</sup>

John M. Richardson's *Partners in Development* sets forth an accurate overview of the chronological periods and patterns of participation in Agency-university relations that established the modern framework for American efforts at nation-building and institution-building. From January 1949, to the summer of 1953, the university-contract program moved from its conception through the initiation of the first projects, which were orientated toward rural and agricultural development, and were experimental and limited in nature. During this period, a variety of

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<sup>169</sup> Byron, "An Historical Study of USAID/Ohio University's Teacher Education Project in the Republic of Vietnam 1962-1972," (PhD diss., Ohio University, 1990), 29.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

government agencies cooperated with project administration: the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), Institute of Inter-American Affairs (IIAA), Mutual Security Agency (MSA), Technical Cooperation Administration (TCA), and the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations (OFAR) of the Department of Agriculture (USAD). The period from the summer of 1953 to July 1955, brought program proliferation, as the university-contract programs expanded rapidly and responsibilities were consolidated under a single Agency, the Foreign Operations Administration (FOA), headed by Harold E. Stassen. The history of Agency-university relations saw more changes in attitudes, rather than procedures.<sup>171</sup>

Technical assistance projects were the most extensive of all American higher education international programs. United States land-grant colleges and state universities directed most of the early contracts. American land-grant institutions, with their tradition of community service via teaching, extension and research services, were the logical choice to assist developing countries. The early projects were primarily agricultural and rural development programs, providing onsite aid and educational programs for foreign nationals in American institutions.<sup>172</sup>

The federal government's International Cooperation Administration (ICA) was formed in 1955. The period from July 1955 to summer 1961, was one of partial reorganization. More uniform legal, financial, and administrative procedures were instituted as John B. Hollister served as director of the Agency. Conferences between high-ranking Agency and university officials became the norm, but negative incidents often characterized relations. Policy change occurred slowly in Agency-university relations. "Clearances" were instituted, requiring universities to get authoritative interpretations and decisions from Agency representatives in Washington or in the field. Clearances were required contract extensions and for most routine matters, even as deviations became necessary while working in the field. Until 1956 there was little uniformity in

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<sup>171</sup> John M. Richardson, *Partners in Development: An Analysis of AID-University Relations 1950 - 1966*, (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969), 10-11, 13-50.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14, 32.

contracts, as twelve different Agency offices negotiated university contracts.<sup>173</sup>

When the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held hearings on the Mutual Security Act of 1957 it inquired into complaints from participating universities. Senator Wayne Morse noted he had received criticisms from college presidents, individuals who conducted foreign surveys, and others. Morse asked ICA Director Hollister about “interminable delays on even the routine matters involving contracts,” and “how many universities have given up contracts” because of difficulties with the ICA. Morse ended his questioning by noting that another charge was “that delays and difficulties in obtaining security and salary approvals for persons employed by universities to engage in overseas projects often reached the point of serious embarrassment.”<sup>174</sup>

Hollister assured Senator Morse and the committee that the ICA was working to improve all facets of its relations with contracting universities. He noted that in 1957 the ICA had 84 contracts with 59 universities working in 34 countries. That year, the agency had spent some \$30 million on these programs. To date, no contracts had been canceled or failed to be renewed because of dissatisfaction with ICA procedures or policy relations. The University of Idaho held some discontent over procedural matters, but canceled its contact primarily because of differences with the host country, India. The agricultural division of the University of California and Ohio State University also had served notice that they may not renew their contracts. Hollister noted, however, that acceptable relationships had been redeveloped and the contracts were being readied in an orderly fashion as the ICA had dedicated itself to resolving all procedural issues.<sup>175</sup>

Four different directors headed the ICA from 1957 through 1961, a period of increased scrutiny. The authorization and appropriation processes had effectively made Congress the salient overseer of foreign assistance measures. A growing dissatisfaction with foreign assistance programs made its reorganization a prevalent topic during the 1960 American presidential

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 58, 60-61, 66

<sup>174</sup> U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. *Mutual Security Act of 1957*, 85<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, (23 March 1957), 72-76.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-75.

election. “New” was the catch word for the new Kennedy Administration and its New Frontiers. In order to achieve a new mandate for foreign assistance the administration set its designs on a new agency and a new program. On 4 September 1961, Congress passed the Foreign Assistance Act separating military and non-military aid, and mandated the creation of an agency to administer economic assistance projects. On 3 November 1961 President Kennedy established the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The Agency credited Rostow’s stages of economic development and “take-off into growth” stage as having supplied the footing for the Agency’s developmental planning.<sup>176</sup> The USAID stressed country-by-country planning and development with long-term objectives of “economic growth and democratic, political stability in the developing world to combat the perceived spread of ideological threats such as communism.”<sup>177</sup> The Agency contracted with the land-grant universities and an ever-growing number of private institutions to conduct a variety of nation-building projects.

USAID-university relations were complex. From the educational viewpoint, each contract represented a special Agency-university-host nation relationship having its own unique version of its history and evolutionary patterns. For university administrators, the history of USAID-university relations led to a growth of consensus between administrators and USAID officials over the objectives of university participation. For university business comptrollers, the history involved a gradual transformation of fiscal and contract procedures to safeguard the universities in their relations with USAID. For USAID contract managers, it was a history of an enduring struggle to bring the aspirations of mission and university personnel into harmony with the legal statutes of Federal contracting policies. To their counterparts in the hosting nations, the history was equally composite. Overall, this history demonstrates efforts designed to substantiate the institutions of developing nations in order that they would persevere after the contracts had

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<sup>176</sup> USAID, “A History of Foreign Assistance,” <http://www.usaid.gov/about/usaidthist.html> , World Wide Web Resource, Computer file, (2003), 3.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 3.

been terminated.<sup>178</sup>

The period from summer 1961 to December 1962 had marked the arrival of the “New Frontier” in Washington, resulting in widespread personnel and organizational changes. Kennedy stressed a recommitment to foreign aid and put the USAID into the forefront of foreign policy as it provided expertise by sponsoring overseas teams of American university experts and professors. The USAID became an important problem-solving agency, as it set forth on a cultural mission and faced a multitude of situations in its attempts to bring about institutional change.

From December 1962 to the end of the Vietnam War, a period of harmony in Agency-university relations was characterized by both expansion and diversification of projects. At the request of USAID Director David Bell, John W. Gardner conducted a major study and chaired a conference focusing on the university-contract program, both of which contributed to an extended period of mutual understanding between Agency and university representatives.<sup>179</sup> Gardner’s report proved to be a major factor in promoting mutual understanding between USAID and the universities. As head of the Carnegie Corporation, Gardner’s academic reputation had preceded his labors to legitimize USAID’s foreign assistance efforts. Gardner’s own standing in educational and public service magnified with time. In 1964 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Then in July of 1965 he was sworn in as the first Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. He was the only Republican Party member in President Johnson’s cabinet. He played a leading role in the enforcement of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and launched Medicare, and supervised the creation of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.<sup>180</sup>

In 1966 John Gardner directed an upper level ‘Evaluation Team’ in Vietnam that found, “Vietnamese higher education today is almost useless as an instrument for social and economic

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<sup>178</sup> Richardson, 6, 153-154.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., 11, 112-114, 138.

<sup>180</sup> Tim Simon, *John Gardner, Uncommon American*, <http://www.pbs.org/johngardner/chapters/4.html>, Working Dog Productions, Twenty-First Century Initiative, (Lincoln, NE: GPN/Nebraska Educational Telecommunications, 2000).

reform.”<sup>181</sup> In October of 1967, John Gardner visited Stevens Point to deliver the University Convocation Address. While at the University he met with members of the Wisconsin Higher Education Survey Team and the group of visiting Vietnamese Rectors who participating in the Team’s first Higher Education Seminar coordinated under the Wisconsin Contract.

In November of 1967, uneasy over the directions of Johnson’s war policy he resigned, advising the president not to seek reelection. He remained an advocate of democracy and political reform as he formed Common Cause.<sup>182</sup>

The *Gardner Report* received the full endorsement of USAID Director David Bell and was heralded in most governmental circles. The report was the subject of a series of articles in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times*. Bell declared the report to be:

forthright, lucid and provocative...to lay just the right kind of analytical basis, and to set out just the right kind of conceptual guidelines for AID and the universities to use in proceeding to work out practical improvements in our joint undertakings...the report itself makes plain, action is also required by the universities as well as by AID to achieve the results desired. We are...inviting study of it by all concerned.<sup>183</sup>

With the priority of USAID programs being raised a growing body of standardized procedures evolved. A greater familiarity of these new policies, by both Agency and university officials, reduced negative incidents relating to past structural problems. While financial management and contractual problems declined, however, the Agency experienced a high rate of personnel turnover, so that it often operated with an inadequate, inexperienced staff. The Agency found it difficult to meet the demands of the participating universities for swift decisions on contract actions even when field activities could not proceed until a decision had been reached. Finally, after long legislative delays, modifications in overhead procedures helped to accelerate actions. Acting upon the recommendation of the Gardner Report, requirements for security clearance of university personnel serving overseas were modified, as were publication

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<sup>181</sup> C. Earle Hoshall, *Higher Education in Vietnam, 1967-1971*, (Saigon: USAID, Higher Education, 1972), 10.

<sup>182</sup> Simon, *John Gardner, Uncommon American*.

<sup>183</sup> Richardson, 115-116. David Bell in “Foreword” of John W. Gardner, *AID and the Universities*, (New York: Education and World Affairs, 1964), ix-x.

regulations. Other problems in programs arose outside the Agency, especially in Congress and in the universities themselves. *Equal partnership* was one of the early slogans used to describe aspects of the programs between the Agency and the universities. When it came down to specifics the concept became increasingly difficult to define, especially when the issue of university autonomy versus Agency control arose. Agency and university representatives often were governed by different broad goals; thus their requirements for *control* came from differing sets of premises. Divergent views clashed in situations where the Agency discontinued, or attempted to discontinue, or limited contracts with participating universities. The keys to this issue centered on questions of control and implementation of lower and higher level objectives and goals, and the ability to choose alternatives, which minimize the conflict or maximize the complementary relevancy of goals. The persistency of this problem involved the complexity of budgeting and programming following an annual cycle, with the maximum term of contracts being limited to three years. The three-year limit and requirements of the budgetary cycle did mitigate bureaucratic problems that are characteristic to most government enterprises.<sup>184</sup>

Still another element, which served to complicate Agency-university relations, was the issue of prestige. Occasionally, high-ranking university representatives associated the continuation of a contract with the prestige of their institution. It should be noted that the issue of prestige was just as important to the Agency and American policymakers working in the realm of foreign relations, especially in Vietnam. Several long-term characteristics of USAID programs played a part in the issue of prestige, as objectives and goals of university-contract projects were vaguely defined and performance criteria were deficient, with ad hoc procedures for selecting participating universities being unsystematic. The setting of projects remained fundamentally important as legislative requirements were designed to make foreign aid an effective instrument of policy and to ensure that the taxpayer's money was not squandered on unproductive projects. By law the Agency was to correlate the recipient nation's capacity for self-help with the

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<sup>184</sup> Richardson, 142-157.

availability of economic assistance from other foreign sources. The economic and technical depth of the project was geared to the rational likelihood of contributing to the development of the recipient country's economic and productive capacities, and the consistency of each project with other ongoing developmental activities.<sup>185</sup>

The "settings," or environmental factors, became particularly significant. Each situation was unique, politically, socially, culturally, and educationally. The singleness of settings was explained in terms of:

No two less developed nations (or host universities) are exactly alike. (Most are not even much alike.)

The situation in any single less developed nation (or host university) is likely to change considerably over short periods of time, independently of activities of U.S. personnel. Not very much is known, even after fifteen or more years of technical assistance activity, about the processes of planned social change, which AID is trying to promote. Furthermore, there is little agreement about what or how much is known.<sup>186</sup>

If the university was to be functional to the development of a nation, it needed to do more than offer material, professional, and technical assistance. Therefore, while modeling both change and stability, higher education's function was also to prepare the people for their responsibilities and roles as citizens of a new nation and new social order—a very difficult task when the new nation looked outward, rather than inward, for validation. John Gardner found:

The key part in the situation is neither AID nor the university but the host government. The problems of the developing nations cannot, in any functional sense, be solved from outside. It must ultimately save itself, develop itself, be itself.<sup>187</sup>

Through time this lesson would be learned, as hard experience demonstrated that what works in Washington, D.C., or Stevens Point may not work in Saigon; and what works in Saigon may not work in Hanoi; and that what works in Saigon in 1967 may not work in 1968 or especially in Ho Chi Minh City in 1975. This example applied to both the escalation of American civilian and military assistance programs in the Republic of Vietnam and Soviet assistance in the North, which in turn tested the social and institutional fabric of both nations. However, a

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<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 174-178.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid., 181.

<sup>187</sup> Gardner, 3.

historical review of the various USAID team configurations and their recommendations for change in education is necessary if we are to determine what characterized the conditions of South Vietnam and what may still be vital for higher education in 2002 and beyond, in a unified Vietnam. The Wisconsin Team was a group much akin to other American University teams that operated under a variety of amended USAID contracts. The Wisconsin Team, directed by Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, was the primary party that focused uniquely on the structure of Vietnamese higher education, educational policy, and administrative reform.

### **American Higher Education Arrives in the Republic of Vietnam**

Overall, the USAID sought to induce changes in Vietnamese higher education through two methods: 1.) From studies and suggestions by American university survey teams; 2.) By direct prolonged assistance of an American university to a Vietnamese institution. Globally, by 1968, the USAID allocated \$2.18 billion toward economic assistance, the largest portion, \$1.04 billion, was in Development and Alliance for Progress Loans. In terms of Supporting Assistance, FY 1968 funds devoted to sustaining nations under military and economic threat, the total was \$594 million. Of this, Vietnam received \$400 million, more than two-thirds of USAID's global obligations to Supportive Assistance.<sup>188</sup> In that year, fifteen countries received eighty-seven percent of USAID's total country assistance, with Vietnam receiving the largest commitments, some two-thirds of the total.<sup>189</sup> In 1968, USAID had 1,396 contracts totaling \$629 million for projects in 67 countries. Of this, \$204 million was allocated to 70 United States colleges and universities who held USAID contracts in 40 countries. About four-fifths of USAID-sponsored experts were from U.S. institutes of higher education.<sup>190</sup> In 1968, USAID committed \$199 million worldwide for manpower and education training, and reported "special progress" in

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<sup>188</sup> U.S. President, Johnson, *The Foreign Assistance Program: Annual Report to Congress, Fiscal Year 1968*, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1968), 1, 3, 35.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

supporting regional centers of higher education in Southeast Asia, specifically “resulting from concentration of AID’s effort and greater Vietnamese responsibility for projects.”<sup>191</sup>

As early as 1951, the United States Operations Mission (USOM) had begun providing some assistance to small-scale educational projects in the Republic of Vietnam. Beginning in 1955, the USOM (soon to be under the auspices of the USAID) instituted a broad program of financial assistance and advisory services. In fiscal 1955, in an effort to assist the GVN with its problems as a new state, the United States Congress appropriated \$322.4 million in economic aid. By 1958, there were 48 technical assistance projects and 16 active institutional contractors in the Republic of Vietnam.<sup>192</sup> The scope of the projects arose from the recognition that from the outset, the new state of South Vietnam encountered an array of problems. The withdrawal of the French meant the immediate loss of both the state’s major economic and administrative props. Some 40,000 Vietnamese had been employed in French workshops and arsenals while more than 120,000 were enlisted members of the French army. The GVN faced staggering technical and administrative difficulties associated with the shift to independent nationhood, as French technicians and civil servants left the state in large numbers. Meanwhile, the influx of an estimated 900,000 refugees migrating from the North, added some eight- percent to the state’s population in less than a ten-month period in 1954-1955. At the same time, vehement internal resistance from three dissident sects challenged the GVN.

In Vietnam, American foreign assistance focused on shaping the country and hopes for peaceful development from 1954 through 1959 to a period in the 1960’s increasingly marked by counterinsurgency and revised U.S. objectives. In Washington, the State Department formed an interagency Vietnam Task Force that included representatives of the Defense Department, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), and the USAID. In 1961, two study groups were sent to Vietnam, one led by General Maxwell Taylor and the other

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid., 13, 36.

<sup>192</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam, 1954-1975, Vol. I*, 31-36.

by Eugene Staley. The missions called for administrative and political reform, economic programs in rural areas, greater U.S. advisory capacities and supply efforts, and a more effective and larger Vietnamese Army. Administrative reforms and economic programs fell within the realm of the USAID. The U.S. Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) grew from 685 advisers in 1960 to 10,000 in 1962. By the end of 1962, USAID had field consultants throughout Vietnam at the province level. Significantly, by the end of 1965 American military commitment had escalated to 184,000 troops. In 1955, there were 199 USAID direct hire employees in Vietnam and on 30 June 1968 there were some 1,977.<sup>193</sup>

In the Republic of Vietnam, direct involvement of American universities had begun in 1955 with Michigan State (College) University, which had the distinction of being the largest technical assistance program of any American institution of higher education. The activities of the Michigan State College [University] Vietnam Advisory Group (MSUG) focused on police administration and occurred in close conjunction with the tenure of Ngo Dinh Diem, and the MSUG contractual direction reflected the cycles of the Diem regime itself.<sup>194</sup>

Diem and Wesley R. Fishel, an assistant professor of political science at Michigan State College, met in Tokyo in 1950. Subsequently, in 1951, at the recommendation of Fishel, Diem became a consultant to Michigan State's Governmental Research Bureau. In 1952, still out of power, Diem requested that the French allow Michigan State College to provide technical assistance to the Vietnamese government, with the United States government furnishing fiscal support. However, the French refused. In July 1954, Diem assumed the office of premier of Vietnam, and asked the American government to assign Fishel as an advisor to the premier's office and to the American ambassador. A Michigan State survey team of four professors followed Fishel to Saigon in September 1954. The team spent two weeks on a study-tour of Vietnam, and then returned to Michigan State to compile their findings. What ensued set a

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 36, 40, 46-49.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 36.

pattern for American university advisory projects in the RVN. The survey team, in mid-October, reported on its recommendations to the United States Foreign Operations Administration (renamed later the Agency for International Development). The report suggested that the FOA underwrite Michigan State College's development of a sizable program of technical assistance in four domains: police administration, public administration, public information, and economics and finance. The sheer magnitude of proposed activities was commensurate with the almost unsolvable problems that accompanied the ending of the Indochina War, the partitioning of Vietnam, and the migration of refugees from the North. Michigan State was to assist the GVN in the development and reorganization of the Republic's administrative and police services, and provide needed equipment for a modern crime laboratory.<sup>195</sup>

Michigan State was to aid the GVN in a wide range of related programs. They offered assistance in the areas of personnel administration, pre-service and in-service training, budgeting, and land property registration procedures, and in the establishment of a Constituent Assembly and the drafting of a Constitution. The MSUG was to assist in the reform of the revenue system, develop a long-term program for economic growth, design a policy for foreign trade, and propose a program for public housing. In the realm of public information, MSUG planned the conception of a government-operated television system, in which large-screen receivers were to be installed in schools and other public places to bring the GVN into immediate communication with its people.<sup>196</sup>

The measure of the significance of the MSUG role in the initial support and development of the new Republic of Vietnam was mirrored in the cost of its operations during its seven-year tenure of assistance. The University contracted for \$5,355,000 for the transportation and salaries of its American staff and for supportive activities on its campus. In addition, some \$5,130,000 was appropriated for its Vietnamese staff and other expenditures in the field. This budget was

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<sup>195</sup> Robert G. Scigliano and Guy H. Fox, *Technical Assistance in Vietnam*, (New York: Praeger, 1965), 1, 4, 5, 12, 50-53.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

assessed to the United States government. Moreover, during the course of its advisory capacity, the MSUG handled some \$15 million worth of equipment and other materials for American economic aid programs in South Vietnam.<sup>197</sup>

Two sets of principles guided the MSUG assistance effort, one quite theoretical and the other very specific. When setting these principles into their functional context, the MSUG field leaders recounted that it is of little wonder that American advisers:

sometimes produced unrealistic solutions to practical problems... One set was rather abstract: the contribution to the development of an independent, modern government that would be responsive and responsible to its people. The other set was quite specific: the introduction of efficient and economic practices into the machinery of government. Both sets of principles were, of course, imbedded in the backgrounds of their holders... they sometimes led the University group into positions that were doubtfully appropriate to Vietnamese needs and realities.<sup>198</sup>

The case study of the MSUG reveals a central precedent for American university advisory groups that would move to assist the government of South Vietnam. The MSUG operated within a perimeter set by the practices and policies of the regime in power, and this perimeter determined the range of success that MSUG or other American university groups who followed would be able to achieve. In this case, the questionable creditability of the Diem regime and its agenda were bolstered by the MSUG assistance in police development. When I discussed the MSU project with historian Hugh Walker, of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, he questioned whether or not many of the “professors” were in fact CIA agents. Walker quickly noted that this was not true of the Wisconsin Team, as its mission and consultants were strictly educational.<sup>199</sup>

Scigliano and Fox stated in their report that Michigan State University harvested few academic returns from its venture in Vietnam, noting those working as part of the MSUG had declared that was not their intent. The University did add to its international dimension through its Vietnam projects, as it developed centers for the studies in international communications,

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>199</sup> Hugh Walker, discussion with author, (2003).

international education, economic and agricultural development, African and Asian affairs, and an international relations library collection. Specifically, however, no new courses or special study programs could be attributed to the Vietnamese investment. In a survey questionnaire distributed among MSU faculty in 1958, of 770 faculty members who expressed an interest in enhancing their knowledge of other cultures, only 42 specifically mentioned the Far East, and only 14 referred to Southeast Asia. Strikingly, none of the 841 faculty constituents who attested to an aspiration of attaining additional foreign language proficiency cited Vietnamese.<sup>200</sup> In my discussion with Professor Walker, he noted that perhaps the poor response to the 1958 faculty survey may indicate that the faculty members of MSU were already aware of the University's political involvement in the oppressive police tactics employed by the Diem regime in Vietnam.<sup>201</sup>

At its high point, in the late 1960's, there were 233 USAID Public Safety advisers in Vietnam as it expanded beyond the training and equipping of the South Vietnamese police force. Public Safety became involved in building up the South Vietnamese prison system, and was linked to Con Son Island's "tiger cages" that held political prisoners and police dossier collection operations that served as the intelligence base for GVN actions against political opponents and the "Phoenix" program working to neutralize Communist cadres. The 1974 Foreign Assistance Act terminated the Public Safety Office of the USAID. U.S. Senator James Abourezk (D-S.D.) led the repeal effort, maintaining that the program was associated with political repression, "They are using our money to suppress their own people." Public Safety Director Lauren J. Goin acknowledged that CIA agents were secretly working within Border Patrol and Special Branch advisory teams in Vietnam. Director Goin noted that Public Safety had operated on a doctrine established by President John F. Kennedy, following principles of "humane" law enforcement, minimum use of force, and counterinsurgency. He recognized that while elements of the

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<sup>200</sup> Scigliano and Fox, 66-67.

<sup>201</sup> Walker, discussion with author.

Vietnamese police had used law as “a mechanism for behavioral control,” often relying on excessive force to instill fear and compliance with laws. “Our doctrine is to turn that around 180 degrees—to get police to operate in a way that makes their role acceptable to the people.”<sup>202</sup>

The historical sketch of the Michigan State University Vietnam Advisory Group indicates that proposals for minor changes fared better than those for wide-scale reforms. The real measure of MSUG mission comes not through any statistical expression or analysis of its links to public safety, but relative to the group’s opening the doorway for USAID projects in Vietnam. Other USAID teams would follow and outline reforms that Vietnamese decision-makers needed to make. For American institutes of higher education, the real educational mission was to introduce ideas in a troubled environment, which could stir the Vietnamese to produce their own solutions to national problems. Recommendations came forth, but the successful implementation of these ideas was a measure that proved to be very difficult in an environment tainted by war and its legacy of social regression and cultural division.

### **“Why Vietnam?”**

At a 28 July 1965 press conference, President Lyndon B. Johnson answered the question:

“Why Vietnam?”

Why must young Americans, born into a land exultant with hope and with golden promise, toil and suffer and sometimes die in such a remote and distant place? (The Lesson of History) The answer, like the war itself, is not an easy one, but it echoes clearly from the painful lessons of half a century. Three times in my lifetime, in two world wars and in Korea, Americans have gone to far lands to fight for freedom. We have learned at a terrible cost that retreat does not bring safety and weakness does not bring peace. It is this lesson that has brought us to Vietnam. This is a different kind of war. There are no marching armies or solemn declarations. Some citizens of South Vietnam, at times with understandable grievances, have joined in the attack on their own government. But we must not let this mask the central fact that is really war. It is guided by North Vietnamese, and it is spurred by Communist China. Its goal is to conquer the South, to defeat American power, and to extend the Asiatic dominion of communism...Our power, therefore, is a very vital shield...an Asia so threatened by Communist domination would certainly imperil the security of the United States itself. We do not choose to be the guardians at the gate, but there is no one else...Moreover, we are in Viet-Nam to fulfill one of the most solemn pledges of the American nation. Three Presidents—President

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<sup>202</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, News Clippings (1967-1974), “No More Dagger Under AID Cloak,” *Milwaukee Journal*, (January 13, 1974), 1, 3.

Eisenhower, President Kennedy, and your President—over 11 years have committed themselves and have promised to help defend this small and valiant nation...we will always insist that the people of South Viet-Nam shall have the right of choice...This was the purpose of the 1954 agreements which the Communists have now cruelly shattered. If the machinery of those agreements was tragically weak, its purposes still guide our action. As battle rages, we will continue as best we can to help the good people of South Viet-Nam enrich the condition of their life, to feed the hungry, and to tend the sick, and teach the young, and shelter the homeless, and help the farmer to increase crops, and the worker to find a job... (A Personal Note)...There is something else, too. When I was young, poverty was so common that we didn't know it had a name. And education was something that you had to fight for...I also know, as a realistic public servant...we must have the courage to resist or we will see it all...swept away on the flood of conquest. So, too, this shall not happen. We will stand in Viet-Nam.<sup>203</sup>

On 8 March 1966 the U.S. Department of State would present the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations with a legal memorandum on “The Legality of U.S. Participation in the Defense of Viet-Nam.” The memorandum noted that: “In response to requests from the Government of South Viet-Nam, the United States had been assisting that country in defending itself against armed attack from the Communist North.” The state department based its argument on four legal points: 1.) The right under international law to participate in the collective self-defense; 2.) The U.S. had undertaken commitments, in executive statements and formal SEATO treaty; 3.) Measures by the U.S. and GVN were justified under the 1954 Geneva accords; 4.) The U.S. President had “full authority to commit United States forces,” justified through the collective sources of article II of the Constitution, the SEATO treaty, and 10 August 1964 joint resolution of Congress on the Gulf of Tonkin.<sup>204</sup>

By 1965-1966, the war had greatly intensified with direct participation of American combat troops, and it had caused serious economic and social problems across South Vietnam. These problems constituted what became known as “the other war,” which had to be won simultaneously with the military war if South Vietnam was to have an effective, stable and popular government. At Honolulu, on 6-8 February 1966, President Lyndon Johnson and his top

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<sup>203</sup> Lyndon B. Johnson, *We Will Stand in Viet-Nam*, Department of State Publication 7937, Far Eastern Series 137, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 1965), 2-11.

<sup>204</sup> Leonard C. Meeker, *The Legality of U.S. Participation in the Defense of Viet-Nam*, Department of State Publication 8062, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1966), 1-12.

advisers met with the leaders of South Vietnam, to stress the critical nature of this second war and pledged to intensify common efforts. The United States delegation included Secretary of State Dean Rusk; Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara; Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare John W. Gardner; Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman; Ambassador at Large W. Averell Harriman; U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Henry Cabot Lodge; Special Assistant to the President McGeorge Bundy; the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Earle G. Wheeler; Special Consultant to the President general Maxwell D. Taylor; and the U.S. commander in Vietnam, General William C. Westmoreland. Representatives from South Vietnam included the Chairman of the National Leadership Committee of the Republic of Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu, South Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Cao Ky, and their uppermost advisers. The leaders of the two governments emerged from the conference with the “Declaration of Honolulu,” pledging a joint determination to defend “the hopes of all the people of South Vietnam” against aggression. The declaration set forth the “purposes” of the Government of Vietnam and Government of the United States as a common commitment. The GVN recognized “in this interdependent world we shall need the help of others: to win the war of independence; to build while we fight...a military war, a war for the hearts and minds of our people. We cannot win one without winning the other.” The U.S. pledged to “prevent aggression...give special support to the work of the people of that country to build even while they fight—to stabilize the economy—to increase production of food—to spread the light of education—to stamp out disease...a purpose of peace.”<sup>205</sup>

On 8 February 1966 President Johnson left Honolulu and met with Vice President Hubert Humphrey in Los Angeles, who was on a special mission in route to Hawaii to accompany the Vietnamese as they returned to Saigon. In Los Angeles, Johnson spoke of “the other war,”

We went to Honolulu to meet the leaders of the Government of South Viet-Nam. They and their people understand, and we understand, that the war we are helping them fight must be a war that will be won on two fronts. One front is military. The other front is

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<sup>205</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The Pledge of Honolulu,” Department of State Publication 8051 Far Eastern Series 145, Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1966), 1-6.

the struggle against social injustice, against hunger and disease, against ignorance, against political apathy and indifference... We talked of many very special and specific things. We talked of rural construction, of agricultural credits, of rural electrification...of schools and teachers and textbooks for their children...of how to give training and education...of how to build the bases for a democratic constitution and for free elections, of how to seek peace, and how to effectively conduct the war...Missions will follow that have been organized by Secretary Gardner in the field of education...and in other fields, where our people can help with the work of social construction in South Viet-Nam...So I have come back here tonight to the mainland refreshed and confident. The road ahead may be long and may be difficult...we shall fight the battle against aggression...We shall fight the battle for social construction, and throughout the world we shall fight the battle for peace...I say to you that we shall fight all these battles successfully and we shall prevail.<sup>206</sup>

Within days Secretary of State Rusk was testifying on the U.S. commitment in Viet-Nam before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. President Johnson had requested a supplemental appropriation for the USAID administration of \$415 million, of which \$275 million was designated for South Viet-Nam. David Bell, the Administrator of the USAID, and Rusk had already testified on the special request. The Secretary had returned to explain the far-reaching attributes of U.S. interests in Southeast Asia, and also, answer the question of: “Why Vietnam.”

I welcome this opportunity to...discuss these larger issues...South Viet-Nam is a long way from the United States, and the issues posed may seem remote from our daily experience...Why are we in Viet-Nam? Certainly we are not there because we have power and like to use it...But we are in Viet-Nam because the issues posed there are deeply intertwined with our own security and because the outcome of the struggle can profoundly affect the nature of the world in which we and our children will live...Like so many of our problems today, the struggle in South Viet-Nam stems from the disruption of two world wars. The Second World War completed the process begun by the first. It ripped apart a structure of power that had existed for 100 years...It undermined the foundations of the colonial structures through which a handful of powers controlled one-third of the world's population. And the winds of change and progress that have blown fiercely during the last 20 years have toppled those structures almost completely. Meanwhile the Communist nations have exploited the turmoil of a time of transition in an effort to extend Communist control into other areas of the world...In order to give support to the nations of Southeast Asia, the United States took the lead in the creation of an alliance embodied in a treaty and reinforced by a collective security system known as SEATO—the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization.<sup>207</sup>

Rusk traced the roots of the American commitment from the Korean War, through

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<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 6-8.

<sup>207</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The Heart of the Problem...Secretary Rusk, General Taylor Review Viet-Nam Policy in Senate Hearings,” Department of State Publication 8054 Bureau of Public Affairs, Office of Media Services, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, March 1966), 1, 3-4.

Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, warning that the existing Communist aggression should not be treated with ambiguity or confused as an indigenous revolt.<sup>208</sup> The two fronts, one of collective security in opposition to Communist aggression, and “the other” of social construction, had been linked together. Common interests became a common destiny.

From 1955 through the early 1960’s, United States educational assistance initially concentrated on elementary and secondary levels of Vietnamese education, upgrading technical vocational training, and ultimately reforming the republic’s system of higher education. Fundamentally, the goal was to change basic education in Vietnam away from both its traditional theoretical nature and its colonial limitations. Conventionally, throughout both the traditional and colonial periods, more than three-fourths of all Vietnamese school children terminated their formal education by age 13. The GVN prime objective in educational reform was to nationalize and Vietnamize its educational system. The USOM, and later the USAID, undertook a wide range of programs that were designed to upgrade total educational experiences and steer functionalist education more directly in line with the needs of the developing republic, its institutions, and people.<sup>209</sup>

In one of its earliest missions, the USOM had coordinated the introduction into Vietnam of the community pilot school focusing on adult education. More than one million Vietnamese adults attended evening classes during the period of 1951-1956, many of whom became literate. Adult education classes and accelerated literacy courses for children grew rapidly. With assistance from the USOM the GVN Ministry of Education’s Bureau of Adult Education expanded educational opportunities for adults to enroll in literacy classes, vocational training, and special studies, including the training of some 2,350 adult education teachers.<sup>210</sup>

From 1954 to 1975, more than \$85 million was funded toward Vietnamese education projects. Educational programs offered financial and technical assistance in a variety of areas.

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-5.

<sup>209</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 502-503.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 513-514.

This assistance occurred at all levels of education in the Republic of Vietnam.<sup>211</sup> For instance, between 1963 and 1970, over 35,000 elementary classrooms were built and 85 percent of elementary school age children were enrolled through the Hamlet School and Hamlet Elementary Education Projects. In 1967, secondary education and teacher training development were given high priority; also in 1967, the first USAID report on higher education was issued.<sup>212</sup>

The period of 1966-1969 was one of rapid expansion for U.S. assistance activities in South Vietnam. Changes in USOM/USAID personnel “in country” between 1956 and 31 March 1975 included:<sup>213</sup>

	<u>U.S. direct hire</u>	<u>Foreign Nationals direct hire</u>	<u>On loan from other agencies</u>	<u>Contract hire</u>	
1956	153	586	8	39 (US)	0 (FN)
1966	843	1144	97	136	380
1967	1674	1848	219	264	684
1969	762 /1084 CORDS	2690 /617 CORDS	307	501	2157
1970	610 /943	2057 /192	255	787	4708
1972	462 /557	1436 /13	148	224	682
1975	344	927	19	118	401

Of note, the rise of U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam followed a similar pattern. From 1954 through 1960 the average number of U.S. military advisors was 650. The peak of American involvement occurred on 31 January 1969 when there were 542,400 U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam. By 31 December 1971 the number had dropped to 158,320; 35, 865 on 31 December 1972; and 7,047 on 10 March 1973.<sup>214</sup>

In 1967, the number of USAID American personnel had reached 1,674, the highest level for the Agency during its tenure in the RVN. In 1968, the number of direct hire USAID

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 524.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., 505-507, 517-518.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 77, Attachment 7.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., 79, Attachment 9.

American personnel reached 1,977. Of that number, however, 1,076 were assigned to the Civil Operations Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), which was the new organizational unit coordinating all U.S. counterinsurgency efforts. The number of contract representatives working in South Vietnam followed a comparable outline of growth, as the number of contractual project consultants rose from 136 in 1966 to 787 in 1969.<sup>215</sup>

The USAID Office of Education in Saigon, although small in number of personnel, was effectively organized. The Office was headed by an Assistant Director (of USAID/Vietnam) for Education. The Office had nine divisions, each supervised by a Deputy Assistant Director. Each of the four Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) regions of Vietnam had a branch Office of Education, and each province had educational advisers to assist the Vietnamese counterparts. Saigon, due to its significance and large population, had its own branch office. The Higher Education Division, organized in 1967, was one of the nine divisions in the central office and was located at the Rectorate of the University of Saigon to channel effective assistance to Vietnamese higher education. The USAID central Office of Education in Saigon employed 186 Vietnamese and American technicians in 1969, aside from the consultants and experts under short-term and long-term contracts. The total budget for the Office, in 1969, was \$8,346,000, with a budget of \$1,549,000 for the Higher Education Division.<sup>216</sup>

The USAID Office of Education played an essential role in creating opportunities conducive to change. The office's activities ranged from consultations with the Vietnamese Department of Education to directing scholarship programs, instituting faculty-upgrading projects, and coordinating observation tours and reorganization conferences. The major areas of emphasis in this early period of USAID educational assistance were the construction or enlargement of elementary-level schools, accelerated training of teachers, and distribution of equipment to improve administrative capacities of provincial education services. With the

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid., 77, Attachment 7.

<sup>216</sup> USAID, *Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials, 1969*, Attachment A.

ratification of the Republic of Vietnam's new constitution in 1967, elementary schools became an even more vital focal point in national development. New goals called for elementary education to become universal, compulsory and free. The USAID assisted the GVN, in a pure functionalist manner, in giving elementary education the "responsibility for teaching democratic, political and social concepts necessary for functional citizenship and for developing a sound educational base for higher levels of education."<sup>217</sup>

Chief among South Vietnam's early key educational problems was its inadequate reserve of well-trained teachers at all levels. The USOM set in motion a comprehensive project of educational expansion and upgrading of the Higher School of Pedagogy, which had been moved from Hanoi to Saigon. By 1965, the United States had initiated a variety of projects aimed at equipping and expanding the normal school system, establishing a curriculum laboratory, assisting the Tan An teacher training center, and facilitating a network of in-service workshops to increase teaching skills. The USAID/Education Division assisted the National Normal School and other faculties of pedagogy to upgrade teacher training, contracting with Southern Illinois University and Ohio University in this area. The initial aim of the development of teacher training programs was to implement and advance comprehensive elementary and secondary-level education throughout the RVN. The Ohio University team helped faculties of pedagogy in South Vietnam develop their programs of secondary teachers' training. Southern Illinois University provided assistance in developing programs of elementary teachers' training.<sup>218</sup>

Most of the university contracts were initiated for one or two years. However, many were renewed for a long-term basis. Ohio University and Southern Illinois University signed the longest contracts in the history of USOM/USAID assistance to the RVN, both running for some 10 years.<sup>219</sup> Ohio University signed an exploratory contract in 1960 and a long-term contract on July 20, 1962. During its ten-year period of contract extensions, which terminated on June 30,

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<sup>217</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 505.

<sup>218</sup> USAID, *Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials, 1969*, Attachment B.

<sup>219</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 507

1972, Ohio University designed a comprehensive educational program at the secondary level, with implementation in fifteen pilot schools in the four Corps regions of the republic and in three demonstration schools affiliated with the faculties of pedagogy in the Universities of Saigon, Hue, and Can Tho.<sup>220</sup>

In 1960, the survey team from Southern Illinois University (SIU) entered South Vietnam to assess the needs of the elementary education system and its teacher-training program. SIU followed a developing pattern of American university/USAID contract formulation in the RVN. Upon the completion of its initial study, recommendations were fashioned which resulted in a contract between SIU and the USAID, which was renewable—in this case the contract terminated in 1970. The terms of the contract provided specific objectives in which SIU was to assist the RVN in the improvement and modernization of its elementary schools, curricula, instructional materials, and educational training programs. As the SIU group entered Vietnam they found that: over one-third of all elementary-age children had no opportunity for education, while the nation's existing schools were understaffed, overcrowded, and inadequately supplied with materials. For the majority of people five years of elementary schooling embodied the sum-total of their education. There was only one normal school, augmented by 10 small teacher training centers, teaching methodology amounted to an application of rote memorization, and teaching status very low. Few ministry level governmental officials seemed to consider elementary education important, holding firm to the elitist doctrine that set the primary aim of the aggregate of educational programs was to produce an educated elite to administer the country; and the centralized administrative authority in the government and schools often stood inflexible and defied reform. Some nine years later, the SIU Team reported that gains had been made as: three normal school complexes had been added, with new admissions standards, ever-increasing enrollments, and a National Elementary Teachers' In-Service Education Center had been

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<sup>220</sup> Byron, 232-234.

established; a graduate program had been initiated in-country to train professors for normal schools and a program in the United States had trained more than 100 Vietnamese teachers in elementary education programs; a Directorate was established within the Ministry of Education to administer teaching training institutions; and other improvements in administrative measures, teaching methods, curriculum and textbooks, and summer in-service programs.<sup>221</sup>

Between September 1958 and June 1963, the University of Michigan held the USOM/USAID contract for the development of English language instructional and testing materials, under the Southeast Asia Regional English Project (SEAREP). In 1955, the USOM had assisted the GVN in instituting programs for the teaching of English as a foreign language. The SEAREP team developed and published teaching materials and examinations fixed on perceived problems of Vietnamese students of English, and the linguistic collations of Vietnamese and English. These assets were used at higher education Faculties, the Military Academy, technical vocational schools and in-service training programs for secondary school teachers throughout South Vietnam.<sup>222</sup>

In 1957, the USOM implemented an Instructional Materials project for the production of elementary and secondary level textbooks in Vietnamese. The project was amended in 1961 to provide for the production and distribution of additional instructional and learning materials, which would foster more effectual educational practices. The injection of extensive quantities of instructional materials into the Vietnamese educational system created an acute need for training in their use. Educators from American institutes of higher education were summoned by the USAID to meet this challenge. A proximate goal of this and other USAID programs was for the GVN Ministry of Education (MOE) to assume full responsibility for the project. In this instance, in 1970 the MOE assumed direction by contracting with local printers and publishers to manufacture, market and distribute approved textbooks nationwide. This shift in production from

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<sup>221</sup> Arthur Aikman, "Progress in Education: Vietnam," *Peabody Journal of Education*, 48 (Oct. 1970), 76-80.

<sup>222</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 516-517.

USAID foreign to domestic industry strengthened local related industries, serving to integrate economic and educational development in a real sense.<sup>223</sup>

Another important USAID project was the University of Florida (UF) study of agricultural training in South Vietnam. The four-member team arrived in Saigon on 23 January 1967, to survey the existing agricultural educational program and facilities, working in conjunction with their Vietnamese counterparts into the spring, a timeframe during which the WSU-SP contracts also were initiated. Insightfully, the UF Team recognized that the very principle of continual education for the wider populace was a new precedent for Vietnamese society:

Efforts should be made to teach students that education is a continuing effort—that information and techniques soon become obsolete. Only through continuous exposure to current books and journals can students acquire a life-long habit of keeping abreast of their respective fields of knowledge.<sup>224</sup>

The UF Team reviewed curricula, training materials, teacher programs and training practices, and made recommendations for improvement of facilities, while developing a list of the equipment and other commodities needed to institute reforms. The UF Team acknowledged that agricultural development was vital to national economy of South Vietnam and saw great potential for the advancement of agricultural education in Vietnam. They found that there were only three secondary level agricultural schools, at Bao Loc, Hue, and Can Tho, all in need of increases in staff and space. They recommended creating new schools as resources allowed, and suggested that the Can Tho agriculture school act in union with the University of Can Tho to be upgraded to the junior college level, and Thu Duc be selected as the site for the new College of Agriculture, Saigon. The UF Team called for a revision of curricula in Plant Science, Animal Science, and Forestry, and recommended the establishment of new departments in Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Education, Fisheries, and Veterinary Science. The UF

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<sup>223</sup> Ibid., 513-514.

<sup>224</sup> Marvin Brooker, University of Florida Team, *Survey of Agricultural Education in South Vietnam, 1967*, (Gainesville: University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, 1967), 60.

Team called for a five-year integration plan between the College of Agricultural at Thu Duc and the University of Saigon. They recommended the establishment of a common program that could stretch limited resources and incorporate a credit system, calling the current certificate system wasteful because current course work was not transferable between institutes and those students failing one course were required to repeat an entire year. The establishment of a shared program schedule and course sequences between cooperating colleges would allow for the more efficient use of limited faculty and permit students to benefit from courses taught in various departments, such as allowing students in Agricultural Economics to take economics courses at the National University, students in Agricultural Engineering taking courses in engineering at the College of Engineering and others at the College of Education, and students from many other Faculties to enroll in botany and zoology courses offered by the College of Agriculture. The UF Team commented on the deficiencies in textbooks and technical equipment, and cited the existing eight-hour day lecture format which left little time for supplementary studies and propagated an over reliance on classroom notes and instructors. Sophisticated laboratories and libraries were unknown commodities, with access for both students and teachers to even simple calculators and reference books being rare.<sup>225</sup>

An important means to the successful expansion, reform, and credibility of educational programs rested in the quality of faculty retained by the new institutes of learning. The UF Team, as did the Wisconsin Team and most other USAID university teams, recognized that reputable instructors needed adequate training, secure academic environments, salaries coupled with their effort and performance, and opportunities and funding for research. The UF Team called for the establishment of regulations for employment and promotion of faculty, so that young academics would pursue careers as teachers. Finally, the Team outlined guidelines for Graduate programs in Agricultural to be sponsored by the USAID and the Ministries of Agriculture and Education.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Ibid., ii.-vi., 34-60.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 62-66.

Following the recommendations of the University of Florida, science education was interjected at the elementary level. The USOM had funded the construction of polytechnic and vocational schools and supported the establishment of South Vietnam's College of Agriculture in 1959 at Blao. In 1962, the college had temporarily moved to Saigon, due to security problems. In response to UF Team recommendations, space at the new campus of the University of Thu Duc was designated for the college and efforts were made to develop a network of 12 secondary agricultural schools and 12 Highlander Training Centers in "secure" rural areas. By 1968, the three agricultural high schools had been upgraded with graduates eligible for college admittance. USAID funding toward agricultural education was terminated in 1970 as the responsibility for the projects was turned over to the GVN.<sup>227</sup>

On 23 February 1967 members of the Wisconsin Team came across similar revelations about Vietnamese faculty during a meeting with American students who were studying at the University of Saigon through a Joint United States Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO) and Washington University program. The American students reported to visiting Wisconsin Team members that there was little concept of loyalty to a university as such, as they encountered the same professors teaching wherever they went. These were the "suitcase professors" which would be mentioned in numerous team reports. Also, it may have been the case that these professors were among the few who could lecture in English. Yet, at the same time, reports would soon show that the level of cooperation and coordination between different institutes and programs was minimal. The American students said there was a clear need to build a stronger elementary and secondary educational foundation. Interestingly, this group of Washington University students found their own JUSPAO program to be lacking in terms of a clear mission and basic language preparation, as most could not understand the lectures they attended. They witnessed a prevalence of cheating and its acceptance by professors. Further, they complained that many classes had not started yet, even though it was late in February. They had wanted more

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<sup>227</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 515-516.

interaction with Vietnamese students and asked for access to other areas of the country, but noted that JUSPAO intruded in many personal areas and restricted any movement, especially while Washington University contractors were not around.<sup>228</sup>

Increasingly, by the period of the early 1970's the GVN was looked upon to "take more responsibility" under the policy of Vietnamization. In 1970, funding for the adult education, elementary education, agricultural education, teacher training, and instructional material programs were all included in the GVN National Budget, as the USAID terminated its aid in these areas.<sup>229</sup> The credibility of both United States government and the Government of Vietnam would be put to the test of time as the burden of shifting responsibilities—militarily and institutionally—built to a tragic climax. Contracts in Vietnamese technical-vocational education and library development continued through FY 1973. A USAID general scholarship program producing U.S. trained university graduates in a broad spectrum of professional and technical skills was terminated in FY 1974. Contracts in higher education continued right through March of 1975.<sup>230</sup> The Wisconsin Team was a unique player throughout the period of 1967 through 1975. While the future remained an unknown, the moment at hand became the single concern of modern day university academia that came to Vietnam, working at an unavoidably hurried pace in this changing environment. They focused collectively on reform and efforts that sought to enrich an impoverished system, instill national character, and construct an institutional foundation for an emerging nation.

### **USAID, the Impact of Tet and other Military Operations and Vietnamization**

As noted, in an effort to insure the stability of the GVN, the USOM and USAID had shifted some emphasis from traditional economic aid programs to include management of civil counterinsurgency. Ultimately, the relationship between America and Vietnam remained

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<sup>228</sup> Series 17 Box 20 Folder 11, University of Saigon, 1966-1967, "Higher Education team meeting with American Students at U. of Saigon," (February 23, 1967).

<sup>229</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 505-508, 513-516.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, 508-516.

precarious and dependent on high spending. Short-term education projects, like construction of village schools, were directed at building political support. Agricultural projects focused on large projects, like distributing fertilizer and the introduction of improved rice strains, in an effort to increase the income of farm families, the largest segment of Vietnam's population. In 1967, the USAID had assumed responsibilities from the USOM for economic assistive projects. Programs returned to traditional patterns of economic development, with an emphasis on societal needs. At that time the USAID provided technical assistance to the Republic of Vietnam in the preparation for local and national elections by means of secret ballot. The interest in representative government at the local level marked an important reversal of the entrenched policy of denying election of village representatives in support of appointed officials. Between November of 1963 and June of 1965 a string of governments had ruled South Vietnam, with the Army representing the primary political power. National elections in 1967 resulted in presidency of Nguyen Van Thieu, who received a simple majority with only a little more than one-third of the votes cast. It was clear that divisions remained in South Vietnam, and the operations of the GVN and efforts at reform were laborious at best. Thieu, however, held office until the final days of the RVN.<sup>231</sup>

While the Republic of Vietnam was seemingly making progress internally, American military and administrative officials expressed optimistic reports that they now saw a light at the end of the tunnel in terms of military progress. During the period the of the 1967 National elections the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong were preparing a major offensive against South Vietnam's cities, seeking to destroy units of the Army of South Vietnam (ARVN), create an uprising against the Saigon government, and dishearten American public opinion. On the evening of 31 January 1968, some 30 Vietnamese province and district towns, along with Saigon, were assaulted on a scale never previously mounted by enemy forces. The attacks lasted several weeks and were followed in May by a lesser offensive. Casualties were high, as during the first two weeks more than 2,300 ARVN troops and 1,100 American soldiers, and as many as 12,500

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<sup>231</sup> Ibid., 39-46.

Vietnamese civilians were killed. Estimates of total enemy casualties were inflated upwards of 40,000, while Tet created as many as 1 million new refugees. Property damage was estimated at more than \$173 million.<sup>232</sup>

As events unraveled, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) sent a series of Vietnam Situation Reports to Walter Rostow, Special Assistant to the President, at the White House. The 'Secret' Memorandum now declassified, were published in 2002 as part of the serial *Foreign Relations of the United States*. The memorandum recounted the consequences of the Tet Offensive for both the U.S. and GVN, while suggesting possible courses of action for consideration of the president and his senior foreign policy advisers.

2 February 1968

Subject: Vietnam Operation Shock

1. The Viet Cong Tet offensive is a clear indication of continued Viet Cong power which calls for a new look in our approach to the Vietnam war and the government of Vietnam. Over the years the current leaders of Vietnam have developed a complacent assurance that American support is immutable. Consequently, they have felt free to approach the war in terms of gradualism, favoritism among the limited circle of personalities at the top and only a casual attention to mobilizing popular support and engaging the population actively in the war. This gentle treatment of the members of the Establishment has worked to exclude from positions of responsibility younger, more dynamic and modern-minded leaders. The Tet offensive can be utilized in a frontal attack on these attitudes and habits, since it has forcefully demonstrated that the present GVN lacks some of the principal attributes of sovereignty. It can not defend its frontiers without a half million U.S. troops and cannot even enable the American Ambassador to utilize his Embassy. [The report called for a thorough reorganization to the RVN military command structure under a Director of Operations and the establishment by the GVN of a War and Reconstruction Council], with counterparts at provincial and district levels...the Councils would...review...the normal operations of government...and ensuring that the programs initiated in this emergency be developed for the long term benefit of Vietnamese citizens through normal governmental and political structures...
  
8. The United States options at the end of 100 days would be deliberately left undefined for President Thieu and Vice President Ky. We might, of course, find that sufficient forward momentum has been achieved to warrant continued U.S. support. Should this not occur, the United States might take one of the following courses action: a. Insistence that President Thieu or other GVN leaders resign in favor of individuals ...who could be duly elected according to Constitutional processes...b. Suspension of the bombing of North Vietnam and the initiation of talks with the DRV... c. Development of dialogue between the United States and the NLF suggesting the

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<sup>232</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. I, 50.

possibility of some move toward a coalition government.<sup>233</sup>

The South Vietnamese and United States had been taken by surprise, but recovered quickly, using superior firepower and mobility to counter the initial success of the National Liberation Front. The political infrastructure of the NLF was badly crippled and its regular units were decimated. South Vietnam had not collapsed, and in fact its forces and those of the United States had rallied strongly. The destruction inflicted upon its cities, however, cast menacing new problems on a government that had demonstrated a limited capacity to confront the routine. As a result of Tet, the credibility of the national governments, of both South Vietnam and the United States, increasingly were questionable in terms of their quantitative reports of progress and stated strategies. On 12 February 1968, Rostow received another Vietnam Situation Report from CIA Director Helms. On his attached cover memorandum to the President, Rostow wrote that the report was: “an extremely well balanced CIA assessment from Saigon of what the Communists have gained and lost; and what our problems are. We are unlikely to have anything better right away.”<sup>234</sup> Vietnam Situation Report No. 7/68 stated:

The Year of the Monkey had an inauspicious beginning for the people of South Vietnam as the VC/NVA forces violated the sacred Tet holidays and launched virtually simultaneous attacks against 36 province capitals, five of the six autonomous cities, and numerous other population centers throughout the country. Their objectives have been clearly spelled out in captured documents—to destroy or subvert the GVN/allied forces, eliminate the GVN government structure, create a general uprising among the people, and establish a revolutionary government... In what appears to be an almost incredible miscalculation of their own military capabilities and the degree of support they could command from the people, the Communists failed to achieve these stated objectives. It has cost them dearly in manpower—in 12 days some 30,000 killed, 5,700 detained, probably another 10,000 dead from wounds, and an unknown number dead from air and artillery strikes—a total probably amounting to more than half of the forces used in this attack. Nevertheless, the enemy’s well planned, coordinated series of attacks was an impressive display of strength which has given him a major psychological victory abroad, dealt a serious blow to the pacification program, and created problems that will tax the energies and resources of the government for many months to come... Although the enemy has been weakened, he is not on the verge of desperation... the enemy could elect to cut his losses by reverting to more traditional harassing attacks while attempting to

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<sup>233</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Vol. VI, Vietnam January-August 1968*. Department of State Publication 10959, 44. “Memorandum prepared in the Central Intelligence Agency,” (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 2002), 98-101.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

improve his position in the countryside. Such attacks...would still gain headlines and have considerable psychological appeal and value to the enemy as they re-raise questions in SVN and the world as to the ability of the allies to provide security to the people... We are very much aware that we have probably seen only the first of a two-act drama... Whatever else may follow, the Tet offensive in South Vietnam, contrary to much foreign opinion, is not popularly regarded here either as a VC victory or even as an indication of their eventual success. There is a sobering thought for the future, however—if it were not for the presence of U.S. forces, the VC flag would be flying over much of South Vietnam today.<sup>235</sup>

The Tet Offensive had left Washington in a condition of “troubled confusion and uncertainty.”<sup>236</sup> President Johnson was determined to “get on with the war as quickly as possible,” by increasing air strikes against North Vietnam and sending American reinforcements to South Vietnam.<sup>237</sup> The Johnson Administration was divided on whether Tet posed new dangers or increased opportunities. The American military command requested 206,000 additional troops, suggesting that a denial could mean an indefinite continuation of the war, with General Westmoreland envisioning a victory through an expanded war. In December of 1967 U.S. military troops already numbered 485,600, and by June of 1968 would number 534,700.<sup>238</sup>

Assent to the military’s recommendation would equate with a major escalation of the war during an election year when public anxiety in America was already salient. In March of 1968, President Johnson turned the problem over to his new secretary of defense, Clark Clifford, and his senior foreign relations advisers. On 20 March 1968, President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Clifford talked on the telephone as they prepared for a full meeting later that day with the administrations senior policy-makers. The two discussed the war and the upcoming election, in which he faced challenges from Eugene McCarthy and Bobby Kennedy. President Johnson was feeling pressured, both domestically and internationally. As a senior adviser, Clifford was known for his insightful moderation. Strategizing with Clifford, President Johnson declared:

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid., Vietnam Situation Report No. 7/68, “The Tet Offensive—A Plus or a Minus?” Saigon, February 12, 1968.

<sup>236</sup> Townsend Hoopes, *The Limits of Intervention*, (New York: D. McKay Company, 1970), 145.

<sup>237</sup> Herbert Schandler, *The Unmaking of a President: Lyndon Johnson and Vietnam*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 91.

<sup>238</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. I, Attachment 9, 79.

I think what we've got to do is to get out of the posture of just being the war candidate that McCarthy has put us in and Bobby is putting us in, the kids are putting us in and the papers are putting us in...And I think that if we could get your people...with some of Rusk's people...and see what it is that we could use with our left hand. Our right hand is going after their jaw with an offense on the war front, but we ought to have a peace front too simultaneously and use both fists—not just one, not fight with one hand behind us—but we are the true peace candidate. We're not the Chamberlain peace—we're the Churchill peace. We are not the guy that is going to throw in the towel and let them take Athens. We are Truman who stands up and finally save Greece and Turkey from the Communists. [Clifford responded]

That is right. Really right in there, what it is, we are out to win, but we are not out to win the war—we are out to win the peace. And that is what our slogan could very well be—win the peace with honor. Now I have been giving consideration to offers of de-escalation...if we could begin to start a negotiation...with the North Vietnamese...that we would let Hanoi alone if they would let Saigon alone...we can't stop, but if there is some program of a gradual de-escalation that the parties could get into, then we could get in a better posture.<sup>239</sup>

Clifford's recommendations went against the military's proposals for another major escalation, calling instead for a deployment of 43,000 troops, including a reserve call-up, and a more forceful strategy of getting the South Vietnamese to shoulder a greater burden in the war. The Pentagon civilians had sought alternative strategies that would move away from search and destroy, with its goal of attrition, to a strategy of population security. American forces would defend against a major thrust by the North Vietnamese and engage in limited offensive operations to keep the enemy off balance. The goal was a negotiated settlement, rather than a military victory. The United States looked to the ARVN to assume more responsibility for the war and for the RVN to purge corrupt officials, end its in-fighting and develop efficient policies. The strategy closely resembled those in the future of the Nixon Administration. President Johnson looked to escape the American quagmire in Vietnam by shifting the long-term responsibility to the GVN, while America alternately shifted its strategy between a concentrated air bombing of the North and a drive toward a negotiated peace settlement with North Vietnam.<sup>240</sup>

The decision marked a return, in part, to the principles that had supported American

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<sup>239</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Vol. VI, Vietnam*, no. 146, "Telephone Conversation between President Johnson and Secretary of Defense Clifford," 428-429.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Vol. VI*, 142. Notes of Meeting, "Notes of the President's meeting with his foreign service advisers at the Tuesday luncheon," Washington, March 19, 1968, 412-418.

involvement prior to 1965 and a rudimentary move toward the theory of Vietnamization. On 20 March 1968, President Johnson met with his foreign policy group to prepare a speech to the nation. The group now included the Vice President, Rusk, Clifford, Fortas, M. Bundy, B. Bundy, W. Rostow, A. Goldberg, Bill Jordon, G. Christian, and T. Johnson. He told them: “I want war like I want polio. What you want and what your image is are two different things—lets meet emergency needs in strength—a reasonable offer on peace.”<sup>241</sup> The group agreed that the president’s speech should maintain the limited objective of addressing the reasons for the call up of reserves, discuss the economic impact, and limit discussion of the conduct of war to a search for peace, while giving the “SVNese” a chance to build themselves up.<sup>242</sup>

On 27 April 1968 Secretary of State Rusk sent a Secret telegram to the American Embassy in Laos, asking the following note be delivered to the North Vietnamese Embassy:

The U.S. Government agrees with the statement of the Government of the DRV, in its note of April 27, that it is necessary for Hanoi and Washington to engage in conversations promptly. The U.S. Government is prepared for these limited discussions on April 30 or several days thereafter. The U.S. Government would welcome the prompt response of the DRV to this suggestion.<sup>243</sup>

The uncertainties of 1968 caused a general economic retrenchment in South Vietnam and a full-scale mobilization, as it dealt with the upsurges in refugee care and combat. For the GVN, the result was a twenty-five percent increase in expenditures and a 22.9 billion VN\$ rise in its budget deficit.<sup>244</sup> The Tet offensive of February 1968 and the May 1968 Viet Cong attacks did extensive damage to the infrastructure of higher education and to psyche of both Americans and South Vietnamese. The University of Hue was excessively damaged, while it, the University of Can Tho, and other remote campuses were closed temporarily. The government of the Republic of Vietnam, USAID, MACV, Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS), USOM, and other agencies mobilized aid to reconstruct university buildings across the republic.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., No. 147. “Notes of Meeting,” Washington, March 20, 1968, 433.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid., 438-440.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid., No. 213. “Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in Laos,” (Washington, April 27, 1968), 608-609. “Secret; Immediate; Drafted by Bundy, and cleared by Rusk, Clifford, Rostow, and...

<sup>244</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. I, 130-132

Unstable security during the first half of 1968 caused some higher education projects to be delayed. Contract teams from the University of Florida and other American institutions were detained in the U.S., as accelerated programs in teacher training and negotiations for university contracts in agriculture and engineering were put on hold until September, 1968.<sup>245</sup>

At a meeting of the Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group (SEADAG) Education and Manpower Seminar at the Asia Foundation in San Francisco, on March 5-6, 1968, Wisconsin Team member, Dr. Glen C. Atkyns, Assistant Dean for Teacher Education, University of Connecticut, presented a paper summarizing many of the findings he had helped to formulate during his work with the Wisconsin Team during the summer of 1967, reporting that given the current post-Tet situation vital connections linking education to nation building in Vietnam were more critical than ever. Atkyns noted:

The devastation of the cities since Tet establishes new priorities in South Vietnam. Reconstruction of communication links, shelter...increased defense expenditure and draft quotas...combine as priorities of great urgency...Education is one of the most potent weapons with which the Government may win support of the people. Education is in as high demand as any service in Vietnam save security itself. Viet Cong attacks on local officials, including school teachers, and the destruction of school buildings, attests the enemy's fear of a popular attachment to the central Government as a result of improved public services including education. Education is a thirst of the poor as well as the rich...<sup>246</sup>

The Asia Foundation and SEADAG were affiliated with USAID. Others addressing the conference were: Kenneth T. Young, president, Asia Society; John J. Quinn, seminar coordinator, Asia Society; John C. Bullitt, assistant administrator for Asia; James P. Grant, assistant administrator for Vietnam; Clifford C. Matlock, special assistant, East Asia Bureau Agency for International Development; and Joseph Fischer, Center for Southeast Asian Studies University of California, Berkeley. Most of the group worked diligently to set education as a priority of the highest order for the GVN, recommending revisions to the national curriculum and Baccalaureate

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<sup>245</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 517-519.

<sup>246</sup> Glen Atkyns, "Secondary Education: Nation Building in Vietnam," SEADAG papers on problems of development in Southeast Asia, no. 32, (New York: Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, Asia Society, 1968).

that reflected the cultural roots of students and their society, recognizing the prevalence of minority groups and heritage of the French educational system.

Fischer, however, was critical of the existing USAID reports on Vietnamese education. He singled out the Wisconsin State University Survey Team report, “Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam,” as being “very general, heavily pedagogical, American value-laden document full of generally untested assumptions about education and development.” He called for more data and research. He noted that the Wisconsin Team had correctly characterized the prime U.S. and GVN effort was to establish security and win the war, but challenged the Team premise that educational change could occur or even relevant to national development during wartime. He wondered if “all” universities could really be responsive to national needs, and faulted the idea of local universities being designed to meet regional needs, asking whether local needs might be antithetical to national needs. Fischer’s own partiality surfaced when he questioned the qualifications of the current survey teams, mentioning that neither WSU-SP, Ohio U., nor SIU had among their team members, specialists in Southeast Asia or training in Vietnamese culture and language. He suggested a new consortium was needed. He did endorse the Team recommendation that the USAID encourage the exchange of views and roles through the active participation of Vietnamese educators and ministry officials in conferences, seminars, and research.<sup>247</sup>

The Asia Foundation in San Francisco came to serve as a stopover point for Vietnamese educators and GVN officials as they traveled to the United States to partake in observation tours. WSU-SP moved to redefine its consultant role as the host and coordinator for the series of seminars and observation tours, which would bring numerous Vietnamese educators, Ministry officials, and other GVN representatives to the United States periodically from October 1967 through April 1973.

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<sup>247</sup> Joseph Fischer, “Comments on USAID Materials on Vietnamese Education,” SEADAG papers on problems of development in Southeast Asia, no. 30, (New York: Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group, Asia Society, 1968).

During the post-Tet period, the forum widened as Vietnamese and American educators continued to discuss educational reforms. In Vietnam, the First National Seminar on Higher Education was held in Nha Trang, in September 1968.<sup>248</sup> On September 18, 1968, WSU-SP's William B. Vickerstaff submitted his report, *Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*.<sup>249</sup> Discussions were held, in Vietnam, between the newly appointed Minister of Education, the Rector of the University of Saigon, and the Chairman of the Vietnamese Senate Education Committee on the Wisconsin Team's recommendation for the establishment of a "governing board" for Vietnam's university system. The Vietnamese educators seemed to be in general agreement with the fundamental concepts of the recommendations included in the Team Report: *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, but viewed the idea of a governing board apprehensively. Seemingly, they were overprotective of their respective institutions' autonomy, and rather conservative in their views toward faculty, student, and governmental agency roles in the shared formation of policy within the institutions.<sup>250</sup> With this in mind, the USAID Education Office, Saigon, quickly moved to provide for a means of reinforcement by working to develop umbrella clauses with the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point consultant team, already under contract, in order to widen the sphere and timeframe of the USAID/RVN contract with the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. Plans were solidified as the Saigon offices of USAID submitted proposals to USAID headquarters in Washington, D.C. for the extension of its contract with the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. so as to allow WSU-SP to select a variety of educational specialists for a combined additional 144 months of project assistance for higher education in Vietnam and coordinators of a series of field tours by the Vietnamese to the U.S.<sup>251</sup>

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird following Richard Nixon's election victory in 1968

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<sup>248</sup> Series 17 Box 14 Folder 3, "Inter-University Seminar at Nha Trang," (September 1-9, 1968).

<sup>249</sup> Series 17 Box 11 Folder 3, William B. Vickerstaff, "Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam," (September 18, 1968).

<sup>250</sup> Series 17 Box 14 Folder 3, "Inter-University Seminar at Nha Trang."

<sup>251</sup> Series 17 Box 1 Folder 7, "Rector Visitation, 1967-Working Papers," 1967 & Undated. The WSU-SP reports, seminars, and observation tours will be covered extensively in the Chapter IV.

would tout “Vietnamization.” In 1970, WSU-SP President Dreyfus would reflect on both Vietnamization and Tet as he prepared to go to Vietnam:

As I understand from my briefings in both military and educational, and economic and social, I have gotten to understand the breath of Vietnamization, which I thought was strictly a military and it is not. Laird certainly didn't intend it as such, but I thought he did...Pacification is an essential to Vietnamization, without it, without a kind of settling down out in the hamlets—and that's where the prime government—and I have learned that as well...Once that is settled down then there can be some kind of development toward nationalization and that's what Vietnamization is about—a sense of national purpose and goal and unity on part of the Vietnamese people and the educational status has got to be part of that...It is important that I get out before Tet, for two reasons: 1.) they don't do much during that time, and 2.) the 1968 experience at Hue...So I think they need a civilian feather merchant running around like they need another head.<sup>252</sup>

During the post-Tet period unstable conditions in the Republic of Vietnam continued to have an imprint on reform efforts in Vietnamese higher education. In early 1969, contiguous to the one-year anniversary of the Tet offensive, the entire Vietnamese educational ministry was stunned by the assassination of Dr. Le Minh Tri, Minister of Education. Minister Tri, who received his doctorate in the United States, had been part of the Medical Faculty at the University of Saigon. Tri participated in a Wisconsin Team coordinated higher education observation tour of the United States for 12 days in December 1968, during which time he visited WSU-SP for a consultation on higher education with team members, WSU-SP administrators, and faculty. Tri's position as education minister was a difficult one, as the tasks-at-hand presented challenges in every direction. Tri, like most South Vietnamese officials, was in constant danger. Early on, WSU-SP consultants had reported that the University of Saigon was not a unified campus, geographically or politically. The University was housed in a variety of scattered buildings, and regular periods of student unrest occurred, involving students who demanded a larger say in their education and from students were actual Viet Cong sympathizers. The 6 January 1969 edition of the *Stevens Point Journal* reported on the death of Minister Tri:

South Vietnam's minister of higher education, who was in Stevens Point less than a month ago, died today, the victim of a terrorist attack on a Saigon street. Critically

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<sup>252</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #16, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, WSU-SP Presidential message on Vietnam and news conference, (January, 1970), tape cassette transcribed by author.

wounded by a grenade explosion that demolished his car, Dr. Le Minh Tri died at French-run Grall Hospital. Dr. Tri was in Stevens Point Dec. 9-10 to discuss cooperative programs between Wisconsin State University and South Vietnam's education system... His driver was killed instantly and two bodyguards and a passerby were wounded by the blast, the most spectacular incident of its kind in Saigon since the enemy's Tet offensive last winter. A government spokesman said the attack was "an act of terrorism by the Communists." The bomb was reported fashioned from a U.S. M26 grenade fortified with plastic explosive. Witnesses said it was tossed into Tri's car at a traffic light by two youths, who then escaped on a motorcycle.<sup>253</sup>

that an effort to die the Soviet Union, which bears a Sino-American deal, is made as Peking worries about U.S.-Soviet relations. But there have been other signs as well.

The treatment of foreign diplomats in Peking has markedly improved in recent months. They are allowed to travel outside the capital again, and even such aristocrats as the Yankovs are treated with courtesy. Two years ago, the deportees of Soviet diplomats were escorted as Red Guards spat on them at the Peking airport and made them crawl under portraits of Mao Tse-tung; now these Soviet citizens are returning. A recent complaint in Paris over an attack on the Chinese embassy in New Delhi was stern but matter-of-fact, and there was no massive demonstration in Peking—in stark contrast to 1967, when at least twelve foreign embassies were besieged by Red Guards at one time or another. There is also evidence that overseas Chinese organizations, most notably in Hong Kong and in Burma, have been quietly told to go easy on the kind of ardor Maoism that led to bloody disturbances in both places during the heyday of the Cultural Revolution.

Peace Hoax. Admittedly, there are ugly scenes in the west. On a normally deserted street, Peking exploded an H-bomb last month. Also, it still has only one ambassador to Cairo post-ahmad. All the other Peking envoys were recalled and humiliated by Red Guards in 1967, and these missions are still headed by charges. Demonstrations of the Viet Nam "peasants take power" campaign, and the Chinese have yet to elaborate on their coexistence formula, as regards the U.S. However, all this is still a far cry from 1967, when Red Guards, virtually in control of the Foreign Office, humiliated Foreign Minister Chen Yi so often that, by his own admission, he lost count of the numerous indignities he was made to suffer. It was a time when the Foreign Ministry was ransacked by extremists who stole classified documents, and when one meeting with the then British chargé d'affaires, Sir Donald Houston, had to be held in a restaurant because officials were barred from their own Ministry. At one point in 1967, the temperamental Chen Yi became so angry with his young secretaries that he asked them: "Against whom are you rebelling? Instead of rebelling against me, why don't you go to Viet Nam and rebel against the Americans?"

China watchers believe that Peking's new look in foreign affairs is part of the moderate line that, over the past five to six months, has slowed down what is left of the Cultural Revolution. They surmise that a foreign policy review was included in a Central Committee plenum session in late October, during which the Chinese leaders must have discovered their country increasingly and dangerously isolated. Only now, it seems, has a real ally, relations with Hanoi had turned icy be-

lie over North Vietnam's decision to talk peace with the U.S.

Moreover, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia during the summer was surely a traumatic event for the Chinese who, after all, share more than 4,000 miles of exposed border with the Russians. It may very well have occurred to the Chinese that the U.S., an enemy for the past 20 years, was considerably more predictable than the Soviet Union, a former friend. As Chen Yi reportedly told one European ambassador in Peking not so very long ago: "The Americans are pragmatic, but honest. The Russians are Sino-American."

cases the Viet Cong. This time both police and the government looked elsewhere. A message of education, especially one in office not quite four months, is an odd target for terrorism. Moreover, observation of fragments showed that the grenade was a U.S. model rather than the Chinese type that the Viet Cong are likely to use. Police soon arrested a discharged South Vietnamese marine sergeant on the basis of what they described as incriminating evidence: a notebook, taken on Tri's daily routine, and the Town's History (HX 0311) written in ink on his hand.

Premier Tran Van Huong, who had appointed Tri one of his former pupils



EDUCATION MINISTER TRI (FOREGROUND) & AUTO  
An odd target for terrorism.

### SOUTH VIET NAM

#### The Price of Honesty

The meeting was foggy in Saigon, and normally punctual Education Minister Dr. Le Minh Tri was late leaving his villa for the ministry. When a red light halted the minister's Toyota four blocks from the office, Tri, his chauffeur and his bodyguard were more intent on the signal than on the motorcycle that drew up alongside them. None was quick enough when one of the bike's two riders tossed a paper bag into the car, as the bike sped away, a hand grenade in the bag exploded. The chauffeur died instantly in the car's flaming wreckage. The bodyguard, unty slacks, managed to pull the minister from the car, but Tri, 47, died half a day later, his stomach slashed by shrapnel, an eye gone, a leg broken and his head grievously battered.

Usually after such attacks, Saigon au-

thorities in Huong's schoolteacher days, died when he heard the news. President Nguyen Van Thieu, Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky and U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker all attended the funeral, and Tri's honored Tri posthumously with the National Order, second class. Meanwhile the dead man's friends barely suggested a motive for someone more highly placed than a routine sergeant. Huong had noted during the previous education minister after discovering that scholarships to universities abroad, which carry built-in exemptions from military duty, were being sent to rich men's sons instead of awarded on merit. Tri, an ex-rose-and-thorn specialist and pliant sergeant who had been teaching at the National Medical School, accepted Huong's charge to clean up the scandal. He apparently was making progress. He had seen the accused sentenced by telephone as well as in several assigned lessons.

<sup>253</sup> Series 17 Box 2 Folder 2, "Ministry of Education Tri Visitation," Dec. 10, 1968, *Stevens Point Journal*, (January 6, 1969). More on Minister Tri's visit will be included in Chapter IV.

*Time* magazine reported the attack as “The Price of Honesty,” noting the fractional political scandals that had characterized the Ministry of Education.

The morning was muggy in Saigon and normally punctual Education Minister Dr. Le Minh Tri was late leaving his villa for the ministry. When a red light halted the minister’s Toyota four blocks from the office, Tri, his chauffeur and his bodyguard were more intent on the signal than the motorbike that drew alongside them. None was quick enough when one of the bike’s two riders tossed a paper bag into the car; as the bike sped away...the bag exploded...Usually after such attacks, Saigon accuses the Viet Cong. This time both police and the government looked elsewhere...Police soon arrested a discharged South Vietnamese marine sergeant on the basis of ...incriminating evidence: a motorbike, notes on Tri’s daily routine, and the Toyota’s license (EG 0011) written in ink on his hand...Meanwhile [Tri’s] friends suggested a motive for someone more highly placed [noting] Premier Tran Van Huong [Tri’s mentor] had tossed out the previous education minister after discovering that scholarships to universities abroad, which carry built-in exemptions from military duty, were being sold to rich men’s sons instead of awarded on merit.<sup>254</sup>

A year later, at a 9 March 1970 news conference, WSU-SP President Lee S. Dreyfus noted Minister Tri had been committed to the reorganization of the University of Saigon. Dreyfus did express confidence that fruitful efforts would continue as WSU-SP and the Vietnamese Ministry of Education worked closely together. Dreyfus was buoyed by his contacts with several experienced Ministry officials who had worked closely with the Wisconsin contract, and were committed to ministry-university relations. Dreyfus even questioned if, “certain elements of the faculty who didn’t want this change brought about,” may have been involved in the incident. “It is a matter of the elite system, the old French elite class...One can...see two different worlds between most of the rest of Saigon and a place like that...still 600-700 teachers in that country who deal only in French and will teach only in French.”<sup>255</sup>

In the broader-spectrum, national development assistance efforts were scaled back after the Tet Offensive. The number of USAID American personnel declined from a high of 1,674 in 1967, to 710 in 1970, and 462 in 1972. American university project advisers also dropped from a high of 787 in 1969, to 442 in 1970, and 224 in 1972. Fiscal expenditures reflect this scaling

<sup>254</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings, *Time*, (January 17, 1969), 29.

<sup>255</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #19, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, WSU-SP President news conference, (9 March 1970), tape cassette transcribed by author.

down of operations. Between 1966 and 1968, USAID had expended \$766.7 million on its variety of project assistance programs, while between 1969 and 1971, just \$418.2 million was earmarked for development projects. Within this budget, educational funding operated on a parallel curve. In the decade from 1954 to 1964 American educational assistance for the RVN totaled some \$18.6 million; in 1967 USAID funded educational projects peaked at more than \$15.0 million, then dropped to \$9.4 million in 1969, \$5.6 million in 1972, and finally just \$1.0 million in 1974. Specifically, U.S. dollar contributions in Higher Education projects, 1954-1974, totaled \$6.992 million, with an undetermined amount of Higher Educational additional assistance being included in the Teacher Education project budget of \$14.357 million.<sup>256</sup>

Dr. Charles Green, the chief officer for USAID/Higher Education, Saigon revealed that much of the downsizing by the USAID occurred in connection with a fine-tuning of the efficiency of AID educational projects. In mid-1971 to 1972, when Charles Green took over as head of the Higher Education Office of USAID/Saigon, he found that many of the American and Vietnamese working for the AID were doing “mostly dead work.” Green later would reflect that Washington had assured him, “that this was no longer true. We still had 1,200 bodies in USAID when I got there and one of the first people I met was a guy I fired in the Dominican Republic!...My first action after moving out my predecessor was to fire most of the locals—they were not doing anything.” Green noted that Burdette Eagon and the Wisconsin Team remained a vital party in higher education throughout the cutbacks. As Green handled all matters with WSU-SP, he quickly recognized the worthiness of the efforts of the Wisconsin Team in the role of helping to create “Vietnamese” institutions.<sup>257</sup>

The USAID efforts in higher education had always been aimed at upgrading South Vietnam’s overall capabilities. Having initially achieved a meaningful breakthrough in widening enrollment, the USAID, in the 1970’s, directed its mission in higher education toward building a

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<sup>256</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 523-524.

<sup>257</sup> Charles Green, interview by author, (January, 2002).

more effective educational system in the RVN. This was to be a transition from expediting a rise in enrollments to enriching the quality of performance of administrators and teachers, from the swift expansion of institutions to their complete utilization and modernization, and the possible conversion and transfer of American facilities in Vietnam to the Vietnamese. Ideally, this was to be a transition from temporary solutions and emergency policies to defining and self-fulfillment of carefully planned goals. But, nothing was idyllic in a warring nation, and reform was always subject to a changing environment.

The fragmented political system of the RVN was exacerbated by the possibility of an American military withdrawal. As the U.S. military moved to better equip and train the ARVN, the USAID moved to continue humanitarian assistance to the government of South Vietnam and its institutions with the RVN struggling to shift from a state of external dependence to one of economic self-sufficiency. Education remained a cornerstone of this assistance.

Change was inevitable as the military situation fluctuated with the passing of time and foreign policy altered. A brief summary of the wider environment in which the AID educational missions evolved reveals a shift in the parameters of events. In January of 1969 the Paris talks, begun by the Johnson Administration, between the U.S. and North Vietnamese had expanded to include the Saigon government and representatives of the Viet Cong. In March of 1969 Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird had invented the term “Vietnamization” to encompass the negotiated withdrawal of American troops. The ground war diminished greatly as the U.S. strategy shifted combat responsibility to ARVN forces supported by American air power. By February of 1970 National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger had begun secret talks in Paris with North Vietnam’s Le Duc Tho. On January 25 1972 President Nixon revealed that secret negotiations had been going. In 30 March 1972 North Vietnam launched its Spring Offensive across the demilitarized zone. In April of 1972, Nixon responded by authorizing the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong. Then in May of 1972 America intensified the scale of bombing North Vietnam and announced the mining of Haiphong harbor. Meanwhile, the North Vietnamese had captured Quang Tri. By

August of 1972 Kissinger and Le Duc Tho had made progress in Paris, but South Vietnam's Nguyen Van Thieu continued to oppose a cease-fire accord through October of that year. On 20 November 1972 Kissinger presented Le Duc Tho with sixty-nine amendments drafted by Thieu. On 18 December 1972 Nixon again ordered the intensive bombing of North Vietnam. North Vietnam agreed to return to diplomatic negotiations if the bombing was stopped, and talks resumed on 8 January 1973. On 27 January 1973 Kissinger and Le Duc Tho formally signed the Cease-Fire agreements. On 29 March 1973 the last U.S. combat troops left Vietnam. In Washington, the Vietnam War had brought out strong governmental divisions over checks-and-balances. By July of 1973 the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee held hearings on the secret U.S. bombing of Cambodia. Then in mid-August 1973 the U.S. halted bombing of Cambodia in response to a congressional prohibition. Finally, on 7 November 1973, Congress overrode President Nixon's veto of legislation limiting the president's right to wage war. In January of 1974, South Vietnam President Thieu declared that the war with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had started again. The buildup of Communist forces in South Vietnam proceeded into June of 1974. Then on 6 January 1975 Phuoc Long province, north of Saigon, fell to the Communists. At a 15 March 1975 Cam Ranh meeting President Nguyen Van Thieu ordered his military commanders to abandon the northern provinces of the Republic of Vietnam, then five days later reversed his command. Hue and Da Nang, however, were captured within 10 days. On April 21 1975 the South Vietnamese perimeter at Xuanloc, outside of Saigon, was crushed. Nguyen Van Thieu fled for Taiwan on 25 April 1975, and the final evacuation of Americans from Saigon began on 29 April 1975. On 30 April 1975 the Communists seized Saigon.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Karnow, 696-701.

AID/fe-274  
(Vietnam)

CONTRACT  
 BETWEEN THE  
 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
 AND  
 WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY -  
 STEVENS POINT FOUNDATION, INC.

PIO/T 430-272-3-60250  
 PIO/T 430-272-3-70197

THIS CONTRACT is made and entered into between the Government of the United States of America, as represented by the Agency for International Development (hereafter called "A.I.D."), and Wisconsin State University - Stevens Point Foundation, Inc. (hereafter called "Contractor"), an educational non-profit corporation chartered by the State of Wisconsin, with its principal office in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

WHEREAS, the Government of the United States has entered into agreements for technical cooperation with the Government of Vietnam (hereafter called "Government"); and

WHEREAS, the Government desires and has requested a survey of Higher Education of Vietnamese Universities, to be conducted by a competent team from an American University, which will include Program, Personnel (faculty, students and staff), Facilities, Finance, Controls, Purpose and Objectives; and

WHEREAS, Contractor is willing and able to perform such a survey; and

From its beginnings in 1967 through the end 1974, by way of the Wisconsin Contract, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point would regularly provide six consultants to South Vietnam. Teams surveyed Vietnamese higher education in the areas of basic curriculum, student affairs, registrar's office services, student accounting, and general university administration. The

Stevens Point Team of advisers remained remarkably optimistic during the attrition of its partnership with USAID and the Republic of Vietnam. They viewed their task in an ostensibly functionalist manner by consciously recommending reforms to the structure, practices, and organization of higher education. Designs and visions were formulated to serve the perceived needs for an improved society by creating a reformed system of higher education, supported by an expansion of educational opportunities at all levels, that would mold capable leaders, train workers, and facilitate national development.

The Wisconsin Team viewed this role as ongoing, and even more vital as the U.S. looked toward a withdrawal militarily. Institution building and educational reform ran hand-in-hand and were separate parts of the overall military strategy. Lee Sherman Dreyfus, the University's new president and sometime chief-of-mission, spun his own interpretation on the historic context of American educational involvement in Southeast Asia:

...U.S. security is somehow related to world security. If the world is not stable, then U.S. security is involved...under the old ICA, the International Cooperative Agency, it was developed...as an outgrowth of the Marshall Plan. The notion that world order and world stability was related to factors other than the military, it was related to food, to each need or problem, related to education, and so on down the line. The ICA was developed into the USAID...Essentially, then there is another premise coming up, mainly that education is a keystone for self-government and self-determination...I would hope ultimately it would make this the key thrust as opposed to the military aid and the military involvement thrust. We are a long way from that obviously maybe this is the direction that the 1970's can bring, and one which I hope I will be able to recommend at the time I do make my full educational recommendations concerning Vietnam. One of the questions has to do with Vietnamization, I'm not sure exactly which definition of that term, [and] I've seen a lot of them. I've read the secretary of state's report...I've read Laird's report...on this term. While the key means is the shift of the military burden...meaning that physically they are going to have to secure their own land or it is not going to be secure, it is just that simple. We obviously don't know what the timetable is, since that has been held back from the American public. But abstemiously there has been given some date and time...This is quite different from those who have been over there previously as I compare notes with them.<sup>259</sup>

Operating within the wider setting, any Vietnamization of the war promised to be greater than a U.S. withdrawal of military forces in scheduled intervals, as the U.S. looked to upgrade more than just the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) with American funds and

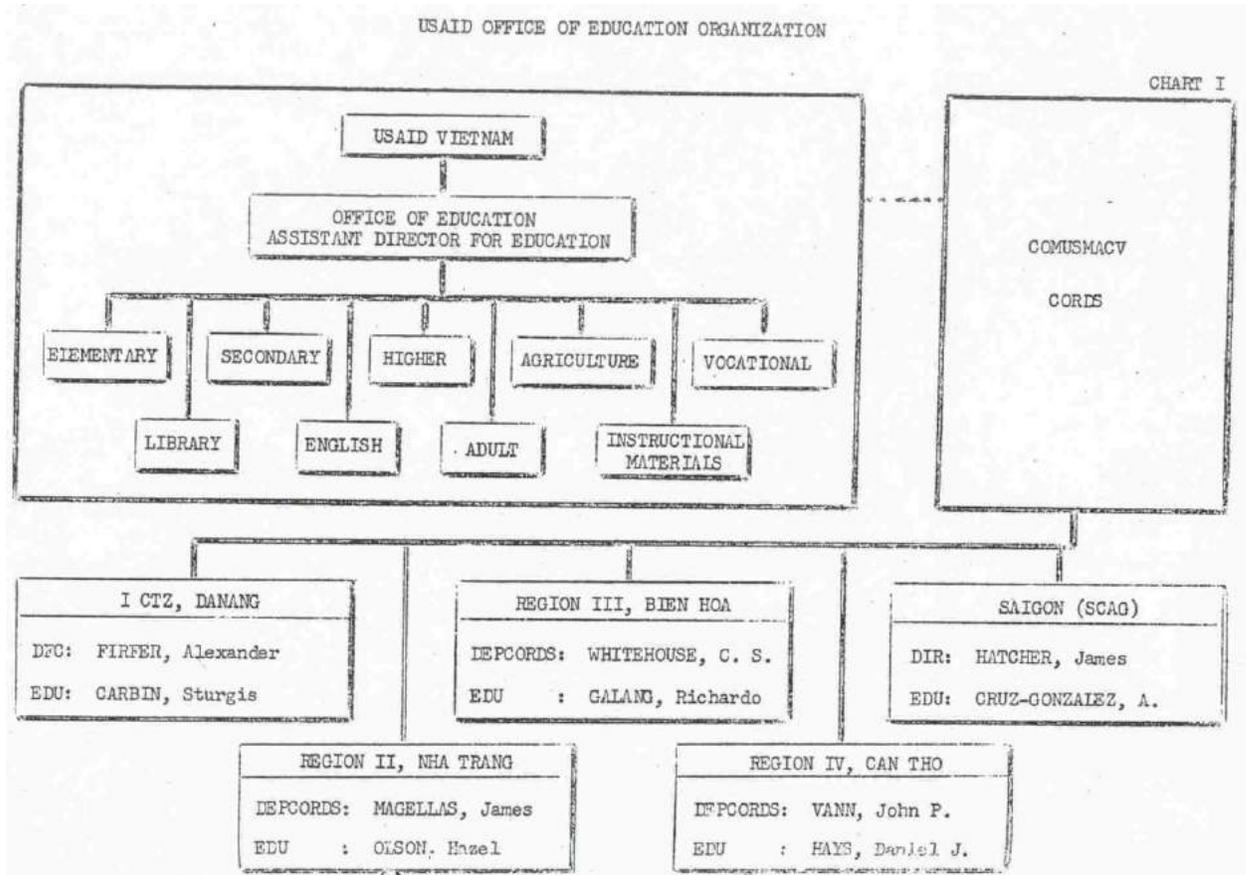
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<sup>259</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #19, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, WSU-SP President news conference, (9 March 1970).

equipment. Generally, during this period American public opinion reflected a growing disillusionment with the war, even as scheduled troop withdrawals continued. Yet, in the next chapter of this thesis my research focuses on Team documentation and personal interviews. I found little disillusionment on the part of educators. American-inspired educational measures were adopted in Vietnam, in hopes of shaping a new Vietnamese higher education with three characteristics mentioned in the Team's first report: popularization, specialization, and relevancy. These elements guided the work of American educators and agency field advisers as they toiled to instill change in an increasingly unstable environment. In effect, for WSU-SP and RVN a partnership in education that had started in 1966, took on an ever increasingly active pace for the period lasting into 1974.

## CHAPTER IV

**WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY-STEVENS POINT AND EDUCATIONAL  
REFORM IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**



The years of 1966 and 1967 marked significant turning points in American educational assistance. The U.S. was now fully engaged in two wars in the Republic of Vietnam: “the fighting war—the familiar war—[where] men kill and are killed. [And] the ‘other war...the quiet war,’ the men who battle on our side do not kill, but they may be killed.” Americans went to South Vietnam to wage war in differing ways, as they fought “to save a country and build a nation.” In 1966, there were some 1,200 “quiet warriors” in South Vietnam.<sup>260</sup> By the end of that year, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point had made the commitment to join “other war.”

<sup>260</sup> U.S. Department of State, Office of Media Services, Bureau of Public Affairs, *Quiet Warriors: Supporting Social Revolution in Viet-Nam*, Department of State Publication 8041, Far Eastern Series 140, (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., April 1966), 3-4.

The Wisconsin Team quickly learned that the task at-hand was both difficult and dangerous, yet as one ‘quiet warrior’ fell another swiftly undertook the challenge with unyielding sincerity.

The USAID Higher Education Division was established in 1967. Robert Russell LaFollette was the first to hold the position of USAID Higher Education Adviser, Vietnam. Formerly, higher education advisers had been part of the Teacher Education Division in USAID. Long-term projects had become an important part of USAID efforts aimed at modernizing and improving Vietnamese education. Central among these long-term projects were: 1.) Scholarship programs helping Vietnamese students to pursue higher education in the United States; 2.) Contracting with American teams of university experts to diagnose problems of Vietnamese education and suggest solutions; and 3.) The support of long-term institutional efforts through new teaching methods and revised curriculum. Short-term projects were linked to these long-term plans, as selected administrators and teachers were exchanged between the two nations, going on study tours of about 90 days or less.<sup>261</sup>

The ultimate aim was to induce rudimentary changes in the Vietnamese educational system. Countless field reports were compiled and observation tours were initiated by teams of consultants from American universities, governmental agencies, other educators, and their Vietnamese counterparts. The work efforts and recommendations delivered via contract between the USAID, the Republic of Vietnam, and American universities were done in a manner that would be relevant to all parties. This was true of the work done during the tenure of the WSU-SP/USAID/RVN relationship, which came to known as the Wisconsin Contract. The words in their reports and the actions of these consultants were specifically addressed to an interested audience—Vietnamese and American educators and governmental officials. The contract was written and the mission was fulfilled with the series of documents produced, seminars held, and observation tours completed all being interconnected and designed to serve as building blocks for

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<sup>261</sup> Series 17 Box 24 Folder 10, Robert Russell LaFollette, *Higher Education Facts in Vietnam*, (Saigon: USAID Higher Education, Undated, 1967?).

the foundations of a troubled but budding democracy, a new nation, its institutions and people, which had for too long had its societal needs neglected.

### **Robert Russell LaFollette, USAID Higher Education Adviser, Saigon, 1964-1967**

Dr. Robert Russell LaFollette worked as the USAID Higher Education Adviser in Saigon, officially serving with the American Embassy in Saigon from 1964 until the tragic plane crash took his life on 23 March 1967. Several weeks prior to his death he had written to a former student answering the student's earlier letter that had expressed concern for the hazards of LaFollette's assignment in the Republic of Vietnam. He replied to this expression of concern by modestly stating, "I am expendable."<sup>262</sup> Dr. Lester E. Hewitt, of Ball State College, spoke of this anecdote when he eulogized his friend and colleague, noting that LaFollette's words measured true selflessness:

which characterized LaFollette's readiness to give unstintingly of himself...[and] his complete devotion to a concept of service on behalf of those values in which he believed...a sense of duty and quiet humility in the life of a man whose influence has truly been international...So deep and continuing was his commitment to these goals that when invited to support them in a distant and dangerous setting, he did not hesitate...At a point in life when a long and illustrious academic career was capped by accepting the obligatory status of "Emeritus"...he sought out and pursued a new career in overseas service through which he might continue to enlarge the lives and horizons of others...He believed fervently in the power of education to change men's minds, and their conditions. To increase the availability and effectiveness of the resources for education—whether in Indiana, post-war Germany, Addis Ababa, or Saigon—was a task he deemed worthy of his life...there are vast numbers...who felt the impact of his life...to some of them, he is the author of the books which opened their eyes to the potentialities of a working democracy. To others he is the counselor whose quiet guidance enabled them to effect major reforms in the aim and structure of their educational facilities...Because he believed intensely in the dignity of all...each of us who rubbed shoulders with him found our own dignity enhanced by the association...And because of his devotion to the cause of peace...our hope in the achievability of such a condition of peace is strengthened.<sup>263</sup>

It was appropriate that Robert R. LaFollette should serve as the initial guiding energy "in-country" for the Wisconsin Team. LaFollette's vision was prototypical of the other members of the original Wisconsin Team and of their successors who committed themselves to the

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<sup>262</sup> LaFollette Papers, Robert Russell LaFollette, Letter File, (1967), Ball State University Archives and Special Collections, Bracken Library 210.

<sup>263</sup> LaFollette Papers, Lester E. Hewitt, "Memorial Service for Dr. Robert R. LaFollette," Ball State University, Indiana, (April 7, 1967).

reformation of Vietnamese education. LaFollette and the other team members were men characterized by bold caution. Upon his retirement after a thirty-eight year tenure at Ball State College, LaFollette had reflected both inwardly and peripherally, speaking as an American educator determined to assist have-not nations he noted: “We must prepare our youth for a world that is struggling to be born rather than one which is dying. If we do not, we are negligent in our duty.”<sup>264</sup> As early as 1949, LaFollette had spoken in a similar tone when he calculated the societal functions of education and importance of methods of free discussion and persuasion rather than “expostulation,” as a people learns the ways of democracy “by actually following the processes of democracy.”<sup>265</sup>

Robert R. LaFollette was deeply rooted in a frontier family with a legacy of dedication to “duty,” which holds a significant place in American and Wisconsin (and Indiana) history. The LaFollette (LeFollet) family date back to colonial America. They were Huguenots—French Protestant in heritage, with their great-great-grandfather Joseph LeFollet one of three brothers coming to America prior to 1750, all settling in Virginia. Joseph served as a Wagoner during the American Revolution. In the early 1800’s, the three brothers and their families moved together to Kentucky where Robert R. LaFollette’s great-grandfather Jesse, one of Joseph’s sons, had a farm adjacent to the home of Thomas Lincoln. Jesse, too, fathered sons assiduously, having: William, Elhanan, Robert, Harvey, and Josiah. For pioneer families living in Kentucky, including both the LaFollette and Lincoln families, the largely unsettled Indiana woodlands offered a new vista. In the 1820’s, the LaFollette families all migrated from Kentucky, staking new land claims on the Indiana frontier.<sup>266</sup> Around 1850, most of Jesse’s sons moved as a group, in this instance to Dane

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<sup>264</sup> LaFollette Papers, Clippings, “LaFollette to End Long Career at Ball State College,” (*Muncie Press*, May 3, 1961).

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., “Returning Ball State Professor Expresses Hope for Democracy Among German People,” (*Muncie Star*, July 27, 1949), 1.

<sup>266</sup> National Park Service, *Lincoln Boyhood*, National Memorial, Indiana, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Interior, 2002), 3.

County, Wisconsin.<sup>267</sup> There, Josiah married Mary Furgeson; they would be the parents of Robert Marion LaFollette Sr., born in Primrose, Wisconsin on 14 June 1855. Robert Marion LaFollette Sr., was the patriarch of the political LaFollette legacy in Wisconsin and Progressive tradition, serving several terms as Wisconsin's Governor, U.S. Senator, and leader of the Progressive Party. LaFollette married Belle Case in 1881; they would be the parents of Robert Marion LaFollette Jr. and Phillip Fox LaFollette.

Joseph W., the namesake of Joseph (LaFollet) Sr., had remained in Indiana, marrying Mary E. Eldridge; their son, Robert R. was born in Clay County, Indiana on 5 December 1894. Robert R. LaFollette was a third cousin of U.S. Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Jr. and of Governor Phillip LaFollette of the State of Wisconsin.<sup>268</sup> The LaFollette cousins' blazed comparable paths characterized by versatility and true dedication to public service. In part, they all followed in the footsteps of Robert Marion LaFollette, Sr., by attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Robert Marion LaFollette, Sr. had first received his B.S. and L.L.D. there in 1879 and 1901; Robert R. LaFollette received his A.M. there, in 1917; Phillip LaFollette received his A.B. in 1919 and L.L.B. in 1922; and Robert M. LaFollette, Jr. his L.L.D. in 1938. Robert R. LaFollette had received an A.B. at Indiana State Teachers College in 1916; and then an A.M. from the University of Wisconsin in 1917.

Robert R. LaFollette then studied at Harvard in 1923-24; and finished his Ph.D. at George Washington University in 1931. In his 1931 dissertation, "The American Revolutionary Foreign Debt and its Liquidation," LaFollette early on pointed his own historical interests toward the examination of a young debtor nation (U.S.A.) that had looked to foreign assistance as it gained independence and then stabilized itself by building credible national institutions.<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Bernard A. Weisberger, *The La Follettes of Wisconsin*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 5.

<sup>268</sup> LaFollette Papers, Robert R. LaFollette, "Biographical Data," (Biographical and personnel background documents courtesy of Joan Dutour, Archives & Special Collections Technician).

<sup>269</sup> Robert R. LaFollette, "The American Revolutionary Foreign Debt and its Liquidation," (PhD diss. George Washington University, 1931).

LaFollette perceived that the practicalities of history and education were unifying forces for the democratization of underdeveloped nations.

In 1917-1918, he had worked as a school principal in Clinton, Indiana; he then served with the Seventh Corps of the U.S. Army from 1918-1919 as an interpreter in German in Italy, France, Belgium, and Luxemburg. Then in 1919-21, he became head of the history department at Brazil (Indiana) High School. Ultimately he worked at Ball State from 1921-1961 as professor of social studies, beginning a long tenure as head of the department in 1924.

Robert R. LaFollette's published works began with a biography of James Swan in 1932. He followed this with biographical articles on Thomas Jefferson, Andrew Jackson, James Madison, James Irvan, and Rutherford Hayes for the *Dictionary of American Biography*. "Designing a Life Pattern," a keynote speech that LaFollette gave at the 25 September 1934 Rotary Club, served as a call for shaping a philosophy of life.<sup>270</sup> In 1935, at a Ball State meeting of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, LaFollette began to speak in terms of a world vision, "Some people have vision extending only a short distance...A pride in home, in community, in state, is not enough. We need a larger vision...Nations are rooms in a great international apartment house, and each one has something to give."<sup>271</sup> In 1949, at a discussion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, LaFollette said, "Law must come from man's rational nature." He explained that among man's social rights were the freedom of conscience, religion, and education, the right to an education and free participation in the cultural life of one's community.<sup>272</sup>

LaFollette served as visiting professor at the University of Tampa in 1941; then he took his career in higher education to the U.S. Foreign Service with six different assignments in Germany beginning in 1949, first at Straubing and Freising teachers colleges, and as the visiting expert teacher in education in Bavaria. Then in 1950 he was the social studies specialist at the

<sup>270</sup> LaFollette Papers, Clippings, "Noted Man," *Union City Evening Times*, (Sept. 24, 1934).

<sup>271</sup> LaFollette Papers, Clippings, "The Call for a World Vision," *The Easterner*, Ball State, (Feb. 8, 1935).

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, "Dr. LaFollette says human nature can be changed," *Ball State News*, (Feb. 17, 1949).

International Social Studies Workshop, Heidelberg, and educational adviser to U.S. High Commander for Germany, 1950-52, social studies specialist North Rhine Westphalia, Ministry of Culture and Education, 1954-55, and Fulbright lecturer in Germany 1956-57 at Oldenburg Pedagogical University. No other American educator had spent more time in post-WW II Germany as LaFollette. Seeing the principles of democratic government take hold in Germany, he spoke of education's immortality, "This I'm sure will live on after I'm gone."<sup>273</sup>

In 1953, while in Germany he wrote *Die Amerikaner bilden ihre Lebensform*, (The American Builds a Way of Life), interpreting American life and thinking. LaFollette then co-edited the *1954 Yearbook for the National Council for Social Studies*, "Approaches to the Understanding of World Affairs." He continued to publish articles focusing on education and the potentialities of a working democracy in social science and historical journals. LaFollette's last published work was *Higher Education Facts in Vietnam*. Published in 1967, the report described the state of affairs of Vietnamese higher education that the Wisconsin Team was now entering.<sup>274</sup>

Held in high esteem at Ball State, Robert R. LaFollette served as the keynote speaker at large alumni and rotary gatherings, other group meetings, and notable campus functions. He brought his educational objectives to the center of the stage at the 1958 Commencement with his speech entitled, "Education, satellites, and freedom," and then a follow-up address at the Alumni-Senior dinner, June 3, 1961 entitled, "The International Dimension." He spoke of his vision:

As alumni...If you were to pursue the October 21, 1925, issue of the *Easterner*, you would find the head of the Social Science Department quoted as saying, "Let us use the war debt to pay the expenses of teachers to go to Europe and, perhaps, catch a world vision." Since that time, that individual has tried to join precept and practice it to a certain degree...Our challenge is in the area of human relations. The test of man may be well whether he can get along with his neighbors here on earth. Confucius is reported as saying that if you have one year, plant rice, ten years, plant trees, if hundred years, educate men. The developments are sometimes so sharp that we wonder if we have that long term. The winds of change are blowing across the world...Doesn't that make the international dimension a categorical imperative...in that it projects into the past and forward into the future...The international dimension is viewed as the growing of

<sup>273</sup> Ibid., "LaFollette to End Long Career at Ball State College," *Muncie Press*, (May 3, 1961).

<sup>274</sup> n.a. *Who Was Who in America with World Notables, Vol. IV. 1961-1968*. (Chicago: Marquis-Who's Who, Inc. 1968), 549.

education... Yet, many are getting a nineteenth century education for a twentieth century world... We can realize that the domestic and the foreign are but parts of a single whole... we can strive... to get... Men whose hearts are warm enough to melt the cold war and whose minds are clear enough to prevent a hot one... The international dimension is an opportunity and an obligation of all of us educators... The understandings of culture other than our own is imperative for sound appraisals and wise decisions by the general public as well as by the leaders.<sup>275</sup>

Robert R. LaFollette continued to dedicate his life to education and the assistance of those eager to learn, as subsequent to his “retirement” from Ball State in 1961 he turned most of his energies to foreign assistance projects in higher education in problematic nations. From 1962 to 1964, he served as USAID higher education adviser to Haile Sellassie I, University of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, then in 1964 became the USAID higher education adviser in Vietnam, working there until his death in 1967. LaFollette worked initially with the Universities of Saigon and Hue. By 1966-1967, when the Wisconsin Team arrived, the USAID had expanded the scope of aid to include universities at Saigon, Hue, Can Tho, Dalat, Van Hanh, and other lesser institutes.

It was somewhat fitting that Robert R. LaFollette worked jointly with the Wisconsin Team on a mission to assist and extend higher education in Vietnam in 1967. His mission in Vietnam, was akin to a mission fixed earlier by LaFollette’s third cousin, Governor Robert M. LaFollette, who had challenged his first legislature in 1901 to extend Wisconsin’s tradition of making opportunities in higher education available and affordable for its citizens: “The state will not have discharged its duty to the University, nor the University fulfilled its mission to the people until adequate means have been furnished to every young man and woman in the state to acquire an education at home in every department of learning.”<sup>276</sup> This was true in 1901, in Wisconsin, and in 1967, in Vietnam.

### ***Higher Education Facts in Vietnam, Robert Russell LaFollete, 1967***

Assigned to the USAID in Saigon, as the consultant working in higher education, LaFollette had authored *Higher Education Facts in Vietnam* prior to the arrival of the Wisconsin

<sup>275</sup> LaFollette Papers, “The International Dimension,” Alumni Day address, Ball State, (June 3, 1961).

<sup>276</sup> Justus Paul, *The World is Ours*, (Stevens Point: UWSP Foundation, Inc. 1994), 1.

Team. With forethought he described—just as the title suggests—the “facts” or status of Vietnamese higher education in the mid 1960’s. The crux of the report rested on the institutional needs of South Vietnam’s two original centers of higher education, and LaFollette stated that the fundamental purpose of American activity in Vietnamese higher education was to counsel and provide information to the Universities of Saigon and Hue,

on ways and means of increasing the effectiveness of higher education administration and improving the curriculum in line with the advancement of the economic and social development of Vietnam...higher education should train an increasing number of higher level personnel—craftsmen, engineers, administrators, planners and Professional personnel. Equally crucial is that the Universities be a source of competent leaders. These two are viewed as higher education’s twin responsibilities.<sup>277</sup>

LaFollette noted these “responsibilities” were in tune with a global shift that stressed the importance of a university to serve as a public service institution. He declared that to date, higher education in Vietnam had not made such a shift. LaFollette offered an appraisal of the present situation partly as a “self-study” that followed with a primary hypothesis of where reorientation could take Vietnam.

LaFollette listed “representative targets” for reorganizing the administration of higher education: 1.) University autonomy, via a charter, creating self-governing institutions guided by a Council that controlled finances while allowing for the participation of faculty in all academic matters; 2.) Universities were to be unitary, both administratively and physically; 3.) Speedily appoint at each institution a Vice-Rector, a Bursar, a Registrar, a Librarian, and several representative faculty members of constituent departments to participate in academic and physical planning; 4.) Set-up an administrative ruling body, chaired by the Vice-Rector, upon which the heads of all University faculties serve; and 5.) Charge higher education with responsibility for all post-secondary education.<sup>278</sup>

LaFollette filled the larger portion of his “facts” report with an in-depth national survey

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<sup>277</sup> Series 17 Box 24 Folder 10, Robert Russell LaFollette, *Higher Education Facts in Vietnam*, 1.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-2.

of population and economic data, graphing varying levels of educational statistics and enrollment projections, while outlining organizational and institutional plans, occupational and economic developments, and forecasting specific budgetary needs. LaFollette made reference to the concept of “Many Flags,” as he noted that New Zealand was helping to finance a new Science Building at Thu Duc and Canada was assisting in the expansion of the Faculty of Medicine at Hue, while West Germany was supplying the Hue Faculty of Medicine with materials and two professors, and France was involved in the recruitment of faculty at both Saigon and Hue. LaFollette credited recurrent consultations and visitations by USAID staff and other American educators as instruments that demonstrated the needed knowledge and powers of persuasion to get key Vietnamese leaders to participate in the self-study and reformation of curricula and higher education administration. LaFollette noted signs of progress, citing the careful employment of American studies and books in the Faculty of Letters, curriculum revisions emphasizing social sciences and sociological jurisprudence in the Faculty of Law, an increase in observation tours by key Vietnamese to the United States, and augmentation of reconnaissance by American personnel in Vietnam. According to LaFollette, these and other inroads in higher education had begun to facilitate better training and job placement of students, while loosening the hold of the French colonial and continental legal scheme.

### **The Contract in Higher Education with the Republic of Vietnam: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and United States Agency for International Development**

In December 1966 the first Wisconsin Contract was formally negotiated between the United States Agency for International Development and Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc., the Contractor, an educational nonprofit corporation chartered by the State of Wisconsin. Acting in parallel, USAID Contracting Officer Adolph J. Bennet and Foundation Executive Secretary William B. Vickerstaff signed the contract in early January 1967. The USAID/WSU-SP contract was entitled by and executed under the authority of the amended Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and Executive Order 11223. The USAID, within the sphere of

its agreements for technical cooperation with the Government of Vietnam, had been asked to administer a survey of Higher Education of South Vietnamese Universities, to include: Controls, Facilities, Finance, Personnel, Program, Purpose and Objectives. Article I of the Contract outlined the Operational Plan, calling on the Contractor to provide a team composed of approximately seven specialists, (hereafter accordingly known as the Wisconsin Team), for a period of three to six months, who would consult with counterpart GVN officials, the USAID Mission to Vietnam, and Vietnamese educators, to sequentially attain and organize the necessary information and data. The diverse makeup of the educational survey team was to include specialists in administration, letters and sciences, behavioral sciences, foreign languages, business administration, law, and other areas as agreed on by the concerned parties. According to contract objectives, the survey team was to: evaluate the current status of Vietnamese higher education; determine the needs in the offing for the program of higher education; design a development program in stages to meet such needs; delineate an administrative organizational structure and financial plan for higher education; and project intermittent progress reviews.<sup>279</sup>

The Contractor was to prepare and process preliminary and final survey reports (twenty-five copies), to be submitted to AID Far East Technical Advisory Staff, which was to distribute recommendations, goals, priorities and assist in the achievement of such goals. Article II designated details for reimbursement by AID to the Contractor for contractual costs, services, travel allowances, salaries, and occupational and special war hazards insurance, in an amount not to exceed a total of \$98,152. Article III detailed non-dollar Contractor allowances, facilities and services to be provided by USAID and the GVN, including: office space; housing allowance; local transportation; all accessible privileges at U.S. military commissary, post exchange, and APO; and exemption from licenses, permits, and payment in the cooperating county of assessments, duties, or any taxes, to the extent allowable by law. Article IV delineated terms of

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<sup>279</sup> Series 17 Box 17 Folder 4, Contract Correspondence; Box 17 Folder 6, Contract and PIOT, AID/fe-274, AID/vn-77 Vietnam, "Contract Between the United States of America and Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc," (1966-1967).

financing and method of payments, and the duration and termination of the contract, which was to be effective as of 15 December 1966 and continue through 31 May 1967.<sup>280</sup> Within the termination clause was a provision that stated:

The Contractor shall not be liable for any delay in performing its obligations hereunder if any delay arises from causes beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of the Contractor, provided the Contractor or AID/W gives prompt notice to the other party. If such causes shall prevent performance hereunder for a continuous five day period after such notice, Contractor or AID may terminate this contract for force majeure on five days' written notice to the other party. Such causes include, but are not limited to, acts of God, or the public enemy, fires, floods, epidemics, strike, quarantine restrictions, acts of government, and unusually severe weather.<sup>281</sup>

Contract No. AID/vn-77  
Amendment #8, Page 2

Line Item Number	Category	"BUDGET		
		Actual Cost Fr: 12/12/69 To: 6/30/73	Estimated Fr: 7/1/73 To: 6/30/74	Total Cost
1	Salaries	\$ 100,000	\$ 51,000	\$ 151,000
2	Transportation/ Travel	54,000	14,000	68,000
3	Equipment/Materials & Supplies	5,500	5,000	10,500
4	Subcontracts	18,000	- 0 -	18,000
5	Other Direct Costs	12,000	10,000	22,000
6	Indirect Costs (Lump Sum in lieu of Overhead)	20,000	9,800	29,800
Total Obligated Amount		\$ 209,500	\$ 89,800	\$ 299,300

The initial Wisconsin Contract went on to serve as an umbrella for extended projects as Stevens Point educators, the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., the USAID and GVN negotiated contractual amendments and additional contracts.

<sup>280</sup> Ibid.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

Choosing to widen its participation in foreign assistance educational projects in Vietnam, WSU-SP never looked to invoke the termination clause, even early on when its President, Dr. James H. Albertson, the first Chief of the Higher Education Survey Team, and the other original Team members were killed in Vietnam.

**James H. Albertson, President WSU-SP/1962-1967 and first Chief-of-Party of the Wisconsin Team**



David Coker (left), WSU-SP Director of Counseling Center (WI Team workshop program coordinator), and Gordon Haferbecker (right), Vice President of Academic Affairs, seeing James Albertson (center) off for his 2<sup>nd</sup> team trip to Vietnam, 1967. In making the commitment to the “other war,” WSU-SP quickly learned that the task at-hand was both difficult and dangerous.

James H. Albertson, at the age of 36 became the eighth president of Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point (WSC-SP), assuming his office on 1 July 1962, following in the footsteps of President William C. Hansen, who had held office for twenty-two years, dating back to 1940. Wisconsin State, along with all of American higher education and its universities, were entering

into new frontiers for higher education. American higher education was experiencing unprecedented growth, both in enrollment and curriculum, as the baby boom generation entered American colleges. Just as new horizons in American higher education were opening at home, American educators looked to extend its vision to other nations through visitation, consultation, and guidance, and field exposure to modern teaching methods and administrative skills.

Albertson was one who held such a vision. Albertson's energy and academic motivation fit the mold of the early 1960's, President John F. Kennedy's "New Frontier." Born 3 September 1925 in Brush, Colorado, Albertson obtained bachelors and masters degrees from Colorado State University, then attended the University of Washington from 1951 to 1952, before transferring to Stanford University for his Ed.D. He had served in the U.S. Coast Guard during WW II on the Island of Saipan tending a beacon light for Allied ships and planes. Albertson then taught in the Seattle public schools in 1949-50, settling into a personal pattern characterized by active civic duty and professional advancement, and an appreciation for diversity. Albertson's rising star had begun with his return to his alma mater as an associate professor, then director of admissions, the director of the college union, and coordinator of student activities for Colorado State College from 1950 to 1957. In 1957, Albertson arrived at Ball State College, Muncie, Indiana, to fill the newly created office of executive assistant to Ball State President John R. Emens; Albertson was in the process of completing his Ed.D. with the assistance of a Danforth Foundation (St. Louis, Missouri) study grant through Stanford University. He worked at Ball State from 1957 to 1962, assisting in a thorough reorganization of Ball State's administrative structure. On 11 April 1962, the Muncie, Indiana newspapers ran a special story announcing that new challenges had called the Ball State administrator to the presidency of Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point, effective July 1, 1962.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> James H. Albertson, Personal data and clippings, "BSC Administrator is Named President of Wisconsin State," *Ball State News*, and "Dr. Albertson to New Post," *Muncie Evening News*, (April 11, 1962), Ball State University Archives and Special Collections, Bracken Library 210.

Albertson's energies extended into both educational and civic service. He served as Director of Citizens National Bank; a Consultant-examiner for the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; a member of the educational committee of Wisconsin Conference of Methodists. He also sat on the executive committee of the Wisconsin Association of Presidents and Deans of Instruction of Higher Learning and the Board of Directors for the Sentry Foundation and for the Wisconsin State University Foundation, Inc., and he was president of the Goerke Bequest Foundation. Ultimately, as college president, he set Wisconsin State-Stevens Point on a course of steady growth and change. As a college president, Albertson brought new ideas to Stevens Point, then as chief-of-party for a USAID survey team he opened new frontiers in Vietnam. In 1967, Albertson, his wife Janice and their five children had settled in Park Ridge, Wisconsin, where the college president's family was active with the United Fund of Portage County, the Stevens Point Chamber of Commerce, the Rotary Club, and St. Paul's Methodist Church.<sup>283</sup>

Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, with an enrollment of 2,500 students, was one of seven state-supported colleges in Wisconsin. Fifty-five percent of the student body was enrolled in teacher education and the remainder primarily in liberal arts and pre-professional curriculum. During his tenure, WSC-SP/WSU-SP experienced unprecedented growth, evolving from College to University. Its new president moved in modern alignment with a budding national philosophy of shared government, as he called for increased faculty participation in the formation of university policies. President Albertson suggested that the faculty form two new policy councils, the academic council and the student affairs council, at the same time proposing the faculty discharge eleven "president's committees" and work toward the development of a faculty senate, an end-product that would not occur until after his five year tenure.

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<sup>283</sup> n.a. *Who Was Who in America with World Notables, Vol. IV. 1961-1968*, 18.

The young president and the college's receptive faculty worked together to develop new advisory committees for long-range planning, including the formation of the Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point Foundation and a Board of Visitors. Having quickly instituted reforms to the college's governance structure, President Albertson called for a complete reappraisal of the undergraduate curriculum with his initial inaugural address. Questions regarding academic "turf" and anxiety over the security of faculty positions mixed with departmental interests, drawing this process into a four-year review complicated by an upward spiral in enrollment and rapid campus growth. The need for new curricular offerings and specialties jumbled any long-range strategy. A noteworthy change came in the addition of a three credit general degree requirement in non-western cultural studies and several new majors.<sup>284</sup>

In alignment with Albertson's attraction for cultural literacy were new majors in American Civilization, Latin American Studies, and Russian and Eastern Europe. He instituted a series of public lectures and faculty-led seminars that incorporated international topics. Also, during his tenure, forestry, speech pathology and audiology (later renamed communicative disorders), physical education for women and business administration all were new majors aimed at career development. Albertson's background in student personnel work led amicably to the initiation of a Student Affairs Division at the university providing support services and bolstering student government and volunteerism.

WSC-SP became Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point (WSU-SP) in 1964. In 1966, the Board of Regents for the Wisconsin State University system called upon each institution to design a "mission statement" charting its goals in terms of five- and fifteen-year plans. Albertson worked closely with Paul Yambert, dean of applied arts and sciences, in the drafting of *Long-Range Plans, 1966-1981*. Optimism characterized the report, highlighted by curricular review and visions of expansion in most sectors. The WSU-SP stratagem included a possible experimental college, an overseas study program, an honors program, and sabbatical program for

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<sup>284</sup> Paul, 95-109.

faculty. In line with the presumably interminable climb in undergraduate enrollments, graduate education evolved during the Albertson term, as a successful cooperative program garnered support for each individual state university to institute graduate programs. In 1964, WSU-SP granted its first two master's degrees from a fledgling program in education. By 1967, thirty-eight graduate degrees had been awarded with graduate studies expanding into home economics. As additional graduate programs developed at WSU-SP, dialogue even gave consideration to a cooperative doctorate with the University of Wisconsin-Madison.<sup>285</sup>

Higher education across America was undergoing dramatic reformation and expansion not removed from turbulent social and economic changes associated with the Civil Rights movement, exploration of space, Cold War, assassination of the American president, and war in Vietnam. WSU-SP was linked to a national and state phenomenon of academic and institutional growth. Enrollment rose from 2,407 in the fall semester of 1962 to 5,907 in the fall of 1967, with annual estimates being exceeded by an average of 1,000 into 1970. By 1967, student diversity at WSU-SP was enhanced as students from 12 countries were enrolled. Visions of the future became instant realizations, with unimagined strains on facilities and faculties. Faculty numbers mushroomed from 160 in 1960 to about 400 in 1967. Plans for the rapidly expanding campus were reliant on land acquisition, community relations, street closings, and removal of property from the tax rolls, as the construction began in dormitories, food service centers, classroom buildings, an expanded University Center, and plans for the replacement of the campus library (ultimately named the Albertson Learning Resource Center) and a new Fine Arts Center.

WSU-SP and its president were representative of their times. Albertson felt each individual and the university as a whole had a special responsibility to share ideals with others. His standards emphasized civic responsibility and leadership. On 4 May 1963, in his Inaugural Address, President Albertson speaking of the college student, "His ability to articulate for himself

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 95-101. Also, Dreyfus interview by author, Dreyfus explained that he later nixed the idea.

a sense of purpose and a commitment to a way of life will attest to his wisdom.”<sup>286</sup> Albertson looked to augment the campus’s international participation as he envisioned WSU-SP as a leader in both innovative programming and cultural awareness, a commitment that led to the cultural mission in Vietnam. In this sense, the University became a model of institutional development for newly developing states of the world. During my interviews with Lee Sherman Dreyfus and Burdette Eagon they both mentioned that Albertson, while at Ball State, had come in contact with Howard G. Johnshoy, Robert R. LaFollette and the USAID. My research found that Albertson not only honed his administrative skills at Ball State, but he coupled his energies and ideas with others at Ball State; in particular LaFollette and Johnshoy. Professor LaFollette had left Ball State in 1961, but often returned to campus. Robert R. LaFollette had become USAID higher education adviser to Vietnam in 1964.<sup>287</sup> It was also in 1964, that the USAID and the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education presented WSU-SP with a grant to provide for an international intern who was to come to WSU-SP to study administrative procedures. Albertson visited the Philippines where he chose Dean of Instruction Gregory C. Borlaza, of the Philippine Normal School of Manila, to work in this capacity starting in January 1965. A second USAID grant came to WSU-SP in the spring of 1966 calling on Albertson to serve as chief-of-team for a group of seven American educators to go to Vietnam and conduct a study of higher education in the Republic of Vietnam and craft recommendations for its improvement. As noted, William Vickerstaff served as executive secretary of the WSU-SP Foundation, the contracting agency for AID grant/af-274 and then AID/vn-77. Any apprehension concerning the unpopularity of the war in Vietnam was overridden by Albertson’s devotion to educational and cultural exchange.<sup>288</sup>

In January 1967, Albertson departed for Vietnam, heading the seven member Wisconsin Team composed of Harry F. Bangsberg, President Bemidji States College; A. Donald Beattie,

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<sup>286</sup> Albertson biographical data and clippings, Richard Burkhart, “Albertson Memorial,” (Undated), Ball State University Archives.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Paul, 101-105.

Dean of the School of Business and Economics, Wisconsin State University-Whitewater; Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard University; Howard G. Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College; Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Programs, University of Illinois-Chicago; and Melvin L. Wall, Head of Plant and Earth Sciences, Wisconsin State University-River Falls. They were joined in Vietnam by Robert LaFollette, USAID Higher Education Advisor, Saigon Office.

Upon their arrival in Vietnam, the Team participated in an initial briefing where USAID and Vietnamese officials discussed the “two fronts in Vietnam” upon which the U.S. was waging war. Chief-of-Party Albertson made note of this in a letter to William Vickerstaff:

This morning (Jan. 11) I had a good example of these two fronts in operation, for as we sat and listened, and as I walked through the corridors and saw and had a chance to learn more about the program, in the distance were flying American planes dropping bombs on the Viet Cong. The ground shook and you could see puffs of smoke go up as the bombs and artillery shells were exploding some eight or nine miles to the east of us. In the daytime an on-going...and viable instructional program is in progress. At night the VC move in and the Vietnamese have to move out. So far there has been no damage to the physical plant of the University of Saigon located at Tu Duc. There are a few bullet holes in the windows and the Vietnamese have several of their troops billeted in the space that is reserved for the faculty pedagogy. It will be a long time before I forget what I saw and learned this morning...Saigon is a fascinating place...you can see why they have referred to it as the ‘Pearl of the Orient.’ Tu Duc is the future of the University of Saigon and it is hoped that one of the recommendations that will come out of our survey will be that the entire university be consolidated on one campus and that campus be the Tu Duc campus...they know what they want in terms of the program, they are very much aware of the problems that they face, and yet they are optimistic regarding the future.<sup>289</sup>

Touring the five Vietnamese institutes of higher education, the Wisconsin Team immediately encountered a curriculum accentuating classical and French continental studies ill-suited for a total enrollment of some 34,000 Vietnamese. Chief-of-Party Albertson pointed to this limitation as he asserted in his letter that there was an absolute need for curricula more in tune with “the immediate needs of the developing country.”<sup>290</sup>

<sup>289</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), “Battle in Vietnam is on Two Fronts—Albertson,” *The Pointer*, (Stevens Point, February 2, 1967).

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*

Albertson returned to WSU-SP in mid-February 1967 with a request to organize a second USAID educational contract. The second project called for a national study of elementary, secondary, vocational, technical, and adult education in the Republic of Vietnam. Albertson met with campus administrators with the hope that Dean of Education Burdette Eagon would lead a second Wisconsin Team and the WSU-SP Foundation again operate in a capacity as the contracting agent.

As he prepared to return to Vietnam to complete the first report on higher education, Albertson held a news conference illuminating the goals of the original Wisconsin USAID mission. He declared, “education is at the very heart of winning peace in Vietnam.”<sup>291</sup>

In March of 1967, from Vietnam Albertson forwarded Vickerstaff fifteen copies of the Wisconsin Team’s preliminary survey of higher education. The Team then worked to modify their report based on responses obtained from their Vietnamese counterparts in Dalat, Saigon, Hue, and Can Tho, hoping to construct a final draft and come home to WSU-SP by early April. Albertson sent an optimistic message of progress on 21 March 1967 to Kurt Schmeller, presidential assistant at WSU-SP. Then on Good Friday, 23 March 1967, Schmeller received an early morning phone call from the USAID. On route to Hue from Saigon, bad weather the day before had forced the chartered twin-engine Air America plane carrying the Wisconsin Team back to Da Nang to refuel. The pilot, made a fateful decision to make a second attempt to cross through the mountains in a monsoon storm, and the attempt ended in a disastrous crash 200 feet short of a rain-veiled mountain peak north of Da Nang. There were no survivors as the pilot, Bruce Massey of La Habra, California, the USAID Mission education advisor, and all seven members of the Wisconsin-led higher education survey team were killed. It took two days for a group of U.S. Marines to reach the wreckage and confirm that there were no survivors.<sup>292</sup>

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<sup>291</sup> Ibid.

<sup>292</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), “AID Team Killed in Viet Disaster,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, (March 25, 1967), 1, 10.

DAILY NEWS, SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1967

# Crash Kills 8 U.S. Educators

Saigon, March 24 (AP)—A plane crash in a monsoon storm yesterday wiped out a team of eight American educators who were surveying South Vietnam's high school and college problems on a tour sponsored by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

All the group, most of them Midwesterners, perished with the pilot when their twin-engine Air America plane smashed into a rain-veiled mountain North of Da Nang.

A U. S. spokesman announced today the tragic end of the educational research mission, undertaken in January, which was to have ended in mid-April.

Messages to relatives and schools in the United States identified the victims:

James Albertson, 41, president of Wisconsin's Stevens Point State University, who headed the team.

Harry F. Bangsberg, 39, president of Bemidji (Minn.) State College.

A. Donald Beattie, 45, dean of the school of business and economics at Whitewater (Wis.) State University.

Vincent F. Conroy, 44, director of field studies at Harvard's center for educational research.

Howard C. Johnson, 48, dean of academic affairs at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.

Robert R. LaFollette, 72, of Muncie, Ind., former history professor, with AID in Saigon since 1961. He was a third cousin of Senator Robert M. LaFollette Jr.

Arthur D. Pickett, 51, director

of the honors program at the University of Illinois, Chicago circle campus.

Melvin L. Wall, 54, head of the department of plant and earth sciences at River Falls (Wis.) State University.

Pilot Not Identified  
The pilot was not identified immediately.

The Air America line is a civilian company. It operates in South Vietnam under charter to the U.S. mission.

The crash came on the last leg of a flight from Saigon to Hue, the old imperial capital 400 miles north of Saigon.

The spokesman said rain and turbulence prompted the pilot to put down at Da Nang, but he later decided to fly the final 80 miles despite the weather.

Albertson, president of Stevens Point State since 1962, received

the assignment from AID about a year ago. He left the United States with the team Jan. 2 and returned early in February for a few days to organize a second team. He was a leader in efforts to establish the community colleges system in Wisconsin.

Native of Colorado  
A native of Bush, Colo., he was executive assistant to the president of Ball State College, Muncie, Ind., before becoming president at Stevens Point where the student body increased from 2,400 to 6,100 during his tenure.

La Fouette served with the field hospital corps in World War I and was an interpreter with the army of occupation in Germany after that war. He taught at Indiana State and then Ball State, where he served as head of the social science department from 1921 until his retirement in 1961.

On leave from Ball State, he returned to Germany to serve as education adviser to the U.S.



Harry F. Bangsberg



Vincent F. Conroy



Robert LaFollette



James H. Albertson

high commissioner from 1950 to 1952 and as professor at Oldenburg University in 1956.  
(Other Viet news on page 6)

Among the dead

In Stevens Point, the first word of the crash came via a telephone call to the Schmeller home at 1:45 a.m. Friday, March 24. Mr. H. Laden Heim, Vietnam Bureau-AID Washington had been unable to reach WSU-SP acting-President Gordon Haferbecker. Laden Heim spelled out the news that the Air America plane carrying the Wisconsin Team had gone in a storm and that there were no survivors. Laden Heim said that due to weather and combat conditions, it would be several days before the site of the crash could be reached by U.S. Marines.<sup>293</sup>

Schmeller, also, was unsuccessful in his first attempt to reach Haferbecker. He then called acting-Vice President Yambert, and the two agreed to immediately meet at the Haferbecker residence. Schmeller arrived first, and by pounding on the front door he awakened Mr. and Mrs. Haferbecker and told them the news. As Yambert joined the group, the three WSU-SP administrators drove together to the Albertson family home, arriving there at about 3 a.m. They told Mrs. Albertson that the plane had gone down, and according to Washington the full team had

<sup>293</sup> Series 17 Box 26 Folder 1, Crash-Log of Events, "Schmeller memo to Vickerstaff," (March 24, 1967).

perished. According to Schmeller, Mrs. Albertson stood in silence and then spoke of her “misgivings about her husband’s return to Vietnam after his brief return to the U.S. in February, and indicated that up to that point she had felt no anxiety at all. Thereafter, however, she worried a lot and feared for the worst.” At the suggestion of Haferbecker, Schmeller called Laden Heim to get an additional confirmation and to see “if frankly this was all true and real.” Schmeller asked if USAID had notified all of the other team member’s families and was shocked when Heim responded saying no the USAID had not done so, and that this was the responsibility of WSU-SP as the primary contractor.<sup>294</sup>

The executive secretary of the WSU-SP Foundation, William Vickerstaff, was out of town on vacation so it fell on Schmeller, Haferbecker, and Yambert to return to campus and contact the families of the crash victims. Laden Heim had told Schmeller that the news of the plane crash had already reached the news services, so those in Stevens Point worked with an added sense of urgency. A command post was set up in president’s office as the administrators painstakingly fielded information. Vickerstaff was contacted in Florida and returned immediately to Stevens Point, flying in-part from Chicago to Stevens Point on a twin-engine Beechcraft, the same type of plane that the Team had traveled on in Vietnam.<sup>295</sup> From that point, Vickerstaff coordinated formal communications. Even as funerals and memorials were being arranged, the work continued in preparation for an accelerated departure of a second WSU-SP led team.

Eugene McPhee, Executive Director of the Wisconsin State University, summed up the anguish of the moment extolling the “courage of those who gave their lives for a cause in which they believed deeply... [they were] front line soldiers in the long range war of ideas.”<sup>296</sup> The *Stevens Point Journal* depicted Albertson as an “inventive, bold, resourceful, articulate...model

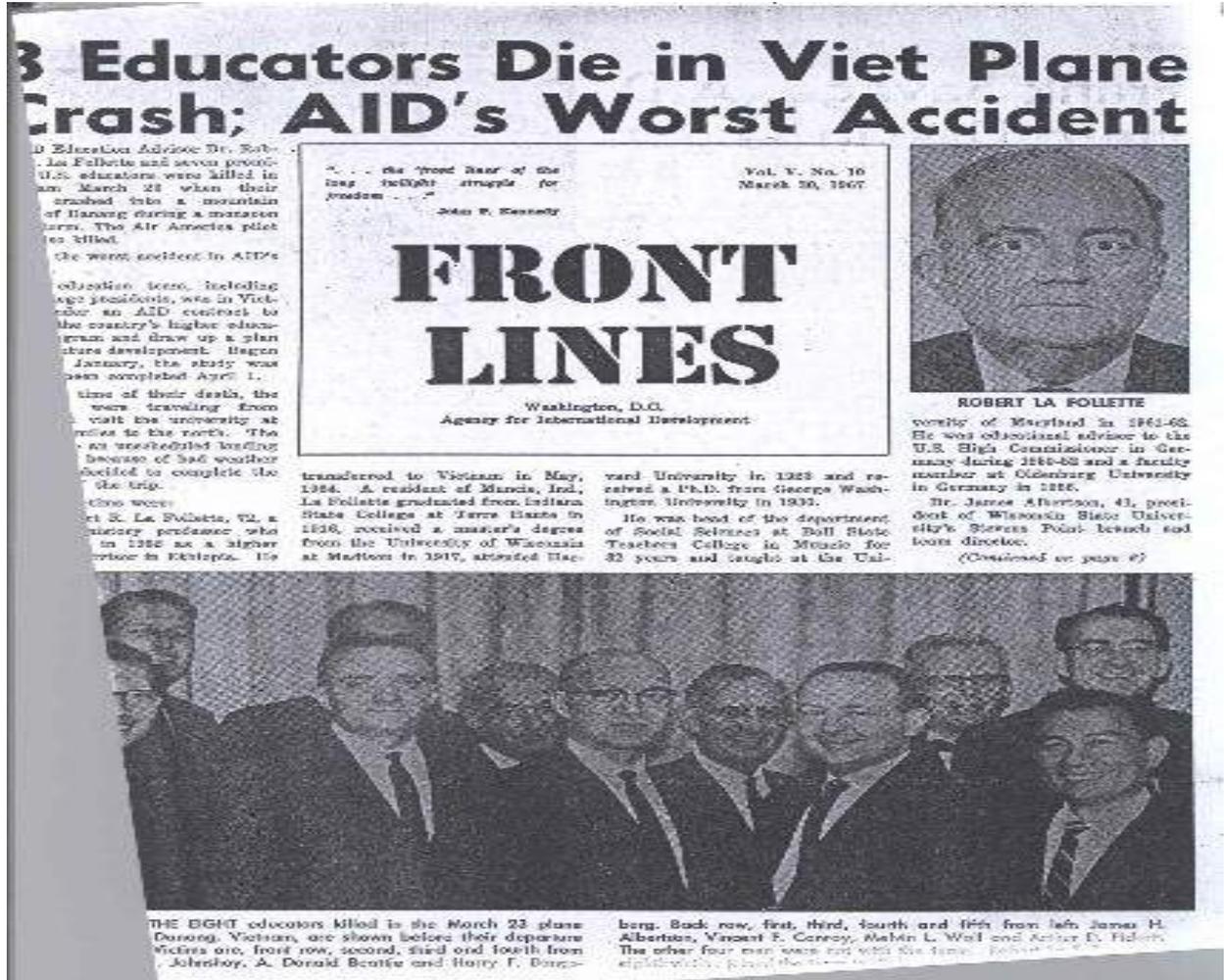
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<sup>294</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid., 2-5.

<sup>296</sup> Series 17 Folder 40 Box 5, Clippings (1967-1974), “Their Weapons were Books not Bullets,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, (March 25, 1967), part 1, 1, 4.

of personal integrity and individual high quality.” Regent Mary Williams cited President Albertson’s capacity for hard work, his idealism, his persuasive and enthusiastic personality.”<sup>297</sup>



*Front Lines*, the USAID news digest, reported that the crash was the worst accident in the history of the USAID.<sup>298</sup> During the entire Vietnam War fifteen Americans associated with the USAID Education Division were killed, the seven Wisconsin project consultants and USAID’s Robert LaFollette in the fatal plane crash, five IVS employees by VC snipers, and two members of the Institute for Linguistics project during the 1968 Tet Offensive.<sup>299</sup>

<sup>297</sup> Paul, 106-107.

<sup>298</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), “Eight Educators Die in Viet Plane Crash...,” *Front Lines*, Vol. V, No. 10, (March 30, 1967). *Front Lines*, the USAID news digest had adopted its title from John Kennedy’s directive for the USAID to work on “the front lines of the long twilight struggle for freedom.”

<sup>299</sup> Byron, 189.

On 26 March 1967, Easter Sunday, Vickerstaff heard from Laden Heim that search operations had reached full proportions with both the U.S. Air Force and Marines involved. The U.S. Ambassador had sent his plane and Deputy Ambassador Kurn to Da Nang to assist in bringing the bodies back to Saigon. The manifest list had been declared accurate and the crash had been designated a weather induced accident. As the plane was of a U.S. registered airlines the Federal Aviation Authority had dispatched an investigative team. In-flight voice tapes had been recovered and preliminary findings revealed that at the time of the accident the plane was traveling at cruise speed on a level flight course. The crash itself was quite destructive and identifying the remains of team personnel proved to be difficult.<sup>300</sup>

On 28 March 1967, the USAID contacted Vickerstaff requesting that he send copies of Albertson's dental records to USAID/Washington and contact representatives of the other team member's universities to do the same. In his log, Vickerstaff noted that there were acute problems in identification: "This is information that is rather unsettling but probably not to surprising under the circumstances surrounding the incident." USAID/Washington also told Vickerstaff that U.S. Representative Mel Laird and Senator Robert Kennedy had been in close contact with AID, acting in the best interest of team members who they had known personally.<sup>301</sup>

On 29 March 1967, Vickerstaff received a call from Bill Shumate, his USAID contact in Washington. Shumate read a cable from USAID/Saigon asking Wisconsin State-Stevens Point to send a representative to Saigon "as soon as possible to assist in the wrap up" of the higher education survey. Haferbecker and Vickerstaff turned to Burdette Eagon, who had been scheduled to depart for Vietnam on the fifteenth of May with the second team. Vickerstaff now suggested that Eagon prepare to leave as soon as possible. The next day, Eagon and Vickerstaff immediately proceeded to Washington to begin the processing for Foreign Service. They met

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<sup>300</sup> Series 17 Box 26 Folder 1, Crash-Log of Events, Vickerstaff, "Log of the activities of Easter Sunday, March, 26, 1967."

<sup>301</sup> Series 17 Box 26 Folder 1, Crash-Log of Events, Vickerstaff, "Log of March 28, 1967."

with USAID's T.C. Clark and its new higher education adviser assigned to Saigon, Warren Wilson.<sup>302</sup>

On 1 April 1967, Eagon and Vickerstaff returned to Stevens Point. Eagon reported that he "was very impressed with the sincere interest of AID officials in Washington and their efforts to do everything possible to expedite completion of the study."<sup>303</sup> By the fourth of April Eagon's credentials had been approved for overseas duty. Eagon would make three trips to Vietnam within the first several months of his work as the new chief of the Wisconsin Team. Once in Vietnam, Eagon worked to finalize the survey of higher education as he retraced the efforts of his fallen colleagues. He visited the five Vietnamese university campuses and exchanged ideas with USAID representatives and his Vietnamese counterparts. He flew over the crash site and could still see the pieces of wreckage. When I interviewed Burdette Eagon he reflected on the first of his ten trips to Vietnam:

Actually, after Albertson was killed in 1967, I think I was there within two weeks. I flew into Hue, flying over the glitter of the plane crash. We worked up there for a time and I think when we left they bombed the hotel the next night. We flew in a helicopter from one place to another, in certain areas of Da Nang and Dalat... That was a time when only Pan American Airlines flew to that area, it was an ungodly long trip... It was interesting just traveling around in Vietnam because they had Air Vietnam, which was a CIA outfit or something. We landed one day in the runway and ran out of gas. It was crazy; think of it, we ran out of gas and had to be towed in. There were a lot of crazy little things like that happened, totally unorganized. The Vietnamese government itself was all-askew as to things, they were disorganized and communications were bad. So you get out of... you were in a totally different world. We went up to the mountain-yard area to look at a school, it seemed like they were as far away from Saigon as the Antarctic is from us, as far as what was happening. Every part of Vietnam is totally different.<sup>304</sup>

The crash site in Vietnam was revisited several years later by the mission leader of another Wisconsin higher education team, WSU-SP/UWSP Chancellor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, whose own examination of the environment is enlightening,

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<sup>302</sup> Ibid., "Log of March 31, 1967."

<sup>303</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), "Dr. Eagon Leaves for Vietnam to Finish Education Report," *Stevens Point Journal*, (April 13, 1967).

<sup>304</sup> Eagon, interview by author, (October, 2000), complete transcript included in thesis appendix.

Finally, on that plane crash, my personal opinion is that Jim Albertson ordered that plane into the air and didn't realize it [the dangerous conditions.] In fact, I brought about a change in defense department policies with Melvin Laird as a result of that crash. Because, my own experience is when you travel, you travel as a GS-18. That's a very high rank – like a lieutenant general. There were a lot of general officers traveling around in Vietnam out of uniform who were there as command people and they did not want to get them mixed up, so they had a policy that these general officers who had other functions, like a friend of mine who was the economic development guy—Colonel Wickham—later became United Nations chief in Korea, often traveled in civilian clothes so these young pilots who were piloting the Air America planes didn't know always who they flying. They knew with me as I was just too fat and out of shape that they didn't mistake me for a general officer.

Jim Albertson was not, he was a very tall and lean guy and young enough that they could assume that he was traveling the equivalent of a brigadier or a major general. They were caught in a heavy storm and fog and so on at Da Nang. I was there, literally a year later. My guess is that he said, "it looks like it is clearing up, I think we will be able to go, why don't we go? I think we'd be able to make it now." I believe that some kind of phrase like that was uttered and the two youngsters who fly the plane, you know they would be 24 – 25 years old, as far as their concerned the man with the stuff on his shoulders is saying go. They put it in gear and took off. They didn't make the crest of Monkey Mountain. I literally flew over that site about a year later in a chopper and could see exactly where they went down; you could still see the scar where the plane did not quite make it. The fog would come up there so fast and dense, you could be looking at the mountain from Da Nang and by the time you got there it was fogged in, it would happen that rapidly. I was finally convinced, 'I bet Jim put that thing in the air, never realizing it, with his talk. You know it is a small plane. The defense department then made it clear that *no* plane was to take off unless they had a man in *uniform* of superior rank telling them to.<sup>305</sup>

On 2 July 1967, a ceremony was held at the University of Saigon posthumously awarding the Chuong My Vietnamese Medals of Merit First Class to James H. Albertson and the seven other educators killed in the plane crash. Eagon, representing the team member's families, accepted the medals from Deputy Prime Minister Nguyen Luu Vien. Others in attendance were the Vietnamese Rectors, Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho, USAID Director Donald MacDonald, U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker, and numerous other U.S. and GVN officials.<sup>306</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author, (August, 2000).

<sup>306</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings, "U.S. Professors posthumously awarded VN Order of Merit," *Saigon Post*, (July 3, 1967).



RVN Memorial Service for Albertson and the Wisconsin Team, the mutual commitment found a new common-ground.

### **Harry Fredrick Bangsberg**

Like President James Albertson, another member of the original Wisconsin Team, Bemidji State University president Dr. Harry Fredrick Bangsberg, would have a lasting impact on

his alma mater, its relations with Vietnam, and programs in educational assistance. Harry Frederick Bangsberg, also, had a distinct connection to Wisconsin. He was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1928; he attended Wisconsin State University-La Crosse in 1947-49, and then received his B.A. from Luther College in 1950, followed by a M.A., in 1951, and a Ph.D. in 1957 from Iowa State University. In 1951, he completed his thesis, "History of the State University of Iowa: the university and World War I. Then in 1953, while continuing his graduate studies in the Graduate College of the State University of Iowa he published, *Mark M. Pomeroy: Copperhead editor a study in transition*. Bangsberg worked as a journalist with the *La Crosse Tribune*, 1951-52, and the *Iowa City Press-Citizen*, 1952-52 and 1955-56; taught history at Western Illinois University, 1953-55; was associate professor of history at Wisconsin State College-Eau Claire, 1956-59; assistant director, Wisconsin State Colleges Board of Regents, Madison, 1959-63; executive director, Higher Education Coordinating Council Metropolitan St. Louis, 1963-64; and in 1964 moved to Bemidji State College, where he was president at the time of his death on 3 March 1967. Harry F. Bangsberg served on the Governor of Wisconsin Advisory Council, Committee for Children and Youth, 1959-63; as Consulting College Examiner North Central Association, 1960-; on the consulting board for college education, American Lutheran Chapter, 1964-; on the advising committee of higher education for Midwest Program Airborne TV Instruction; and then in 1967 as a USAID educational adviser, Republic of Vietnam, and member of the original Wisconsin Team.<sup>307</sup>

As a team member Bangsberg worked closely with Albertson, authoring much of the original draft of the Wisconsin Team's Report: *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*. Albertson had mentioned to the gathering of Wisconsin State administrators that Bangsberg would be the perfect candidate to join in the proposed second Wisconsin Team once the first survey was completed. Unfortunately, the fatal crash in March of 1967 would cut short the

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<sup>307</sup> n.a. *Who Was Who in America with World Notables, Vol. IV. 1961-1968*, 54.

dedicated service of both Bangsberg and his team leader, James Albertson. Just as President Albertson's spirit would be everlasting for Wisconsin State-Stevens Point, so too, would that of President Bangsberg at Bemidji State. Importantly, in recent years, Bemidji State College has renewed its working-relationship with Vietnam, with on-going professional exchanges and renewed assistance in higher education.

### **Ball State College**

In part, as a matter of historical circumstance and a simple twist of fate, the original WSU-SP Survey Team had both a distinct Wisconsin State and a Ball State University flavor. Robert R. LaFollette, James H. Albertson, and Howard G. Johnshoy had all served as part of the Ball State faculty and administration. In terms of research, this connection between Ball State, Wisconsin State-Stevens Point, and the USAID contract team, presented this author with a supplemental body of archival documents and biographical information, courtesy of the Ball State Archives.

In March of 1967, in Vietnam, Dr. Robert Russell LaFollette was 72 years of age, having ended his 38 year tenure as head of the Ball State social science department in June of 1961. LaFollette had been in Vietnam for more than two years when he joined his former Ball State colleagues for the Wisconsin Team survey of higher education in Vietnam. My research found that all three had shaped their interest in foreign educational assistance while at Ball State.

In March of 1967, Dr. Howard G. Johnshoy was 48 years of age, having served as Ball State President John R. Emens' first administrative assistant in 1951-52, and then was dean of Student Affairs at Ball State for the next seven years. In 1959, Johnshoy had moved to an administrative post at the University of South Florida, and then returned to his native Minnesota where he was working as dean of academic affairs at Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, and a position which coincided with his consultant work at the time of his death. Johnshoy had earned his B.A. degree at Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota; and a M.A. and Ed.D. from Columbia University. He had worked as a high school principal in Mohall, North

Dakota; and then as dean at Monmouth Junior College at Long Branch, New Jersey, prior to coming to Ball State. Research points to the similarity in their Ball State assignments and tenures as features which led to Albertson's recruitment of Johnshoy for the Wisconsin Team. Albertson, as Johnshoy had done earlier, had worked as President Emens' executive assistant at Ball State from 1957 to 1962.

As noted, on Good Friday 23 March 1967, the chartered twin-engine Air America flight carrying the Wisconsin Team went down in a turbulent rain storm. James H. Albertson was 41 years of age, had been president of WSU-SP since 1962. Albertson and the first Wisconsin Team were in the latter stages of their second survey tour of Vietnam; their preliminary report was almost finished, while they hoped to have their final report ready to publish by June of 1967.

With only a few days remaining in their three-month study tour the entire Wisconsin Team, along with their pilot, had been killed. A dedication date for Ball State's newly built dormitory complex, the LaFollette Residence Halls, had been awaiting word from Saigon as to word when Robert R. LaFollette would be able to return to the United States. The course of events dictated a different flavor to the opening ceremony of the LaFollette Residential Complex. The eight undergraduate units housed 1,744 students, and a 10-story graduate unit, housed 194 students. At this time in history growth in higher education was the norm in the United States. Ball State and Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point were both undergoing unprecedented growth. The symbolic words of Lester E. Hewitt captured the spirit of LaFollette and the other Ball State educators who had come together under the Wisconsin Team banner for illimitable education in Vietnam and at Ball State and across the domain of higher education:

We are, of course, saddened that he will not again stroll across the campus of this University to whose growth he contributed so much during the forty years he served here. And each of us, in special ways, are saddened by the loss of his companionship. But this is more appropriately an occasion of Thanksgiving—an opportunity to recall in how many ways the lives of each of us who knew him have been enriched by that acquaintance. And as we contemplate the thousands of young men and women who will call LaFollette Hall their temporary home in the years to come, it is perhaps not

unreasonable to hope that they, too, will find their lives enriched by the spirit of devoted duty his life has exemplified.<sup>308</sup>

In 1968, as a highlight of Ball State's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year the three Ball State educators, LaFollette, Albertson, and Johnshoy, were memorialized as a group with the creation of a new Alumni Association memorial Travel-Study Abroad Fund, a program for Ball State students desiring to spend a year studying outside of the United States.<sup>309</sup> Of note, one of the new undergraduate residence halls was named for another Ball State notable, Gola H. Clevenger. Dr. J. C. Clevenger, Dean of Students, Washington State University, was a consulting member of the follow-up Wisconsin Team in Vietnam. As to whether there is a relation between the two is an interesting research question, which to date remains unanswered.

Just as Ball State had established a living memorial for Robert R. LaFollette and the other Ball State educators, WSU-SP/UWSP did so for James H. Albertson. In 1967, President Dreyfus inaugurated the Albertson Medallion. This award annually honors those graduating students who have exemplified Albertson's outstanding persona as a leader, a scholar, and as a citizen on campus and in his/her community. In 1970, the University opened the new James H. Albertson Learning Resource Center. The Albertson Learning Resources Center was/is central to the educational mission of its campus, opening with an affirmed philosophy of providing all forms of educational media, print and non-print alike, freely accessible to all, a philosophy that Albertson himself had lived by. The building housed the University Library, a federal government publications depository, other special collections, a natural history museum, a tutoring laboratory, a television studio, and other special service areas. In the 1980's, the Albertson Learning Resources Center was the site of a major \$8.3 million expansion project, with the construction of two side wing additions and a new sixth floor over the entire building. The building addition was completed for the opening of the academic year in 1986. In 1986-87, the James H. Albertson

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<sup>308</sup> LaFollette Papers, Lester E. Hewitt, "Memorial Address for Dr. Robert R. LaFollette," (April 7, 1967).

<sup>309</sup> LaFollette Papers, *News Bureau*, "Alumni Association announce memorial travel-study abroad program," Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, (February 5, 1968).

Learning Resource Center became the technological heartbeat of the campus as the Information/Technology Systems Network was established the building's basement.<sup>310</sup>

### **Growth of the Wisconsin-Stevens Point Mission in Vietnamese Higher Education**

In the months that followed the loss of President Albertson, the local WSU-SP search and screen committee suggested that the Board of Regents appoint Gordon Haferbecker permanent president of WSU-SP. The Regents moved externally, however, appointing UW-Madison Professor of Communication Lee Sherman Dreyfus as the ninth president of WSU-SP on 2 October 1967.

In Vietnam, the "Preliminary Report: Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam" had been submitted for review on 14 March 1967. At WSU-SP, Dean Burdette Eagon had just accepted the leadership role for a second Wisconsin/USAID survey team, the National Study Team. Eagon arrived in Vietnam in mid-April of 1967, leading a three-man team of consultants that had a distinct linkage to the original team. Joining Eagon, were Dr. T.C. Clark, education adviser for the USAID, and Dr. Russell Davis, assistant director of the Harvard University Center for Studies in Education and Development. The second Wisconsin Team worked quickly to complete the Albertson team survey. Once completed, the Final Report *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam* and its three appendices amounted to more than 400 pages. The report was published in both English and Vietnamese.

The initial survey work done by the Wisconsin Team was well received, and the members got along well with their Vietnamese counterparts and USAID officials. Eagon reported that: "The South Vietnamese have great potential. They will need a great deal of government assistance—and much patience—in working out their problems in the years ahead."<sup>311</sup> As the fresh Team worked putting the finishing touches on the final report new negotiations took place between WSU-SP and the USAID for an extension of the Wisconsin

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<sup>310</sup> Paul, 116, 118, 136-137.

<sup>311</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), "Dean Eagon reports on Vietnam, second study to begin in June," *The Pointer*, (May 11, 1967).

contract. The initial contract and report set the pattern for all future advisory relations under the Wisconsin Contract. The USAID and Republic of Vietnam continued to formulate a series of umbrella clauses that would carry over Wisconsin-Stevens Point-led assistance projects in higher education through mid-1974.

**The Report: *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam***

As noted, one study proved to be a foundation on which other surveys were built; that was *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, the Wisconsin Team's first report compiled by the seven member group of university administrators and faculty led by WSU-SP President James Albertson. As he formed the survey team Albertson depended primarily on discussions of WSU-SP administrators and consultations with USAID officials. Members of the first survey team, joined in Vietnam by Robert R. LaFollette, USAID Higher Education Advisor, Saigon Office, quickly became known as the Wisconsin Team as they operated under the auspices of the Wisconsin contract in higher education scribed by the USAID and WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.

As circumstance dictated, by mid-April, 1967, the second Wisconsin Team headed by Burdette W. Eagon, Dean of the WSU-SP School of Education was dispatched to Vietnam embarking on the task of completing the survey report on higher education. As noted, Eagon had been preparing to go to Vietnam, having agreed to lead the National Education Study Team, which had been scheduled to begin in June. He now led both teams, completing comprehensive reviews throughout the late spring and upcoming summer. The National Education Study Team had been formed by WSU-SP upon the request of Vietnamese Ministry of Education (MOE), to make recommendations for the reorganization of Elementary, Secondary, Vocational, Technical, and Adult Education. Burdette Eagon assumed a dual leadership capacity. He continued to serve as the chief-of-party for the duration of the Wisconsin Team contract, sharing the title at times with WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus.



CHATting WITH Dean Eagon before he left for Vietnam were (left) John Vickerstaff, WSU Foundation, and (right) Orland Radke, Extended Services.

## Dr. Eagon Leaves For Vietnam To Finish Education Report

Overall, at WSU-SP the two key figures who worked in nearly all facets of the WSU-SP/USAID/ RVN contract in higher education were Burdette Eagon and William Vickerstaff. Burdette W. Eagon was Dean of Educational Services and Innovative Programs, and William Vickerstaff, was administrative assistant to the WSU-SP president and executive secretary of the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. (the contracting agency for the USAID grant.) Eagon would be point man for the projects, both “in-country” (in Vietnam) and across the United States, while Vickerstaff coordinated all financial matters and daily functions, by maintaining campus communications with those in Vietnam and managing formal correspondence with other American universities and officials in Washington, D.C. A larger group of WSU-SP/UWSP

educators were involved in the administration discussions of the WSU-SP/USAID/RVN contract. Among these were: Gordon M. Haferbecker, WSU-SP Dean of Instruction and Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs; Paul Yambert, Dean of Applied Arts; and Vice President for Business Affairs, Leon Bell, Jr. Haferbecker also served as acting president when presidents Albertson or Dreyfus were “in-country,” and acted as interim president during the transitional period between presidential tenures. Paul Yambert served as acting vice president for academic affairs in correlation to the shifts by Haferbecker. Numerous other campus faculty and administrators played key roles in the operations of the University contract in higher education; several traveled to Vietnam to develop special reports, while many participated in the on-campus seminars and various field observation tours coordinated under the contract umbrella. In addition, various other university specialists from across the states came under the auspices of the Wisconsin Team, working directly through the Wisconsin Contract held by WSU-SP/UWSP.

With the mission of completing the Albertson report at hand WSU-SP administrators and USAID officials moved quickly to assist Eagon in the recruitment of the National Survey Team members. For purposes of continuity many of the new consultants had a close tie to original team members: T.C. Clark, USAID Higher Education Officer, Washington, D.C., (had hands-on experience); Russell G. Davis, Assistant Director of Harvard Center for Studies in Education and Development, (Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard, had been on the first team); J.C. Clevenger, Dean of Students, Washington State University, already in Vietnam; Earl Seyler, Associate Dean of Admissions and Records, University of Illinois, (Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Program, University of Illinois, Chicago had been on the first team); and Dr. Warren A. Wilson, Higher Education Adviser, USAID/Education, Saigon, on leave from Colorado State University, (replacing Robert R. LaFollette, USAID/Education, Saigon.) It is

interesting research point that Wilson and Albertson had a Colorado State connection, with Albertson an alumnus and having worked there as an administrator from 1950-1957.<sup>312</sup>

The diversity and sheer work ethic of the original Wisconsin Team provided a model for all future Wisconsin Team efforts, as they entered on a course determined by new conditions and extensions under the WSU-SP/USAID contractual umbrella. The original mission assignment moved from being a general-survey, to an action-plan, to a brick-laying operation, as new teams reviewed the cloudy horizon of Vietnamese higher education. Each team member was a specialist who contributed through the application of their own particular educational expertise in institutional growth. Research into Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point/USAID/RVN documents reveals a multitude of reports completed by these team members and their associates. Moreover, biographical research reveals the depth-of-service exhibited by USAID educators in Vietnam as their tenure in Foreign Service evolved with the agency's international development. In the 1960's and early 1970's, Vietnam and Stevens Point, became a crossroads for educators from three generations, all working together on a common mission. The USAID and American University educators coming to Vietnam and Stevens Point brought with them educational visions honed by their experiences at home in America, in Europe, Africa, Latin America, and ultimately—Southeast Asia.

Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. operated in a dual role, which USAID had co-designed on mission to assist higher education in the RVN. As its contract expanded, WSU-SP served as the host and coordinator for Vietnamese study-observation tours and continued to lead a series of teams of special consultants in Vietnam. Numerous WSU-SP (UWSP)/USAID additional studies were developed in relation to the administrative and overall institutional structure of Vietnamese of higher education. All the while, the report, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, would serve as a prospectus for all succeeding reports and tours.

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<sup>312</sup> Series 17 Box 17 Folder 1, Albertson Survey Team-Background, (1967 & Undated).

The major part of the initial report dealt with administrative problems in Vietnamese higher education. Specifically, the Wisconsin Team had called for the establishment of a Governing Board of Higher Education for South Vietnam. Among its functions the Board was to appoint rectors of the universities and set up an advisory council with the duties of advising the rectors on problems related to local needs. The Board was to have the right to discuss formation of the educational budget and plan. The survey team also recommended the construction of planned centralized campuses to facilitate coordination and effectiveness of university-wide programs. Further, the team proposed centralization of language study and translation facilities to enable simultaneous translation to help students and foreign teachers communicate more easily. In the area of methods and programs the team recommended that a more flexible academic program was needed which would allow for a variety of teaching methods, the improvement of faculty working conditions, and student services. Finally, the team suggested the incorporation of programs of agriculture, engineering and administration into the university system, and the combination of the Faculties of Letters, Science, and Law into a common program of professional studies.<sup>313</sup>

These recommendations marked the beginning of a seven-year partnership between WSU-SP (UWSP)/USAID and Vietnamese higher education, as the Wisconsin Team served as coordinator of follow-up field reports and the U.S. host for Vietnamese study-observation tours and seminars. A chronological review of this partnership reveals some 38 major reports, tours and seminars, all coordinated by WSU-SP/UWSP. The initial report served as a guideline for additional reports and opened the way for umbrella contracts between WSU-SP/UWSP, the USAID and the RVN. The partnership widened as reforms occurred in South Vietnam. From the onset, the Wisconsin Higher Education Survey Team explained its task as follows:

The United States of America, at the request of the Republic of Vietnam, agreed to sponsor a study of public universities in Vietnam and to include in its study a survey of the present status of higher education, a determination of the needs to be met through the

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<sup>313</sup> Series 17 Box 9 Folder 2, Complete Report Public University Republic of Vietnam, (1967).

program of higher education, a definition of a development program to meet those needs, a definition of an organizational structure, suggestions for financing the programs recommended, identification of steps to be taken, and a projection for a periodic review of progress...

The success of public higher education anywhere in the world depends on the ability of institutions to serve the needs of the nation and, at the same time, to meet the needs of individual citizens. In functional terms, the university needs to transmit usable knowledge to its citizens as it provides continuing critique of the society and its standards...

Vietnam is a developing country in one of the important under-developed areas of the world, Southeast Asia. The people of Vietnam must be served by programs that free them from disease, ignorance, archaism, anarchy and tyranny. Education and training programs are the major means of developing the human resources, the leadership, and the expertise needed to overcome such problems. Education is the highest priority in the building of a healthy national economy. Thus the training programs of higher educational institutions must be related directly to the economic development of the country.<sup>314</sup>

The Wisconsin Team's survey found that higher education had an ambiguous status, due to an absence of strong leadership and lack of effective coordination at the central governmental level. The team noted the following characteristics in its report, *Public Universities in the Republic of Vietnam*, which, when paraphrased, are indicative of the fledgling republic's problems and the weaknesses in Vietnamese higher education:

- 1) There was an absence of a visibly stated and systematized National Policy for higher education. The Republic had not enacted a National Universities Charter or a National Policy. Instead, the universities operated under modified statutes, inherited from the University of Hanoi. The survey team recommended the development of a charter for higher education and the formation of Governing Board. The Governing Board was to set the goals of higher education, as well as recommend and implement new programs and institutions.
- 2) There was ambiguity in the term "university autonomy." Article 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam stated that: "university education is autonomous," but failed to define the concept. The "public" universities in the Republic of Vietnam were owned and funded by

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<sup>314</sup> Higher Education Survey Team, *Public Universities in the Republic of Vietnam*, (Stevens Point: WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., 1967), 1-3.

the State, and subject to the directives of the central government. The ambiguity of the principles of autonomy contributed to radical protest by some students and faculty. The survey team proposed that the legislature of the country should have the ultimate authority for public education, through its budgetary approval, while at the same time recognizing that academic freedom and internal management not be subjected to outside domination.

- 3) There was a distinct lack of institutional unity. For example, the University of Saigon, with two-thirds of the republic's higher educational enrollment, operated eight independent faculties. The survey team recommended a reduction in the duplication of some programs and the introduction of new programs in agriculture, engineering and administration—so as to meet the needs for specialization. The team suggested the centralization of faculty and material resources.
- 4) Curricula were narrow in scope and theoretical in nature. It was not practical, as each faculty concentrated on its professional content to the exclusion of other areas and needs. The survey team recommended the development of a core program at each institution, which emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of higher education. The team proposed that: special Curriculum Committees be established at each university, that the institutions inaugurate semester and credit systems in place of their traditional block and certificate systems, and allow transfer of credit between schools.
- 5) Instructional methods in Vietnamese higher education were highly structured, almost completely relying on the transmission of knowledge via lecture, stressing memorization for rigorously graded examinations. In some institutions lectures had become so standardized that students purchased copies of lectures from professors or the universities, and were not required to attend class. The survey team recommended a variety of improvements for instruction through: the development of libraries, the translation of materials and French/English textbooks into Vietnamese, the improvement in language instruction programs, and a greater emphasis on laboratory programs. The team suggested that

instituting a continuous system of evaluation would alter the traditional year-end examination, which had been the exclusive means of evaluation.

- 6) Higher education allowed multiple registrations. Students often registered in two or more faculties and more than one university. Multiple registrations only added to the problem excessive enrollment in some faculties. The survey team saw this problem as an indication of a waste of human and material resources, and recommended more coordination. The survey team found there was no provision for central registration, and the compiled data relative to enrollment was often erroneous. Duplicate enrollments were not identified, as student records were difficult to locate and kept separately by each faculty. The team found that all Faculties except Medicine, Dentistry, and Pedagogy had graduated less than 5 percent of their total enrollment.
- 7) The institutions generally had inadequate classroom, laboratory, and library facilities.
- 8) Higher education in the Republic of Vietnam had too few university professors. Many professors taught in several universities. "Suitcase professors" shifted from one institution (most likely Saigon) to another, often teaching an entire course in a brief visit to Hue or Can Tho. Vietnamese professors' salaries were inadequate, so they supplemented their income by teaching at other universities and selling their lecture notes. This system reinforced the retention of low salaries, for had the universities not been able to obtain part-time instructors they would have been required to bid for the services of full-time professors. As testimony of the extreme peculiarity of this system, full-time professors were required to teach only three hours per week. Professors were then permitted to teach overtime at their home institution, for which they would be paid on an hourly basis. Most South Vietnamese professors taught 30 or more hours each week, as they struggled to earn a living. Under these conditions, professors were unable to find time for vital research, further degrading higher education in

general.<sup>315</sup>

When President Albertson returned from the initial higher education exploratory trip to the Republic of Vietnam, he carried with him a second proposal from the USAID. Albertson shared his initial reflections of his USAID team's first visit to Vietnam and their tour of five Vietnamese universities in his oral narrative as he led a general administrative discussion of the second USAID proposal, which proposed that WSU-SP examine elementary and secondary education in the Republic of Vietnam. Albertson trusted that the WSU-SP Foundation would again function as the contracting agent and Dean Burdette Eagon serve as Chief of Party for the new project. The Republic of Vietnam's Prime Minister General Nguyen CIO Ky and Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho had requested the second study.

President Albertson called the meeting of WSU-SP administrators at his home in Park Ridge. He tape recorded the heart of the group's discussion of the new contract proposal, which I have transcribed as part of my thesis work. He is the only person specifically identified on an archival tape, while another member of the group is referred to as "Bud," which I clearly have verified to be Dean of Educational Services and Innovative Programs Burdette W. Eagon. My additional research identified WSU-SP Dean of Instruction Gordon M. Haferbecker, WSU-SP Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. Other key participants in the Albertson discussion group were identified through consultation with Dr. Eagon, as Dean Paul Yambert, acting vice president for academic affairs; William Vickerstaff, executive secretary for the WSU-SP Foundation, the contracting agency for the USAID grant; and Vice President for Business Affairs, Leon Bell, Jr., who had a distinct military background. The meeting occurred just weeks before what would be President Albertson's final departure for Vietnam. As the leader of the original USAID Wisconsin Team, Albertson led the conversation, and the true depth of the University's commitment to the growing tasks-at-hand becomes apparent. The ideas and energy

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<sup>315</sup> Ibid. Higher Education Survey designated these characteristics of Vietnamese universities.

that flow from the group is genuine. The Wisconsin State-Stevens Point group saw higher education in Vietnam as a mission for which they were a good match. Albertson began the discussion with a useful background summary of his recent contact with USAID and Vietnamese officials:

At this point there is some difference between the USAID administrators and myself, it is primarily a dispute between the educational office of AID and me on this. Let me get this out first: He [Winer] wants a blueprint for education in Vietnam, including elementary, secondary, [and vocational technical and adult education.] My position has been, if they [the USAID] want a blueprint it has to be a Vietnamese blueprint. If they [the Vietnamese] want some help from America we could come in and help provide some guidelines, some areas within which they then could divide and we could work with the Vietnamese one-on-one. I talked with the minister of the Vietnamese Education Ministry Education just the night before last and he got the word blueprint from the head of AID Education, and he is perfectly willing to talk about guidelines. They [USAID] are interested in having a contingent of American educators come over and spend about three months to make some kind of a survey and then to come up with some definite recommendations. These would be delivered to the Republic of Vietnam Minister of Education and to the Republic of Vietnam Prime Minister; from these they would then write an educational message that would go to the First Congress. Now the Constituent Assembly is meeting currently, this is the group that is drafting the Vietnamese People's Constitution. They had thought that the Constituent Assembly would be through in about six weeks, but chances are it will not. Had it been through then they thought that by August 1 or September 1 they would have the First Congress meet. As soon as the Constituent Assembly completes its work then this goes to a vote of the people for ratification of the Constitution. If the Constitution is ratified then they set up an election for a new congress and the First Congress convenes. So the chances are it will be October-November, it may even be December before this all fits into place. They mainly want to have something together that they then can take and work on. The present Minister [of Education, Nguyen Van Tho] is a dentist, he is Northwestern and Yale educated, Roman Catholic, and part of the power of structure of Vietnam. He was the deputy prime minister under Diem. He was asked by the first general to succeed Diem to be the Vietnamese ambassador to the United States three times. He refused on the basis on that what the general wanted was this man's involvement, which would have insured his stay in power. For reasons that I do not know he choose not to support the general. But, he is a powerful figure, but more importantly he seems to be a pretty well balanced man and is willing to stay in office through the First Congress. They have had five ministers of education in the last two years. So stability of government is a real problem and it will be a problem in this project if we decide to do it.

What it means is getting a team together—and we could decide whether the five or six or four—of educators, people who have a breath experience, who are willing to bend with wind—this is a phrase you see over and over there—who want to work with Vietnamese counterparts and who have some idea of the basic tenants of an educational system, whether it is in Afghanistan or Vietnam or the United States. Then who are willing to take leadership and work these into some guidelines? The country's needs, the educational system needs reorganization; there is no question about that. Whether the

country will accept the change and accept the report and put it into operation, it is going to depend upon the team and the extent in which they can work with Vietnamese educators and make it their report, and then make it practical enough for Vietnam that it is workable. You get all kinds of requests: Nguyen Cao Ky, the Prime Minister wants an “American” university, lock-stock-and-barrel in Vietnam, he also wants an American secretary school—and unfortunately they don’t have either one, yet. But, these are prestige symbols right now and the way you improve it is to get some other type of recommendations put forward. Again, fortunately there enough others interested in working on this, modifying what they presently have. The present educational system is five years of what we call elementary, four years of what would be comparable to junior high and three years of what we call high school, and then limited higher education. Yet, as I mentioned before two-thirds of the young people in secondary schools are in private secondary schools and these are the better institutions. Much better, primarily French, although there are some Buddhist private secondary schools and some Roman Catholic non-French. But, most of them are French and most of them are in the Saigon area. The request was originally that this would be an immediate extension of our present work and that it be first grade through higher education. Yet, I think, they are willing to except that whatever our present team comes up with, would be the guidelines for higher education, and whatever somebody else did ought to fit in with that, although they are not part of the same ball-of-wax, as far as one report. Then the next request, and this again was pushed real hard by Winer [of the USAID] for this to be handled by us on our side, was there would be physical continuity between the two. Ideally, Winer wanted our team to do this other project too, he wanted to hire someone from our team to do it, but I said we can’t do it—the team wasn’t selected with that in mind, we don’t have the time; it is going to detract if we even get into, detract from the higher education role. I think he is willing to accept this [a separate project], and I know Donald MacDonald the head of USAID in Vietnam, and I think the ambassador, Ambassador Lodge, is sympathetic with the fact that you can’t take all in under one survey, and also Hammond is certainly in favor of that. But, there would be some advantage in having some continuity. Well, this we could provide by having briefings here and if we needed to we could bring Harry Bangsberg or somebody else in to assist in that continuity. It would mean then, probably, the team going over in June, early June, and staying at least two-and-one-half months, it ought to be three months—June, July, and August—and completing the survey and report and then getting it done [presented] and then come back. If it were required, and if it were desirable, and if it were necessary, I could go over for about a week late in the period, to be there for the wrap-up and to see what kind of things could be helpful. But, this is real iffy.

Well that’s real sketchy, but the Vietnamese do favor our involvement. With everything I have gotten from them and from the American side it is a golden opportunity and a challenge. It is almost an impossible task to do anything at all with the cultural and other variables. You can’t read the language—you drive along the streets of Saigon you see these student banners, and the students right now are about ready to explode over the national language, and then you can’t read it, you can’t read what people are trying to say. This is something you have to live with. But, on the one hand you know that somebody has to do this job. Somebody has to take this task. On the other hand, you know all the reasons why you shouldn’t do it or shouldn’t be concerned with it. So that is the dilemma. So you find yourself with a horse and no whip...

A strong wave of nationalism is taking place...there is nothing wrong with nationalism...Their problem being, the Vietnamese, they threw the Chinese out, then they spent a hundred years trying to establish a viable Vietnamese government and because it

was unstable the French moved in. Then they spent from 1871 to 1939 under French domination...then the Japanese moved in...Then the Communists moved in. They have been at war since 1941, the Vietnamese people, they have been trying to throw out first one group then another, and it may be that they will try to throw out the Americans. It may not. All of the opposition may not be from the VC [Viet Cong.] So I am going a long way around to say in education, they like their music, they like their culture, they like their history. The Vietnamese are not xenophobic; they don't have the fear of the foreigner. They will take a good idea if it is Japanese, they will take a good idea if it is German, they will take a good idea if it is American and they will make it Vietnamese. They don't apologize, they will bring it into their own culture, and they have an inordinate sense of value that have attached to education, which is also wonderful.

They will go almost too any extreme...to achieve an education for their children.<sup>316</sup>

The group discussion flowed with an enlivened exchange of ideas and possibilities.

Albertson and the entire group recognized that a historical trap awaited any team of consultants accepting the USAID proposal, noting the importance of working one-on-one with Vietnamese. Albertson and the others recognized a weakness in preceding USAID groups, as there had been three groups assigned to study the “manpower” needs of the struggling republic, yet to date no report had been delivered. The group emphasized that they would do their best to avoid repeating history, recognizing the failings of the French system and possibilities that while American advisers were following different ideals they were at times heading in similar directions and could end up with the same disastrous results. It was here that the Wisconsin educators decided to do their best to correct the path of history by accentuating the need for a “Vietnamese blueprint” when planning educational reform. They recognized that any mission success would not come by way of building on the Franco-Vietnamese educational system and its philosophy, or strictly from any USAID charged American blueprint.<sup>317</sup>

Albertson declared, “This is the trap on this...repeating history within four years, of one hundred years. In 1871 the French went into their blueprint and they imposed French education. Now here, ninety-six years later, the danger is that America is going to do this. You know—‘we have the answers.’ It can't be that way; it can't be that way in higher education.” Vickerstaff and

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<sup>316</sup> Series 17 Tape 9 #56, Albertson on Vietnam, (1967), transcribed by author, (2001).

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

Haferbecker tendered if the USAID and RVN were looking for a “typical blueprint of American schools, that is [was] one thing”...if they...“are really looking for people who can give them their type of education for their particular culture, then that is another kind of person.” Albertson concurred, “I don’t want to be party to the first. I would recommend that if we can, we try to do the second.” The “golden opportunity” was there, and it was an invitation for educational action. All agreed that there was little doubt that the new project was going to be initiated by some group from the United States. For those from Wisconsin it was just a question of—were they the ones ready to do it? As far as they were concerned the answer was, a resounding yes!<sup>318</sup>

Albertson again showed he was on the cutting-edge when he shared some early warning signs that he had brought before USAID officials concerning their earlier contracts:

...with Southern Illinois University and with Ohio University...we [American universities under USAID contracts] are training teachers, printing textbooks, we are turning out millions of textbooks. But, neither of these things done by the U.S. government has really related to what they are trying to teach, to curriculum. We are grinding out textbooks and training teachers, and yet I rose what I thought was a very elemental question: ‘How do these things relate to what is being taught?’ The response I got was: ‘You know that is a good question and it has never been raised here before.’ It was said in a way that was very genuine: ‘Boy that is really deep!’<sup>319</sup>

Vickerstaff noted that from his classified communiqués with Scot Hammond he knew that the USAID was anxious for WSU-SP to expand its efforts, having found Team ideas to be insightfully refreshing. Albertson concurred, but noted the most meaningful endorsement came directly from the Vietnamese who had initiated the second request based upon the first three weeks of work done by the Wisconsin Team. Albertson went on to say that the sheer impossibilities of the task and one’s common “intellectual instincts” would caution against touching “this with a ten-foot pole.” Yet, he had adopted what he found to be an applicable phrase—“The future is tomorrow, in Vietnam”—as the country that was endeavoring to “create a peaceful government” based on public institutions while being “engaged in a full-scale war.”<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> Series 17 Tape 9 #56, Albertson on Vietnam.

<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

Albertson did warn that any mission in such an environment was prone to moral problems, and he recognized it was vital to build both face-to-face and interpersonal relationships with the Vietnamese while respecting native protocol and customs. The group conversation ventured that WSU-SP students might be an added asset and perfect match for a summertime cooperative programs at the University of Can Tho, doing “Peace Corps” type work with its school of forestry or assisting with dormitory construction projects. The WSU-SP administrators remarked how this could parallel local efforts that had proved successful, such as working with Native Americans and tree planting projects. All seemed to agree that Burdette Eagon would be perfect as chief-of-party for the next Wisconsin Team, Eagon was quick to respond by joking that perhaps Dean Yambert wanted to come along or had some suggestions. The group discussed various others who would make good team members. Eagon’s personal intuition stepped to the forefront as he cautioned the group to do more than just find people with certain kinds of academic backgrounds only for their backgrounds’ sake. They had better know someone fairly well before entering into the mission as a team.<sup>321</sup>

Albertson’s own experience and values again spoke volumes:

Let me be very open. The whole team had trouble as they missed their wives...There are some personal aspects that anyone considering this ought to weigh...Being off and away from one’s family whether it is a month or three months is something that is a sacrifice. I think in all fairness I keep thinking I know the extent to which my family has to sacrifice, and yet probably I don’t really know. My wife probably has to accept some things that may not be fair to impose. Then on the other hand, anyone would be dishonest who didn’t miss their family and who didn’t feel loneliness at times; that is something that comes. I think you can bring your family into it so that the way they experience this is more than vicariously.<sup>322</sup>

President Albertson was truly a leader who held strong family and humane values, and his multiculturalism was revealed again as he closed the meeting with a discussion of ways to strengthen ties with other areas of the world, which could be visited while traveling to and from Vietnam. Albertson looked to establish permanent relationships with the Vietnamese at Can Tho,

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

Hue, and Dalat, and build other programs in Manila, at the Philippine National College. In a real sense, the project marked a beginning of the WSU-SP and UWSP International Programs, which President Dreyfus would institute during his follow-up tenure. A pattern was set as educators from WSU-SP stopped at numerous other international locations as they were going to and coming from Vietnam, establishing contacts for future and then ongoing study aboard programs.

***National Education Study, Education Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization—Elementary—Secondary—Vocational—Technical—Adult***

As noted, in advance of his return to Stevens Point from his initial higher education exploratory trip to the Republic of Vietnam, President Albertson had been presented with this second proposal from the USAID asking that WSU-SP form an additional survey team. In January of 1967, Prime Minister General Nguyen Cao Ky and Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho had recognized that their new nation was facing an emergency situation on all fronts, including education. With this in mind, they requested that the USAID assist in a comprehensive organizational study of Vietnamese Elementary, Secondary, Vocational-Technical and Adult Educational systems and curriculum. The USAID responded by proposing to amend its contract with Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point to include a second survey, a National Study Plan for the reorganization of these areas of Vietnamese education. In February of 1967, Albertson had held the informal meeting of WSU-SP administrators in his Park Ridge home where this proposal was discussed. During the discussion the WSU-SP president had shared his reflections of his first USAID sponsored survey visit to Vietnam and the Wisconsin Team's tour of five Vietnamese universities. The WSU-SP administrative group had kept in close contact with their president and gone over briefing materials prior to this meeting. Albertson suggested, and the panel quickly agreed, that the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. would again function as the USAID contracting agent and that Dean Burdette Eagon would serve as Chief of Party for the new project. The meeting concluded with a general agreement that WSU-SP would again serve as the contractor. A motion was approved to select a group of six educators to travel to Saigon in June

of 1967 to work with Vietnamese Ministry counterparts on the task of formulating proposals for national educational reorganization.<sup>323</sup> The task involved an examination of the entire educational system's administrative organization and its relationship to the GVN. The Team was to work with the Vietnamese in order to: "determine the goals and purposes of the education program, curriculum and methods of instruction."<sup>324</sup>

Thus initiated, the WSU-SP administrators designated that the contract team studying Elementary, Secondary, Vocational-Technical and Adult Educational programs of Vietnam would include: WSU-SP Dean Burdette W. Eagon, Chief of Party; W. Harold Anderson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools and Director of Elementary Schools, Wausau, Wisconsin; Glen C. Atkins, Assistant Dean of Teacher Education, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut; Willard J. Brandt, Director In-Service and Extension Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; John Furlong, Vice President of University Relations and Development, Wisconsin State University-Stout, Menomonie; and Fred E. Harris, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College, Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio. This team, in combination with their counterparts—the Vietnamese Committee for Curriculum Revision—came to be known as the National Education Study Team.

In Vietnam, on 28 June 1967, Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho addressed the Team charging them with the task at hand:

It is a great honor for me to meet and welcome here competent and willing American educators full of experiences, and high-ranking Vietnamese officials in education, members of the "Committee for Curriculum Revision."

...the problem of education here still has too many weaknesses that need a thorough and complete renovation so as to form well-educated people with a good personality and a professional ability which will enable them to earn a living and serve the national economy as well as the society.

Being aware of the importance of the problem, the Ministry of Education, with the cooperation of experts in education who are present here, has decided to create a "Committee for Curriculum Revision" to meet emergency needs of the actual situation of

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<sup>323</sup> Ibid.

<sup>324</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), "Name Team to Work with Eagon in Vietnam Study," *Stevens Point Daily Journal*, (May 3, 1967).

the country.

Education is something like an investment for the development of the country. We must courageously recognize that our present kind of education investment has not yielded desired results. The problem is how to set up a program of education that aims at popularizing basic knowledge... Education should develop all aspects of the human beings and prepare them to serve the society, the educational investment will then yield good results and maximize benefits to the individual as well as to the community.

Under this guideline, we will:

- re-examine the objectives and the education policy.
- re-study the different means already used to attain these objectives.
- reform the administration and organization problem in education.
- determine the relationship between the education system and the government structure.
- study the procedure and planning to:
  - make elementary education collective, universal.
  - improve program studies and methods of teaching in secondary schools.
  - develop technical and vocational education as well as agricultural, forestry, and animal husbandry, aiming to revive the national economy.

Since the economic, political, social, and cultural situations are not similar in all countries, every nation possesses its own educational philosophy. The reform of the education system in Vietnam will not be efficient if it is a mere imitation of foreign education systems. It must be, on the contrary, a profound and scientific study basing on the particular conditions of the Vietnamese society. So, this improvement will require tremendous efforts, but I firmly believe that, with your broad knowledge, your precious experiences, and your willingness, you will carry out the setting up of a new fundamental basis for the education here.<sup>325</sup>

So charged, the National Education Study Team journeyed to each region of South Vietnam, holding discussions on educational problems and potential solutions at regional and local school levels with provincial chiefs, inspectors, principals, teachers, parents, students, technical and normal school officials, university officials, managerial staff and other workers, and lay people. The National Study Team visited representative educational facilities while evaluating demographic data, records and works of the Vietnamese National Council of Education. The Wisconsin-led Team developed a preliminary report and an in-depth 322 page final report, the *National Education Study, Education Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization-Elementary-Secondary-Vocational-Technical-Adult Education*. The report was divided into three

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<sup>325</sup> Series 17 Box 10 Folder 2, *National Education Study, Education Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization*, (Stevens Point: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc. 1967), 3-4.

parts and six appendixes: Part I described the study's procedures and setting; Part II was divided into designated areas of elementary and community education and secondary, and vocational-technical and adult education, offering in each area a statement of problems, dialogue, recommendations and possible implementations at three levels of development; Part III conveyed recommendations that had commonality for all of the areas studied set into corresponding priorities and levels of progress. The Wisconsin Team, as part of the National Study Team, operated on a theme that the goals of a developing nation must be reflected in its educational programs. The basic position of the report was that the problems related to mass education were:

...largely inter-related parts of a whole and must be treated as such. This creates a much different approach to problem solving than one dealing with only a single problem such as a shortage of teachers...Even as all problems have a dynamic relationship that may result in a weak situation becoming weaker, strong points or assets have the same relationship and tend to reinforce one another...The task is to discover the best in the current situation and make it into the average of tomorrow's situation—to create positive patterns of reinforcement for change.<sup>326</sup>

Specifically, the Wisconsin-led Team recommended that the concept of technical proficiency be added to all of the national goals first enunciated by Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho. As the Team shifted its focus to secondary education it noted that certain implied goals accompanied the Ministry of Education's stated goals of citizenship, individual economic competence, and leadership training. Central among these implied goals was winning the war, while expanding the national workforce and economy, and increasing the operational efficiency of government, industry, and education. Unlike the typical American or Western approach to war, the Vietnamese did not view the winning of war as necessitating a total mobilization of resources. With war and conflict having occupied much of their long history, the Vietnamese had grown accustomed to a certain measure of continuing conflict as a way of life, and to a certain degree business was expected to operate routinely. However, quite insightfully, the Wisconsin Team in their National Study report noted:

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<sup>326</sup> Ibid., 16.

If the Vietnamese government does not devote itself to the role of making sure that the people at all levels believe that their thoughts are considered worthy, it is doubtful that, in the long run, the government can hold the allegiance of those citizens except by force of arms.<sup>327</sup>

The principles of professional development remained the main focus of the National Study Team. Operating within a limited timeframe, they recognized that actual implementation and administrative reorganization would require more specialized studies and extensive expertise. The Team noted that their study was undertaken at a crucial point of history for Vietnam and its people. As the Vietnamese looked to modify cultural, social, and political institutions they were a people who could draw on a long cultural heritage of resourcefulness and durability. New goals of mass education were set in general terms of literacy, health, moral values, scientific and economic values, national and international values, and community and home values. The goals were linked to constitutional freedoms to promulgate the creation of an informed people that would use and value knowledge, and build civic responsibility. No effort was to be spared in adjusting curriculum, preparing instructional materials, training teachers and administrators, expanding facilities, and developing programs related to national values. The National Study Team noted that numerous national sources would need to be employed for the enrichment of curriculum. They recommended the development of teacher's guides, lesson plans, and instructional materials; workshop study conferences for Ministry personnel; Constitutional training for provincial chiefs and civil officers working with local adults; development of charts and other materials; visits of students and adults to governmental offices; and increasing experiences in self-government for students. Specifically, national interests in curriculum could be drawn from Vietnam's history of majority and minority groups, the unique influence of regional climate and geography, the significance of folkways, customs, folklore, and songs,

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<sup>327</sup> Ibid., 115.

economic goals and life, and new national visions in education, culture, healthcare, industry and trade.<sup>328</sup>

Appendix B of their final report outlined a tentative program for the implementation of major curriculum changes; here the Team declared that universal education meant that each child be given the opportunity to maximize individual potential while elevating their social, community, and family skills. This could only be accomplished by providing classrooms with broader levels of diverse materials, reducing class sizes, expanding facilities, and building a cooperative relationship between schools, homes, and communities—exemplifying the community school concept. The National Study Team called for further guidance from the National Education Council in the formation of curriculum committees and groups in the furtherance of instructional practices and curriculum changes. There was a distinct need for more audio-visual materials, library resources, and a better-balanced curriculum placing a greater emphasis on art, music, social studies, physical education and recreation. As noted, a three level development plan was recommended linking national interests and curriculum growth while recognizing the need for sophisticated techniques and changes in scheduling. Development at Level I was to achieve basic literacy through “word-centered” curriculum relating to other values. Level II development was directed at literacy with an emphasis in each subject on value content. Finally, Level III approached comprehensive goals requiring new institutions for professional training and demonstration activities while acting as community centers with adult services.

The 1967 Team study pointed out that in Vietnam change was dependent upon a decentralization of functions, in particular governmental functions, specifically Ministry of education functions needed to be decentralized. The Team declared: “No unit of government

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<sup>328</sup> Ibid., 281-287.

functions effectively when overburdened, and the Ministry certainly appears to be overburdened.<sup>329</sup>

The centrist position had run its course as the centralization of functions in Vietnam, educationally and otherwise, had been the imposed doctrine of the French and had continued after their exit. Local participation was badly needed if any new plan for universal education was to be successful. Governmental policies under the French colonial system were characterized by a doctrine of strict control with limited action occurring without the approval of the higher echelon. This was especially characteristic of French colonial Vietnam, where the ruling class had different objectives from their subordinate administrators and the general population. When the Republic of Vietnam formed its national government, educational responsibility and authority increasingly became concentrated in the Ministry of Education's top officials. Seemingly, officials in self-protection, focused on the processes of government, such as budgets, proposals, memos and words, and inter-ministerial rivalries, not the ends.

The National Study Team noted the difficulty of this situation as one which was:

...unfortunate that it sometimes takes power to retrieve power for such action sets the whole matter of authority and responsibility for education into a political context—and education always the loser... as seen in nation after nation, the end of over-centralization is political control—and no nation has developed a quality educational system while that system was under strong political control.<sup>330</sup>

The burdens of responsibility needed to be widely shared. In Vietnam the historical prominence of the village presented reformers a means for the decentralization of control and services. The village complex was the center of the universe for villagers, and the village constituted the basic underlying unit of government, not the Ministries. Historically, villagers did not distinguish their needs in terms of the plausible perimeters that marked power groups and ministries within government. In Vietnam, the government could only win the hearts and minds

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 52.

of its people if it reaffirmed that the basis of its power lay in its people and the foundations of governing became aligned with moral ends—good schools, good crops, good health.

Effective decentralization was linked to the problem of readiness, and readiness was to be determined by training and education. Further, even if highly trained professionals became available at the provincial level, there was little supportive machinery (infrastructure and procedural processes) in place. Yet, mass education offered the very foundation from which self-empowerment could flourish. The task at hand was immense. The second major WSU-SP USAID contract team had come to a similar conclusion as their earlier predecessors reporting on higher education had, as both teams declared that higher education needed autonomy. The Wisconsin Team, acting as part of the National Study Team, asserted that mass education, at any level, should not be used as a political pawn; education needed to be free at levels from political domination. This was not to say that education could operate independently of a system of checks and balances, just that any preoccupation with checks and balances should recognize that the Vietnamese people needed to see their government functioning in terms of real services for villages and families. The Vietnamese government was called upon to involve its people in their own improvement by carrying its programs to them.

The Team called for the revitalization of the community school concept, development of comprehensive high schools and Village Centers, which with government assistance and reorganization, could serve as vehicles for educational services interconnected to the fundamental needs of children and adults. The Team's vision saw each village as a unit of opportunity for the amalgamation of education functions with other village functions, a complete laboratory designed for the development of the skills of democratic living. Cadres of leaders-trainers were to train local indigenous leadership.

Yet, in itself, the training of these teams required the formation of a new type of institution beyond the capabilities of Vietnamese normal schools. The Team found that

Vietnamese normal schools were cast in the literacy emphasis of an outdated curriculum. USAID reports by teams from Ohio University and Southern Illinois University had pronounced current Vietnamese normal schools as excellent vehicles for upgrading professionals. However, the Wisconsin Team, as part of the National Study Team, now warned of the possible continued over-institutionalization of current normal schools. Instead, they recommended the formation a single National Center for Mass Education to serve solely as a training center for leadership positions in elementary education and provide human resources to Vietnam through preparation of administrative and policy planning positions. The proposed Center would grant the appropriate degrees only in the field of education, under a course-credit system, while operating autonomously beneath a professional board as part of the university system. Normal schools, with a modified curriculum, were to continue the training of classroom teachers. Secondary teachers were to be trained at the universities expanding faculties of pedagogy.<sup>331</sup>

Constitutionally, universal education was specifically to be applied at the elementary level. Again, in comparison to American universal educational opportunities at the secondary or higher levels, in Vietnam the additional “freedom of educational opportunity” meant freedom to compete on relatively equal terms for the more-limited opportunities to secure further education.<sup>332</sup>

Team designs recognized the desirability of forming unified elementary-secondary school districts that could provide continuity in guidance for students and better curriculum articulation and use of trained personnel. Curriculum needed to be meaningfully redesigned if it was to prove its applicability and worth by instilling students with the desire to remain in school. At the same time, to meet growing national needs in technical and professional ranks, the census needed to be updated and correlated with newly designed secondary level minimum requirements in

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<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 295-308.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 105-107.

specialized curricula, while assuring that minimum class spaces for these projections if needs were to be accurately programmed into the overall school plan.

Historically, Vietnam's cultural heritage represented an interlocking of Chinese, Vietnamese and French cultures. In China and Vietnam, the Mandarin as the educated class memorized the wisdom of previous ages that they could only emulate while ruling and directing others. The French educational system had set the organization of grade structures and school levels to be constructed with predetermined break off points where great numbers of students were disqualified from further education. The French education system had looked to maintain an educationally cultured, small ruling class, while educating most people at a relatively low level. The continued application of the French system under the differing cultural circumstances of Vietnam was particularly inappropriate as the developing country moved into its own period of industrialization and modernization. Vietnam faced a dramatic reworking of its curriculum as educators interpreted data and developments from history, sociology, economics, government, and science. Curriculum patterns needed to be restructured and realigned with new standards. The National Study Team acknowledged that even France had done away with its Secondary Entrance Exam and instituted a two-year preparatory orientation period for those students choosing additional educational courses; the Team decried those who cited the richness of French heritage and undesirability of change should recognize new methodologies. The Team called for a revision and amalgamation of the Vietnamese baccalaureate examinations, which historically were used as breaking points in secondary education between the First Cycle and Second Form, and for final certification of high school graduation and entrance to higher education.<sup>333</sup>

In 1964, the National Education Council had recommended the inauguration a four-region curriculum. The Wisconsin-led Team now called for the specific adaptation of curriculum to specific localities, citing a proposed "city curriculum" that distinguished among the differing

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 129-135.

environments and relationships found in Can Tho, Ban Me Thuot, and Saigon. Educational research abounded with evidence that students learned with greater understanding and more quickly when material was presented with relevance to their own environment and experiences. In 1967, the current curriculum had prepared only one percent of the population for successful entry into institutes of higher education. At this point the Directorate of Secondary Education accepted in theory a pilot program for eleven comprehensive high schools. The National Education Study Team issued a word of caution, hoping that the rate would be accelerated recalling that in Vietnam there was a tendency to issue proclamations and then assume action would be fulfilled simply because some high-ranking official had proclaimed it. Schools were handicapped by insufficiencies in materials and trained teachers, and failures to adjust curriculum and instill changes in the classroom. Deficiencies in scheduling were exposed, as the current secondary system was censured for spreading small amounts of subject content over many grade levels, a practice that removed depth and curiosity from the learning experience and left unwarranted gaps in content. New curriculum was to be blocked into extended class time-periods for the more efficient use of teachers and equipment, while allowing for the building of more momentum in the construction of knowledge and content relationships. The incorporation and orientation of differing levels of course difficulty and abstraction could provide additional flexibility and address both the needs of non-college-bound and college-bound students.<sup>334</sup>

In 1964, Minister of National Education Bui Tuong Huan had opened the National Education Convention, in part, by declaring that:

In the field of education we have only one concern—how to perfect on an emergency basis all educational installations from the infrastructure to the superstructure, how to improve the system, how to make programs of studies more suitable to the conditions of our nation, an agricultural, underdeveloped nation which is on the way to industrialization and which needs many specialists and technicians.<sup>335</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 127-145.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid., 181.

In 1967, the Wisconsin-led Team concurred with this objective, and developed specific recommendations for the development of vocational technical schools. Adequate appropriation of non-war expenditures was an ongoing problem during wartime, but effective educational budgeting could be a beneficiary of coordinated responsibility. The Team called for renewed communication between different departments of different ministries, such as the Ministries of Labor and Agriculture and the agriculture and vocational technical departments in the Ministry of Education, all of who held a common ground in basic training and job entry, with agriculture remaining as the country's largest industry, occupation, and economic resource. However, school curricula at the elementary and secondary levels did not support the advancement of agriculture. Agricultural education was an add-on to the basic education program, penalizing students whose interests led them to choose agricultural education by requiring them to complete up to 40 hours of study, whereas students in the regular academic curriculum took only 26 hours of study. The Team recommended expanding current teacher training programs to include agriculture. Also, training programs for agricultural agents were to incorporate methods of demonstration teaching, as a series of presentations on the improvement of agricultural practices was to be developed in cooperation with the Adult Education Directorate and radio-television bureaus.<sup>336</sup>

Illiteracy could not be eliminated through the sole expansion of efforts of the elementary and secondary schools. With numerous hamlets and villages having no schools beyond grades three to five, the enormity of the problem had increased annually with limited opportunities for formal education, while the reading and writing skills of children and adults lapsed into illiteracy, as they were often denied any opportunity to use such skills. Additionally, the formation of a comprehensive national adult education program was made more difficult because of security problems. Only as hamlets or villages became secure could schools expand and any development of a comprehensive adult education program take hold. The national government took a central

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<sup>336</sup> Ibid., 181-203.

role in adult education courses, as its primary objectives were to eliminate illiteracy, improve individual's economic status, and instill civic understanding and support of the government. The Wisconsin Team, as part of its National Study, called on the Vietnamese Government to, with USAID assistance, secure a contract with a radio-television company for the production of instructional programs with the long-range goal of establishing an educational television network. Government-purchased television sets were to be installed in villages and the government was to reserve some primetime daily for educational programming.<sup>337</sup>

The sheer magnitude of Team recommendations amounted to a total assault on the problems of education in Vietnam. In abridgment, the Wisconsin Team, along with their Vietnamese counterparts, called for: additional regional and national studies and conferences; massive training programs and structural and functional reorganization; cooperative inter-ministry efforts; establishment of a national training center for leadership; creation of new educational models offering break-through points at all barriers; the allocation of twenty-five percent of the national budget for education; infusion of a technical emphasis at all levels, through method and curriculum; initiation of a three year curriculum revision program; widespread participation in a plan for decentralization; adoption of a twelve grade organization promoted by UNESCO; inspection and licensing of private schools; and establishment of educational standards by professional committees, enforced by the Ministry of Education.<sup>338</sup>

On 28 August 1967, a headline in the *Saigon Daily Press* declared "Reformed Education Curricula to Be Applied Soon." The accompanying news story noted that Vietnam's Education Secretary Dr. Nguyen Van Tho declared that a number of the National Study Team's

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<sup>337</sup> Ibid., 209-214.

<sup>338</sup> Ibid., 217-224.

recommendations “should soon be put to practice” and in the near future “the educational fund would be 25 percent of the national budget instead of the five percent at present.”<sup>339</sup>

In 1967, Eagon had spent nearly six months during in Vietnam. Having completed the National Study, Eagon returned to Stevens Point Vietnam telling of the “other war” as he held a series of discussions at local schools and other public forums. Eagon reported that the Vietnamese “have done so much for themselves despite being at war for 25 years. If there is one thing they want for their children it is education.” He was pessimistic about an early end to hostilities in Vietnam, noting the enormity of the tasks associated with the “other war.” “There’s got to be a strong commitment to education, but we have to do more than build schools for them.”<sup>340</sup>

**J.C. Clevenger, “Student Personnel Services in the Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam,” 19 May 1967**

In April 1967, the new Wisconsin Team led by Burdette W. Eagon, Dean of the WSU-SP School of Education had embarked on its task of completing the first Wisconsin Team’s survey of Vietnamese higher education. Joining Eagon as a consultant on the new Wisconsin Team was Dr. J.C. Clevenger, Dean of Students, Washington State University. Of note, Clevenger had been “in-country” for some time and brought first-hand experience to the new team. In addition, to his new team responsibilities, Clevenger was already at work separately on a report on “Student Personnel Services in the Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam,” which he completed on 19 May 1967. The RVN Ministry of Education and Office of Education and the USAID Saigon Office had requested that the USAID contract a study of the current status of personnel services in Vietnamese universities, accessing the needs in this area, and offering recommendations for a developmental program to meet these needs.

Clevenger had accepted this task while the original Wisconsin Team neared the issuance

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<sup>339</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 6, Clippings (Undated), “Eagon returning from Viet mission,” *Stevens Point Journal*, (Undated).

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, “Eagon tells of Other War underway in South Vietnam,” *Stevens Point Journal*, (Undated).

of their preliminary findings. He had an initial dialogue with the seven members of the first Wisconsin Team and conducted a thorough review of their preliminary data as he constructed the supplementary survey of student services. It was only befitting that Clevenger then worked as a member of the follow-up Wisconsin Team as a consultant already involved with the mission in Vietnamese higher education.

As Clevenger developed his report, he conducted concurrent interviews and consultations with a variety of subjects, including: Vietnamese faculty members, students, and university officials; the Minister of Education, ministry and other GVN officials; USAID – Education, Saigon, officials; members of USAID – Education contract teams from Ohio University, Southern Illinois University, and University of Florida; American Fulbright professors “in-country;” and American students attending the University of Saigon under the sponsorship of JUSPAO and the University of Washington.

It was Clevenger’s premise that the role of higher education was similar in all countries. He felt it was the charge of the University to convey a nation’s history, culture and traditions, and lead the way in improving all aspects of its society through the expansion of knowledge and skills of citizens needed to fulfill present and future demands of the national economy. In almost constructivist terms, Clevenger emphasized that Vietnamese higher education needed to recognize the inseparability of the transmission of knowledge and the quest for learning, with the freedom to teach the “truth” and the freedom of inquiry as being the basic tenets for the worthiness of any university. Clevenger made reference to the principles of a democratic struggle that included certain rights and responsibilities, so that citizens were to be given the opportunity to participate in all discussions and events that affected their daily lives and the destiny of their nation. According to Clevenger, following this philosophy, the University should be student centered. Thereby, it was the responsibility of university administration to provide facilities, financial aid, administrative policies, guidance and other services, in a manner that benefits

students in the widest range of educational activities.<sup>341</sup>

In many ways, “Student Personnel Services in the Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam,” could be considered a derivative of or supplement to, the Wisconsin Survey Team “Report on Higher Education.” The parallels are distinctive and reveal an ongoing lineage of the original Team recommendations. Clevenger opened his report with a full endorsement for the work of the Wisconsin Team. The section of his report references the work of the Wisconsin Team and Robert R. LaFollette, noting their “profound effect” on educational efforts in Vietnam. He called for an expedient adoption of the Report’s basic recommendations on needs and proposed changes in higher education.<sup>342</sup>

Foremost among Clevenger’s concurrence in recommendations was for the Vietnamese to create a national policy-making board of higher education—charged to initiate change, formulate policy, and implement ideas. Also, it was suggested that high priority be given to the initiation of a nation-wide workforce study, to determine both military and civilian needs as well as a survey of the nation’s current and future economic needs. Clevenger appealed for curriculum development to use the study findings as a base; he quoted the Wisconsin Survey Team call for, “closing the wide gap that exists between the needs of Viet-Nam and the purposes manifested by public higher education.”<sup>343</sup>

Clevenger found merit in the Survey Team’s suggestion that a core curriculum and basic faculty be established in terms of a common program for the initial one or two years of college. These and other changes were aimed at reducing waste in both student and teaching resources. Clevenger agreed with the original Wisconsin Team’s condemnation of Vietnam’s current procedures in enrollment and registration, and methods of teaching and testing. Vietnam’s universities permitted students to enroll in classes in which total class enrollment exceeded by ten

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<sup>341</sup> Series 17 Box 11 Folder 2, J.C. Clevenger, Final report: Student Personnel Service in the Public Universities of the Republic of Viet-Nam, (Saigon: USAID, Education Saigon, 1967).

<sup>342</sup> Ibid., 1-6.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 10.

times the number of available seats. This encouraged absenteeism and accentuated memorization of a professor's class lecture notes as the principal prerequisite in doing well on the examinations at the end of the academic year. Clevenger concurred with the original Team's findings, which noted that academic libraries were inadequately outfitted and had very low usage by students and faculty. Current teaching norms did not require use of reference sources or library materials, much less regular class attendance.

Interestingly, Clevenger suggested that the Vietnamese build upon the results of the survey reports managed by the Wisconsin Team and the Special Consultants in Registration, Records, and Student Personnel Services through initiating self-studies by their universities. Clevenger suggested that associations like USAID-Education, Vietnam, or the Asia Foundation be approached to provide funding for week-long conferences for self-study groups composed of select faculty and administrators and their American consultants. Clevenger recommended the following areas for self-study discussions: faculty personnel policies; curriculum development; improvement of teaching methods, including testing and grading; needs in centralized services, e.g. libraries, student registration and records, and coordination of student services; budget management; and long range campus planning and physical management.<sup>344</sup> These areas, for the most part, would be embraced by the series of seminars and observation tours coordinated by WSU-SP.

The timing and circumstances surrounding Clevenger's report added to the urgent need for student services as Clevenger came in direct contact with a student protest-hunger strike that had erupted at the Higher School of Architecture, University of Saigon, during the week of 3 – 7 April 1967. The students there were reacting to conditions that they associated with failures in teaching, administration, library resources, classroom size, and most notably, the low percentage of graduates in relation to total enrollment. Clevenger was of the opinion that the strike might have been avoided had there been an avenue for more faculty-student interaction. In his report,

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 13.

Clevenger cited the 6 April 1967 edition of the *Saigon Daily News* account of the student strike,

...According to Duong Manh Hung, Vice President of the student body, the hunger strike is in protest against the Director of the School, Mr. Tran Van Tai, who in Hung's words has retarded the progress of the Architect School for the last 14 years...Hung said that the number of students graduating each year is less than desirable, it is the result of the school's testing system; the books used are out of date, there are not enough professors and classrooms are too small...the biggest classroom can only hold 80 students, while the number of students of the first year is more than 700...Hung told the *Saigon Daily News* that during the...examination on March 31 for students of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> years, the ratio of graduates is 3 to 96. According to official figures, the number of graduates from the Architecture School has never exceeded more than 10 for 14 years...During the academic year of 1961-62, there were 407 students. But none has graduated. In 62-63, there were 2 graduates out of 449 students and in the years of 65-66, the ratio of graduates is 8 out of 794...We ask for change, so that the school can keep up with the demands of the country, Hung said.<sup>345</sup>

In no way did Clevenger, as a consultant, attempt to judge the strength of the students' demands. He could not help, however, but to verify the authenticity of the low graduation rate, and noted that the School of Architecture was not alone, as one of his chief concerns was that across the system Vietnamese higher education faced a disproportionate relationship between the number of graduation certificates awarded and the annual undergraduate enrollment. Moreover, an excessively high dropout rate was symptomatic of a larger problem at-hand and of higher education's troubled state.

Clevenger credited the Wisconsin Team for its groundbreaking field work at the Vietnamese universities and accurate collection of the most current statistics. The Wisconsin Team had found that with the exception of Pedagogy, Medicine, and Dentistry, over the past three years the institutes had graduated between one and five percent of their annual enrollments. The statistics were a starting point, as further surveying was needed. A rapid increase in enrollment had occurred over the previous three years, pressing graduation percentiles lower due to time lag. Annual surveys would need to follow beginning year enrollments with a graduating class in four years. Rates were further exacerbated, as the GVN did not permit capping enrollments in Faculties of Letters, Science, Law, and Architecture. Further, to this point no survey team had

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<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 15. Clevenger includes the text of 6 April 1967 *Saigon Daily News* article in his report.

gathered statistics of enrolled/absentee students holding fulltime jobs somewhere else and of who may or may not opt to take final examinations in a given year. Clevenger concurred that Pedagogy was the strongest of the Faculties, while conceding that of the total enrolled in other Faculties some fifty percent or less would take the final examinations, and of these some fifty to eighty percent would fail, dependent relative to the particular Faculty and courses taken.<sup>346</sup>

The high attrition rate was symptomatic of various procedural weaknesses and general conditions. Clevenger faulted the current system that allowed students to enroll in more than one Faculty, simultaneously permitted flagrant absenteeism, and detrimentally promoted teaching practices that sprouted rote memorization of mimeographed lecture notes as the primary method of learning course material. He also criticized the system's reliance on single end-of-the-year examinations. A practice that even employed a lottery to decide which courses would be chosen for written testing, with students having no inclination as to which of their courses would be designated.

Clevenger focused his study on the current status of student personnel services. As he surveyed the specifics of student service needs at each of the three universities, he was not surprised to find that they were quite limited. Vietnamese higher education had very little in the way of a shared organization pattern for student services among the universities. Among the few commonalities was a requirement for students to be given an annual medical examination and other minimal student health services. Each of the universities did employ bureau heads for student service units, ranging from academic affairs to fiscal management. The bureau heads operated as civil service clerks, without faculty status, administratively reporting directly to each institute's Secretary General. Clevenger worked closely with the Vietnamese Universities at Saigon, Hue, and Can Tho, meeting at each university with students, faculty, and administrators. The Secretary Generals at Can Tho, and Saigon, and the Acting Secretary General at Hue, each expressed a readiness for change and recommendations for improvements in student services.

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<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 16-18.

Periodically, Clevenger made reference to student services at Dalat University and Van Hanh University, noting their passable strength was bolstered by their religious affiliation.

He noted that the University of Saigon had developed a Bureau of Guidance and Statistics, but its director had no professional training in guidance services, and to date the bureau had failed to delineate sophisticated enrollment statistics that could be incorporated with didactic planning. Clevenger found that the University of Saigon's Bureau of Social and Cultural Affairs was mainly involved in the coordination of intercollegiate and intramural sports activities. Clevenger found its director a capable administrator, who had been enrolled in graduate studies in history at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The director, however, was quite occupied in unrelated administrative duties, also served as a host and interpreter for foreign guests, and was set to move to Can Tho for the next academic year. Clevenger was disappointed to find that the student union was operated independently of the bureau or any other university control. Student housing had not been designated as a high priority for the University of Saigon. Yet, relative to the other Vietnamese institutes, Saigon's enrollment was huge, and the majority of the 26,800 students resided in the city and its surrounding communities. In 1967, from his perspective as an American consultant, Clevenger characterized Saigon's student residence services as a discredit to the University. He recognized that this would have to change with plans calling for further new campus development of the University of Saigon at Thu Duc.

In 1967, the University of Saigon had housing for some 400 men and 85 women in two student residence centers. Clevenger found that the Men's University City was a series of barrack type-housing units near Cholon, some distance from most University Faculties, and had originally opened in 1955 to house student refugees that migrated from the North. The hastily constructed substandard housing had been poorly maintained and was characterized by non-flushing type toilets, no showers, no windows, and wooden pallets serving as beds, with electricity turned on only during evening hours, and wooden louvered ventilation openings that allowed free access for both insects and dirt. Clevenger discovered that construction had been halted as building costs

rose with unchecked inflation. Hanging sheets and blankets over wires strung inside the units cordoned off crowded rooms. Of the 400 male residents some 100 were non-student squatters living in cardboard shelters within a partly built multi-floored residence hall. All attempts to remove the squatters had been unsuccessful forcing housing applications from another 100 students to be rejected. Rental rates had been set at 50 piasters per month, yet the Residence Chief of Service had not collected any rent for the past seven years.<sup>347</sup>

A student-managed men's dining hall had negligible sanitary standards, and served two daily meals for which students paid 600 piasters per month. The University of Saigon allocated 240,000 piaster annually for food purchases, but did not require any reports or accountability of funds spent. Although limited, the woman's student residence services were much better. Clevenger characterized the women's dormitory unit as orderly and clean, with adequate toilet and shower facilities, and a private food service. Women students were charged 1300 piaster per month for two daily meals and 100 piasters per month for rent. University student health services were lacking in both staff and facilities, despoiled by poorly maintained student health records. He suggested Saigon assign its health services to the Faculty of Medicine. Clevenger noted that the Catholic Church, which operated four dormitories in Saigon, two each for men and women, each housing about 60 students, provided supplemental housing. Also, the Asia Foundation, IVS, and JUSPAO supported four private student hostels, with a capacity of 130.<sup>348</sup>

Clevenger found the University of Hue's student health services to be superior in quality, and appropriately administered by the Faculty of Medicine. University student housing at Hue consisted of a single residence unit. The students paid no dormitory fees, but did pay 1,000 piaster per month for meals, and the Province Chief supplied the food service with rice. The University had a Bureau of Public Relations, which Clevenger found to be an interesting administrative unit. The Bureau's Director was preoccupied with the Prime Minister's visit to

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<sup>347</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 27-28.

Hue when Clevenger arrived, so Clevenger consulted directly with the University's Acting Secretary General. He reported that the Bureau of Public Relations sponsored various student associations and coordinated student activities such as sports and cultural events, university theater work, student newspaper projects, and special programs for Tet. Clevenger found that Hue did not have a student center and the Student Union was "still closed following the incidents of 1966."<sup>349</sup>

Clevenger reported that the University of Can Tho was busily planning for future growth in enrollment and facilities, and its basic bureaus and student services offered much promise. Student Health was developing with the assistance of the Provincial Health Officer and Province Hospital, additional student health services were set to grow with enrollment. In 1967, Can Tho had no student housing. A Bureau of Student Affairs was in its first year of operation, and had focused on intramural athletic activities. A slightly varied pattern of organizing student associations occurred as the University appointed commissioners for sports, social affairs, seminars and conferences, and finances, and vice presidents for internal and external affairs.<sup>350</sup>

In 1967, Can Tho's long-range plans were being developed to parallel projections in enrollment. The Wisconsin Team would take on a detailed interest in developments at Can Tho. Overall, Clevenger recommended wider latitude be provided for student participation in the shared governance, life, and affairs at all of the universities.

A second phase of his basic assignment called on Clevenger to investigate the long-standing problem of academic and social distance between students and their professors. Feelings of alienation were rapidly developing, as students viewed most professors as unapproachable and unconcerned as to students' welfare and academic program. Many professors voiced regret, blaming the lack of personal office space and heavy teaching schedules as they shuttled between three or more universities. One senior faculty member recommended that Clevenger note in his

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<sup>349</sup> Ibid., 30-32.

<sup>350</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

report that in the past there had been a very close association between student and teacher, almost a father and son relationship, prior to the establishment of the French continental pattern of education. The lecture podium and mimeographed lecture notes had become the sole points of contact; further, this system procreated absenteeism and minuscule personal contact, as many students never attended classes. Few small discussion groups or seminars or tutorial services were scheduled. Clevenger suggested that a first step would be for the rectors, deans, and faculty openly to discuss this issue and work toward possible solutions. Recognizing an entrenched scheme filled with apprehension he recommended that each Faculty organize faculty-student discussion groups, not as “executive action” groups or avenues for “militant advocacy,” but, “for open and frank discussion and exchange of views on any aspect of university operation or Faculty or student problems...characterized by an attitude of mutual trust and respect.”<sup>351</sup>

Clevenger made a series of recommendations related to a plan for the development of counseling and testing student centers as essential units of student personal services at each of South Vietnam’s five universities. He emphasized the importance of appointing a director at each center who possessed a doctoral degree from an American university in counseling psychology or counseling and guidance. He called for two additional Vietnamese sent to the United States for Ph.D. level studies in educational psychology and psychometrics; one was to work at the proposed Ministry of Education Testing Center, and the other assigned to the University of Saigon’s Faculty of Pedagogy to instruct and conduct research in these fields. For the campus centers a master’s degree in counseling, psychology, or pedagogy would be an acceptable starting point, provided the candidate followed through with additional graduate studies. Clevenger had seen the shortcomings as other service unit bureau heads lacked faculty status, working as clerical civil servants instead of educational specialists. He felt the importance of counseling services demanded an added measure of professional performance, prestige and status from the perspective of Faculty and students. He called for directive/trainee practicum counseling training

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<sup>351</sup> Ibid., 37-40.

in an American setting and a progressive series of Vietnamese visitations to American university counseling centers and attendance at national and state conferences in the United States. He recommended that approaches be made to outside organizations for supplemental financial support, for example the Asia Foundation, as the GVN might not be able to fund comprehensive training of guidance specialists for the universities, including Dalat and Van Hanh. He was conscious of the time needed, “until the Ministry of Education, the universities, and supporting agencies make a decision as to whether or not these recommendations should be accepted and implemented,” with any action taken as a result of his recommendations on educators sent to the United States due to occur after his departure from Vietnam. He asked that the Vietnamese continue to work with USAID/Education-Saigon, and American consultants already working with Vietnamese higher education for active assistance.<sup>352</sup>

Clevenger stressed the importance of confidentiality of counseling notes and individual student personal folders, and suggested campus counseling centers be centrally located facilities, contiguous to the offices of student records and registrar. Just as urgent was the establishment of coordinated guidance testing procedures needed to recognize and direct student aptitude. He noted that Vietnam had yet to develop any guidance tests for educational and vocational counseling. He called for a USAID/Education contract with an American testing organization to consult with the Vietnamese for the development of two general guidance tools, one to test scholastic aptitude and one to measure broad field vocational traits. He anticipated that this aspect of the project would take 1½ to 2 years to institute, and the work would have to occur in Vietnam. He envisioned the tests as instruments that would facilitate selective admission standards and reduce the high dropout rate, and that all resulting measures could be useful as guidance supplements for counselors assisting students completing the Bac I and Bac II. He cautioned that the Vietnamese needed to counsel students early on and compensate for testing variables while working to surmount a history of negative social status identified with vocational

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid., 42-45, 51.

interests.<sup>353</sup>

The remainder of Clevenger's report was devoted to detailing an administrative plan for organizing student services. To add indigenous credibility to his suggestions, he cited a report on student services developed by Dr. Tran Ngoc Tieng of the Faculty of Pharmacy, University of Saigon. Clevenger agreed with Tieng, who, when observing and reviewing student services at universities in Japan, Korea, and the Philippines, had found the essential structure of student services administratively coordinated under the primary direction of a Dean of Students. He praised Tieng's "Vietnamese document" and the convictions of other Vietnamese educators and officials for sharing their ideas with the Minister of Education and USAID/Education, who in turn had invited Clevenger to come to Vietnam. He noted that each university's Chief Administrative Officer for Student Personnel Services, Student Personnel Services Administrator and Counseling Center Director represented just a launching point as additional professional staff would be needed as service programs were extended and units became basic referral agencies. He explained that staffing needs were critical as the void in services was filled by new action programs and the emergence of Student Counseling Centers, the Student Activities Program, Student Housing, Student Health Services, Student Financial Aids, Graduate Placement, Student Centers, and Orientation.<sup>354</sup>

In summary, Clevenger recommended that the following actions should go forward: 1.) Each university appoint a Director of Student Affairs, with each going to the United States for one-year of training; 2.) Each university establish a Counseling Center, with its director holding doctorate level credentials in related fields; 3.) The USAID/Education and Republic of Vietnam tender a contract with a principal testing organization in the United States for the development of tests to measure student aptitude and vocational interest; with two Vietnamese educators being sent to the United States for Ph.D. level training in Educational Psychology and Psychometrics,

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 46-51.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 53-54, 60-65.

returning to lead in the implementation of tests and development of new guidance tools; 4.) As recommended by numerous survey teams, initiate a nationwide workforce study, linked to economic and educational development; 5.) Thought be given to the hiring of a long-term specialist in student services assigned to the Higher Education Office, USAID/education, Saigon. Clevenger closed his report by quoting from the Wisconsin Team's initial report, noting:

The Higher Education Survey Team [the Wisconsin Team] recommended that a contract be developed with either a North American institution, or a consortium of institutions, to provide "general advisory services in university development and planning." If this recommendation is approved and implemented, then consideration should be given to adding student personnel specialists to the advisory team. The development of student personnel services rates as one of the high priority areas in university planning and development in Vietnam.<sup>355</sup>

Clevenger's report was well received by the Ministry of Education, USAID/Education, and the other consultants from American universities, including the new Wisconsin Team. Clevenger soon joined the Team in the capacity of student services specialist, an area he deemed vital, and a niche which the many consortiums of Wisconsin Team's would always utilize.

### **Discussion and Formulation of Umbrella Contract with WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.**

On 21 July 1967 William Vickerstaff received a confidential memorandum from USAID Vietnam Education Office, Saigon, projecting tentative extensions of the original WSU-SP higher education contract. USAID/Education, Saigon, and Burdette Eagon wired Vickerstaff to make special preparations and budget allowances for the upcoming rector visitation, and if at all possible to come to Saigon to meet with the USAID higher education adviser to stimulate relations and formulate planning procedures for the umbrella contract. The tape belt read:

By now no doubt you have the contract for the visitation [of the rectors, Seminar in Higher Education: "Policy Formulation in American Education," 7 October to 18 November 1967] well under way... I do hope you are writing into the contract sometime available when Vietnamese students can come into a central location such as Chicago... and meet with the rectors... this is a pretty high power group that we are dealing with. I would also like to see them wanting to spend some time with their own individual specialties such as rector who is spending sometime at the agricultural school such as River Falls. I am very serious, Bill, when I recommend that you come to

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<sup>355</sup> Ibid., 69-71.

Saigon...This would be very helpful for public relations...It would be a good experience for you and would give you some background and relationships and contacts that can be used as we begin to move toward the umbrella contract... we can tie into or from this visitation contract many aspects of the umbrella contract...as being the lead into this whole large realm of university planning. It is apparent that if we work this right. The umbrella contract will merely be another amendment unto our original contract. This has many advantages to AID...as they do not have to negotiate another large contract...one of the persons who may question our entrance into this contract is Mr. Holsol [Hoshall] because he sees this contract as being a big name kind of thing. I do not believe this feeling is shared by the people I have been working with over here. As I believe can list them that a smaller institution that is also a developing institution and not crystallize the ways of operation can be more flexible and work more freely with the kind of people we are working with here...I am going to cite from a document that has been drawn up and submitted to Mr. Winer as some ideas for the umbrella contract. Please do not ever refer to this as this is totally unofficial and actually confidential from the state point of our background work here.

Mr. Wilson and I have been working this thing through...merely give you this...so you can be thinking about some of the aspects...there should be many modifications...and revisions in some parts...services of the specialists would be extended to each of the five universities in Vietnam...the team leader should be a dean specifically with experience in organization and administration within a developing institution and should have experience working in a developing country. [Reading from Wilson's proposal] "One such example would be that of Dr. Burdette Eagon Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point." I add here that Wilson put this into the form without my consultation. I think the main purpose being that we wanted to get Wisconsin State University in front of them as they looked over the tentative PIOT. It was a pretty shrewd move on his part...

Please remember this is to give you an idea of the umbrella contract. In no way quote this or use statements in any official work that you plan or prepare with Washington unless you hear to the contrary. Discuss these belts with Gordon [Haferbecker, acting president WSU-SP] and others that you feel it is necessary to do so.<sup>356</sup>

The contract extension for the visitation of the Vietnamese rectors was earmarked for \$25,000 (later referenced up to \$30,000 in residue contract funds) in USAID funds; including \$2,000 per individual set aside for travel expenses. Within the USAID there was some debate over whether it would be Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point or Ohio University that would extend their respective contracts into the widened realm of university planning and development. The USAID's Warren Wilson, Harold Winer, USAID/Vietnam Director of Education, and Scott Hammond, of the USAID/Washington Office of Education, all believed it was a natural fit for WSU-SP as a developing institution. Each had been impressed by the

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<sup>356</sup> Series 17 Box 15 Folder 5, "Rector Visitation, 1967-Working Papers," (1967 & Undated).

Wisconsin Team's original report and its philosophy that looked to assist in making higher education truly Vietnamese in character. Wilson and his assistants moved quickly to extend the "umbrella" so as to offer the mantle for reform recommendations in Vietnamese higher education primarily to WSU-SP led team of consultants, projecting that the fundamental work could be phased out in about two years, with some aspects continuing thereafter as the Vietnamese gained more expertise. Logistically, the USAID projected a financial pledge of \$520,000 and a timeline that included a combined 144 months of consultant duties to be divided between eight or more educational specialists.<sup>357</sup>

The early proposal from the USAID Saigon Office included provisions for: 1.) Higher education visitations to the U.S., to be coordinated by WSU-SP; 2.) Development of master building plans for the University of Saigon and the University of Can Tho; 3.) Developmental planning for a new institution of business administration at Thu Duc; 4.) Assistance in the establishment of central registration and records for higher education and the training of local staff; 5.) Establishment of a basic studies program, and assistance in other curriculum developments; 6.) Development of student services and the implementation of an academic guidance program; 7.) Assignment of a consultant for test development, assisting the universities and GVN testing center in preparing modern testing instruments of a more psychometric nature; 8.) Long range participation in university faculty training in all areas except architecture, dentistry, engineering, and medicine, which were already involved in training programs contracted by the USAID; 9.) Specialists to be available on an "as needed" basis to fulfill the readiness requests of the five universities of the Republic of Vietnam including the two private institutions; 10.) Chief of party and seven team members all to possess doctoral degrees and broad experience in respective fields of campus planning, curriculum, student services, and test development; 11.) USAID to provide office space, supplies, transportation, and local support personnel; 12.) Team reports to be submitted monthly, mid-year, and annually to the USAID

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<sup>357</sup> Series 17 Box 15 Folder 6, Vietnam Correspondence-Vickerstaff, (1967 & Undated).

Office of Education; 13.) WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., the contractor, to be responsible to the USAID director, while the team was to be supervised by the higher education branch in Vietnam and USAID education; and 14.) Under-secretary of the ministry of education and the five university rectors were to act as Vietnamese counterparts.<sup>358</sup>

*The Pointer May 11, 1967*

## Dean Eagon reports on Vietnam, second study to begin in June

Dr. Burdette W. Eagon, dean of the School of Education at WSU-SP, is leader of the newly-organized team of U.S. educators to study higher education in South Vietnam.

Eagon is back in the U.S. preparing the second phase of the project. He reported on the mission's progress at a meeting of the WSU board of directors Monday, May 7.

The Eagon team succeeds the ill-fated team headed by the late Dr. James Albertson, killed in a plane crash in Vietnam March 23.

The Albertson team had completed a preliminary report on its study and was prepared to discuss it with Vietnamese leaders for suggestions and corrections. This function has been taken over by the new team.

The final document of this report was presented to South Vietnam's minister of education last Wednesday.

Phase two of the study will begin early in June. It will include preparation of a plan to reorganize elementary, secondary, technical, vocational, and adult education in South Vietnam.

Dr. Eagon said that fewer than five per cent of the students enrolled in the South Vietnamese university system ever graduate with degrees. He said that those who fall by the way-



DEAN EAGON

side lose everything. The graduates enter official positions in the government and thus the real needs of the country are neglected.

The new team will try to correct what Dr. Eagon feels is a serious deficiency in the programs for the training of people

in trades and attempt to influence changes in values and attitudes toward the development of this training which is essential to the economic welfare of the country.

Recommendations in the new team's first report delivered last week include a schedule for development projects in a sort of small package form which would be coordinated with various outside agencies.

Agricultural improvement is an immediate need, Dr. Eagon said, and added that next should come the education and establishment of sufficient numbers of businessmen and business administrators.

South Vietnam's newly-drafted constitution attempts to implement some needed changes; but it is inconsistent in certain respects, Eagon said.

"The South Vietnamese have great potential," Eagon commented. "They will need a great deal of government assistance — and much patience — in working out their problems in the years ahead."

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

During the summer of 1967, Burdette Eagon had returned to Vietnam, leading the Wisconsin Survey Team in Vietnam, completing their National Education Study report on Vietnamese education. On 8 August 1967 Eagon sent a communication belt to William Vickerstaff, following up on a cable that Vickerstaff and he had received concerning the upcoming rector visitation and also reporting on a team dinner held with ministry of education officials the previous evening at the Majestic Hotel in Saigon. Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho had presented each team member with award certificates and promised to forward a memorial to Stevens Point for the Albertson family. Eagon noted that the minister had expressed hope that a member of the Wisconsin Team would be available on a year around basis, working through ideas and implementing team recommendations with the Vietnamese. Eagon reported that both Tho and Winer had articulated their endorsement of the rector visitation as a Wisconsin contract project, with the minister sanctioning lengthy workshops and observations as a means of absorbing ideas on the full operation of the university, while Winer was agreeable that WSU-SP cover all arrangements and costs within the some \$30,000 residue of funds remaining in the WSU-SP – USAID higher education contract. Again, Winer was hopeful that Vickerstaff would soon come to Vietnam for discussions on how WSU-SP Foundation might function as an umbrella contractor.<sup>359</sup>

Eagon, seconded that idea, noting that Winer, Minister Tho, and he felt it was critical that this be done prior to Hoshall's arrival in Vietnam:

I certainly suggest that you come over and make yourself known with them as I do believe politically it would have a great deal of weight on the umbrella contract...Very honestly, I do not believe we will have a chance with the contract if Mr. Hoshall arrives and throws his weight around prior to the granting of the contract. If he will arrive prior to October 1, I think we could have the contract idea well in the mind of Mr. Winer, and I am sure Mr. Tho would support us and the Wisconsin Team in the contract...I'm sure he will be discussing this with Winer in the near future. I did indicate to him we'd be very happy to be of help to him...It would appear to me if you can get some of the work lined up back home prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> of September, and then can spend a week or two weeks here in Saigon talking with Winer discussing the umbrella contract, meeting with some of the rectors, discussing some of the ideas they would like to see...The last of our team

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<sup>359</sup> Series 17 Box 15 Folder 5, Rector Visitation, 1967-Working Papers, (1967 & Undated).

members leave Sunday. I am on a waiting list for leaving Wednesday...I do hope to have the work in the hands for final printing by that time. I intend to be home for the evening football game on September 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>360</sup>

On 15 November 1967, Vickerstaff, as Campus Coordinator/Education Advisor, received security clearance and Mission clearance for a one-month visit to Vietnam from the Department of State/Agency for International Development. He was able to confer with USAID officials in the U.S. on facets of the umbrella contract simultaneously, during September – November, as Eagon, he and others planned, coordinated, and participated in the rector visitation. The strength of future reviews of Team surveys and the coordinating efforts done by WSU-SP would assure that the Wisconsin Contract would be frequently renewed into the year 1974.

### **Other Team Reports, Seminars and Contacts between USAID, WSU-SP and the Republic of Vietnam, 1967 through 1973**

From 1967 into 1974, numerous Vietnamese educators took the opportunity to visit the United States and participate in study-observation tours coordinated by WSU-SP/ UWSP. Six major visitations occurred under the auspices of the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., the GVN, the USAID, and in some aspects, the U.S. Office of Health, Education, and Welfare. The key purposes of the observation tours were: 1.) Offer added understanding of the formulation and implementation of policy in universities in American; 2.) Evaluate study reports and the progress of reforming and restructuring higher education in the South Vietnam; 3.) Discuss the state of development of Vietnamese education and specific concerns of each university; and 4.) Observe the administrative process and structure of universities in American higher education.

WSU-SP/UWSP remained as a centerpiece of exchange and progressive educational action as it hosted a series of seminars and implemented advisory missions to Vietnam. The complete chronological listing of these projects is included in the thesis appendices and is quite insightful as to the complexity and profundity of this partnership. Set within the wider chronological nature of the American Vietnam War, the listing serves as a testimonial to and a

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<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

reflection of the magnitude of the USAID – WSU-SP/UWSP and RVN partnership.

**Seminar in Higher Education: “Policy Formulation in American Education,”  
7 October to 18 November 1967**

As the title of the seminar suggests, the stated purpose of this initial workshop was to present an understanding of the “formulation and implementation of policy” in public and private American universities. In part, the rectors said their visit was a tribute to the late President James Albertson. In fact, Albertson and his team’s work had made such a favorable impression that the Vietnamese educators fully supported a broadening of the WSU-SP/USAID/RVN contract umbrella to include a series of six major observation tours centered at WSU-SP and additional survey reports. As such, the first seminar set the pattern for those that were to follow. The six-week seminar and observation tour was coordinated by WSU-SP’s Dr. David L. Coker, Director, Counseling Center and Psychological Services; Dr. Burdette W. Eagon, Dean of Education, and Mr. William Vickerstaff, Executive Secretary, WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. For the most part, Coker synchronized the on-campus program, coordinating activities with WSU-SP faculty and other personnel. Vickerstaff handled most of the national scheduling and business arrangements, communicating with other campus administrators, USAID personnel, the Vietnamese Embassy, and other federal, state, local officials, and community leaders. Eagon, in Vietnam prior to the visit, harmonized preparations and interactions among the Vietnamese, USAID Saigon Offices, and WSU-SP. In the role of host institution, WSU-SP brought together the university rectors from the Republic of Vietnam’s five institutions of higher education: Dr. Tran Quang De, Rector, University of Saigon (arrival was postponed by emergency hernia surgery); Dr. Phan Hoang Ho, Rector, University of Can Tho; Dr. Nguyen The Anh, Rector, University of Hue; Father Van Lap, rector, Dalat University; and Venerable Thich Minh Chau, Rector, Van Hanh University. Dr. Bui Xuan Bao, Professor, University of Saigon, served as the conference secretary; and following the tour he was to confer with USAID officials and deliver a report to the Vietnamese Ministry of Education. Mr. Hoang Si Binh, USAID - Vietnam Education, Saigon, worked as interpreter-

translator for the seminar.<sup>361</sup>



President Lee Sherman Dreyfus (center) presents gift, The Wisconsin Story, to Vietnamese rectors at WSU-SP: Mr. Binh, Father Lap, University of Dalat; Rector Anh, University of Hue; Rector De, University of Saigon; LSD, Rector Ho, University of Can Tho; Venerable Chau, University of Van Hanh; Dr. Bao, Saigon professor and secretary for tour.

<sup>361</sup> Series 17 Box 15 Folder 5, Rector Visitation, 1967-Working Papers.



Venerable Chau, University of Van Hanh, giving gift of Buddhist literature to Dreyfus

The seminar program was designed around some thirty days of workshops, thorough discussions, and field observations designed to provide an broad examination of the historical development of American higher education, the academic problems associated with curriculum and financial growth, and the roles of coordinating boards, regents or trustees, the governor,

legislators, administrative officials, faculty, and students in the formulation and implementation of policy. The seminar offered the Vietnamese participants a full vision of the objectives of American higher education and of the personnel and programs needed to achieve those goals. Vietnamese academic and ministry leaders had expressed general support for the fundamental recommendations and concepts of the initial WSU-SP consultations about higher education, yet they demonstrated great anxiety in terms of the actual implementation of such recommendations.<sup>362</sup>

As the seminar coordinators designed the workshop, they recognized that the Hoshall Report had indicated that Vietnamese educators were concerned with the concept of a governing board, which had been a key recommendation of the Albertson team report. The Vietnamese academics had expressed fears that the development of such an organizational structure would weaken the autonomy of their representative institutions. The WSU-SP coordinators cited the Clevenger Report, “Student Personnel Services Public University-Republic of Vietnam,” which noted that student strikes at various South Vietnamese universities had resulted in an administrative apprehension toward the role of faculty, students, and governmental agencies in policy formulation. Wisconsin State educators set out to reassure the Vietnamese on the need for shared governance and wider student services.<sup>363</sup>

All guests received brief resumes of all activities and field observations prior to their visitations. Participating universities and organizations developed their resume and forwarded these to WSU-SP. The format of the 7 October – 18 November 1967 visitation would serve as a model for a cycle of observation tours lasting through the spring of 1973, all sponsored under umbrella contracts in higher education between WSU-SP/UWSP, the USAID, and RVN.

The group departed from Saigon on 7 October 1967 with a one-day stopover in Hawaii for a briefing session at the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange between East and

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<sup>362</sup> Ibid.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid.

West. The East – West Center had been established by the U.S. Congress in 1960 and later augmented by the USAID cooperative project with the University of Hawaii. Burdette Eagon, William Vickerstaff, and the Director of the East and West Institute, Dai Ho Chun welcomed the group in Honolulu. The group then traveled to San Francisco for meetings at the Asia Foundation prior to their arrival on 11 October 1967 at WSU-SP for a reception, dinner and opening session hosted by WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus and Eugene McPhee, executive secretary of the Wisconsin State University System Board of Regents.<sup>364</sup>

The three-week program in Stevens Point included sessions on: “American Higher Education: A Historical Perspective,” delivered by Dr. James Doi, Professor of Higher Education University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; “Higher Education in Wisconsin: A Historical Perspective,” by Dr. William Stielstra of WSU-SP; “Role of Coordinating Boards in Higher Education,” with William Kraus, Vice-President, Sentry Insurance, citizen member and secretary of Coordinating Committee of Higher Education, Wisconsin, and Mary Williams, member Board of Regents-Wisconsin State Universities; “Role of Student Services in a University,” with Dr. Robert Shaffer, Dean of Students Indiana University, Bloomington, and Dr. William Stielstra, Vice-President, Student Affairs, WSU-SP; “Role of the Faculty in a University,” by Dr. Fred Harris, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Baldwin-Wallace College, Berea, Ohio; “Curriculum Development in a University,” with Dr. Paul Yambert, Dean, College of Applied Arts and Science, WSU-SP, and Dr. Warren Jenkins, Dean, College of Letters and Science, WSU-SP; “Financial Budget in a University,” with Dr. Gordon Haferbecker, Vice-President, Academic Affairs, WSU-SP, and Leon Bell, Vice-President, Financial Affairs, WSU-SP; “Development of Facilities in a University,” Ray Specht, Director, Campus Planning, WSU-SP; and “Review and Briefing,” with Dr. David Coker and William Vickerstaff. During their stay in Stevens Point the Vietnamese participated in a number of observation sessions, including: WSU-SP Classrooms, Association of Wisconsin State Faculties Conference, Asia Study Club, Education and Youth

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<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

Leadership Conference, Board of Regents Meeting, and the University Convocation, an address by Dr. John Gardner, Secretary, United States Office of Health, Education and Welfare.<sup>365</sup>

Hoang Si Binh remarked, as the rectors left Stevens Point for their extended tour across the U.S., “youth is alike throughout the world...our conception is that faculty members are, above all teachers...what struck us most pleasantly was the warmth and friendliness with which the people of Stevens Point welcomed us.”<sup>366</sup>

While based at WSU-SP the group had ventured out on field observation tours to view the “progress of American agriculture and industry.”<sup>367</sup> The rectors, also, visited Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin State University- Stout, Wisconsin State University-River Falls, and University of Wisconsin, Madison, and they attended a program on “State Government and Educational Coordinating Offices” hosted by the State Governor’s Office and Office of Board of Regents of State Universities in Madison. The group then toured the University of Illinois-Circle Campus in Chicago prior to their 4 November 1967 departure for New York City.<sup>368</sup>

In New York the group visited the United Nations, followed by an all day observation of an Education and World Affairs (EWA) Conference lead by Dr. Herman B. Wells, Chairman, EWA Board of Directors, and Chancellor of Indiana University. Founded in 1962, EWA was a nonprofit, private educational organization, originating from one of the central recommendations of the Morrill Committee report *The University and the World Affairs*.<sup>369</sup> It was a goal of EWA to contribute to strengthening the role of American institutes of higher education in world affairs. The EWA had been the major financier of the 1964 cooperative task force study between USAID Administrator David E. Bell and John Gardner, then President of the Carnegie Corporation. That

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), “Vietnam rectors leave with sampling of American life,” *Stevens Point Daily Journal*, (November 8, 1967).

<sup>367</sup> Ibid.

<sup>368</sup> Series 17 Box 15 Folder 5, Rector Visitation, 1967-Working Papers.

<sup>369</sup> Committee on the University and World Affairs, *The University and World Affairs*, (New York: Ford Foundation, 1960).

study resulted in the formation of the AID office of university relations, within which an USAID-University Relations Advisory Committee improved standardized contracts and opened more research funds for contracts with universities. By 1967, the EWA was actively involved in consultation programs in international educational policy-making, consultation services with American institutes of higher education, the formulation of objective studies on key problems in international education, development of issue-orientated conferences, working groups, and seminars as bridges of communication between representatives of government agencies, private corporations, and educational communities throughout the world. While in New York the group from Vietnam also had meetings with the governor of New York, the state chairman of the Board of Regents, and other philanthropic foundations associated with higher education.<sup>370</sup>

The group of Vietnamese rectors then toured Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on 8 November, before arriving in Washington, D.C. later that evening. During their 8 – 13 November visit in Washington, D.C. they were accompanied by WSU-SP's Lee S. Dreyfus, David Coker, and William Vickerstaff as they spent a full day at USAID headquarters, followed by three days of other meetings, receptions, and dinners at the Vietnamese Embassy and various hotels, a special tour of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare to review federal facilitation of higher education, and finally a special meeting with President Lyndon B. Johnson and other American officials at the White House. During the White House meeting, the Vietnamese presented a report on "progress" in higher education in Vietnam to President Johnson and the president announced his support for consideration of developing telecommunications as an instructional tool for distance education in Vietnam. Two days earlier, WSU-SP President Lee S. Dreyfus, a member of the Board of Directors of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, had attended a White House ceremony during which President Johnson had signed into law a bill establishing the national educational (public) television-radio system. Dreyfus had worked extensively in the development of Wisconsin Public Television prior to his tenure at

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<sup>370</sup> Series 17 Box 1 Folder 6, "Rector Visitation, 1967-Miscellaneous," (1967 and Undated).

WSU-SP/UWSP and was instrumental in the development of the first televised satellite intercontinental classroom connection when he linked Wisconsin's West Bend High School with the Lycee` Henri IV in Paris via Early Bird on 31 May 1965.<sup>371</sup>

The delegation of rectors then returned to California for a final observation tour coordinated by the Asia Foundation, with part of the party making a scheduled stop in Los Angeles for a visitation tour of UCLA and meetings with Vietnamese associates and American grantees on 11 – 12 November; and then coming together again as a full delegation in San Francisco on 13 – 14 November 1967, where they were joined by William Stielstra, David Coker, and William Vickerstaff for an observation tour of the University of California, Berkeley and visits with more Vietnamese contacts. Finally, on their return route to Saigon, the group stopped at the East-West Center, University of Hawaii, for a 15 November – 18 November seminar analysis, “Review and Projection,” coordinated by Nguyen Van Tho, Minister of Education, South Vietnam and chaired by Burdette Eagon. Others in attendance included: Harold Winer, Earle Hoshall, and Warren Wilson, all of USAID, Saigon, Scott Hammond, USAID, Washington, D.C., and David Coker, and William Vickerstaff of WSU-SP.

**“A Report on American Higher Education by the Delegation of Rectors following their Observation Tour in the U.S. from Oct. 7 to Nov. 20, 1967”**

Acting on order of the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee the Vietnamese Commissioner for Education issued Official Memo 267-GD.DH/KH requesting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue a Travel Mission Order for the delegation of Rectors observation tour of American Universities, with the provision that they deliver a written report following their return to Vietnam. The report proved to be a testament of the positive impact WSU-SP had as host institution and the Vietnamese educators' willing acceptance of the Wisconsin State University System of governance.

The report was a reflection of the diversity of American higher education that the

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<sup>371</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

Vietnamese had observed during their visitation. Their report was a study in contrasts between Vietnamese and American educational facilities, resources, conditions, and budgetary concerns. Understandingly, the rectors quickly reported on their admiration of the independent structure of American universities as “campus” units that afforded faculty, staff, and students with most necessities.

They were impressed by the complexity of campus buildings, fully equipped classrooms and range of instructional materials, library resources, sports facilities, student centers, the growing ranks of American professors, their superior salary structure, and the favorable professor to student ratio. They made special reference to American teaching styles centered on current textbooks versus the copied lecture format and mimeographed texts used in Vietnam. The rectors were encouraged by the great variety of other instructional possibilities, which included audio-visual equipment, television and other forms of telecommunications, with satellite linkage employed as part of distance education.<sup>372</sup>

They recognized that with the rapid expansion of American higher education and associated societal changes, more emphasis was placed on counseling services in terms of academic and social guidance, and the acknowledgment given to the diversity of student abilities. The rectors paid special attention to the broadening of curriculum, as American higher education programs were designed in manner in which fundamental parts were offered to students in various departments. They acknowledged the superiority of administrative organizational structure at the institutional and state system levels, the role of faculty curriculum committees, periodic examinations, graduated grading system, the strength of compulsory attendance, the versatility of the credit system, and usefulness of financial aid services—all entities that were yet to come to Vietnamese higher education.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Series 17 Box 2 Folder 1, Nguyen Van Hai, “A Report on American Higher Education by the Delegation of Rectors following their Observation Tour in the U.S. from Oct. 7 to Nov. 20, 1967,” (November 21, 1967).

<sup>373</sup> Ibid.

The delegation concluded their report with a series of recommendations to modify the organizational structure of their own institutes of higher education. Firstly, they favored the formation and governmental recognition of an Inter-University Coordinating Council, to be comprised of the five university rectors, two additional representatives from each university, and one representative from the ministry of education. The Inter-University Coordinating Council was to be responsible for general policy, expansion planning, and all teaching criteria relative to higher education, and it was to provide accreditation to university degrees. Secondly, the delegates recommended that each university set up an Advisory Council, whose structure and composition was to be determined by respective local conditions. Thirdly, the delegation suggested that the administrative structure of their universities follow the American pattern, with each rector being provided with special assistants, e.g. university presidents with administrative, academic and student affairs, financial assistants (vice-presidents.) Fourthly, recommendations were made to revise and expand current curriculum so as to permit horizontal and vertical transference of studies between faculties within each institution, while enforcing regular attendance and seeking to alleviate the burden of year-end examinations by exercising conscientious supervision, along with more periodic testing and ongoing evaluation of students' performance. Finally, the report called for the promulgation of a University Statute to adequately raise teaching standards and practices by readjusting professor salaries in close correlation to the cost of living. Also, they recommended that in-service opportunities be developed as a means of updating professional knowledge and providing added support for research.<sup>374</sup>

Prior to making their official report, the rectors discussed most of these recommendations for higher education during the "Review and Projection" 15 – 18 November 1967 seminar held at the East-West Center in Honolulu, chaired by Burdette Eagon. Dr. Eagon's personal notes from the meeting related some observations that proved valuable from the perspective of the WSU-SP consultation capacity. Eagon noted a potential problem in terms of the confusion of legislative

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<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

and administrative capacities of the inter-university coordinating council and advisory councils within each institution. He thought that a by-law should be incorporated in the development of the advisory council pointing to the necessity of lay-membership, so as to encompass the concepts of community action and the balance of power in Vietnamese higher education. Eagon saw an imminent need to assist the rectors in defining the roles of the inter-university council and those of the Ministry of Education, as there would always be problems generating funds. He felt the rectors had not recognized that academic autonomy would be impossible without financial autonomy. Further, Eagon felt the rectors should develop a minimal number of vice-president positions, set strictly on a functional basis. Eagon encouraged the rectors to develop task forces as university issues of development arose and to assist in defining principles.<sup>375</sup>

The October – November 1967 observation tour by the delegation of Vietnamese rectors had set the stage for an ongoing series of visitations/seminars between American and Vietnamese educators and officials, coordinated under the umbrella of the WSU-SP – USAID contract in higher education.

The next major visitation occurred with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of Seminars in Higher Education: “Policy Formulation in American Higher Education,” 29 September – 9 November 1968 as an eighteen-member delegation of vice rectors, deans, directors, and secretaries general from the five Vietnamese universities opened their visit with a 2 – 8 October 1968 seminar held at WSU-SP.

Coinciding with the timing of the upcoming visitation, on 18 September 1968 William Vickerstaff submitted the final draft of his report, “Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam.” The visit by Vickerstaff to Vietnam had gone well and he continued to play a key contractual role as Executive Secretary of the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.

**William Vickerstaff , “Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam,” 18 September 1968**

On his vita, William Vickerstaff listed his “Fields of Interest” as Development, and

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<sup>375</sup> Series 17 Box 1 Folder 4, “Rector Visitation, 1967-Eagon,” (1967).

Educational Administration. Vickerstaff was born on 31 March 1930. In 1956, he received a B.A. from Cornell; then worked in insurance administration with Connecticut General Life Insurance Company from 1956-59 and then Sentry Insurance, Stevens Point, Wisconsin, from 1959-64; from 1964-66 as an investments counselor with The Marshall Company, Stevens Point. In 1966, Vickerstaff brought his skills in business administration to WSU-SP as Special Assistant to the President and Executive Secretary, WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.<sup>376</sup> As noted previously, Vickerstaff's business and daily management skills were part of the foundation for all contract affairs between WSU-SP, the USAID, and the RVN. Both Dreyfus and Eagon credit Vickerstaff with possessing an economic expertise that was well suited for the highly effective business management of all Wisconsin Team contractual matters.<sup>377</sup>

On 18 September 1968, William Vickerstaff tendered his, "Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam." Much of his report represented an adaptation of the Wisconsin-State higher education system. Vickerstaff, however, was careful to note that the current aim of the Wisconsin USAID mission was:

to help them put into practice some of the ideas they had gained here last fall...By no means do we want to superimpose upon them a pattern of our system for operating a university."<sup>378</sup>

Vickerstaff's advisory document addressed many of the concerns that Burdette Eagon had noted, following the October – November 1967 visit by the Vietnamese rectors, in terms of the Vietnamese understanding of administrative and legislative capacities of the university coordinating and advisory councils. Vickerstaff's report was a result of a thirty-day field study in Vietnam. Vickerstaff offered possible guidelines for the establishment of an Administrative Board for the National Universities of the Republic of Vietnam. He went on to define the composition, power, and role of a recommended University Advisory Board. Vickerstaff

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<sup>376</sup> Series 17 Box 8 Folder 4, "Contracts and Consultants," (1967-1972 & Undated).

<sup>377</sup> Dreyfus & Eagon, interviews by author, (2000).

<sup>378</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 6, Clippings (Undated), "Vickerstaff to go to South Vietnam," *Stevens Point Journal*, (Undated).

explored possible models of internal university organization and a variety of definitive functions for faculty that might enhance the totality of the university community for the Vietnamese.

Vickerstaff suggested that the universities of Vietnam be directed by an Administrative Board composed of members appointed by the President of the Republic of Vietnam. The Board membership was to include: each university rector; the minister of education; the chairman of the Senate and House Education Committees; regional lay members; and a Secretary General from the Ministry of Education. The lay members were to be selected from candidates recommended by each of the university rectors and appointed by the President of the Republic of Vietnam. The Secretary General of the Ministry of Education, a non-voting member, was to serve as the permanent secretary of the Administrative Board. The Minister of Education was to serve as chairman of the Board, and the rector of the University of Saigon was to be vice-chairman. The rectors, minister of education, and chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees were to hold Board terms as long as they held their official office. Lay members were to be appointed for three-year terms. Vickerstaff proposed that the Administrative Board have powers to: devise a common policy for the universities that maximized educational opportunities nationally; govern higher education activities by establishing rules, regulations, and by-laws for wise management; determine and approve the curriculum for higher education; set the amount of tuition and fees, and regulate exemptions; create proper accounting and disbursement procedures for managing all monies received, all procedures were to be audited annually; ascertain and submit the annual budget request for the universities to the Minister of Education, which the minister would then present an approved budget to the legislature for funding; maintain appropriate procedures authorizing each rector to disburse budgeted funds and audit all disbursements annually. Acting upon recommendations of the rectors, the Board was to appoint deans, professors, and all other university administrative positions; determine salaries for said positions; recommend three candidates for rector positions to the President of the Republic of Vietnam who would appoint one of the three; authorize the rectors to sign and award degrees, awards, and other matters on

behalf of the Republic of Vietnam and the Board; and establish procedures to receive gifts, grants, and awards; have juridical status, create advisory boards, and conduct other necessary business for the correct management of higher education and the universities.<sup>379</sup>

Vickerstaff suggested that each university rector appoint an Advisory Board of up to twenty-five members, composed of faculty, business people, state and local officials, students, alumni, and other community members. The group was to meet twice a year or when called upon, functioning in an advisory capacity to the rector on curriculum, quality of education, financial matters, other needs of the university, promote good will within the community, and build public support for the university. Vickerstaff's recommendations for the organizational and administrative structure of a university were addressed at great length. With his report he seemingly looked to export the WSU-SP system governance. His design sought to correlate the needs of institutions with a higher quality education and more academic freedom: 1.) The university rector was to be the Chief Administrative Officer and have full responsibility for university operations. As noted, the rector was to be a member of the Administrative Board of the National Universities, and as such submit all matters to the Board that were to be resolved therewithal on behalf of the university. Acting with the advice of committees, councils, and other university personal, each rector was to make recommendations to the Board for appointment of administrative positions, deans, and faculty. The rector was to execute all other functions essential for the benefit of the university. 2.) The Secretary General was to act as the executive administrative assistant to the rector, assisting the rector in the fulfillment of all duties. 3.) A Vice Rector for Academic Affairs was to serve as chief academic officer, responsible to the rector for all academic matters, including the supervision of deans of all faculties, appointment of professors, conduct of professors, salary matters, approval of courses, and all other academic matters. 4.) Each dean was responsible for the administration of each unit of faculty. Courses

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<sup>379</sup> Series 17 Box 11 Folder 4, W.B. Vickerstaff, "Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam," (1968).

taught were to be developed by faculty with the approval of the Academic Council and University Curriculum Committee. In this way, curriculum changes would benefit all faculties, not just one department. Recommendations for the appointment of new deans were to be developed by a committee appointed by the rector, upon which the vice rector of academic affairs, one dean, and three professors were to serve. The appointment of new professors by the Administrative Board would occur after each dean and vice rector of academic affairs had prepared a list of candidates developed in conjunction with the recommendations of faculty members. The vice rector of academic affairs, with the advice of the deans, will administer excellence of instruction and academic standards, including qualifications of students for entrance and graduation. 5.) A Vice Rector for Business Affairs was to be the lead administrative officer responsible for matters of finance, including the preparation of the university budget, proper disbursement of funds, building and equipment maintenance, keep an inventory of all university property, manage all purchases, maintain payroll records, coordinate technical and building planning, and all other business matters. 6.) The Vice Rector for Student Affairs was to be responsible for all Student Services and Activities, including financial aid, student records, housing, counseling, recreational and athletic activities, student union/center, health clinic, and all other services related to the welfare of students.<sup>380</sup>

Vickerstaff recommendations called for the university rector to establish an administrative council, consisting of the rector and all vice rectors. The council was to meet weekly or when called upon by the rector. Vickerstaff envisioned an organizational body for the faculty that would enable it to assist the rector and administrative council and serve the good of the university. As a body, each year the faculty was to elect from its members a chairman, vice chairman, secretary, and a chairman for each of the proposed faculty standing committees. Vickerstaff went the distance with his suggestions for standing faculty committees, including: an Academic Council, Curriculum Committee, Learning Resources Committee, Research

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid.

Committee, Admissions Committee, Honors Committee, Student Affairs Council, Student Welfare Committee, Student Financial Aids Committee, Student Activities Committee, Athletics Committee, Convocation and Commencement Committee, Arts and Lectures Committee, Long Range Goals Advisory Committee, and Committee on Faculty Affairs.<sup>381</sup>

**Seminar in Higher Education: “Policy Formulation in American Higher Education,” 29 September – 9 November 1968**

Vickerstaff submitted his “suggestions” for review as a delegation of Vietnamese university deans and vice rectors were on route to WSU-SP for the second major seminar held under the WSU-SP/USAID/RVN umbrella contract in higher education.



WSU-SP, Vickerstaff, Dreyfus, Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, with Vietnamese Deans and Eagon, Radtke, on steps of WSU-SP University Center

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

The flow of Vietnamese educators through a variety of field tours coordinated by WSU-SP/UWSP continued with this group. The University's second seminar in higher education—"Policy Formulation in American Higher Education," 29 September – 9 November 1968—the program was similar to, but larger than the rector visitation to WSU-SP in 1967. Coordinators, David Coker, Burdette Eagon, John Ellery, and William Vickerstaff prepared for the 2 – 8 October 1968 seminars held at WSU-SP with a nineteen-member delegation of vice rectors, deans, directors, and secretaries general from the five Vietnamese universities. The event marked the start of a six-week observation tour of American universities according to USAID contract PIO/P 730-367-1-80909. The theme of the large group observation tour was: "To gain some insight into the formulation and implementation of the polices in the public and private universities and colleges in the United States."<sup>382</sup>

The chief of the Vietnamese delegation was Dr. Nguyen Cao Hach, Dean, Faculty of Law, University of Saigon. Administratively, Dr. Lam Thanh Liem, Secretary General-University of Saigon, and Mr. Tran Quang Dieu, Secretary General-Dalat University headed the group. Delegates from the University of Hue included: Dr. Le Van Bach, Assistant Dean, Faculty of Medicine; Dr. Nguyen Si Hai, Dean, Faculty of Law; Dr. Nguyen Van Hai, Dean, Faculty of Science; Dr. Nguyen Quoi, Director of Academic Affairs, Faculty of Pedagogy; and Dr. Lam Ngoc Huynh, Dean, Faculty of Letters. Other delegates from the University of Saigon included: Professor Nguyen Quang Nhac, Dean, Faculty of Architecture; Dr. Nguyen Khac Hoach, Dean, Faculty of Letters; Dr. Ly Cong Can, Director of Science Instruction, Faculty of Pedagogy; Professor To Dong, Acting Assistant Dean of Faculty of Pharmacy; and Dr. Tran Van Tan, Dean, Faculty of Pedagogy. Representing the University of Can Tho was: Dr. Pham Huu Hiep, Dean, Faculty of Science; and Dr. Nguyen Van Thach, Dean, Faculty of Pedagogy. Other delegates from the University of Dalat were: Father Le Van Ly, Vice Rector and Dean, Faculty of letters; and Brother Tran Van Nghiem, Dean, Faculty of Pedagogy. Representing Van Hanh University

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<sup>382</sup> Series 17 Box 1 Folder 15, Vietnam Visitation, October 1968-Vietnam Deans Visitation, (1968).

were: Venerable Thich Man Giac, Dean, Faculty of Buddhist Studies; and Venerable Thich Nguyen Tanh, Director of Curricula. The vast majority of the Vietnamese higher education delegates had received their graduate degrees in France, while two had gotten PhD's from the University of Tokyo, with another having done so at Liege University in Belgium, and another at the University of Roma. Only Dr. Nguyen Si Hai had received his graduate degree, a Doctor in Law, from a Vietnamese university, the University of Saigon.<sup>383</sup>

### **Visitation of Vietnamese Minister of Education, 9-10 December 1968**

South Vietnam's minister of higher education, Dr. Le Minh Tri toured the United States in December 1968, visiting several campuses and other locations for official high-level meetings. Dr. Tri visited WSU-SP on 9 – 10 December 1968, coming to Stevens Point to observe the administrative and physical layout of the University while discussing collaborative programs with the University and USAID. Two other Vietnamese educators, Dr. Kiet and Dr. Chanh, and Dr. Earle Hoshall, Deputy Assistant Director of Education, USAID/Education-Vietnam, accompanied Minister Tri. The group got hands-on practice in the fundamentals of educational management by visiting WSU-SP, an institute of higher education that was endeavoring to fulfill new needs caused by growth and modernization. President Dreyfus acted as the official host, as William Vickerstaff, coordinated the campus visit. Others on campus playing key roles in the visitation were: Dr. John B. Ellery, Assistant to the President; Dr. William H. Stielstra, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students; Dr. Gordon Haferbecker, Vice President of Student Affairs; Mr. Leon Bell, Jr., Vice President for Business Affairs; Dr. David L. Coker, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services; Dr. Burdette Eagon, Dean of the College of Education; and Dr. Albert J. Croft, Chair of Speech Department. Interestingly, Croft worked with the USAID in Vietnam prior to coming to WSU-SP.<sup>384</sup> WSU-SP had been working with South Vietnamese educators for two years, with Burdette Eagon, William Vickerstaff, and the late WSU

<sup>383</sup> Series 17 Box 1 Folder 8, Vietnam Visitation, October 1968-Bio-Data for Visitation, (October 1968).

<sup>384</sup> Series 17 Box 2 Folder 2, Ministry of Education Tri Visitation, (December 10, 1968).

President Albertson having gone to Vietnam. WSU-SP President Dreyfus was preparing for his first of what would be three visits to South Vietnam.

Le Minh Tri had been educated in America, attending Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. Tri was part of the University of Saigon medical faculty prior to becoming education minister earlier that year. Team reports had found the University of Saigon to be disjointed, overcrowded, poorly facilitated, and educationally inefficient. Demands on the University were never greater, and its outmoded style bred student problems. Saigon, itself, was increasingly an unpredictable place and educational problems could never totally be insulated from governmental problems and the war. Yet, working sincerely together, USAID and WSU-SP consultants had gotten along well with Tri as they probed for ways of instituting changes at all levels of education.

On 6 January 1969 Tri was killed as two riders on a motorbike tossed a U.S. M26 grenade filled with plastic explosives into Tri's automobile at traffic light on a Saigon street. As noted in Chapter III of this thesis, Tri was actively engaged in the removal of corrupt ministry officials. USAID higher education adviser Earle Hoshall had found Tri to be "a dynamic individual," eager to make changes at all levels of education in Vietnam. On the news of Tri's death, Dreyfus mused:

In the short time he was here he sensed an understanding about the need to develop a good, broad educational system if Vietnam is truly to become a democracy. He understood the old French system of educating the elite was passé. I personally felt optimism for our work there because of his understanding. He was personally sold that this university had the personnel and history to provide Vietnam with the help it needed.<sup>385</sup>

Eagon, Vickerstaff, Dreyfus, and other WSU-SP educators moved forward unrelentingly. Study teams and observation tours continued, as efforts in both Vietnam and Stevens Point, and elsewhere had a mission to complete. The Team's belief in education as a viable means toward South Vietnam's stability and sheer human victory remained solid, even as other battles occurred

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<sup>385</sup> Series 17 Box 2 Folder 2, Ministry of Education tri Visitation, (December 10, 1968), "Viet leader who visited here killed," *Stevens Point Daily Journal*, (January 6, 1969).

and the time was uncertain.<sup>386</sup> Key study-observation tours continued within months of Tri's assassination as the Vietnamese University Secretaries-General, Deans and Vice Rectors to Universities and Colleges came the United States with WSU-SP coordinating the tour. Moreover, in Vietnam, the pace of the survey work done by the Wisconsin Team continued to increase throughout the period of 1969 to 1974.

**Burdette Eagon, "Proposals for the Preparatory Center at the University of Vietnam," July 1969**

In July 1969, an important report was developed by Burdette Eagon, which dealt with the troubles and requirements in the establishment of a two-year preparatory program for eight Faculties at the University of Saigon. In his "Proposals for the Preparatory Center at the University of Vietnam," Eagon cited enduring problems of continually increasing enrollments, the utilization of old facilities for the eight Faculties dispersed about various locations in Cholon and Saigon, deficient salaries for professors, and scarcity of curriculum and library materials. Eagon proposed that a Preparatory Center be established at the University of Saigon to enroll all incoming students passing the Baccalaureate II and provide a two-year general course preparation for students prior to their entrance into one of eight Faculties at the University of Saigon. Eagon noted that on 10 June 1969 Saigon's University Council had asked its University Rector and Ministry of Education to seek such a site. The University Council had done so in response to the 1967 Wisconsin Team recommendations and the Rectors' November 1967 "Report on American Higher Education," issued following their observation tour in the United States, which had called for the revision of basic curriculum. Eagon emphasized that the Center needed to have a separate and identifiable curriculum, individualized student records, regular examinations, and administration. Eagon urged that Preparatory Certificates be awarded to students completing the two-year plan signifying their achievement and making available a listing of certificate holders' for employers looking for "above average" workers. Eagon felt the University of Saigon should

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<sup>386</sup> Dreyfus and Eagon, interviews by author, (2000).

consider providing counselors to assist students in career goals, developing technical programs, and adding additional third year areas of specialization and other subsequent programs.

A further study-observation tour of selected members of the Vietnamese Congress, the Republic of Korea, and Republic of China, to the United States, occurred 4-10 August 1969. This study-observation tour transpired as Cao Van Chieu and Duong Minh Kinh, Chairman and Deputy Chairman/Rapporteur Committee on Culture, Education and Youth, all visited WSU-SP.

***USAID/Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials, 1969***

In 1969, Deputy Assistant Director-Higher Education Dr. C. Earle Hoshall, USAID Office of Education, Saigon, in a status report, *USAID/Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials, 1969*, documented Vietnamese educational problems that had continued to be focal points for USAID program activities. Hoshall described USAID/GVN educational programs within the broader context themes of: Pacification—involving mostly short-range objectives gained through Hamlet and Elementary Education, Adult Education, and expansion of Secondary Education; and Nation-Building—relating mostly to long-range objectives, stressing the interrelationship of all education projects. To accommodate short-range, pacification objectives the USAID Office of Education trained teachers, constructed classrooms, and supplied curriculum and instructional materials to hamlets and villages not already possessing these amenities and services. Hoshall noted, USAID also offered skill and literacy training to students as part of the regular school system, to others in the adult education program, and bolstered the GVN through its advisory support to the Ministry of Revolutionary Development and the Ministry of Education. In terms of long-range goals of Nation-Building, the USAID helped to develop curricula and an educational system molded to provide an underlying foundation of education for workforce and economic growth.

The broad objectives established to meet pacification issues for elementary education, consisted of providing an increased amount of elementary education opportunity “to a maximum number of children in rural areas (where opportunity had been unavailable in the past), in the

shortest period of time possible”<sup>387</sup>

By 1969, over a five year period, USAID education projects had trained more than 18,000 teachers, built more than 11,340 classrooms, and assisted in the production and distribution of 13 million textbooks. In-service education programs for teachers and other personnel were inaugurated or continued with USAID assistance. Hoshall documented that there were five Normal Schools with a total enrollment of 4,400, with 1,450 graduates in the 1967-68 school year, meeting 60 percent of the needs for elementary level teachers in the nation’s expanding program. The USAID and GVN set a goal of 30 June 1971 for the graduation of sufficient teachers to maintain an expanding elementary school system that set a enrollment goal for 85 percent of the eligible school age group by 1972. By providing all elementary school teachers opportunities for professional growth, the USAID and GVN Ministry of Education moved one step closer to its targeted objective of converting all schools to a universal “community school curriculum.” Specifically, elementary school projects looked to construct 4,500 additional classrooms and train 5,200 new teachers; provide in-service workshops for 25,000 school personnel; reprint and distribute 4,900,000 textbooks; improve and reorganize curriculum and administrative procedures, while developing a course-credit system; and enhance educational leadership by providing study-observation experiences in the U.S. or another third country. A USAID Southern Illinois University Contract Team, working to improve Normal Schools in Vietnam, had extended “sixty-six man years” from 1961 through 1968. According to Hoshall, teacher training was the hypothesis of the “educational pyramid,” illustrating that had not been able to produce sufficient numbers of graduates needed as enrollments expanded in all levels of education. A USAID/GVN 90-day Hamlet Teacher Training Course generated one-third of those teaching in elementary schools, and an accelerated one-year course plan was projected to train 500 new secondary teachers for the public schools each year. By the fiscal year

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<sup>387</sup> Earle C. Hoshall, *USAID/Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials*, (USAID: Saigon, 1969), 26.

1971 this advisement was to be trimmed to two advisers for 90 days per annum.<sup>388</sup>

Development and expansion of elementary education placed pressure on the secondary level of education and ultimately on higher education in South Vietnam. In addition, economic development necessitated an expansion of skilled laborers, technicians, and professionals, leading to curriculum changes congruent to an acceptable quality of education. Secondary education was the focal point for an Ohio University Contract Team (No. AID/fe-164) initiated 20 July 1962 and to be terminated in FY 1972. Having grown from a six to fourteen advisers, the Ohio Team instituted teacher in-service and pre-service programs at the Faculty of Pedagogy, University of Saigon, University of Can Tho, and the University of Hue, and implemented a comprehensive secondary school curriculum at the Thu Duc Demonstration Secondary School and twelve Pilot Comprehensive Secondary Schools.<sup>389</sup>

Hoshall found that three Faculties of Pedagogy in South Vietnam trained secondary level teachers, and supplied 80 percent of the expanding secondary system needs, having increased their output to 1,100 teachers per annum. In 1969, 22.5 percent of the eligible secondary age level was enrolled; two-thirds of these were enrolled in private schools. Hoshall noted that USAID aid was to be provided until enrollment reached 24 percent (1970), at which time the GVN was expected to be capable of continuing growth at a slower rate, unassisted.<sup>390</sup>

Hoshall attributed many of the gains in effective educational growth to the USAID Instructional Materials Project, its development and distribution of instructional materials for all levels of education was unprecedented in Vietnam. Assistance for Technical and Vocational Education had extended curricular offerings at secondary and first year college level. New programs in Agricultural Education were launched in secondary and college level, and the National Agricultural Center had instituted a four-year degree program. With USAID assistance, an English curriculum was produced via the instructional materials introduced at the secondary

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<sup>388</sup> Ibid., 2, 26-28.

<sup>389</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid., 28.

and college levels, and incorporated in new teacher training programs in GVN institutes of higher education. Additionally, USAID work in Adult Education continued to design immediate experiences in vocational skills, adult literacy, health education and recreation, and other studies to another portion of the Vietnamese population long-denied educational opportunities, with 60,000 people benefiting from the program by 1969. A USAID University of Washington project in Library Development in Vietnam centralized cataloging and set up a National Library program, training GVN library personnel and working to extend library services to all levels of education and expand public libraries. Hoshall declared that, “extensive studies” of higher education pointed to needs for further development of agricultural and engineering education, and as noted, teacher education, plus development of university administrative organization, registrar and student services, libraries and other facilities. Resources were limited, but according to Hoshall, indigenous resources were to be maximized. This extended to higher education curriculum development and instruction as education was growing exponentially.<sup>391</sup>

In his report Hoshall recognized the work of three USAID University Contract teams working in higher education: the University of Florida’s work with the national Institute of Agriculture; the University of Missouri-Rolla’s work in Engineering education; and Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point effort to develop a pool of academic and administrative specialists, such as controllers, registrars, guidance personnel, and deans to serve as on-call consultants to the five Vietnamese universities for terms of 3 to 6 months. Hoshall concurred with early findings of the Wisconsin Team, noting that the project’s primary mission had identified needed changes and assisted in an ongoing effective and relevant transformation of higher education in a manner linked to the roots of Vietnamese society. Hoshall applauded the Wisconsin Team’s recommendations for curriculum revision, a credit hour system, library expansion, and the formation of a Governing Board for national universities. Hoshall cited the frequent changing of Ministers of Education and a lack of transitional provisions as fundamental

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid. 29-30.

weaknesses that could only be remedied with the formation of a Governing Board.<sup>392</sup>

Hoshall noted that, beginning in July 1964, some 43 “free world” countries supplied humanitarian assistance in the field of education. By 1969, assistance totals had reached \$24,588,000 or 26 percent of Free World assistance (other than the U.S.), exceeded only by medical humanitarian aid programs. Projects supplied technical training, equipment, constructed facilities, published and distributed textbooks, staged curriculum planning and instructional materials workshops, and provided student scholarships and professors for higher education.<sup>393</sup>

### **Additional Wisconsin Team Reports**

The Wisconsin Contract remained at the forefront of USAID higher education projects with the January 1970 visitation to Vietnam by Dr. Lee Sherman Dreyfus and Dr. Fred E. Harris. The Wisconsin Team leaders held consultations with President Thieu, the Ministry of Education, and top university officials. Individual meetings occurred with other Team members and university rectors to discuss operational and professional problems. Their discussions resulted in a variety of consultancies that might address an assemblage of problems and a team report on consulting, “University Development, Manpower Needs Documents and Policies Related to the Governance of Vietnamese Universities.”<sup>394</sup>

In May 1970, Dr. Winthrop C. Difford, of Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, developed another key report. He had traveled to Vietnam and served as a consultant while endeavoring to determine the future needs for consultancies at various Vietnamese institutions of higher education. Difford recommended ways to enhance and activate the on-going plan for working relationships between Vietnamese institutions and visiting specialists.<sup>395</sup>

Dr. J. Kenneth Little served as a Wisconsin Team consultant conferring with GVN and

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<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 19-30.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>394</sup> Series 17 Box 11 Folder 6, “University Development, Manpower Needs Documents and Policies Related to the Governance of Vietnamese Universities,” (1967 and undated).

<sup>395</sup> Series 17 Box 11 Folder 8, “A Report from Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point-Contract USAID/VN,” (May 1970).

Vietnamese university officials on needs and designing plans for student service programs extending beyond the classroom. His “Observations and Reflections on University of South Vietnam (Saigon),” was published on 7 July 1970. Little addressed ten primary areas for student personnel services.<sup>396</sup> Kenneth Little had been a colleague of Dreyfus at UW-Madison, where he worked with Student Affairs. Little suffered a heart attack while in Vietnam, but was able to finish his report upon his return to the states. When I interviewed Dreyfus, he noted he had felt responsible for having a part in sending Kenneth Little to Vietnam. Yet, upon his return, Little reported he had a “marvelous experience.” Little had benefited from the quick action of American military medical experts and received special treatment returning on a DC-9 under the care of a doctor and nurses traveling with wounded GI’s.<sup>397</sup> In May of 1973, Little declined another assignment as part of the Wisconsin Team noting:

In review of total circumstances, personal and other, I have decided that it would be unwise for me to accept such an assignment this summer. The relationship with your staff and with the educators in South Vietnam remain strong and pleasant, and I wish your project every possible success and a lasting benefit to professional education in South Vietnam.<sup>398</sup>

In July of 1970, WSU-SP Registrar Leonard Gibb acted in conjunction with Little’s field observations to design a working draft for basic student services. Gibb’s, “Basic Student Services Program,” recognized that each Vietnamese university differed in its needs, given the diversity of facilities, enrollment, and other elements. Gibb’s report emphasized that the establishment of fundamental student service programs as necessary and positive assets to universities and students. He felt little progress had been achieved in implementing student services primarily because Vietnamese administrators saw such lack of services as tantamount with dissident student activities; also the sheer scarcity of qualified faculty had prohibited transfer of trained academics to non-teaching positions. Gibb saw both South Vietnam’s students and educators as

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<sup>396</sup> Series 17 Box 12 Folder 2, Kenneth J. Little, “Observations and Reflections on the University of Saigon,” (July 7, 1970).

<sup>397</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

<sup>398</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon, (1966-1975 & Undated), “Little to Eagon,” (May 5, 1973).

victims of a drained economy owing to the war and the unstable political state of affairs. Gibb presented his findings to the Ministry of Education with the hope that a new approach could be found to dissolve frustrations, which had continued to build. He suggested that if it was not yet possible to develop institutional wide basic student services perhaps each Faculty at individual universities could initiate supplemental programs as the search continued for a Director of Student Services.<sup>399</sup>

Dr. Jesse Tarwater traveled to Vietnam as a Team consultant from 6 July – 27 August 1970, issuing a report entitled, “Basic Studies: Common Trunk.” Tarwater projected the premise of a definitive need for a basic studies program delivered via community colleges. He suggested four locations for possible community colleges and a range of assistance measures available for their establishment.<sup>400</sup>

Dr. O.W. (Tad) Hascall began his longtime service as a Team consultant 15 Sept. – 15 Nov. 1970, presenting a description of the current registration and admission procedures at Vietnamese Universities. In his report, “Assistance in Modernization of Student Records in South Vietnamese Universities,” Hascall presented a review of the implementation of a new program to strengthen admissions, registration and student records at the University of Hue, elaborating on the rationale of Hue as a demonstration model for this project.<sup>401</sup>

A seminar was coordinated at WSU-SP from 18 – 31 October, 1970, by Burdette Eagon, William Vickerstaff, Winthrop Difford, and Leonard Gibb. They issued a report, “Evaluation Seminar in Higher Education, WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.,” summarizing the two weeks of meetings held at WSU-SP between Vietnamese University Rectors, the Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Education officials, and representatives of the WSU-SP Foundation Inc. and USAID. The conference provided additional insight into the modernization of higher

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<sup>399</sup> Series 17 Box 11 Folder 9, Leonard L. Gibb, “Basic Student Services Program,” (July 1970).

<sup>400</sup> Series 17 Box 12 Folder 1, Jesse W. Tarwater, “Basic Studies: Common Trunk,” (1970).

<sup>401</sup> Series 17 Box 12 Folder 3-7, O.W. Hascall, “Experiment & Assistance in Modernization of Student Records in South Vietnamese Universities,” (1970).

education and evaluated the progress of reformation of Vietnamese higher education. The resulting report charted priorities for consultations as offered by the Vietnamese University Rectors.<sup>402</sup>

James Redford and John Rowlett, representatives of Caudill Rowlett Scott Firm, Architects-Planners from Houston, Texas, served as Team Campus Planning Consultants from 28 March – 11 April 1971. They conducted an “in-country” inventory of existing South Vietnamese higher education facilities. The consultants developed planning procedures for the five Vietnamese Universities in concurrence with GVN officials, with an emphasis on a more thorough planning procedure for the new campus at Thu Duc.<sup>403</sup> Burdette Eagon visited Vietnam for a follow-up and evaluation with Ministry of Education and USAID Education during July – August, 1971.

The years of 1971 and 1972 continued to be busy ones for consultants associated with the Wisconsin Contract. Dr. Paul Proctor, Chairman, ITV-EM, University of Missouri, Rolla, MO., visited Vietnam during September and October, 1971, to work on a Team report, “Relating Area Resources to Curriculum Planning.”<sup>404</sup> At the same time, WSU-SP hosted an exchange seminar entitled, “Policy Formulation and Administrative Structure in American Higher Education.” Eagon and Vickerstaff served as coordinators for this seminar with deans from the Vietnamese Universities.<sup>405</sup> Team consultant, O.W. Hascall, reported on the Vietnamese Registration and Record System, in October, 1971.<sup>406</sup> In October and November of 1971, long term team member Dr. William Wood focused on a study of administrative procedures at University of Hue.<sup>407</sup> An administrative internship, sponsored by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher

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<sup>402</sup> Series 17 Box 12 Folder 8, Eagon, Vickerstaff, Difford, & Gibb, “Report of Seminar in Higher Education,” (1970).

<sup>403</sup> Series 17 Box 12 Folder 9, “Planning Analysis Higher Education, (1971).

<sup>404</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 2, Paul Proctor, “University Curricular Review and Recommendations,” (1971).

<sup>405</sup> Series 17 Box 3 Folder 11, Eagon & Vickerstaff, Seminar in Higher Education, Deans Visit, & Box 12 Folder 10, “Policy Formulation and Administrative Structure in American Higher Education,” (1970).

<sup>406</sup> Series 17 Box 6 Folder 2, Box 28 Folder 10, O.W. Hascall, (1970-73 & Undated).

<sup>407</sup> Series 17 Box 8 Folder 9, William R. Wood, (1971-1973 & Undated).

Education (AACTE), occurred at WSU-SP from November of 1971 to February of 1972, with Dr. Nguyen Van Hai working with Eagon. Nguyen Van Hai had been a familiar visitor to Stevens Point since his 1968 “Report of American Higher Education.”<sup>408</sup>

In December 1971 through January of 1972, Dr. Ray Van Cleef, Dean of Student Affairs at Terrant County Community College, and Dr. B. Lamar Johnson, Executive Director of the League of Innovation in Community College, Los Angeles, traveled to Vietnam under the Wisconsin Contract, conducting a related survey and publishing a report on, “Assistance in the Planning and Development of Community Colleges.” In 1973, they would return to complete a follow-up study on community colleges.<sup>409</sup>

In these years after 1967, many of the initial difficulties had continued and new deficiencies surfaced. Reform faced serious challenge as each year brought with it an increase in the uncertainties of American credibility and its commitment to Vietnam, the protracted war itself, and the stability of the GVN. In 1971, Earle Hoshall, the Deputy Assistant Director for Higher Education USAID/Saigon, reflected on his two tours in Vietnam:

The fact that progress has been made during these...years is truly amazing and a fine tribute to the educational leaders of Vietnam, and reveals the support of the Vietnamese for the universities...Those of us who lived through this period at times were not wondering whether progress in higher education could be made but rather whether the Republic of Vietnam could survive and recover from devastation. But it survived and recovered, and progress in higher education was made.<sup>410</sup>

Hoshall restated the original tenets of the first Wisconsin Team when he noted that the objective of the higher education project is: “to assist in the development of an effective and relevant higher education system, with roots in the Vietnamese society, that will meet current and long range needs.”<sup>411</sup> In 1969, Hoshall had noted that the follow-up Wisconsin Project in Higher

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<sup>408</sup> Series 17 Box 24 Folder 16, Nguyen Van Hai, (November 9, 1968).

<sup>409</sup> Series 17 Box 26 Folder 18, “Community College Concept,” (1971-1973).

<sup>410</sup> Earle C. Hoshall, *Higher Education in Vietnam, 1967-1971*, (Saigon: USAID, 1972), 15.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

Education had been initiated in FY 1968, with an anticipated termination in FY 1978.<sup>412</sup> Then with his 1972 status report, Hoshall declared that for Vietnamese educators, the Wisconsin State University- Stevens Point/University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point had remained a hands-on model institute of higher education. The University, itself, was undergoing unprecedented growth and instituting practical reform. All the while, the Wisconsin Team held the firm endorsement of the USAID, Saigon and the principal Vietnamese educators. With his reports, Hoshall, affirmed the close “professional and personal ties” WSU-SP had with their Vietnamese counterparts and the “intimate knowledge of their problems, ideas, and hopes for the future” the Wisconsin Team held. “No other institution has such comparable insight or personal relationships.”<sup>413</sup>

Overall, the USAID had seen that despite the assurance of American advisors that change did not aim at replacing the traditional French-Vietnamese system with an American one, often specific USAID educational programs were labeled as heavily American-oriented. At the same time, elements of the ministry officials and educators at the University of Saigon were deeply entrenched in the Franco-Vietnamese conventions and slow to implement reform. In 1954, the University of Saigon was the only public university in South Vietnam; its enrollment was 2,180. In 1970, enrollment at the three public universities of the Republic of Vietnam had increased to 46,736. In 1970, however, the total number of graduates from all three faculties of higher learning was 632.<sup>414</sup>

With his 1967 – 1971 status report Hoshall summarized the scope of USAID Division of Higher Education stratagem for reform. For purposes of this thesis I have grouped and paraphrased his USAID objectives:

- 1) Provide and/or reinforce a foundation for change through study-observation tours to the United States, made by Rectors, Deans and Secretary-Generals, Ministry of Education officials, and selected Legislators. The goal was to provide insights to modern higher education and motivate the interested parties to institute reform.

<sup>412</sup> Earle C. Hoshall, *USAID/Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials*, (Saigon: USAID, 1969), 28.

<sup>413</sup> Earle C. Hoshall, *Higher Education in Vietnam*, 41-42.

<sup>414</sup> USAID, *U. S. Economic Assistance to South Vietnam...*, Vol. II, 522.

- 2) Support and organize regional and national seminars and meetings between officials, professors, administrators, and others interested in higher education. The goal was to produce through a synthesis of ideas, a consensus of opinion.
- 3) Incorporate and implement selected field-survey recommendations, especially the formation of a National Policy for Higher Education. The goal was to improve governance.
- 4) Expand aid to the Faculties of Pedagogy. The goal was to train teachers.
- 5) Aid the development of engineering education and agricultural education. The goal was to meet the special needs of a developing nation.
- 6) Assist in the planning and reorganization of university administrative structures, initiate new services, improve curricula, and amend statutes. Special consultants were to supplement the services of direct hire assistance.
- 7) Abet assistance to private universities through grants to the Asia Foundation and via the use of special consultants.
- 8) Assist in the construction of facilities and provide feasible equipment.
- 9) Support the development of university libraries and assist the training of librarians.
- 10) Furnish 40/50 participant grants to send university professors to the United States to work toward graduate degrees.
- 11) Promote the development of programs in Economics and Business Administration, so as aid vital economic growth. (Hoshall noted that funds for this objective were never secured.)
- 12) In 1969, an objective was added, which favored the expansion of community junior colleges, as institutions that would round out the system of higher education by providing the middle-level skills needed for national development and reduce the enrollment pressures on the universities.<sup>415</sup>

The first objectives had been to position and strengthen a framework and readiness for change in higher education, via a series of study-observation tours to the United States. The Wisconsin Team had coordinated these tours and assisted in the delivery of the results of these initial observation tours at the first national conferences on higher education held in South Vietnam in 1968 and 1969. The tours had furnished understanding and insight into the modeling, codification, and implementation of policy by American institutes of higher education.

Vietnamese educators worked with Wisconsin Team counterparts, observing the basic functions

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 20-22.

of U.S. institutions, in terms of: the relationships among schools, the administrative structure, the financing of higher education, and the roles of regents, trustees, legislators, governors, student groups, school boards, and professional organizations.<sup>416</sup> Hoshall reserved his highest praise for those associated with the Wisconsin Contract as he credited the Stevens Point seminars and tours for having,

contributed more substantially than any other input to the development of an atmosphere or readiness for change which has made possible the progressive changes that have taken place in higher education in Vietnam during the last four years. They provided new insights and understandings, new frames of reference, but more importantly they helped create the motivation and stimulation necessary for change and improvement.<sup>417</sup>

For the Vietnamese, WSU-SP had become a hands-on model institute of growth in higher education. For the members of the Wisconsin Team, Vietnam had become an educational platform designed for proposals in favor of reform. This two-way partnership in development would continue through the end of 1973.

***The Baccalaureate Examination in the Republic of Vietnam, Wisconsin State University Stevens Point Foundation, Inc., June, 1972***

In June of 1972, the USAID higher education contract with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc. financed an extensive “in-country” study of the Vietnamese Baccalaureate Examination. This study is worthy of a lengthy review in terms of its historical account of educational testing practices, a study that the Wisconsin Team had called for as early as 1967. O.W. Hascall, Regional Director of the American Testing Program, was retained under the Wisconsin Contract to be the study’s chief author. Prior to Hascall’s arrival in the Republic of Vietnam, the USAID Saigon Office of Education and GVN had prepared a preliminary report through the collaboration of USAID Chief of Secondary Education, Dr. Charles Reed and the Ministry of Education Director of Testing, Nguyen Kim Linh. Hascall worked closely with University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point chief-of-party Dr. Burdette Eagon and, while in Vietnam

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>417</sup> Ibid., 28.

teamed up with Assistant Minister of Education, Nguyen Thanh Linh; Envoy in the Ministry of Education, Ton That Toai; Nguyen Kim Linh; and Minister of Education, Ngo Khac Tinh. Eagon noted, in the report's Introduction, that the study outlined plans for the implementation of a more harmonious restructuring for curriculum and testing. Eagon recognized this to be higher education's Achilles' heel. Reformation of testing would serve to broaden the overall perspective of educational organization and curriculum planning in Vietnam and address the nature of its transitional problems.

For decades the rigidity of the French system had limited educational opportunities in South Vietnamese primary elementary, secondary, and higher education to children of wealthy families. In the 1972 report, Hascall noted that compulsory education still had not become a reality in the Republic of Vietnam, and some sixty percent of enrolled students attended non-public schools with semi-private schools continuing to receive some public funding. With only forty percent of secondary schools being public, a modicum of uniformity existed within the system. Private schools ranged from being very good or very poor, with some schools even in ill-equipped private homes, and taught by teachers with questionable credentials. The Bac II became a type of common denominator used for the assessment and certification of a designated minimum level of achievement designating graduation from secondary school.

A new system with a curriculum structured to meet the unique needs of the Vietnamese people emerged very slowly. Even as primary schools became available to all Vietnamese children, in rural and urban areas alike, there was a noticeably high attrition rate after the third grade, resulting in the consolidation of the fourth and fifth grade levels. Upon the completion of fifth grade, a nationally designed "Sixth Grade Entrance Examination" determined students' eligibility to enter the sixth grade. Problematically, the cutoff score for this exam varied from year to year, dependant upon the number of school facilities, seats, and teachers available regionally. In 1972, sixty percent of those fifth graders writing the exam were successfully certified for entrance into the sixth grade. With the future addition of facilities and adequate

teachers the Sixth Grade Entrance Examination was to be eliminated. A similarity did exist between Vietnamese and American secondary education. Vietnamese schools were akin to junior/middle school and senior high school, in terms of grade-level divisions, with grades 6, 7, 8, and 9 grouped as “First-cycle Secondary Schools,” and grades 10, 11, and 12 grouped in “Second-cycle Secondary Schools.” While entrance into tenth grade was comparatively unrestricted, passage of another national examination, the “Bac I” or Baccalaureate First Part Examination, was a prerequisite for entrance into grade 12. Starting in 1975, entrance to twelfth grade was open to all students passing grade 11. Yet, the goal of obtaining certification from the Second Cycle of Education for having completed twelfth grade was dependent upon the successful passage of the “Bac II,” Baccalaureate Second Part Examination, as graduates of grade 12 who failed the Bac II failed also to net the benefits of full high school graduates. Only certified graduates of the Bac II were qualified for admission to higher education, deferred from the military draft or eligible for induction as an officer, and deemed suitable for more auspicious types of employment.<sup>418</sup>

At the tenth grade level students were required to choose a particular curriculum track for one’s remaining years in secondary school. These tracks or majors were called “sections,” usually designated as sections A, B, C, and D: A, Experimental Science which emphasized physics and chemistry; B, Mathematical Science; C, Modern Literature with English and French as the foreign languages, which emphasized philosophy; and D, Classical Literature with Chinese as the foreign language, which also emphasized philosophy. During the ten year period from 1962 through 1972, secondary school enrollment more than tripled, from 52,981 to 168,400. While in 1962-1963, close to one-tenth of the students enrolled in sections C or D by 1971-1972, only one out of seventeen students enrolled in sections C or D; Hascall accounted this change to “rumors” of problematical grading in sections C and D, and the ins and outs of admission to

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<sup>418</sup> O. W. Hascall, *The Baccalaureate Examination in the Republic of Vietnam*, (Stevens Point: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc. 1972), 3-5.

higher education as the exalted divisions of higher education accepted only graduates of sections A or B.<sup>419</sup>

In 1972, enrollment opportunities in technical, agricultural, and comprehensive high schools were still quite limited in the Republic of Vietnam. The Bac II exam consisted of a series of eleven essay type examination questions measuring achievement in subjects across the full range of secondary curriculum. During the 1965-66 school year, Citizenship Education was added to the curriculum for grades 6 through 11. The history/geography/civics sub-test of the Bac II became the only objective, multiple choice portion of the Bac II, made up of 120 items, 40 in each area, one hour-and-a-half in length, in which all student sections answered the same questions. Hascall found merit in the changeover to objective testing. He emphasized the importance of educational test development workshops for teachers and administrators, and a consolidation of the separate examination formats (A, B, C, and D; Agricultural and Technical Bac II's and the Comprehensive High School Certificate exam) into a singularly applicable exam with prescribed necessary levels of achievement for sub-tests in correlation with each major's curricula emphasis. The total Bac II amounted to three full days of testing, scheduled twice annually, usually in June and August, with scoring procedures taking one-month. Institutes of higher education postponed the opening of their fall semesters until October or even November, as prospective freshman awaited their Bac II reports. Hascall recommended setting time limits for a new test that could reduce the examination schedule to one day. Hascall found that the proportions of students passing had not stabilized by 1972, nor were the projections very optimistic due to problematic nature of the examination and educational conditions. In 1969, only 39 percent Bac II candidates passed, with 62 percent passing in 1970, and 53 percent passing in 1971. In 1974, with the anticipated elimination of the Bac I, and its service function as a screening process, test volume was expected to involve 150,000 candidates, doubling the level in

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid., 5-7.

1972.<sup>420</sup>

Attempts toward the modernization of the Bac II included conversion of numerous sub-tests to objective type tests and the negotiation of a contract between the Ministry of Education and IBM, in Saigon, for processing Bac II registration materials and the printing of examination results by computers. With the culmination of two years of planning a new registration form was developed, incorporating student serial code numbers and testing code numbers, which enabled IBM to chronicle keypunched data onto a master tape, thwarting the flood of manually produced records and making computerized statistical data a significant balancing component of academic testing and assessment as data was stored and manipulated to produce pertinent results. IBM and Saigon officials worked together to develop for the first time computer generated Vietnamese alphabet with accent marks.<sup>421</sup>

In 1972, other problems remained for the Bac II such as: questions over a lack of empirical equivalency between sub-tests; the test development staff's dependency on antiquated stenciling and mimeographing machines; the sheer timeframe and inconsistency of hand scoring of essays, given the projected 70,000 candidates in 1972 graded by test graders of varying skills and schedules. Given the magnitude of importance for the future life of students, there were ongoing educational security issues involving every means of cheating, bribery, and intimidation. There were numerous documented cases of violence at test centers, as soldiers often brought their weapons to test centers, and even rumors of testing supervisors having been shot and murdered.<sup>422</sup>

A statistical benchmark needed to be established, against which reforms to the Bac II could be measured. As it stood, the Bac II was a symptom of its environment, as students, regardless of their years of schooling, were not considered high school graduates until they had passed the Bac II. Further, the number of a teacher's students passing the given subject on the

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<sup>420</sup> Ibid., 11-14.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid., 36-37, 43.

<sup>422</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings (1967-1974), "It's a brave tester who calls 'em as he sees 'em," *Guidepost*, (American Personnel and Guidance Association, December 8, 1972).

Bac II determined a teacher's status. In turn, principals of public schools were often retained or fired depending on the percentage of their school's students passing the Bac II. Numerous private schools' very existence correlated to the bolstering of their curriculum with cram courses designed so students could pass the Bac II. Low status and shortfalls in enrollment were connected to various high school subjects included in school curriculums but not tested on in the Bac II; among these were important skill and service oriented classes like typing and the business courses offered in comprehensive high schools. Hascall noted that at the time of his report no frequency distributions had been carried out, which could be used to measure the Bac II examination's validity by tracking correlations between test scores and grades of students from secondary schools with good standards.<sup>423</sup>

In the 1970's, the Bac II represented a single instrument that could stifle or bring about change and reform in the structure and curriculum of Vietnamese secondary education—the necessary precursor to Vietnamese higher education. The long-range purposes of the Bac II and efforts to reform the Bac II were fundamental steps that could lead to the modernization of Vietnamese secondary curriculum, teaching methods, and facilities, and serve as a catalyst for change in other examination formats, including the development of a new Ninth Grade Examination, in place of the Bac I, and put a timely emphasis on career guidance. Changes in teacher training programs would be fruitless if the most expedient goal remained thinly for students to learn whatever was necessary to pass the test. Costly new textbooks, libraries, and laboratories would garner dust if they seemingly had no relationship to the Bac II. Classroom exams and university entrance exams were redesigned objectively to act as supplements for the new Bac II. The long term goal was to stabilize the Bac II with supportive statistics leading to its ultimate elimination as a requirement for certification of high school graduation. Given statistical verification identifying high schools with improved, standardized curriculums with students earning valid marks, these secondary schools were to become certified high schools and their

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<sup>423</sup> Hascall, *The Baccalaureate Examination in the Republic of Vietnam*, 44-55.

graduates excused from the national examination. Educational reform, in general, faced an enigma in the Republic of Vietnam, as all terms of future development and change faced the pressing problem of raising costs and shortage of resources in a country at war, and in 1972, a country under martial law. Team recommendations revealed that the energy and resources expended on Bac II assessment and certification of individual students could be more prudently spent on the assessment and certification of schools and educational systems.<sup>424</sup>

### **The Continuing Work of the Wisconsin Team: Final Reports of Burdette Eagon and those involved in USAID/WSU-SP/UWSP Mission to Vietnam**

In January of 1972, WSU-SP Chancellor Lee Sherman Dreyfus acting as both a chief representative of the Wisconsin Team and an Educational Consultant to the Secretary of the Army Froehlke, compiled a team survey entitled, “Recommendations for the Use of Military Facilities for Educational Purposes.” This in-depth report represented Dreyfus’s final official visit to the Republic of Vietnam.<sup>425</sup> Burdette Eagon visited Vietnam at the same time, working closely with the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and USAID-Education, and issuing a key team report, “Projections for Higher Education,” looking at higher education’s future strategy for Vietnam. Eagon returned to Vietnam 3 – 19 August 1972, to lead an extensive consultation survey with the Ministry of Education and USAID/Saigon education officials, covering campus planning, community colleges, curricular reform, and graduate education.<sup>426</sup> Wisconsin Team consultant, Dr. William Wood worked in Vietnam from August through September of 1972 developing a “Plan for Reorganization of National System of Higher Education.”<sup>427</sup>

On 11 – 12 October 1972, a major Consultant Conference with the Chief of Higher Education-Vietnam and all current consultants associated with the UWSP Wisconsin Contract was held in Stevens Point. In attendance were: Dr. Burdette Eagon, Dean of Educational Services

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<sup>424</sup> Ibid., 44-55.

<sup>425</sup> Series 17, Box 13 Folder 3, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, “Recommendations for the Use of Military Facilities for Educational Purposes,” (January 1972).

<sup>426</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 6, Burdette Eagon, “Higher Education in Vietnam,” (1972-1973).

<sup>427</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 11, William Wood, “National System of Higher Education,” (1971-1973).

and Innovative Programs, UWSP; Dr. Charles Green, Chief of Higher Education, USAID, Vietnam; Dr. O. W. Hascall, director American College Testing Program (ACT), Rocky Mountain Region, Boulder, CO.; Mr. Clare Humphrey, Country Director-Vietnam, Asia Foundation, San Francisco, CA.; Dr. B. Lamar Johnson, Executive Director, League for Innovation in Community College, Los Angeles, CA.; Dr. Paul Proctor, Chairman, ITV-EM, University of Missouri, Rolla, MO.; Mr. Harry S. Ransom, AIA, Professor of Architecture and Architectural Consultant, Rice University, Houston, TX.; Dr. Ray Van Cleef, Dean of Student Affairs, Tarrant County Community College, Fort Worth, TX.; Mr. William Vickerstaff, Special Assistant to the Chancellor, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, Wisconsin; Dr. William Wood, President, University of Alaska, College, Alaska; along with other UWSP educators and special guests.<sup>428</sup>

Over the next several months' Team consultants traveled between Vietnam and UWSP working to publish a series of Wisconsin Team reports. At the time these were definitely not viewed as a final series of reports, but the momentum for change was in air as a Cease Fire in the war became formalized. Three reports were developed in December 1972 – January 1973, as Dr. Paul Proctor compiled a survey on “Instructional Development Planning,”<sup>429</sup> Harry Ransom published a survey on campus planning,<sup>430</sup> and Dr. B. Lamar Johnson reported on community college planning.<sup>431</sup> Another administrative internship, sponsored by the AACTE, between Dr. Le Van Diem and Dr. Burdette Eagon, began at UWSP in February of 1973.

### **1973 Cease-Fire: Reports of “Wait-and-See, Optimism and Progress”**

In 1973, with the coming of the New Year the struggle between the two republics of Vietnam and their relationship with the United States would undergo dramatic change. For those associated with the Wisconsin Contract and the USAID, optimism persisted even as the future

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<sup>428</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 7, Consultant Conference, (October 11-12, 1972).

<sup>429</sup> Series 17 Box 7 Folder 3, Box 26 Folder 12, Paul Proctor, “Campus Planning,” (1970-1973 & Undated).

<sup>430</sup> Series 17 Box 7 Folder 4, Box 31 Folder 5, Harry Ransom, (1972-1973 & Undated).

<sup>431</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 8, B. Lamar Johnson, “The Community Junior College in Vietnam,” (January 31, 1973).

was not clear. USAID staff reductions would be noticeable, but throughout the year the educational mission of the Wisconsin Team continued with a note of regularity. Seemingly, with the 1973 Cease-Fire the GVN might be able to address more Team recommendations that had been devoted to the reformation of archaic institutions and the construction of new institutions. Reports noted this as a time when societal institutions could benefit from the reallocation of resources which had been needed for the war. Reports now mentioned both the need to reform and rebuild.<sup>432</sup>

The Wisconsin Team even saw this as an opportune time to draw from their experience in Vietnam to assist the USAID in an even wider perspective. On 28 February 1973 Eagon wrote to Dr. Curtis Baker of the USAID Washington Office, "submitting an idea for consideration that... would be of future benefit to AID programs as they relate to university reform in developing countries." Eagon asked for comments as he purposefully extended a formal proposal for UWSP to build upon its relations with the USAID, "to develop the staff and resources necessary to make a systematic study of the processes involved in university reforms in the developing countries."<sup>433</sup>

With his "Preliminary Project Proposal University Reforms in Developing Countries," Eagon noted that to date there had not been an evaluation study of the wide-range of USAID projects engaged in upgrading institutions of higher education in developing countries. Eagon suggested amalgamating the "body of knowledge" from the hundreds of university educators from developing nations that had received assistance and those from developed nations who had served as consultants. Eagon recalled that the United States and other industrial nations had been disappointed that their higher education contracts had not had the predicated developmental effects on underdeveloped countries. Eagon brought to the table the long-standing premise of the

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<sup>432</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 12, Charles Green, *Some Current Observations...*, Box 13 Folder 9, Burdette Eagon, "Vietnam Visit," (1973).

<sup>433</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 13, Burdette Eagon, "Preliminary Project Proposal University Reforms in Developing Countries," (February 1973).

Wisconsin Team when he proposed to focus his new study on how best to relate university reform procedures to the “needs of underdeveloped countries.” Eagon sought to add to this badly needed topic by ascertaining systematic findings instead of relying on guesswork. He stated that UWSP had six years of experience in identifying “change-agents.” The Wisconsin Team led projects had recognized the manner in which basic reforms were identified, initiated, and accepted, while elevating the abilities of their university counterparts. Eagon detailed the history of the Wisconsin Contract, recalling the Albertson led preliminary report and the resulting final report, which stood as the basis for over six years of follow-up programs and the protracted USAID contract. He noted the long line of consultants who had served under WSU-SP/UWSP, the USAID and other sponsorship. Eagon recounted the Wisconsin Team philosophy of believing in shared leadership during the reform process, with Vietnamese educators playing the fundamental role when instituting change. The Wisconsin Team stood ready to employ the experience it had gained from working with one nation, the Republic of Vietnam, and a nucleus from which wider higher education projects could gain. Eagon proposed a five-year plan geared to the eventual adoption of procedures for the development of “university-to-university” relations.<sup>434</sup>

The Wisconsin proposal called for UWSP to carry out a comprehensive search of resources so as to develop and maintain a library collection documenting the efforts of modern universities to assist in the reformation of higher education in less developed countries (LDC). A bibliography of technical assistance to higher education in LDC was to be developed. The designed research was to be aimed at the discovery of pertinent ideals and reform procedures for the initiation of successful change. Reform interactions were seen as encompassing major administrative, curriculum, economic, and management relationships. Intensive studies and seminars were to be scheduled, resulting in the publication of cumulative reports. A team of consultants was to be available to assist universities of LDC. Special programs would develop as university-to-university relationships developed. These were to include: cooperative projects,

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<sup>434</sup> Ibid., 1-5.

internships, exchange programs and independent study for university leaders and technical assistants of LDC.<sup>435</sup>

Eagon drew from his six years of experience as an AID consultant when as part of his proposal he reviewed the history of USAID assistance to higher education. He noted that since 1955, USAID had allocated over \$400,000,000 toward university development in sixty-three countries. While the overall goal had been to effectively connect higher education to total national development, advisors, technical assistants, academic consultants, and career USAID personnel had all operated basically from “accrued experience.” Projects and consultations had been creative, but not much systematic research had been done to find which services were largely productive. Eagon appealed for increased “interaction on a broad base” between USAID and university consultants, advisors, and their foreign counterparts intended for the reform and effective modification of procedures for university development. Eagon saw seminars as an avenue for the revitalization of USAID and academic personnel from American and foreign universities. With his proposal, Eagon envisioned employing the area studies programs (African, Asian, Far Eastern, Indian, and Latin American studies) of the entire University of Wisconsin System, as new and existing resources would prove invaluable and be enhanced through conferences, seminars, research findings, survey reports, and archival materials. Eagon called for UWSP, UW-Madison, UW-Milwaukee, and Chapter 37 to “serve as the basic unit of resource,” with UWSP acting as the physical base and coordinating institute. A recognizable list of administrative and organizational perceived areas of concern, paralleling Wisconsin Team projects, highlighted Eagon’s proposal to evaluate successes and failures of assistive efforts. Specific administrative and organizational areas included: academic, business, administrative policies, budget planning, statutes, university governance, curricular revision, schedules, student governance, student affairs, records and registration, university requirements (admission,

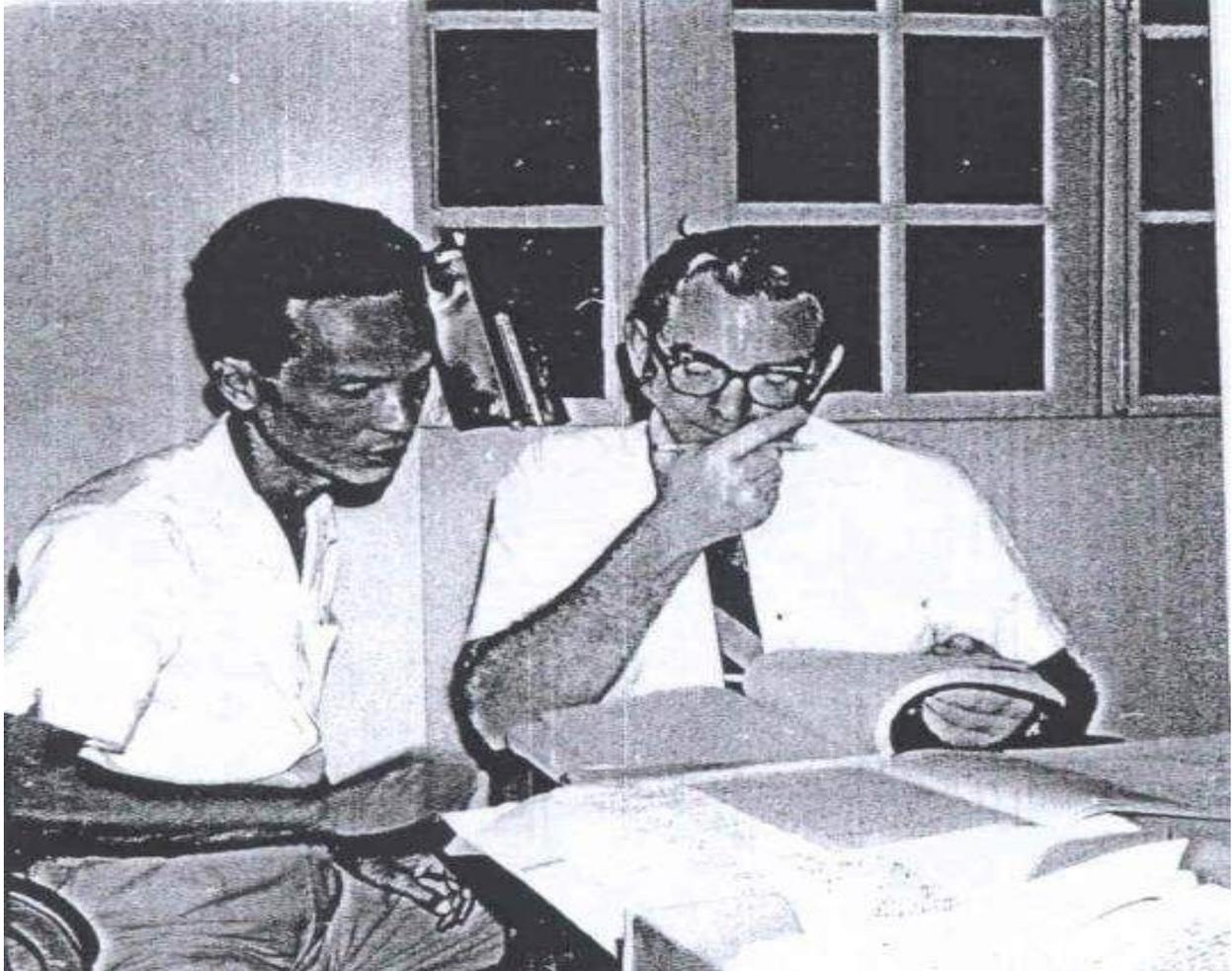
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<sup>435</sup> Ibid., 5-7.

academic, graduation), and faculty (participant training, placement, quality, upgrading.)<sup>436</sup>

### **Eagon Visitation to Vietnam, 8 – 22 March 1973**

In March of 1973 Eagon returned to Vietnam to conduct an updated survey of Higher Education Project Planning.



On 29 March 1973 Dr. Charles Green, USAID, Saigon, summarized Eagon's visitation in the form of an official memorandum to Dr. T.C. Clark, USAID, Washington, D.C. Clark noted that the purposes of Eagon's visit were three-fold: to evaluate the past progress of university reforms; to contribute where possible to current progress; and to plan future steps. Eagon had used his own extensive experience in field work when he presented a historical capsule within his

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<sup>436</sup> Ibid., 6, 8-11.

most recent “Preliminary Project Proposal University Reforms in Developing Countries.” In March of 1973, Charles Green now suggested to Clark, that Eagon had indeed become a historical asset to USAID. With his long-standing team leadership role, Eagon had developed a wide circle of Vietnamese contacts. Most other USAID staff members, both veterans and those newly assigned to USAID higher education, had no such array of connections. Green and Clark concurred, and during his March tour in Vietnam, Burdette Eagon introduced some thirty different Vietnamese educators to American officials. Among these was Mary C. Neville, who had just been appointed as director of USAID, Higher Education, Washington, was visiting Vietnam for her first time. T.C. Clark and Neville were destined to replace Charles Green in Saigon through the periodic rotation of USAID assignments. Extensive meetings occurred in Saigon at the offices of the USAID and the MOE. Eagon discussed his experiences at special meetings with the USAID Education Staff, the USAID Higher Education Liaison Committee, and Asia Foundation. In attendance were numerous high ranking USAID officials, including other officials and educators from the Australian Embassy, the University of Florida, Harvard University, England’s Reading University, VVA, Ford Foundation, and Asia Foundation. Orin Hascall, the longtime Wisconsin Team consultant, had recently joined the Asia Foundation, continuing his efforts at revising the Bac II. Eagon agreed to assist Hascall in securing additional consultation service for the continuation of that project. At a Higher Education Liaison Committee meeting, Eagon focused on the importance of acting on his recent “Core Curriculum Report.”<sup>437</sup>

In conjunction with his visit, Eagon led study tours to the University of Saigon, Thu Duc, Can Tho, and the new site of the Upper Delta Community College. While visiting the campuses Eagon presented new instructional materials on teaching English as a second language, health education, and methods of instruction using courses-on-tape. Before leaving Vietnam, Eagon

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<sup>437</sup> Series 17, Box 13 Folder 9, Eagon Vietnam Visit-March 1973, “Green to Clark,” and “Minutes of meeting of Higher Education Liaison Committee,” (1973 and Undated).

held important meetings on the development of university foundations as fund raising organs, the AACTE Intern Program, and the status of the Community College program. While meeting with USAID officials, he set up a tentative schedule for the upcoming year of team consultations associated with the Wisconsin Contract. Included on the list were: William Wood, "General Administration," 2-27 April; Ray Van Cleef, "Community Colleges," 3-19 April; Ken Little, "Graduate Programs," June; Harry Ransom, "Campus Planning," July-August; and B. Lamar Johnson, "Community College," September-October. Eagon was to work to fill open dates for registration and testing and the development of a college of accounting and business administration. Eagon was scheduled to return to Vietnam in November 1973 to consult on Instructional Innovations.<sup>438</sup> The November visit took on added importance with Vietnam's changing environment and the growing disengagement of U.S. governmental aid programs.

On 23 March 1973, Vickerstaff, in Stevens Point, received a letter from Eagon reporting on the status of the Wisconsin Contract.

I have not written sooner as I wanted to wait until something quite definite had been nailed down in way of the Contract for 73-74. It now appears that we will have an add of \$10,000...to assist in the revision in the Baccalaureate II...and ...in the Teacher Education Program...the group in Education USAID is being reduced...it appears that various projects may take on an entirely different form in that the direct assistance of USAID will not be available to the extent it has in the past for assisting our consultants. It is operating on a very merger base now...This also goes to the kind of accommodations and services that are available in Saigon itself...with the pullout of American troops and Americans in support services. Daily, AID people are leaving and many do not know where they are going from here. The American is almost a rarity to be seen on the streets of Saigon. The Vietnamese do not have seemed to change their feelings one way or another...they may be slightly more open in talking...they refer to this "peace" as a transition period and seem to indicate they are going to have to gain more strength...I still feel that the lack of leadership which is not emerging at a rapid rate, will hinder them for some time...I have heard a very disappointing rumor, that Rector Chau up at Hoa has turned in his resignation...this is a real setback...I was tremendously enthused with what I saw at Can Tho...they have made leaps and bounds...This is certainly a far cry from...we first saw it in 1967. Chuck Green, who will be leaving here probably in June, has had me spending all my waking hours trying to familiarize the person who is going to take his place, Mary Neville. We are making contact with as many Vietnamese as possible who have had some part in the program with the Wisconsin Contract. While she seems capable, she certainly is not another Chuck Green. The Vietnamese are not committing themselves as to whether they want to team up with the North Vietnam or not

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<sup>438</sup> Series 17, Box 13 Folder 9, Eagon Vietnam Visit-March, 1973.

in the way of education. It appears there would be some professors who might want to make contact again with the North; others are quite apprehensive about this.<sup>439</sup>

Green's own upbeat memorandum to T.C. Clark on the March visit, noted that Eagon had, sensed a greater spirit of change...than on any of his previous visits...he was pleased with the interest shown in instructional innovations...the progress that the University of Can Tho had made...he expressed an optimism for the future of the University of Hue Foundation...He found a greater openness among the Vietnamese to discuss their problems and concerns.<sup>440</sup>

Green also stated that upon the completion of his visit, Eagon still had pressing concerns. Green reported that Eagon had observed a lack of overall awareness of higher education as a system and a real hesitation for action on higher education legislation. Eagon was critical of the Vietnamese Senate for having failed to confirm community college presidents. Eagon had noticed a marked slowness on part of the other universities to follow the registration and record keeping model of the University of Hue. Both Green and Eagon agreed that there was still duplication in teacher education programs, only a modest effort to improve instruction, and inferior programs in English at the university level. Eagon criticized the failure to upgrade faculty salary structure. Eagon noted an overall lack of effort by the IMC and the huge level of work looming for the understaffed MOE Higher Education Office.<sup>441</sup>

In another 23 March 1973 letter to UWSP's Tom McKitterick, Eagon reported that the trip was going well, and that the Wisconsin Contract, "is in good shape. We've worked on it...and have had some increases in funding that will carry through till a year from this June."<sup>442</sup> Again, he wrote that Saigon had changed, with Americans now being rare. Not only had military support forces been reduced, but also the number of USAID people had been greatly reduced. In 1967-1968 there were some 280 personnel in USAID Education, Vietnam. Eagon wrote that by

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<sup>439</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Contracts and Consultants, Burdette W. Eagon (1973-1975), "Letter to Bill Vickerstaff," (March 23, 1973).

<sup>440</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 9, Eagon Vietnam Visit, "Charles Green Memorandum to T.C. Clark," (March 29, 1973).

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 9, Eagon Vietnam Visit, "Letter to Tom McKitterick," (March 23, 1973).

June of 1973 there were to be only 5 assigned to the entire area.<sup>443</sup>

Eagon sensed both openness and a wait-and-see attitude among the Vietnamese university people, as they worked in a transitional period hoping peace might finally come. They seemed neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Eagon wrote that he had just completed an hour-long meeting with the Vice Prime Minister who was about to leave for Paris as:

the chief negotiator of the South Vietnamese team to try to draw up guidelines and ground rules with North Vietnam on the pending elections. He expressed hope that he would not have to spend the length of time that the previous peace groups had spent in trying to come to some peace negotiations, that being four years.<sup>444</sup>

In this letter, Eagon made a few final references that reveal advancements in UWSP's study abroad programs. As part of his return trip to Stevens Point Eagon noted he would stop in Singapore to meet with a new consultant that the Wisconsin Team might take on for the registration and testing work in Vietnam. Eagon would then stop by Kuala Lumpur to visit with Marcus Fang and a group of UWSP students registered with International Programs. Eagon said he intended to be back in Stevens Point by the time classes resumed from spring break, noting that he hoped enrollment had picked up so "we don't have any other worries."<sup>445</sup>

In April of 1973, Dr. Ray Van Cleef returned, as planned, to Vietnam to update the Wisconsin Team report on Community College Development. Eagon quickly joined Van Cleef back in Vietnam in late April of 1973.<sup>446</sup> Eagon had hustled back to Vietnam, to assist Vietnamese officials in the formulation and incorporation of the National System of Higher Education-Higher Education Law. Eagon felt this law ranked among higher education's most pressing needs. It would only be through long overdue legislative action that higher education could secure the defined autonomy that had been a key point of the original 1967 Team report.<sup>447</sup>

On 3 June 1973 a major situational meeting occurred at USAID Higher Education, Washington, D.C. In attendance were Dr. T.C. Clark, Dr. Eleanor Green, Dr. H. Hall, Burdette

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<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 10, Ray Van Cleef, "Community College Development," (April 1973).

<sup>447</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8, 8a, Burdette Eagon, (1966-1975 & Undated).

Eagon, and other key USAID officials. The meeting focused on Clark's status report on projects related to higher education in Vietnam. Clark reported that a three-month program had been initiated in the U.S. training Vietnamese architectural graduate students involved in the planning processes of university facilities. Phil Hendren and Ray Johnson of the Asia Foundation were to meet with the group and discuss the development of the Thu Duc campus site. In Vietnam, campus planning was progressing with the setting of the cornerstone for Thu Duc's Engineering Building scheduled for that summer of 1973. Phil Hendren was to arrive in Saigon on the 15 July. Hendren was to work primarily on location on the campus development at Can Tho, while splitting additional time consulting on Faculty development with Rector Xuan at Thu Duc and Rector Chau at Hue. He was also scheduled to teach a series of architectural workshops at Thu Duc.

T.C. Clark was now stationed in Vietnam, and Eleanor Green was now heading USAID/Education Office in Washington, D.C. At the June meeting, Clark reported to Eagon that the development of Vietnam's community colleges continued to struggle, as the acting rectors had resigned and there was still a shortage of qualified new instructors. The USAID, in consultation with Eagon, hired J. Wayne Reitz to go to Vietnam in August and early September of 1973 to assist in the development of the overall guidelines and organization of a graduate education program. Wisconsin Team consultant B. Lamar Johnson was scheduled to attend the Asian conference of Far Eastern Community Colleges, with the intent of establishing liaisons between those developing in Vietnam and state-side community colleges. The work on the development of Vietnamese educational foundations was budgeted for up to six-weeks, with Easton Rothwell, Ken Williams, and Reitz to consult with Kenneth Howe. Tad Hascall was to continue his work on Vietnamese examinations and evaluation, with two man-months set aside for the development of college admissions testing. During the June meeting, Clark emphasized that Eagon was scheduled to return to Vietnam in November of 1973. Eagon was to focus on development of "higher education community relationships." University accounting and business

management had been put “on hold” until Eagon’s arrival. In September, Minister of Education Tinh was scheduled to visit USAID contract institutions in Stevens Point, Florida and Missouri. As part of the observation tour, Minister Tinh was to acquaint himself with the workings of university foundations. Tinh was then to depart in mid-September for the Geneva peace conference. As the June meeting closed Eagon extended a proposal that UWSP take over an added portion of the USAID administrative intern program, gearing it toward specific objectives as deemed by the rectors, with the interns intended to fill particular needs upon their return to Vietnam.<sup>448</sup>

### **Burdette Eagon, “Higher Education in South Vietnam – 1973”**

The year of 1973 continued to be an active year for the Wisconsin Contract and its leader Burdette Eagon. Eagon submitted an updated Wisconsin Team report, “Higher Education in South Vietnam – 1973,” which provided a standing summary of the higher education program into the current year. As far back as the Albertson Team the Wisconsin educators had set the story of Vietnamese higher education in its wider historical setting, Eagon once again followed this path. Noting the high value education held in Vietnamese culture, Eagon briefly retraced the evolution of higher education from the Mandarin system through French colonialism into its current period of reform. He noted the remarkable increases in enrollment during the war years from 1954 to 1973, noting that national survival remained the main focus during this time of war. Although the institutional needs of the young republic remained sizeable, education, like no other area of civil development, had made great leaps forward. For Vietnam, Eagon declared that serious ground had been gained at the elementary level of education, with the concept of the community school becoming a natural fit when keyed to village life. Secondary education had progressed with attempts to make programs more relevant. Qualitative changes took time, but the future looked better with the development of comprehensive secondary schools, agricultural schools, and vocational-technical schools. In the years 1954 to 1973, higher education enrollment

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<sup>448</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 13, Washington, D.C. Meeting, (July 3, 1973).

had increased twelve-fold at the University of Saigon. The development of college professors had not been able to keep on pace with the growth at Saigon and the developments at Hue, Can Tho, Thu Duc, Dalat, the other private institutes, and two public community colleges. To a large extent, the new universities were dependent on part-time professors from the University of Saigon. Eagon stated that at Can Tho classes were scheduled on a week-by-week basis as aligned with the visits of the “suitcase” professors. Just as in earlier reports, Eagon characterized the University of Saigon as bursting with duplications and inefficient procedures owing to its fragmentation of Faculties and archaic statutes. Eagon called for continued efforts at incorporating a core curriculum and educational legislation.<sup>449</sup>

Eagon referred to two systems of higher education, as some faculties had policies of open enrollment, while others required entrance exams that limited enrollment relative to high admissions standards. This could be viewed as complementary, with the flexibility of open enrollment Faculties absorbing most of the increase in enrollments, and making it possible for faculties with selective enrollment to keep their enrollments reasonably constant. There were, however, plenty of negative aspects to this as open enrollment faculties having limited facilities often did not require student attendance. Students who had no intention of attending classes continued to enroll in more than one faculty and even in more than one university, hoping to pass year-end examinations somewhere. Consultation work continued in terms of admissions tests and standards. University administrators had recognized the necessity of limiting enrollments in all colleges and were considering employing admissions exams for all applicants and registering students on the basis of whether or not they could attend classes.<sup>450</sup>

Eagon pointed out that the troubles of outmoded instruction continued. Learning was still dependent on the practices of rote-memory and the quality of lecture notes, which were sold by professors or the universities. Some instructional gains had been made through the development

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<sup>449</sup> Series 17 Box 24 Folder 13, Burdette Eagon, “Higher Education in South Vietnam,” (1973), 1-4.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-6.

of libraries, translation of textbooks, and a greater emphasis on language instruction and laboratory programs. Yet, problems with evaluation continued as the year-end examination remained as the single measure of assessment. Grading was still rigorous, using the French 20 point scale with a grade of 10 as passing. In colleges with open enrollment policies evaluation was extremely tough. Only one-fourth of the students completing final exams in Saigon's Law Faculty passed. Even at institutes with selective admission policies grades averaged scarcely above the passing level. Eagon noted that both the MOE and rectors had agreed with the recommendation that all universities, "as soon as possible, start a continuous system of evaluation."<sup>451</sup>

Programs had been organized on the block certificate system, with students taking classes in blocks operated on yearly basis. A student had to pass all the classes to complete the block or get a certificate to advance. Again, Eagon noted that the MOE and the rectors had adopted team recommendations, and stated that all universities, "as soon as feasible should inaugurate semester and credit systems, in which a semester is to be 16 weeks and a credit defined as a lecture course for one hour per week for a semester."<sup>452</sup> "As soon as possible" or "feasible" had become positive attributes of MOE directives given conditions. Progress was being made.

In his 1973 team report, Eagon recommended the further development of junior colleges in Vietnam. He suggested that community junior colleges could provide: "the practical education needed for national development." He reported on the group of Vietnamese graduate students who had studied the junior college movement in the United States. Eagon noted several other advantages that junior colleges would have in Vietnam: 1.) the staffing of junior colleges would be easier as professors not have to have PhD's; 2.) in the "community" colleges, the community would share in the financial responsibility, easing the burden on the national treasury; 3.) the junior colleges would relieve the enrollment demands on the major universities; 4.) community

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<sup>451</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

colleges would provide localized skilled training for veterans and others to fill middle-level manpower needs; 5.) the colleges would help to meet the primary needs in the fields of agriculture and teacher training for secondary schools. In the two years since the 14 August 1971 decree authorizing the system of community colleges, only two colleges had been established, with three more in the planning stages.<sup>453</sup>

Eagon declared that the GVN had recognized the value of higher education in national development, but years of war had not permitted adequate allocation of resources or consideration to problems. Just as the Albertson Team had done some six years earlier, Eagon sounded a note of optimism as he summarized the current state-of-affairs of higher education. Also something new had occurred, and although the future was unclear Eagon saw a ray of hope:

Now with the Cease Fire, the institutions will have to be reorganized to meet the needs of this developing society and this, of course, will require the allocations of proper resources for reconstruction and the development of qualified staff members for the institutions. It is amazing that the individual institutions have performed as well as they have in providing top-level human resources, but these institutions have developed without any organization or framework that might be called a National System of Higher Education.<sup>454</sup>

As he had in the past, Eagon called for action on a Basic Higher Education Law. He noted that the President of Vietnam had recently approved the draft of the law and it now awaited legislative ratification. The law would establish a National Higher Educational Development Council. The Council would have the task of forging the national system of higher education.<sup>455</sup> Just as Vietnamese higher education was in need of a firmer legislative footing, it was also increasingly in need of an alternative apparatus for financial support. Thoughts now turned to the institution of an educational foundation.

### **The Vietnam Foundation**

The Wisconsin Team recommended that the Vietnamese integrate the concept of educational foundations as supportive mechanisms that obtained and managed funds backing

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<sup>453</sup> Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

innovative educational change. In April, 1973, Vietnamese Statutes created the Vietnam Foundation for Educational Development. It was a private foundation authorized to obtain funds in Vietnam and abroad, from governments, international organizations, private individuals and corporations, and foundations. The Wisconsin Team recommendations led to a structured Foundation that included a Board of Directors, an Executive Director, a General Membership, and small staff. Principally, the Foundation was to serve as a catalyst and sponsor addressing the pressing needs of national “rehabilitation and recovery,” hastening educational change to meet national needs. The Foundation was to act as a grantee to individuals and institutions for pilot projects, research, and experimental programs. The Wisconsin Team suggested that the Foundation establish joint training teams with representatives of education and industry. It recommended setting a short term priority on the educational training of accountants, middle level managers, technicians, and other specialists. Long term priorities were to be developed as the Foundation evolved. Team recommendations called for an emphasis on teacher training, textbook development in technical and general subjects, distance education using television and radio, and other pilot programs matching various regional needs.<sup>456</sup>

In October of 1973 the Wisconsin Team produced a discussion paper for the first working session of the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Foundation for Educational Development. The Team suggested the Foundation’s priorities and purposes be determined by critical necessities:

Pressing immediate national needs, both economic and social, that are created by the cease-fire, the reconstruction and rehabilitation, and the changing international position of Vietnam. The further need to bring education into alignment with the nation’s development objectives as formulated in the Four-Year National Economic Development Plan (1972). The special need to attain the goals for educational growth set forth in Chapter X of the Four-Year Plan, “Culture and Education.” The need to bring education more closely in line with the heritage of the Vietnamese people and their changing cultural and national aspirations.<sup>457</sup>

Seemingly, the Foundation was a step forward as both the Vietnamese and the Wisconsin

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<sup>456</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 16, Easton Rothwell, “What is the Vietnam Foundation for Educational Development?” (October, 1973).

<sup>457</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 16, “Discussion Paper for the Working Session of the Board of Directors of the Vietnam Foundation for Educational Development at the Ministry of Education,” (October 1973).

Team looked for a sustained avenue for progressive change and development. The latest Team recommendation was in tune with the theme of cultural relevance that the Wisconsin Contract had carried for more than six years. The Team had worked hard throughout these years to prepare and assist the Vietnamese in meeting national needs, and now looked to set up an alternative mechanism to coordinate funds and educational change. The window for change, however, would be closing fast, as would the Vietnamese people's "changing cultural and national aspirations."<sup>458</sup>

**Charles Green, *Some Current Observations, General Information and Data on Higher Education in Vietnam, June 15, 1973, (USAID/Education/Saigon)***

Dr. Charles B. Green had served as the head of the Higher Education Branch of USAID in Vietnam from June of 1971 through June of 1973. Green's *Current Observations, General Information and Data on Higher Education in Vietnam* marked a cumulative assessment of the condition of Vietnamese higher education, its evolution, tendencies, and tribulations at a time that would soon prove to be a fork in the road for American consultation services.

Just as Eagon had reported, Green stated that fragmentation had not stopped at the University of Saigon. Faculties and departments still operated as independent institutions. In 1957, the University had an enrollment of 5,300. By 1973, enrollment had escalated to some 64,000 students. Facilities varied from dilapidated old structures to newly constructed almost adequate modern buildings. Open-enrollment policies at many of the faculties had yet to produce an abundance of graduates. The majority of students continued to purchase professors' notes, rather than attend overcrowded classes. Many students remained discouraged and did not take final exams, while less than half of those who were tested passed. Green reported that the University of Hue had the greatest relative growth with enrollment almost doubling, from 3,100 in 1971 to 5,949 in 1973. Hue had suffered the most from overall wartime conditions. In particular, during the 1968 Tet offensive and the 1972 military offensive much of the city had

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<sup>458</sup> Series 17 Box 9 Folder 2, Albertson Higher Education Survey Team, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, (Stevens Point: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, 1967), 42-43.

been evacuated and the University buildings either ruined or converted into housing for refugees. Hue still lacked a centralized campus, while one-half of newly planned building had been completed, and other older structures were being converted and refurbished. The University of Can Tho was in the process of instituting selective enrollment, with an enrollment of 4,520 in 1973. Can Tho's citywide facilities were being consolidated as a new campus was emerging on the edge of the city at Cai Khe. In 1972, ten new buildings had been built, six more to be completed in 1973, while its original campus was rehabilitated to house faculty and a third campus accommodated library and science services. The Wisconsin Team was working closely with the planning concepts used for Can Tho. One common point of interest was that much of the new campus was being built in marshy lowlands, requiring expansive fill preparations much like WSU-SP/UWSP had incorporated as its own campus expanded. Green also reported that with a 29 March 1973 Ministry decree the Polytechnic University of Thu Duc had emerged, based on a concept dating back some ten years calling for a unified institute critical to national development. Thu Duc had inherited faculties from the National Agricultural Institute, the National Technological Institute's School of Engineering, and the Nguyen Truong To Center of Technical Vocational Teaching Training. Eventually, the plan called for the Polytechnic Institute to become affiliated with Phu Tho Junior College focusing on technical programs, and the new University of Thu Duc becoming the center for agricultural and engineering faculties.<sup>459</sup>

Finally, Green noted that the My Tho Upper Delta Community College and Nha Trang Coastal Community College, the two public community colleges authorized by decrees in 1971, had established moderate programs in 1972-1973. Green reported tenuous growth at the universities at Dalat, Van Hanh, Minh Duc, Hoa Hao, and Cao Dai. Each had maintained standards via a severe program of evaluation, equating to very low graduation rates. Several other educational institutes, patterned in the manner of France's *Grandes Ecoles*, remained under

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<sup>459</sup> Series 17 Box 13 Folder 12, Charles Green, *Some Current Observations...*, 2-11.

the direction of auxiliary ministries rather than the direct auspices of the Ministry of Education.<sup>460</sup>

With the assistance of Wisconsin Team consultants, reforms had begun to institute change. The University of Hue had introduced an automated system for records and registration, and statistical analysis had revealed some troubling data. Even with a selective admissions policy, the standing rigorous system of evaluation continued to exact its toll, with the greater part of enrollment representing first-year students and declining portions at each year of study. The year 1973 marked the final year that the Bac I was to be used, making the Bac II an even more important measure of secondary graduation and entry device for the universities. A new form of the Bac II was slated for implementation in June 1974. Team consultants, working with the Ministry of Education had started to employ validity and reliability trials for the newly formatted, completely objective test. During this time of national emergency, budgetary education as a whole had been allotted between 4.2 percent and 6 percent of the national budget. By comparison, in 1973, funding for higher education's portion of the educational budget had increased from 10.6 percent to 17 percent. This represented one percent or less of Vietnam's national budget and less than the amount the GVN spent supporting students studying abroad. The GVN annually allotted 100,000 piasters or \$200 per student at Hue and only 26,000 piasters or some \$52 at Saigon. In addition, Green found that student fees remained very low, averaging only 1,000 piasters or a perfunctory \$2 at public universities. At the same time fees at private institutes ranged between 5,000 piasters or \$10 at Dalat and 54,000 piasters or \$108 at Minh Duc. Green concurred with earlier Team reports, noting that tuition increases were long overdue and offered a clear means to raise the quality of higher education.<sup>461</sup>

Green completed his 1973 observations by summarizing material garnered from his discussions with officials of the Vietnamese institutes of higher education and American university consultants. The reform agenda was consistent with the legacy of recommendations

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid., 2-11.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid., 30, 36, 39, 41.

made by the Wisconsin Team. Educators from both lands recognized the enduring necessity to reform institutions in a manner aligned with national needs. A National Master Plan for Higher Education was still needed, as the statutes of Hanoi remained as the nucleus for the University of Saigon. Simultaneously, a regionalization plan was needed if higher education was to serve its entire people. Administrative reorganization was needed. The European faculty system was a vestige of colonial ruin, while the American elective system might result in subsequent waste through proliferation. A clear compromise was to set the central function of the university campus itself as the unit of organization, with subservient subunits and develop unified administrative structure with administrators of varied divisions holding defined responsibilities and roles. Administrative problems pointed again to the need for a defined base of accountability and authority. Since the 14 June 1972 meeting of the Rectors and Ministry of Education officials, a legislative draft for a basic higher education law had undergone some eleven major redrafts and now awaited legislative approval. Other problems remained in terms of inadequate recognition of foreign graduate degrees, a lack of Vietnamese graduate programs, relations between faculty research and academic programs, deficiencies in curriculum, policies on language instruction and teaching methods, inadequacies in university staff, the need for in-service programs, extensive delays in the implementation of the new salary law, a lack of synchronization between governmental agencies exercising control over university personnel and budgetary matters, and finally the fundamental need to address the question of how higher education was to be financed.<sup>462</sup>

As Green concluded his 1973 observations, he issued a plea for cooperation among the universities themselves. Not only were the institutions of higher education fragmented internally, there continued to be a tendency for them to grow apart. Green noted that the call for cooperation dated back to the 1 – 9 September 1968 Nha Trang Conference on Higher Education, the 21 – 24 October 1970 Stevens Point conference of Rectors, and the resulting ongoing series of Rectors’

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<sup>462</sup> Ibid., 43-55.

Conferences. Consultants associated with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point had attended all of these conferences, serving as resource personnel. Green ended his report on a positive note, finding value and great promise in the Community College Program and heralding Thu Duc University for following the model of a “land grant” university. Green credited the Asia Foundation and Wisconsin Team consultants Dr. B. Lamar Johnson and Dr. Raymond Van Cleef for their work with the president-designates of the new institutions. Green predicated that Vietnamese normal schools would upgrade their two-year programs to the junior college level.<sup>463</sup>

Even as the final months of 1973 remained active for the Wisconsin Contract, signs pointed that 1974 would be more and more problematical. On 12 August 1973, a USAID briefing on Vietnam was held in Los Angeles, California. The purpose of the meeting was to have a current “informational exchange,” between rotating USAID officials on the Wisconsin Contract, and brief J. Wayne Reitz, who was enroute to Vietnam. Reitz was scheduled to work as a Wisconsin Team consultant in the development of a graduate program for Vietnamese higher education. Participating in the meeting were: Charles Green, former Chief, Higher Education, AID/Vietnam, now enroute to a new assignment at Bogotá, Columbia; Hal O. Hall, Vietnam desk, Washington, D.C., enroute to USAID visitation to the Far East including South Vietnam; Harry Ransom, professor of Architecture, Rice University, Wisconsin Contract consultant in Campus Planning; William Wood, retired president, University of Alaska, Wisconsin Contract consultant for master planning of higher education system in Vietnam; J. Wayne Reitz, former president of the University of Florida, and Ford Foundation consultant, now enroute to Vietnam as Wisconsin Team consultant; and Burdette Eagon, Wisconsin Contract representative.<sup>464</sup>

At the August meeting, Green discussed the status of Vietnamese higher education; the consultants reviewed what their roles had been with the Wisconsin Contract; and the group briefed Reitz on the structure of USAID and MOE and the areas pertinent personnel, with the

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 56-69.

<sup>464</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, 1973-1975 and undated, “Wisconsin Consultants Conference,” (August 12, 1973).

specifics of Reitz's assignment discussed in relation to the current status of Vietnamese graduate programs, its "needs" and questions of resources and staffing. Of special note, the relationship between USAID and the Asia Foundation was discussed, denoting a change of tack.<sup>465</sup>

The representatives of the Asia Foundation had been unable to attend the conference. It was decided that Eagon would meet on 14 August 1973 in San Francisco with Robert Swantes, Project Director for the Asia Foundation. Eagon arrived at the Asia Foundation and was surprised to find out that Swantes had very little knowledge of the Wisconsin Contract. Eagon briefed Swantes on the wide range of the Team's work in Vietnamese higher education, stressing the importance of coordination between consultants representing the Asia Foundation and the Wisconsin Contract.<sup>466</sup>

In particular, Eagon cited the current work in relationship to the educational foundation program for Vietnam. Swantes concurred on the desirability of communications between the two groups, noting that each had field consultants working on graduate programs, architecture, and foundations. Notably, Swantes asked Eagon if he had any insight "as to what the intention of AID was in regard to continuing of sponsoring higher education in Vietnam." Eagon "indicated it was merely an understanding on my part that AID would be gradually withdrawing support as indicated by the reduction in staff to five people this year and a possibility of reducing to three in the following year. I indicated our contract was from a year-to-year basis and we have no idea what would happen one year from June, 1974."<sup>467</sup> The two discussed the general problems of foundations and the need for social assistance by developing nations. Swantes pointed out that, beginning in 1974, the Asia Foundation had entered into a contract with a private foundation to fund fifteen graduate students for training in the Far East. Eagon quickly suggested the University of Hue and Rector Chau represented an interesting location for one or two of the scholars to gain "knowledge of Southeast Asia and the country of Vietnam." As the meeting

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<sup>465</sup> Ibid.

<sup>466</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, "Visitation to the Asia Foundation," (August 14, 1973).

<sup>467</sup> Ibid.

concluded, Eagon signified that Team consultant Phil Hendren's computer expertise could fill O.W. Hascall's request for assistance.<sup>468</sup> By the end of 1973, Robert Whetstone, Wisconsin's newest consultant would be assigned to assist Hascall with his ongoing work on Vietnamese educational testing under the auspices of the Asia Foundation.

In September of 1973 the USAID notified Stevens Point that two Vietnamese educators, Nguyen Thanh Linh, Special Assistant to the Minister of Education, and Pham Dinh Thang, Vice Secretary General of the MOE, would be coming to the U.S. in the near future, as teacher education activity in leadership development. Eagon responded, saying Stevens Point would welcome the opportunity to serve as host and willingly assist with any orientation needs. The two would not arrive until January of 1974.

Also, in September 1973, Eagon stayed in close contact with Easton Rothwell who had joined Ken Howe in Vietnam under the Wisconsin Contract work associated with the Vietnam Foundation for Educational Development. Rothwell had carried with him foundation materials from the Stevens Point Foundation, the University of California, Berkeley, and San Francisco State.<sup>469</sup>

### **Been All Around the World: the Termination of the Wisconsin Contract**

Eagon's travel agenda in March 1973 was representative of team member's trips to and from Vietnam. He departed Central Wisconsin Airport for Chicago, then flew to Washington, D.C., then London, then Bangkok, and finally Saigon; on the return trip he departed Saigon for Bangkok, then stopped in Kuala Lumpur, then Hong Kong, to Taipei, to Tokyo, on to Fairbanks, then Seattle, to Chicago, and back to Central Wisconsin.

On 27 September 1973, Chancellor Dreyfus received a letter from Eleanor Green, Chief Education Officer, USAID/Washington, officially requesting that Eagon go to Vietnam for thirty days of consultative service beginning in mid-November. E. Green wrote:

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, Rothwell letters, (September 18, 1973).

Dr. Eagon has provided valuable advisory assistance in the planning for and recruitment of consultants during the life of this contract, which has focused upon reforms in the administration of universities. Both AID/W and USAID/Saigon, as well as the Vietnamese universities, have profited from his counsel and guidance, and we shall appreciate your concurrence with our request for his services at the specified time. I remember well your visits to Saigon and the informal yet stimulating meetings mixed with good food and fun at T.C. Clark's home in Saigon. Your red vest always added to the merriment and good fellowship of the occasion.<sup>470</sup>

The November request would mark the ninth such trip to Vietnam for Burdette Eagon. He had gone for thirty days in April 1967, to complete the original survey; he had returned for ninety days in June-September 1967, to conduct the National Education Survey; he then returned for ten days in November 1967; sixty days in July-September 1969; fourteen days in July 1971; thirteen days in January 1972; thirty days in July 1972; thirty days in March 1973; and finally Eagon prepared for thirty days of consultation service in November-December 1973. Eagon would travel for a tenth time to Vietnam on a personal visit in 1998 with his wife, Charles Green, and a group of other interested parties.

The November 1973 trip took "an on again, off again" character, during the month of October, even as USAID/Saigon sent Eagon a lengthy schedule for the visit and kept him updated on the service of Team consultants. Eagon's father passed away that month, adding to the increasingly unpredictable nature of the contracting activities. As Eagon prepared to travel home to handle estate matters he received a letter from T.C. Clark in Saigon.

We are delighted to learn that you will be with us as of November 15, to help make an intensive evaluation of the Wisconsin Contract inputs to date, to assess the current needs of the Vietnamese...for the first time in over two years we are in a GVN leadership transition period...in this setting we must reassess our program in light of new priorities. Our implementation...must be responsive to manpower needs to achieve rapid economic self-sufficiency and to staff a decentralized structure. In addition, we have decided to lean heavily on The Asia Foundation...we must be very selective as to where we focus our energies. One of the strengths of our intermittent consultants to date has been as stimulus to other donors to contribute to identified need...We will want to review our entire program with you in depth as a background to determine with the Vietnamese the consultants needed for 1974.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, letter "E. Green to Dreyfus," (September 27, 1973).

<sup>471</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, letter "Clark to Eagon," (October 30, 1973).

Eagon's departure for Saigon was postponed by a week, but the importance of the occasion pulled Eagon to Saigon. Once in Saigon, meetings ensued with T.C. Clark, Mary Neville, and Tad Hascall. Eagon also met with Kenneth Howe, USAID Teacher Education, and Winfield Niblo, USAID Associate Director for Local Development. Eagon and his USAID contacts labored on the financial status of the Wisconsin Contract, AID/vn-77, working to identify key priorities related to the improvement of Vietnamese higher education and setting a tentative schedule for consultants and internships for the period of November 1973 to June 1974. In exploration of a continuance of aid efforts, Eagon had appointments with representatives of the Asia Foundation. Eagon also attended an open house hosted by Dr. and Mrs. George Marlowe in honor of Dr. and Mrs. Merritt Boone, and an open house hosted by T.C. Clark in honor of Team consultant Dr. Easton Rothwell and his wife. Eagon had known the Marlowes and Boones for some time. Boone was a member of the University of Florida Team and was scheduled to depart Vietnam at the end of the month. The UF Team had concluded their USAID contract associated with the development of the National Agricultural Institute. The Institute was now slated to become the College of Agriculture at the new Thu Duc Polytechnic University.<sup>472</sup>

Significantly, during his November consultation service Eagon met with series of key Vietnamese associates. He met first with the Vietnamese Minister of Education and Do Bo Khe, Vice Minister of Education in Charge of Higher Education. Eagon then met with Tran Van Tan, acting-Rector of the University of Saigon and Pham Huu Hiep, Special Assistant to the Minister of Education.<sup>473</sup> Do Bo Khe was awaiting approval of his appointment as Rector of Thu Duc Polytechnic University. He expressed a desire of maintaining extended assistance in terms of developmental planning and budgetary procedures as he prepared to take on new duties. In addition to his new title, Dr. Khe sought to retain his current position, telling Eagon he feared any replacement at the vice-minister level would not be amenable toward Thu Duc. Eagon's most

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<sup>472</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, "Tentative Program for the visit of Dr. Eagon," (November 15, 1973).

<sup>473</sup> Ibid.

pleasurable meetings were with Nguyen Duy Xuan, Rector of Can Tho, and Le Thanh Minh Chau, Rector of the University of Hue. Xuan and Chau were very capable administrators and their respective universities had been quite receptive to Team recommendations. The rectors gave Eagon progress reports, and showed special interest in the current Team projects in campus design by Phil Hendren and educational foundations by Easton Rothwell. Eagon assured the rectors that Hendren and Rothwell were slated to assist their institutes, along with Thu Duc, through March of 1974. Rector Chau and Eagon then firmed up plans for an internship in the U.S. for Ton That Hanh. Dr. Hanh was to consult with educators in California, Texas and Stevens Point.<sup>474</sup>

It would be February of 1974 when Ton That Hanh and two other Vietnamese educators arrived in the U.S. for the internship and month long visitation to American universities. The group studied the development of comprehensive community colleges. Eagon coordinated a portion of the visit, hosting the group at Stevens Point and taking them to Nicolet College in northern Wisconsin. At Nicolet they met with Robert Steger, dean of instruction, who discussed the comprehensive community college goals, which focused on college transfer and career preparation.<sup>475</sup>

Eagon, having spent the Thanksgiving holiday in Saigon, returned to Stevens Point in time for the Christmas season. He received a special USAID holiday greeting in the form of a letter from T.C. Clark in Saigon. The USAID wished all in Stevens Point and its other university partners a “Happy New Year, Farewell to the Year of the Buffalo and Welcome to the Year of the Tiger,” Clark thanked Eagon with a personal note: “Great to have you in Saigon—My thanks for cheese and sage advice and guidance. Special regards, T.C.”<sup>476</sup>

Operating within the theater of wider events, for the Republic of Vietnam and Stevens

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<sup>474</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, “Visitations and Comments from Conversations,” (November 23, 1973).

<sup>475</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 5, Clippings 1967-1974, “Vietnam Visitor Inspects Nicolet,” *Rhineland Daily News*, (February 11, 1974).

<sup>476</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Burdette Eagon Vietnam Contracts and Consultants, “Christmas 1973.”

Point, the Year of the Tiger would mark the finale of USAID assistive programs and the Wisconsin Contract.

Early in 1974, Eagon attended an Asian Society Seminar in San Francisco. The special meeting included representatives from the Rockefeller Foundation, Asia Foundation, Overseas Educational Services, the Foreign Policy Research Center, Stanford Research Institute, and USAID Far East advisers T.C. Clark and Scott Hammond. A wide discussion of Vietnamese education served as a springboard for the group as they examined avenues for research concerning the development of Social Sciences in East Asia. Eagon came out of the day and a half meeting with two ideas he planned on presenting to the Asia Foundation, one in relation to a teacher education program and the other a child psychology plan to track child development in Vietnam. He noted that to date the only child study in Vietnam, was one produced by the French. Eagon reported on his impressions as he dispatched a letter to Warren Wilson, USAID/Education. He broached his rising concern over refugees who were hoping to relocate to the U.S. Eagon had begun to set up a depository at his Stevens Point office for contributions from specific groups and individuals seeking to aid the Vietnamese. The USAID directed Eagon to work with the National World Organization Association for the handling of funds and the distribution of commodities. Eagon asked Wilson for additional advice. A growing disappointment was evident in Eagon's correspondence, yet he stated that, "many of us want to continue" assistive efforts "in ways that would be most applicable."

It is certainly a useless role we are playing back here at home. We have kept rather close contact with Bill Shumate in Washington, and there are plus and minuses coming out of Vietnam. Not having heard from you...I'm wondering what your plans are for the future. I gather from Scott Hammond there is a real limitation of funds coming out of USAID especially in the area of Higher Education. I am also curious as to what trend the new ministry has taken since November. Do you know of any written report of the Rector's visit? As it was intended that someone would pool at least the basic ideas of that group together. I would also appreciate knowing where our friends are.<sup>477</sup>

On 18 January 1974, Mary Neville, now Chief of Higher Education, USAID/Vietnam,

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<sup>477</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, letter, "Eagon to Wilson," (Undated-1974).

attended the Sixth Seminar of Rectors of Universities and Institutions of Higher Education. The seminar had come under the guidance of the Asia Foundation, with Charles Hitch, President of the University of California and Trustee of the Asia Foundation (TAF), acting as visiting consultant. Hitch was journeying “around the world in 30 days” visiting countries which had TAF programs. At the seminar, Hitch presented information on fundraising, the role of the university and its search for identity. As this was his first visit to Vietnam, Hitch based his discussions on his experiences with higher education in the U.S., the United Kingdom, and South America, hoping that the content could be applicable toward the resolution of problems of higher education in Vietnam. Neville, in her official notes, declared that Hitch was well received and a worthwhile discussion occurred in substantive problem areas. In the growing disunion of affairs, Stevens Point did not receive a copy of Neville’s notes until 22 April 1974, when Mary Neville spent out a series of memorandums and materials with her “best wishes on my last day with USAID/Vietnam—17 April 1974.”<sup>478</sup>

On 28 January 1974, Chancellor Dreyfus wrote to the new USAID Administrator, Daniel Parker. Dreyfus hoped to secure a future commitment for Stevens Point from the Agency. Parker had assisted Dreyfus during the chancellor’s visits to Vietnam, a time when Parker served as a deputy ambassador with the American Embassy. Parker wrote back to the Chancellor Dreyfus, saying he had received numerous inquiries from university leaders and other organizations associated with the USAID. Parker explained that it was his intention to support “AID’s increasing reliance upon the private sector.” He expressed his appreciation for the important role played by WSU-SP/UWSP in the educational development of higher education in Vietnam. He recognized the outstanding cooperative efforts of Dreyfus’ office, Burdette Eagon and William Vickerstaff, but the letter revealed that the end of the Wisconsin Contract was now clearly on the horizon.

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<sup>478</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, “Notes on the Sixth Seminar of Rectors, January 18, 1974,” letter “Neville to Vickerstaff,” (April 17, 1974).

We regret the need for terminating the funding for educational projects in Vietnam; however, because of the effectiveness, flexibility and efficiency of your contract services, when the need arises for future work of a similar nature, be assured of our interest in exploring with you the possibility of additional contractual relationships.<sup>479</sup>

Eagon continued to work closely with Hendren, as together they developed building designs for Can Tho and Thu Duc that incorporated two-way natural air flows to combat the tropical heat. The conceptual designs circulated fresh air from the cooler lower levels through ventilation shafts to the high-ceiling upper level classrooms and then out through flues located near the roof. The roof areas were designed to combine concrete and natural thatch with an air space in between that would provide good insulation. Each building was to have open-aired ground level areas occupied by science laboratories, shaded study areas, and other gathering points. The planned construction emphasized the ancient Chinese art of Feng-Shui: “Building location and design is based on the belief that at every place there are special topological and topographical features, either natural or artificial, which indicate or modify the cosmic energies there.”<sup>480</sup> Vietnam’s natural riverside settings and forest backdrops were looked upon as assets rather than deterrents. The adjacent buildings on the new campuses were connected by tree laden shaded pathways, the natural ventilation saved on electricity, and other shading devices were incorporated over the large open windows that lined the structures. The maintenance of the campus environment would provide hands-on opportunities for students enrolled in agriculture and engineering.<sup>481</sup>

In October of 1973, Mary Neville had requested that Eagon send her thirty-five copies of Hendren’s preliminary campus planning booklet. On 22 February 1974, Hendren wrote to Eagon noting, that although there was much more of an air of “wrapping it up” he was optimistic of the possibilities at Hue, Can Tho, and the community colleges at Nha Trang and Me Tho. Hendren efforts had an immediate impact as construction continued at the new Cai Khe site. After the first

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<sup>479</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, letter, “Parker to Dreyfus,” (February 15, 1974).

<sup>480</sup> Philip A. Hendren, *Architectural Notes in Vietnam*, (Stevens Point: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc., 1974), 14.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-25.

three weeks of Hendren's 1974 tour, T.C. Clark directed Mary Neville to budget the full 2.5 months available contract time for Hendren's work with Can Tho, Hue, and Thu Duc.<sup>482</sup> The communications between Eagon and Hendren represented the unwavering sincerity of Team efforts and ideals. In late March of 1974 Hendren wrote to Eagon:

I've been pondering the situation and have a couple of ideas that I might try out on you. It seems to me the world works in many odd ways and one of the oddest is that what we have inadvertently done in recent years (especially USAID) may well be far more significant than anything we might have intended. It is complex but I think there is a kind of understanding held by many of the Vietnamese about American culture—including the weaknesses of it—that other S.E. Asians don't have... Whether we like it or not the Vietnamese have a more direct and perhaps more accurate impression of Americans, and we're not as pretty as the U.S. would prefer the world to believe, but nobody is. That isn't the point. The point is that much of the developing world is heading toward an idealized American dream that the Vietnamese have had the good fortune to experience vicariously—and see through, so to speak. It's probably not an original thought but it seems important to me because it may provide the perfect setting for reconciliation of the values which seem to polarize Americans today... what I am getting to is the irony of exporting one set of American values—a pretty conservative set inasmuch as one can archetype the typical USAID career person—to a country already experienced with a set of values now being cultivated by many American youth. I know the danger of generalizations like that but for the sake of conjecture one might imagine that we have the opportunity perhaps for the first time in human history to short-circuit one of these cycles that control the way things normally work. Do the Vietnamese really have to live through their own industrial/electronic/asphalt/dirty-air and-water age? I for one would like to answer that question no and show how it is really possible that two groups on Earth might exchange what they each know about life on this planet... What I have in mind is somehow marrying the wisdom of the East to the wizardry of the West and emerging with a fruit palatable to both.<sup>483</sup>

Hendren submitted his architectural notes to Eagon for review. The formal report would be the final major report produced under the Wisconsin Contract and published by the Wisconsin-Stevens Point Foundation, later in 1974.<sup>484</sup> During my interview with Eagon, he referred to the architectural work which he assisted in implementing at Can Tho. Eagon noted that the sketches were groundbreaking in that they came through with designs incorporating natural airflows. Typically, in Vietnam, American advisory firms had constructed large cement or steel buildings reliant on air-conditioning, which in turn was dependent on electricity, too often in short supply.

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<sup>482</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, (1974).

<sup>483</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, "Hendren to Eagon, late March 1974."

<sup>484</sup> Philip A. Hendren, *Architectural Notes in Vietnam*.

Hendren and Eagon worked fervently to counter architectural plans being designed in Saigon which called for expensive, monumental concrete, air-conditioned structures.<sup>485</sup> Hendren was so bold as to get Can Tho's Rector Xuan to agree to the construction of a experimental wind tower at the Cai Khe site. The giant wind tower was to be a working symbol that Vietnam wanted technology and electricity, but in a better and cleaner way. Hendren was, in effect, hoping that contemporary Vietnam was beginning to identify with new generational ideas of not wanting to do things the way "our fathers ('our advisers') did, but better."<sup>486</sup>

On 8 March 1974, Charles Green wrote to Eagon. Green had now settled in as Chief, Human Resources Division, USAID/Bogotá. He had recently been to Washington where he met with Eleanor Green and Hal Hall. He had found them to be all "gloom and doom" concerning the Vietnam program. This reflected what Ken Howe and Mary Neville had already conveyed to him. He reported to Eagon that in Colombia the program looked "longer on money than on ideas or the realistic implementation of the ideas...it occurred to me that you with your 27 caps you wear might have some suggestions." Green inquired as to the possibility of sending Colombian professors to UWSP for internships in innovative programs and instructional materials. He also confirmed that he had requested the services of Team consultants B. L. Johnson and W. Wood.<sup>487</sup>

In Vietnam, with the Wisconsin Contract due to expire in June, work continued until existing contract funds were exhausted. Hendren had remained actively engaged, Rothwell had returned to Saigon for consultant service furthering the development of Vietnamese educational foundations, Ray Van Cleef and B. Lamar Johnson were due to arrive for work on the ongoing development of community colleges, and the newest Team consultant Robert Whetstone had joined Hascall in debugging the IBM 1230 program for preparation of a possible launching of a new system for testing in June. From Stevens Point, Eagon corresponded with Do Bo Khe setting the groundwork for two Vietnamese seminars scheduled for that spring in Vietnam. Dr. Khe had

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<sup>485</sup> Eagon, interview by author, (October, 2000).

<sup>486</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, "Hendren to Eagon, late March 1974."

<sup>487</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, "Charles Green to Eagon," (March 8, 1974).

been directed to seek assistance from the Asia Foundation, but also requested that USAID/Vietnam secure the services of Johnson and Van Cleef to assist with the seminars. Eagon wrote to Mary Neville, sending along a preliminary outline for the first seminar. Eagon noted, however, that Wisconsin did not have the contract dollars to be of further assistance and Stevens Point not been informed as to whether there would be additional funding.

In March of 1974, Stevens Point hosted its final contractual visitation as Ngo Khac Tinh, Minister of Culture, Education and Youth, and Khuong Huu Dieu, President of Industrial Development Bank of Vietnam, visited the campus. Eagon characterized the event as primarily a protocol visit, as the Vietnamese leaders met with the twenty Vietnamese students now studying on campus, briefing them on the current situation in Vietnam and encouraging them to return to Vietnam upon the completion of their master's programs. Eagon graciously followed-up the visit with a personal letter thanking the Vietnamese for taking the time to visit the campus:

It has been of great benefit and enjoyment for this University to work with your Universities, and we hope that the Wisconsin Contract has been helpful to you. If there is any way that we can continue to be of assistance to you through any type of funding available we stand ready to help. The Wisconsin Contract has been very flexible to meet the expressed needs of the Ministry and AID, and we hope to continue in that way.<sup>488</sup>

Along with his March 1974 letter, Eagon enclosed his "Proposal for the Community College Seminar" and a "Chronological listing of Contacts between UWSP and the Republic of Vietnam."

Eagon spent April of 1974 wrapping up communications with the remaining Team consultants working in Vietnam. Rothwell, Whetstone, and Hendren all reported in with final accounts and impressions as they prepared to return to the U.S. in May of 1974. Rothwell wrote:

I shall leave with some real concerns about the future... This has been a sad time to be here. John Haffenrichter has already left. Mary leaves next Wednesday; Ken Howe on Friday. Others within days after that. Only Jim Turman remains uncertain... Windy Niblo takes off in about 5 or six days. The Minister awarded all of them decorations—first class. But that neither allays regret nor uncertainty. I shall return to San Francisco about the 5<sup>th</sup> of May. While they speak of my coming out here again, I have made clear there are no more funds in sight, and I am not at all sure what I can do beyond what I have done... I know you will be pleased to learn of the Minister's glowing reports of his visit

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<sup>488</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, "Eagon to Tinh," (March 22, 1974).

to Stevens Point.<sup>489</sup>

Mary Neville was to continue her work USAID work with a new assignment in Korea. T.C. Clark had been among the first aid officials in Saigon and would be among the last Americans to leave Vietnam. Dr. Teunison C. Clark first served in Vietnam from 1960 through 1963, he then shifted his duties to USAID/Washington, as Robert LaFollette arrived in Saigon to direct USAID/Higher Education-Vietnam. Clark had then returned to Vietnam in May of 1967, working closely with the second Wisconsin Team. Since that time, he had shifted his work between Vietnam and Washington, and would be the final top USAID official to close his home in Saigon.

On 6 September 1974, Hal Hall, USAID/Washington, sent a final cable to Vickerstaff and Eagon joining "TC" in expressing the USAID's appreciation for the many accomplishments of the Wisconsin Contract and regretting its termination. Hall noted the USAID would appreciate it if Vickerstaff would submit Wisconsin's final report in a timely fashion. He noted that the Standard Provisions of the Wisconsin Contract had provided the guidelines for the final report, including the text in his letter:

At the conclusion of the work hereunder, Contractor shall prepare and submit to the Contracting Officer three (3) copies, and to the Mission four (4) copies of a final report which summarizes the accomplishments of the assignment, methods of work used and recommendations regarding unfinished work and/or program continuation. The final report shall be submitted within 45 days after completion of this contract.<sup>490</sup>

The Wisconsin Team had traveled around the world to assist Vietnam in the institutionalization of a modern system of higher education. Early on in the mission the Team had recognized the difficulties and dangers of such a mission in a land divided by war. The original Wisconsin Team had given the ultimate sacrifice so others might have the opportunity to learn. They had posthumously received National Awards of Merit from their Vietnamese hosts. As the Wisconsin Team in Stevens Point submitted their mandated closure reports and the final

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<sup>489</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, "Rothwell to Eagon," (April 9, 1974).

<sup>490</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, contracts and letters, "H. Hall to Vickerstaff," (September 6, 1974).

Team members departed Vietnam, they too received decorations and formal expressions of gratitude. Yet, the real measure of appreciation worked both ways, as a lasting bond had been formed between the two foreign groups of educators. Their mutual commitment would not end with the termination of a parchment contract. If the Team could no longer go to Vietnam to offer assistance, then they would work at home to keep the doorway to Stevens Point and America open. A rising tide of Vietnamese would soon be in search of innovative opportunities in the land of pioneers, a land they had come to respect, far away from their homeland, all the way around the world. By mid-1975, South Vietnam had collapsed.

## CHAPTER V

### **THE AFTERMATH, HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM AND THE WISCONSIN MISSION REVISITED: REFLECTIONS OF LEE SHERMAN DREYFUS, NGUYEN QUYNH-HOA, CHARLES GREEN, AND BURDETTE EAGON**

Having completed my extensive review of the reports and efforts associated with the Wisconsin Contract I will conclude my findings through the reflections of selected members of the Wisconsin Team. I wrote letters of inquiry to several of the known surviving Team members, asking if they would consent to my interviewing them and incorporating their reflections into my thesis. Former WSU-SP/UWSP President/Chancellor Lee Sherman Dreyfus responded by calling me within 48 hours of my mailing and insisting that I interview him first.

#### **‘LSD,’ Governor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, President/Chancellor WSU-SP/UWSP**

In 1967, the Wisconsin Board of Regents had already been working to fill a presidential vacancy at Wisconsin State University-Whitewater when WSU-SP President James H. Albertson was killed in Vietnam. With Albertson’s death, the board moved to fill both state university positions by 1 July 1967. At WSU-SP, the working groups for faculty governance that President Albertson had provided with an active role in campus administrative planning sought to participate in the selection process. The Board of Regents, however, rebuffed all attempts by the local faculty advisory committee to take part in early screening and interview sessions. As July came and went the board had recognized that WSU-SP was in good administrative shape with Gordon Haferbecker continuing to resolve the vital issues associated with continued growth during this extended transitional period. Acting President Haferbecker had the endorsement of local faculty to be named permanent president, but the regents favored a surprise candidate, Lee Sherman Dreyfus. Dreyfus’s credentials included B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from UW-Madison, work as general manager of WHA-TV in Madison, and résumés shaped by research, writing, and speech-making. Acting on the recommendation of the Regent Presidential Search Committee, the board appointed Dreyfus as the ninth president of WSU-SP on 2 October 1967.

President Dreyfus became Chancellor Dreyfus of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) four years later with the merger of the University of Wisconsin System and Wisconsin State University System. This transition represented a real maturity in higher education in Stevens Point, as the campus underwent expansion and curricular growth. The events of this period included the reorganization of shared governance; faculty layoffs based on projected enrollment declines; regent imposed guidelines barring excesses of student civil disobedience and unauthorized occupancy of university buildings; innovative programs; establishment of an Army ROTC unit on campus. The Dreyfus era also marked the zenith of the University's contractual association with the USAID and Republic of Vietnam.<sup>491</sup>

The new president arrived at WSU-SP during a time of brisk expansion. In part, Dreyfus' own unorthodox quest to place WSU-SP on the road to cultural and educational pre-eminence in central Wisconsin and higher education represented a sustained augmentation of the reforms and innovative administrative themes associated with President Albertson and the young professionals who had helped initiate Albertson's philosophy. There is little doubt that Dreyfus benefited from the things Albertson had already set in motion, along with the shear momentum of institutional growth. President Dreyfus, set new goals for the University that employed an even stronger emphasis on new technologies and internationalization. WSU-SP, according to Dreyfus, was to become a "twenty-first century campus," as television, and later computers, were tools that would enhance and share educational resources nationwide and "change the process of learning, improve its efficiency, and...do a better job with fewer resources."<sup>492</sup> In 1972, Dreyfus' title changed to chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point with the merger of the University of Wisconsin System and Wisconsin State University System. Dreyfus had been a strong advocate of the merger of the two university systems. In 1977, Dreyfus' own fervor for change led him to request a leave from office as he sought the Republican nomination for

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<sup>491</sup> Paul, 111.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

governor of the state of Wisconsin. In 1978, following an energetic grassroots campaign, he was successfully elected as Wisconsin's fortieth governor. In 1979, Dreyfus assumed his new job when he returned to Stevens Point and took the oath-of-office in front of Old Main.

Just as Dreyfus benefited from the administrative and institutional reforms President Albertson had initiated, he would benefit internationally and contractually from the momentum that Albertson's Wisconsin Team had already achieved and the quick actions of Burdette Eagon as new team leader. Eagon arrived in Vietnam within two weeks of the fatal plane crash, assuring that the early efforts of the Wisconsin Team would be fulfilled. My transcription and review of several taped records of Dreyfus' news conferences and "in country" reports are quite revealing as to the evolution of the USAID contract. In addition, my in-depth personal interview of former Governor Dreyfus, shed new light on the flow of USAID and RVN relations with new teams of Wisconsin-led educators. The content of my transcribed materials is included in its entirety in the appendices of my thesis. The material offers insight into the concluding years of the Wisconsin Team's contractual association with Vietnamese higher education and America's involvement in Vietnam.

When I interviewed Dreyfus he immediately expressed his delight that I had chosen this topic for my thesis and was happy that he was the first Team leader I had interviewed, especially before my series of meetings with Burdette Eagon, "because he is so modest." Dreyfus credited Albertson for the project's originality. He credited Eagon for the project's longevity, noting that Eagon was characterized by an objective expertise that could carry the Wisconsin Team to its culmination. In light of my own research, I must concur with Dreyfus' crediting of Albertson and Eagon, and would like to add my own respect for their educational prowess and humanity. While the focal point of my interview with Governor Dreyfus was the work of the Wisconsin Team, we discussed a variety of facets of his tenure at WSU-SP/UWSP. For the purpose of this thesis, I will for the most part incorporate only the information the governor gave me in regards to the Vietnam higher education project, while I have chosen to include the entire transcript of the

interview in the appendix of my thesis. Dreyfus began by explaining his reasons for coming to WSU-SP:

I came here because of James Albertson. I was a consultant to the Wisconsin State University system for educational television...Albertson and I got to be good friends. I got to know him really well...and...Leonard Hass who was over at Wisconsin State University-Eau Claire, and...Yarn Olsich down at Wisconsin State University-Platteville. Those three were very interested in educational television and public television and as a result I dealt directly with them...when Jim died that really bothered me because I knew that somewhere the report they were working on, what was left of it, was going to be written up—probably by Bud Eagon and put in a file down there at USAID offices...and seven good men could have died for no good reason...The state university system had been pushing me to take a presidency, for all sorts of reasons that I won't get into. I kept on saying no. When Jim died in that March 1967; that changed the rules...I would go to Stevens Point—with no intention to stay, but to carry out the USAID contract and get those universities built...On that basis—that is what brought me here—and then in the process really got involved in the Vietnam thing. My job in that contract, Mr. Reich, was essentially political and promotional. That is, I had to get through the political barriers...<sup>493</sup>



Republic of Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu and WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus (LSD) meeting in Presidential Palace, Saigon

<sup>493</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

Dreyfus would not go to Vietnam until 1970. He would make three such trips; one under the strict auspices of the Wisconsin Contract; one in conjunction with the work of the higher education team and his interests in ROTC; and a final trip funded by the U.S. Defense Department as he traveled with Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird looking at the possible conversion of U.S. military installations. Burdette Eagon, the new chief of the Higher Education Survey Team, continued to work on specific reports and synchronize all in-the-field surveys completed team consultants. All the while, William Vickerstaff harmonized details of the Wisconsin Contract. Eagon and Vickerstaff jointly coordinated the series of seminars that had begun at WSU-SP, with numerous Vietnamese educators and officials visiting the Stevens Point campus. The campus now served as a hub for observation tours held in the United States.

The WSU-SP campus was a model for institutional change. By 1970, in Stevens Point, President Dreyfus had continued to institute a plan of academic reorganization. Dreyfus had eliminated the College of Applied Arts and Sciences and the College of Education, replacing them with the College of Natural Resources and the College of Professional Studies. The curriculum in natural resources had been elevated to the status of the new College of Natural Resources with the program expanding its curricular prominence in Wisconsin and nationally, with a new major in conservation education being followed by majors in forestry, wildlife, soil science, water resources, and resource management. The College of Professional Studies pulled together professional programs from the School of Education, Communicative Disorders, Home Economics, Health, Physical Education and Recreation, with new specialized curricula in chemical (paper and pulp) technology and medical technology, and learning disabilities, early childhood education, the Laboratory School/Gesell Institute, and military science. These two new colleges joined with the College of Letters and Science and the College of Fine Arts (later renamed College of Fine Arts and Communication) to form the four basic academic units remaining in place at UWSP to this day. In 1964, the College of Fine Arts had originated from the merger of the Departments of Art, Drama, and Music from within the College of Letters and

Science. In 1969, the Communication Department materialized, reflecting Dreyfus' interests, by merging the Speech Department curriculum with courses in journalism and radio-television. A broadening of the cultural offerings for the University and community continued as Dreyfus created the Division of Educational Services and Innovative Programs (ESIP), with Dean Burdette W. Eagon taking on the leadership of the Learning Resources Center/Library/Archives, Tutoring Services, the Speech and Hearing Clinic, Extended Services (later renamed Continuing Education), Instructional Data Processing, and International Programs. Major advances in the structure of graduate studies also took place during the Dreyfus tenure, with master's degree programs being approved in communicative disorders, home economics, natural resources, and teaching degrees in biology, drama, elementary education, English, history, music, and social studies. Further graduate programs were developed so that by the 1977-78 academic year graduate enrollment exceeded 1,200 students.<sup>494</sup>

Dreyfus, garnered widespread faculty support for the of International Programs, an idea for internationalizing the education for WSU-SP students that President Albertson had earlier suggested as means of linking together classroom and non-classroom activities and providing opportunities for students to study abroad. It was under Albertson that WSU-SP program had its start-up with an International Studies Committee in 1966. In 1967, Professor Hugh Walker chaired the committee. Albertson's interest in multicultural programs had spawned such studies in various departments. By the time Dreyfus arrived the History Department had Asian Studies, Latin American Studies, and Russian and East European Studies. Professor Walker, Professor Knowlton, and Professor Soroka had all arrived in the early and mid 1960's instituting classes in their respective specialties.<sup>495</sup>

The move toward internationalization continued later with the appointment of Foreign Student Adviser Marcus Fang in 1974, and the inauguration of the Host Family Program and

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<sup>494</sup> Paul, 112.

<sup>495</sup> Walker, discussion with author, (2003).

International Dinner in 1975. The Host Program proved instrumental in the relocation of numerous Vietnamese students with the collapse of South Vietnam. The families of numerous Stevens Point faculty, including the Eagons, the Stelstras, the Crows, and others, sponsored hundreds of Vietnamese relocating to the United States.<sup>496</sup>

In 1969, the initial program directed toward increasing educational opportunities for minorities at WSU-SP began under the direction of Dean Burdette Eagon, with the institution of PRIDE (Programs Recognizing Individual Determination through Education.) In 1973, the University's sensitivity to minority issues continued with the creation of an Affirmative Action Office, and faculty adoption of an Affirmative Action Plan in 1974. The Albertson tradition of "shared governance" for the University had been initiated with the president's institution of assorted councils and committees; however, the committee set up to investigate changes in governance had been disbanded following his death. In 1970, a new committee was formed to study issues of reorganization, including the possible creation of a Faculty Senate. In 1972, the faculty's Constitutional Revision Committee recommended that the formation of a senate organization was the best answer for the perceived inefficiencies in campus management. Yet, faculty morale was significantly damaged when the University's rapid growth in enrollment, experienced during the 1960's, culminated with an unexpected decline between 1972 and 1974. Flawed predictions of a prolonged decline led the Board of Regents to approve a declaration of fiscal emergency by Chancellor Dreyfus, authorizing the non-renewal or layoff of 27 tenured and non-tenured faculty and staff. Dire forecasts of waning enrollment failed to materialize. In fact, some years later, the regents would call on each campus to set enrollment caps.<sup>497</sup>

A mounting opposition to the U.S. military involvement in Vietnam brought serious challenges to Dreyfus' ostensible faith in an open-university, academic freedom and free speech. Antiwar activities on campus and in the community mirrored the national scene on a more minor

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<sup>496</sup> Eagon, interview by author.

<sup>497</sup> Paul, 118-122.

scale with weekly peace vigils, discussion groups, literature distribution, teach-ins, marches on the local selective service office, and sit-ins in Old Main and the University Center and an occupation of Nelson Hall. Chancellor Dreyfus, acting on the strength of Regent Resolution 3161 banning SDS from system campuses, denied a request for official recognition of the local chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Resolutions by University faculty and student government calling for the ban to be overturned were unsuccessful. Meanwhile, an application for the establishment of an Army ROTC unit at WSU-SP had been upheld by a faculty vote just prior to Dreyfus' appointment as president. The U.S. Army acted to fulfill the request, and with additional faculty debate and approval of its curriculum the unit became a fixture on campus in September of 1968, and the focal point of antiwar protests. Taken as a whole, patience and compromise characterized the reactions modeled by campus security and administrators.<sup>498</sup>

Dreyfus' educational mission became increasingly involved in the national sector, traveling regularly to Washington, D.C. as part of a federal ROTC advisory council and educational consultant for the defense department. In 1970, President Dreyfus would take his negotiating skills and political prowess to Vietnam as the new leader of the Wisconsin Team.<sup>499</sup>

In January of 1970 the Wisconsin Team contract had been in operation for two and one-half years. Dreyfus worked with Vickerstaff and Eagon in securing a 24 man-month add-on to the Wisconsin Contract for consultations that would work to entirely reorganize higher education in Vietnam. Dreyfus recognized the existing tie with the Vietnamese people that the late President Albertson had created. Dreyfus told Bill Meissner of the Stevens Point press, the opportunity was "possibly the most significant thing this institution can do within this decade. The key factor is the personal relationship; in the simplest terms, it's human trust." The primary payoff, said Dreyfus, was the prestige the University would gain by doing: "Something of such

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<sup>498</sup> Ibid., 122-124.

<sup>499</sup> The author was a student antiwar activist involved in the protest movement on campus and nationally, overall there were no actions against the Wisconsin Contract, as it was clearly an educational project that focused on positive reforms and assisting to expand the horizons of higher education.

national import that it puts us in the mainstream of national education.”<sup>500</sup>

As Dreyfus prepared to leave for Vietnam, he addressed a large gathering on the Stevens Point campus. The new chief of the Wisconsin Team spoke of what he anticipated to be an educational mission that would serve long-term relations between Vietnam and the United States:

The problems of defense and party are obviously today. Somebody has got to be working in the long-range plan, and one big aspect of that would be the development of higher education and the leadership of that country to keep it stable...I think there is another war to fight. This is a most important long-range war. I feel quite obligated to do it, plus to carry out final plans of that which was started by my predecessor Jim Albertson... [university] presidents had come over here, the vice-presidents, the deans, they now see a different approach to higher education...this broad Jeffersonian tradition we have here in America, they accepted a good deal of this...So now the real issue isn't bringing our system there, but to make sure that they understand our system and how it can be adapted. What can they take from us to help bring about the changes they need to provide a higher educational base that will meet their needs for a self-governed society?<sup>501</sup>

Dreyfus' initial overall impressions from South Vietnam are revealing:

I flew back across the entire length of 600 miles and find this country to be an absolutely enchanting beautiful wooded country. It is a shame it is so torn by war...All in all it seems to me that the South Vietnam situation has begun to stabilize at least on this pre-Tet period. There is some question of whether there will be a mounted offensive and only the military guess, which seems to be pessimistic, would suggest that this is the last chance for the VC and the North to make major impact...It is their last chance to say that they can really control the situation...From the vantage point of this viewer, I see only a carnival city in Saigon, a kind of delightful refreshing city in Hue, and a people who are now beginning to sense their own nationalism, their own individuality, and who before they are through will probably will ask that the American presence to be gone...I feel now so much as I did in meeting all of the various Vietnamese who have visited our campuses in the past two years that we cannot and must not abandon these people. If we do, I am sure they are going to be overrun in the most vicious form and never again will the American presence be looked on as any value to anyone in the free world. This is the best I can give you from an inexperienced eye and a standard Wisconsin citizen sitting here in the middle of South Vietnam from inside the fish bowl. It is very different from going to bed in Stevens Point, Wisconsin and not being concerned whether the front door is locked...<sup>502</sup>

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<sup>500</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 6, Clippings (Undated), Bill Meissner, “Dreyfus Outlines Vietnam Plans.”

<sup>501</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #16, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, “WSU-SP Presidential message on Vietnam and news conference,” (January, 1970), tape recorded message transcribed by author, (2000).

<sup>502</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #19, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, “WSU-SP President news conference, 9 March 1970,” tape recorded message transcribed by author, (2000).

### Why Stevens Point?



Dreyfus explained that President Lyndon Baines Johnson had asked him the same question. Johnson queried if the lack of monetary reward was the reason an eastern Ivy League University or Berkeley did not have the USAID contract, instead of WSU-SP? Dreyfus explained that great growth at WSU-SP had occurred in a short time span and served as a model for the Vietnamese rectors WSU-SP/UWSP that was understandable. Johnson noted that he had attended a former normal school, Texas State. LBJ thought it was terrific that WSU-SP had the contract. LBJ commented, “That is so *fucking* smart, no one in Washington would have thought

of that!” According to Dreyfus, “that is the way he talked, but he was sincere.”<sup>503</sup> Moreover, Dreyfus and Johnson realized WSU-SP had gained the trust and respect of the Vietnamese.

First of all, why Stevens Point State University, and what’s our relationship to the Vietnamese university? There are five universities over there...universities are going to have to be built and expanded...Our relationship there is essentially one that is personal. I think the personal debt is that the president of our university died there. That he was there to lead the team to study the educational situation and to see too if we could provide and suggest recommendations to the Vietnamese government as to what they should/could do to help education. So I think Albertson’s death is a very real factor involved here for the most of these men who are providing the leadership in the universities. They knew him, they talked with him, they worked with them, they are fully aware of what his recommendations and reports were. And I think the fact that all the faculty were here [WSU-SP]...were on this campus...along with most of the deans and most of the vice-presidents, so that I was able to renew the relationship as I did not have to start from scratch. I did not have to go through that first human spiral, as one tries to determine the other’s moves or intents, meanings and communications...Most of this had already established a bridge...The other factor is that a university like ours is a university more typical for the Vietnamese than larger universities across the United States...The big thing is we are still a single factor, kind of a physical plant...you look at buildings and say that is a Fine Arts Building, this building is Physical Education, this building is Learning Resources, this building is a dormitory, and this building is the Student Center/Union, that kind of one at a time. If you go to a large institution, like Ann Arbor, Madison, Berkeley, Harvard, with a wealth of cement, bricks, asphalt, it is very difficult for them to understand, it is impressive, but most difficult to understand what exactly it is. It is also, I think, impossible for these Vietnamese educators to look at that and somehow say, “I can reproduce that and build that in my lifetime.”<sup>504</sup>

Indeed, by 1973, Stevens Point had established a contemporary building plan, and almost an entire campus had been constructed and fully staffed in the period from when Albertson arrived. Within a decade, the university had developed visible layers of efficient administration, numerous service agencies, academic buildings, dorms, and athletic fields. Visiting Vietnamese educators, within a week or two, could understand how things operated. WSU-SP had built a strong academic core, had begun a graduate school, and had instituted a modern system of registration and records. In comparison, the UW-Madison, with its huge campus, was much more confusing for Vietnamese educators who visited Wisconsin on a short-term basis.

The Dreyfus educational mission with Vietnam was to differ in its disposition, but the

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<sup>503</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

<sup>504</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #19, Dreyfus, news conference, (9 March 1970).

impetus of the mission continued to move forward. While the Wisconsin Team led by Burdette Eagon still developed its long-range recommendations along earlier strategic lines based upon humanitarian ideals, the new WSU-SP president saw long-term planning more in terms of calculated principles. Upon his return from his first trip to South Vietnam, Dreyfus laid out a simplified history of American foreign relations:

I think there has been a cabinet coalition in this country, which in the first century of our existence was essentially internal, our interior base of agriculture so the State Department, which has always ascended had been in coalition with those to build this country internally. But, in the second century, close to the 1880's, we see a new kind of coalition with the Department of War and Department of Navy, as we become an externally orientated nation. That is true right up until today. So that the key coalition is obviously Defense and State, and Defense becomes the key instrument of foreign policy for our State Department. We are about to go into a third century, so that on a sort of grand scale we see this kind of tack that can be sold that is the route to go, get off the military kick and we go the educational route. The new coalition could be State and Education, and that as Education builds the new relationship with the State Department it becomes our external initiative...that is what I was looking at and I am now in the process of trying to find consultants...what they [the Vietnamese] think they need, what kind of help. We are in the process of asking people if as early as April 15<sup>th</sup> [1970] will they go for 60 days, go to all five universities, spend in the neighborhood of 2 weeks at each one...people from institutions that are more like the five universities there in South Vietnam now.<sup>505</sup>

President Albertson had set up the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., which held the USAID-Vietnam funding. According to Dreyfus, the Wisconsin State University System offices in Madison found this “irritating,” as at the time WSU-SP was the only institute in the system to have an independent contract. Dreyfus acted quickly to keep the USAID/WSU-SP contract on firm footing, by employing his own skills in political communication to open the official doors so that other Team educators could continue to work toward reform and use their particular expertise to the maximum. Burdette Eagon was given full support to fulfill the initial USAID contract. A new Wisconsin Contract was initiated, with WSU-SP to provide thirty percent of the consultants and draw the other seventy percent from other American universities. The Wisconsin Team would bring the Educational Foundation idea to Vietnam in the early 1970's; at that time

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<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

recommending the establishment of a Vietnam Foundation as a channel for soliciting and managing educational funds from government and corporate partners. With its USAID contract renewed, WSU-SP worked through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities to recruit experts aligned with the services and needs as specified in the original Team report and discussions with Vietnamese officials. Dreyfus sent WSU-SP Special Assistant to the President William Vickerstaff to Vietnam to set things in motion for contractual extensions and to fully utilize the services of the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc. During our interview, Dreyfus reflected back, noting:

1.) I wasn't in a position to go to Vietnam initially and I sent him. 2.) Vickerstaff also a key man, in case we needed to pull that money out of the Foundation. My interest in him going there, and he didn't know this, I was going to have him operate separate from the University, he was not an academic. He would have been willing to do that, he had financial resources behind him, and he didn't have to have this job. So I knew he was able to say, "I quit," and get into something that absolutely not related to the University or state at all, and have the Foundation contract that entity—do you follow me? If Madison and some of their staff were going to be successful and get their hands on controlling this contract, then I wanted to put it out of their reach—so it was a backup play. I didn't talk to anybody about it, not even Bud Eagon. But I thought that at that point Vickerstaff needed to understand that besides the finances, what this was about just in case he had to run it. That would come as a surprise to Bud and you are probably the first person I told other than Fred Harrington, and Fred is now dead.<sup>506</sup>

Vickerstaff was well received in Vietnam, just as Eagon always found, the Stevens Point educators would all benefit from the time-honored appreciative salutation from their Vietnamese counterparts won by the Albertson Team. Dreyfus was not surprised when he found that the biggest hurdle the Wisconsin Team faced in Vietnam was the U.S. State Department. When he arrived in Vietnam, Dreyfus encountered initial opposition, which he characterized as elitist, in the form of U.S. Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker. He found Bunker to be a "typical Eastern Brahman" who did not give much credence to the notions of a highly visible Midwestern college president. According to Dreyfus, Bunker did mix well with Rector Day of the University of Saigon and other Francophile elitists. Dreyfus did find an endorsement of support from Daniel

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<sup>506</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

Parker of the USAID, who was from Janesville, Wisconsin, and the Parker Pen family. In Saigon, Dreyfus also found that he could not push Earl Hoshol of the USAID, because as a “careerist” he worried that Bunker may spoil his retirement plans. Dreyfus made an end run around Bunker to schedule a meeting with Vietnamese President Thieu by working through Deputy Ambassador Berger, another Wisconsin product, from the Michael John Experimental College at Madison. Dreyfus explained that he operated using his own political experience and the general knowledge that others knew he had met with President Johnson. Over time, Dreyfus would garner additional dividends from his friendship with Melvin Laird and Secretary of the Army Froehlke, both products of Central Wisconsin. For example, it was Congressman Laird who later set up a White House meeting for the Wisconsin Team and the Vietnamese rectors.

In 1970, Dreyfus emerged from his first Saigon meeting with two *arêtes* and three decrees after an hour and three-quarter long executive conference with Thieu.

I had everything we wanted. That they had been—Earl Hoshol and the USAID—had been trying to get through the state department for two years. Hoshol couldn’t believe it. I said, “It is going to get delivered.” He said, “Where is it going to get delivered?” I said, [to Thieu] “Can you deliver it to me directly—I am staying across from USAID I?” He [Thieu] said, “It will be put personally in your hands,” and it was. That was my function. Frankly, I was running interference against the State Department. I am convinced to this day if those *arêtes* and decrees had been delivered to the State Department, Hoshol would never have seen them unless Bunker decided he was going to take care of this...having the Froehlke and Laird backup turned out to be very important to this project, as well as toward the end delivering things over the educational run. Because once it was clear to the military commanders [American] that these educational things were growing, especially in Hue and down in Can Tho and over in Dalat, that these things were important to the Pentagon, not just the state department.<sup>507</sup>

Dreyfus, while having great faith in Nguyen Van Thieu, did note high levels of corruption in the GVN, especially where financial matters were involved. When I interviewed Dreyfus, he noted numerous instances when he witnessed questionable economic exchanges in Saigon. He was quick to rebuff any such opportunities. To its credit the Wisconsin Team always maintained irrefutable educational ethics and professional respectability. The Team was never infiltrated by governmental agents or diverted from the mission at-hand.

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<sup>507</sup> Ibid.

Dreyfus' additional personal impressions from Vietnam are revealing. He found both Hue and Can Tho promising, but troubled in terms of human resources—lacking faculty. Their distance from Saigon heightened the challenges associated with terrain and transportation, and the dangers coupled with the activities of the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese. This problem had been noted before and remained a reoccurring concern of the Wisconsin Team. Dreyfus especially admired the administrative leadership of Rector Chau and the reforms at Hue. He called Hue “a landmark of intellectualism.” Dreyfus noted that although Chau was a Vietnamese Catholic and head of the Anti-Communist League, he refused any extra security, choosing to focus on his educational mission and adhering to the Vietnamese Buddhist philosophy. Chau told Dreyfus, Oh, I could have all kinds of security and it would not change a thing. If they [VC] decide that I am not going to exist any further, I am not going to exist; it is just going to happen.” After the war, Rector Chau, would become a dean at Notre Dame University, Indiana.<sup>508</sup>

In his 1970 message from Vietnam, Dreyfus went to great detail in the account of his visit to Hue, where he had witnessed: “the constant thump, thump, thump of the outgoing payload of rockets and eight-inch howitzers...into [the] perimeter zone so that the VC cannot move into it at night.” Dreyfus again used Cold War jargon in his description: “we could, if we put our resources to it, develop...in this part of the world exactly what West Berlin did in its part of the world...as a form of defense for the free world at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel here in Southeast Asia.”<sup>509</sup> In fact, German educators had invested time and resources in developing a technical school as part of Hue, but pulled out with the Tet offensive. The Wisconsin Contract continued to assist Hue in the development of a model program for registration and records. Dreyfus suggested that WSU-Stout could play a role in the development of technical and industrial arts at Hue. Hue, however, remained in constant threat from the effects of the war, and some officials opposed any large scale investment as it was thought that a new line of demarcation may someday cede Hue to the

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<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

<sup>509</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #16, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, “Message on Vietnam, news conference, (January 1970).

North. Dreyfus saw some potential for Japanese assistance at Can Tho, working in the areas of forestry, paper science, and agriculture. He noted that Can Tho's facilities were becoming more and more impressive, but unfortunately they were extensively damaged by an American air strike targeting VC insurgents, just as the U.S. was pulling out. Dreyfus, like most other American educators, saw the University of Saigon as posing the biggest problem as it carried the most weight and prestige, but was totally fragmented and plagued by vestiges of the French colonial system. Dreyfus recommended bypassing Saigon University, while putting an emphasis on establishing modern competitive campuses in the Saigon area. The Buddhist University at Van Hanh and the Catholic University at Dalat had particularly good administrative promise and had been recently granted equal representation on the newly established governing board of the universities, along with an increased level of assistance from the GVN.<sup>510</sup>

Dreyfus' observations while in Vietnam are illuminating in the overly optimistic tone of his communiqué:

The situation does not appear to me as it has in the press. I have found this to be like a bustling carnival like city with every indication that Tet is at hand in another week with shops that are colorful and full of the black market goods... There is no indication of any fear... that people are concerned about driving in and around the city since all the cars have their windows open, with little fear of someone dropping a bomb in their window, as has been the case in the past. There are GI's riding about inside rickshaws and inside vehicles as they move about the city. People are laughing; life is gayety. It is interrupted in the night, while once in awhile by the thump of an eight-inch howitzer as it moves out on the outgoing perimeter to some area suspected of VC rocket activity. There have been no rockets coming into the city. This in fact is the Paris of Southeast Asia and it lives up to its name in every way. I find it very difficult to believe that there is a war going on in any sense at all, in the sense that I have been reading daily in the reports that are always listed from Saigon... I have been told by members of party who were here two years ago that they are absolutely astonished at the difference in the kind of polish, the kind of efficiency shown in these ARVN troops as they... stand ready on their watches... I did make a trip up to Hue and found a similar situation with the exception that Hue is not the large urban center... it is more like Stevens Point than like Madison... it is a bit more rural in its approach to life. Last night, however, I found myself in the middle of a VC attack on the University of Hue and in its environs. A hand grenade was exploded just outside my billet... there was a good deal of small arms fire for about three hours during the night, which tend to keep one awake when we are used to the things we are used to in Wisconsin. But, I am not sure if that was anything other than the fact that these... young local force troops... are a bit trigger-happy and when they get a chance to fire these

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<sup>510</sup> Series 17 Tape 8 #17-18, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, message from Vietnam, (January 1970).

M-16's they tend to take advantage of it. I suspect any shadow, any cat, any dog, anything that even moves gets fired at...so far as I could determine the entire perimeter of defense being set up here, just forty miles south of the Communist border, was being handled by ARVN troops. This would suggest that Vietnamization is in fact really from the military point-of-view. I talked with some of the news reporters...asked them specifically, why the reports in the United States do not show this kind of carnival atmosphere or the fact that when there is a small incident the ARVN troops move in regularly. Their basic reply is that this may be only temporary, a kind of wait and see attitude. My argument of course would be that we ought to tell it the way it is...There may be a giant offensive mounting since it is known that the troops are mounting north of the DMZ, I was told this by Colonel Chisholm who is the provincial senior adviser in Hue or in I CORE...immediately south of the North Vietnamese border...It was his reaction that there would be no real Tet offensive since as he put it: "We would absolutely wax them if they did." It would be completely disastrous from their point-of-view and they know it...he expects some attempts of the kinds I experienced myself last night...to create some kind of dramatic effect to the people that the VC are not gone...He pointed out that if another Tet goes by without any offensive by the VC they will clearly lose their grip on the people.<sup>511</sup>

It is difficult to fault educational optimism, but events would not be kind to the GVN or the ARVN. Three years later, in 1973, Charles Green of the USAID would not share in Dreyfus' confidence of the capabilities of the ARVN or the composed attitude of the general populous as he prepared to depart from his three-year tour in Vietnam. When I asked Green to reflect on the outcome of the war and if he anticipated the Communist victory, he responded:

"I really wasn't surprised. When we pulled out our troops in early 1973, the war went on except not so 'extravagantly.' A United States Air Force general told me as he was leaving that he was afraid that the South Viet Army might run amok over Southeast Asia since it was the largest and best equipped in all of Southeast Asia. He need not have worried the South Viet Army did not have the will—nor skill—to fight.<sup>512</sup>

Dreyfus' military connections and special interest in Vietnamization led him to devote his final educational mission in Vietnam to a survey of the possibilities for the conversion of U.S. military installations and apparatus into Vietnamese educational facilities. It was at that time that Dreyfus suggested that a decommissioned U.S. aircraft carrier be brought up the river from the harbor and permanently docked at downtown Saigon to serve as a vocational technical institute. The old diesel-stove carrier would have its own source of power and enough space for housing, classrooms, chow halls, gymnasiums, and more. Dreyfus hoped that Wisconsin State University-

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<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Green, interview by author, (January 2002).

Stout would join the plan with a program in vocational education. Several naval engineers, however, declared that the plan would not work, and other Pentagon officials noted that the U.S. military pullout was moving too fast. In hindsight, Dreyfus' noted, "You know now some of the Pentagon types and a lot of the Madison types here and some of them on this campus thought this was another—you know—Dreyfus is hitting the LSD again, but it really wasn't that wild of an idea." To this day he declares that, "If we were still going full bore, if I had made the proposal a year earlier, and if that carrier had been available I am convinced it would be there today. And think what a marvelous symbol that would be sitting there." He insisted that in his view it would have sat there, "as an absolute Buddhist symbol of an instrument of violence that through education becomes an instrument of peace."<sup>513</sup>

Other areas of Dreyfus' final report did prove useful, as he worked with both the defense department and USAID, recommending that bases be specifically turned over to the Vietnamese MOE rather than the GVN or ARVN. Dreyfus succeeded in a large transference of equipment from two mobile surgical units to the Medical College and hospital group at Hue. Upon Dreyfus' recommendation, Camp Doezema, was turned over to the University of Hue. Numerous other U.S. installations also would serve as the future sites for vocational-technical schools and junior colleges. The U.S. Army shifted warehouses, heavy equipment, maintenance equipment, radio communications gear, furniture, and laboratory equipment to the new agricultural center at Thu Duc and the National Technical Center in Saigon. Supplies were also transferred to the National Center of Administration, University of Saigon, and University of Can Tho. U.S. Army Secretary Robert F. Froehlke credited "Dreyfus' expertise and forethought...in shaping these important decisions" for the transference of \$1 million worth of equipment, installations, and surplus supplies to South Vietnamese for education and cultural development.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

<sup>514</sup> Series 17 Box 40 Folder 6, Clippings (Undated), "Viets Get \$1 Mil. In U.S. Aid," S&S Washington Bureau, (1972).

Almost thirty years later, Charles Green and Burdette Eagon on their return visit to Vietnam visited a fully functioning vocational school and junior college on a former American military base northeast of Saigon that Dreyfus had singled out. On a personal note, during my interview, Dreyfus expressed that he, too, hoped to return to Vietnam for a visit in the coming year or two. Dreyfus again expressed his excitement with my extensive research, noting he remains convinced that the Wisconsin Team higher education project is “probably one of the greatest contributions this country has made!” Governor Dreyfus mentioned that the University of Wisconsin-Stout had explored reinitiating an assistive program with Vietnam’s vocational technical school system some five years ago. He said that following the takeover in 1975 by the North he had severed communications with those from the Republic of Vietnam with whom he had worked, fearing what any contact or letters may lead to dire ramifications. Governor Dreyfus said, “To this day I feel badly about that.”<sup>515</sup> My later interviews with Burdette Eagon and Charles Green noted that positive contacts on their part have continued with their close Vietnamese counterparts. From talking with him, I know Dreyfus held confidence that other individuals’ efforts would be ongoing and continue to be constructive.<sup>516</sup>

### **Impressions of Nguyen Quynh-Hoa**

In an effort to present a Vietnamese perspective to my thesis I corresponded with Dr. Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, the Vietnamese interrupter who worked most closely with the Wisconsin Team. She presented me with copies of several biographical articles, both USAID and IVS documents, and her translation of “Some Impressions on America,” an article by Democratic Republic of Vietnam educator Mai Quoc Lien, reporting on his visit to UWSP during the 1997-98 academic year. Additionally, Miss Nguyen taped recorded responses to my research survey and questionnaire.

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<sup>515</sup> Dreyfus, interview by author.

<sup>516</sup> Dreyfus, Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, Green, and Eagon, interviews by author, (August, 2000 - February, 2002).

*"SCIENCE IS INTERESTING" says Vince McGeehan, here giving a simple demonstration for elementary teachers near Nam with Miss Hoa, his assistant.*



In 1967, when the WI Team met Quynh-Hoa she had already worked for nine years as an elementary school teacher, and served three years as an International Voluntary Services (IVS) instructor with the Mobil Science Laboratory for Elementary Instruction. Quynh-Hoa's early story is embedded with the USAID educational assistance program in Vietnam. In 1967, when the Wisconsin Team met Quynh-Hoa in Vietnam, she had already worked for nine years as an elementary school teacher, and served three years as an International Voluntary Services (IVS)

instructor with the Mobil Science Laboratory for Elementary instruction. She then worked with USAID Education and was assigned to the Wisconsin Team as their Vietnamese interpreter for the first two years of the contract in higher education. By 1969, Quynh-Hoa had migrated to the U.S. with the assistance of the Eagon family and enrolled in WSU-SP. Ms. Hoa was a student in Professor Walker's first section of Vietnamese Civilization. Nguyen Quynh-Hoa began her undergraduate studies in Stevens Point and then went on to complete her B.A. at the Catholic University of America, in Washington, D.C. There she continued her studies, earning both a M.A. and Ph.D. in Library Science

As noted, Quynh-Hoa began her association with American educators as an IVS instructor. The IVS had originated, in 1953, from a broad association of fourteen American Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations, with the objective of serving as a bridge in the twentieth century for young American volunteers to go to foreign areas to work and live together, aiding people with basic needs. IVS personnel assisted people with needs such as building hamlet schools, constructing pit privies, introducing extra-curricular activities and teaching English in schools, planting alternative agricultural crops, and designing new methods of farming. The IVS set forth their efforts in full cooperation with the many other agencies in Vietnam. Joint GVN/USOM provincial funds and USAID finances provided operating costs, as the IVS worked in a team partnership with advisers from USOM, MAAG, Special Forces, USAID, and others. Additional supplies came from other entities cooperating with IVS, such as the Asia Foundation, CARE, and religious relief associations. In 1960, a Congressional committee hearing reported on the IVS work in Vietnam, with the committee recommending that the government investigate starting a comparable program. President Kennedy was of the same opinion of IVS efforts when he initiated plans for the Peace Corps. The IVS continued to assist in Vietnam throughout the 1960's. IVS Team observations over the years noted both positive achievements and a similarity in disappointments. In 1957, IVS/VN Agriculturalist Arthur King reported that "gaining the confidence of these people is the biggest problem...It is difficult to introduce new methods

among people who are struggling for existence.” In 1958, IVS Chief-of-Party, J.W. Barwick, reported to the International Cooperation Administration that “individual reports express real ground for optimism as well as frustration.” In 1964, Robert Biggers, IVS/VN Hamlet Education Technician, ask: “how in the world can we build schools when, in so many cases, we are advised to stay out of the villages because the Viet Cong may be waiting somewhere in the rice paddies for an ambush?”<sup>517</sup>

IVS/Education focused on “cultivating practical experience” in Vietnam, a developing country, where the primary concerns were to extend literacy among the population, advance technical and vocational skills. IVS consultants and their assistants conducted extensive teacher training workshops across the Republic of Vietnam. In 1964, Nguyen Quynh-Hoa worked directly with IVS/Education as a teaching assistant with an IVS mobile science unit. Over a one-month period, in the region surrounding Hue, Ms. Nguyen assisted in the demonstration of science principles and methods to over 400 teachers representing 16,000 students from 100 Vietnamese schools.<sup>518</sup>

Nguyen Quynh-Hoa’s own words provide credence to the legacy of the Wisconsin Team:

Yes, I can say this very clearly, that I am very lucky because I met two groups from Stevens Point. The first one led by Dr. James Albertson, he came to my area as I at that time lived in Region II, about 250 hundred miles from Saigon. Region II, at that time, we were strong in education because we had a Community College, the University, and Oceanographic Institute. At that time, I was able to speak English and French [and Vietnamese] and was one who was really willing to help the Vietnamese and a person who wanted the Americans to understand so we both can work together.

I met Dr. Albertson one day, I think for around three hours. I was so busy at that time as I worked as an assistant to the higher education mission as translator, interpreter, and everything else that they needed me for. In the afternoon, at our meeting before Dr. Albertson went back to Saigon, he asked me if I could go with the delegation to Hue, my hometown. He said he knew I was a good interpreter and was familiar with Hue, which at that time was not a very safe area. Everyone involved in Vietnamese education thought it would be good for me to go with the delegation. I think there were six or seven people, but I could not go at that time. Unfortunately, I wouldn’t have a chance to work with them. The next morning when I went to work I got a note with the message from

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<sup>517</sup> Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, “Personal Papers,” *Annual Report, 1963-64: International Voluntary Services in the Republic of Vietnam*. (IVS Team/Vietnam, Saigon & San Francisco, 1964), 3-33.

<sup>518</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

Saigon letting us know that the plane had crashed in DaNang. It was really very difficult for others and me to know or understand why things had happened.

I think it was around three or six months that another group lead by Dr. Eagon also came to my area (Nha Trang.) Everyone knew I had met with Dr. Albertson before, so I tried my best to give all information and everything Dr. Eagon needed for the delegation from the United States as they prepared to study the universities.

You know part of this; I worked with AID, the Agency for International Development. We worked with all the contacts from the United States. We gave all the needed accommodations. We furnished all the interpreters, translators, arranged transportation, and everything. That way, we knew every single delegation from the United States. At that time, I worked as a teacher-trainer, so I traveled with an American woman to conduct workshops in different areas. So I flew in the morning and returned to Nha Trang in the afternoon. Each time I trained about 400 primary school teachers how to use new textbooks developed by the United States.

Well I am a Vietnamese, so in Vietnam the American was a foreigner to me. But I longed to come to the United States to study and I loved to learn English, so whenever I had any opportunity to speak English I volunteered. I read the newspapers from England and the United States and the Boy Scout Reader from England. Also, I helped some church people with social activities.

In 1960, up to 1966 I worked for International Volunteer Services, IVS. This is a group like Peace Corps, which came from the United States to come to Vietnam to help train primary school and secondary school teachers. This was almost like Dr. Eagon's group, but this one was for primary schools and they worked in the field.

I had contacts with all kinds of educators in Vietnam and then in the United States. That is why I had many experiences to handle and compare things between Vietnam and the United States. In my office I came to work with project teams and with Dr. Eagon on the team in higher education.

In Vietnam they asked me to work with Americans many times, but I refused because of our custom. We could not work with American, at that time, because my father was a mandarin. He passed away, but as a member in a [mandarin] family I cannot decide otherwise, but I began to have contacts. Since 1960 I had contacts with the Americans, but never worked for money. Then in 1966 the situation changed because the war spread everywhere so we moved to Nha Trang. In order to survive I had to work with Americans because I got more salary than [paid normally] in Vietnam. Luckily, they needed someone like me to travel in the area, the Ninh Thuan area, to train the teachers. The job was very, very dangerous, but I didn't know that. I loved to teach, I loved to speak English, and I loved to improve my education.

During the weekday I worked in my office helping war victims and poor people. I remember Dr. Albertson and Dr. Eagon visited Nha Trang. I took them to Cam Ranh...As I got involved with the project my life changed. ...at that time, during the war we had all kinds of [Americans] with all kinds of backgrounds, sometimes they were not involved with education; they were involved as soldiers or working in a different area. In education, to be honest with you, the group from Stevens Point was well known by Vietnamese people.

...I think the success of Stevens Point is now in education and its history! The history of [modern] higher education in Vietnam started back with Stevens Point. They came to help, and they came there to do a study about [implementing] a credit system. I think some of the parents knew about Stevens Point from Dr. Albertson and Dr. Eagon, so they sent their children there.

...You see, if we don't try to understand what work was done by the people in Stevens Point we will go nowhere.<sup>519</sup> *Nguyen Quynh-Hoa*

Of special note, when Eagon returned to Vietnam in November of 1973 he brought word to the USAID/Saigon that Nguyen Quynh-Hoa had completed her M.A. in Library Science and was considering whether to return to Vietnam or continue her studies toward a Ph.D. at the Catholic University of America. USAID Education Adviser in Library Science, John Hafenrichter, copied Eagon on an urgent dispatch to Nguyen Quynh-Hoa asking that she return to her homeland to play a leading role in the National Library of Vietnam that was being developed in conjunction with the new campus at Thu Duc University and the National Agricultural Institute. South Vietnam was in desperate need of trained librarians, and it was thought that Nguyen Quynh-Hoa would serve as a symbol of hope as one of a “new generation” of educated Vietnamese who were assuming leadership roles as South Vietnam worked to stand on its own. Also, it was thought that she could help direct the institution of a Vietnamese graduate program in Library Science. Hafenrichter's plea noted that:

Our mutual friend of many years, Dr. Burdette W. Eagon of Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point has returned for a brief period of consultation with us in USAID/Saigon...the level of your commitment to Viet-Nam indicated by Dr. Eagon...gives substance to this hope on my part. The years of development have not been sufficient enough to see real improvement in National Library leadership. At present this deficiency persists for largely political reasons. It is essential to “live with” this for yet a while longer, and await pressures...In hope that you do wish to serve within this milieu... a new “generation” of librarians trained overseas has begun to return...the abject frustration of ancient days has been or is very much in the process of being dispersed. I venture to hope that you might participate in this process of dispersal...together with your experience working while studying...and the several years struggling to make firm a profession and its discipline in actual work here, you will possess both academic pedigree in fullest measure and a Vietnamese practical approach to professional operations to match it. This unsolicited letter has grown to too great a length. I send it forward in the hope it may serve a useful purpose, chiefly to call you to

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<sup>519</sup> Nguyen Quynh-Hao, interview by author, (16 February 2002).

Viet-Nam at an early point in 1974!<sup>520</sup>

When I interviewed Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, she spoke fondly of her days at WSU-SP and the leadership of President Albertson, Dreyfus and Burdette Eagon. She asked that I extend her thanks to Dr. Walker, Dreyfus and Eagon. She told me that she had always intended to return to Vietnam and assist her native land in forming a National Library System. Yet, in 1974, given the uncertainties of the times, she decided to continue her studies at the Catholic University. As the larger events of the war further postponed her return, Quynh-Hoa worked to assist the relocation of other Vietnamese as she served on President Gerald Ford's Advisory Committee on Refugees. She returned to Vietnam in 1991, at which time she visited the National Library and academic libraries in Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, and Hanoi. While in Vietnam, she drafted a plan for future cooperation between Vietnamese and American libraries. In 1995, Nguyen Quynh-Hoa corresponded with President William Clinton as he worked to normalize relations between the United States and Vietnam. Nguyen Quynh-Hoa returned to UWSP as an education consultant with Dr. Linh and a group of other Vietnamese educators during the 1997-1998 school year. The group toured American Universities in search of future educational exchange projects. In conjunction with her consultant work with the Vietnam Library Education Project she translated an article by Mai Quoc (Lien) Linh, "Some Impressions on America." Nguyen Quynh-Hoa and her sister continue to reside outside Washington D.C., where Quynh-Hoa recently retired from a long career as a U.S. depository librarian. She told me,

I love it in Vietnam... [however] we are lucky to be in the United States, a country that gave us a chance to move and to help others...I can say the Vietnamese are different, different. I can tell you now, that the Vietnamese open their eyes widely! I think now their eyes are opened, very wide open.<sup>521</sup>

### **Reflections of Charles B. Green, USAID**

Just as Nguyen Quynh-Hoa assisted my thesis by providing it with a Vietnamese perspective, my correspondence with Dr. Charles B. Green provided my research with a view

<sup>520</sup> Series 17 Box 5 Folder 8a, Eagon, "John L. Hafenrichter to Nguyen Quynh-Hoa," (November 29, 1973).

<sup>521</sup> Nguyen Quynh-Hao, interview by author, and personal papers of Nguyen Quynh-Hao.

from the USAID perspective of the Wisconsin Contract. This thesis has already documented Green's major 1973 report, *Some Current Observations, General Information and Data, Higher Education in Vietnam*. Green's more recent recollections offered valuable reinforcement his earlier insightful "observations" and to my documentation of the reforms recommended by the cooperative efforts of the Wisconsin Team, USAID officials, other American educators, and their Vietnamese counterparts. The value of Green's observations and reflections is amplified as a result of his long service with the USAID. After corresponding with several letters, Dr. Green completed my research survey and interview questionnaire. I have included my complete transcription of the text of the interview in the appendix of my thesis. During his tenure with the USAID in Vietnam, Green supervised the USAID contract with WSU-SP/UWSP, with the focal purpose of improving the administration of Vietnamese universities.

Before and after his tour in Vietnam, Green's career mirrored developments in American foreign aid programs in the decade from the mid-1960's through the mid-1970's. Charles Green served with American foreign assistance programs in Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Vietnam, and then back to Bogotá. He started in the Foreign Service as Assistant Cultural Attaché in the United States Information Agency (USIA) in Columbia, while in the USIA Green received funding from the USAID to assist Peace Corps projects in Columbia. Green transferred to the USAID, going to the Dominican Republic, first to specifically manage higher education projects, and then was in charge of all social programs. After three and one-half years Peru requested his services. In early 1971, he was in charge of all USAID education programs in Peru when a disastrous earthquake occurred; the United States gave ten million dollars in relief funds and the American ambassador decided to use much of it to rebuild schools, placing Green in charge of the assistance plan. Green had received an appeal from the USAID Mission in Vietnam asking him "to come to Vietnam because the program in higher education needed 'fixing.'" He declined the invitation because of what he saw as an essential job in Peru to rebuild schools. He

received assurances from personnel that he would not be transferred, but within a month was given the option of going to Vietnam or resigning—Green went to Vietnam.<sup>522</sup>

Arriving in Saigon in June of 1971, Green worked together with his predecessor for a six-week transition period during which he got a good understanding of Vietnam along with the concurrent problems the Vietnamese and USAID were encountering as they strove to reform the country's system of higher education. Most emphasis by his predecessor had been placed on the University of Saigon, which Green described as “not much of a university.” Green avoided Vietnam's largest university, plagued by Francophile practices and overcrowded facilities. Green's standing for having helped higher education in Latin America was quickly tested in Vietnam. At its high point the USAID had some 2,000 people in Vietnam; when Green arrived there were still 1,200 AID workers doing what he called “mostly dead work...nowhere would you find that many capable people...one of the first people I met was a USAID guy I had fired in the Dominican Republic!” Green promptly reorganized and downsized USAID higher education offices, returning them to the USAID headquarters, giving back badly needed office space in the University of Saigon Administration Building to the University. Green found that the USAID had three major projects in higher education in Vietnam: 1.) to institute an agricultural college, 2.) to develop an engineering college, and 3.) to upgrade existing Vietnamese Universities. Overall he found that “the three major projects were simply not doing much.” Green assumed responsibility for the last himself, while he had an assistant, Ken House of Michigan State University, to help supervise the first two. Green's work in South America had taught him the importance of hands-on project management and the need to give greater attention to the institutional capacity of host nations.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Green, interview by author, Green described his start in the Foreign Service as a “‘lateral transfer,’ meaning I started a bit up the ladder.”

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

Green and Professor of Education Ken House worked with the team from the University of Florida developing Vietnam's Agricultural University and with the University of Missouri Team to develop the Engineering University. Green handled all substantive work with WSU-SP, by often traveling to the United States and always accompanying the Wisconsin Team to the Vietnamese universities. Green took daily Vietnamese language lessons, but relied on his counterparts, Dr. Thuy, Du Ba Khe, and the university rectors when working on significant matters. Green noted that: "Thanks to Bud Eagon and Lee Dreyfus, the Wisconsin Team had a realization that we were helping to create 'Vietnamese' institutions." Green and Eagon, like Albertson had before them, worked hard to be sensitive to Vietnamese culture and history, quickly recognizing that the needs in Vietnam were unique and their universities would always be different from "American universities."<sup>524</sup>

In our recent correspondence, Green recollected that during the first year of his service in Vietnam the universities had gone on for the most part as if there was no war. The year 1972 marked the North Vietnamese offensive in which Hue was targeted. At the University of Saigon, professors and others refused to move a few miles out of the city to the new location at Thu Duc. Green worked closely with one of the Vietnamese professors, who had obtained her Ph.D. in zoology in the U.S., to establish the School of Science at Thu Duc. Green, himself, taught English classes at the Thu Duc branch campus of the University of Saigon. While educational progress was made in the urban areas, education continued to be subjected to harsh conditions in the countryside. Much of the early efforts done by the second Wisconsin Team had focused on the cooperative National Education Study Team survey of elementary, secondary, vocational, technical and adult education. Green reflected that in elementary education there was a limited effect as the main projects had been to build rural schools and create good elementary textbooks. Yet, "only a few of the so-called 'schools' ever had teachers or classes." Further, Green noted,

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<sup>524</sup> Ibid.

that the five textbooks the USAID had created and published remained in filled warehouses, as the Vietnamese teachers were reluctant to use them. This point is critical. As early as 1967, Albertson had prompted the USAID on the failings of their contracts training teachers and producing “millions of textbooks,” seemingly culturally irrelevant to the Vietnamese.

Green recalled that the American consultants never really got going in secondary education. He said, the USAID did get a decent start in developing libraries. By far, the most positive gains were in higher education, with Green crediting a first-rate mixture of “sensible consultants” and excellent Vietnamese educators:

Actually, we left some good higher education institutions; besides universities we tried the WSU-SP project to start junior colleges. I went back to Vietnam last August and was pleased to find that the institutions were doing well with the nucleus we left... The Soviet Union took up training where we left off, but it seemed the language problem limited results. Thanks to Bud Eagon and Lee Dreyfus the Team had a realization that we were helping to create “Vietnamese” institutions... The University of Hue, the University of Can Tho, and the community colleges all got off to a good start and are now doing pretty well except for a shortage of well educated personnel... the universities and some of the other institutions started by the USAID are now thriving. I think that the regime used our beginning better than the old Thieu Government with the archaic system would have. Interestingly, my counterpart Thuy got out as a boat person after being “reeducated” for 400 days. He was suspected as a CIA spy because he had a Ph.D. from Michigan State University. Now he goes back to advise on higher education and I went with him this August [2002] on his sixth return visit!<sup>525</sup> *Charles Green*

### **Reflections of Burdette Eagon, Chief-of-Party Wisconsin Team, WSU-SP/UWSP**

When I first started my research I knew immediately of the importance of President Albertson’s leadership and willing sacrifice. I found great value in listening to his voice on the archival tapes of the Team discussion held in his home environment in Park Ridge. I heard the voice and words of Bud Eagon and the others. I listened time and time-again as I transcribed the words and knew they were spoken with deep sincerity and joy. With my research I quickly learned that Eagon had carried on where Albertson had started, and that Eagon had led the Wisconsin Team from that time to its finish. Circumstances led to interview Lee Sherman Dreyfus first. Yet, Dreyfus assured me that it was Eagon who was the key to my thesis. It was

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<sup>525</sup> Ibid.

through Eagon that I was able to contact Nguyen Quynh-Hoa and Charles Green. It was to Eagon that I turned for information, consultation and guidance. Rightfully, it is with Burdette Eagon's reflections that I close my thesis.



**BURDETTE EAGON** greets the family on his return home.

## *Mission Completed, Eagon Back Home*

Burdette W. Eagon's long association with Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point began in 1950. Eagon explained to me that he was teaching sixth grade at the campus school when he was asked by President Hansen to serve as dorm director at Delzell Hall. Bud Eagon and his wife Sara were both alumni of Wisconsin State College-Oshkosh. Dr. Eagon received his M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his Ed.D. from George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee. At WSU-SP Burdette Eagon's positions evolved as did the institution. He was a Professor of Education, then Director of the College of Education, and finally Dean of Educational Services and Innovative Programs. Eagon held numerous other titles. As a

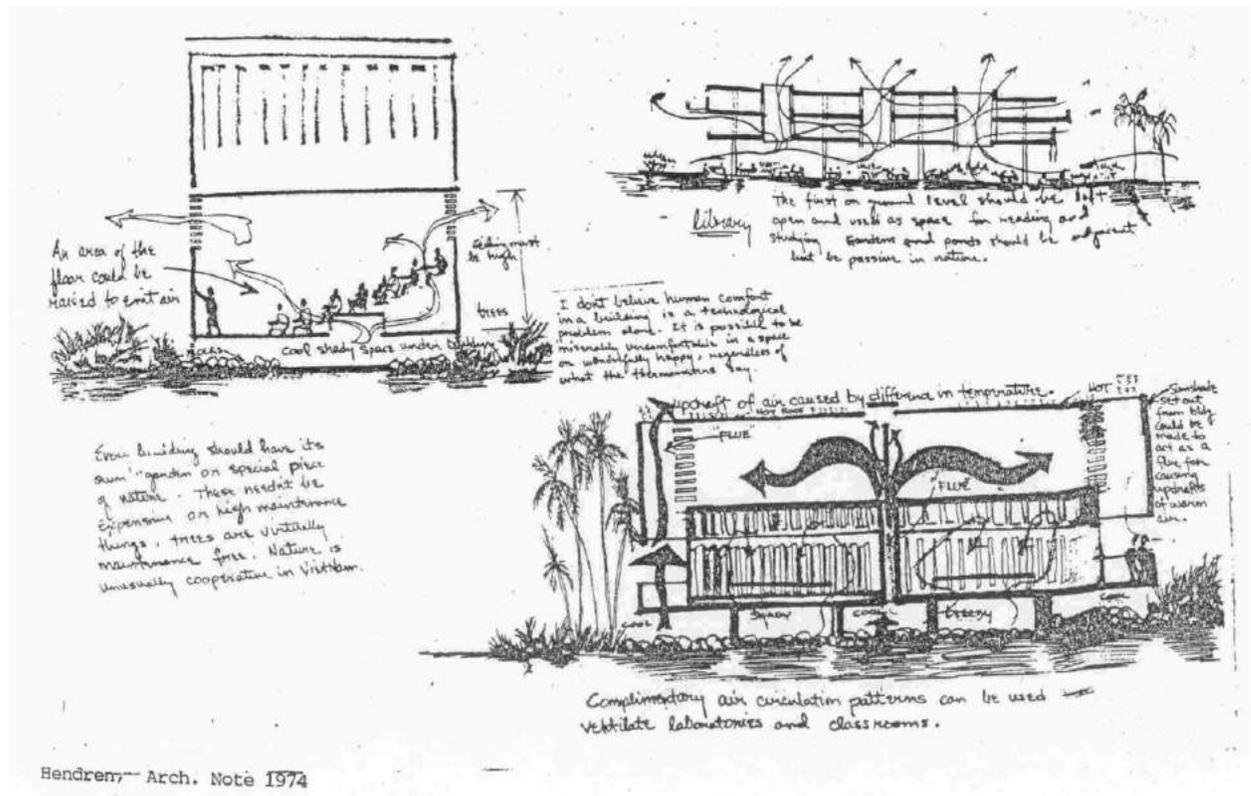
dedicated educator, Eagon's own expertise in teaching would match President Albertson's administrative expertise. Both of their careers displayed commendable human qualities, an absolute appreciation of multiculturalism, and a devotion to missions assisting others. It was little wonder that Albertson and his colleagues at WSU-SP looked to Eagon as the unanimous choice as chief-of-party for the second Wisconsin Team. As Team leader, Eagon served as the nucleus for the Wisconsin Team from the period immediately following after the Albertson team's fatal plane crash to its final reports in 1973. Eagon's work with the Wisconsin Team stands as a testament to the true worthiness of Team recommendations. Even today, Dr. Eagon remains faithful to those he befriended decades ago and the vision to which the Wisconsin Team dedicated their mission. He and his wife Sara sponsored over 100 Vietnamese families who migrated to the United States. Eagon's confidence in the team's ideals remains relevant as shown by his close relations with a myriad of those families and others both in Vietnam and the United States. In part, these relations have led to a renewal of relations between the two countries' systems of higher education. For the purpose of my thesis, it was to Eagon that I turned, time-and-again, for first-hand information about the Wisconsin Team, the contractual reports, and the status and addresses of surviving team associates. While the volume of information I received from Dr. Eagon was substantial, it was surpassed by his gifts of educational wisdom, sincerity, openness, and modest disposition. I continued to meet with Dr. Eagon periodically as I conducted my thesis research and writing.

It was in October of 2000 that I visited the Eagon family home and had my first formal interview with Burdette Eagon and his wife Sara. Dr. Eagon immediately sought to put the work of the Wisconsin Team into a cultural context as he gave me two books which summarized Vietnamese history and customs, up to the 1970's. He then showed me summaries of all the surveys and reports conducted by the Wisconsin Team. I thanked him for these and the wealth of other resources he offered, while assuring him that I had reviewed the materials in the UWSP Archives and had myself recognized the need to set the project in a wider context. I asked about

Vietnam's diverse culture and its environment and climate. Dr. Eagon explained that each region of Vietnam had unique facets historically. Regional needs were associated with the diversity of the environment and cultural patterns. Eagon talked about the qualities of the Wisconsin Team consultants, noting that WSU-SP had benefited from the USAID experiences of Al and Mary Croft who had worked with a USAID communications project in Vietnam prior to coming to Stevens Point and the startup of the Wisconsin Contract.

Bud Eagon wanted to know if I had seen the Hendren architectural designs that he had helped implement. I told him that I had, and was quite impressed. He quickly noted:

It was sort of maddening the way we [Americans] approached things. This architect came through with airflows, and the kind of buildings where the air would move naturally...typically that is not the way we did a lot of things over there. We burdened them with some things really out of place.<sup>526</sup>



We talked about the wide range of the reports and he discussed the association with the USAID, mentioning Earle Hoshol, T.C. Clark, and Charles Green. Eagon explained that O.W.

<sup>526</sup> Burdette and Sara Eagon, interview by author, (October 2000).

Hascall was not a USIAD advisor, but had worked directly under the Wisconsin Team contract. Eagon noted that both Hoshol and Clark had passed away. He was unsure as to the status of Hascall, but he did have the address of Charles Green with whom he had remained in contact. Eagon, also, gave me the addresses of Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, Rector Chau and Dean Linh. We talked at length of Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, and I told Dr. Eagon how both Governor Dreyfus and Professor Walker had asked about her. Eagon talked of the lasting relations he and many of his Vietnamese counterparts had maintained. As I walked around the Eagon home on Sunset Lake I couldn't help but admire the many shelves filled with Vietnamese books and other items, and the walls adorned by Vietnamese and Native American artwork. The Eagons explained to me that many of the items were gifts. Eagon quickly told me he got great pleasure in sending woodcrafts, which he created in his shop, to his many friends around the world. I thought, to myself, here are two educators who have given so much of themselves to others, and others have recognized their humanity by giving things in return. Here was the living legacy of the spirit of the Wisconsin Team. The Eagons truly represent the human model of the Wisconsin Team vision of university-to-university relations, relationships built through the appreciation one's counterpart, and the real appreciation of differing cultures and histories.<sup>527</sup>

Interestingly, just as my interview with Burdette Eagon had first dealt with his current contacts it naturally evolved to other recent events. Eagon explained that his daughter is a director of programs in the University of Minnesota System. She had recently been instrumental in reviving an exchange program between Vietnamese universities and Bemidji State, the home of original Team consultant Harry Bangsberg. Eagon told me that Bangsberg had only been president for a short time prior to the fatal plane crash in Vietnam, and had little chance to get much going in Minnesota. Eagon, however, knew that in more recent years Bemidji State had developed an extensive International Programs division and suggested to his daughter that they

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<sup>527</sup> Ibid.

were well suited to take on the Vietnam project.<sup>528</sup>



Eagon led seven field visits to Vietnam and coordinated all WI Team reports.

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<sup>528</sup> Ibid.

We talked again about Nguyen Quynh-Hoa and their joint attempt to reinstitute the partnership between UWSP and Vietnamese higher education. Bud and Sara Eagon reported to me that they had visited Vietnam later that same year, with Bill and Ann Stielstra and Charles Green and Dr. Linh. I told Eagon of my personal meetings with Bill Stielstra, when we had often discussed the time period. Eagon explained that the Stielstras had played an instrumental local role in sponsoring Vietnamese families and students. Eagon said that Frank Crow, as well, was quite involved locally. Eagon said that Bill Stielstra had arranged much of the trip to Vietnam as part of an elder hostel tour starting in Thailand, going through Hanoi, on to Hue and Saigon. The Stevens Point group linked up with Charles Green, who had already made two other return visits with Dr. Linh to Vietnam. I asked if during their visit they had observed any lasting signs of the work done by the Wisconsin Team. Eagon stated that:

Some of the basic principles are still there from the efforts that we made. According to Linh, there has been some change. The change is coming in the records systems: I know the records systems we instituted have pretty much continued up in Hue. But, the administrative aspects [problems] are probably still pretty much the same... We were really working from the ground up. One problem that we really had was the book system...they are [now] doing their own printing...I worked on what they called a trunk system, what we would call a general education...I understand they are following through on making some basic requirements...the teaching system, I think, has changed somewhat because of the number of deans we brought here to observe teaching...these professors were French in origin and the French educational system...they followed in the path of totally lecture, no demonstrations, very little assignments, other than their notes. You can understand one of the reasons that professors sold their notes, because they didn't have books and they didn't have outside readings, they had very little library facilities, so they sold their notes.<sup>529</sup>

Eagon reflected that during the days of the Wisconsin Contract, Vietnamese faculty were poorly paid and stretched to a maximum, often teaching at three or four institutes. Eagon said that most of the Vietnamese, both educators and students, were eager to improve things and sincerely spelled out their needs. As team leader he had found the educational situation to be an “interesting mesh.” Eagon feels that the public schools were better and more disciplined than the private schools. The private schools were supposed to operate under the National Education

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<sup>529</sup> Ibid.

Group, but more often did as they chose. Overall, the GVN interjected itself in most procedures as educational autonomy never became a reality. Eagon noted that today, evaluation and testing have been improved, as they are using more objective tests versus the older subjective examinations used when students had to write for several days just to graduate from high school. He said it was not surprising if higher education lagged behind in long term reforms. Eagon recalled that Vietnamese administrators had recognized the need for specialized studies, but often objected to the establishment of specific curriculum programs. When he chaired both the second Wisconsin Team and the National Study Team, Eagon had found that Ministry officials were more eager to institute general measures and national policies for elementary, secondary and vocational-technical education. During their more recent visit, the group toured several childcare and elementary programs that Eagon said, “looked very good...these kids worked very hard and we could communicate with them. It was really quite interesting and quite gratifying to see.” Today, Eagon rationalizes that time was too short during the years of war for the university deans and rectors to have an immediate impact. Yet, “some of those ideas they started with...are still there.”<sup>530</sup>

During the visit the group wasn't able to visit Can Tho, but did go to the old university in Saigon, which was still functioning and “still crowded.” Most of the rectors were “free-minded,” but “Saigon was probably the most conservative.” WSU-SP made the first to attempt to get the rectors together. I asked if he noticed any change associated with Vietnamization. Eagon retorted,

Things to us were sort of like at a standstill...but you did see...a lot of changes in deanships, rectorships...Needless to say the government [GVN] really controlled things in higher education...as you look at that period of time that whole thing was very shaky. Actually, we weren't far enough along in the contracts...You know five years in a contract is still a startup period. I would say it takes longer than Americans realize to work and orient or become orientated to that culture and ways. You know I read things now that I didn't know happened or was going on then. Even in the educational field there were some things that you just didn't realize. What do you do in just a few years? You get an overview. You don't look at it as we were going to deescalate, we were still

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<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

in the building stage... We were going gung-ho. We worked on things that were to be there for the long term. For instance, the records system up in Hue still exists... Linh told me that... they have a system like that. I think they are still toying with the credit system. You know they never had a credit system.<sup>531</sup>

I talked with Dr. Eagon about my interview with Governor Dreyfus, and while we both laughed about some aspects, Eagon was quick to note that Dreyfus was great at opening doors, attending to the political side of contractual work, participating in cocktail parties, and attending executive meetings, all areas that Eagon had been glad to avoid. Eagon concurred with Dreyfus, in crediting William Vickerstaff for his outstanding efforts working with the WSU-SP Foundation, Inc., and the handling of fundamental economic matters, much of the formal contractual negotiations and paperwork. Eagon said, besides himself, Vickerstaff had the longest relationship with Team efforts. Eagon gave me Bill Vickerstaff's address. I immediately sent a letter of inquiry. I thought of Vickerstaff and the "other quiet warriors." It would be another year and one-half when I heard the news in Stevens Point that Sara Eagon had passed away. I attended the funeral. Inside my heart cried in the moment of loss and yet my soul smiled as I knew how fortunate I had been to meet her. My interviews with the Eagons and Dreyfus had taken on a more important role as I garnered the local story of the efforts of the Wisconsin Team. Thanks to the information the Eagons gave me, I was successful in corresponding with Charles Green and Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, who provided my research with an even wider context for understanding Team efforts.

I inquired further with Eagon as to the role of the WSU-SP Foundation; he noted that the Team would not have been able to operate effectively without the advantages the Foundation provided. Eagon complimented the Foundation for the success of his work at WSU-SP with Indian Programs. Both the PRIDE Program and the Menominee tutor project were initiated through Foundation funding. Eagon also established a WSU-SP two-year Native American Program in the American Southwest with Foundation support. I discussed my research on the

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid.

role played by international foundations in USAID projects with Vietnam, for example the Asia Foundation coordinating the Hawaii and California meetings between USAID and Vietnamese officials and members of the Wisconsin Team. Eagon noted that they were not directly involved in state projects, but did assist in Vietnam during the latter stages of the AID program.

Bud Eagon and I talked about the longtime Team recommendation for educational autonomy. He agreed that the GVN never accepted that idea. I asked him if the situation for educational autonomy had changed with the unification of Vietnam. While Eagon saw great promise during his return visit and hoped for a rebirth in Vietnamese and U.S. relations.

However, autonomy remained a distant dream. Eagon observed,

I don't think that is going to happen. In fact, Linh indicated that it just depends who is director or head of the Program of National Education as to what happens. His brother was a big wheel in national education and he thought he could get some help there for invites and money, but no way. I think still at this point the Communists have a good firm handle on it...It just doesn't seem to be moving very fast. I think something is going to have to happen though...I would say the chances for improvement and development of an educational system in future looks pretty rosy. I would say if the U.S. could forget the idea that they lost the damn war; that is the whole thing. To...the Vietnamese it was just another war, they had so many...They didn't even talk about it, they didn't even think about it...We [the U.S.] have got a chip on our shoulder. I think business wise, business can get over that, but if the politicians can or not is another thing...I would say for a contract to happen, if there were dollars offered and Stevens Point applied for them—and this is what they were trying to get going—I think it would be a fantastic program. They are ready for it...<sup>532</sup>

As noted, a momentary rebirth of the Wisconsin Team observation-study tours once commonplace during the era of WSU-SP/RVN relations occurred when longtime Wisconsin Team interpreter Nguyen Quynh-Hoa accompanied a group of native Vietnamese educators from unified Vietnam and American based Vietnamese educators to the UWSP campus. Eagon noted that, in 1997-98 school year, it was Nguyen Quynh-Hoa who had initiated a revival of contacts between UWSP and higher education in current day Vietnam. I talked with Eagon about the Stevens Point meeting between Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, Dr. Linh, Chancellor Thomas George, Vice Chancellor Bill Meyer, Helen Godfrey, Associate Dean of Education Leslie McClain-Ruelle,

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<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

Professor Hugh Walker, Professor William Wresch, and Burdette Eagon. The Vietnamese were interested in exploring the Wisconsin model of Distance Education as a state-of-the-art tool for higher education. Eagon indicated that funding was a real problem, and Bill Wresch was working to explore the possibility of assisting in the development of distance education in Vietnam, as he had done in Africa. Shortly thereafter, Wresch moved on to UW-Oshkosh as a Vice Chancellor, where under the direction of Chancellor Coragen, he is involved in assisting education in South America through Rotary projects. In Stevens Point, the idea fell to the wayside as the group to-date has not been able secure funding for any joint projects. Linh, Eagon, Green, and Nguyen Quynh-Hoa have kept in close contact and still have hope of reestablishing formal educational exchanges. Dreyfus, also, felt there would be great value in such an exchange. While I did not receive a response from Linh, each of the others encouraged me to continue my investigation of a possible renewal in relations with Vietnamese higher education in the future. Linh's reflections of his visit remain reflective of those who traveled to Stevens Point and to Vietnam in pursuit of reform, asking "Why Stevens Point" and "Why Vietnam?"

Dr. Eagon and Mrs. Eagon greeted me at the airport and personally drove me to the University. Dr. Eagon, who during 1967-1973 carried out an investigation on higher education in South Vietnam, is a gentle and amiable person. The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point is an average-sized University built on a campus with a melancholy serenity. It seems that the university wants to enclose its students in such an atmosphere that will facilitate their focusing on academic matters. I had been there for a week, visited almost all its schools, met with its teaching staff... American professors are sincere and candid in their manners. Here, during the Vietnam War era, there was a student anti-war movement. There was a president who lost his life on his trip investigating Vietnam's education. Was that the reason why the university staff concerned themselves with Vietnam? Through dialogues, I was informed that they seriously wish to come to Vietnam, to exchange lecturers with Vietnam, to co-operate with Vietnam on higher education issues. The question is whether or not the parties have been prepared for the connection. With her youthful and intellectual look, Dr. Leslie McClain-Ruelle, Dean of the Teachers' School, briefed me and answered all my questions about training teachers in the United States. The English language center for unsatisfactory students impressed me greatly... the attractive classrooms were equipped with personal computers to be used by learners. The tutors were not members of the teaching staff, but themselves students with more proficiency... "Learning from one's master is inferior to learning from one's friends," I told the center supervisor about a Vietnamese pedagogic principle and she was amused with it. In the process of coaching and learning, it will turn out at the end that he who coaches gains the most for being better refined and gathering more wisdom.

I told the rector of my University that we should have a plan on co-operation with American universities. However, who will be the one who solves the problem. We are living in an age of intellectual civilization, and to take advantage of the educational-scientific potential of America is an exigency. To modernize our country, we must modernize our education and science. Although the Americans adopt models different from ours, the intellectual assets they have accumulated now belong to the whole of mankind. We should grab these assets without hesitation, and with our intelligence and creativeness...let us find ways, through negotiating and discussing, to take our first steps. There lies the didactic character of the problem. We must surpass the contradictions to attain profitable equilibrium. The day I left Stevens Point, Dr. and Mrs. Eagon personally drove me to the airport and saw me off. His house was full of Oriental souvenirs, including some poems by Vuong Duy, To Thuc written in scrawling characters...On the way to the airport, as he knew I was a Sinologist, he asked me in a half-joking, half-serious manner to write him a poem as a keepsake. Silently I rhymed the words, and having once gotten inside the airport wrote down these four lines:

Thien son van thuy hanh phung quan,  
 Truong tong kim thien van tiet xuan.  
 Ha thoi Tay Cong quy lai nhat,  
 Truong uc tham tinh tong nga an.

(Loose translation: I traveled over thousands of mounts, tens of thousands of rivers to have the pleasure of meeting you, You go a long distance to send me off today, in late spring time. On the day I come back to Saigon, I will long remember this gracious good-bye.)

Dr. and Mrs. Eagon seemed gratified and moved by the inspiration of the poem. I said earlier that when I come into contact with American professors, I am impressed by their truthfulness. This might be a trait of America's character. This multi-racial nation has never seen monarchy and aristocracy which reigned thousands of years elsewhere. People pioneer new land, carry out their business, build and trade in a legal atmosphere, and they are ordinary and simple. Burdette Eagon is one among such people.<sup>533</sup>

### **Higher Education in Vietnam and the Wisconsin Team Revisited**

The chapters of this thesis contained the following: 1.) Chapter I included an introduction to the study, a review of related works, and my methodology; 2.) Chapter II reviewed the history of higher education in Vietnam; 3.) Chapter III explored the origins of the USAID and U.S. foreign assistance to South Vietnam; 4.) Chapter IV examined the origins of the Wisconsin Contract and detailed the work of the Wisconsin Team; 5.) Chapter V revisited higher education in Vietnam and the Wisconsin Contract through the reflections of selected Team members. This final chapter seeks to summarize, present conclusions, and offer closing remarks based upon the

<sup>533</sup> Nguyen Quynh-Hoa personal papers, translation of Mai Quoc (Lien) Linh, "Some Impressions on America," (also appeared in *Kiên thu'c ngày nay*, Hội nhà văn Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh, Spring 1997.)

research presented by the author.

In Los Angeles, on 15 July 1960, John F. Kennedy accepted the Democratic Party nomination for the Presidency of the United States. He spoke words that preordained actions that would typify many of his generation who strove to meet both old and new challenges with designs for the betterment of all at home and abroad, even as the world entered a perfect storm.

The times are grave, the challenge too urgent, and the stakes too high—to permit customary passions of political debate. We are not here to curse the darkness, but to light the candle that can guide us through that darkness to a safe and sane world. As Winston Churchill said taking office some twenty years ago: if we open a quarrel between the present and the past, we shall be in danger of losing the future. Today our concern must be with that future. For the world is changing. The old era is ending. The old ways will not do. Abroad, the balance of power is shifting—new and uncertain nations—new pressures of population and deprivation. One-third of the world may be free but one-third is victim of cruel repression—and the other one-third is rocked by pangs of poverty, hunger and envy... Meanwhile, Communist influence has penetrated further into Asia... Friends have slipped into neutrality—and neutrals into hostility... Here at home, the changing face of the future is equally revolutionary. The New Deal and the Fair Deal were bold measures for their generations—but this is a new generation... There has also been a change—a slippage—in our intellectual and moral strength... drought and famine have withered a field of ideas... Too many Americans have lost their way, their will and their sense of historic purpose. It is time, in short, for a new generation of leadership—new men to cope with new problems and new opportunities... I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier... the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a world... they were not captives of their own doubts... Today some would say that all the horizons have been explored—that all the battles have been won—that there is no longer an American frontier. But... the problems are not solved and the battles are not all won—and we stand today on the edge of a New Frontier—the frontier of the 1960's—a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils—a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats... the New Frontier of which I speak is not a set of promises—it is a set of challenges... I am asking each of you to be pioneers on that New Frontier... For courage—not complacency—is our need today—leadership—not salesmanship. And the only valid test of leadership is the ability to lead, and lead vigorously.<sup>534</sup>

The Wisconsin Team and their Vietnamese counterparts were among those who accepted the challenge of their time and entered new frontiers as they worked to reform the universities of Vietnam.

Just as history is an important vehicle for understanding the realities of the modern world,

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<sup>534</sup> John F. Kennedy, “Address accepting the Democratic Party nomination for the Presidency of the United States,” July 15, 1960, John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library, <http://www.cs.umb.edu/jfklibrary/j071560.htm> (Boston: John Fitzgerald Kennedy Library Foundation, 1996 updated 2002).

it also opens an avenue through which we can understand educational reform. Not all approaches to historical study provide a positive impact, and certain approaches aggrandize ethnocentrism and are troublesome to an international frame of reference. The Wisconsin Team recognized this and with their recommendations they worked to highlight the commonalties in human experience in the historical development of cultures and nations. The Wisconsin Team saw that such a paradigm offered hope for change, in which novel insights and diligent study would acknowledge past events while recognizing new answers to timeless questions. The educators from America and Vietnam who came together under the Wisconsin Contract worked to contribute to a sustained discourse concerning the role of higher education in the fundamental processes of institution-building and nation-building.

In Vietnam, American impact facilitated and accelerated higher education's relationship with the needs of national development and other levels of Vietnamese education. As higher education became more functional to the development of an underdeveloped country, its curriculum and organization had to be redirected inward.

In *AID and the Universities*, John Gardner noted:

The key part in the situation is neither AID nor the university but the host government. The problems of the developing nations cannot, in any functional sense, be solved from the outside. It must ultimately save itself, develop itself, and be itself.<sup>535</sup>

On 23 October 1967 John Gardner brought his message to Stevens Point, when he delivered the University Convocation Address and made a Keynote Address at the University's annual Education and Youth Conference. The Wisconsin Team and the university leaders from Vietnam had gathered in Stevens Point for their Seminar in Higher Education on "Policy Formulation in Education," and attended these events and held consultations with Gardner.

Recommendations for change in higher and other levels of education in South Vietnam were almost completely monopolized by American expertise. Americans' intentions as educators

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<sup>535</sup> Gardner, 3.

were often honorable, but their recommendations drew most heavily from American experience, often without any serious understanding of the cultural or historical background of Vietnam. South Vietnamese education itself had lost its own cultural identity. This combination made for detailed recommendations, yet, as the result of corrupt political developments, South Vietnamese practices often betrayed the good intentions. The Wisconsin Team recognized this trend. The Team worked to avoid this pattern, and insure that Vietnam's education incorporated cultural realism. With this recognition in mind, during the final stages of the Wisconsin Contract the Wisconsin Team proposed to assist the USAID in reforming its general practices and procedures for the assistance of other lesser developed nations.

With their first report, the Wisconsin Team had recognized Vietnam's long history. The Team noted that historically, the village had been the primary social and cultural institution for Vietnam. The dinh or village center serves as the area where ancient spirits and souls reside; it is where village elders meet to discuss business; it is where institutions like Buddhist Temples, Taoist Shrines, Catholic Churches, and schools were set. At Tet, the lunar New Year celebration, Vietnamese people endeavored to return to their villages, even if they were in a war zone. When Vietnamese die they believe their spirit returns to the dinh. The Vietnamese retained this village culture under Chinese rule, as the Imperial law stopped at the village gate. Neither the French nor the Government of South Vietnam looked to emphasize village government. Instead, they sought to centralize the local populations in *agrovilles* and Strategic Hamlets and finally urban areas.

The Vietnamese survived some 1050 years of Chinese colonial rule, as China failed to absorb the land or its people. The Vietnamese then survived almost 100 years of modern colonial rule by the French and a civil war that spanned almost three decades. The Viet self-identity is one molded by the struggle against foreigners, a historic struggle for independence and liberation. From the first great heroines, the Truong Sisters, who resisted the Sinification of the Chinese in 39 AD, to the revolutionary leader Nguyen Ai Quoc (Ho Chi Minh), the Vietnamese have

treasured freedom, not personal freedom but freedom from foreign rule, freedom on cultural grounds, and opposition to assimilation at all times.

The Vietnamese did employ the Chinese mandarin administrative system and Confucian principles that placed intellect and virtue above all other values. Buddhism was the religion of the common people, and its tenets would rise to resist the future policies of the GVN. Traditional ancient Vietnamese higher education had been limited to the very few, aimed at shaping “virtuous men” who would be faithful to the foundations of the social strata of Vietnamese society, as it had adapted from the Chinese model. Traditionally, vocational and technical skills were never formally incorporated in the schools.

French colonialism was complex, and life for the Vietnamese became more and more complex as France divided its rule among three regions of Vietnam. The French built an infrastructure in Vietnam, but whether its rule was set in terms of association or assimilation, its policies were those of extraction and exploitation. French education in Vietnam functioned only to make the Vietnamese useful to France. France’s University of Hanoi proved to be a French clearinghouse for the French to study Asia, but not for Asians to study their own land, culture, or history. The French educational policy crushed the free school movement in Hanoi and kept Vietnamese literacy at low levels, while Vietnam became evermore dependent on foreign economic assistance. During the French colonial period, higher education was designed to meet the needs of the mother country and not those of the Vietnamese people. The national system was organized to best serve the foreign regime. Like the traditional higher education it replaced, the French imposed curriculum was never devised for the masses.

The United States moved into Vietnam with a vision of halting the Communist monolith emerging on the horizon. Somehow, this illusion failed to record ten centuries of the Vietnamese conflict with China. The American military machine would learn the hard way that in Vietnam its own destiny was limited, as it controlled only the land on which it stood for the moment.

Educational reform was an important and sincere endeavor, but its fate was, in part, as limited as that of the effort to conquer a map.

The new Republic of Vietnam attempted to adopt a new philosophy of education, more appropriate to the needs of the developing state of Vietnam. Yet, this philosophy was difficult to define in clear terms, as the republic was dependent upon external assistance for its very survival. The adolescent nation labored with a national curriculum designed to support patriotism and a sense of duty in its time of military and political struggle for survival. The official goal as cited by President Nguyen Van Thieu was the idea of providing a balanced education for the individual and the nation, “a system of mass and practical education.”<sup>536</sup> But its national capability fell short, because of war, financial burdens, and internal corruption.

Even with American assistance the reorganization of traditional curricula was extremely difficult. The Vietnamese dependence on French, and then English as languages of instruction, especially at the universities, proved to be a formidable barrier. Faculty members had been trained in such languages and preferred to teach in a like manner. Eighty percent of college level texts were written in foreign language, and there was a shortage in qualified instructors trained in Vietnamese. Critically, American educational advisors also lacked such training and understanding of the Vietnamese language, history, and culture.

Too often, educational programs were evaluated on the degree to which they had achieved quantitative goals for school enrollment, schools built, teachers employed, students graduated, etc.; so long as quantitative progress was made, success was generally read into education. But this method reveals a narrow set of objectives and a very narrow understanding of cultural history. Quantitatively, America had proclaimed *progress* both militarily and in *the other war* on ignorance and social problems in the Republic of Vietnam. Just as body counts did not equate with military victory, the quantitative expansion of education in the Republic of Vietnam

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<sup>536</sup> Nguyen Van Thieu, “Excerpts from Speech to the Vietnamese Nation,” (October 6, 1969), in Byron, (1990).

was impressive, but deceptive. Realistically, enrollments increased, but shortages in facilities and trained teachers never were overcome.

By the close of the 1960's, elements of disillusionment and skepticism had spread concerning education's role in the process of development. Beneath the tremendous education expansion of the 1960's was an educational crisis of global proportions. The overall external assistance policy, which had been developed in the 1950's and implemented throughout the 1960's, was focused on the expansion of existing educational systems. For the emerging newly independent nations, this equated to the modification of educational systems inherited from their former colonial sovereigns. In turn, education systems were hesitant to accommodate themselves to changes in technology and an increased body of knowledge. The Wisconsin Team recognized these factors and worked hard to open an avenue for new policy and practice.

As development specialists debated the outcomes of expanded education in developing nations, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point embarked upon its contract to study higher education in the Republic of Vietnam. The University found an interesting historical context in which it soon began to write its own chapter. Clearly many things were wrong. The Wisconsin Team was one of the many groups of America's academia who moved to advise the South Vietnamese on higher education and other social institutions. The Wisconsin led Higher Education Survey Team encountered in South Vietnam significant disparities that existed in education systems worldwide. These disparities had their most debilitating effect in all undeveloped nations—particularly in a nation like Vietnam, with its history, culture, and society torn by war. The situation there was marked by:

- 1) An increasingly obsolete curriculum, as higher education had not kept pace with advances in new knowledge and technology.
- 2) A disparity between education and the nation's development needs. The gap between education and employment figures was exacerbated by a history of colonialism and war.
- 3) A growing gap between the rising costs for education and the amount the nation was able or

willing to pay for it.

Such perceived characteristics had a profound influence on the field recommendations for Agency assistance and educational objectives prescribed by the Wisconsin Team. The Wisconsin Team sought to overcome some basic flaws in USAID technical assistance programs, as past assistance programs did not closely correlate with the economic, political, and social realities of the nations that they served.

- 1) The Team pledged to assure that educational development pointed attention to human resource development.
- 2) The Team felt that development policies needed to go beyond the concept that innovations in education should be based upon the American model.
- 3) Team AID strategies were fixed upon constant and carefully planned out priorities. Constant research was done to improve the quality and efficiency of assistance.
- 4) The Team developed recruitment procedures to prevent personnel turnover.
- 5) Program personnel worked closely with other assistance agencies, which sought to prevent any duplication of labors and strife among agencies.

This thesis found that changes in higher education in Vietnam transpired slowly, as progressive change faced the constraints of the environment in which it operated. Such constraints were rudiments of a wider history that stirred revolution in Vietnam. The Wisconsin Team saw that higher education, as an instrument of foreign assistance, needed to transmit usable knowledge to citizens as it rendered a continuing critique of a society and its standards. Only by allowing for this ongoing evolution, could the Team quest for and construction of new knowledge, play a positive role in developmental processes and reform efforts.

Education systematically instills individuals with the knowledge that has been sorted and accumulated and that society warrants that all members of the society shall hold in common. This was true in Vietnam, as French colonialism structured education to serve as a functionary tool for its own *mission civilisatrice*. French colonialism subsidized French needs rather than

those of Vietnamese society, and impaired any attempt at fully integrating modernization and the emancipation of Vietnamese higher education. French functionaries followed a school of thought that denied full integration of stage theories when explaining the “development” from traditional social structures to modern institutions.

As every society articulates the function of education the question arises, where does education fit into the economic and social aspirations of a country? Throughout history, the basic purpose of education has been to fit the population for citizenship, to give a common language, to develop a common set of ideals, to develop a common loyalty, to train a skilled workforce, and readily construct an administrative base—all necessities for a cohesive society. It is generally agreed in the modern world that the fundamentals of educational curricula serve to impart skills necessary for employment and the preparation for higher education.

This interpretation of social development matches well to the evolution of changes in Vietnamese society, especially as one considers foreign influences. In Vietnam, higher education, as a social institution, played a fundamental role in this evolution of changes. Traditionally, higher education held an elite place in Vietnamese society and culture, and had done so since ancient times. Higher education was unable to evolve as a result of foreign intervention and French domination. It is impossible for this thesis to ignore the distorted phenomenon of modernization and its processes of development that occurred in Vietnam, amidst the whirlpool of civil turmoil, creating a special environment making educational development ever more difficult and complicated.

Scholars are generally agreed that the character of an educational system found in a society is of fundamental significance in determining how a society as a whole can change and develop. Such was the case in Vietnam. Research reveals that the problems encountered by the Wisconsin Team in their attempts to arouse educational change in Vietnam had roots in the nature of Vietnamese history and its previous educational systems. Long ago, in 1930, Abraham

Flexner noted that a university is “an expression of an age.”<sup>537</sup> Indeed, higher education affects the evolution of an era by both yielding to and influencing society’s demands, needs, and philosophical impulses that underlie alternative periods of vitality, stability, and change.

Education, as a social institution, provides members of society with imperious reasons for doing that they diversely might not be prone to do and that is essential for the maintenance of social order. In Vietnam, however, the debate was not only over the role of schools in contemporary society, but also was a fundamental debate over the very tenets upon which society would be based. In a real sense, the study of higher education in Vietnam can serve as an illustrative macrocosm that reflects differing interpretations of the relation of education to society and culture.

In a large part, educators in South Vietnam, both Vietnamese and American, saw schools theoretically within the functionalist context of being a vital institution for facilitating democracy, material wellness, technological development—education and training programs became the capital for the development of economic and human resources, the leadership and expertise needed to overcome the problems of the emerging state. In South Vietnam, contemporary Vietnamese and American educators recognized the inherent link between the failings of higher education and its French colonialist functionary mission. As modern functionalists they held that universal laws govern social behavior, and that their mission was to discover the universal generalizations that command and explicate the development of society. Their functionalist mission fit well with the modern expectation that in society there is a movement away from bestowing positions and rewards on the basis of ascribed values and toward bestowing them on the basis of achieved values. In North Vietnam, the Communist state accepted the Marxist counterclaim, adhering to a doctrine that produced universal evidence suggesting the distribution of positions and rewards is best explained in terms of class relations and conflict.

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<sup>537</sup> Abraham Flexner, *Universities: American, English, German*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1930), 3.

Education as a social institution needed to be built so that it could accommodate change. Society often struggles with the cultural evolution of its educational system as its inner lines are drawn by the interrelations between three things—change, adaptation, and disparity. Some of these forces have only domestic roots, while others are international in scope; as such they reflect implications for the evolution of education in sundry countries. By rationally assessing the major social and cultural forces that strongly impinged on higher education in Vietnam in the past, we may come to grasp the critical nature of the problems that enveloped the interchange of Vietnamese and American higher education, and thereby shaped both societies' future. With this thesis the author has attempted to shed light on these and related issues, as they were demonstrated in the evolution of Vietnamese higher education, and the educational work and recommendations of the Wisconsin Team.

### **The Wisconsin Team Re-examined**

The original Wisconsin Team had recognized that the plight of Vietnamese higher education confirmed the need for definitions of the relationships of government and various institutions and Faculties and the responsibilities of officials at all levels. Team leaders Albertson and Eagon, both, stressed that such definitions needed constitutionally guaranteed legal status. An absence of a defined and coordinated system of governance discouraged effective administrative leadership and no clear synchronization of educational resources. Ambiguity created anxiety shared by administrators, teachers, and students. Anxiety could be defeated by academic freedom. Academic freedom equated to the transmission of knowledge through criticism and experimentation, and new methods of instruction and the application of new ideas. For the Wisconsin Team, ambiguity within Vietnamese higher education would be only be overcome by fixed autonomy. Autonomy did not mean separate institutes operating independently of one and another; it meant carefully designed system of authority yielding effective policy and cooperative programs. The Wisconsin Team recognized the interdisciplinary nature of modern higher education and the fundamentality of core programs and pre-established

criteria. The original report of the Wisconsin Team noted that growth in Vietnamese higher education would not be easy during an age of turmoil.

More than any other single requirement, implementation of this report will require leadership of the universities which will be able to convey to the public a clear statement of aims and purposes. Courage will be required, too, for implementation will necessitate a divorcement from self-interest and a countering of claims of many groups whose theories of higher education do not emphasize service to the people and nation.<sup>538</sup>

The Wisconsin mission would transcend time and even the turmoil of war. Research shows that the willing sacrifices and courage of the Albertson Team would be equaled by the indefatigable efforts of succeeding Wisconsin Teams, and their fellow Vietnamese educators. The Wisconsin State-Stevens Point Contract and other USAID projects in Vietnam operated under extreme conditions and should be viewed as historical in measures of the forces under which Team members worked to accomplish educational reform.

In Vietnam, problems persisted as higher education was guided by an overly centralized bureaucracy and there was little coordination between Vietnamese universities. The universities operated with fractional units. Vestiges of French colonialism remained with autocratic officials and Francophile faculty entrenched at the University of Saigon. During the 1960's and early 1970's enrollment at all levels of education increased dramatically. Shortages of trained teachers and adequate facilities slowed the resolution of South Vietnam's educational problems. Graduation rates within higher education paled in comparison to the growth in enrollment.

The objectives of the Wisconsin Contract expanded substantially during the more than eight years of its existence. The combined efforts of those associated with Wisconsin Team produced some thirty-eight major reports, surveys, observation tours, and seminars. Over fifty consultants worked under the banner of the Wisconsin Team. Countless others were formally associated the Wisconsin Contract, including campus faculty and staff, other officials from the USIAD, the Asia Foundation, other organizational personnel, and a comparable number of Vietnamese counterparts and officials in Vietnam. Throughout the duration of the Wisconsin

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<sup>538</sup> Higher Education Survey Team, James H. Albertson, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*, 41.

Contract, the Wisconsin Team held the firm endorsement of their Vietnamese counterparts and officials of the USAID. While the mission expanded over the duration of the Wisconsin Contract, it remained constant. The Team worked to introduce new concepts, new materials and methods to higher education in Vietnam. Wisconsin State-Stevens Point played an active role in coordinating Team projects and assisted in the training of Vietnamese educators and Ministry officials in administrative organization. The Wisconsin Team assisted the Vietnamese in the formulation and enactment of legislative statutes supporting higher education.

Political and military factors played a dominant role in the acquiescence of USAID and Team projects. The fate of AID programs and of South Vietnam was mutually dependent on such factors. The Team had little control over GVN or USAID policy. The Team had no control over the wartime environment or the course of the war. Team members had little difficulty adjusting to conditions in Vietnam; they resided and worked in modern residences and had access to U.S. military and medical facilities. While Team members showed very little fear of the wartime conditions, they were conscious of the security risks, delays in the distribution of supplies, destruction of educational facilities, and limitations imposed on educational funds. In the long run American political and public disfavor with “progress” in war went against the financial support of USAID foreign aid programs. Upon the termination of the contract and the ultimate collapse of South Vietnam, Team members and their associates worked caringly to assist Vietnamese families in relocating to the United States. Thirty years after the termination of the contract former Team members and contract partners, both American and Vietnamese, have remained in close personal contact and have actively communicated with educators in current day Vietnamese higher education.

In terms of lasting impact for Vietnam, the Wisconsin Contract holds emeritus status. The research of Team documents and periodic USAID reports reveal that gains were made during the years of consultation services. The return visits and testimonies of Team members reveal an ongoing maturation of reforms dating from the period of Wisconsin Team recommendations.

Varying levels of evidence point to the work of Team consultants in registration and records, educational testing, administrative organization, architectural design, core curriculum, graduate programs, educational foundations, and junior colleges. Traces of each project remain viable today for a unified Vietnam. Can Tho, Thu Duc, and Hue stand as strong institutes. A system of Community Colleges exists, while agricultural and vocational institutes have grown, all becoming critically matched to the needs of regional and national development.

In terms of lasting impact for Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, the University was exposed to the wider circles of higher education in the United States and internationally. Wisconsin-Stevens Point grew intellectually, academically and physically in tune with its times and maintained standards of excellence and efficiency. The Wisconsin Contract played an important role in the development of the University's mission in diversity and multiculturalism. The contractual period facilitated the development of the University's International Programs and Study Abroad Program. During the timeframe of its contract with the USAID, the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc. was developed. The successful organization of the Foundation proved vital to the growth of the Wisconsin Contract and the host University. A legacy of excellence in administrative leadership came to Stevens Point with the Wisconsin Contract, as President Albertson opened the University to the world, Governor Dreyfus opened the institution to his nation and state, and Dean Eagon opened Stevens Point to humanity.

When I started the research for my thesis topic, I knew I had found a topic that had not been the sole focus of a historical study; I recognized that I had a topic that was of both local and international historical importance. Further, I recognized that the topic would offer me a chance to acknowledge and thank the UWSP University community for its educational leadership and gift of knowledge. The topic has proven even more worthy, historically and personally. As I began to research this topic my own historical interests and experiences as a student were already deeply rooted in the American chapter of Vietnamese history. For me this new trail of research opened a fresh perspective on this period. Indeed, while my original expectations proved correct,

the topic has also yielded an unforeseen reward. From my study of the efforts of the Wisconsin Team and other educators involved with the USAID, I found a lasting victory in the maze of war and defeat, a victory of lasting visions and ideals and an enduring role for reform in higher education in the United States, in Vietnam and all developing nation-states. President Albertson and the Wisconsin Team unquestionably gave of themselves to others, by presenting an inspirational, and realistic path for modernization that embraced institutional autonomy and cultural relevance in education.

As noted, President Albertson exemplified an educational wisdom and natural vision for modern education that was born from the days of “New Frontiers” and “dominos.” I feel that his ideals endured the tragedy of a fatal plane crash on a stormy Vietnamese mountain side and contributed to long-term foundations of higher education for Stevens Point. His leadership and keen courage captured an endearing commitment from educators in Vietnam and the USAID. Today, the Wisconsin Team’s progressive educational ideals and recommendations remain relevant for higher education, both locally and globally.

President Albertson, Dean Eagon and the members of the Wisconsin Team accepted their mission without any second guessing. They were bolstered by their knowledge that higher education would continue to be a constructive foundation upon which social institutions are built and people grow together as a society and culture. One small chapter in educational reform from Stevens Point stands as a legacy of the work of this man and the other educators of the Wisconsin Team for their university, for Vietnam, and for university-governmental agency relations and American assistance programs across the globe. Truly, President Albertson and Burdette Eagon opened new frontiers in education, both in Stevens Point and in a far away land.

The Wisconsin Team acted with unparalleled determination, working to overcome historical barriers and to help expand opportunity and freedom to a people long denied their own culture. Such a mission should not, be judged strictly by instant measures of success or failure, for their vision looked to instill the spirit for reform. They sought only a chance to demonstrate

the freedom to learn, to think, to teach, and to change. They saw it as their responsibility to serve other people, through their professionalism, educational wisdom, and humanism. For all things that were open to question or criticism, they bore all responsibility admirably.

Against the backdrop of the wider Cold War, United States foreign policy had rapidly evolved in terms of its technical and educational assistance to the small, independent, underdeveloped nations, newly emerging after years of living under colonial rule. My research has investigated the contacts between educators from Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the Republic of Vietnam, placing their work into this context of Vietnamese history, the history of the USAID/WSU-SP/RVN Contracts in Education, and the general history of the Vietnam War era.

Tragically, in Vietnam, educational policy had often been incorporated via external foreign forces and influences, which neglected internal forces and national considerations, and then prejudiced the evolution of higher education in Vietnam. The reforms offered by the Wisconsin Team recognized this history and introduced a modern mission to higher education in Vietnam. The USAID/WSU-SP/RVN contracts came at a time when WSU-SP President James Albertson had instituted a new vision for higher education at his home institution in Stevens Point, which sought to expand the international involvement of the University while pushing for internal curricular changes which placed a greater emphasis on non-western cultures. Dean Eagon and Chancellor Dreyfus picked up what President Albertson had introduced and continued to pioneer innovative programs. The institutional counterparts, higher education in Vietnam and in the United States via WSU-SP, held a common ground from their experiences with expansion and modernization.

The work of the Wisconsin Team for the effectual reformation of higher education can still be vital to the larger embodiment of educational curriculum in today's global village. Recognition and tolerance of the diversity of cultures is critical. History and education facilitate a better understanding of this. The Wisconsin Team embarked on a mission to move effectual

educational reform in a manner that set aside institutional biases and was culturally sensitive. By doing so, curriculum and school organization was to be proactive instead of being reactive. The Wisconsin Team recognized each educational situation as a unique building block and learning experience. The Wisconsin Team operated in a war zone, but did not concern itself with the major issues of the war. As educators, they were interpreters of history working to acknowledge Vietnamese history while suggesting educational reforms that would put higher education on a mission of modernization. Today, in part, educators remain interpreters of history. Through the study of these times, we can explore those dimensions of history that others might choose to overlook, forget, or neglect to record. By understanding the past in a manner that serves the present, teachers and students strive together to make new history.

With the culmination of the work of the Wisconsin Team many RVN Vietnamese educators and other natives followed their counterparts to the United States, where they continued to work in higher education and other professions. The testimonies of James Albertson, Lee Sherman Dreyfus, Burdette Eagon, Charles Green, and Nguyen Quynh-Hoa are evidence of the role UWSP served as an entry point during this migration, as community members sponsored numerous individuals. Just as importantly, the testimonies are evidence that the reform efforts of the Wisconsin Team have had a lasting positive impact on higher education in a unified Vietnam. Today, higher education in contemporary Vietnam has undergone deep reform and dramatic growth. It continues to modernize and sculpt itself to the needs of its people and Vietnam's status as stable unified nation. The extent of this growth and change is a topic beyond the scope of this thesis, but the visions of the Wisconsin Team have had some effect in Vietnam. After more than a decade of doi moi, Vietnam's perestroika, the nation has moved forward. At long last, America has established diplomatic relations with the unified nation of Vietnam. Vietnamese educators have worked closely with Australian institutes of higher education and those of its other neighbors to inaugurate positive change. In August of 1998, a group of American and Vietnamese educators convened for a conference in Boston. Old enemies and friends are finally

working together, putting the war behind them and grasping their future together.

The momentary rebirth of the Wisconsin Team observation-study tours once commonplace during the era of WSU-SP/RVN relations occurred when longtime Team interpreter Nguyen Quynh-Hoa accompanied a group of native Vietnamese educators from unified Vietnam and American based Vietnamese educators to the UWSP campus. The University of Wisconsin-Madison has a reoccurring association with Vietnamese higher education and has been favorably cited in recent reports.

### **An Aside, Schools of Thought**

It is my sincere hope that my research will place the past efforts of the Wisconsin Team in a context that acknowledges their significant and lasting contribution toward a promising future for higher education everywhere. The Wisconsin Team recognized the deep connection between history, culture and education. Today, we need to continue to bring the cultural context of education back into focus by developing a historic framework of social needs, demands, and responses in respect to the role of school in a particular society. Education is a social activity.

The study of higher education in Vietnam suggests that both functionalists and Marxists can be faulted for fixing their educational goals to systematic regularities and quantitative results. It is understandable why they did so, when one considers that they stood on common ground with the dominant schools of thought in the twentieth century. A newer, more qualitative view suggests that a clearer understanding of the meaning of societal systems can be garnered through interpretative engagement. A true metamorphosis in higher education would not occur without the unification of Vietnam and recognition of its polyglot background. North and South Vietnam faced similar societal and educational problems and issues. Each looked outside itself for assistance and models of national institutions, with each looking first to the United States. Vestiges of colonialism and thoughts of monoliths and dominos confused nationalism with Communism. Ultimately, the North looked to the Soviet Union and the South looked to the United States. My research reveals, that, over time, elements of the improvisations in higher

education suggested by the Wisconsin Team and other USAID educators can still prove viable for a unified Vietnam.

In retrospect, one must question whether American military advisers and their South Vietnamese counterparts accurately examined the specific social and cultural situation in which they were operating, or discovered the meaning that it held for those who were part of it. The Wisconsin Team recognized that as educational advisers they needed to understand how participants perceived their own situation, rather than merely setting their actions in more general terms and prescribing stereotyped conclusions. Foreign policies long associated with institutional racism and Cold War ideology had determined whether or not participants were amassed on the basis of their understandings, and even whether others think they may be able to articulate it and whether others believe that they have reason to speak the truth. Yet, even the best laid intentions of American educators operated in a quagmire of wider events. The government of the Republic of Vietnam was never a government of the people of Vietnam. South Vietnam's preoccupation with war, the relative newness of national institutions, the academic customs that the country inherited, and the shortages of resources came together to undermine efforts at reform. American advisers and their Vietnamese counterparts (both in the north and the south) were challenged as they strove to interpret the situation in which they operated. Educational reform was grounded by the conditions of the times. Nevertheless, the educational vision and reform recommendations introduced by the Wisconsin Team and others proved to have some lasting legacy.

In South Vietnam, higher education was an instrument of society that enabled people to adapt to larger world of mass society. Nationhood, technological growth, and industrialization were perceived as inevitable, and education was given the function of structuring the inclinations and wants of individuals in accordance with the skills and values people need to function more effectively in a modern integrated society.

In North Vietnam, Marxists held that education had long been involved with the legitimization of existing inequalities. They drew attention to the policies of colonization, the

nature of class relations, and the rules and social meanings that people learn to adopt. As conflict theorists, they stressed the fashion in which role differentiation was generated in contemporary society, furnishing some individuals with great authority and power, while limiting the available opportunities for position and power for others.

In Vietnam, as a whole, it is clear that different parties held different views of the “rules of the game.” Questions arise whether these views realistically recognized the right to disagree over the value of virtue and freedom, the character of a good life, and nature of a collectively conscious social reproduction. These questions are especially poignant in terms of understanding the social and cultural historical environment of Vietnam, from which higher education evolved. Institutionally, this understanding of Vietnamese social and cultural history had been denied to the very people for whom it was the most important—the Vietnamese themselves.

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VOL. II: APPENDIX

Higher Education in Vietnam:

United States Agency for International Development

Contract in Education,

Wisconsin State University – Stevens Point and

Republic of Vietnam

The Wisconsin Contract in Higher Education and other USAID/ Wisconsin Team Efforts

By Thomas Charles Reich

May 2003

## APPENDIX

- I. Transcriptions of Archival Tapes and Interviews.
  
- II. Chronological Listing of Contacts between Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and Republic of Vietnam and Chronology of Vietnam War.
  
- III. Other Related Documents.
  - A. Archival Photos (UWSP University Library Archives).
  - B. Architectural Designs (Philip Hendren, *Architectural Notes in Vietnam, 1974*, Stevens Point, WI: University Wisconsin Stevens Point Foundation, 1974).
  - C. Public Schools of Vietnam, USAID of Education/Vietnam Organization, and Vietnam Ministry for Culture, Education and Youth (diagrams from *USAID/Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials, 1969*, Saigon: USAID, 1969).
  - D. Contract between the United States Agency for International Development and Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc.: AID/fe-274 Vietnam (selected sections).
  - E. Contract Amendment No. 1 (Umbrella contracts will continue through June 1974).
  
- IV. Vietnamese Declaration of Independence.
  
- V. Bibliography to Appendix, including Chronology and related thesis materials. (Full thesis bibliography is included with thesis).

[Appendix page #'s continue from Volume I.]

Author's note: The materials presented in this volume were supplemental in the development of the author's thesis. As such, these materials are provided as an Appendix and thesis supplement that serves as a reference source for readers and researchers. The appendix presents readers with the component of oral history, which the author integrated with the review of Team documents. By including the transcriptions of interviews, news conferences, photos, organization diagrams, design sketches, and the Wisconsin Contract, it is the author's intention that the materials are preserved historically and available for review. I have included an extensive chronology as the Team attempts at reform were undertaken within the wider history of higher education in Vietnam, USAID-University relations, and the extended war. Finally, I have included Vietnam's Declaration of Independence, which is historical both in its content and wider relation to the desire of a people for self-determination and independence from colonial domination.

Within the transcriptions **subject's names and interview questions are in bold font**, while subject's remarks are in most instances presented in regular font.

The author has obtained signed consent releases from those being interviewed granting the use of the all information by the author for educational use and other purposes related to the author's research and written thesis, and for publication by the author. The author of this thesis bears all responsibility for the transcriptions included in this thesis appendix. Generally, the author has forsaken the use footnotes in the appendix as technically it is strictly a supplement to material already footnoted in volume one of the thesis; a bibliography is included with the appendix crediting resources.

## TRANSCRIPTIONS OF ARCHIVAL TAPES

### Series 17 Tape 9 # 56: Albertson Tape on Vietnam ca. 1967

President Albertson-led group administrative discussion of USAID/RVN proposal for second Wisconsin Contract

Identified discussion participants:

**James H. Albertson, WSU-SP President, Chief-of-Party Wisconsin Team**  
**Burdette W. Eagon, Dean of Educational Services and Innovative Programs**  
**William Vickerstaff, Executive Secretary for the WSU-SP Foundation,**  
**Dean Paul Yambert, acting-Vice President for Academic Affairs**  
**Leon Bell, Jr., Vice President for Business Affairs**

**Albertson:** At this point there is some difference between the USAID administrators and myself, it is primarily a dispute between the educational office of A.I.D. and me on this. Let me get this out first: He wants a blueprint for education in Vietnam, including elementary, secondary, [and vocational technical and adult education.] My position has been, if they [the USAID] want a blueprint it has to be a Vietnamese blueprint. If they [the Vietnamese] want some help from America we could come in and help provide some guidelines, some areas within which they—then could they divide and we could work with the Vietnamese one-on-one.

I talked with the minister of the Vietnamese Education Ministry Education just the night before last and he got the word blueprint from the head of AID Education, and he is perfectly willing to talk about guidelines.

**Panel member:** Wiener?

**Albertson:** Yes, of AID. They are interested in having a contingent of American educators come over and spend about three months to make some kind of a survey and then to come up with some definite recommendations. These would be delivered to the Republic of Vietnam Minister of Education and to the Republic of Vietnam Prime Minister; from these they would then write an educational message that would go to the First Congress. Now the Constituent Assembly is meeting currently, this is the group that is drafting the Vietnamese People's Constitution. They

had thought that the Constituent Assembly would be through in about six weeks, but chances are it will not. Had it been through then they thought that by August 1 or September 1 they would have the First Congress meet. As soon as the Constituent Assembly completes its work then this goes to a vote of the people for ratification of the Constitution. If the Constitution is ratified then they set up an election for a new congress and the First Congress convenes. So the chances are it will be October-November, it may even be December before this all fits into place. They mainly want to have something together that they then can take and work on.

The present Minister [of Education, Nguyen Van Tho] is a dentist, he is Northwestern and Yale educated, Roman Catholic, and part of the power of structure of Vietnam. He was the deputy prime minister under Diem. He was asked by the first general to succeed Diem to be the Vietnamese ambassador to the United States three times. He refused on the basis on that what the general wanted was this man's involvement, which would have insured his stay in power. For reasons that I do not know he choose not to support the general. But, he is a powerful figure, but more importantly he seems to be a pretty well balanced man and is willing to stay in office through the First Congress. They have had five ministers of education in the last two years. So stability of government is a real problem and it will be a problem in this project if we decide to do it.

What it means is getting a team together—and we could decide whether the five or six or four—of educators, people who have a breath experience, who are willing to bend with wind—this is a phrase you see over and over there—who want to work with Vietnamese counterparts and who have some idea of the basic tenants of an educational system, whether it is in Afghanistan or Vietnam or the United States. Then who are willing to take leadership and work these into some guidelines? The country's needs, the educational system needs reorganization; there is no question about that. Whether the country will accept the change and accept the report and put it into operation, it is going to depend upon the team and the extent in which they can

work with Vietnamese educators and make it their report, and then make it practical enough for Vietnam that it is workable.

You get all kinds of requests: Nguyen Cao Ky, the Prime Minister wants an “American” university, lock-stock-and-barrel in Vietnam, he also wants an American secretary school—and unfortunately they don’t have either one, yet. But, these are prestige symbols right now and the way you improve it is to get some other type of recommendations put forward. Again, fortunately there enough others interested in working on this, modifying what they presently have.

The present educational system is five years of what we call elementary, four years of what would be comparable to junior high and three years of what we call high school, and then limited higher education. Yet, as I mentioned before two-thirds of the young people in secondary schools are in private secondary schools and these are the better institutions. Much better, primarily French, although there are some Buddhist private secondary schools and some Roman Catholic non-French. But, most of them are French and most of them are in the Saigon area.

The request was originally that this would be an immediate extension of our present work and that it be first grade through higher education. Yet, I think, they are willing to except that whatever our present team comes up with, would be the guidelines for higher education, and whatever somebody else did ought to fit in with that, although they are not part of the same ball-of-wax, as far as one report.

Then the next request, and this again was pushed real hard by Wiener [of the USAID] for this to be handled by us on our side, was there would be physical continuity between the two. Ideally, Wiener wanted our team to do this other project too, he wanted to hire someone from our team to do it, but I said we can’t do it—the team wasn’t selected with that in mind, we don’t have the time; it is going to detract if we even get into, detract from the higher education role. I think he is willing to accept this [a separate project], and I know Donald McDonald the head of USAID

in Vietnam, and I think the ambassador, Ambassador Lodge, is sympathetic with the fact that you can't take all in under one survey, and also Hammond is certainly in favor of that.

But, there would be some advantage in having some continuity. Well, this we could provide by having briefings here and if we needed to we could bring Harry Bangsberg or somebody else in to assist in that continuity.

It would mean then, probably, the team going over in June, early June, and staying at least two-and-one-half months, it ought to be three months—June, July, and August—and completing the survey and report and then getting it done [presented] and then come back. If it were required, and if it were desirable, and if it were necessary, I could go over for about a week late in the period, to be there for the wrap-up and to see what kind of things could be helpful. But, this is real iffy.

Well that's real sketchy, but the Vietnamese do favor our involvement. With everything I have gotten from them and from the American side it is a golden opportunity and a challenge. It is almost an impossible task to do anything at all with the cultural and other variables. You can't read the language—you drive along the streets of Saigon you see these student banners, and the students right now are about ready to explode over the national language, and then you can't read it, you can't read what people are trying to say. This is something you have to live with. But, on the one hand you know that somebody has to do this job. Somebody has to take this task. On the other hand, you know all the reasons why you shouldn't do it or shouldn't be concerned with it. So that is the dilemma. So you find yourself with a horse and no whip.

**Haferbecker:** How do you look at the articulation though from the higher education team as imposing guidelines on the five, four, three?

**Albertson:** I don't think so. I don't see it as being top orientated if that is what you are saying. Again, if you read the series of questions that I raised at my meeting with Wiener and again with Donald McDonald, that I think need to be answered: What does Vietnam want from the educational system? What are its' objectives? Is it literacy; is this the objective? Do they want

to have Vietnamese history and culture integrated into the educational system? To what extent are they interested in manpower needs?

The United States has had three manpower groups in Vietnam, and yet there is not a report available to us dealing in terms of what the manpower needs are in the country. You talk about higher education, what do you educate people for? Well they say: "We want to have professional people." How many doctors do you need? "We need more." How many dentists do you need? "We need more." How many dentists do you educate now? "Thirty a year." Well if you had the facilities, the money, the personnel, how many would you like to educate? "A hundred a year." How many dentists do you have in the country? "Two hundred." How many people? "Fifteen million." Well their diet isn't that good, let us face it—this is the kind of problems one faces.

**Haferbecker:** But, are they looking at the French philosophy of education as something that can be built upon?

**Albertson:** This is the trap on this—this is the trap on this—because Wiener wants a blueprint of American education, which is repeating history within four years, of one hundred years. In 1871 the French went into their blueprint and they imposed French education. Now here, ninety-six years later, the danger is that America is going to do this. You know—we have the answers. It can't be that way; it can't be that way in higher education.

**Haferbecker:** This is why I asked the question about articulation, this is what has happened in our own school systems. Higher education has imposed certain demands upon the elementary and secondary school. If your team is setting up a guideline there, it certainly has to be in relationship to something else.

**Albertson:** I don't think we will. Of course, our report isn't written and I can't commit myself, as I am working with six other men.

**Yambert:** What is the general attitude, if there is any, toward vocational schools?

**Albertson:** Low prestige. Do you want your youngster to be a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer? Lawyers are real high. Then what happens to the lawyers that are produced? Well they go into civil service, but they have certificates and diplomas that are very important.

**Eagon:** What is the answer? Do they want their culture taught?

**Albertson:** Right now the answer is a resounding yes. A strong wave of nationalism is taking place.

**Eagon:** That is what is needed, isn't it?

**Albertson:** There is nothing wrong with nationalism. That is what the students are saying. We went to the medical school last week, which has problems right now. The prime minister ousted the dean. Well, the students are rioting, lying down in the streets blocking vehicles and all. This was just going on ten days ago in Saigon, because the medical school students wanted Vietnamese to be the language of instruction in the medical school. The dean, I was impressed by the dean as a top-notch guy, but he is French educated and he thinks that the way you educate people is with the French language. You lecture in French. So he was not about to change, so the students were rioting against him and against the Faculty Council, a powerful body within the Faculty of Medicine, what we would call the School of Medicine. So the prime minister, seeing this as a political unstable situation, removed the dean. Now the students are rioting because the prime minister bypassed the University Rector, the University Council, and the Faculty Council, to get rid of the dean. They picked which principles were important, they still want Vietnamese taught, but they don't want the prime minister interfering in things. So now they have torn down all of the posters and banners on Vietnamese language, now the banners are all up in terms of "we want autonomy." "Prime Minister Ky stay out of our internal affairs."

**Eagon:** You've read the papers?!

**Albertson:** All of this is an example of nationalist feelings.

**Eagon:** You flew over California, didn't you?!

(General laughter)

**Albertson:** In Vietnam there is a strong wave of nationalism. You see this more at Hue than you do in Saigon. But, you see all the positive aspects of it, too. Their problem being, the Vietnamese, they threw the Chinese out, then they spent a hundred years trying to establish a viable Vietnamese government and because it was unstable the French moved in. Then they spent from 1871 until 1939 under French domination—as the French lost their power in 1939 because of the European war. Then the Japanese moved in and were taken out because of what the United States did in the war in the Pacific. Then the Communists moved in.

They have been at war since 1941, the Vietnamese people, they have been trying to throw out first one group then another, and it may be that they will try to throw out the Americans. It may not. All of the opposition may not be from the VC [Viet Cong.] So I am going a long way around to say in education, they like their music, they like their culture, they like their history.

**Eagon:** That is wonderful, that is what they have to build on.

**Leon Bell:** This is typical of the Far East, isn't it Jim?

**Albertson:** The Vietnamese are not xenophobic; they don't have the fear of the foreigner. They will take a good idea if it is Japanese, they will take a good idea if it is German, they will take a good idea if it is American and they will make it Vietnamese. They don't apologize, they will bring it into their own culture, and they have an inordinate sense of value that have attached to education. Which is also wonderful. They will go almost to any extreme, as is true in the Philippines, to achieve an education for their children.

**Bell:** Does this go from top to bottom?

**Albertson:** Yes. It is real important to succeed in education.

**Bell:** But, a certain type of success; it wouldn't be success for the skilled laborer?

**Albertson:** It is in the sense if you can't be a lawyer then you go into letters, if you can't go into letters you go into something else. You have got to finally find your niche to succeed.

**Bell:** This is really saying then that they have got to try to go all the way before they settle back into something that is adaptable for the particular individual?

**Albertson:** Well, it depends on the family values. When we are talking about universities we are talking about the higher level of the country. One of the most successful programs that the United States has had has been the Village School Project. It is a project where we are supplying concrete and some structural steel and some corrugated thin steel for roofing, and the Vietnamese supply the labor. They build what seems to us to be very much improved schools. The value of them is shown, as these are the kind of things that the Viet Cong try to destroy when they go into a village and its' symbolism. We helped build over six thousand of these, the United States government with the Vietnamese government. The Vietnamese use the basic blueprint, the people in the village supply the labor, these people are very adaptable in terms of the use of their skills and they build this school.

Then the provinces are in the program for training teachers, it is a dismal program, ninety days, and they call them ninety-day wonders. Now they take girls, up until the war with the Viet Cong, almost all of the teachers were men, now almost all of the elementary school teachers are women, out of necessity. This is a country that has six hundred thousand men, almost seven hundred thousand men—out of a population of fifteen million—in uniform. That is what? Five percent. If we had that, what do we have? Two hundred million people?

**Panel:** Yes.

**Albertson:** If we had five percent of our population it would be a ten million-man army! So it is quite the situation we are entering.

So the basic question is: I have made no commitments. I told the people in USAID, I told the representative of the embassy, I told the minister: "I can in no way commit us, to this other project." But, the basic question is one: Is this something that we would want to tackle? If it is, I would like very much for at least one of the new people to be somebody from here, as chief of the party. Then within the next two days, if we do decide to go ahead, try to recruit a team of people who can do the job.

**Haferbecker:** Does this have to be done if we don't do it?

**Albertson:** Yes, it is going to be done by someone. Again, I don't want to sound boastful, but if we don't do it, it is going to be done by some hacks. It could be done by hacks if we do it, too. Wiener is interested in getting bodies there right now. If he can get five people who can come next week, this is what he wants: he wants to get it started in April. In my judgment, you are not going to get five people of any caliber to go much before the first of June. Yet, I think that June, July, and August is rather ideal in terms of getting people from American universities.

**Yambert:** Are their schools in session at that time of year?

**Albertson:** Their schools are not open then, but on this project it is not necessary.

**Haferbecker/or Vickerstaff:** Again, I think basically it would make some difference what they want and what their philosophy is going to be in establishing guidelines, as to the kind of people you select as a team. If they want the typical blueprint of American schools, that is one thing and I suppose we have a number of people who can give them a typical blueprint. If we are really looking for people who can give them their type of education for their particular culture, then that is another kind of a person.

**Albertson:** I don't want to be a party to the first. I would recommend that if we can we try to do the second.

**Bell:** Another point related to this question is I can conceive of a team that is not composed entirely of people that we would call educators. They might be drawn from our university, they would be educators in that sense, but for instance someone who is cognoscente of their manpower needs, someone who understands the economy, the culture, the necessity for the family to sacrifice to get children through school. This sort of thing is as important; it would seem to me, as understanding the schooling sequence in the typical American elementary school.

**Albertson:** I think they like the idea of a comprehensive school. But, the important thing is if it is a good idea then they are receptive to it. As I said, it doesn't matter if it is Japanese or if it is American or it is French, as long as you are not trying to transpose a system.

**Vickerstaff:** And you still have to have the underlying educational principles, which provides a framework.

**Albertson:** That is right, Bob. This is the thing, for example the United States government [Agency for International Development] has a contract with Southern Illinois University and with Ohio University—this was in my letter—we [American universities under USAID contracts] are training teachers, printing textbooks, we are turning out millions of textbooks. But, neither of these things done by the United States government has been really related to what they are trying to teach—to curriculum. We are grinding out textbooks and training teachers, and yet I rose what I thought was a very elemental question: How do these things relate to what is being taught? The response I got was: “You know that is a good question and it has never been raised here before.” It was said in a way that was genuine: “Boy, that is really deep.”

**Eagon:** So what they are doing may not actually fit into the total picture of what they need?

**Albertson:** The only thing that brings us back to any positive aspect is that we are doing something. We are not really hurting people. There are so many things that have to be done, and in this case some motion is good. The fact that kids have a book in their hand that is a learning

tool is probably good. The fact that they have a teacher who has been taught something about teaching, in a ninety-day period, is better than not being in school at all. But, that is where you have to stop.

**Yambert/or Bell:** This reminds me of a cartoon about a successful person working for a big Madison Avenue firm, he stopped to consider what his role in society was and got to thinking whether he was doing any good or not and decided he wasn't. Then he decided the only solution was, if he wasn't going to starve his own family, was to work only about ten months out of the year and then quit so at least there would be two months that he wasn't doing any harm. Most others would have to be a position to retire before they could say that. You are in the same situation apparently.

**Vickerstaff:** The report that I have, that may not be passed on officially, is that this team that is over there now is having tremendous reception and success [applause.] That is the word from Scot Hammond. I think that it is relative to what was going on before and is such a refreshment to these people that they are more than anxious for you to continue and to do some of the things you have started to do already. Is this a fair assessment, Jim?

**Albertson:** Yes, I think so. The thing that has been most meaningful to me is that we have been highly complimented by being asked to do this to, because as I said the initiative was not with the American government, it was with the Vietnamese and based just on our three weeks there.

**Haferbecker/Vickerstaff:** Do you see the main work in a project of this type being with the school people or with the community people who are interested in education or with a formal organization?

**Albertson:** I will answer your question indirectly and then directly. All of your intellectual instincts say you shouldn't even touch this with a ten-foot pole. First, the team ought to learn Vietnamese and they ought to know something about the culture and the history and the traditions

and all of these things. Second, then you ought to spend at least two years there, just listening and to absorb it. But, none of this is possible. It is not possible because the country is moving too fast. A phrase that is hackney but yet is very applicable is that: *The future is tomorrow, in Vietnam*. Yet, this is literally true, here is a country that is engaged in a full-scale war and is at the same time trying to create a peaceful government. They are doing two things that are really impossible to do at the same time. Yet, they are doing it. They are doing it partly with some American help and some—I am sure—good advice. They are doing it partly from their own bootstraps.

But, the chances are that the team will have no intercourse with province level. You don't know. One of the questions I raised in my letter was: What is the unit of government they want create as the basic unit? Is it a central government only? Is it on a regional basis? Is it the province level? What is it?

**Eagon:** Right

**Bell:** Yes, very basic.

**Albertson:** Yes, this is certainly relevant and pretty basic to education. You ask the question and again you get the response, and this is from the Vietnamese: “You know we hadn't really thought of that.” The reason they haven't thought about that is that they are doing so many other things. But, these are questions that ought to be resolved and ought to be resolved with time.

The Vietnamese move slowly. Now, one of the biggest frustrations with our team is we have had some moral problems with our team—they spent—six of them spent the first ten days just sitting in the rectorate reading, while I was out making the protocol visits. First, I visited with the minister of education, then the rectors, and then went to see the dean of each faculty. The guys got real antsy. They couldn't understand why they couldn't go along. Will this was direct, and turned out to be, sound advice from the embassy. You do not move at any other pace.

We wanted to set up meetings; we had established committees and wanted to meet with them. We wanted to establish a direct face-to-face relationship; we are just now beginning to do that, because we had to go through all these other steps first. Again, you use your own standards. You say I want to meet you at five o'clock. They say, Vietnamese time or American time? You say, American time. Well then at five o'clock you meet. But, if you agree to five o'clock Vietnamese time, why it is six-thirty or seven—so what—soon enough you will get together. If along the way you see a friend and stop and talk to him it is ok, because that is important. Interpersonal relationships are awfully important.

**Haferbecker/or Vickerstaff:** The answer to my question then is, you would deal pretty much at the ministry level?

**Albertson:** The ministry level, they have said they would identify the counterparts to who we have on our team. They will do the identification, I don't know who they will be, I don't know if they will be people in the power structure or people who have educational background or who they might be.

**Vickerstaff:** You are also suggesting that the chief of the party should go over early?

**Albertson:** Well, not necessarily. It would be an advantage, if the chief of the party could go over for two weeks before the team gets there. It would have been much had I been there two weeks in advance, much better. You are right; it would be desirable if the chief of the party would go over and establish protocol and relationships before the arrival of the full team.

*(Side two of tape) WSU-SP President James Albertson continues his discussion with WSU-SP administrative panel members over some observations made by him as chief of the higher education team during his past visit to Vietnam and interaction with the USAID.*

**Albertson:** One of the things the higher education team found was a lack library materials. In the first place most of the books are in French or English, or if they are in Vietnamese they are non-

scientific. They are Vietnamese novels, which is a low-grade novel according to even the Vietnamese. Yet, they really ought to have books in Vietnamese. A Catholic priest took the Roman alphabet and modified it so you could use scientific terms. What the Japanese have done is to use the vernacular of the scientific term, if it were a French term they have adopted it, if it is English they have adopted it, and that is good. But, they [the Vietnamese] need printing presses, they need paper, and they need money to print all these things. Some Americans think the Vietnamese libraries ought to be air-conditioned, but the Vietnamese don't live in an air-conditioned world, we do. We like to have an air-conditioned hotel room, the ambassador's car is air-conditioned, but the Vietnamese don't live in this. [Eagon later worked on designing natural airflow systems for academic buildings.] So, I think that would be rather sterile.

**Yambert:** This might be a problem that would lend itself to solutions through our paper-chemistry expertise, like Chemistry 105-106 [Science and Technology in Pulp and Paper Making]?

**Albertson:** Correct, that would be a lasting solution.

Anyway, I would like to see our students interested in the students in these Vietnamese universities. They have the same objectives, they want to be heard, they want to have a voice in these things. As I say, right now they have this strong nationalistic pride that they are pushing hard. Another thing that excites me is the possibility of getting our students—getting an airlift setup—and this is very embryonic as an idea, but the University of Can Tho probably has the most promise. It is less than nine months old, and if there is to be an American type of university it could be the land grant type. It is right there in the middle of the Mekong Delta, which is an extremely rich, potentially, agriculture area.

One of the River Falls graduates has introduced a homemade rice thresher there, and this is tremendous and these people like it. I have some slides, you know the Wisconsin pump, the Wisconsin engine—the single-valve engine—these are being sold and they put a twenty foot steel

pipe on them with a propeller on the end of it and they put these on their sampans. Then they have this thing with the propeller out there twenty feet and they can regulate the depth of this thing. So they have this Wisconsin engine, with the label on it, modified and they are pushing their sampans through this area down there. What this fellow from River Falls did, Paul Lipsich—I guess—again using the Wisconsin engine, has made a very simple threshing machine for rice. He is in IVS now, when he gets out of IVS he wants to setup a distributorship.

**Bell:** Sounds just exactly like one would do in America? In a good sense.

**Eagon:** (laughs)

**Albertson:** Except that he is doing it for the benefit of the Vietnamese, too. Melvin Wall, the Head of the Department of Plant and Earth Sciences at Wisconsin State University-River Falls [member of the Wisconsin Higher Education Team,] has determined this to be the case. Boy, I can emotional about him, because he is identifying. He went down with Paul into this village and he threshed rice by hand. The guy there that does it does a thousand bushels a day for about a dollar-sixty. Mel did this, not for a day, but he did this because the man wanted him to. He got out into the paddies, he talked with the farmers, they offered him their first watermelon, which is pretty large and was an honor.

**Eagon:** You bet, you, that would be a real sacrifice.

**Bell:** Yes, before you came we had some background materials on the watermelon.

**Albertson:** But in the Mekong Delta, if that university could move in terms of Extension Programs and in terms of relating the academic to the practical world. It could serve all the way up into Cambodia, because the delta, of course, goes into Cambodia it doesn't stop with the border. There ought to be a major university there, a University of Southeast Asia, because this area can be developed and needs it. Also, similar areas in Southeast Asia could learn from what a university could do there.

**(Panel speaks in agreement)**

**Albertson:** Well, to finish my point. They need dormitories, the students come from all over Vietnam to the University of Can Tho already and it is just nine months old. They could and already do get materials from America. But, think of what kind of project we could get if we could some of our kids to go over and spend the summer. Instead of these kids going home in the summertime, there is no work here for them. If our government and the Vietnamese government could supply fish and rice for them to live on, the students from America and Vietnam could get together and build dormitories like we are building village schools over there. You get a few key people with help a then and then you add the manpower. The association would be...

**Yambert:** Like the Peace Corps?

**Albertson:** Yes, we would have our own Peace Corps type contingent.

**Vickerstaff:** This wouldn't be too difficult—to get this idea going. For one the students I wouldn't think would object.

**Albertson:** Well if we could get one or two advisers and put a couple of hundred kids over there in the summer.

**Yambert:** This is one outcome I would certainly like to see. I believe, as you have indicated, our students are ripe for this. In the relatively few projects I have worked with, like tree planting or working with the Indians, they are ready; they have this Peace Corps concept, or whatever you want to call.

**Eagon:** It is the outlet they need right about now.

**Bell:** This is right, I was in a meeting yesterday with a couple of students and I got the impression they are looking here for something to identify with, something to be part of. For some reason they do not have it right now. If it is a cycle, I don't know.

**Vickerstaff:** They [the Vietnamese] haven't the leadership right now, actually there is no one way they can turn to get leadership in any one of these areas. The question, in my mind, how do you communicate with these various groups?

**Eagon:** In Vietnamese and English, both.

**Albertson:** And the students, of course, in the best way we can in this regard.

**Eagon:** Are you learning Vietnamese?

**Albertson:** No, but I am trying. I have got some it down, like the morning greetings.

**Vickerstaff:** Is there a fair exchange of?

**Eagon:** Communication?

**Albertson:** If you can speak French they will speak French with you. If you can speak German the chances are they will speak German with you. They can handle Spanish fairly well.

**Eagon:** Whew.

**Albertson:** This I mentioned earlier, you feel very inadequate and very humble, because they come over to you and work with you, and they converse with you in English.

**Eagon:** Is it advantageous to have a team that can speak several languages, one of these three languages?

**Albertson:** It would be wonderful if you had a team that everyone could speak French. It would be tremendous if they all could speak Vietnamese. But, more importantly is to have a team who is willing to identify once they have developed something that can be Vietnamese. People who are more of the type that can be liked, that are willing to eat their food and who want to learn something about the Vietnamese. These things all come across real strong to the Vietnamese. If you spend your time telling them about how we do it at home, you know the American way and swatting mosquitoes and resenting the heat and all that, they can sense it and they do.

**Bell:** I assume that the minimum number of people we want from this institution is one, what is the maximum number that you think would be desirable?

**Albertson:** I would have no figure. I think in part that would depend in part on what we could convince the board to do and on what we would think would be the strength of the manpower. Another way to answer that, I think probably there would be an advantage in having some representation from outside the institution.

**Yambert:** Oh yes, I agree with that. I was thinking in terms of bringing it back to the University, I can see having two people from this university. Just as they would compliment each other on the team, they would compliment each other in selling the follow-up programs at this institution.

**Albertson:** Now, ideally, and ideally I think I would like to see a majority of the people from this university.

**Bell:** Who are you going to take with you Bud? [Loud clock chiming]

**Eagon:** I was just thinking maybe the dean [Yambert] wanted to go or had some suggestions.

**Bell/or Vickerstaff:** I think it would be good if we had two or three from this institution. One man that we were talking about when we talked about some possibilities, one man who I think would be a person is Willard Brandt from the UW-M [University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee] a close friend of mine there. He got his start with the school at Platteville and I think he taught elementary school; his main background is elementary. He has spent two years in Liberia with his family and he also headed some of or one the summer Peace Corps programs in Milwaukee, I don't remember which country that group was being trained for, I think somewhere in South America. But, he is a warm, personable type of person, and has a very a good grasp of education all up-and-down-the-line. He has been the elementary supervisor and has a broad educational experience. I don't know what his title is or his responsibilities are now? The Graduate

Education or the Education Extension Program in Milwaukee? He has been up here for several meetings.

**Eagon:** The Extension Program [In-Service and Extension Education], right now he is working with us on the School Board Clinics; in fact he is here tonight.

**Albertson:** Well then the consensus would be we ought to have a go at this if we could?

**General panel agrees.**

**Eagon:** Sure.

**Yambert:** We talked about this before, so I think it is certainly anticlimactic. I think we were all sold before you got back. So this is the reason we are not being more obvious about it now.

**Eagon:** I think we had some basic questions, you know, as to the kind of program that was involved, which would make a difference as to the kinds of people really needed.

**Vickerstaff/or Haferbecker:** I think Jim can be helpful now, with this experience with the present team, too, as to the personality or what personality is really best.

**Albertson:** The men on our present team that are most successful are fellows who were in the military, who had to adjust. It is amazing what this does. I would confess naiveté on my own part that I shouldn't have anticipated it. The people who have had to adjust to different situations; who had to make do. We had a real knockdown one night because the guys were complaining that they couldn't go to the PX that day, a couple of them were. Well, here our team has the very best that there is in Vietnam. Our quarters are excellent; we are getting sixteen dollars a day to eat.

**Eagon:** We think. (laughing)

**Albertson:** Don't say, we think. [Laughter]

We are making money on per diem. We have good travel arrangements. You go right down the line in terms of the conditions that our team is working under. We went to Hue and stayed at the perfume [factory] River Hotel that Diem built for his younger brother and then the province government took it over. Well, basically it was an average place, but it is not equipped with dehumidifiers. Humidity is very high and the weather was cold, so there is condensation—water—standing on the floor. There was no hot water, when we got there the water wasn't even turned on and when they turned it on in the morning it ran out for some reason. Well, you climbed in bed and the sheets were not spanking fresh clean, they didn't smell like they had just been laundered and they were salty from the humidity. This nearly threw two members of our team and they couldn't work effectively the next day.

Well, on the other hand, the full moon came up out of the east that night. The conditions were just perfect; it was a beautiful night. This river is a lovely river and all of the strange noises, you feel like a dry sponge, and you just keep pulling things in. Finally, your head just starts to swim with all the new experiences you have and this university there. So if creature comfort is important and basic to a guy, if he has to have his three-minute egg and his cold beer in the afternoon and all, why you are in trouble. In all honesty there are people whose lives are regimented that way and you really can't criticize them, you have to criticize the previous experiences I guess. These are the kind of people you have to avoid.

**Eagon:** Are you really saying you have got to get to know people before you take them on a team? The thing is that this is the kind of problem you have when you reach out to far and get people with certain kinds of background only for their backgrounds sake—academic background.

**Albertson:** Boy that is. Let me be very open. The whole team had trouble as they missed their wives. The Vietnamese think very highly of their own women, they are not subordinate at that level, while at the lower socio-economic levels they very definitely are. Now, they are subordinate in a sense that many of the professional people you never see their wives. If they

entertain—some of them—if they entertain you never see their wives, their wives are back someplace in the house.

**Yambert:** This is fairly typical of the oriental culture?

**Bell:** It is true in Japan I know, I would imagine it varies at different levels.

**Albertson:** Now on the other hand, we had dinner last week with—the minister of education and his wife were present—but we were the guests of the owner of the largest pharmaceutical company in Vietnam. His wife was very much there, as she is the owner of the company and her husband is the figurehead. He said openly to me, she runs it, she is the brains of it, and he made no pretext that he was anything but that.

**Eagon:** Some of us would do good to recognize the same thing here.

**(Whole group agrees)**

**Albertson:** There would be some practical problems [in terms of spouses or female team members], I don't think we should discriminate but the practical problems if you could get housing and like that. Now, the place that we were in there was an American Negro woman staying there. If the group could get in a place like League [?] Hotel there would be no problem.

**Bell:** How about traveling, would there be problems going from place to place, are there other places?

**Albertson:** Well, it would be how receptive the males were to the female and how willing she was to adapt.

**Yambert:** I would assume if they can adapt to the country, they could adapt to a female.

**Eagon:** This is another question. I don't think we have many females that are adaptable, very honestly?

**Bell:** Do you mean in general?

**Eagon:** Well, no I mean in our own institution. I think if it were a female I think we would have to know her very well to know that she was adaptable, because this could probably create more problems.

**Yambert:** I was talking to a fellow who heads the project of which Arnold Holstead is going to a part. One of the interesting comments that he, now this is an entirely different culture of course and I don't know how far you can extend this, but his observations then was that it was the middle-age people who adapted well and the young people who did not adapt well.

**Albertson:** You know how dangerous generalizations are, but bachelors and old maids are the ones I would be concerned about.

**Bell:** I will go along with that generalization, in any situation. [general agreement and laughter]

**Vickerstaff:** In any situation.

**Albertson:** But, if people have a set pattern and a routine and they haven't had to live outside of themselves you know they may have difficulties doing so. When you have children and when you have a wife you have to live outside of yourself if you are going to be very successful in life. That is a good prerequisite.

**Vickerstaff:** Speaking of individuals and from your comments I can see why Paul Baxter [WSU-SP professor of Conservation] would have been good on some overseas projects, because he is that homey type individual who can easily see outside of himself.

**Yambert:** Right, he is not excitable.

**Vickerstaff:** Do you think it would be advantageous for this university to set the topside number in talking with the board office.

**Albertson:** I don't think we are at that point yet. I do not know, it depends on the rest of your reactions.

**Yambert:** Well, ideally I would like to react in this way: I would like to think of the job that needs to be done and then if we begin to identify people see how they could compliment each other to comprise a whole. This may wind up with four people or six people. I would approach it in that way, see how much overlap of expertise and see what kinks we have.

**Eagon:** The other question though, I think, can you accomplish more with six people or with four people? Can the number of people you have to work with there, will there be numbers of people to work with or will there a few people to work with?

**Albertson:** I think from the standpoint of protocol they would like to have as many as we could have or get, probably no more, because manpower is short.

**Bell:** Particularly at this level.

**Albertson:** And your ideas change. You know I was real critical in my own mind and maybe I voiced it in terms of these flying professors. But, you get over there and it is a whole different picture. They are doing it because of and out of their own commitment to wanting to give these kids an education. Now, the man who is a director of the Oceanographic Institute, he is on the faculty of the University of Saigon as a Professor of Science—did I write this in my correspondence?

**Eagon:** Yes, I agree that is a good example of commitment.

**Albertson:** He gets his plane ticket from the government and they him a 150 piastas a-day in expenses—that is all. So he flies to Saigon, and the economy there is terrifically inflated, he stays with friends but it costs him about 300 piastas a-day to eat, so he loses money. He also teaches six hours at the University, spending 3-4 days to give all of his lectures and then goes back as he is also the Director of the Oceanographic Institute, which will just tear you apart when you see it. He is a reputable scientist, he is researching, writing in recognized international journals, he articulates what he is doing extremely well, he directs a staff of sixty-five people, and he teaches

because he is committed to it. He is not making money, he is not running away from a job, he is not flying around the country to fatten his paycheck, because he is in fact losing money, more than that his salary is 12,000 piastas, which is about \$105.00 a month. He has to maintain a home and provide food in an inflated economy. He has all the desires of any other professional person, he wants to buy books—it costs about 15 American dollars to buy a book and get it over there—how many books do you buy if you have a monthly income of \$105.00? He wants to look nice, which he does, when you visit them they put on a coat and white shirt and it is spotless. He wants to drive a car, but has to borrow one. They have feelings, and they want to have certain things.

**Eagon:** Well I wonder if we could look at what kinds of people would makeup a team? What would be this whole?

**Vickerstaff/or Bell:** This is what I think we need to talk about. What kinds of expertise do you think we need? You are thinking of professional qualifications as opposed to?

**Eagon:** No, what would best meet the situation? How do you best look at their need and say what can we provide?

**Albertson:** I tell you what Washington said.

**Eagon:** George?

**Vickerstaff:** I'm going to get that coin across that river, yet. (Laughter)

**Albertson:** This is the letter from the Minister of Education Nguyen Van Tho:

*Our Ministry of Education affirms that we intend to organize a committee to study the whole programs of university, secondary, elementary, professional, and technical education. According the government's directive our ministry must achieve this within the limited period of six months. Therefore, would you be so kind as to setup a plan to support our ministry by supplying specialists and means for our realization of the above mentioned educational program improvement.*

**Eagon:** Do you need to add professional.

**Albertson:** No, that word is there—professional and technical education.

**Vickerstaff:** Does this mean...?

**Albertson:** This is addressed to our university because of our current survey. Yet, you also talk about technical education.

**Eagon:** How do you interpret professional and technical education?

**Albertson:** I am not sure.

**Haferbecker:** Or how do they?

**Albertson:** I am not sure. I don't think it means medical education.

**Eagon:** What about teacher education?

**Albertson:** Well you can't be sure. Right now, I don't know. I don't mean to be evasive. I am looking for a copy of the telegram. This is a translation; we have found already it makes a big difference in who does the translating.

**Bell:** May I glance at this letter? This was a translation.

**Vickerstaff:** Right.

**Albertson:** And we found already it makes a difference in who does the translating.

**Eagon:** Was it translated from Vietnamese or French?

**Bell:** I would assume it was Vietnamese.

**Albertson:** Now, here is the *cablegram* from Washington. (Reads)

*Concur Albertson consultation, home campus.*

1. *Gratified initial successful impact of survey team. Also, pleased enthusiasm and receptivity to Minister Tho to preparation of master plan for Vietnamese educational system.*
2. *Agree major problem limited time-span for completion of study and recruitment competent professional personnel processing: 1. Theoretical foundations; 2.*

*Administrative experience; 3. Research capability; 4. Overseas experience. Request Albertson contact AID Washington upon arrival Wisconsin for consultation.*

**Albertson:** I talked with Scot Hammond about this and he is open. I said this business about overseas experience that is desirable, but how important is it. He said these are just ideas.

**Haferbecker:** Whose cable is that?

**Albertson:** Well, every cable that goes out of Vietnam is signed Lodge and every cable that out of Washington is signed Rusk. But, I think this is Hammond's.

**Eagon:** Certainly his interpretation of research is something different than many interpretations. What he is looking at is maybe research at what the people are like.

**Albertson:** The thing that has been real helpful in our team, and we have said this consistently since last summer and I think people are responding to it, our kind of university can work real well because we are a developing university. We have people who are professionally competent and also know what the practical problems are that go along with development. This ought to have some transfer to a developing country. You remember when Leon and I were in Washington in August, Scot [Hammond] was not real sure if this was something he would buy, but more and more he could see the value in it.

**Bell:** Chicago convinced him completely I think. He was pretty excited after the day he spent with the total team. I can't recall when he hasn't alluded to it or directly commented on it in the phone discussions since.

**Albertson:** There are some personal aspects that anyone considering this ought to weigh, and of course they are obvious. Being off and away from one's family whether it is a month or three months is something that is a sacrifice. I think in all fairness I keep thinking I know the extent to which my family has to sacrifice, and yet probably I don't really know. My wife probably has to accept some things that may not be fair to impose. Then on the other hand, anyone would be

dishonest who didn't miss their family and who didn't feel the loneliness at times; that is something that comes. I think you can bring your family into it so that the way they experience this is more than vicariously. Again, personally, because of where it is located geographically for just a few dollars more you can go the rest of the way around the world in conjunction with it. You can spend some time in Japan, some time in Taiwan, Hong Kong or the Philippines. You can get to know more about just a limited area, so that is an aspect.

**Haferbecker:** And, again, presumably improve your usefulness to the university when you return.

**Bell:** No question.

**Albertson:** Again, I plan to stop in Manila coming back, before I come out, it will strengthen our tie with PNC [Philippine National College.] I could see us having a permanent relationship with all three [three of the Vietnamese Universities outside of Saigon], but particularly Can Tho. I think in terms of the people in our Sciences and Conservation Departments—we could have a group there for three or four years.

**Yambert:** Do you mean in Forestry?

**Albertson:** Yes, forest products. They this tremendous growth potential and yet they are short of wood. Well, they have a lot of pine...*tape ends.*

**UWSP Archives Series 17 Tape 8 #16, WSU-SP President Dreyfus on Vietnam,  
January 1970  
Message and News conference**

**President Dreyfus:** The Saigon educational people had requested my coming to Vietnam to deal with those very people that have been there for the last 2 to 2 ½ years, and who were now ready to finalize a program of development based on their needs and what they want to do. I think that this states the obvious value of the project to Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and South Vietnam. I was pleased and honored myself to be the chief of the mission for such a project, because I think were talking about the relationship of Vietnam to this nation in 1975 and 1980. The problems of the defense and party are obviously today. Somebody has got to be working in the long-range plan, and one big aspect of that would be the development of higher education and the leadership of that country to keep it stable. That's essentially why I am going. I think there's another war to fight. This is a most important long-range war. I feel quite obligated to do it plus to carry out final plans of that which was started by my predecessor Jim Albertson.

**You say this is a good thing for the university, how would it benefit the university?**

Only in the sense that the University then would become what one may call a part of the mainstream of national higher education. To be selected out of one of the 2500 universities and then say this institution will represent this country, I think the impact of this on this faculty, faculty elsewhere and other institutions and the attitude about this place—to put it in blunt terms, I think that it clearly moves us into a bigger league.

**What specifically do you intend to do while you are over there Dr. Dreyfus?**

I will be meeting with students and younger faculty to assess that input of where they want to go. In other words in the Vietnamization process of higher education as will all other Vietnamization. Because that's a source that we had not had yet. Those people have not come here to Stevens Point. I will be reestablishing my contacts, which have been somewhat

continuous with the presidents deans and vice-presidents who have been here and with whom we had a continuous kind of relationship to get at any change they may have had. Then also with the political forces in that country. So that the vice-president of the lower assembly, a very important man, and the deputy and his top man in the educational committee in the lower assembly, I will be meeting with and as it stands now with the President Thieu. Since the political forces here are going to have to be lined up to aid the educational ministry and what the Vietnamese educators want. Part of my job is to get that all pulled together and get it moving in a direction and then decide what resources we here in the United States can bring there. By resources I'm not talking about this university, I will probably use less than one fourth of the consultants from the State of Wisconsin, the rest will be from the other 49 states.

**Are you optimistic about the Vietnamization program now underway and which will be underway in the future?**

Yes I am. As I understand from my briefings in both military and educational, and economic and social I have gotten to understand the breath of Vietnamization which I thought was strictly a military term and it is not. Laird certainly didn't intend it as such, but I thought he did. I am very much optimistic especially with some of the data that have been shared with me by Admiral Lamias, who is primarily the man responsible for this process.

**Are then the terms pacification and Vietnamization really a question of semantics or is there a real hard-core difference?**

There is a distinct difference I think one is a subunit of the other. Pacification is an essential to Vietnamization, without it, without a kind of settling down out in the hamlets—and that's where the prime government of Vietnam is, and I've learned that as well, fortunately before I went over. Once that is settled down then they can begin a kind of development toward nationalization and that's what Vietnamization is about; a sense of national purpose and goal and unity on part of the Vietnamese people and the educational status has got to be a part of that.

**Well doctor, do you think it is right for the United States to force its educational system on a nation's culture?**

I sure do not and have no intention of doing that. What's happened is it was a French system of higher education and the forced impact of the French culture. In the interim, say the last decade [the decade in the 1960's] that had a lot of the young faculty that had been trained in American universities. This presidents had come over here, the vice-presidents, the deans—they now see a different approach to higher education where we do not use students as a cultural class who were separate and distinct and considerably lower than professors. With a few full professors, and you literally create just a few a year where they run the show and it's an elite concept.

But this broad Jeffersonian tradition we have here in America, they accepted a good deal of this having lived in it, studied under it. The minister of education with a University of Chicago degree, for example, it is this kind of change.

So now the real issue isn't bringing our system there, but to make sure that they understand our system and how it can be adapted. What can they take from us to help bring about the changes they need to provide a higher educational base that will meet their needs for self governed society? They apparently see at this point more value in the American type system than a French system. Now where they are going to arrive at is at a Vietnamese system. And in a very real basis I will do much more listening than I will do suggesting, to really finding out what the Vietnamese system is.

Anything on timing? Why we are in and out? It is important that I get out before Tet. For two reasons: 1.) they don't do very much during that time, and 2.) the 1968 experience at Hue. Hue is one of the places I will be up at the DMZ. So I think they need a civilian feather merchant running around like they need another head.

**You mention that there will be some resources used to help education in Vietnam, specifically will people be stationed over there for long periods of time do you believe, both local faculty members, for instance, or administrators. Do you foresee any of that?**

Our initial contract will be based on relatively short-term consultation work of 30-90 days maximum, more like a 60-day involvement, because we have some very specific kind of

skills. They need to find out how our registrar functions, they need some mechanics, they need to understand how to implement the concept of basic studies and credits—things that we just take for granted here.

See in the system under the old French system, if a student starts in one faculty he goes for three years and then he quits or is thrown out, he goes to another faculty and goes back to zero—he doesn't even pass go and get his 200 dollars. He starts all over from the very beginning; where that isn't true here. If you go to school two years, you have two years on your record and it is transferable totally as a basic study down to say Madison. You might lose some credits if you were to change type of college to an engineering school from liberal arts or something or vice versa. That is what they are trying to get at; a kind of system that will allow flexibility and interchangeability. Our people going over are essentially short-term, how to do it, kinds of implementation. We will draw them from all over the United States, from situations that are as close to that which they have got.

**How long do you expect to be gone?**

I expect to be gone with all the travel and transit time a maximum of 45 days. I don't expect to be in Vietnam itself much more than 3 to 3 ½ weeks. I am planning on coming back through Europe: 1.) To look at a couple of new spots for branch campus or for overseas additional programs for this university, 2.) To visit our own overseas group; which will be at Stratford in Avon taking their Shakespearian course when I hit England. But, I also do want to look at, I think, at Athens, Rome and Paris for possible establishment of overseas programs for this university.

**Do you have any understanding of Vietnamese language?**

Well enough that I think I can get in a little trouble at a cocktail party. But, I think enough that they will understand that I have begun to move in the language. Most of these people who were here of course know that I had no language base when they were here. I think really it is more the psychological soil it will create, to know that at least were taking the trouble and that

in fact Vietnamese would be offered here as a language next fall, if I can via the Learning Resources Center and the use of the tutorial tape approach.

**Are you certain that it will be offered?**

No, I have to run through the faculty machinery on that—and nothing is for sure until it gets through the faculty machinery.

**Who will be taking up your responsibilities for the next forty-five days?**

While I am gone Vice-President Haferbecker is the acting president of the university.

**Do you have any personal feelings about the political situation in Vietnam, with the recent assassination [of the Minister of Education] and question of change in administrations?**

Yes, this change in ministries is important, although I will be dealing with three former ministers of education and the current Vietnamese Minister of Education. So I think I will be working with primarily with those out of the pool of whom will be selected any future Minister of Education.

**Series 17 Tape 8 #17-18, President Dreyfus from Vietnam (Jan. 1970)**

**President Dreyfus:** This is Lee Dreyfus reporting directly from Saigon to Wisconsin. I'm over here on an educational mission related to the five universities in Vietnam and carrying out that which was originally the Albertson mission and the Stevens Point State University involvement in that. One can't help but notice the life in Saigon and in Hue, from where I just returned. The situation does not at all appear to me as it has in the press. I have found this to be like a bustling carnival like city with every indication that Tet is at hand in another week with the shops that are colorful and full of the black market goods. People absolutely crowded and jammed in every degree in this three million city out doing their pre-Tet shopping, which is compliable in every respect to our pre-Christmas period.

There is no indication of any fear of crowd; there is no indication that people are concerned about driving in and around the city since all the cars have their windows open, with little fear of someone dropping a bomb in their window, as has been the case in the past. There are GI's riding about inside the rickshaws and inside vehicles as they move about the city. People are laughing; life is gayety. It is interrupted at night, while once in awhile by the thump of an eight-inch howitzer as it moves out on the outgoing perimeter to some area suspected of VC rocket activity. There have been no rockets coming into the city. This in fact is the Paris of Southeast Asia and it lives up to its name in every way. I find it very difficult to believe that there is a war going on in any sense at all, in the sense that I have been reading daily in the reports that are always listed from Saigon. As far as I'm concerned, nothing is happening in Saigon related to a war other than the fact that one sees the mounted sand bags on each corner with the presence of the ARVN, the Republic of Vietnam soldier. I have been told by members of my party who were here two years ago that they are absolutely astonished at the difference in the kind of polish, the kind of efficiency shown in these ARVN troops as they seem to be maintaining their machines as they stand ready on their watches and so forth.

I did take a trip up to Hue and found the similar situation with the exception that Hue is not the large urban center of three million that Saigon is. Hue is actually one hundred-sixty thousand, but I don't think it would compare to a one hundred-sixty thousand-sized city within Wisconsin. It is more like Stevens Point than like Madison in its makeup and it shows that difference, as one would compare Stevens Point to Milwaukee or Stevens Point to Madison. The people of Hue were preparing for Tet, as were the people of Saigon, though there isn't the kind of carnival atmosphere since as I indicated, it is a bit more rural in its approach to life. Last night, however, I found myself in the middle of a VC attack on the University of Hue and in its environs. A hand grenade was exploded just outside my billet quarters and within a matter, literally a minute or a minute and a-half, the place was crawling with ARVN troops. They turned out in force. It was a good twenty minutes before American troops showed from their troop gathering [base] at Hue some 6 miles from where I was located. The ARVN troops were searching in and about the rectorate, the housing, the various buildings of the various faculty of the University of Hue and made it clear that they were going to ferret out any VC who might of come in to explode either a plastic or a hand grenade. Whatever it was that exploded, I am not at all sure and I did not get the reports before I left the city, but it was one of those two items. Nothing was apparently damaged.

There was a good deal of small arms fire for about three hours during the night, which tends to keep one awake when we are used to the things we are used to in Wisconsin. But, I am not sure if that was anything other than the fact that these 15-18 yr old well-trained young local force troops for the protection of the city are a bit trigger-happy and when they get a chance to fire these M-16's they tend to take advantage of it. I suspect any shadow, any cat, any dog; anything that even moves gets fired at. One could hear the vehicles, one could hear the troop carriers, and one could hear the walkie-talkies of the various command officers and almost totally in the Vietnamese language, so as far as I could determine the entire perimeter of defense being

set up here, just 40 miles south of the Communist border, was being handled by the ARVN troops. This would suggest that Vietnamization is in fact really from the military point of view.

I talked with some of the news reporters who hang around in the bar of the Caravelle Hotel and asked them specifically, why the reports in the United States do not show this kind of carnival atmosphere or the fact that when there is a small incident the ARVN troops move in regularly. Their basic reply is that this may be only temporary, a kind of wait and see attitude. My argument of course would be that we ought to tell it the way it is and the way it is now. There may be a giant offensive mounting since it is known that the troops are mounting north of the DMZ, I was told this by Colonel Chisum who is the provincial senior advisor in Hue or in I-CORE, the CORE that is immediately south of the North Vietnamese border, and the one which faces the Communists on an almost daily basis. It was his reaction that there would be no real Tet offensive since as he put it: "We would absolutely wax them if they did." It would be completely disastrous from their point of view and they know it. He also pointed out, however, that he expects some attempts of the kinds such as I experienced myself last night in order to create some kind of dramatic effect to the people that the VC are not gone and that they will continue some kind of terrorist activity. He pointed out that if another Tet goes by without any offensive by the VC they will clearly lose their grip on the people.

Hue is one of those cities that have been questioned as to whether it belonged to the North or it belonged to the South. In fact there are people in the North who expect the South to cede Hue to that country. President Thieu has made it clear as of last month that he has no intention of ceding one inch of that ground. Since the Hue offensive of 1968, when atrocities by the thousands were committed by a very vicious enemy, the people of Hue have turned their view-point toward Saigon. Instead of identifying with Hanoi, as they always did in the past traditionally, they now recognize that the enemy is really the VC and Hanoi, and that their future lies with Saigon. I could feel the kind of spirit of the rebirth of Hue, I could see it in the University of Hue, which is a growing and vital institution, and patterning very clearly along

American lines and beginning to reject what I would call the traditional French lines that are so obvious in the University of Saigon. Rector Chau of the University of Hue is a very young man who has been educated in the undergraduate level in Paris, at the masters' level in Great Britain, and took his doctorate at the University of Chicago. He is a very bright, dedicated, energetic young man from Hue, who has returned to that city with his wife and his children in order to build a future for this nation. He could very easily sitting comfortably with a tenured position as a professor in American or British University, he is well aware of that. His wife holds a law degree and yet they sit up in their city just 40 miles or less south of the communist menace, facing that on a daily basis because they believe in their nation and they believe in their community.

Colonel John Chisum was a man who impressed me a good deal in his kind of simple approach to life. I did ask him about the fact that ROTC was having its trouble on some campuses in the United States but the fact on my own campus in Stevens Point it is growing at a faster rate than anywhere else within the Middle West. He pointed out that he was an ROTC graduate and he felt that ROTC may be the basis that we should begin to operate on the universities within Vietnam and if so this proposal can and will be advanced by my team through the USAID mission to the department of defense in order for it to be viewed and looked to as a possible adaptive move by the five universities of South Vietnam. Here may be the future source of civilian leadership in the form of young officers who can see to it that this is protected and retains as an institution separate from the northern part of Vietnam.

I see a parallel here in Hue comparable to West Berlin. It may be that here the free world will have an opportunity to see a university grow and to become a landmark of intellectualism and the development of the intellectual aspect which is so important in the oriental mind. We could, if we put our resources to it, develop in this community an institution, which would do in this part of the world exactly what West Berlin did in its part of the world. There is every indication that proper and responsible authorities within the department of defense will begin

looking at the development of the University and the University Hospital at Hue, as a form of defense for the free world at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel here in Southeast Asia.

One key difference that one notices up here in Hue as opposed to Saigon is the constant thump, thump, thump of the outgoing payload of rockets and eight-inch howitzers. I asked Colonel Chisum what was going on and whom were they attacking, and he said in all probability no one. This is a new version of protection against guerrilla warfare. What they have done is they have created a map in which they indicate a perimeter around Hue, in which there would have to be placed by the VC the necessary rocket implementations in order to fire a rocket, even indiscriminately, into the city itself. They determine the minimum and maximum range of those rockets, this has been charted out on a map and on a scattered and non regular basis they continue to fire round after round into that perimeter zone so that the VC cannot move into it at night and disturb the people of Hue by firing rockets into their midst. What a strange approach this is to life and here is the new kind of wall. A wall of shells literally intended to keep the enemy from firing the rockets as they had in the past into the very heart of the city itself. So that these people feel a security now in hearing the constant thump of the artillery as opposed to the quiet, which sometimes brings the black silk pajama VC into their midst, into the dark and someone who they fear on the basis of his terrorist acts.

I then flew back across Vietnam the entire length of 600 miles and find this to be an absolutely enchanting beautiful wooded country. It is a shame that it is so torn by war, particularly since I find these people to be about as gentle and loving and sweet as any human beings I ever met in my life. I think that is the only description one can give about these people. The young girls still carry on in a giggle kind of fashion. Which, I think, we of our so called sophisticated society are bound to enjoy and see a kind of beauty and freshness there that we have begun to lose within our own culture. All and all it seems to me that the South Vietnam situation has begun to stabilize at least on this pre-Tet period. There is some question of whether there will be a mounted offensive and only the military guess, which seems to be pessimistic, would suggest

that this is the last chance for the VC and the North to make major impact on the people in the South. It is their last chance to say that they can really control the situation.

From the vantage point of this viewer, I see only a carnival city in Saigon, a kind of delightful refreshing ruralized city in Hue, and a people who are now beginning to sense their own nationalism, their own individuality, and who before they are through will probably will ask the American presence to be gone. For the moment they are delighted that we are here, but I am sure in time—as with all people—they will want to be unoccupied by anyone even including those who helped them to achieve the very freedom they are trying to see. I feel now so much as I did in meeting all of the various Vietnamese who have visited our campuses in the past two years that we cannot and must not abandon these people. If we do, I am sure they are going to be overrun in the most viscous form and never again will the American presence will be looked on as any value to anyone in the free world at all.

This is the best I can give you from an inexperienced eye and a standard Wisconsin citizen sitting here in the middle of South Vietnam looking from inside the fish bowl. It is very different from going to bed in Stevens Point, Wisconsin and not being concerned whether the front door is locked. It is returning to that kind of viewpoint here in Saigon.

**Series 17 Tape 8 #19 Dreyfus News conference on Vietnam, March 9, 1970**

*This is Jim Thom recording for the University Archives Lee Dreyfus's speech on March 9, 1970.*

*Welcome to President Dreyfus's speech on Vietnam. He was in Vietnam for three weeks, cosponsored by Stevens Point State and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). When Dr. Dreyfus completes his speech, he will open the floor for questions and we hope you save your questions for this time. In this case I would like to present President Lee S. Dreyfus to you at this time.*

**President Dreyfus:** Let me just wander about as to what I was doing over there, how we got over there, and what we think our possible roles to be in terms of an educational contribution in Southeast Asia. I suppose since World War II, one way or another this nation seemed to have gotten itself involved in the role in keeping world order, which shifted from a 1940 kind of isolation position to this new position of world order and our responsibility to it. Both in terms of the balance of power concept of nuclear chess game team, where one supposedly out balances the other or matches the other, and in terms of dollars in the United Nations, and our major support of that institution, via military equipment and aid to nations, military involvement as in Korea, Mediterranean, Cuba, South Vietnam—there is a relatively long list, its been growing I think. All of this, coming to the point that the basic premise that U.S. security is somehow related to world stability. If the world is not stable then U.S. security is involved. I think that is one of the underlying principles that based the whole nation to about 1941-42. Now, starting with that principle, we then look to world stability looking at military involvement and the police force concept.

Then under the old ICA, the International Cooperative Agency, it was developed on a post-war basis as an outgrowth of the Marshall Plan. The notion that world order and world stability was related to factors other than the military, it was related to food, related to each need or problem, related to education, and so on down the line. The ICA was developed into the USAID, which is the United States Agency for International Development. Essentially, that aim was trying to provide some of the U.S. resources—both the natural, physical, human, otherwise aid those countries in areas were they asked for certain and specific kinds of aid. It may be health

and there is an awful lot of this going on around the world, but more recently in the area of education.

My own administrative assistant, Dr. John Ellery, came here later than I would have had him come, in that he was finishing up a tour for the USAID and attempting to help them to develop and build a College of Java in Sierra de Lone, Africa. And getting that college moving took him a year, after I arrived here, to get over here.

Essentially then there is another premise coming up, mainly that education is a keystone for self-government and self-determination, and that is a second premise and I think a relatively new one that come out in the decade of the 1960's. One that I hope and believe that this government will take more seriously. A major thrust of its' resources, its' energy, its' intent, and its' commitment to other nations around the world. I would hope ultimately it would make this the key thrust as opposed to the military aid and the military involvement thrust. We are a long way from that obviously maybe this is the direction that the 1970's can bring, and one which I hope I will be able to recommend at the time I do make my full educational recommendations concerning Vietnam.

One of the questions has to do with Vietnamization. I'm not sure exactly which definition of that term; I've seen a lot of them. I've read the secretary of state's report to the Congressional Committee; I've read Laird's report to a Congressional Committee on this term. While the key means is the shift of the military burden from the military obviously dominated and handled by U.S. forces, to domination and control and involvement by the Vietnamese, meaning that physically they are going to have secure their own land or it is not going to be secure, it is just that simple. We obviously don't know what the timetable is, since that has been held back from the American public. But abstemiously there has been given some date and time, saying by then you better handle it on your own or school's out, because if you can't handle it we are not going to handle it for you.

In all probability something that should have been said a long time ago. But I couldn't judge that from my involvement there. One, I don't think I am capable of judging what they can or can't do militarily; this is not an area where I have any expertise at all. The only military thing I noted was the lack of military presence in Saigon, itself, of the American forces. Apparently they pulled them all out to the perimeter, purposely taking them out of Saigon, so that in three weeks time, most of which was spent in Saigon, I am not sure I saw 300 American GI's in that period. This is quite different from those who have been over there previously as I compare notes with them.

Now, as to what it is we can do to the United States Educational Agencies and what our work is there. First of all, why Stevens Point State University, and what's our relationship to the Vietnamese University? There are five universities over there, three public universities, one Catholic, and one Buddhist. The Catholic-Buddhist issue, by the way, is a very serious issue. There is great mistrust there; I would say they are about on a par with the 1900-1910 Protestant-Catholic split in this country. They are not at the point of the Northern Ireland mistrust and split, but it gets involved in the total war picture and politics. Saigon is essentially Catholic, when you get up in Hue, the northern end of the country, you see the much heavier Buddhist involvement, a greater number of Buddhists. But, that becomes an issue sometimes unspoken—sometimes spoken—and beginning to find this powering some of the judgments and I also suspect will have a lot to do with some of the consultation work we will be doing over.

One university is at the top of the country at Hue, which is 37 miles south of the DMZ, it is a public university. It has a College of Medicine, a College of Liberal Arts or Letters, a College of Science, a College of Pedagogy and Education, no Engineering, a School of Law. There, when they talk about a College of Law, they are talking about law, political science, sociology, and even some history—a total of all Social Studies areas of law. Their College of Medicine, that Bob Cass built, is in fairly good shape through meetings that put money into this thing, but then they ran out in terms of the amount of funds needed to build an entire College of

Medicine. Their problem was the faculty, since the medical doctors prefer to stay down in Saigon, it's a lot safer, warmer climate, a lot less accident prone, on that basis they have to fly them back and forth, they have to fly the faculty to various colleges.

The University of Hue, which has a fairly good physical set up as a university and I also think some leadership in terms of administration, has a notion of the modern university and how to structure and where to go and what to do. They simply do not have the faculty resource, they have to take them on catch of catch basis, fly them in, on some cases a faculty will only agree to do this if they can fly in—give the course in a two weeks time and get out. This means the students would have to stop everything else they would be doing and take this course from about 8:00 in the morning until about 5:00 in the afternoon, right straight through for two weeks. It is very difficult, obviously, trying to make any sense out of this, trying to structure time, trying to create a schedule, trying to get the faculty and facility to fit and work. But, in some cases it is either that or no course offered at all.

Coming down in the country in the mountain resort area of DaNang, go off to the left to Dalat, which is where the University is, a beautiful kind of climate, terrain, it was most impressive as far as I was concerned physically. It's a Catholic institution at the University of Dalat; Father Luck who was here on campus for about three weeks is still rector or president there. It has almost all Roman Catholic priests in the faculty positions, most of them American or European trained, very few of them are French trained and that was quite a difference since the French academic system is replete in the entire educational process, particularly since it's the old French Academy system from the 1920's-1930's that seemed to be frozen in time. It works greatly to the students' disadvantage, works greatly, I think, to the disadvantage of the entire country, at least from my point of view, but I think from the point of view of the students in the country and I think from the student leadership I was able to talk to. At Dalat, you had a province security problem, a problem that has grown since the action in the south has been reduced, then the VC

action up in Dalat has increased. It is also the vegetable basket so to speak of the nation, so the issue of movement of food to the south is important, particularly to Saigon.

Saigon is a city about the size of Madison in physical space, with a population of about three million people, it is a crowded, polluted, with motorcycles and half a million other smoky vehicles, it's a noisy place. In this crowded condition, this is where they have to be prepared to get food in, and one of the major roads in had the bridge bombed, and that begins to create these problems—and whether or not they can provide food and so forth for three million people. They have to move everything from the south up, after being cut-off from the north.

Coming down to into Saigon itself, we have the so-called University of Saigon, and I say so-called because from my point of view is not a university—it is a collection of totally disconnected colleges. You have all of the colleges that are expected of a major university except they have no relationship to each other at all. It was the University of Hanoi, it moved down in 1955 after the partition, and almost all of the faculty chose to move down to Saigon, but there was no physical space for them to provide campus or facilities so they have a Rector in one place, a Medical College off in another place, a Law College in another place, a Pharmacy College in another place, a Dentistry College, Letters, Science, Pedagogy and so on—it is just scattered all over this community. The faculties have grown so independent of each other that really they don't see each other as part of “a” university. And other than on paper, I don't believe that the University of Saigon exists, and this is a very real problem, in that here is the greatest entrenchment of the old French Academy system—very few professors, and the professors have absolute and complete control of the situation.

Now that situation of the old Academy can and does work in some parts of the world, like the version used in Germany. But, it is dependent on the fact the professors have to be dedicated, they have to be dedicated to doing some teaching, and you get in this controlled situation where professors were not dedicated to teach or in fact not prepared to teach they obviously got problems. A good many of these professors were appointed both by the Diem régime, and the

Thieu and Ky régimes, these professors were simply handed these jobs as kind of a political pay off. We are not prepared and they not about to give up the power easily since reform means that they would come out of the power of control.

When I say that they hold the power tightly, the man who was here a year ago last Christmas, Minister Tri, was here in Stevens Point for three weeks and went back, I think was relatively committed to a reorganization providing the University of Saigon with some semblance of structure, of courses and offerings so that the students had the opportunity to go to school. They just happened to drop a hand-grenade into his car and destroyed the man. The sources, as I understand it, I've been told, had nothing to do with the VC and that in fact this was carried out by probably by certain elements of the faculty who didn't want this change brought about. It isn't just the matter of having control of the university, it is a matter of the elite system and elite class the old French elite class and French colonial power you see simply extended their contact into these people and who set up their own elite class, and they don't want to give this up. There is great class disparity, one can go to their French styled athletic club and just see two different worlds between most of the rest of Saigon and a place like that. It is, essentially still a French culture. There are still 600-700 teachers in that country who deal only in French and will teach only in the French. It is my own personal belief that there may well be many of the university hierarchy who are in fact on a French payroll at this point; although on this I am not absolutely certain.

Also in the Saigon area is Van Hanh University, which is a Buddhist institution. Rector V. Chau is presiding over that institution, he has been able to get mostly a lay faculty, which is a little easier to get inside Saigon because this is the fact that this is where people tend to live at the moment and it is physically superior. This institution, well structured and has some real notions about how the university ought to operate, I think, and about how students ought to get certain opportunities to learn as opposed to Saigon University. When I say opportunities to learn, I'm

talking about the fact that Saigon will register for a course anyone who wants to register for. Consequently, there may be 3000 students registered for a course that meets in a room that normally holds 100 people. This just isn't a matter of concern, it just means you don't go to the course, but you still register. If you register for it, it is then a matter for the end of the year that you go take the exam, if you pass two of the exams you get your credits for the year for the entire course operation. If you flunk one of the two exams you don't get any credits; you haven't done anything all year long. So there is not break down by semester, by credits, by courses, or anything else. You simply study in whatever matter you can for a years time and present yourself for the examinations. And the fact that we [they] keep the passing level at somewhere around 25-35 percent, some are around 65-75 percent flunk every year in order that too many don't get through, so that you can't load up the elite system. Students have about had it with this, obviously it is one of those that can't break out of the mold. You find out who's passing and who isn't, whether it's based on knowledge or based on someone who is from the right family and so on. This is more prevalent and observable in the Saigon situation than anywhere else.

It is not operated this way in Van Hanh, the Buddhist University, most of the faculty I talked to seemed to be men who are well trained, have credentials in their disciplines, who are there to teach, and teaching is not particularly well paid, as such they paid a personal price for the belief that they have to build a good university. In Van Hanh's case their handling about 2,500 to 3,000 students. There able to do so, and one can see students in a situation, which would be a little more normal I think in terms of the sense of a European or American university. At least you can observe students' presence, you can observe library facilities, you can observe classroom facilities, you can observe teachers teaching, which one normally associates with universities. One cannot observe this anywhere in Saigon to any meaningful extent.

All the way south into the Mekong to Can Tho, which is the last of the five universities. It is the other, the third public university. It does have their Agriculture College, it does have

some Engineering, and it does again have Pedagogy. In the instance of the five universities they all offer teaching degrees or pedagogy, since that has been the main thrust of the USAID for the last seven years. In that period of time the enrollment has moved from about 18 percent of the school children in school to the current 1969 figure of about 83 percent. They have got about 83 percent of the youngsters in elementary/middle school situations, which means in the next five years we have got to get them into high schools and in secondary buildings, which is now up around the 20 percent enrolled. If all these students were being educated they would have to have a place to go, which means in about five years from now, universities are going to have to be built and expanded or produced.

This is what I think this nation [the United States] can do something for that, which is helping to produce universities. In effect, work to be prepared for this 83 percent of the youngsters who are in the elementary level now as they begin to move through education.

Our relationship there is essentially one that is personal. I think the personal debt is that the President of our University died there. That he was there to lead the team to study the educational situation and to see too if we could provide and suggest recommendations to the Vietnamese government as to what they should/could do to help education. So I think Albertson's death is a very real factor involved here for most of these men who are providing the leadership in the universities. They knew him, they talked with him, they worked with them, they are fully aware of what his recommendations and reports were. And I think the fact that all the faculty were here, all except the new rector up at Hue, have been here on this campus for approximately three weeks—along with most of the deans and most of the vice-presidents, so that I was able to renew the relationship as I did not have to start from scratch. I did not have to go through that first human spiral, as one tries to determine the other's moves or intents, meanings and communications, and so on. Most of this had already established a bridge, which made it a lot easier in terms of trying to find out from them, what do they really think they needed from us, what kind of human resource could we provide them.

The other factor is that a university like ours is a university more typical for the Vietnamese than larger universities across the United States. We tend to know only the universities that are very large and consequently prestigious and known for their graduate schools—but they are the exception since most of the universities are of about 4000 students, the average in this country. The big thing is that we are still a single factor, kind of physical plant. By that I mean, you look at buildings and say that is a Fine Arts building, this building is Physical Education, this building is Learning Resources, this building is a dormitory, and this building is the Student Center/Union, that kind of one at a time. If you go to a large institution, like Ann Arbor, Madison, or Berkeley, Harvard, with a wealth of cement, bricks, and asphalt, it is very difficult for them to understand, it is very impressive, but most difficult to understand what exactly it is. It is also, I think, impossible for these Vietnamese educators to look at that and somehow say, “I can reproduce that and build that in my lifetime.” Whereas, it is obvious when one walks by a campus like this [WSU-SP] that it is mostly within the decade of the 1960’s that the whole shooting match was developed. So it is something they know that they can do if they have the resources and if they have the time to build it.

Now, we agreed to a contract, which will allow us to use up to 30 percent of the consultants from Wisconsin State itself and the other 70 percent from around the rest the United States. Probably we will work through the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. Even though South Vietnam has two private institutions, they relate to their private institutions in a different way. They do involve them in the law, they do not have any separation of church and state to the kind of definitiveness that we are used to in this county. So that the law in higher education being technically developed at this time will include an arrangement whereby the governing board of the universities will have representation for this Catholic and this Buddhist University, as well as for the public universities. So they see their five universities as their total national educational resource, rather than three of them being the national resource and two of them being some sort of private adjunct, which would be more our type of cultural set.

This was a little hard for me to adjust to, it is just a key difference in terms of our cultural attitudes about these things and in terms, I suppose, of our political science concepts of the way things are structured. It was very hard for me, at first, to understand that private schools, especially church schools, were going to come under some kind of government board related to the government at all, this is a very different viewpoint as they see it.

The five universities and their situations are, I think at this point—and this is a brief review—the very south is Can Tho and very north is Hue. I think these are in very real trouble, in terms of human resource in terms of faculty, because they are so far and Hue is the most difficult as it is so far from the Capital. You understand we are talking about a country the size of Florida. It is a good long run from down in the Keys to all the way up to Tallahassee or say all the way to Pensacola. You are talking about 600 miles or so when one takes off on a flight. Even though they are providing that kind of transportation, it is a flight of some danger, as they could be shot down or come down for any number of reasons. It isn't just a matter of VC activity or North Vietnamese activity, it is just the matter of the nature of the terrain and its inhabitants—it is lion, tiger, and elephant country. One passes literally hundreds of miles of forestry and jungle, you become very condescend of the fact much of it is not practicably inhabitable or terrain that welcomes one.

I have noticed the presence of the Japanese in Can Tho, working in the agricultural area and particularly in the Forestry and Paper Schools. They're teaching private Japanese language courses, and there seems to be a greater move on the part of Japan to get influence in this part of the world. I think they will probably be much more successful in Vietnam than they are in the Philippines, because in the Philippines they have this residue, even yet, of the harsh occupational treatment which they gave to the Philippines because the Philippines resisted the Japanese invasion and occupation. The Vietnamese did not resist the Japanese occupation and thus were not given the same kind of harsh treatment; so the relationship is not the negative one that one would find up in Malaya or the Philippines or in China itself, as related to the Japanese

occupational forces. So that this looks to be a place where Japan can begin to move out in Asia, and they are moving in almost all directions in Asia. In some respects they may achieve what they set out in 1931 to do militarily, they may achieve economically and educationally in very different means and I think in a much greater efficiency.

The Germans were up in Hue, helping to develop the technical school. After the Tet offensive they pulled out, because of the physical insecurity of Hue. Hue being as close as it is to the DMZ and the nature of the front itself, so that with little ease a guerilla force to move in and strike and move back out. So the Germans finally decided they were not going to continue to put German nationals/German educators in there to help them with the technical school development. That is going foul right now, as we are not putting technical school or industrial arts school help in. If that becomes part of our contract and mission, this is a place that Stout State obviously can be of value because they have the kinds of personal and resources necessary to help people develop that kind of capability.

Saigon, I will just say one last thing about, the danger of Saigon University, in my opinion, at this point is that it carries all of the prestige and weight. It has of the good faculty in great numbers, although some of them do fly to Dalat, Hue, etc. The danger there, I think, is that the basic whole French system might simply set in because they tend by definition be the one that others will follow, when in truth—I don't think they have anywhere near the kind of structure, sophistication or understanding of an educational system to help them achieve the very goals of their nation. On that basis, Saigon and the University could pose a problem. So it is either a matter of helping those who wish to reform the Saigon University situation or, in my own opinion, to bypass it and create some other universities in Saigon and simply do so on a competitive basis. The students would go where they get the best education, it's just that simple. In fact, I think Saigon University will come apart at the seams, because it will simply drop back to an elitist academy with those who see it a the last vestige of French Colonial power.

I didn't talk to groups of students—let me move to students. I talked to student leaders in each case—in each institution. In one case, the administration was present so I wasn't too sure how deep my discussion went. In the case of Saigon, I had to set up my own time to get to talk to student leadership. The leadership that I talked to, all of them have been in jail for some period of time, put there by the Ky or the Thieu regimes, for student activities. The Thieu government was obviously aware of my meeting with student leadership, as I realized when/or before I left the country and had my final meeting with the Minister of Education and then with President Thieu himself. In the course of President Thieu's discussion and conversation, it was clear to me that he knew that I had met student leaders and other than through or by some kind of surveillance I can't image how he knew or by what means. That is conjecture on my part, but I really don't know since this was set up totally by myself and we met in a private situation through a young embassy coordinator who I know and who was very helpful in this because he has a relationship with student leadership.

The students are aware of the kind of college choice they are looking at in 1980-1985. They have seen the experiences between the Diem government, to Ky, to Thieu, versus the Hanoi situation. They have mixed feelings about this, as to which situation that may provide the best one on the list that can ultimately get some kind of self-determination as they assume the leadership of that country. From their point of view it is strictly a matter of a choice of a lesser of two evils. Some characterizations here not necessarily of the positives of the Hanoi government versus the negatives of the Thieu government I did not find with any of these student leaders. They picked them both to be negative, in nice colored strips and in no uncertain terms. The question is which one they think they can operate the best under, in terms of trying to break out of that mode. In other words, which one can they trade off in terms of certain prerogatives and liberties as that the country attempts to move toward self-government and self-determination?

They are worried about the Americans as an occupying force. I have a little less to worry about Americans in the sense that they have a notion that Americans tend to go back to the

mother country with great regularity. Americans do not seem to be comfortable outside of North America, by comparison to British and French, Portuguese who have been staying from generation after generation. At least this is their feeling in the matter, but you have got to understand that this country has been occupied for a thousand years. It has been in some respects for greater and the non-populist, at least this is the students' description. It is very difficult to get the broad range group of people directed to a future, at least in terms of dealing with any governmental force or any occupying force. This is something they have grown up with, lived with, and it is almost an occupied mentality that this is the way things always were, "somebody else has been stomping around in my rice paddy, and I need to replant and replant it." They see an American uniform that is different from previous uniform which was French and that was different from the previous uniform which was Japanese and that was different from the previous uniform that was French again and that was different from the previous uniform, which was Chinese. So they see it within this menu and the whole question is: "To what extent is American involvement evolved to an occupying force?"

In fact, I am sure that the key way to destroy any real development say in education would be to Americanize it, to tie it to this country. Because, student leadership has to be careful it doesn't get caste as being pro-American. Some political leadership has to be very careful as to how pro-American it is. It wasn't just sensing this, we talked very bluntly and directly about this once they opened up and decided to take a chance about talking what they wanted—they did not want to go back to jail again if Mr. Thieu decides that they are dangerous to the overthrow of the government. In fact, they have a problem with Ky and the military police.

The student leadership varies around Vietnam outside of Saigon. I see most of the political activism in Saigon. Student leadership at Hue has now been reflected in what I think one finds in Hue, a very anti-Hanoi group, but that is not to be construed as a pro-Saigon group. At this point, they are gyrating toward Saigon and Saigon government only because of the Tet offensive and the string of the atrocities, which covered so many families, and the viciousness of

them. Because, frankly Hue is not that far from Hanoi and they tend to relate to the Chinese people and are concerned that Saigon is going to forget about them or maybe trade them off tomorrow—making a deal with Hanoi saying we will quit the whole business and you get all of your forces out and stop all this and we draw a new line—we will give you Hue. That rumor persists and some students, in fact, brought that up again, just brokering the possibilities, they are going to be careful how far they commit one way or the other out of fear they may find out some morning that there has been a new line drawn and they are now on the other side of the line, and they have to quickly change their flag or be in big trouble.

So it is a very touchy situation as far as they are concerned. But, the Tet offensive in which I suspect from some people's view was a giant flop and military error on part of Hanoi and VC forces, resulted in an anti-Hanoi attitude that has set in and exists among the faculty. Because, in Saigon they are not very trustful with Hue; they don't provide them with much help. Hue has all of the basing for a West Berlin/East Berlin kind of arrangement, if they wanted to pour the resource in there they could have by now built a beautiful university and that was proposed at one time, saying here is an example of what we are doing. But, frankly they are afraid of pouring it in there because they figure about the time they pour it in then they will be redrawing the line and Hue will be part of North Vietnam. At least this was expressed by some student leaders and by some of the faculty, and I sense in talking with some government officials there is this tendency to forget almost that Hue is up there somewhere and that they have a relationship to them. That is a very real kind of division.

I am now at a point, while I was there, that we were to question and to look at the determination of some of the things that they are going to do with military bases—U.S. military bases. Because they will soon be in the process of either phasing them out or turning them over to the Vietnamese military, at least they are at the question of: "What do we do with this physical compound?" Some of these are of pretty good size, and as we reduce forces they are going to have such physical resources available to them. My own proposal, and I have not really gotten all

of these in final form that I will be making to the department of defense, but essentially my own proposal will be to allow those bases to be converted to universities and thus give up military bases to start new universities. This is where I think the USAID is needed and can supply some of the human resource, some of the faculty necessary to go over there and teach until such time they can create Vietnamese faculty.

So in effect, the basic plan would be for the USAID to move in to take the base. I looked at one just northeast of Saigon, take a base such as this and when the U.S. deactivates it have the USAID and Vietnamese Ministry of Education use it, instead of just turning it over to the Vietnamese government because if they were to do that I would gather it would go to Vietnamese military and their defense establishment, as if they decide it is going to be an army base that is what it is going to be.

The educational establishment does not have enough political clout or just is not even involved in this determination. But, if this is added to an USAID contract this could be done and in effect create a Vietnamese University Graduate School, so that we stop putting money into sending the Vietnamese nationals all over this country to be educated or to Europe—most of whom do not go home. Even when we insist that they leave here, instead of going home they go to Paris and Europe and not return to the nation, which needs them so badly. I think it would be to their advantage if they were trained over there and I think too we could get the faculty from this country to go over there and help educate them. In many respects some of my own graduate students who would not consider going over there with an M-16 at all, would go over there on the basis of going in as a professor, as a teacher to help provide a new cadre of educational leadership for Vietnamese Universities. Because, I don't think anything is going to change in those universities unless there is a new group of young faculty who are prepared, who are trained in a discipline, and who understand the necessity of being educated in order to provide the education for this next generation.

The various student leadership who would not come to this country to study on a bet because of this business of dealing with American occupied force and they will not relate that way, and so they would never accept any kind of scholarship that takes them over here to study and go back. On the other hand, they would move into such a university inside their own country, particularly that close to Saigon—at least that was their indication, if they could be assured of getting a reasonable education as opposed to what is happening to them now where they are not sure they are getting any education at all.

One of the fellows who had been arrested three times had also flunked three times, and I gathered this from the young Embassy officer I was talking with and some of the students with him and my own assessment. I realized in this short conversation this was really an exceptionally bright man, about age 25-26, it seemed quite unreasonable to me that others had determined his fate. When it becomes time to put the grades on, he flunks and that is the end of that. It is that kind of situation that I think is explosive.

I did get a chance to talk to President Thieu directly about that, insisting that we look to 1980-1985, and if that if they do go in the situation militarily now, in 1970's, then it will not be worth it from 1980 if they have not gotten the new leadership that says this is a new nation and want to provide a move to self-determination, because they can possibly win in the 1970's and lose ultimately the whole ship in the 1980's anyway. It may not affect Mr. Thieu, since he may not even be around, but my own reaction is at least he sees what the problem is and within certain parameters and limits, he will go along with this notion of expanding education on a broader base, getting rid of the elite kind of concept.

The last point that I will make is this and this is very simple. In the simplified form, I think there has been a cabinet coalition in this country, which in the first century of our existence was essentially internal, our interior base of agriculture so the State Department, which has always ascended had been in coalition with those to build this country internally. But, in the second century, close to the 1880's, we see a new kind of coalition with the Department of War

and Department of Navy, as we become an externally orientated nation. That is true right up until today. So that the key coalition is obviously Defense and State, and Defense becomes the key instrument of foreign policy for our State Department.

We are about to go into a third century, so that on a sort of grand scale we see this kind of tact that can be sold that this is the route to go, get off the military kick and we go the educational route. The new coalition could be State and Education, and that as Education builds the new relationship with the State Department it becomes our external initiative and not the military and defense mission. Increasingly that is what we are doing, that is what I was looking at and I am now in the process of trying to find consultants in these various fields. We have selected from the various universities what it is they think they need; what kind of help. We are in the process now of asking people if as early as April 15<sup>th</sup>, will they go for 60 days, go to all five universities, spend in the neighborhood of 2 weeks at each one, and help them to meet their needs. In some cases it is guidance and counseling, and testing, admission procedures, registration, it just about covers the gamut, everything one would need to get a university started and underway. This is what we are looking for now, this is what we are calling around the country for now, to get in people from institutions that are more like the five universities there in South Vietnam now.

OK, now, any questions?

**(Question) I just want to thank you for your earlier explanation of imperialism.**

Yes, Dennis.

**(Question) I would like to know what relationship, if any, your programs in the Vietnamese education are related to the SIU program, which is also, I believe, a result of a contract with the USAID and the Vietnamese.**

No, yes it is with AID, I think, I am not sure, I assume so. SIU, through the offices of Senator Dirkson, got funds from the United States Government, I assume through the AID, to build on their campus a million dollar center for Vietnamese study. I do not know to what extent that is going to help that nation, to have that built at Southern Illinois University, in Carbondale. Southern Illinois does have a relationship in Vietnam, but it is not an official one at this point and

they operate pretty much on a freelance sort of arrangement. But, it is not related to what we are attempting to do, at least as far as I can yet see. I will call a meeting with all institutions that are attempting to aid education over there, so I will have to include SIU whether they are on official contract or not, because we would like to know what they are doing. Florida State, for example, at Tallahassee is working with agriculture. We are working with higher education. Ohio University, at Athens, is working with secondary education. I want to find out what everyone is doing.

**(Question) I understand or thought that representatives from SIU had already been up there, at least a couple of times. Could you tell me if that is true, first of all? Secondly...**

Who is here that knows? Dick what about the representative from SIU? Dr. Wach was here by invitation of the Vietnam Seminar, on February 7<sup>th</sup>. This was because he was a former Embassy officer, with the Embassy of Vietnam in Washington D.C. He went to SIU just last October.

He was cultural attaché in the embassy, and SIU when they got this million dollar grant then they hired Dr. Wach from out of the embassy to become a professor. Essentially that Center is to teach American's about Vietnam, as I understand it, but that is about as inform as I am about it, I have not had the time to chase what SIU is doing. But, I do not see their presence over there as particularly important or as trying to help the Vietnamese. I do not see their presence over there particularly helping at this point in attempting to provide the Vietnamese with whatever their requests are in education.

**(Question) I am just wondering whether it's realistic to expect a continued American influence in education once the military is removed? Don't you think the Vietnamese will have a reaction or resentment against us and throw us out without our military?**

I think it is a very real possibility, no question about it. Some people question whether we ought to be doing anything on the basis of what many have projected later. I guess it is my own personal philosophy in education that as long as they are educators there, as long as they asked for certain help, which we are capable for providing them, and as long as we are in a position to provide, we ought to do it! In fact, I do not think it should be on a strings tied basis,

“that unless you are going to stay friendly,” I have not felt that was appropriate in economic aid, so I would not feel that was appropriate in educational aid. But, you are quite right, there are a lot of people who say, if this doesn’t have enough strings on it we should not do it. That is one way to look at that, and I assumed if we are improving education in part of the world that is a positive goal. Everybody might not agree with that, but that just happens to be my personal philosophy.

Anything else?

Thank you.

**TRANSCRIPTIONS OF AUTHORS INTERVIEWS****Lee Sherman Dreyfus, President/Chancellor of WSU-SP/UWSP and  
Governor of Wisconsin, (August, 2000)**

**Tom Reich: Thank you, Governor Dreyfus, for meeting with me. Firstly, is it all right with you that I tape this interview and incorporate this material into my thesis, and by doing so make the information available for others to review and use for educational purposes?**

Governor Dreyfus: Yes. I am so pleased that you have chosen this topic as your thesis project and are developing a history of the contract. I wanted to be the first one you talked to, especially before you meet with Bud Eagon. He is so modest.

**First, could you share some background information with me and tell me about your involvement with the Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point (WSU-SP)/United States Agency for International Development (USAID) contract in higher education?**

The contract came hear under James Albertson. Albertson was leading a team to survey the needs in South Vietnam. Harry Bangsberg was on that team. Harry had been in the state office building for the State University System. He, at the time of his death when the plane went down, was at the Bemidji State University. Robert LaFollette, a relative of the LaFollette family of Wisconsin and Washington D.C., was with USAID. A man named Wall from Wisconsin State-River Falls and three others were all part of the team and went down in the plane crash.

Finally, on that plane crash, my personal opinion is that Jim Albertson ordered that plane into the air and didn't realize it [the dangerous conditions.] In fact, I brought about a change in defense department policies with Melvin Laird as a result of that crash. Because, my own experience is when you travel, you travel as a GS-18. That's a very high rank – like a lieutenant general. There were a lot of general officers traveling around in Vietnam out of uniform who were there as command people and they did not want to get them mixed up, so they had a policy that these general officers who had other functions, like a friend of mine who was the economic development guy—Colonel Wickham—later became United Nations chief in Korea, often traveled in civilian clothes so these young pilots who were piloting the Air America planes didn't

know always who they flying, they knew with me as I was just too fat and out of shape that they didn't mistake me for a general officer.

Jim Albertson was not, he was a very tall and lean guy and young enough that they could assume that he was traveling the equivalent of a brigadier or a major general. They were caught in a heavy storm and fog and so on at Da Nang. I was there, literally a year later. My guess is that he said, "it looks like it is clearing up, I think we will be able to go, why don't we go? I think we'd be able to make it now." I believe that some kind of phrase like that was uttered and the two youngsters who fly the plane, you know they would be 24 – 25 years old, as far as their concerned the man with the stuff on his shoulders is saying go. They put it in gear and took off. They didn't make the crest of Monkey Mountain. I literally flew over that site about a year later in a chopper and could see exactly where they went down, you could still see the scar where the plane did not quite make it. The fog would come up there so fast and dense, you could be looking at the mountain from Da Nang and by the time you got there it was fogged in, it would happen that rapidly. I was finally convinced, 'I bet Jim put that thing in the air, never realizing it, with his talk. You know it is a small plane. The defense department then made it clear that *no* plane was to take off unless they had a man in *uniform* of superior rank telling them to.

Let me explain to you the reason that I came here [WSU-SP] as president, I was professor [at UW Madison] and did not want to be a dean, vice president or any of that, that just was not goal of mine. I came here because of James Albertson. I was a consultant to the Wisconsin State University system for educational television, in building the state television network. That was the reason I was brought here back in '62 from Michigan to design the state TV network that now exists. I originally intended the studio to be here and to operate channel 20 off of the Rib Mountain. Now it is pretty well automated, Rib Mountain.

Albertson and I really got to be good friends. I got to know him really well in the state system, and a guy named Leonard Hass who was over at Wisconsin State University-Eau Claire, and a guy named Yarn Olsich down at Wisconsin State University-Platteville. Those three were

very interested in educational television and public television and as a result I dealt directly with them. On the other campuses, I dealt with people underneath them.

Well, when Jim died that really bothered me because I knew that somewhere the report they were working on, what was left of it, was going to be written up—probably by Bud Eagon, and put in a file down there at USAID offices, in the library in archives and that would be the end of it. And seven good men could have died for no good reason at all. The state university system had been pushing me to take a presidency, for all sorts of reasons that I won't get into. I kept on saying no. When Jim died in that March 1967, that changed the rules.

So, I then talked to them and they said, “well you have to get a credential in here by July 1st. I hemmed and hawed, and about the 30<sup>th</sup> of June my wife [Joyce] finally said, “look I heard you tell Gene McPhee you were going to turn your resume in, now you promised, at least turn it in and then just tell them no, you're not going to take the job.”

I did turn it in and they said, “that they had three openings, but the new one was in Stevens Point.” I said, “I am not interested in going to River Falls or Whitewater, but I would go to Stevens Point—with no intention to stay, but to carry out the USAID contract and get those universities built [in Vietnam.] So they understood when I came up here I did not intend to stay. When I left Madison I was a tenured full professor, and with my research I really intended to be back in three years. So I came here intentionally for three years. On that basis—that is what brought me here—and then in the process really got involved in the Vietnam thing.

My job in that contract, Mr. Reich, was essentially political and promotional. That is, I had to get through the political barriers, I met with President Thieu, I met with (Vice President Vinh), their people and all of the rectors.

Although, I think Bud Eagon met with all of the rectors, too, but he didn't get to meet with the president or vice president, because protocol required that none of those people should do that. At least, Asian protocol clearly required that if you are going to meet with the top man, you are the top man had better come, it is just that simple. In fact, because I met with Thieu, then

the rectors wanted to meet with my president—Lyndon Baines Johnson. They just assumed, now you met with ours, we get to meet with yours. Since Laird was my congressman and a leading congressman, he and Jerry Ford were running the Republican side of the House. He set up a meeting with LBJ. I have photographs of those meetings—again I was the only one with security clearance in the White House. I even tried to get Vice-President Coker in on the meeting; I did not have the clearance yet to get him in. So I did take all of the Vietnamese rectors from the five universities of the Republic of Vietnam.

One university that we had nothing to do with directly, either in promoting it or developing it, was the University of Saigon itself. So let me start there. Rector Day was in charge there, although he was here and we had some involvement, but I do not think he was taking any of our training, if you will, seriously. You see the whole basis was to bring those people on campus. One, to see how an American university operated, and you need to understand things like credits and majors, and being able to transfer, and building up course by course, that was not the basis of the old French university. You took a year, you took some exams, and if you passed them you go to the next year.

**Yes, I have examined the French system as part of my research into the history of higher education in Vietnam.**

It was the old French system; by the way the French system had already changed. The students practically burned the places down at the *Shari Von* in Paris and so on, because they got tired of this, you'd go year's work and you are told you need to take the whole year over. The French were well aware; because now they had so many foreign exchange students who talked with American, British and German students and found out that you could flunk a course, but you do not lose a year, and that brought the change about in France. The change never came to Vietnam; it was the old French system. The University of Saigon was faculty who left the University of Hanoi and jumped south when the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel decision was made. So they bought with them that old system. They were a loosely banded group. The university was not a place, it

was scattered all over Saigon in whatever building they could put it in. They operated like an independent sphere. Rector Dave Realey was at Saigon; I did not see him as a very interested academic or a driven academic. In my opinion, and that is where he and I related very well, he had a purely political social role. He carried the title—he was the rector in Saigon—but not compared to the other rectors, who were absolute academic administrators. So Saigon University was not really anything that this university that had a part in developing.

The other four, that's another matter. For example, the public university in Hue; now that rector I think you ought to try and chase. So let me give you his name, it is Chau, which I think is spelled Chau. Again ask Bud Eagon. But, the best way I could tell you to chase him is to write to Notre Dame.

**That's right, you mentioned him during our phone conversation.**

If I am correct, two or three years ago he retired as an assistant or associate dean I think of law, but I am not sure what it was maybe graduate studies or something, or write to Ted Hessler, no not Hessler, Ted...what is the name of the president? Ha, [Hessberg] I am getting old, he was there thirty-five years as president, I should know his name, a terrific figure, I had lunch with him about four years ago down there. At any rate, Rector Chau became an assistant or associate dean at Notre Dame. I think he is probably one you could get too, at least to get some input from somebody from the other side, who is doing all the work. To see if they even remember to what extent they were helped by anything that was done by Stevens Point and by people particularly like Eagon and some others. But I think he is reachable, if he is still alive and he probably is. He was the rector up at the DMZ, at Hue. He was also head of the Anticommunist League up there. When I had dinner with him one night, at his place, it bothered me a little that there was no security and I mentioned this to him. You know we were just not that far from North Vietnam, and I mentioned this to him and he said, even though he was Christian and Catholic he still had that Buddhist philosophy, he said: "Oh, I could have all kinds of security and it would not change a thing. If they decide that I am not going to exist any further, I am not

going to exist, it is just going to happen.” So I ate my soup a little more rapidly, I was glad to get out of there.

In fact, I got a little jumpy getting out of there because my helicopter did not arrive in time at the field where they were supposed to pick me up and the police, what they called the Mickey Mouse—they had white shirts and cute white hats—they split. I mean they were not going to stand around with me in an open field at ten o’clock at night! The chopper wasn’t there, that was it! Then I was not sure what to do and my driver, I knew was jumpy, but then we heard the chopper. It came and I was on and we were gone! Because, they had VC (Viet Cong) action, in fact one time up at Hue I did have a gun grenade take off a chunk of the side of our building. Although the only real danger I was in was from the two guys from Ohio State who had a couple of these Ethica grease guns, and the next morning I find one on the commode and the chamber was open.

**They were on an educational mission, also?**

Yes. They didn’t know, so they got these machine guns, those are 45 caliber you know, and their a little trigger happy, and they were inside in the dark looking outside because the civilians, former Vietnam veterans who guard you, they took off, the minute this action started. The Vietnam army, the ARVN turned out on patrol, a lot of firing was going on, no one got hit and no one got shot, so I do not know what they were firing at. Apparently one was a scare tactic and the return was a counter scare tactic. But, I was not too happy. I had the dumbest reaction, because Joyce didn’t want me to go over there since Albertson had died over there. I am sitting there, thinking god if the VC captured me Joyce is really going to be mad. Ha, Ha, Ha! When I think of that now, that was my big concern boy is she going to be mad—as I am down on the deck in my room.

**How many trips did you make to Vietnam? Did you go there twice?**

I went there three times. Once was really under the auspices of the U.S. Army. I traveled with the secretary of defense.

**Yes, I have read your report that you prepared for the defense department and Secretary Froehlke, in regards to the transferring American military facilities to the Vietnamese for educational use.**

Right, because I had Secretary Froehlke right there, otherwise the Vietnamese Army would grab everything. I was able, in fact, to move two mobile surgical units, that's big expensive equipment, to the Medical College and the hospital group. Also, one at the Zima compound up in Hue, named after a kid from in Grand Rapids, Michigan and died there—Joe Zima, that compound we secured for the university as part of its development. I have not the slightest idea if it is still there or isn't.

You had Rector Chau up there, Venerable Chau, same name, but he was a Buddhist priest. He wore the orange saffron, he was quite a figure here in Stevens Point, especially as when he was here in the cold with his sandals, baldhead and saffron gown, and I hope he had long underwear underneath it. He developed Van Hanh University, and that is just northwest of Saigon.

Then Father Lup and Father Lee are important, both of who were here, Venerable Chau was here, Rector Chau was here. Father Lup and Father Lee were here, on campus in Stevens Point. Lup and Lee, Father Lup I believe was the older one and Father Lee the younger; they had the Catholic University, which was out in Dalat in the Mountain yard area, over in the central highlands.

Then Rector Anh was down in the Mekong, at Can Tho. Now, frankly, unfortunately, there was a belief that there were some Vietnamese VC were in the university building or something and unfortunately our Air Force de-built a big chunk of it, just as we were pulling out.

**In Can Tho?**

Yes! Now I have a picture with LBJ in the Cabinet Room, where they first met with the press, with all of us there—all the rectors, the president, and myself and Doug Cater who was the president's assistant. I don't know if you are going to need any photographs, I also have a picture of myself with President Thieu, I finally found that, but I didn't carry a camera.

The key person, in my opinion, here is Burdette Eagon. He absolutely directed and carried the load, and you are going to have to pump-prime Eagon. Because Eagan is a very self-effacing man, he just is not a type who would take a bow for anything. I mean everybody else did everything, did it all. So you are going to have to, if you are going to do this research, you are going to have to pull out of him really all the things that he did because he tends not to take credit for things, it just Bud's nature. You're not going to meet a better soul in your life.

My assistant Vickerstaff was over there, I am not sure if he can be of any value to you at all, he's up in Minocqua-Woodruff. He is a security broker for Dean Witter, but Bud can tell you if he can be of some value. Bud will know anybody else who put in any time over there. We then hired people not of this university for an example we have the president of the University of Alaska, I think Fairbanks—Bud will know, I am sure. A guy named Wood or Robert Woods, a dead ringer for Fred Harrington. Just shocked me! I looked at him when I first met him, and I think I met him in Vietnam, maybe here, or maybe in Washington, but he looked like President Harrington in Madison, a huge tall guy and Bob may still be alive. There was a fellow that I did not think was very good at all from Evansville, Indiana, and that's probably why I can't remember his name, but he just didn't understand what I was doing, trying to motivate those people to really move this thing—that was my task. I wasn't there to design it, that is what Bud Eagon and the people here would do. We did bring them on campus.

Now why Stevens Point? I think you may at some point have to put a rationale, by the way that is the question LBJ ask me. In my first meeting with President Johnson he absolutely assaulted me verbally with language that I hadn't heard since I was discharged from the United

States Navy in 1946. I mean he had a sailor's foul mouth like I couldn't believe it, I never heard my father talk that way, I never talked that way—I did in the service, it was my big fear when I was discharged as a twenty-year-old I would slip and say something at home—what happened was that LBJ noticed me sitting there, and I sat off to the side really until after the press got out. Then we all backed off so that the rectors could be right there with him and talk with him and he with them. That's the way I thought it should be, otherwise, I was not about to monopolize it. If I stood there I knew that it might be a problem. In fact, I had troubles getting Herman Wells, the old Uncle Herman from Indiana to come aside and just let the rectors be there.

At any rate, LBJ on his way back to the Oval Office, which is right adjacent to the Cabinet Room, and I am sitting down on the end in one of the chairs, he came over and I stood up. LBJ literally walks right up to you, I mean there is not 10 inches between you, apparently it was a tactic he started as a young man, and it is really quite intimidating, you got this guy right on top of you, in my case I was 5'10 ½, I am looking up at this 6'3" guy, that's when he laces it into me. Although, oddly enough the first thing he asked me, he said, "are you with the Secret Service?" I said, "no sir, I am the president of Wisconsin State University, who has the USAID contract. "Oh," he said, "I thought you were kind of chubby for a Secret Service guy. And, I said, "no why would you think that?" He said, "Weren't you just here a couple of days ago?" I said, "Oh, yes sir, I was. You signed the bill to develop the corporation for Public Broadcasting, PBS and NPR, and I am also on the National Board of Educational Broadcasting. So we were here in the East Room when you signed that bill and created National Public Broadcasting."

That is why I tried to get Vice President Coker to go with the rectors, because I had just been in the White House two days before and I got off the plane in Mosinee and Bill Vickerstaff said, "get fresh underwear you are going right back," because Coker did not have security clearance. So I explained to him who I was and that's when he started to tell me about these blank, blank, blank, eastern Ivy League's and the big shots, and Harvard and Berkley, and where

are they? “Why didn’t they take this contract, what’s the matter isn’t there enough money in it?” And I said, “no, I think that was probably true, this isn’t a thing with a lot of money in it.” And he was railing about these big guys, but he said “I think that is terrific that an institution like yours especially a former teachers college, I understand, I am a graduate of a Normal School, a former teacher’s college.” Which I knew at the time anyway, Texas State, so he took some pride in the fact that that type of an institution was doing that.

But the other thing, I explained to him, the reason for Stevens Point’s involvement. It is that most of where we were by 1973-74, the contemporary building that was going here. I mean this university, while it is true that it started in 1894, it had only been a hand full of buildings, there was the Old Main, Nelson Hall, and what is now Delzell, and a piece of the Student Center, and the Science Building, everything else was down with the dorms. So all of this occurred in a very short period, which was a way of showing these rectors this can be done in a ten year period—you get a good decade, you can develop a flow blown university and build it and get the faculty. The other thing was this university for a visitor, is understandable. I showed them all the administrations in this layer, then next to it comes the various service agencies, and then next to that comes the academic buildings, next to that is open playing fields, and next to that you now got the dorms around and out on the side. All of which is really true; these are five layers. I did not tell him the reason I planned for the playing fields where they were is that with the student riots that I had experienced in Madison, I did not exactly want to have student dorms right next to the academic buildings. It saves a lot of strain and it did work pretty well. The only mistake they made is when they built our Field House and those squares that you see in the design in the cement—next time you look at them—that use to be all loose rocks and crack holes. I said, “you have got to be kidding, we have glass doors and you are putting stones out here. All we need is one student riot and we are going to replace all this, why stack the ammunition, cement those stones together,” which they did.

We also, I explained to the rectors, what we had done here as we built the academic core we didn't build any paving other than what was left of the city streets. We just tried to sand wherever. We watched where the students walked and then tried to figure out how we could work that in and it was Ray Speck that worked that into the design. Otherwise, they just kind of cross everything and you'd have to put up signs to stay off the grass, etc. The intention was to build this [Specht] Forum (Sundial.) Now it was intended to be larger, by the way, the Natural Resources Building was not going to be there. Which makes the Forum smaller, but I think it is quite nice as it is, especially once we built the mural. The Natural Science Building was to be over here where there is mostly a parking lot and where the Newman Center is, over on that side. But, I had two families that decided to hijack me on their houses, and I finally thought stick it in your ear, you got greedy, because they had suddenly doubled their price when we had gotten the rest of the land. I said, "We will build a parking lot around them." Which is what exactly happened, then they really screamed. When they came to see me I said I am not interested I don't want your property, if you want to put it your will and leave it to the University, lots of luck!" And then we moved the building plans in here.

But, those rectors and the deans who were here and some faculty, lead faculty, could in fact see how the university was structured. We could also, easily get them to understand how our registration worked at the time and what it meant, the credits and how that builds up as a record, and were not as computerized as we are now, which would have made it faster. They could actually see how the records that were kept, and we got a guy named Reich and here it is and there is everything he took, and especially if he took it in another university and not just in this state, but also anywhere in this country. Whereas that was never true in France, it was not true at the University of Saigon. I don't care what you took anywhere else, you either took it there or it didn't count. It was kind of an academic ego thing. So this really intrigued these people.

I said, “this is really what makes it possible for people in the non-wealthy class to go to school.” You can’t afford to go to school where they would not accept anything you took anywhere else, also if you change majors you go back to square one, as if you were an entering freshman. So the notion of transcripts, the notion of credits, the notion of grading those individually, and individually faculty doing that, and building up this thing until the faculty says you now have the transcript that says to us with 124 or 128 credits and with such and such a division and mixture, we will give you a Bachelor of Arts Degree, a Bachelor of Science Degree, we will give an Education Degree, or whatever. Then also the development of a graduate school, and since I said when I came here that there would never be a doctorate program but there would be masters—but only in departments that had strong undergraduate programs. That’s why Stevens Point, Stevens Point was understandable; those rectors wanted to go to Madison and some of those faculty, so I would take them down. And, they were well aware that I was a tenured professor at Madison at the university. So I would drive around that huge campus, there would be entire buildings I would not have the foggiest idea about, and they would say “what is this” and I would say “I don’t know, I have never been in that building.” It is such a huge complex, and if you stop and think there is no way other than Baschom Hill and the Agriculture campus and Engineering Campus, you have three areas that you would point out and that’s about it. It is just not understandable; it is a confusing mess.

This [WSU-SP] is understandable and they got so that within a week or two that they really understood what the university was and what each building was, the various segments and how things operated, and where the classes were and where the students were. And, that’s why it was Stevens Point; it was a perfect place to do it. One, it was understandable, and two, it had been done in a decade period of time. If you take that period when Albertson came on board to about 1973, in those ten years all of the basics had begun and the buildings had started to sprout.

Now, in Vietnam itself as I said my key role was one, to make the political connections, and there I had some real opposition. The key opposition was the state department. I had a problem with the state department. First of all, in their eyes, I was a Midwesterner, I have got a PhD from a social college down in Madison, I am not Ivy League, and I was the president of what was probably or what used to be a teachers college, not really a university. Ellsworth Bunker, typical eastern Brahman, and frankly they made a major contribution to this country, but they are elitists, absolute elitists! So he mixed with Rector Day and the Saigon people very well because they are elitists. They spoke each other's language. Ellsworth Bunker, who was our ambassador, and by the way at the time I think Bunker had to be older than I am now, but he was brought back to do that job because we had in fact, and now it is no longer theory, we helped literally with the assassination of the President Diem and getting his regime out of there, and so did Cardinal Spellman had a hand in that. I don't think that this is *National Inquirer* stuff—I think it is really there.

Then Thieu was brought in, and I think Thieu was terrific. My personal assessment of him is that he was a lot more democratic in his notions than Ellsworth Bunker, our ambassador, by a long shot. He was particularly interested in our GI Bill, and he and I spent a lot of time talking about that. He intended to see that his government provided education for Vietnamese veterans to begin to create an educated Vietnamese class, which the French has kept down. In fact, Thieu as a French Army Officer could never rise above the rank of captain because he was a Vietnamese. All field officers, field grade, were French. At any rate, Bunker and I really clashed I think not only because I was a Midwestern College president, but also he thought I was a little bit too visual, saying we are going to do this and that without clearing it with him. Well I did not think I had to clear it with him. I was getting a lot of support out of a guy names Daniel Parker, who also happened to be a Wisconsin ideal from Janesville the Parker Pen family. And Old

Uncle John Hannah, who had preceded him, absolutely saying, goes ahead ignore Bunker. John Hannah also would not have been acceptable to Ellsworth Bunker, no question about it.

### **And they were part of the USAID?**

He would have been the head of the USAID before Parker. He was the former president, he built Michigan State University, the old butter and egg man they called him—he built them through football, the same way Hessberg—Hessberg, not Hessler, built Notre Dame through football. But, Bunker had an assistant, he had a deputy ambassador named Berger—I don't know if your research will take you in connection with him, but he was a Wisconsin product from what they called an old Michael John Experimental College at Madison. That was kind of a wild liberal bunch anyway, sort of a Thoreau based Walden within the campus and the faculty had to live with the students that did not work too well, the faculty got damn tired because at 3:00 AM and a student wants to talk to you about something. But, Berger and I had good conversations. I could get to him easily, when I wanted to talk to him, and finally when I would put in a call to Bunker I would get a call back from Berger, Bunker would not—I was not at his level, no question in my mind. So I finally said the hell with it I am not going to waste my time, I would deal with Berger and some other people, because I couldn't really push Hoshol. The reason I couldn't is because Hoshol was a careerist and people like Bunker could hurt him as he headed toward retirement, I am well aware state department protocol is worse than the military. The big thing too, besides that is because my congressman became—when that happened two years later and my congressman is now secretary of defense and my neighbor here in Stevens Point is now secretary of the army—Bunker was well aware if I wanted to go somewhere I didn't take a USAID car, I called over to Saigon to Tan Son Nhut and they got a chopper for me and off I would go. So he knew I was popping around the country.

Just as a historian I wanted to go up and see Tu Duc's tomb, Bunker about went ballistic and rightly so, in that case he had a right to be angry with me because as it turned I just hadn't

realized what I set in motion, they had to move out three companies—or three regiments—of ARVN troops and a company of American troops out of Fu Bi Camp Eagle to secure the area because what I did not fully understand at the time was that the VC would know that this feather merchant college president who runs that program is coming for a tour of Tu Duc's tomb. They had that place cordoned off, also we had to travel on the ground in portions and that gets you jumpy anyway, which has a lot of security with you because you don't know who is going to step out in front of you, come around a turn and bang you have a grenade or something. I never did that again because it created problems, and I made a second mistake after touring Tu Duc's tomb, he was the last emperor or the Great Emperor, and that's also where Bo Dai was going to be buried when he died.

The other mistake was that when I decided to come back I didn't come back with the army chopper, I accepted the Minister of Education's offer to bring me back in his airplane which was an old DC 3 with a couple of chairs bolted in it. Bunker just did not want those kind of contacts at that kind of level, if anybody is going to talk to a minister or a vice president or a president it's going to be the embassy and it will probably be Bunker or somebody he says, and he just saw me as a loose cannon and maybe I was, in fairness to him, but I don't think so because of what happened with Thieu. I mentioned the gun grenade business that hit the side of our bunk and we got the whole place for about three hours secured in the dark.

That next afternoon, I had a meeting in Saigon at the Presidential Palace with President Thieu. By the way, when I go to the meeting my interpreter Miss Quynh-Hoa Nguyen, and Eagon would know her very well she is a good friend of his, boy it would be nifty if she could be located [*I located her, corresponded with her, and have transcribed her taped responses to my questionnaire*], she can't go with me, they said women can't go to the Presidential Palace. This caught me by surprise, I have a new interpreter and he's from State. In fact, nobody, including

Earl Hoshol, went with me. I had no one or anybody in Vietnam of our team that went with me to see Thieu!

When I went I was all alone except for a group of state department flacks, as I saw them, who are obviously there to watch in case I did something wrong. Thieu when I came in that afternoon right after that gun grenade he came to put his hand out and said, “good to see you again professor.” He said, “I understand you were in danger last night, we had some enemy action.” I said, “I don’t know if I was in danger, I was probably in more danger from the Ohio State civilians with those machine guns inside than I was from anything outside.” He kind of laughed, and then he got serious and he said: “You know I really wonder why do you come over here since the man before you with this program died? Why do come over here and endanger yourself to help us and to do this for us?” Now, the state department had, you know, a whole worked out answer for this kind of question. I gave a very good, if you will, self-centered answer. I said, “Because I believe that it is in the best interest of the United States of America, and that’s my interest and concern. I tell you; those state department guys kind of looked sideways at each other like oh my god what is he saying and President Thieu lit up like a Christmas tree. He said you and I are going to get along very well indeed.

At that point we sat down and I did not have a ten-minute meeting, I had about an hour and three-quarter meeting. I came out of there with two arêtes and three decrees—I had everything we wanted. That they had been—Earl Hoshol—had been trying to get through state department for over two years. Hoshol couldn’t believe it. I said, “It is going to get delivered.” He said, “Where is it going to get delivered?” I said, “can you deliver it to me directly—I am staying across from USAID 1.” He said, “it will be put personally into your hands,” and it was. That was my function. Frankly, I was running interference against state department. I am convinced to this day if those arêtes and decrees had been delivered to the state department,

Hoshol would have never seen them unless Bunker decided he was going to take care of this. It was that kind of ego nonsense.

At any rate, I think that relationship as it turned out—having the Froehlke and Laird backup—turned out to be very important to this project, as well as toward the end delivering things over to the educational run. Because, once it was clear to the military commanders, I am talking about American, that these educational things that were growing—especially in Hue and down in Can Tho and over in Dalat—that these were important to the Pentagon, not just the state department. In the military they preferred not to have anything to do with the state department, and in some cases couldn't give a rip what the state department thinks. But, once they knew it was important to the Pentagon then it became important to the commanders including General McCaffre, who was running the whole show, and General Dolman up in II Corps, maybe he was I Corps I can't remember he was a latter day replacement. That gave me access—the military colonel who was a frocked brigadier, that means he wasn't a brigadier yet but he had to wear the star because his ARVN counterpart was a general, a man named John Wickham, in economics and in economic development there—it gave us the ability to do what we were doing in the university and make him aware of it. Because, he was already convinced, I didn't have to sell him he was a pretty good academic, that the Vietnamese university system is what was going to drive—not just the investment—it was going take some people with knowledge in various areas and especially in stuff that is starting to come, remember it is the very beginning of the computer involvement and so on.

He understood the need for both entrepreneurs and the capital, he was a bright enough economist to understand that besides that you have to have an academic establishment turning out the kinds of people you need to run what the capital and entrepreneurs create. So he began to see what we were doing over in the state department as a third leg to his project. I think that was a very sound connection and maybe the only place in the world where they ever had that

connection between state and the military. By the way as an aside, Wickham helped again when I was slated to lead a business trip and tour into South Korea in 1980 or 1981...

**As governor of Wisconsin?**

Yes, as governor. When Park was president of South Korea and assassinated, they thought there might be a North Korean attack and they were worried about mines or tunnels underneath the DMZ, all kinds of rumors, and we were on huge Red Alert. So the state department suggested or in effect told me that it was not a good time for my trip. General Wickham was now in Korea and he arranged things so that the trip went on as scheduled. He was really very helpful and a good friend, insuring that my group had a very successful trip. [*...first tape ends...interview continues...*]

Thieu did not buy the notion of student government. He didn't want a student government. He said the students are too easily used by the enemy, they can be easily put out and become kind of a front screen for what becomes a student protest eventually turns into a military action. I thought that probably was true, who was I to argue. I realized that some people with very nefarious goals in line had used to student protest in Madison as a smoke screen and eventually killed a researcher and bombed a building and so on just before I left there and came here to Stevens Point. So I didn't push it, because I was a firm believer in student government. I told him how successful ours was and that the students actually held the hearings, decided on the distribution of the money on my campus.

In fact, before we pulled out of there I was able to tell him that that was now a law in the state of Wisconsin for all of our universities—that students have a legal involvement in such things and that it would be good to do in Vietnam. Now, in part remember too that Thieu was also a product of the old French system. Remember, students are on the low end of the rung of the ladder, faculty hardly talked to them—when you come into their lectures, learn or don't learn, I don't care what you do, drop dead—it is just a different thing. But, the new faculty, and

understand we were getting a lot of people from Vietnam now who were coming up with PhD's out of this country and understood the system and understood the relationship with students. While Thieu, I think, was very interested in doing something for veterans on GI Bill, he was not willing to incorporate anything that I was proposing from the four universities in Vietnam to develop a student government. And I backed off and I did understand that.

I remember too, speaking of my problems dealing with the state department, Ellsworth Bunker had put all of these flacks around me for my meeting with Thieu; they did the same thing with the meeting with the vice president. Finally as I am about to leave the country—I think it was the time I was there for the longest period—I am about to leave and we are having a final meeting at this long table with lots of people but at least 8 of them that are with me are state department people, I did have Earl Hoshol with me at this final meeting, but he is the only one—oh, and Quynh-Hoa Nguyen was there sitting behind me as the interpreter in case we needed her. But with (*Vice President Vinh*) we really didn't need an interpreter. Vice President Vinh is sitting right across from me and then you have people strung out and we go through all of these different things that we are going to do and finally agreed on, and what I'm going to see about, and what funds to distribute for this and this and this, and most of the political problems. By that time they knew what President Thieu had already authorized and that was good because I wanted these state department guys to hear it in their ears that this was going to happen. But, that is when I finally decided to ask for the meeting since I had gone to Bunker saying “that these people want to come to the United States and you can send them and they want to meet with the President and I'll be glad to accompany or whoever from the state department down there”—and Bunker just said, “nope, it couldn't be done.” When he found out that I set it up through Congressman Laird that really hacked him.

It happened again when I wanted to see Thieu before I left. That is what that one was about at that last meeting. I am going to leave in a matter of three or four days and I said, “you

wanted to see my president and I have set this up before I leave, now I need to see yours before I leave. Can you set that up?" Well these guys about froze like puppets because Bunker had said no. I said, "Rector Vinh is it possible that you could arrange a meeting for me with your President Thieu before I leave?" "Oh no problem at all, I will get to it right away and I will check with Mr. Hoshol." So we walked out of there and I knew I am going to see Thieu and Bunker is absolutely livid.

So he sent for me. Now to come over, I don't at about 1:30, it is on the paper as 13:30, and you land on top of the embassy that is the way you go in on a chopper. So I go over to what they call Red Ball patch, which is where I always went to get a helicopter at Ton Son Nhut Field. Only I get over there at one o'clock or something, I finish lunch and I am over there early. So I walk into the Officers Lounge and a couple of youngsters were sitting there and I said, "Are any of you going to be driving me to the embassy?" Two of the kids say "yeah, yeah we're the one's." I said, "Good are you free now, have you eaten lunch?" They said, "yeah we've already eaten, do you want to go now?" I said, "yep." So we get in and up we go, so we're up in the air. They say, "So where do you want to go?" I said, "I beg your pardon." "Where do you want to go?" I said, "To the embassy, I am going to see the ambassador."

"Oh, no sir, we are to land there at 13:34, if we come in there at something like 13:33 or 13:35, those Marines will shoot us down." I said, "are you serious?" They said, "We are dead serious!" We cannot come within, I don't know—several hundred feet of the air space—until such and such a time. So now we are in the air we've got 20 to 25 minutes, and I said, "Well, I suppose we better go back." They said, "Unless you want to see Saigon?" I said, "yeah I never really have had a chance to see it from the air." So they're flying me all around. In the process we come over a lot of the roofs that have gardens and so on, but in one area here are a couple of gals obviously Caucasian, probably American nurses or aid workers or whatever, but they are sunbathing and they are in the nude. I said, "Did you see that?" "Oh, yeah!" Then they got out a

map that was so fold worn it was ready to fall apart. It has things circled on it. “Let’s see if those two are out on so and so.” They fly over to show me a couple of other nude sunbathing girls that have masks on their eyes for the sun and they just wave their hand—you know, buzz off.

I couldn’t believe it. I thought, these kids what are they going to do when they get home, what are they going to do that would be comparable to having a fun machine like that thing, and here they had an extra 20 minutes to zip around, by the time they took to the embassy even Bunker couldn’t have made me mad. But, sure enough, when we landed we landed at whatever time they had said and if I remember it was like 13:34. I am telling you, we landed at 13:34 on top of that embassy. A couple of Marines grabbed me and moved me. A very interesting experience!

Well is there anything you want to ask? I can’t think of other people that I think you ought to talk to. I hope you can reach Rector Chau. Notre Dame has got to know where is and he may even still live there in South Bend. That is an easy drive, if you can go down and see him. I never forget he literally had me out to dinner at his house in Hue with no security. I never forgot that, I didn’t eat very easily with no security whatsoever.

**I am just thinking, near the latter stages of the program, was the phasing out of things determined as part of the Vietnamization process? Or by the turning of the war? Did you actually have any sense of the coming defeat or failure for either the project or the war itself?**

From the military side the people I was talking with on a non-publication basis were telling me that they thought the Vietnamese would hold if the supplies, munitions, and money continued to come in to the ARVN. They really thought that the Vietnamization of the war, which was a Laird project, was going to hold.

But, what happened of course is that Laird came out and was replaced; we not only withdrew our troops we withdrew our support. The money came out of there. I think when that happened we in effect told the North go ahead, and in effect told the Southern leadership you

guys are out and on your own. To this day Thieu is a bitter man, he no longer says anything positive about American help in trying to save that insipient democracy. He said they'd been better off without help, because our help brought in the Russian support of the North and in effect made a lot of people lose faith. They said Americans have just replaced the French; it was an easy propaganda ploy and one that Thieu had to put up with. It would be nice if you could reach Thieu by mail in London and find out where he is located. *Who's Who in the World* may know, if you look it up—I should look that up I've got a copy, since they put me in it and I spent all the money to satisfy the ego of myself and my wife. Check over in the library for the latest issue, Thieu might be in 1999 issue, it would be nice if you could reach him.

But, you are right the argument was that we said: "Oh no, it is the Vietnamization that is all set." It wasn't there without us supplying their military; they were dead in the water. When that happened, just the fact that we pulled out, I think, was visually of concern to a lot of people who had committed themselves to us. I can give you an example of how I reacted to it. When we pulled out and the North took over in 1975, from that point on I never ever communicated with any of the people with whom I had dealt with and whom I knew and had their addresses in Vietnam. Because, I was afraid of what a letter from me might do to them. To this day I feel badly about that.

I am thinking about going to Vietnam this next year, (*Mike Greve?*), former president of the regents when I was a regent he was a captain who had three tours there, he is an Academy graduate. Mike and I may go over because there are things.

Well I'll tell you an interesting sidelight that didn't happen, and I thought I had it all locked with Mel Laird and with John Chaffee, who was secretary of the navy, and I got shot down by a couple four-stripe captain engineers. The Navy was moving to decommission carriers, some carriers from World War II, small carriers—really what they called jeep carriers. I wanted one because rather than get the scrap, and I think they could get a few million dollars for the

scrap, I wanted them to bring that ship up the river from the harbor into Saigon and dock it and let it literally settle into the mud and then secure it permanently to the dock. It had its own source of electricity, air, water producing capacity; you name it. Strip out the military armament, make the upper deck—just cover it with typical army Quonset stuff which we had plenty of and that we could have done that—create a housing on that flight deck. Turn the entire thing's lower area, and you have every thing including a gym if you needed it, into the classrooms and everything for what I figured by the time I got through with the planning, and I really worked with some of the people I knew in vocational technical education, to create a 15 – 17 thousand student vocational technical school, and the Wisconsin State University-Stout had the vocational education USAID contract.

So I knew we had the university connection to do that also in Wisconsin. Chaffee was excited, Laird was excited, from my point of view as a communicationist and propagandist I had presented to the Naval chief-of-staff and to the Pentagon staff, I said look this thing would sit there permanently as an absolute Buddhist symbol of an instrument of violence that through education becomes an instrument of peace. Ninety per cent of the Vietnamese were Buddhist, I said that symbolism wouldn't be lost on them. No matter what happens in Saigon, hereafter you can't talk about Saigon without the image of that huge carrier right there downtown. A couple of engineers finally convinced them (the Pentagon and the Navy) that it was built to be underway, that it really wouldn't work, and you shouldn't do this, and unfortunately everything else was winding down. If we were still going full bore, if I made that proposal a year earlier, and if that carrier would have been available I am convinced that it would be there today. And think what a marvelous symbol that would be sitting in there.

You know now some of the Pentagon types and a lot of the Madison types here and some of them on this campus thought this was another—you know—Dreyfus is hitting the LSD again, but it really wasn't that wild of an idea. It really wasn't, it would have made a marvelous

vocational technical school. It wouldn't have taken a lot to build what you needed, you would have classrooms and housing and everything. The carrier I was looking at had three separate chow halls, so they could have a faculty chow hall, and two student chow halls. It had everything self-contained. In fact, if they had a loss of electricity that thing could of temporarily lighted Saigon. It had enough power to do that. I don't know if you are familiar with that, but a carrier is an incredible thing, and this was one of the older diesel stove carriers.

**Yes, I can picture the possibilities. I do find it interesting that you sought to expand the horizons of education through the possible conversion of American military infrastructure, had the Republic of Vietnam held together. We certainly did have a lot of materials that were discarded.**

What a shame. I thought it was a nifty idea and really think this would have proved its worth. But, you can imagine what they thought when I said I wanted a lake out here [on the WSU-SP campus.] Or that I wanted the students to make tiles and tile the wall of the building [the campus Natural Resources Building.] I had seen that in China. I saw there that students had created all these tiles and made a beautiful mosaic. I came back and got Dick Snyder into it, because I wanted him to put a mural up of Old Main. I thought we were going to lose Old Main, and we darn near did, it took four shots to keep it at the building commission. Snyder improved it as he created those five panels. If you stand back and look at it you will see Old Main behind it, including all the old elm trees that used to be there. But, with the trade unions, the state regulations, the engineer and bureaucracy deemed that the students were not allowed to put the tiles up. They could make them, but you had to have staff and union people. So I thought, gee it is more free in Red China than it is in Wisconsin. That didn't make a lot of sense to me,

Thomas?

**I think labor in Red China is a different issue, but I sympathize with your ideas. Back to Vietnam, I do know that some of the American bases became schools and I have read your report to the Pentagon on the possibilities for these conversions. Perhaps, that is one of the lasting legacies of Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point. Again, your role was that of a problem-solver?**

Yes! Well, I hope you get a flavor that my role absolutely was to try and run the political front and gauntlet to keep the politicians in our own state department over there, some of the politicians in Saigon, the politicians in Washington, the politicians in our state system here in Madison from getting at this project. I saw my role as to absolutely to protect the people and as a result, I think even Eagon will tell you this, nobody ever that I am aware of got through me to get at any of these people and to start slowing them down and things. They felt they were totally free to operate when they had a problem they let me know and my job was to solve it.

**Could you evaluate the progress you think was actually made as far as the contract and program?**

Well, of my own opinion I don't think they would be there, not in the form they were. Frankly, granted they were in limited facilities and so on, but they had some pretty good faculty, they had administrators who knew what they were doing. That was another problem with the politics in Saigon, you don't put a rector in because he is competent and will do the job, you put a rector in because he is somebody who is in the right class of people, frankly it is a position strictly as some kind of honorary position. There was a lot of opposition to some of the people we had. I did not have any problem with the Catholic Church, those two men—Lup and Lee—terrific, no problem. I did not see a problem with Rector Chau and I do not think with the Buddhists. I was concerned about Can Tho and I was concerned about Hue. Saigon, I just gave up on. They never were a unified university, they were a gathering of faculty, and I am never sure how many of them still didn't have all their contacts in Hanoi.

**Many of those faculty taught in other institutions as well?**

I do not know that, if they did they did in ours, there weren't any others. That was it; there was a vocational development. You may want to ask over there at Stout, and Stout got back into this about 5 years ago.

**Really, I was not aware of that.**

I was not aware that Stout had a contract with either until I kept on running into them over there. The other institution that was in there was Rolla, Missouri. They [the Vietnamese] separated out engineering. Engineering has nothing to do with the university under that system. I understand that Rolla did a terrific job building a School of Engineering. I do not think there was a separate medical school component, but I do not know for sure, and I do not think they needed that as European medicine was about structured like ours and was well developed.

I do know that what was planted there was the American style university. What were planted there were students who understood the new relationship and also understood the function of the university to provide them with an avenue to social mobility. In other words, exactly what we had here. The old French system definitely didn't have that, if you did not have the social status you did not get in. It was a place to plant your young, until they are mature enough that maybe they will do something productive.

In fact I will give you an example. I met with their Speaker of the House equivalent, he needed to see me, he was very angry. So I went over with my assistant, who was former dean at William and Mary who had worked in Ethiopia—Bud can give you his name. Now understand this William and Mary guy is the former Dean of the School of Education, he has got a kid who is a medical chopper pilot about a hundred miles north of Saigon, they had to fly into great danger and had a high rate among those men being wounded, missing-in-action or killed. We meet with this congressman and he's madder than hell that he hasn't gotten money from us for his second son to come to the United States to study. The second son is about 19 or 20 years old. I said to him, "don't you think that your son has an obligation to stay here and defend this nation before he gets sent off to go to college. He bristled at that, he said, "that's an American idea and you people are dead wrong. When this war is over we are going to need leadership people to run this country and we can't send them out to be killed in the military or we aren't going to have the young people with leadership quality to run the country."

Now he is telling this to a guy who has a kid the same age who is fighting this war in his country. I am watching the dean's face, he started to look like a thermometer, as he got red in the face, I thought he is going to pop this bird. I saw that absolute French class elitism, to say something that insensitive because I had said the dean has his son fighting here and flying the medical chopper unit. So he knew that, and just as if it didn't matter, so in other words your son is not of the same leadership class, obviously he fights a war—but my son is not. He was mad that the money was not there for his kid because he already got his enrollment approval and so on. Can you imagine that?

**Yes, I can!**

A very corrupt system! I had the corruption move in on me directly, I was about to leave when they made it clear to me; they wanted me to understand that I would not go through security or anything. I would be traveling with the vice president's group that would take me out and nothing would be checked. I had asked Vickerstaff to send my one thousand dollars in cash, I am running out, which he did, he wired to the bank. So I go in and I get one thousand dollars in American money, but then some timing changed and it came too late and I literally got it in the morning of the afternoon that I am leaving. But, what was clear to me is that I could step out into the street convert that money into Vietnamese piastas at the street rate, then I got to Tan Son Nhut they would at the governmental rate convert it back. I would have come up with something like eight thousand-five hundred dollars in American cash in my hand. Seven thousand-five hundred for me, and one thousand dollars to give back to the university. At first, they thought I did not understand. Finally, I said, "I understand completely, you need to understand that is against our law, it is against the law here but it is also against our law for me to take state money, university money and arbitress it into more money, in fact if that occurred I would turn it all in. It was clear to me the Vietnamese officials did not understand that kind of a mentality, and I am dealing with

our friends—I am talking about the guys on our side who saw it that way and thought this is silly you are in a position, and I think a lot of American military did it that way.

Well I can't think of anything else Tom. Can you think of anything?

**Do you know when the University Foundation at Stevens Point developed? Was that in context with the advisory program in higher education?**

Yes, when I came in it was just beginning. Jim Albertson set it up and I think if I had to take a guess, he set it up about 1966. They ought to have records and somebody over there should be able to tell you, Bruce Froehkle can tell you.

**Yes, I was interested in your understanding of and experiences with the Foundation.**

Now, it didn't have anything. It was started and being run out of somebody's back-pocket. I think Lynn Gibb was here. What they really had, something Hiram Anderson an attorney here in town had helped them get was a piece of land or two pieces of land. One was to be used by the Boy Scouts out at Sunset Lake, and another, which is over here, and now the Schmeckle. His name was on a dorm and I took it off that and put it there, I didn't know him, as he was dead when I got here. They had the fifty acres out there, it was intended that would be sort of a nut. Hiram had said, sit on it. Hiram is a multi-millionaire as a result of land; his name is on land all over the place that he took as his fees as an attorney all over this town. In fact, by the time that I decided to something with it we did have some funds and things were coming in. I personally went out and I would get fees for speeches and those fees would come to the foundation as I set up a Lee Sherman Dreyfus Speech Awards Fund that is still active and I put money in once and awhile. When they found out that I wanted to give that fifty acres, in effect, to the federal government, old Hiram about went ballistic.

But, a guy named Paul Yambert was a dean of one of the colleges I abolished, Applied Arts and Sciences or something it was called. He had an idea when we built the new building for Natural Resources that we put a pond, a mirror, a little reflection pond that would be pretty good

size right in front of that building with fountains and so on. He talked to me about the water table right that really is not that far down. I said, “no Paul I don’t think we want a reflection pond.” It is a neat idea he had it all drawn up, but I said, “why not a whole lake, with have got fifty acres.” He said, “Well that is going to be developed for apartments for students.” I said, “no, no, no, lets check on our facts and the Land and Water Conservation Act. I found we could get \$250,000.00 for that property, and we had originally paid \$50,000.00 and had a mortgage left of about \$43,000.00, maybe \$45-\$46,000.00 as not much had been paid off. If I would take that \$250,000.00 and give it to the state, then the state would be able to donate into a Land Conservation project and the federal government would match it, but with cash. So now we would have fifty acres and \$250,000.00 to develop it as part of a Land and Water Conservation. That was one piece of the puzzle the other was with Sentry.

Sentry was going to build their headquarters and needed fill dirt, which they had to haul, lots of it. I met with John Jonas and said, “I’ve got a deal for you, and I can save you a lot of money on dirt. Frankly, you don’t have to haul it far, just a couple of blocks.” I told him exactly what I wanted to do with that piece of land. I said, “If you’ll dig it the way we want it dug. We need it 23 feet deep because it has to have that much depth so fish can survive and we can use it for water research. He thought it was a neat idea, plus it would save him a lot of money and I intended an equal trade I said for whatever it is going to cost I want Sentry to come out even with the University. So it doesn’t cost you anything, it doesn’t cost us anything. All the cost of getting the machinery, the engineering, the designing, and so on, it will be offset for what you’re not going to pay for things.

I said, “actually it won’t save you any money, but it won’t cost you anything, but you will wind up with a lake which you will be able to see out from the upper floors.” Deal! So we go ahead and we dig the lake and hire a man had opposed that because he said it’s going to be all that muddy stuff that looks like coca-cola coming down the creek. Frankly, we engineered the

bypass of the creek itself, Moses Creek. They dug and they did hit spring water and had to start pumping it out. The problem was that Sentry finally had enough dirt, only we weren't 23 feet deep, it was only 18 we got a problem I need 5 more feet. That is when Byron Shaw and the engineers said what we really need is 23 feet in just a few places.

**And you decided to make the island in the middle?**

Yes, it was John Jonas who said, "Well that is easy, then will dig the 5 more feet and just push the dirt to the center and nobody will know there is a pile of dirt under there. As it turned out, it pushed it so high it came above the water surface and that island this man made. That's what created the lake. I think it did actually end up costing Sentry about \$30,000.00, and I didn't like that, but they could handle it in time. Frankly, they got their dirt, we got our lake and look at it today. Even Hiram Anderson was there for the dedication. We named the lake after John Jonas, because without him it wouldn't be there. It may have been my idea, but it was his shovels, and hoes, and diggers. Hiram, I think, I sensed that he thought that lake was pretty good and it is an absolutely marvelous addition. The only restriction I put on it is that you could not, even for maintenance, put a road path in it. We had problems with chloroform building up as to many kids were in there swimming, and I went on WSPT putting on a message to stop swimming now and let the lake establish itself, let some plants grow it and things that would make it work then it would be all right. But, if they keep swimming what they are putting into the water would kill off most of the young fish and young plant life. Tom, you wouldn't believe it. The kids stopped going over there. Within two summers that thing was all clear and up and running. Look at it today!

**I am wondering how the University Foundation served to publish all the reports from the contract in higher education. How did that work?**

Well we put the money in the Foundation; it was Vietnam money. That was irritating down in Madison. They asked what are we doing with all this money; they did not get to audit it. One of the staffers down there, it really bugged him. He was upset and said you are the only one

in the system who does this. When he mentioned that to me I said to him, “Well that proves how wrong your system is. You have got good leaders, you are paying big money—they were paying me about \$30,000.00 a year to be the president. If you’re paying someone \$30,000.00 a year to run a whole damn university, you can’t trust him with running your contracts? We don’t need you guys down here, you are too far from it.” I believed that at the time and still do. I am telling you we did not have junkets, there weren’t any; we did not have junkets over to Vietnam. Damn near in every kind of project like that had those, but not here.

Now I was teaching. I taught every semester I was president. I taught a 12-student seminar in my office; the same course that was 458 students in a lecture hall in Madison. When I was off campus I would come back via telex-lecture, I had my office bugged like Nixon. The one lecture I missed was from Saigon. I didn’t realize until later, again had I used my military connection, we couldn’t get our broadcast to Manila it just wouldn’t work. Whereas the military had the MARS system, which is what the whole Internet is now, they had that in function. If I had given that any thought at all I could have just as easily gone over to Tan Son Nhut to the military and had them plug me in to Manila and then I would have been into the system and gotten back to my class.

**Do you see any lessons that we can learn for higher education or for aiding underdeveloped countries from the experiences with this contract?**

Oh, I think there is a pile of them there. I think that a lot of the vitality right now that exists, and I do not know how knowledgeable you are on what is going on in Ho Chi Minh City. Ask yourself one question: You have got a Communist government in Hanoi, why haven’t they stepped in and said this is the end of it, there is no capitalism system, people must stop, and clamp it down?

**The economy?**

For the same reason China hasn't clamped down in Hong Kong. Right now Ho Chi Minh City is just vibrant. The University is turning out young people, and has been all this time who are building that economy. Those students aren't coming out, they're not boat people. If there were we would have heard about it by now. Rector Chau, over in Notre Dame might have some insight. So I think what was intended to be do, to provide the future human capital for the system, educationally, intellectually, business wise—you name it—and it shows particularly right there in that area. In fact, Hue is going full bore and doing well, I have seen that in print. So is Can Tho, I don't see anything about Van Hanh or Dalat, but they're pretty small. I think those universities are doing what they intended them to do.

As such, I think we democratized higher education in Vietnam, and you can't undo that. You can't give people a vision of freedom and a sense of freedom and an ability to debate and discuss topics with superiors and then take it away from them. It is not going to work. It is like the thing the Pope had to learn about American Catholics. He and I talked about that when he was here on campus as Cardinal, then I was at the White House dinner with him and met with him a couple of times since he was Pope. This country taught him so things about intellectual debate. I know he read John Milton's [*title inaudible*] because I had him read it; it is the whole basis of western civilization, debate and democracy.

I think we opened the door. We created some faculty who couldn't be uncreated. They didn't fit the system. Now many of them may have had initially take the oath, I promise I am going to teach good socialism and so forth. Some may say did they sell out, what do you mean did they sell out. We had people in this country after World War II when McCarthy was pressuring for the taking of an oath in our universities. In fact, Madison was one of the labeled places because the faculty and a lot of us as students said no. I was on a list and in trouble for a while I was not about to take an oath. Not after putting in two years with the Navy in the South Pacific, about what I was loyal to from guys whom never went out to protect this joint.

That is what we set in motion, and you can't undo it, you can't undo it. I think it is a major part of the vibrancy of that place. It would be nifty and get in there and start tracing those students and what they did and where were. They could never turn them back to the kinds of students they had before. I do not care what the political system is. I have always been suspicious of the fact that they did not come in and just put their foot down. They didn't put their foot down in Hue and they didn't in Can Tho. You know if it were just Saigon, I'd say well their going to let it go.

As far as I know the Catholic university at Dalat is in fact Catholic run, I do not know if there are priests there or not, I think so. If it were China they would be out. I know because I met the Catholic Bishop in Shanghai when I was part of that first academic mission to Beijing in 1975. When I see those things I am only extrapolating from looking at the results, and I do not have a lot of notions on what is going on. But, as far as I know all four universities are up and running, and I can't believe the system changed because the majority of the faculty and then the sub-faculty that they created, people at your level were created by the very faculty that are taking all of their degrees over here, somewhere. I think it is probably one of the greatest, that and what we did medically are probably two of greatest successes of American involvement in Vietnam. There isn't much of that story being told.

**Well I am working on telling an important part of that story.**

I will tell you Thieu was sure gun ho. You need to understand that, he and I did get along very well. He gave the arêtes and decrees. He understood and we talked a little about what I did in World War II and that both my older brothers had been in Asia, one in the Philippines and China/Burma and myself in the South Pacific. I really got along well with Thieu.

**Dreyfus Interview, PART 2:**

**I have a few questions as to a few individuals who were involved in support capacities here at the university during the timeframe of the contract in higher education. Who would you suggest I contact?**

Karen Engelhard was head of the Alumni and retired here just a year or two ago. She's here in town and her husband's name is Bob, he was an Associate Professor in Natural Resources. Karen Engelhard should be able to know where Leonard L. Gibb, the Associate Dean of Students is and Helen Godfrey I bet would know too. Mary Croft might know where Winthrop C. Difford, the former Dean of Graduate Studies is, Mary Croft's husband Albert J. Croft was head of the Speech Department. I took the Speech Department and Journalism out of the English Department and Radio out of Theater, of all places, Television out of Education and the Library, and Film from Learning Resources, I just preempted all of those people and areas and said your now report to the new School of Communications located where the Lab School had been. I don't know if I had that kind of authority, but I thought I did.

**I have a chronological listing of contacts and seminars held at WSU-SP in relation to the contract in higher education with the Republic of Vietnam. Do you have any special recollections of these?**

I remember Melvin Wall, he and Harry Bangsberg had been in Madison, then Harry was President of Bemidji State College when they died in the plane crash in Vietnam. Mel Wall was Head Department Plant and Earth Sciences at Wisconsin State University-River Falls.

**I would like to read the names of the team: Dr. James Albertson, President Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point, Dr. Harry F. Bangsberg, Dr. Melvin Wall, Dr. A. Donald Beattie, Dean of the School of Business and Economics, Wisconsin State University-Whitewater, Dr. Vincent F. Conroy, Director of Field Studies, Harvard University, Dr. Howard G. Johnshoy, Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College, and Dr. Arthur D. Pickett, Director of Honors Program, University of Illinois, Chicago, all members of the original survey team and Dr. Robert LaFollette, Higher Education Advisor, USAID-Saigon, were all on the plane when it went down.**

Yes, they all died and they didn't miss the top of that mountain by fifty feet. It was a real tragedy. So Dr. Burdette W. Eagon, WSU-SP Dean of Education, became the Chief of the Higher Education Survey Team and set about to complete the initial team report. [Looking at the

list of Team Consultants the author provided Dr. Dreyfus] He worked with Dr. T.C. Clark, Higher Education Officer, USAID/Education, Washington, D.C., Dr. J.C. Clevenger, Dean of Students, Washington State University, Dr. Russell G. Davis, Assistant Director of Field Studies, Harvard University, Mr. Earl Seyler, Associate Dean of Admissions and Records, University of Illinois, and Dr. Warren A. Wilson, Higher Education Advisor, on leave from Colorado State University, USAID/Education, Saigon. Bud will know if any of these are still around or of any value to you.

**William B. Vickerstaff, what was his title and capacity?**

At the time he was my assistant, Special Assistant to the President. One, I wasn't in a position to go to Vietnam initially and I sent him. Two, Vickerstaff also a key man, in case we needed to pull that money out of the foundation. My interest in his going there, and he didn't know this, I was going to have him operate separate from the University, he was not an academic. He would have been willing to do that, he had financial resources behind him, and he didn't even have to have the job. So I knew that he was able to say, "I quit," and get into something that absolutely not related to the university or the state at all, and have Foundation contract that entity—do you follow me? If Madison and some of their staff were going to be successful and get their hands on controlling this contract, then I wanted to put it out of their reach—so it was a backup play. I didn't talk to anybody about it, not even Bud Eagon.

Fred Harris, I am sure he was the Evansville guy who never understood the picture. I don't see Wood's name?

**From the University of Alaska? It is down further on the list.**

Oh yes. Coker, he is easily reachable. But I thought that at that point Vickerstaff needed to understand that besides the finances, what this was about just in case he had to run it. That would come as a surprise to Bud and you are probably the first person I told that to other than Fred Harrington and Fred is now dead.

**After that trip, Vickerstaff mainly remained home to do the coordinating, correct?**

Yes. I was getting so heavily involved in what was being built and done at WSU-SP. We were now, you see I had proposed merger in the 1970 election.

### **With the University of Wisconsin System?**

You bet. My neighbor was running for governor—Patrick Lucy. He wanted an issue in higher education and he said, “I don’t want long hair and unrest.” I said, “Ok, the key issue is parity. What is happening is that they are going to open the university of Green Bay and those damn faculty have got a 9 hour load based on the Madison formula, they don’t even have graduate programs and my faculty have got a minimum 12 hour load. This is ridiculous. If a student chooses to go to this new university over there, I told them how much money is going to follow that student for library resources, if that same student says—no I am going to go to Stevens Point—only half the amount follows them here.” But, it so happened then as I was getting the bids on a Learning Resources Building and they were building one too, except they were getting \$6.8 million and I was getting \$3.4 million—exactly half—and that turned out to be the death mill for the fight over there. I finally convinced them, I said, “you’ll never get legislators and the UW alumni and their lobbyists to allow you to fund us like they fund them.” I said, “frankly we shouldn’t be funded equally with Madison. I don’t disagree with that, it is a world-class graduate university research institution. What I am objecting to is what they are building in Green Bay and Parkside and what is happening in Milwaukee. I could even justify Milwaukee a bit, but what is happening at green Bay and Parkside is not any different than what is happening on my campus. And Pat Lucy agreed. I said, “Make that a keystone of your campaign.” He said, “Wrong.” I got my first political lesson. He said, “We won’t even mention this until after we win. It is an administrative issue and I do not want to bring those opponents out of the woodwork, I don’t need them I have enough enemies.” He was right. I was amazed at the opposition to it, we only passed the bill by one vote. I had that one vote hidden in my house, Tiny Kreger from Merrill. Really, I had him for the whole weekend and they were trying to reach

him. I needed six Republicans and he was my sixth, he had been unsure. So obviously when this got implemented in 1971-72 and we started working out all of the new Chapter 36, you can imagine how much of my time went into this. There was no way I could do anything personally with the contract in higher education in Vietnam other than in 1972 take the trip with the Secretary of the Army Froehkle. In fact, I needed a break. By the way traveling that way is truly first class. We used Air Force II.

I don't know about Minister of Education Tri, Republic of Vietnam. I believe he was the man assassinated.

**Yes, I have written about him in a chapter of my thesis.**

Yes, now I remember meeting him at the Ministry of Education before I went to the Presidential Palace. When he was here at WSU-SP he was convinced that this was the center of the United States, because when I took him to the airport another plane landed with Vice President Hubert Humphrey. He knew he was running for President of the United States and he knew Melvin Laird was from here. What a coincidence, Tri was delighted to meet Hubert and Muriel. His family relocated to Philadelphia. I am not sure about the others listed in the chronology, I would check with Dean Chau from Notre Dame or Bud Eagon. Ken Little is definitely gone, he is dead, in fact, he had a heart attack over in Vietnam. Ken had been a colleague of mine at Madison, a terrific guy in Student Affairs. He had a heart attack in Vietnam. I really felt badly about that having been part of sending him, when I found out he could not have had a better place in the world to have a heart attack because the military medics never deal with heart attacks and the best guys in the place wanted to do something special for him. He came back on one of those DC-9 medical direct flights with a doctor and nurse traveling with all those wounded GI's. He had a marvelous experience; too bad he isn't around.

I hope this guy Hascall is available, because I am telling you student records in Vietnam—they were almost nonexistent. They didn't give a damn; it was just an arbitrary

system. I could just say, “Ok, Reich is going to pass for this year, now you’re a third year or whatever.” You didn’t have to keep records.

Sometime fax the chronology to me so maybe in time I will remember others. Bill Wood, oh yes, not Bob Wood. I bet he is still around, let’s see, University of Alaska ought to be able to get you updated. Bud Eagon probably will know whether it was Juneau or Fairbanks, I am sure it wasn’t Anchorage. He did a good job. Ask Bud for information on who might still be around from the WSU-Stout connection. Or call over there, if you call the Chancellor’s Office say you are calling for Governor Dreyfus, I can do that for you, which should get you through—I do not think they will blow you off.

**Do you have Chau’s full name?**

I always called him Rector Chau. Check in the Learning Resources Reference for listings at Notre Dame for the past five years in School of Law or Graduate Studies. My guess he is available via South Bend.

**I do have a listing of all the Rectors from which I can correlate, he was at Hue, correct? Thank you Governor Dreyfus for this recommendation and the valuable information you have shared with me today. I would like to follow-up with you after I have interviewed others. Thank you for traveling to Stevens Point and taking the time to meet with me here at the UWSP History Department. I really appreciate your openness and support of my thesis project.**

Yes. Well I am really excited that you are doing this project. I mean that seriously, because I am convinced that it is probably one of the greatest contributions this country made. I am sorry Lyndon Johnson is not alive, because he felt very strongly about the contract and finally decided that having a Normal School – Teacher College from the Middle West do this was key. He said, “That is so ‘fucking’ smart no one here in Washington would have thought of it.” I am serious Tom, that is the way he talked. But, he was sincere.

Come on, let us get something to eat and we can talk about anything else you want. My treat, you choose the best place in town. I do not want a starving graduate student on my conscience.

*Thus, this ended my interview with Governor Dreyfus. As we left the CPS Building we paused for a couple of photos. I thought about the years that had passed, the changes we had seen and been part off. I thought of another time when I was a student activist and Governor Dreyfus was my Chancellor. Yet, this was not my story, that story awaits being told for another day, another year, another chapter, another volume. This was the story not to be overlooked in history. This was the story of the Wisconsin Team, those who worked with them, and their families and community. This was the story of WSU-SP/UWSP, USAID, and Vietnam. At lunch we talked about other issues, local news and UWSP. After our Sunday brunch, I thanked Governor Dreyfus for the interesting day, his time and personal reflections, and a delightful meal. I have continued my contact with him and may incorporate some of his personal documentation and photographs in my future projects. I noted it was my intent to forward gift copies of my report to the Governor and the others I was to interview.*

**Quynh Hoa-Nguyen**
**University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**


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February 17, 2000

Dear Nguyen Quynh-Hoa:

I am a master's candidate for a MST in History at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. My current MST/History thesis topic is *Contract in Higher Education: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the Republic of Vietnam*. Professor William Skelton is my thesis adviser. Over the past several semesters I have worked as the graduate assistant with the UWSP Department of History. I am a permanent employee of the UWSP Library, having worked in Main Circulation, Archives, and now serve as the Advanced Library Services Assistant in Government Documents. Through collaboration with Dr. Skelton, the History Department and the Library staff I have decided to incorporate an oral history interview component in my case study. Thus far, I have interviewed numerous local participants, including Burdette Eagon and Lee Sherman Dreyfus, and transcribed an in-depth interview with James Albertson recorded prior to his death in the plane crash in Vietnam. I am writing this letter in an effort to contact you and enlist your support in this aspect of my research.

I have chosen this topic because of the project's special value to the histories of Vietnam, UWSP and higher education. Thus far, I have conducted far-reaching research on the USAID, the WSU-SP/RVN contract, and on the Vietnam War. I have completed a draft of my early thesis chapters, dealing with the background of higher education in Vietnam and the origins of the U.S. aid program. It is my objective that this thesis project models a reflection of my appreciation of UWSP higher education and of the dedication of the educators who came together in the local and international settings of the Vietnam War.

I realize it has been quite some time since your experiences in South Vietnam and with the WSU-SP (UWSP) advisory project. Nevertheless, I am aware of your dedication to this contract, and feel that you can offer a special insight to my thesis topic. I am especially interested in the objectives, goals and outcomes of the contractual attempts at educational reform and modernization. It would be most helpful if you could share some of your recollections with me. My research is attempting to examine the nature of cultural and educational relationships that developed between project advisors and their Vietnamese counterparts. I hope to explore the Higher Education Survey Team's personal understandings and interpretations of the historic and cultural interaction of Vietnamese, French Colonial and American educational systems.

I am writing, to inquiry at this time as I send you a preliminary questionnaire. My apologies for any repetition in this survey, and please answer any/or all questions in the manner and timeframe that is best for you. Please feel free to contact my adviser Dr. William Skelton, Chair Dr. Neil Lewis, Dr. Hugh Walker, others in the History Department, or myself if you have any questions. I will be most grateful for your advice, assistance, cooperation, opinions and information and look forward to a follow-up discussion of these matters with you. Also, I am interested in any names and addresses of other individuals who you think may be willing to be interviewed or take part in a survey. Thank you for assistance.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Reich

*Tom Reich*, University Library & Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point,  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

• Phone 715/346-4200 or e-mail [treich@uwsp.edu](mailto:treich@uwsp.edu)

**Interview with Nguyen Quynh-Hoa, former interpreter for USAID Contract  
in Higher Education. February 16, 2002**

*Nguyen Quynh-Hoa:*

Today is February 5<sup>th</sup> 2002. This is Quynh-Hoa speaking, before I go through the questionnaire you sent me I would like to tell you a little bit about the Vietnamese way of speaking. In Vietnam we write our name a little different than Americans, we put our first name last and last name first. This is the Vietnamese way, Nguyen Quynh-Hoa. But in the American way we put our first name first and last name last, Quynh-Hoa Nguyen. So you can write in the future. When you address your letters you may write to me as Dear Quynh-Hoa, or Dear Miss Nguyen, or Dear Dr. Nguyen. Most of the time in Vietnam we call each other by first names.

I want to note that technology is changing so fast, that the things we talked about yesterday is in the next morning already changed a bit. With the Internet and everything now being on computers; so you can get all kinds of other information on the Internet. But, in terms of your questionnaire you can get more information particularly from Dr. Eagon and some of his friends in Stevens Point, and in the Archives there are papers that can help you. Now I will read each question so you can follow as I tape record my answers for you.

**Interview Questions**

**I. WSU-SP/USAID/RVN: Please provide some relevant personal background information as to your involvement and time in Vietnam and the United States?**

**I think you know me already more than anybody else, because you have worked with Dr. Eagon and I have talked to you. So I will send you some papers, some background papers that will help you know more about me, because right now if I say it, it will take a long time.**

**A. To the best of your knowledge, how did Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point (WSU-SP)/ University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) become involved with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project advising higher education in the Republic of Vietnam?**

Yes, I can say this very clearly, that I am very lucky because I met two groups from Stevens Point. The first one lead by Dr. James Albertson, he came to my area as I at that time I lived in Region II, about 250 hundred miles from Saigon. Region II, at that time, we were strong in education because we had a Community College, the University, and Oceanographic Institute. At that time, I was able to speak English and French [and Vietnamese] and was one who was really willing to help the Vietnamese and a person who wanted the Americans to understand so we both can work together. I met Dr. Albertson one day, I think for around three hours. I was so busy at that time as I worked as an assistant to the higher education mission as translator, interpreter, and everything that else that they needed me for. In the afternoon, at our meeting before Dr. Albertson went back to Saigon, he asked me if I could go with the delegation to Hue, my hometown. He said he knew I was a good interpreter and was familiar with Hue, which at that time was not a very safe area. Everyone involved in Vietnamese education thought it would be good for me to go with the delegation. I think there were six or seven

people, but I could not go at that time. Unfortunately, I wouldn't have a chance to work with them. The next morning when I went to work I got a note with the message from Saigon letting us know that the plane had crashed in DaNang. It was really very difficult for others and me to know or understand why things had happened.

I think it was around three or six months that another group lead by Dr. Eagon also came to my area (Nha Trang.) Everyone knew I had meet with Dr. Albertson before, so I tried my best to give all information and everything Dr. Eagon needed for the delegation from the United States as they prepared to study the universities.

**B. Describe your background, in relation to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and your first contacts with WSU-SP. What was your position in relation to WSU-SP?**

You know part of this; I worked with AID, the Agency for International Development. We worked with all the contacts from the United States. We gave all the needed accommodations. We furnished all the interpreters, translators, arranged transportation, and everything. That way, we knew every single delegation from the United States. At that time, I worked as a teacher-trainer, so I traveled with an American woman to conduct workshops in different areas. So I would flew in the morning and return to Nha Trang in the afternoon. Each time I trained about 400 primary school teachers how to use new textbooks developed by the United States.

**C. Describe your first contacts with the USAID. In Vietnam? In the United States?**

Well I am a Vietnamese, so in Vietnam the American was a foreigner to me. But I longed to come to the United States to study and I loved to learn English, so whenever I had any opportunity to speak English I volunteered. I read the newspapers from England and the United States and the Boy Scout Reader from England. Also, I helped some church people with social activities.

**D. Describe your first contacts with the government of the RVN and its educators. In Vietnam? In the United States?**

In 1960, up to 1966 I worked for International Volunteer Services, IVS. This is a group like Peace Corps, which came from the United States to come to Vietnam to help train primary school and secondary school teachers. This was almost like Dr. Eagon's' group, but this one was for primary schools and they worked in the field.

**II. Personal Experience: Would you elaborate on your position and responsibilities with the project team on higher education and/or USAID?**

**I had contacts with all kinds of educators in Vietnam and then in the United States. That is why I had many experiences to handle and compare things between Vietnam and the United States. In my office I came to work with project teams and with Dr. Eagon on the team in higher education.**

**A. How were you recruited for the job?**

In Vietnam they asked to work with Americans many times, but I refused because of our custom we could not work with American, at that time, because my father was a mandarin. He passed away, but as a member in a [mandarin] family I cannot decide otherwise, but I began to have contacts. Since 1960 I had contacts with the Americans, but never worked for money. Then in 1966 the situation changed because the war spread everywhere so we moved to Nha Trang. In order to survive I had to work with Americans because I got more salary than [paid normally] in Vietnam. Luckily, they needed someone like me to travel in the area, the Ninh Thuan area, to train the teachers. The job was very, very dangerous, but I didn't know that. I loved to teach, I loved to speak English, and I loved to improve my education.

**B. What was the duration of your contract?**

I think I worked with Americans since 1960, but as a volunteer. Then in 1965-66 I worked directly with AID. Then I go to the United States in 1968.

**C. How much time did you spend in the Republic of Vietnam? In the United States?**

Well I am now retired from the government. I lived in Vietnam for thirty years and worked in the United States for twenty years, and now have been here for thirty years. So, half and half, actually thirty-three years in Vietnam and now thirty-four, thirty-five years in the United States.

**D. How did your contract responsibilities mix with those of your other occupation or life in general?**

As I grew up I wanted to be involved in education and youth activity particularly Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and Cub Scouts as a Scout Master. In Boy Scouts I was the first Vietnamese woman to receive the Wood Badge for leadership. I got it from Thailand in 1964. In Vietnam, at that time, we had war so we needed many volunteers and I always worked as a volunteer. During the weekday I worked in my office helping war victims and poor people. I remember when Dr. Albertson and Dr. Eagon visited Nha Trang I took them to Cam Ranh. Cam Ranh was an American base in Vietnam. As I got involved with the project my life changed.

**III. Cultural Experience: Describe your impressions of and working relations with your Vietnamese and American associates and counterparts. Any local and cultural constraints?**

**Work for me was a little different, I am too American; yes when I was in Vietnam they said I was European-Modern Vietnamese, but my heart is still Vietnam, in my heart I liked to try to help and I did not like to change fast. But, for education I liked to involve in many activities. That is why I did not have any cultural shock when I came to America, a little bit, but not much.**

**A. What was the primary adjustment for the Vietnamese in Stevens Point? What was the primary adjustment for American educators in Vietnam?**

Yes, of course, Asians and Americans for many years did not have a chance to intermix, a chance to speak English well, so of course in time things changed. For students, the younger change very fast. If they are willing to learn, willing to improve I think it is not a problem. All of the American educators, I mean if you work in education it is always good that we have good educators! Because, at that time, during the war we had all kinds of [Americans] with all kinds of backgrounds, sometimes they were not involved with education, they were involved as soldiers or working in a different area. In education, to be honest with you the group from Stevens Point were well known by Vietnamese people. You know today, there are a lot of Vietnamese from that time period living in Madison, Milwaukee, and Stevens Point, I suggest you talk or contact them. I am too close to being an American, I came here before everybody and my ideals are a little different because I enjoyed my early work with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, which helped me adjust quickly.

**B. Describe social and formal activities, e.g. dinners, recreation, tours, holidays. In Vietnam? In the United States?**

I did not have time, I worked all the time and we didn't have time because the war spread everywhere. Besides that, my family was very traditional and I am a very traditional girl. It was not our custom to go out. If we had a dinner, it was as a traditional family.

**C. To the best of your recollection, describe the interaction and importance of American and Vietnamese customs, traditions, and language? To what extent did your counterparts and you learn/understand American and Vietnamese customs and language while you were working with them?**

I think it is very important for you to understand Vietnamese traditions. I will send you a report I did in 1962, to show how important it is. Right now I can say that if you go to Vietnam you will know about tradition, now you might go to a banquet, but before because of the war we did not have time to make choices. Before you go to the country you should understand the tradition, the language, the language is very important. I will send you an article, and you can read and we can discuss.

**D. How did you acclimatize to some of the social and cultural constraints, e.g. the food, housing, climate, work and administrative habits, and the sense of time in the United States and Vietnam?**

Well now and then I think it was different. Now, I can tell you, when Vietnamese move to the United States they are very successful. With me, I think I have been very successful but very unlucky, as I had a stroke so I had to stay home and work only part-time. If you don't have Vietnamese contacts I can give you some, I think you should talk to them and ask them about this. For me, I had a chance to move and to do what I wanted to do because I was more mature and older. Some of my students came and studied with me and wanted to stay. They attended Stevens Point as a freshman with me. You can contact some people, like in southern California, if you go to there you can see *My Thuc* or *Van Thuy*, the Vietnamese are very successful because they work hard.

**E. Did cultural and social differences hinder your goals? If so, how?**

No, because as I told I went with Girl Scouts when I was young. Also, my family tried to help do lots of activities to help the children learn. Then the war came when we were young, but luckily I achieved my goal.

**F. How did the war conditions impact on the working environment?**

Yes, that is why I moved from one place to another place. It will help explain if I tell you about some things. Sometimes we were almost killed by the VC [Viet Cong], and our plane almost crashed, the same thing that happened to Dr. Albertson. I don't know the reason why Dr. Albertson was killed by the accident [his team's plane crash was ruled an accident caused by weather], but sometimes an ambush by the VC was very simply part of the war.

**G. Give some examples of how the military situation affected the contract in higher education and Vietnamese education in general.**

I think not much, military situation yes, but we accepted it because we had a war with the Communists and we were not Communists. Ambushes occurred and I had some of my American volunteer workers killed on the road soon after they came from the United States. But, now it is over.

**IV. Identify Personal/Project Perspectives and Accomplishments:**

**Well I think Dr. Eagon can tell you about this, but with me I accomplish a lot in Vietnam. I trained almost 10,000 teachers, and I trained many students, and all of my Cub Scouts and my primary grade students now in the United States and they still remember me. Many of these and my Girl Scouts are very successful here in the United States. I helped Vietnamese families come to the United States in 1975, and Dr. Eagon helped by sending a cable to sponsor them. They still remember him; know they have a family with six medical doctors in Florida.**

**A. What was the Vietnamese perspective? What was the American perspective? Historically, can you comment on the influences of Vietnam itself, China, France, and the United States educational systems?**

When you see the papers I send to you, you will understand some of this. I like the United States, I appreciate very much that Stevens Point gave me a chance to move further [in my career.] Dr. Dreyfus, Dr. Eagon, Dr. Gibb and all the others did so much. I will tell you unfortunately I stopped halfway, because I worked too hard and had a stroke. I entered school as a freshman in the United States [in Stevens Point] when I was thirty-four years old, and I spent the next ten years to my BS, my Masters, and my PhD. You can imagine it was very difficult.

**B. What was the USAID perspective on higher education?**

Yes, the Agency was the main unit that had the money and funded education in Vietnam. At that time AID had all kinds of projects in Vietnam.

**C. What was the Wisconsin Team perspective?**

This one you ask Dr. Eagon and read his papers. Yes, they did a good job. I think they were in Vietnam for ten years, almost. When I worked there in 1970, Dr. Eagon and Dr. Dreyfus helped about twelve of us to start over. Now there are hundreds of Vietnamese in higher education here.

**D. How did these perspectives work together and with those of the Vietnamese?**

**Can you describe some teaching, educational, administrative practices that you observed?**

Well, now it is different again. In the last ten years I worked for Vietnam, volunteering again. I went back to Vietnam to help in libraries. They really need money, but they are really moving forward. When I left Vietnam [originally] not too many people spoke English, now when I went back the majority speaks very fluently, because the young people, eighteen to twenty-two and on learn to speak English.

**E. What were the most pressing needs for reform in higher education?****F. What were the successes, in your mind, of the Wisconsin Team contract?**

I think the success of Stevens Point is now in education and its history! The history of [modern] higher education in Vietnam started back with Stevens Point. They came to help, and they came there to do a study about [implementing] a credit system. I think in Archives you can see that. I think some of the parents knew about Stevens Point from Dr. Albertson and Dr. Eagon, so they sent their children there. Now after the fall of Saigon, they moved their families to California to work [and other places] and they are very successful.

**V. The End of the War: How did conditions change in the latter years of the conflict? Did your commitment or attitude change during different stages of the project? Did you notice changes in the commitment of the RVN, the United States, others?**

On this one you can read in newspapers and other places. Do you know I majored in Education, but I think that if I were young I would take Political Science. About three years ago Robert McNamara had a book entitled, *In Retrospect: the Tragedy and Lesson of Vietnam*. Do you have this book? If not I can let you borrow it. [I have read it twice.] It took me about two months to finish it, because I did not have time. But, I think he did a good job with this book and [has things] you need to know.

**A. How did Vietnamization change your project funding and objectives?**

**B. How did the mission of the project fit into or contribute to the overall U.S. effort in the Republic of Vietnam?**

Yes, I worked with AID, in education I think they helped a lot for Vietnam. I do not know the other way, in terms of the overall war effort. For education we always have space to do things. So again, for Stevens Point we are really proud to say that in education they contribute and they made it very important for Vietnam. People in education in Vietnam will mention the importance of Stevens Point.

**C. What was the importance of the observation/study tours in Vietnam, Stevens Point, and other locations for your Vietnamese and American counterparts?**

This was always very important.

**D. Reflect on the final outcome of the war. Did you anticipate the Communist victory?**

Are you kidding? I am not a Communist, [laughing], but the thing is when the Communists had victory most people [I knew] were sad because we had to leave the country. We knew, but I had never had a dream to live in the United States, because it was very difficult, we had to start over. It was a mixed feeling.

**E. Can you find lasting accomplishments in higher education in Vietnam due to the work of the project and the Wisconsin Team, despite the defeat of the United States and South Vietnam?**

Oh no, I can not comment on this. Read the book by Robert McNamara or others to see.

**VI. Impact on WSU-Stevens Point:**

**How were WSU-SP/UWSP, the USAID and/or Vietnam changed by the contract?**

It is too long of time for me to say.

**A. What was the role of WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.?**

**B. What was the lasting impact of the contract in higher education on WSU-SP/UWSP?**

**C. What was the lasting impact of the contract in higher education on Vietnam?**

Now it is has changed. Now when I went there, there were many groups from the United States. But, I was a little disappointed because the people with experience working in Vietnam and tried to stay there, they were denied. You see, if we don't try to understand what work was done by the people in Stevens Point we will go nowhere.

**D. Can you comment on aspects of reform that remain in Vietnam, long after the final days of the contract in higher education?**

Ask Dr. Eagon, he is the best one for this question.

**E. Can you comment on the visit to UWSP by Vietnamese educators and representatives a couple of years ago?**

**You mean the visit in about 1996 or 1997? I and Dr. Linh from Saigon visit Stevens Point and met Dr. Eagon, with Mrs. Eagon, and the Dean and a lot of people. I think that I sent an article for you, a beautiful article I translated, and I am proud to say that. If you don't have I will mail it to you, because I think it is very effective.**

**F. Can you comment on the experiences of some of the Vietnamese educators who settled in America?**

Oh we are very happy here. I retired from government. If we still have Vietnamese customs and live in the United States I think you have a very good life. But, we always miss something that we never expect, like I plan to do something and something happens. But, in the United States we can do everything you want to, but you have the responsibility. That is why I love it in Vietnam, if you go to school people respect you and do not look down at you. Here I spent almost ten years getting my degrees and I help everyone I can. Now I live with my sister, we are lucky to be in the United States, a country that gave us a chance to move and to help others.

**G. Were there any important lessons for higher education in contemporary societies of both developed and lesser-developed nations?**

This you find out for yourself, easily, because this project was a long time ago.

**VII. Any closing advice or comment: Please note any positive and negative recollections:**

Well before, about twenty years ago—oh I can say many things—but right now I can that let them observe, let them do a lot of reading. The reason I move fast is because I do a lot of reading. I remember when I was in Wisconsin I stayed in the library at 1:00 am to get all the Reserve books. Negative always has things both ways, and now everyone has an eye to observe themselves, and you too. I didn't know much about you, but I hope that if I ask a question I think you will help me to understand.

**A. Has your attitude toward the mission in higher education changed today?**

Oh yes, it has changed a lot. When I came here we did not have a computer, it just had started. Now in the library, everywhere there are computers. That changes things.

**B. Have you maintained any contacts with Vietnamese, USAID, and/or American educators you met during your contract years?**

Yes, I still have contacts with Vietnamese, particularly in the library. I love to help with some books and in cataloging things. When, if someday I go back, I will still be working

for them, volunteer to give advice. Now I can say that we can use a lot of advice. If they take it fine, if they don't that is fine, because I think that is what everybody should do.

**A. Any additional remarks and advice you believe are worth sharing.**

Well what is my advice? I can tell you now, that the Vietnamese open their eyes widely! That is why I can say the Vietnamese they are different, different. Even I never learned something like that, so I think that now their eyes are opened, very wide open.

**B. Any personal contacts and addresses you can provide for my continuing research:**

Well I think right now you have to conclude your thesis. If you have any questions look to the materials I sent to you. To be honest with you I hope that you can finish as soon as possible. When you say that you work in the library, are you going to work in the library with a degree in history? With my experience a Masters degree in Library Science is not as difficult compared with a Masters in History in America. But, for the Vietnamese things are so difficult because we have a lot to deal with in humanities. But, luckily, I did learn a lot and read a lot. If you want to stay in the library you should take Library Science. I expect the Library School in Milwaukee or Madison; you can take long distance learning/education. It makes Library Science easy for Americans you can take about three semesters and you finish, or six semesters if you go part-time. Now they have about ten important courses, and because you sound like a very good historian and it should be easy for you. Sometime if I have time I will get my nephew, he is a Masters in History, he loves history, but I discouraged him because I knew he was good as a medical doctor. Now next year, he will graduate as a medical doctor at Georgetown University, but when he was at the University of Virginia he loved history. I admired his paper so much; someday I will mail it to you. So, please, if you like to work in the library, please take your Masters degree in Library Science. History I love too, right now I learn a lot, I take more history because I am retired. For the future, the computer is also very important for you.

OK. Thank you very much and say hi to everyone.

Sometimes I talk to Dr. Eagon and my other friends in the states. Give me a call or use e-mail, and any questions you have I will let you know. I think it is time for you to complete your project. I have two of my friends who wrote thesis and they came to interview me at my place, about three years ago and now they finished, they are someplace in Missouri. I speak English very fast, but since I was ill writing as you see is difficult, but I try my best.

Please continue and take care,

*Quynh-Hoa Nguyen*

**Charles Green**
**University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point**


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9 January 2, 2002

Dear Charles Green:

It has been a year since we first had contact. As you may recall I am working on my graduate project entitled, *USAID Contract in Higher Education: Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the Republic of Vietnam*. Professor William Skelton is my graduate adviser. I am now a permanent employee of the UWSP Library, having worked in Main Circulation, Archives, and I am now responsible for the daily functions of our Government Documents and Special Collections division. I just talked with Bud Eagon this week and he asked me to send you a current article written by Nguyen The Anh, the former rector at the University of Hue. Bud has told me often what a pleasure it was for him to work with you, and again asked me to convey to you his best wishes. If I can assist you in any other way please let me know.

As you know I have interviewed numerous local participants, including Burdette Eagon and Chancellor Lee Sherman Dreyfus, and transcribed an in-depth interview with WSU-SP President James Albertson recorded in 1967 (prior to his death in the plane crash in Vietnam.) I am still hopeful that I can enlist your support in this aspect of my research. If you could answer any of the questions on the attached survey or just write/or tape record a brief summary of your participation and reflections of the times or of any lasting impact that the Wisconsin Team might have had on higher education in Vietnam and on your own career it would be a truly valuable contribution to my project. I really would like to incorporate more of a USAID and Vietnamese perspective on things. Anything, however small or large that you could add to my study would be greatly appreciated!

Thus far, I have conducted far-reaching research on the USAID, the WSU-SP/RVN contract, and on the Vietnam War. I have completed a draft of my early chapters, dealing with the background of higher education in Vietnam and the origins of the U.S. aid program. It is my objective that this graduate project models a reflection of my appreciation of USAID/UWSP higher education efforts and of the dedication of the educators from both Vietnam and the United States.

I am aware of your dedication to this contract and the lasting friendship with the Eagons' and others. Everyone involved in the original contract between Stevens Point and Vietnam has spoken highly of you and holds good memories of the times you all shared during troubled times. I feel that you can offer a special insight to my graduate topic. I am especially interested in the objectives, goals and outcomes of the contractual attempts at educational lasting reform and modernization. It would be most helpful if you could share some of your recollections with me. My research is attempting to examine the nature of cultural and educational relationships that developed between project advisors and their Vietnamese counterparts and the historic cultural interaction of Vietnamese, French Colonial and American educational systems, along with any possible lasting impacts on higher education today in Vietnam, the U.S. and its correlation to any future aid efforts to underdeveloped countries.

My apologies for any repetition within my correspondence to you, if at all possible please answer any/or all questions in the manner and timeframe that is best for you. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if I can help you in any way. I will be most grateful for your advice, assistance, cooperation, opinions and information and look forward to a follow-up discussion of these matters with you. Also, I am interested in any names and addresses of other individuals who you think may be willing to take part in my survey. Thank you for assistance.

Sincerely,  
Thomas C. Reich

University Library & Department of History, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point,  
Stevens Point, WI 54481

• Phone 715/346-4200 or e-mail [treich@uwsp.edu](mailto:treich@uwsp.edu)

## **Interview Charles Green, USAID/Vietnam-Higher Education, February 2, 2002**

### **I. WSU-SP/USAID/RVN: Would you provide some relevant personal background information?**

I served as the head of the Higher Education Office of USAID/Saigon, June 1971 to June 1973, and supervised the USAID contract with UW-Stevens Point, which main purpose was to improve the administration of Vietnamese Universities.

#### **A. To the best of your knowledge, how did Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point (WSU-SP)/ University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (UWSP) become involved in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project advising higher education in the Republic of Vietnam?**

The contract came after the unfortunate airplane accident in which the United States university team of 17 people were killed in DaNang. The leader of the team was President of WSU-SP, so that made for an emotional tie between WSU-SP and Vietnamese higher education.

#### **B. Describe your background, in relation to the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) and your first contacts with WSU-SP. What was your position in relation to USAID and/or WSU-SP?**

Before my tour in Vietnam, I had served in Columbia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru. The Vietnamese USAID mission asked me to come to Vietnam because the program in higher education needed “fixing.” I declined the invitation because I had a very essential job in Peru to rebuild schools after the earthquake. I received a letter from personnel saying that under no circumstance would I be transferred—and then a month later I was given the option of going to Vietnam or resigning—so I went to Vietnam.

#### **C. Describe your first contacts with the USAID. In Vietnam? In the United States?**

I started in the Foreign Service as Assistant Cultural Attaché in the United States Information Agency in Columbia. I was what is called a “lateral transfer,” meaning I started a bit up the ladder. In the USIA I got money from the USAID to help Peace Corp projects. After my tour I transferred to the USAID and went to the Dominican Republic, first to manage higher education projects, but later I was in charge of all social programs. Peru asked for me after three and one-half years, so I went to Peru and was in charge of all education programs when in 1972 there was a horrible earthquake. The United States gave ten million dollars in earthquake relief and the ambassador decided to use it to rebuild schools with me in charge.

#### **D. Describe your first contacts with the government of the RVN and its educators. In Vietnam? In the United States?**

The day I arrived in Saigon I had a meeting, which included the man I was replacing and the Vietnamese Vice Minister for Education Du Ba Khe and his assistant Thuy. It was easy to see why the USAID had tagged me to come to Vietnam. The three major higher education projects in the books were simply not doing much. My predecessor was

spending his time fiddling with the university of Saigon, which was not much of a university. My job was to move out my predecessor. He was just not competent but he was happy in Saigon, had a woman friend, etc. It took me six weeks to get him to leave. He did a good job of showing me around Vietnam so I got a good picture of the problems.

**II. Personal Experience: Would you elaborate on your position and responsibilities with the project team on higher education?**

We had three major projects in higher education: to develop an agricultural college, an engineering college, and to upgrade Vietnamese universities. I had an assistant to oversee the first two projects and I managed the third on my own.

**A. How were you recruited for the job?**

As I mentioned above, I guess I had some reputation for helping higher education in Columbia, the Dominican Republic, and Peru, so I was “recruited” for Vietnam to solve a problem. I said I would not go without my wife so I was named a “key employee” and my wife accompanied me. I did not want to go because I knew the USAID program in Vietnam was a mess! One time we had some 2,000 AID people in Vietnam. Nowhere would you find that many capable people—so it really was mostly dead work. USAID/Washington assured me that this was no longer true. We still had 1,200 bodies in USAID when I got there and one of the first people I met was a USAID guy I had fired in the Dominican Republic!

**B. What was the duration of your contract?**

I was in Vietnam for two years. My first action after moving out my predecessor was to fire most of my locals—they were not doing anything! We had taken over one-half of the University of Saigon Administration Building for our office, so I gave the office back to the University of Saigon and moved into an office in the USAID Building.

**C. How much time did you spend in the Republic of Vietnam? In the United States?**

I was in Vietnam from June 1971 to June 1973, except for a short vacation in Indonesia and Australia.

**D. How did your contract responsibilities mix with those of your other occupation or life in general?**

At first, I was alone in the Higher Education office, but later I got an assistant, *Ken House*, Education professor from Michigan State. He and I worked together with the team from the University of Florida working to develop the Agricultural University and with the University of Missouri Team working to develop the Engineering University. I handled all matters with the WSU-SP, which concentrated its efforts on the University of Can Tho, University of Hue, the Buddhist University, the University of Dalat, and the

Military Academy at Dalat. I traveled frequently to the universities and always accompanied the WSU-SP Team and consultants.

We ignored the University of Saigon, which was pretty much just a diploma mill and an escape from the draft. The professors were Francophiles who insisted on speaking French to me. Later I worked with a group of professors who broke off from the rest.

**III. Cultural Experience: Describe your impressions of and working relations with your Vietnamese associates and American counterparts. Any Local and Cultural Constraints?**

Language was difficult. I took Vietnamese lessons everyday and got enough language to get along with our maid and general conversation. Thuy, really my counterpart was very helpful and we became good friends with him and Du Ba Khe. Also, I had good friends at all the Universities—rectors of Can Tho, Hue, and the Saigon Buddhist University.

**A. What was the primary adjustment for the Vietnamese in reforming higher education? What was the primary adjustment for American educators in Vietnam?**

We had done a good job of training professors in the United States so we had a nucleus of good people. The rector of the University of Hue was really outstanding—he fled in 1975 and got a top job at the University of Notre Dame.

The main adjustment for us Americans was to have a deep understanding that the needs in Vietnam were different and the universities would be different. We did not try to make them “American universities.”

**B. Describe social and formal activities, e.g. dinners, recreation, tours, holidays. In Vietnam? In the United States?**

I had numerous parties at my place for Vietnamese educators and, of course, was entertained every time I visited a university. Of course, we also had lots of Embassy parties. At Vietnamese dinners we were always given a menu whether it was at a home or at a restaurant. I saved these and have a stack over an inch high!

**C. To the best of your recollection, describe the interaction and importance of American and Vietnamese customs, traditions, and language? To what extent did your American counterparts learn/understand Vietnamese customs and language while you were working with them?**

All my people studied Vietnamese, and we had little difficulty because we tried hard to be sensitive to the Vietnamese culture. We had good Vietnamese friends who helped us to acculturate a bit. Of course, the short-term consultants from the WSU-SP contract had interpreters and I always introduced them personally to the Vietnamese educators.

**D. How did you acclimatize to some of the social and cultural constraints, e.g. the food, housing, climate, work and administrative habits, and the sense of time in the United States?**

The military offered U.S. food in the commissaries and good restaurants in the BOQ's and officer's club, so some Americans "ate American." Also, the French had left fine restaurants and good bread. We never had a problem with food. We had a great maid who did our shopping at the market and was a great cook. When we had a dinner party we always had American dinners and Buddhist (meatless) dinners. The United States had set up compounds and we had a nice apartment.

**E. Did cultural and social differences hinder your goals? If so, how?**

My problem was just with the Francophiles at the University of Saigon. To give you an idea of why I avoided the University of Saigon, the Law school had 22,000 "students" in a small bungalow. The University of Saigon did not recognize an MA as being different than a BA, when, of course, in the U.S. a MA is really better than a "3<sup>rd</sup> cycle French doctorate."

**F. How did the war conditions impact on the working environment?**

The universities went on as if there was no war—that is except for a time in the 1972 year when the North Vietnamese attacked Hue.

Because of the war though, the University of Saigon people refused to move out to a new location at Tu Duc, a few miles out of Saigon. Finally, a group under the leadership of a woman professor with a U.S. PhD in Zoology started a School of Science at Thu Duc. I worked with her and also taught English classes at her branch of the University of Saigon.

**G. Give some examples of how the military situation affected the contract in higher education and Vietnamese education in general.**

Although the universities and the schools in the major cities went on as if there was no war, education suffered badly out in the countryside. In elementary education our main projects were to build schools out in the country and to create good elementary textbooks—the problems were that only a few of the so-called "schools" ever had teachers or classes. As to the five textbooks we created and printed, the Vietnamese teachers would not use them. When I left Saigon in June 1973 we had warehouses filled with the textbooks.

**IV. Identify Personal/Project Perspectives and Accomplishments:**

Actually, we left some good higher education institutions; besides universities we tried the WSU-SP project to start junior colleges. I went back to Vietnam last August and was pleased to find that the institutions were doing pretty well with the nucleus we left. Their problem is that they need more and better trained educators. The Soviet Union took up training where we left off, but it seemed the language problem limited the results.

**A. What the Vietnamese perspective? Historically, can you comment on the influences of Vietnam itself, China, France, and the United States?**

I found that a group of intellectuals were meeting to develop Vietnamese dictionaries in Chemistry, Biology, etc. so I sat in on their deliberation. Almost always they chose the Chinese equivalent—but I am sure the American terms are what is used.

**B. What was the USAID perspective on higher education?**

We recognized that Vietnam needed well-educated leaders and our best programs were sending good prospects to the U.S. for higher education.

**C. What was the Wisconsin Team perspective?**

Thanks to Bud Eagon and Lee Dreyfus the Team had a realization that we were helping to create “Vietnamese” institutions.

**D. How did these perspectives work together and with those of the Vietnamese?  
Can you describe some teaching, educational, administrative practices that you observed? What were the most pressing needs for reform in higher education?**

The technique of the consultants was to try to get the Vietnamese to identify problems and needs and then to work with their Vietnamese counterparts, many of which had been to U.S. universities, to find solutions.

A major problem was that the government had French colonial systems so it was hard to create workable modern methods.

The main need (and still is) better trained educators.

**E. What were the successes, in your mind, of the USAID in education?**

We never really got started in secondary education. We did help to develop libraries. We had a very limited effect on elementary education. So most of our gains were in higher education. We achieved this because we had a good combination of sensible consultants and very good Vietnamese educational leaders.

**F. Successes of the Wisconsin Team contract?**

The University of Hue, the University of Can Tho, and community colleges all got off to a good start and are now doing pretty well except for a shortage of well educated personnel.

**V. The End of the War: How did conditions change in the latter years of the conflict?**

I was only there until June 1973. I know though that after we had signed a “peace” treaty in the spring of 1973 our AID program was greatly reduced. My assistant and I were not replaced and our projects were not refunded.

**A. Did your commitment or attitude change during different stages of the project? Did you notice changes in the commitment of the RVN, the United States, others?**

A major problem was that the Vietnamese draft law was very, very weak so the University of Saigon was primarily for dodging the draft. In early 1973 we drafted with our Vietnamese leaders in the other universities a stricter draft law. Our military leaders wanted the draft law weakened but Ambassador Bunker backed me and we got the new law accepted. It was still weaker than I would have liked.

**B. How did Vietnamization change your project funding and objectives?**

The problem was not Vietnamization it was trying to get around the archaic French administrative and financial systems. The universities could not be frank and honest and survive the governmental systems.

**C. How did the mission of the project fit into or contribute to the overall U.S. effort in the Republic of Vietnam?**

I think it was very much a success story as I saw what was going on this August and in meeting there with some of the people trained under the U.S. project.

**D. What was the importance of the observation/study tours in Vietnam, Stevens Point, and other locations for your Vietnamese and American counterparts?**

My predecessors had setup observation tours for Vietnamese higher education people and most of these were from the University of Saigon. When I arrived my predecessor, Earle, had a team lined up to go. I sent them out and talked to them when they returned. I decided this was almost a waste—so no more “observation tours.” We spent our available funds for long-term graduate students.

**E. Reflect on the final outcome of the war. Did you anticipate the Communist victory?**

I really was not surprised. When we pulled our troops out in early 1973, the war went on except not so extravagantly. A United States Air Force general told me as he was leaving that he was afraid that the South Viet Army might run amok over Southeast Asia since it was the largest and best equipped in all of Southeast Asia. He need not have worried the South Viet Army did not have neither the will—nor skill—to fight.

**F. Can you find lasting accomplishments, despite the defeat of the United States and South Vietnam?**

As I said above, the universities and some other institutions started by the USAID are now thriving. I think that their regime used our beginning better than the old Thieu Government with the archaic system would have.

Interestingly, my counterpart Thuy got out as a boat person after being “reeducated” for 400 days. He was suspected as a CIA spy because he had a PhD from Michigan State

University. Now he goes back to advise on higher education and I went with him this August on his sixth return visit!

**VI. Impact on WSU-Stevens Point:**

- A. How was WSU-SP/UWSP changed by the contract?**
- B. What was the role of WSU-SP Foundation, Inc.?**
- C. What was the lasting impact of the contract in higher education on UWSP or the USA?**
- D. What was the lasting impact of the contract in higher education on Vietnam?**

Institutions in higher education have grown on the start we gave.

**VII. Can you comment on aspects of reform that remain in Vietnam, long after the final days of the contract in higher education?**

I have. I spent two weeks in Vietnam this August and visited the universities and was pleased to see what has happened.

- A. Can you comment on the visit to WSU-SP/UWSP by Vietnamese educators and representatives a couple of years ago?**
- B. Comment on the experiences of some of the Vietnamese who settled in America?**

I think the Vietnamese would make better comments:

Do Ba Khe (Vice Minister of Higher Education up to 1975)  
3415 Santa Paula drive  
Concord, CA 94518  
Thuy (Van Thuy Nguyen)  
13751 Saint Andrews Drive  
Seal Beach, CA 90740

- C. What was the lasting impact that can be important lessons for higher education in contemporary societies of both developed and lesser-developed nations?**

Planning is important but plans must be a bit flexible and the success of any plan depends on the ability of the people carrying out the plan.

**VIII. Any closing advice or comment: Please note any positive and negative recollections.**

My suggestion would be to look over I have written and try to derive specific questions that will get more significant answers. [If needed]

**A. Has your attitude toward the mission in higher education changed today?**

*No*

**B. Have you maintained any contacts with Vietnamese, USAID, and/or American educators you met during your contract years?**

*Yes*

**C. Any additional remarks and advice you believe are worth sharing. Do you feel the USAID contract in higher education has had a lasting impact on education in Vietnam today?**

*Very definitely!*

**D. Any personal contacts and addresses you can provide for my continuing research:**

Already done, as above.

Obviously, I will be glad to answer more questions and help in any that I can.

*Charles Green*

### **Interview: Burdette Eagon Interview, October, 2000**

Dr. Eagon and his wife Sarah invited me to their home for the day at Sunset Lake in Portage County, Wisconsin. I had heard only good things about this loving and dedicated couple and my research quickly gave me a true value of the Eagons' contribution to WSU-SP and the people of the Republic of Vietnam. Mrs. Eagon passed away the winter after my interview, I am thankful to have had the pleasure of making her acquaintance. I have met periodically with Bud Eagon while conducting my research as he remains both a vital resource and sincere humanitarian.

***Tom Reich:* Dr. Eagon, I want to thank you for your time and hospitality. You have beautiful home, and I notice it is filled with numerous Vietnamese artworks and books. Firstly, is it okay if I tape record our talk and use the material for my thesis and make it available at UWSP for educational purposes?**

Burdette Eagon: Yes, please feel comfortable doing so. I am very pleased you are doing your graduate work on this topic.

Have you seen this book? I just picked this up again recently. It pretty sums up from a Vietnamese background. It is written by a Vietnamese and takes their history up to about the early 1970's. He describes quite well in a distinct manner the Vietnamese people, their customs, their culture, their educational system, and lots of characteristics of the people. It is just a very good, concise book. If you haven't read it, it might put some context on the setting.

**Yes, thank you I would love to read the book. Long before I chose my thesis topic I was deeply interested in Vietnamese history and culture and of course the American involvement in Southeast Asia. My graduate studies have placed an emphasis on both American and Asian history. I have taken numerous classes in this context taught by our history faculty, including Dr. Hugh Walker's Vietnamese history, as well as Dr. Skelton and Dr. Brewer's history of the American Vietnam War. As part of my thesis research, acting on the advice of my graduate advisor and others, I have sought to set a wider context before I focused on Stevens Point. So I did research and write a broad history of higher education in Vietnam, tracing education from ancient times to Chinese influence and the mandarin system, up through the French colonial period and its system, which you would make valiant attempts to reform. I then looked at the broader picture of American involvement.**

**I specifically focused on the history of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), from which I research their history of USAID contracts with American higher institutions of learning. From this perspective I have attempted to prepare the setting for my focal point—the USAID contract in higher education between**

**Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point and the Republic of Vietnam. At that point I began researching in depth the materials held in the Vietnam Collection in the University Archives. I have done a broad survey of these resources, reading scores of documents, correspondence, seminar overviews, and official team reports. I have examined many of your own manuscripts and recommendations, including the four volumes published by the University Foundation entitled, *Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam: A Report by the National Education Study Team* and *Education Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization*. I am now conducting a number of oral history interviews to incorporate first hand accounts of the contract, and its historical and living impact. At this point, I am continuing to strive to present a specific chronicle of the university's role during the unique period of history.**

Do you have a summary of all the studies that were made by the Higher Education Team?

**Yes, I have looked at most of them, and have made copies of portions of these and the summaries.**

I just pulled this out, I don't know completely what I have—I have so much—but this starts at the beginning and traces the contract with summaries of the studies. This one is of our initial meeting in which the rectors determined what they wanted us to do. I do not know if this is in Archives, it may well be, but these are very good summaries of each study.

**Yes, some of these look familiar and I believe they match the reports held in Archives. I, too, have brought some materials with me, as you can guess I have piles of things in the office. I am sure you know how researchers and historians accumulate resources and tend to construct files with various materials and copies of this and that, all gathered during the many hours of research.**

In your research did you get back as far as Hoshol? Have you looked into anything done by him?

**Yes, I have encountered quite a bit of material connected to him. In fact, I have his name near the top of my list of those I wanted to ask you about.**

Hoshol was a Director of Programs in the Far East and then he zeroed in on and was assigned strictly to Vietnam. He passed away.

**I have one of his reports with me, dated 1971.**

Yes, I remember helping to put this together that was about the time he left.

**Let me just say that my research really appears you did a lot work connected to most of the reports.**

Another person who went over, and he has passed away too, was Clark.

**Yes, T.C. Clark, he was the USAID Higher Education Officer.**

The only one that is left that I know was there for a while is **Green, Charles Green**. He is in California; he would be someone you could contact. He is interesting fellow he is a political scientist type of person. I do have his address that you might want if you would like to contact him.

**Yes, I would like to do so. When did Hoshol pass away?**

He passed away about 8 to 10 years ago.

**How about the name Hascall?**

Hascall, we hired him, Hascall was hired out of some university for our consultant up at Hue to do records. I don't know if he is living or not.

**Was Hascall with the USAID?**

No, he was on our side of the contract.

**But, Green was USAID?**

Yes, Green was with the USAID. He was really the Director of Education in Vietnam, a counterpart with the Minister of Education of the Republic of Vietnam. We hoped always to work with counterparts, and not forcing anything but/or just making suggestions that would be helpful to them and some of them did accept these, some would fit in and some wouldn't. But it was a counterpart situation in which he worked directly with the minister of education.

Now, there is a minister of education still living. He really is American educated and he lives in California, too. Would you be interested in contacting him?

**Yes, I would like to explore that possibility.**

We have that in our Christmas card list. I will make a note on some of these things and dig them out for you.

**Did you say you do not still have contact with or gotten a card from Rector Chau? There was another Chau, was he at Can Tho or?**

No he was at Van Hanh. He is not the same one.

**I am looking for information on Rector Chau at Hue.**

I haven't looked through my materials enough to remember all of the names. But, we did work with Can Tho and actually we did some tentative sketching of the campus down there with Rowlett, the architectural firm. You must have run across some of those architectural books in the Archives.

**Yes, I found them very impressive for the time period.**

He was a fantastic guy, really. Typically, we went over there and built big cement buildings and then they were hotter than heck. Then what do you do with them? Then you air-condition them; then you have got to find electricity. It was sort of maddening the way we approached some things. This architect came through with airflows, and the kind of buildings where the air would move naturally.

**Designs more suited for the climate?**

Yes, but typically that is not the way we did a lot of things over there. We burdened them with some things really out of place.

**I am sure that is true. It was quite a different culture and environment, quite foreign to the American experience.**

Ok, here we go. I have written down on my list Minister of Education Tri, Chuck Green, and Chau who was at Notre Dame. We do communicate with a Vietnamese history professor who sends us publications.

Before I forget, you know we were there again in 1997, Sara and I.

**Oh, you were? Excellent!**

Of course they fly into Hue. You get your indoctrination up in Hue, but they treated us great. We were there for 10 – 12 days. Then we went from Hue down to Saigon. And of course they take you to the tunnels. I wanted to ask you if you were familiar with these books? We get a series of these from a Vietnamese friend, they are all written by Vietnamese authors; they are up

to Volume IV already. Oh, here is the Vietnamese person who served as our translator and guide during the time period the survey team worked in Vietnam. She came with the rectors to Stevens Point as a translator; she made three trips here. She is now in Washington, D.C.

**I wonder if this is the woman Dreyfus referred to? He said very good things about her and wanted very much to find out where she is now. Dr. Walker, also, spoke highly of her.**

Yes. Well now she is in Washington and sends us these books, part of a series put out by Vietnamese. The first time I saw her in Vietnam she was teaching science in an elementary school. Then she was hired by the USAID Education Office as sort of an interpreter. Then she came to school here at the university in Stevens Point, then went on to get her doctorate at the Catholic University of America in Washington. She was with the National Archives and Library of Congress for a while. She has since had a stroke, we communicate often, and in fact she just called the other day.

**So is she still working or is she retired? Is she still in Washington?**

She is retired now and still in Washington. She is on a disability of some kind, but she is very knowledgeable and likes to talk. Let me check if this is her address or not. I will get that for you.

**I will forward her address to Governor Dreyfus.**

The reason I mentioned her has been instrumental in trying to get Stevens Point back into the works over there in Vietnam. [Quynh-Hoa Nguyen] She was instrumental in bringing one of the Vietnamese educators here. Are you up to that point—the recent visit of the North Vietnamese here?

**To the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point? When did that occur?**

That was about two years ago. Actually we went to Vietnam in 1997, he must have been here in—Sara when was Linh here, just before we went to Vietnam, wasn't he?

Yes. That was the summer of 1997. He was here and she was trying to get Stevens Point re-involved in the educational follow-up, a continuation. Now she has no official role, but she has interest and connections in Vietnam and he was one of them. He was in—let's see his role was a graduate dean—his name is Lein. I am not sure if you have seen anything on this, I didn't submit anything on this to Archives.

**Looking at this now I do recall reading a brief report in Archives on the visit.**

We did meet with Tom George, Bill Meyer, Helen Godfrey, and Associate Dean of the Department of Education Leslie McClain-Ruelle. The Vietnamese were here for four days and we took them around trying to get interest and some kind of contractual agreement for money. That is the whole thing, nobody is interested unless there is funding for it. Bill Wresh was real interested in it; do you remember him?

**Yes. In fact, I had a class with him—*The Information Highway: Teaching with the Internet*. I recall he had been very active in Distance Education, even going to Africa to set up an educational network. I really enjoyed his class and he told me never to hesitate to call upon him as a special reference. I know he moved on to the administrative level at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh.**

Yes, Bill was about the only guy I could get going on this. He was really interested in it and was trying to get some funding. On this end he was the only guy that was really moving, but the funding was a real problem, then he left to Oshkosh. Sarah and I are alumni of Oshkosh and we go to our alumni meetings. I talked to Bill when we were down there. I said, "Bill, can't you get Coragen interested here?" Well, we fiddled around with e-mails for two months and Bill was gun ho, but then the chancellor down there said, "Well I think we should be more interested in Rotary and South America." So that ended that. But, we have another possibility. We have a daughter in the Minnesota University system. She's the Director of Programs up there in St. Paul. She said, "I have a friend in Bemidji." They have contracts in Korea and, well, states over there. Anyway, they were interested in seeing some kind of follow up for that, so they stopped in Vietnam and spent a week with the Vietnamese. And they offered a couple of scholarships and they got them; so the Vietnamese are up in Bemidji now. Their problem too is that the United

States does not have as much funding for programs in Vietnam. Although, I understand the World Bank has put some money into it.

**Bemidji State—now they were involved with the original WSU-SP contract team in Vietnam. Wasn't Harry Bangsberg, who was one of the team-members killed in the plane crash, from Bemidji State? I have the original team report with me; yes here he is listed as President of Bemidji State.**

Well Harry Bangsberg became chancellor for about a week or so. That [the plane crash] was the end of that. You probably have run into the name LaFollette. LaFollette was the one that got Albertson involved originally, originally from Ball State.

**And they all died in the plane crash, what a tragedy. Well I think it is very interesting that Bemidji has renewed ties to Vietnam.**

See Harry did not really get anything going up there in such a short time. But they had and have International Programs on quite an extensive scope. So I thought they might take over. I didn't care who did it, just so it would continue.

**So your interest continues. That points to one of the important questions of my research: Is there a lasting legacy of the contract's efforts at reform in Vietnamese higher education? Even after the North took control of the country. When you returned did you see anything? Or, in general, do you feel your efforts and those of the survey team had a lasting effect?**

Some of the basic principles are still there from the efforts that we made. According to Lein, there has been some change. The change largely is coming in the record systems; I know the record systems we instituted have pretty much continued up in Hue. But, the administrative aspects are probably still pretty much the same. We didn't do much with that. We really were working more from the ground up. One of the problems that we really had was the book system. Seemingly, they are doing their own printing and that kind of thing now. How much really has happened you cannot really tell until you get into it again. I understand and I worked on what they called a trunk system, what we would call a general education. I worked one summer on that program. I understand they are following through on making some basic requirements as they go through. And as they are able to, I think they are using more objective tests than they used to,

everything was totally subjective. These poor kids [students] would write for days and days and days, just to get out of high school.

The teaching system, I think, has changed somewhat because of the number of deans we brought here to observe teaching. Because, pretty much they were of French origin, as most of these professors were French in origin and the French educational system. Therefore, they followed in the path of totally lecture—no demonstration, very little assignments, other than their notes. You can understand one of the reasons that professors sold their notes, because they didn't have books and they didn't outside readings, they had very little library facilities, so they sold their notes.

**And it provided additional income for the professors?**

That is another problem. They had to teach maybe at three or four different schools, they would have to travel for this. They would have private schools, public schools. The public schools were better, the private schools would take a variety of kids and they were less disciplined in what they did. They could do almost anything in the private school. They were supposedly under the National Education Group, but obviously they couldn't do much but listen. It was an interesting mesh of educational programs plus the Vietnamese government, in South Vietnam, trying to improve themselves. They were really eager to improve as you see in the reports. They pretty much spelled out the kinds of things they really needed.

Saigon was the elite school of course. Hue would contest that because they were the older university of the original ones. Saigon was moving; the city itself of course was more cosmopolitan and more of a trade center. So they were wanting a better graduate program, a better curriculum, they were foreseeing and objected to this, the rectors that were worked with on higher education, they sort of objected to a specific curriculum/training program like electricians, carpenters, contractors, and architects. But, they really saw the need for it. They did have a

School of Architecture, but what we were working with them was to set up a general education program and then let the college students specialize in areas at the university itself.

The second study, I chaired, was the one on elementary, secondary and vocational/technical education in Vietnam. That was another thing that they wanted very badly.

**Yes, I have read your proposals for reorganization.**

They had actually moved and started construction of the Thu Duc campus, which would have helped in that direction. But, the problem was that these deans themselves all being French or mainly French oriented— we had two or three were not, they were of a British or United States educational background. They didn't really have time enough to get anything going, because you know from 1969 when they got things going they only had a couple of years to make any impact. Some of those ideas that they started with, I think, are still there. Of course, when the South fell they went to prison camp where they were reeducated. So there was only one person that I really knew, who was here, he was the Dean of Education, who stayed with the old regime. When I say the old régime, I mean he stayed with his communist buddies and he is still there, but, not the other ones.

**Who was that?**

I can't think of his name now.

**What about the Minister of Education who was assassinated? What do you recall about him?**

He did come to Stevens Point for a seminar.

**Yes, and it was shortly after he returned to Vietnam that he was killed.**

After the war many of the deans were able to escape. The Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy lived with us for a while. I still communicate with him. He got a Ford Foundation Grant to study PCB's in Lake Michigan, then he went on to cancer research in California, and now works with a private company in cancer research. As Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy he

had his own pharmacy factory in Vietnam surrounded by beautiful lily pads and a pond. He was a real industrialist, but the problem was he spoke very little English and had a rough time when he first got to the United States. That was true for many of them when they resettled here. Now the one at Notre Dame was a real exception, he was very fluent in English and education. The former minister of education who now is in California is a similar success story; he got his doctorate from the University of California. Most of these people are now well established because they had good educational backgrounds. Those kids have done just fantastic. We visit two Vietnamese in \$2-million-dollar homes down in Texas who are petroleum engineers. Some are doctors, dentists, and lawyers with big spacious homes.

**They must have worked very hard.**

They were straight 'A' students. They had the opportunities and they are very adaptable people. I think the book I gave you is a good summary of the problems they faced when they got here. You know the language, the climate, and the vast cultural change—not being family centered and orientated. But, they still have retained their family center. We go to a picnic every year by this one family that all gets together from all over the United States. It is amazing. Some of these kids were graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. These are the kids who were sponsored here. We sponsored over a hundred families here.

**Was that during the contract period or at the end?**

At the end; it was a desperate time, I just signed the papers for them all. It is interesting that the Catholic University at Dalat, with Father Lee, was very open to changes. Rector Chau was also open, a little more concerned over buildings and libraries and things like materials rather than the conceptual changes, which of course I think would be more difficult for a Buddhist monk to change. He was more of a materialistic type of a rector. But, just as an example of cooperative viewpoints, the Buddhist rector and the Catholic rector actually agreed to be housed together here.

Bill Vickerstaff, have you contacted him?

**I wrote to him but have not as of yet gotten a reply.**

He operates Dean Witter in Minocqua. Bill was probably the other person [besides Bud Eagon himself] that did more on this than anyone else, as far as the business aspect. He was sort of the coordinator and administrator of the funding.

**Especially on the home side, yes, I talked with Governor Dreyfus extensively about Vickerstaff's role. Another facet of my research and that has stirred my interest is the role of the Stevens Point Foundation.**

We had to set the Foundation to handle the project independently of state funding.

**Dreyfus explained it as a means of controlling your own purse strings.**

That is right, it wouldn't have worked otherwise.

**When you look at the Foundation today you really see it operating in a much different and enlarged role, rather than strictly a support mechanism. It is notable, to me, that the Foundation is an outgrowth of the contract in higher education. The Foundation would make an interesting and perhaps controversial thesis topic for someone else.**

Yes, it did come out of that time period. I think I used the Foundation for my other contractual things—the Indian Programs for instance, the Menominee tutor program, and the Pride Program. All those started initially, we started through the Foundation funding, and we did a lot with the two-year Native American Program in the Southwest through the Foundation. It has its advantages.

**I noticed in my research there was a Vietnamese Foundation set up, too, and the Asian Foundation that has sponsored papers and other reports.**

I do not know the specifics; oh those are international foundations. That is where some of the funding for a lot of liberal arts schools comes out of the Asia Foundation. They do not touch state programs, but it is largely private funding that does more work in literary and library materials.

**Yes, I seen numerous books donated at our library from these groups and I have encountered a number of reports that they sponsored.**

They do contractual work. A friend of mine, who is no longer living, was director of all the libraries in Vietnam. He was from the University of Michigan. He started reclassifying books in Vietnam. If you can imagine, there you went into a library and books were grouped as small, medium, and large. Topically, forget it. John used to tear his hair because he would get all the books lined up and classified and he would go back and find them switched back to these three sizes. So that was another whole project that the University of Michigan had the contract was to reform the libraries.

**That is an excellent example of the hurdles you and other USAID contractors faced. I have read your own recommendation for better library resources, specifically dealing with the expansion and restructuring of libraries and the need for library materials.**

Well that all ties together because the professors really didn't have libraries to refer their kids to do any reading in, and it wasn't part of the French educational system to do much outside, it was all internal work. There were very few libraries; the elementary schools were far ahead in the whole process of educational change, which was amazing. I believe it was the University of Illinois (possibly Southern Illinois University) that began Vietnam in starting textbook production. I left a whole series of textbooks up in the library, I had a whole set of stuff and it was a good place to leave them. The Vietnamese developed a very good set of texts, they did over time I do not know about now. I doubt very much if they really threw them out.

I think obviously the Central-South Vietnam is far ahead in educational programs. In 1997, in Hue we visited childcare centers and kindergarten programs and they looked very good. These kids worked very hard and we could communicate with them. It was really quite interesting and quite gratifying to see.

**You said before that during your return visit you visited Hue and Saigon, did you visit any of the institutions of higher education that you had advised during the tenure of the USAID contract?**

We didn't get to go to Can Tho, but I have got pictures of the old university in Saigon. It's still there and it still functions and it is still crowded.

**Are the Catholic and Buddhist educators still involved in higher education at the institutions where they worked during the wartime period?**

Yes, I really think they are. We didn't get a chance to see them as we were only in Saigon for three days and didn't get around to see other things. We had to go with the tour group. I did get out and go to the large university. Lein had invited us over for a family meal at his home, after he had been here, and we had a meal that you would never forget. In fact, when he invited us, I invited Bill and Ann Stelstra.

**Yes, I have talked to Bill Stelstra several times about their visit; I was planning on talking to him more about his experiences during the period of the USAID contract.**

He hadn't been there before. This was an elder hostel tour that started in Thailand and went to Hue and up through Hanoi.

**Stelstra himself was basically Student Administration or Student Affairs during the timeframe of the project?**

Yes. He had quite an interesting connection because his two sons were really in radical opposition to the war.

**Yes, I informally discussed their experiences with him.**

Stelstra's were instrumental in caring for families here too. They had sponsored families and students as most of us here in the community were to do with the Vietnamese students. Frank Crow was very involved with sponsoring and helping the students.

On our return tour it was interesting to see what they had done with early childhood education, because they of course had a lot of these programs staged with us. They wanted to show us what they were doing. I would say that they did have a nice and interesting program. We got to talk to teachers and students, but I didn't get to talk to many university professors that

were involved other than Lein and this ladies brother [pointing to some correspondence] who is a literature teacher. Lein was in mathematics.

I would say, by enlarge, USAID were quite strict on the qualifications of getting a contract—once you got it—you were free to do and maneuver within it to do the kinds of things that had to be done. Now you always ran into federal restrictions here and there, but by enlarge between the people we worked with in Vietnam and the relating of business aspects of Vickerstaff, we really were and Bill was very clever in working in through those kinds of situations.

**Which is important. As an agency you think it was very cooperative.**

Yes, I would say so. I know a lot of people have real objections to them as being, too, directive. But, I think again it depends pretty much on the person in the mission field, as they call it. The mission field in Vietnam had always been a very flexible one. Hoshol was flexible within the restraints, and he probably understood the federal workings more than anyone, because he had been with the USAID program for probably years. He knew the basic people to work with. In fact, Bill Vickerstaff and I went to Washington and worked out the contracts with him. They had a goal we had to meet. They set them down and spelled them out pretty good in these papers.

**What about the state department? Did you have contacts with it?**

Really we had very little contact with them. On all of these occasions you meet with the ambassador, the ministers, its one of those things the United States seems to want to do with big affairs, you have to dress up. You always got this every time you go there; you have to formally go through the process. You have to have dinners, etc. That kind of thing is a pain in the neck.

**I understand that is the way you viewed it. Dreyfus, of course, approached this differently.**

Yes that is the way I viewed that aspect. Dreyfus probably enjoyed that stuff and was good at it.

**Although Dreyfus didn't have much good to say about the ambassador or the state department, he did talk about the dinners and being shuttled around in a helicopter, as he was treated like someone with the ranking of general staff.**

He was working with ROTC for some of that time. He used that very well. When Sarah and I started a semester abroad program in Taiwan he insisted that we go to Korea and go to the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel. Low and behold he had things arranged for us that you cannot believe. We and our 17-18 students were wined and dined and escorted around because of Dreyfus's ROTC contacts.

**Yes, he told me about his experiences in Vietnam where he had met an American army colonel who later became a general with U.S. forces in Korea. He talked about his trip to Korea as the governor of Wisconsin and the special treatment and precautions that his group received. He described his military connections as being a positive because at times in would override other things that might be slowing things down. He recounted his friendship with Laird and Froehkle as having being of great importance in overcoming obstacles that the state department often wanted to impose. Especially, considering that the contract was being operated under wartime conditions.**

Actually, after Albertson was killed in 1967, I think I was there within two weeks. I flew into Hue, flying over the glitter of the plane crash. We worked up there for a time and I think when we left they bombed the hotel the next night. We flew in a helicopter from one place to another, in certain areas of DaNang and Dalat. I would be curious as to how much change has taken place in the Buddhist University. The mentality, religious and cultural background would prohibit change. On the other hand rector Chau was a go-getter and aggressive guy in his own quiet way. He had money from foundations in the United States, individually. As I said, half of our Christmas card list is Vietnamese.

**How many times did you travel back-and-forth to Vietnam during those years?**

I think it was nine or ten times. That was time when only Pan American Airlines flew to that area, it was an ungodly long trip. I remember one time I tried to get my team to Vietnam it was the same time as the war started in Israel and the Middle East in 1967. I got as far as Japan and I got the instructions to hold, I couldn't get anywhere because the U.S. government had

stopped everything because of the war in Lebanon. The war held my team up, for I think two weeks. I had to sit in Japan and wait to move.

It was interesting just traveling around in Vietnam because they had Air Vietnam, which was a CIA outfit or something. We landed one day in the runway and ran out of gas. It was crazy, think of it, we ran out of gas and had to be towed in.

**Thankfully you made it as far as the runway.**

There were a lot of crazy little things like that happened, totally unorganized. The Vietnamese government itself was all-askew as to things, they were disorganized and communications were bad. So you get out of you were in a totally different world. We went up to the Mountain-yard area to look at a school, it seemed like they were as far away from Saigon as the Antarctic is from us, as far as what was happening. Every part of Vietnam is totally different. Can Tho is totally an agricultural area, their mind set is entirely different—they did not want to be bothered too much. The rector there, Rector Chau Ho, however was very interested in experimentation, so he had experimental plots in his university. I would say the rectors were pretty independent in how they operated. Saigon was different.

**When you first started to develop recommendations, did they have standing rectors that were free-minded?**

Yes. They were pretty good. Saigon was probably the most conservative.

**Were they independent or did they have a system mentality?**

Oh no, they were pretty independent. I doubt very much if they had ever met and talked with each other. Because, they were governmental appointees and they were really interested when they got the chance to sit down and talk to each other. It was fascinating to bring them together. One of the projects and one of things they saw as being good for themselves was the aspect to travel a lot and the opportunity to get out of the country. Sometimes you wondered about it, but they seemed as interested in the travel as their interest in the educational aspect of it.

Their goals were to travel a lot. So one of the things we would do was to take them to places where they could see things. For instance, the University of Hawaii was/is agricultural; Chau Ho was really interested in that. The Asia Foundation sponsored our visit there. Their travel across the United States was just amazing in the number of places that they visited.

**Did you serve, from Stevens Point, as the coordinator of these travels?**

Yes, but we couldn't go or do it all. We had a lot of staff members that did travel with them. Leonard Gibb traveled with them a lot. Dave Coker, of student affairs at WSU-SP traveled with them a lot. Those kinds of things were really enriching to the rectors. They got to ask questions and see different kinds of things being done. That was really one of our main purposes, to broaden them. But what they wanted, not what we were trying to impose on them. We were very careful in everyone that we hired to really instill in them, "now don't be forcing yourself and your ideas on them, show them what is possible and then let them work it out with themselves. That's why we had a pretty much one to one relationship with each of our people. In most all of our studies, if I could arrange it, I got a person that would listen to them. The Vietnamese and the USAID coordinator in country would work with the Minister of Education and get the kind of person that would talk and ask questions. In the old French system you didn't ask questions.

It was interesting in the changing of the elementary schools—this particular person was a demonstrator that traveled around, and this was an USAID project, did science presentations in the schools and carried the science equipment with him. Otherwise the schools didn't have any of that and the teachers didn't have the background for it either. That was quite interesting.

**What better place to start than the elementary level?**

That is why we were very pleased when we returned. My wife has a Master's Degree in early childhood in mathematics. To see what they were doing with those kids up in Hanoi was interesting. How it got started is interesting question. Because, obviously there weren't any

women that were ministers or people at the higher level in education—no women whatsoever. But in the elementary level there were a lot of women and a lot of men teachers in elementary education, too.

**Is Gibb still around?**

Yes, but I don't know where.

**Did they actually have success, as I read in one of reports recommending setting up educational autonomy, constitutionally or legally, to have them self-governing in any fashion?**

I don't think that is going to happen. In fact, Linh indicated that it just depends who is director or head of the Program of National Education as to what happens. His brother was a big wheel in national education and he thought he could get some help there for invites and money, but no way. I think still at this point the communists have a good firm handle on it, and if they handle it right, what the heck, maybe it's ok for them. It just doesn't seem to be moving very fast. I think that something is going to have to happen though. For example, one of the places they took us in Saigon, which was when we were there before was swamp and wetland, they had totally filled that in and built an industrial complex on it. Along with that complex they showed us, or told us anyway, that they were building an international school because they were going to have all this business and industry there and they would need that because people that were coming in with families would need a place for their schools. It was a beautiful set up. What has happened I don't know, I have no idea, it hasn't opened.

One of our daughters teaches in international schools and she has been in the circuit long enough. She was just here she spent the summer with us. She's been in Israel, Japan, and Egypt, so she has friends around the world. They told her that a lot of those hired in Vietnam in international programs have lost their jobs; they were just discontinued. In fact, they were told at Christmas time not to come back for second semester. Evidently, the economic situation was such that people aren't industrially traveling and building. So they have curtailed that and it

doesn't look real good. Of course, that is true and has happened in other places in the international schools because of the business slump in Japan and elsewhere. They have real problems.

**American business interests have been very hesitant to invest in Vietnam. In general, there are many interests in America that do not seem to be able to get past the image of Vietnam as a war not a people.**

Yes, but I would say in the long run, if I were young and had money to invest, I would say in twenty years it will be another Taiwan or Korea because it is just ideally located. They have got in and out transportation, they have a good climate, they have got workers—cheap labor. I would say basically a very work ethic orientated people. That is a beautiful layout they have waiting for industry, just fantastic.

So, I would say the chances for improvement and development of an educational system in the future looks pretty rosy. I would say if the U.S. could forget the idea that they lost the damn war; that is the whole thing. To those people over there, to the Vietnamese it was just another war, they had so many, and this is just another one. They didn't even talk about it, they didn't even think about it. The Vietnamese we meet, and we probably met a hundred or a couple of hundred during our tour, they do not even think anything of it. We [the United States] have got a chip on our shoulder. I think business wise, business can get over that, but if the politicians can or not is another thing. That is why the contracts we get to help Vietnam now are probably only for business in a very limited way. I would say now for a contract to happen, if there were dollars offered, and Stevens Point applied for them—and this what they were trying to get going—I think it could be a fantastic program. They are ready for it, as they get more industry they have got to have more trained people. The Vietnamese are fantastic in picking up things like technology; they work with that all the time now. Even this old dean I met who was ready to retire, he works in a lab with all kinds of technology.

**Did Wisconsin State University-Stout have an advisory vocational program in Vietnam?**

The UW at Stout does have a number of international programs too. John Furlong, who was with me on the team, was an assistant to the chancellor in Stout. He stopped here a couple of months ago. But, the WSU- Stout was not involved with the USAID contract in Vietnam. A couple of the others on the team have died, Frickle died. Fred from Ohio passed away.

**Fred Harris?**

Yes, he died just a couple of years ago. He was with Dreyfus, two very different personalities.

**Yes, I read a letter in Archives that Dreyfus had written saying he just could not get along with Harris. He was writing to Vickerstaff, and was very frank remarking that he would do his best in a difficult situation.**

Fred was one who wanted everything very honest, straight foreword, and it had to be done in detail and the other guy is totally the other way. So I could see how Fred and Dreyfus would clash. Well let me look through some more of my materials, there is a lot here and it is interesting how much I have forgotten.

Well you sure have a lot there, I am very impressed by the volumes I have read and the materials you have here. It reflects even more on the actual work that was being done by you.

You know it is the kind of work that it would be easy to sit down and say this is the way to do it, but you just can't do it that way because it wouldn't ever be successful.

**Yes, indeed, you were working in an underdeveloped country in a wartime situation.**

You are dealing with a different culture and different ideas of budget and dollars. Say what you want but Vietnam is really, North, Central, and the South. The South is the youngster and the old North looks at the youngster as the geyser, with radicals down there. The old far North is totally different than Central. You could sense this when traveling from Hanoi south.

**In my studies I have found that these divisions go back to ancient times.**

Sure, it was night and day. If you try to coordinate all those things it is real difficult. Luckily we were dealing with only one part and the part that will probably move. The South will move, the Central has real possibilities, and the North is pretty stayed, they're more French. The geographical features are such too that it makes a great difference. The mountain range going right down through the middle sort of isolates the sea side from the other mountainous side. Then you get way south and into the lowlands and rice paddies. The people are very different.

**Yes, I agree coordinating and mediating those differences would be very difficult.**

Fortunately, they do have the family ethic and sense of community ideas working for them, and that in Vietnam is pretty universal I suppose because of the way the migrations took place. There is strictly a Chinese orientation, although the Vietnamese may not want to hear that. The movement down to the south was influenced by Chinese pressure.

**I also agree that the Vietnamese will never forget their ancestral lineage. I know that was always an issue during the war as the hamlet program failed and other American strategies failed in part because of America's problem with understanding the Vietnamese and their history.**

Yes, it is interesting. I think you will find these things reinforced by the books I gave you; they are written from the Vietnamese perspective. Even today, as part of the Vietnamese immigration picture, they all get together even as they are all over America; they are pretty much of a means that they can do that. Some are out in the Silicone Valley; others are economics professors, petroleum engineers, and medical doctors.

**In the latter years of your work with the WSU-SP USAID contract in higher education did you anticipate the South actually losing? How could you plan with a war going on?**

Well you didn't let the war shape your plans. Things to us were sort of like at a standstill as far as we were concerned, but you did see, I think, a lot of changes in deanships, rectorships, but that was probably due to the weakness of the leadership. It just appeared.

**Was this a problem in governmental leadership?**

Needless to say the government really controlled things in higher education pretty tightly. I suppose they always had fears of communistic leanings of certain people, and if they saw one they made a change. I don't know if they really paid much attention, as you look at that period of time that whole thing was very shaky.

**As far as the changes that accompanied American efforts at Vietnamization, how did that correlate to any adjustments within your project?**

Actually, we weren't far enough along in the contracts to do that. You know five years in a contract is still a startup period. I would say it takes longer than Americans realize to work and orient or become orientated to that culture and ways. You know I read things now that I didn't know happened or was going on then. Even in the educational field there were some things that you just didn't realize. What do you do in just a few years? You get an overview. You don't look at it as we were going to deescalate, we were still in the building stage.

**Did you feel from other channels or contacts that the war was changing or things were becoming even more unstable?**

No, I don't think so. We were going gung ho. We worked on things that were to be there for the long term. For instance, the record system up in Hue still exists. Hascall set up a way to get kids registered, identified, put down in a folder—that was a big change and that still exists. Lein told me that in Hue they have a system like that. I think they are still toying with the credit system. You know they never had a credit system?

**Yes, I saw that was one of your primary recommendations.**

We hired Hascall from the Educational Testing Systems, the ETS. He was working with them in a testing program for college admissions, which they are nuts about that over there and it is all about diplomas and records—that kind of records. So he was working with them on changes in their testing program, because those poor kids in high school spent day and days and

days being tested they don't eat or sleep. If they are ambitious it is important to them, they have got to get into the college and there are literally thousands and thousands of applicants and they can only take so many, it is getting almost that way here.

They had only so many places and they would pack them in, but even then there were thousands who would never get in, so they wait and wait and wait to get in. Then they go to their classes—go to their class—with no books, they take notes if they can or if they wait to the end of the semester and buy the notes they then stay up hours and hours and hours studying these notes. If they don't pass they would take it [the test] over again, they would keep on taking it over again. So it's a little different!

I am going to get some more coffee, how about you? Can I warm yours up?

**Yes, thank you. I have been so interested in our talk that I still have some left. It still tastes good, you can freshen it up. Thank you.**

***(Interview tape # 4, interview with Eagon continues.)***

**Could you describe for me the university setting in Vietnam?**

The classrooms in the university usually were very large, they just packed in as many as you can. You know that half of them couldn't hear what was going on. Some kids [students] were like our kids, except we have an attendance policy in our university in a lot of classes, in Vietnam because of the way higher education operated they would register and then never go to class until it was time to buy the notes.

**What would they do in the meantime?**

They are the most contented people to sit around and talk with friends. Probably for many Americans the hardest thing to see was young men walking around holding hands. Here, my god it wasn't done then. There it was just friendship for 15 to 20 year-olds, it was part of their culture. For some of those in our groups this was just terrible, especially for those in of our

age in our tour group, if it were girls people wouldn't notice. American's still do not know beans about Vietnamese culture. A lot of those little things bothered some of the people we hired.

**So did you try to educate yourself in the culture so you would have some preparation and understanding?**

Not really, we just got into it so quickly. To some extent our background was helpful, our daughter Sally was in the AFTC Program when she was in high school in Afghanistan; that is a very different culture. I think basically you have to be the right kind of person not to jump at conclusions. You have got to listen and move slow in some ways. You have got to eat those rotten eggs, hundred-year-old chicken eggs. No actually, there wasn't any knowledge in America, nobody knew much about that culture. I bet you don't find many writings before our involvement.

**Well the French sure didn't understand Vietnam or make much of an effort to recognize Vietnamese culture.**

Oh no, they sure didn't. They said, "Lets use them, lets select a few out to be in on things and serve us." That is about what they did.

**I wonder, in general, if America attempted to understand this history as much as they should have? American involvement might have had a different outcome had the U.S. done so, or it might have had a different start even if we had looked and listened a little more.**

Yes, that is for sure. I am not sure who would be the culprit in history. As you check into things, is it Johnson? Is it Kennedy? I think it is just a misreading.

**I think so, too. It is much more than one individual.**

I think in the book I gave you; you will see that if you want to destroy Vietnam you have got to destroy the family.

**I know Dr. Walker always emphasized the significance of the family in his Vietnamese and Asian history classes.**

Hugh has always been very good. Do you know Mary Croft?

**Not well, I have met her in connection to my work in the UWSP Tutoring Center and Library. As a tutor I was aware that the Tutoring Center was named after her and I talked with her briefly at the library holiday party. Also, I was at the College of Letters & Science Banquet when Helen Godfrey and she were the keynote speakers. Mary Croft really impressed me with her recounting of her travels and experiences. She was certainly a woman ahead of her times.**

You know she and her husband Al with a couple of their kids were in Vietnam in 1964-65 under USAID on a communications project. This was before Al came here to the University. So she has a background of that period of time. She is a good friend of ours; we sat across from her last Saturday night. She comes out here quite often. That little period in history is interesting, too. The French were still more intact educationally in early 1964. I know Al was involved in the communication process, in some area. So I guess the connections have been going on for some time.

**How about Mrs. Albertson? Do you still have contact with her? Doesn't she live close to your neighborhood? I was thinking of possibly interviewing her.**

Yes, in fact we took her with us Saturday to the celebration honoring Helen Godfrey.

**Where was that dinner? I think Dreyfus was there, too.**

It was at the Stevens Point Country Club. I ask her questions about those times now and then, but she does not remember much. She had five little kids when all this happened and she really doesn't remember much of it. I ask her about LaFollette the other night and she didn't recall much. He was at Ball State, eventually, he had some USAID connection then and urged Jim [Albertson] to get involved in the USAID role in Vietnam. Then they were over there with the Higher Education Team and Jim came back just before the report was finished and said there was a need within the National Education Study Team for an assessment of elementary-secondary-vocational education and asked me if I would head that up. He went back and was killed. In the meantime, the people over there had contacted me and we had begun the contract on that. But, Jim was killed right away and I went over within a week or two and helped finish the initial contract for the report on higher education. So then we went right on with the

proposals for reorganization of elementary-secondary-vocational-technical-adult education and then continued with higher education. So she was busy with the five kids at the time.

**Mrs. Albertson worked at the University didn't she?**

Well, in later years. She went back to school. She had been an art student at the Chicago Art Institute, and she finished her degree here in [Interior] Design. Then she was employed by the University to work with the renovation and designs of the housing units. She worked there until she retired just last year. So she is younger than me. It was interesting, Jim had just finished the preliminaries on the study on higher education and he came back [to WSU-SP] because there was a need for the next study [on elementary-secondary-vocational-technical-adult education] and we all visited and that is where I got involved in it. Really, it was just like that, your chancellor is off in Vietnam and you are at home not paying much attention to what is going on until you get the call. I was Dean of Education at the time.

**Excellent, thanks for that insight. When Dreyfus came here he went about reorganizing WSU-SP, merging Education within the College of Professional Studies. What was your job after they no longer had a Dean of Education?**

Well then Dreyfus left and Ellery was chancellor [president] and I became vice-chancellor [Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs] until they got a new chancellor and Ellery switched back to vice-chancellor. I don't remember my title, I was in charge of thirteen areas—one of them was the library, [Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Educational Services and Innovative Programs.] Dreyfus was an interesting guy to work for, he let you know what he wanted you to do and then he left you alone.

**Yes, he described things in those terms. He said he liked to surround himself with good, knowledgeable individuals who he could let run. He looked to specialists who were even more capable than he was in important areas.**

He didn't bug you once you got going.

**I am not sure if he had the same type of relationship with the faculty on campus or endorsed his style? To this day I think certain things are debatable.**

Especially to this day—after his speech on Saturday night.

**Really?**

Well, he admits it he has got an ego. But, he was a great guy to work for. We developed some very innovative programs. Some worked, some didn't. We helped people, we helped Hugh Walker with publications, and we did a lot in the way of Indian Programs with David Wrone. Is Dave still there in the History Department?

**He retired. But, I see him all the time as he continues to write and research using materials in our Special Collections and Government Documents at the UWSP Library.**

But, he is still teaching Menominee language?

**Yes, off campus.**

We worked a lot with Dave and Jim Forchete.

**Right, they still have projects in the library.**

Actually, Dreyfus let you do some innovative things and lots of those programs really worked out. Which is important in the field of education, you need to have a mindset open to change and innovation.

The Tutorial Center started in that way. Actually Paul, Sarah and Carl and I used to go up to the Menominee Reservation and then tutor at night. Then we got more and more people tutoring, college kids used to go up then to tutor at night. It started then that the whole Tutoring Center got started with Mary Croft. All of those programs had to start somewhere.

**Yes, I worked for several years myself in the Tutoring Center with the Reading Adjunct Program.**

Then we started the Student Counseling Center.

**Oh, that is housed in Delzell now.**

We were the first residents of Delzell. Sarah and I, we had one or two kids and we had one little room. In 1952, I was the Director of Delzell Hall. Hansen said one day, “we are going to build a dorm, and I thought maybe you would like to live there? Of course, we can’t pay you anything for it.”

**Did you get free room and board?**

Free room, but you had to declare that on your income tax. I was a 6<sup>th</sup> grade campus schoolteacher at the time. We lived there until I went to get my doctorate. We came back and we had three kids then. Later some of the faculty members had been kids in my dorm. Don Benz was one of the kids, he just retired from the education Department. Did you ever have Frank Crow?

**Yes, I had him for American Intellectual History.**

Do you ever go see him? He enjoys visitors.

**I know Dr. Neil Lewis visits him often. I went to the memorial service for his wife.**

Have you read the *Last Days of Morey (sp)* or some title like that? It is a new book about a student who goes back to visit his old professor and what insights he gets from the old gentleman. Sarah do you remember the name of that book? *Tuesdays With Morey*. It is a fascinating book, Helen Godfrey referred to it in her last speech we attended.

Now I have some other kinds things here that you might want to look at, I didn’t really know what you had looked at. This is interesting if you are interested in their literary things. Let’s see, here is an evaluation of school records. Here is a group of Vietnamese artists, with some of their travels and sketches and other stuff.

Here is the new idea for the industrial park that we worked on for a vocational program. Here is a letter from 1972 from my old Vietnamese assistant who was a great guy. He tried to escape with his family and I have never heard from him since. I have a lot of personal letters I

can share with you; I don't know if they would be of any value for your research. You are certainly free to look through my materials to see if there might be anything that would be helpful. I assume that by this time you have so much stuff you don't know what to do with it all.

**To a degree that is very true, but I really appreciate your offer. You and your materials have to rank at the top of my research, it never hurts to look and be aware of what primary resources are available.**

Here is an example of a book that was published probably in 1965 by the Ohio USAID group and this one is in handy crafts students, which is what their elementary schools did. They let the boys take Manual Arts and the girls had to take Home Economics in upper elementary school. Here is a textbook that was produced, this one is in reading, and one in childcare entitled *My Sister* for grades four and five published by the Ministry of Culture and Education funded by the contract with Ohio State University. This is what I gave a whole set of, in English, to our university library. I, also, took a couple of thousand slides into the library. Here is a manuscript sent to me from a friend who wrote this, it is pretty much detail of geography and everything of Vietnam, people, and it has a lot of detail.

**Did you use that for your work?**

No, I got this afterwards.

**I noticed in your initial report on higher education in Vietnam that you wrote a chapter on the geographical setting and summary of historical background. How did you research that?**

Pretty much from other materials, step into the other room and I will show you. Hi Sarah, have you got your reading lamp—how are you doing sweet lady? Here is the reference to the rector at Hue, I can give you that information. Here is an e-mail from him in France, at the Sorbonne in Paris. I am not sure where all the books I used are exactly.

**Did you have any contact with President Thieu?**

No, I saw him at parties and the like but I had no involvement with President Thieu. I think everything in Vietnamese education worked independently, there just didn't seem to be any

coordination. Even if they were appointed they didn't seem to have much connection anyway or work together. Now I think there are certain mandates being handed down, I think the people who are in favor of these are getting their opinions set—the Tommy Thompson approach to education. The stuff I have out in the garage is just a lot of detailed information.

**Well I do not want to ask you to search through everything.**

Are you going to use pictures?

**I may try to incorporate some. Governor Dreyfus also offered to share some with me. I am not quite at that stage. It might work will to have some to supplement my written work. It could serve to put one in the setting and times.**

We have pictures of the general university setting.

**For now, could you talk a little more about the settings? The University of Saigon was the largest and was overcrowded and split up all over the city, correct?**

It really outgrew the conditions. It started out with just a few thousand but by the early 1970's was upwards to thirty-some thousand students. I am not sure how many of those actually attended classes?

Saigon was really a university that was all over the place in seven different locations and it really grew, there was probably thirty thousand and another one hundred thousand waiting to get in. Of course, Hue was a different situation; it was all right there.

**How was the University of Hue affected by the Tet offensive?**

Interesting enough they didn't seem to hurt it too much. You know they had a certain amount of respect for that kind of an institution.

Can Tho was down there by itself and that is central Vietnam. Dalat is up there by itself and it is central. Van Hahn University had a couple of buildings in Saigon, but Saigon University was really all over the city.

It is interesting that the difference between public and private is almost opposite of what we looked at it as. The public schools were good and private schools were supposedly supervised

but never were supervised. Kids that couldn't get in public schools and didn't do well went to the private schools.

**This is a beautiful collection of Vietnamese artwork that you have, who is the woman is this one?**

This one I think is from Quanyin-Hoa. She is a really quite an aggressive Vietnamese woman, to do the things she has done. That drawing is one is one of my favorites pictures, it is of two Vietnamese girls. I got that in 1968 and brought it home. This is a fantastic array of artwork; they do so much with cloth. They do so much on the eggshell. Of course the costume are really attractive, the conical hat is the worker's hat. The Brass work and Pewter on the top ledge is Vietnamese stuff. The Ivory and eggshell inlay are all Vietnamese. The vase is Vietnamese. One of the rectors gave me this sculpture. My other favorite sculpture is the one of the Vietnamese fisherman. Most of these really reflect their pride and joy.

**Yes, I like that one, too. Everything is just wonderful. The many gifts and correspondence you still receive from the Vietnamese really shows your ongoing connection. I think this connection is true testimony of appreciation that works both ways between your Vietnamese friends and Sarah and you.**

This report is part of what you already have, it is part of a base piece you could call it. That is sort the whole thing in a nutshell.

**Yes, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point was very well suited as the model for higher education in Vietnam. My research has found numerous representations of the correlation. It is described as such because it is similar to an original teachers college. As far as working in a way that Vietnamese educators could come here and see everything in a combined fashion. They would see the departments, see administration, and see the dorms, the whole lifestyle of the university in a compact area rather than being overwhelmed if they were to travel to Madison or something.**

Of course you know the prestige of the big schools was important to those rectors too. We had one rector who sort of looked down his nose at the 'small time school' in Stevens Point. He really came around to appreciate what was done and what was intended to be done by the Wisconsin Team. But, you know he was an old Frenchman.

**In my research I found that the USAID worked a lot with land grant colleges.**

In your research did you find when the USAID actually started their contracts with universities?

**Yes, in fact, my adviser suggested I research that very area. I wrote the larger part of a chapter on the origins of USAID. The USAID evolved from a couple different agencies. I think USAID surfaced as the United States Agency for International Development during President Kennedy's term.**

I think when Al Croft was with them they were a different name. I think the present congress has cut back considerable on the funding.

**That kind of speaks for their attitude about helping foreign nations, which is not necessarily positive. That is why I was impressed by one of your latter reports stating that the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point could formulate a future contract for modeling reforms for underdeveloped countries. I was very impressed by your foresight. I take it, however, that this contract was never instituted or adopted? I find it very interesting that the University could have carried it on to a new perspective, in a real sense the contract in higher education has a living legacy.**

Yes, another interesting aspect of one of our consultants was his background in ...

(tape ends...out of tape)

The interview continued, as I spent the entire October afternoon at the Eagons' home. I have since met with Burdette Eagon numerous times.

## Chronological Listing of Contacts between WSU-SP and the RVN

*Preliminary Report Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam:* 14 March 1967.  
*Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam:* April 1967.  
*Education in Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization:* June 1967.  
*Seminar in Higher Education:* 7 October 1967.  
*Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam:* 18 September 1968.  
*Seminar in Higher Education:* 2-8 October 1968.  
*Visitation of Vietnamese Minister of Education:* 10 December 1968.  
*A Study-Observation Tour of Vietnamese Secretaries-General and Deans to Universities and Colleges in the United States:* April 1969.  
*Proposals for Preparatory Center at the University of Saigon:* July 1969.  
*A Study-Observation Tour of selected Members of Congress, Republic of Vietnam to the United States, Republic of Korea, and Republic of China:* 4-10 August, 1969.  
*A Report on Consulting Regarding-University Development, Manpower Needs, Documents and Policies Related to the Governance of Vietnamese Universities:* 30 July 1970.  
*A Report from Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc:* May 1970.  
*Observations and Reflections on University of South Vietnam:* 7 July 1970.  
*Basic Student Services Program:* July 1970.  
*Basic Studies: Common Trunk:* 6 July-27 August 1970.  
*Assistance in Modernization of Student Records in South Vietnamese Universities:* 15 September-15 November 1970.  
*Evaluation Seminar in Higher Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc.:* 18-31 October 1970.  
*Campus Planning Consultants:* 28 March-11 April 1971.  
*Follow up and Evaluation with Ministry of Education and USAID-Education:* July-August, 1971.  
*Relating Area Resources to Curriculum Planning:* September-October, 1971.  
*Seminar in Policy Formulation and Administrative Structure in American Higher Education:* September-October, 1971.  
*Registration and Record System:* October 1971.  
*Administrative Procedures:* October-November, 1971.  
*Administrative Internship:* November, 1971-February, 1972.  
*Assistance in the Planning and Development of Community Colleges:* December, 1971-January, 1972.  
*Recommendations for the Use of Military Facilities for Educational Purposes:* January 1972.  
*Projection-Higher Education Ministry of Education and USAID-Education:* January 1972.  
*The Baccalaureate Examination:* June 1972.  
*Consultation with Ministry of Education, USAID-Education Officials:* 3-19 August 1972.  
*Administrative Reorganization:* August-September, 1972.  
*Consultant Conference with Chief of Higher Education-Vietnam and Current Consultants in the Vietnam Contract:* 11-12 October 1972.  
*Instructional Development Planning:* December, 1972-January, 1973.  
*Campus Planning:* December, 1972-January, 1973.  
*Community College Planning:* December, 1972-January, 1973.  
*Administrative Internship-AACTE, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point:* February 1973.  
*Higher Education Project Planning:* March 1973.  
*Community College Development:* April 1973.  
*National System of Higher Education-Higher Education Law:* April 1973.

## A PARTIAL CHRONOLGY OF THE VIETNAM WAR

*Summary of background dates, development of U.S. foreign aid and Wisconsin Survey Team, with reference points, (**Italicized time entries are WSU-SP/USAID/RVN contract related**)*

### Colonial Era

#### 1843

French fleet permanently deployed in Asian waters.

#### 1852

Napoleon III endorses series of expeditions to Vietnam to gain trade concessions and protect missionaries.

#### 1858

Admiral Rigault de Genouilly commands French fleet bombarding Tourane (Da Nang) and capturing Saigon.

#### 1862

Tu Duc signs treaty with French granting them broad economic, political and religious concessions; under the Treaty of Saigon Vietnam cedes the three eastern provinces of Cochinchina to France.

#### 1863

France establishes protectorate in Cambodia.

#### 1867

France occupies the three western provinces of Cochinchina.

#### 1879

Cochinchina's first French civilian governor is appointed.

#### 1883

A "protectorate" is established by France over Annam and Tonkin and control of Cochinchina as a colony under provisions of the Treaty of Hue.

**1887**

The Union Indo-Chinoise is created by France, composed of Cochinchina, Annam, Tonkin and Cambodia; administratively unifying the region.

**1890**

Ho Chi Minh (Nguyen That Thanh) born in central Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh is rightly viewed as the father of the Vietnamese revolution.

**1893**

France establishes protectorate over Laos.

**1902**

Hanoi School of Medicine opens.

**1907**

Indochinese University at Hanoi opens, and then closes in **1908** do to civil unrest.

**1911**

After taking part in peasant tax protests, Ho leaves Vietnam, will return in thirty years.

Vo Nguyen Giap born in Quan Bin province. General Giap became a key deputy to Ho Chi Minh and preeminent military strategist for North Vietnam throughout its war to unify Vietnam.

**1914**

About a hundred thousand Vietnamese go to France in labor battalions as World War I breaks out in Europe.

**1917**

University of Hanoi reopens, by **1919** will have seven schools: medicine and pharmacy, veterinary science, pedagogy, law and administration, public works and commerce, agriculture and forestry, and civil engineering.

**1918**

Ho Chi Minh using the name Nguyen Ai Quoc (Nguyen the Patriot) arrives in Paris, staying there for seven years.

**1919**

At the Versailles Peace Conference, Ho is co-author of petition to U.S. President Woodrow Wilson and Allied leaders, demanding self-determination for all peoples under colonial rule.

**1920**

In December Ho Chi Minh joins the newly formed French Communist Party.

**1923-1924**

Ho Chi Minh goes to Moscow to work at the headquarters of the Communist International (Comintern), then Canton as assistant to Mikhail Borodin, Soviet representative in China.

**1925-1928**

In Canton, Ho formed the Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League as training ground for a future communist party, enlisting adherents from nationalist elements residing in south China. The league emphasized twin goals of national independence and social justice, making little reference to Marxist ideology. Ho flees Canton in wake of Chiang Kai-shek's crackdown.

**1927**

Vietnamese Nationalist Party (VNQDD) formed by Nguyen Thai Hoc, in Hanoi.

**1929****May**

National Congress of Revolutionary Youth meets in Hong Kong.

**1930****February**

Ho and comrades bring factions together during "unity congress," creating the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), in Hong Kong. A clear reference in the title to Vietnamese nationalism ran counter to official views in Moscow.

**October**

VCP Central Committee adopts new name of Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). New title reflected the Comintern view that small countries could only be liberated by banding together in larger alliances.

**1931**

Ho Chi Minh arrested in Hong Kong by British police.

**1932****September**

Emperor Bao Dai returns to Vietnam from schooling in France to ascend throne under French tutelage.

**1933**

Ho Chi Minh released from prison in Hong Kong on a legal technicality and returns to Moscow, where Stalin viewed Ho and other independent-minded communists with suspicion.

**1936**

Popular Front government in France endorses short-lived reforms in Vietnam.

**1938-1940**

Ho Chi Minh leaves the Soviet Union returning to China to resume organizing activities in the field; first serving with communist Chinese forces in central and south China, and finally with leading elements of the ICP in Vietnam.

**1939**

Outbreak of World War II in Europe.

**1940****August**

Franco-Japanese Treaty grants Japan Military facilities in northern Indochina.

**September**

Japan occupies Indochina but leaves the French colonial administration intact. Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) is driven underground.

**September-November**

Bac Son uprising in northern Tonkin; Nam Bo uprising in Cochinchina.

**1941****May**

Ho Chi Minh returns to Vietnam covertly, acts with the Indochinese Communist Party to set up a broad nationalist alliance called the League for the Independence of Vietnam (popularly known as the Viet Minh). The new front emphasized anti-imperialism and land reform, rather than ideology, in order to win the support of moderate elements against the twin enemies of French colonialism and Japanese fascism.

**1942**

University of Hanoi enrollment peaks at 1,200.

The United States Office of Strategic Services (OSS) was established in **1942**, the precursor to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). William J. Donovan headed the organization which conducted paramilitary operations, supported resistance groups, subverted foreign governments, disseminated propaganda, and collected intelligence. The OSS involved itself in Indochina, toward the end of World War II, trusting Viet Minh networks for intelligence and assistance in rescuing downed Allied airmen.

**August**

Ho Chi Minh shuttling between China and Vietnam to build support for his movement is arrested and jailed in south China.

**1943****September**

Chinese authorities came to realize Ho's organizational talents could be useful in helping to defeat Japan. Ho is released from prison, leads the Dong Minh Hoi (Vietnamese Revolutionary League) in south China. Ho established contact with U.S. military units in south China, providing information on Japanese troop movements in Indochina and receiving small arms and equipment.

**1944**

Vo Nguyen Giap forms Viet Minh army to fight the Japanese; will occupy Hanoi in **1945**. First Armed Propaganda Brigades are created by the ICP.

Allied forces, World War II, invade Europe.

General de Gaulle establishes provisional French government in Algiers, returns to Paris.

**1945****March 9**

A Japanese coup d'état abolishes French administration in Indochina and offers Bao Dai independence under Japanese protection; Bao Dai proclaims independence on **March 11**.

**April**

Prime Minister Tran Trong Kim formed Vietnamese puppet government.

**April 12**

U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt dies and Harry S. Truman becomes president. Presidents from Truman to Gerald Ford would follow an interventionist policy in an attempt to contain communist expansionism in Southeast Asia. Beginning in **1948** Truman viewed Vietnam as one of the possible "points of contact." Truman viewed Ho Chi Minh's revolutionary movement as a

communist puppet in the global Cold War; frequently invoking the domino theory and the policy of containment in describing policy in Indochina.

### **May**

National Salvation Army and Armed Propaganda Brigades are merged into the Vietnamese Liberation Army.

Ho Chi Minh returns to Vietnam from China, setting up Communist Party headquarters at Tan Trao.

In **1945** an OSS advisory team parachuted into northern Vietnam in support of Ho Chi Minh, against the Japanese. The OSS supplied the Viet Minh with mortars, rifles, ammunition, and instructed them in the use of the weapons and techniques to train other partisans. Ho Chi Minh was officially appointed OSS Agent 19, as he welcomed the OSS officers warmly, hoping to enlist the United States against the reestablishment of French colonial rule over Vietnam. Major Archimedes Patti and other OSS officers endorsed self-rule for the Vietnamese. Maj. Patti helped Ho Chi Minh draft his declaration of independence. The Truman administration was largely unsympathetic to this ideal, instead supporting the French and British actions crushing an independence movement in Saigon in **September 1945**.

### **July**

At Potsdam Conference Allied leaders assign British to disarm Japanese in southern Vietnam; Chinese Nationalists to perform same function north of the sixteenth parallel in Vietnam.

### **August 14-15**

Japan capitulates, after U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

### **August Revolution**

#### **August 16**

Viet Minh National Congress appeals for general uprising throughout Vietnam, declaring Ho Chi Minh president of a provisional republic of Vietnam.

#### **August 18**

Japanese transfer of power in Indochina to Viet Minh.

#### **August 19**

General uprising in Hanoi.

#### **August 23**

Viet Minh forces seize imperial capital of Hue, Bao Dai abdicates.

#### **August 25**

Allied in Committee for the South, uprising of nationalist and communist forces in Saigon.

#### **August 29**

Ho Chi Minh proclaims provisional government in Hanoi, Bao Dai accepts position as supreme counselor.

**September 2**

Japan formally surrenders to the Allies. Ho Chi Minh declares the independence of Vietnam, creation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

**September 9**

Chinese occupation forces arrive in Hanoi.

**September 13**

General Douglas Gracey leads British forces landing at Saigon; soon returns authority to the French.

**September 21**

Martial law in Saigon is announced by the British commander.

**September 26**

Lt. Col. A. Peter Dewey, head of the OSS mission in Saigon, is shot by Vietminh troops, becoming the first American to die in the Vietnam War.

**October**

French military forces begin to arrive in South Vietnam.

**October 16**

Viet Minh forces begin guerrilla operations against French administration in Cochinchina. Viet Minh retreat from Saigon.

**November 11**

Ho Chi Minh dissolves the Indochinese Communist Party.

Communist and Nationalist parties agree on formation of a coalition government in Hanoi, selecting Ho Chi Minh as president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

**1946**

Marshall Plan emergency relief and assistance programs for Europe, success will lead to U.S. foreign aid to underdeveloped nations.

Fulbright Act beginning framework for U.S. foreign aid in terms of educational and information exchange.

**January 1**

In Hanoi the provisional coalition government takes office.

**January 6**

Throughout the north national elections are held for the election of a National Assembly.

**February 28**

Sino-French Agreement on withdrawal of Chinese troops from North Vietnam. China agrees to withdraw forces from Vietnam, and France concedes its extraterritorial rights in China.

**March 6**

Franco-Vietnamese Accords signed. Ho-Sainteny Agreement creates “free state” of Vietnam within the French Union and calls for a referendum to decide if Cochinchina, Tonkin and Annam should be reunited. French troops are authorized to return to the north to replace the Chinese.

**April 18-May 11**

Da Lat Conference between representatives of DRV and France. The conference fails to resolve substantive political issues between the two governments.

**May-September 10**

The Fontainebleau Conference between representatives of France and the DRV occurs near Paris.

Prior to the conference French high commissioner Argenlieu undercut the Viet Minh by reorganizing a French puppet state. No agreement was reached on the key issues of the status of Cochinchina and Vietnam’s role within the French Union; in the face of Argenlieu’s unilateral actions the Viet Minh questioned French sincerity and left the meetings. Ho Chi Minh remained in France in the hopes of salvaging modus vivendi.

**June 1**

Republic of Cochinchina is formed by pro-French elements in South Vietnam. Admiral Thierry d’Argenlieu, French high commissioner for Indochina, violates **March** agreement by proclaiming a separate government for Cochinchina.

**September 14**

Modus vivendi is signed by Ho Chi Minh in Paris. Political negotiations had broken down, but this measure covers economic issues and agreement to cessation of hostilities.

**October 28**

DRV National Assembly meets, reorganizing government without participation of nationalists.

**November 8**

First Constitution of the DRV is approved by the National Assembly.

**November 20-23**

French ships bombard native quarter in Haiphong, initiating the Indochina War.

**December 19**

The Viet Minh attack French forces in Tonkin, formally beginning the First Indochina War. Attacks on French installations increase as Viet Minh reorganize in rural areas.

**1947**

Center for Medicine Studies opens in Saigon.

National Technical Institute opens in Hanoi.

**May**

Paul Mus, a French scholar, meets with Ho Chi Minh. Ho refuses to accept French terms for an end of the conflict.

**June**

Living in Hong Kong, Bao Dai offers to negotiate with France to achieve Vietnam's independence and unity.

**December 7**

Ex-Emperor Bao Dai and French high commissioner Emile Bollaert reach First Ha Long Bay Agreement in the Gulf of Tonkin. Bao Dai soon denounces the agreement as providing not enough independence for the projected new state of Vietnam.

**1948**

Economic Cooperation Act of 1948, Smith-Mundt Act, sets framework for U.S. foreign aid in terms of educational and information exchange.

**June 5**

The French name Bao Dai head of the state of Vietnam. The Second Ha Long Bay Agreement, France recognizes the independence of a provisional central government formed in **May**, but retains control over foreign affairs and defense. Other functions are left to be discussed at a future conference.

**July**

Bao Dai proclaims Second Ha Long Bay Agreement as being inadequate.

**1949**

President Truman speaks of Four Points in inaugural address. Point Four in foreign aid plan for underdeveloped areas.

**March 8-9**

Elysee Agreement is signed by representatives of France and the new Associated State of Vietnam. The new Associated State has nominal independence, as France retains control of foreign relations and national defense and Vietnam enters the French Union, with Bao Dai assuming office of Head of State of Associated State of Vietnam on **June 13**.

**1950**

Act for International Development amends Economic Cooperation Act.

Special Technical and Economic Mission (STEM) is established in Saigon.

**January 14**

Ho Chi Minh declares that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam is the only legal government.

**January 18**

The new People's Republic of China grants diplomatic recognition to the DRV.

**January 25**

The Soviet Union officially recognizes the independence of the DRV.

The DRV establishes diplomatic relations with Marshal Tito's Yugoslavia, causing some American officials to suggest that Ho is not a Soviet "puppet."

**February 4**

The United States officially recognizes the independence of the French organized Associated State of Vietnam.

**February 7**

Great Britain follows suit, recognizing Bao Dai's government.

**February 16**

France requests U.S. aid in fighting the Viet Minh insurgency. Chinese Communists at the Vietnamese border begin to supply the Viet Minh with modern weapons.

**May 25**

U.S. announces it will set up economic aid mission within the Associated States of Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.)

**June 25-26**

Opening of Korean War. President Truman commits American troops to the war under United Nations auspices, without consulting Congress.

**June 29**

Pau negotiations open on the transfer of sovereignty to Vietnam.

**July 19**

President Truman announces increased U.S. military aid to Indochina.

**July 26**

President Truman approves \$15 million in military aid to the French in Indochina.

**August 3**

United States Military Assistance and Advisory Group arrives in Saigon.

**September**

The U.S. Military Advisory Group-Indochina (MAAG) is established in Saigon.

**September-November**

Viet Minh border offensive destroys French outposts along Chinese border.

**September**

Battle of Cao Bang: French are ambushed as they withdraw from Cao Bang, 3,000 men were killed or captured. French withdraw from area along Colonial Route 4, including in **October** Lang Son. This represented the failure of French units fighting not against guerrillas but Viet Minh regiments in conventional warfare. North Vietnam's General Giap recognized the weakness of the French position and the timing of moving from guerrilla to conventional warfare.

**December 6**

General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny is named French military commander and high commissioner for Indochina.

**December 23**

U.S. representatives sign Agreement on Mutual Defense Assistance in Indochina.

**1951**

U.S. Congress ratified Mutual Securities Act, linking military and economic assistance to "friendly" countries.

**January-May**

Abortive Viet Minh general offensive on the fringes of the Red River Delta.

**February 11-19**

The Lao Dong (Vietnamese Workers Party) is established and holds National Congress in Tuyen Quang province.

**November**

Battle of Hoa Binh begins, lasting until **February, 1952.**

**1952****January**

General Giap's offensive in the Red River Delta is blunted by de Lattre.

**January 11**

In Paris de Lattre dies.

**November**

In the mountains north of Hanoi Viet Minh offensive forces French evacuation of border area.  
Battle of Na San.

**November 4**

Dwight D. Eisenhower is elected president of the United States.

**April**

Viet Minh offensive in northern Laos.

**May**

Appointment of Gen. Henri Navarre as commander-in-chief of French forces in Indochina and adoption of the Navarre Plan to win the war.

**July 27**

Korean armistice is signed.

**October**

Laos is granted independence as a member of the French Union.

Majority of the French National Assembly push for a negotiated settlement to the Indochina War.

**November 9**

Prince Norodom Sihanouk takes command of the Cambodian Army, declaring Cambodian independence from France.

**1953**

Foreign Operations Administration consolidates American university-contract programs (1953-1955) under a single agency, headed by Harold Stassen.

**October 12**

Statutes of University of Hanoi go into effect.

**November 20**

French paratroopers reoccupy military outpost at Dien Bien Phu to hinder Viet Minh movement between Vietnam and Laos. Gen. Henri Navarre, the French commander in Saigon, hoped that such an aggressively positioned air head would disrupt the Viet Minh's rear operations as France strove to gain the military initiative and bolster its position before the looming negotiations.

**November 29**

During an interview with a Swedish reporter, Ho Chi Minh says he is ready to discuss French peace proposals.

**1954****January 25**

Foreign ministers of France, United States, Britain and Soviet Union meet in Berlin; agree to meet in Geneva for a conference on Korea and Indochina to be held in **April-May, 1954**.

**March 13-May 7**

Battle of Dien Bien Phu: Viet Minh two-month siege of French garrison; the French post falls to attacking forces on **May 6-7**. Giap had purposely sent forces into Laos to overextend the French, and viewed the isolated outpost as an opportunity to strike a decisive blow against the French. The French had underestimated the Viet Minh, who surrounded the garrison during the winter, disabled its airstrip, and then annihilated the outpost. The Viet Minh's success reflected their formidable logistical preparations and superior artillery positions. When the French realized their precarious position in late **March** they appealed to the U.S. for air strikes to relieve the siege. Some of American administration figures favored intervention, including Secretary of State Dulles and Vice President Nixon, who even considered a tactical nuclear response. Others, led by Gen. Matthew Ridgeway, expressed skepticism, warning that intervention would draw U.S. ground forces into a protracted war. President Eisenhower decided in **April** against American intervention after Britain rejected proposal for concerted action. The fall of Dien Bien Phu fed disillusionment among the French public and the ruling French coalition fell, and the new government of Pierre Mendes-France agreed to negotiate a withdrawal from Indochina. The Viet Minh victory inspired Algerian nationalists as the battle marked demise of French colonialism.

**June-July**

Fall of Dien Bien Phu stunned the French public, government of Prime Minister Joseph Laniel falls in Paris. Pierre Mendes-France as prime minister of France pledges to achieve cease-fire within a month; in Bern secretly negotiates with Chinese foreign minister Zhou Enlai.

**May 8-July 21**

Opening of discussions on Indochina at Geneva Conference. Geneva Conference concludes with military agreement on a cease-fire in Indochina, provisionally partitioning Vietnam setting

demarcation line at seventeenth parallel; pending political settlement to be achieved through nationwide elections in 1956; International Supervision and Control Commission established. Final declaration accepted orally by all at conference except United States. U.S. announces it will not disturb agreements but will view renewed aggression with concern. The agreements are denounced by Bao Dai's government. The PRC and the USSR pressured the Viet Minh to accept the settlement, as the PRC feared a unified Vietnamese power to its south and the Soviet Union sought French support for European initiatives. This diplomatic failure prepared the way for the next war. Later, Vietnamese communists termed the settlement a "betrayal."

With the culmination of Geneva Accords; neither U.S. nor South Vietnam sign accords. United States Operations Mission (USOM) is created to assist new Government of South Vietnam.

### **June**

Bao Dai appoints Ngo Dinh Diem as prime minister of the Associated State of Vietnam.

### **July 7**

Diem returns to Saigon.

### **August-October**

Nearly one million refugees from North Vietnam cross into South Vietnam. U.S. Navy assists.

### **September**

Michigan State University Advisory Group arrives in Saigon, assists Diem in organization of police administration.

### **September 8**

The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) is formed by United States, Britain, France, Thailand, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand and Pakistan, all signing the Manila Treaty.

### **October 1**

President Eisenhower promises aid to South Vietnam. Eisenhower's special envoy Gen. J. Lawton Collins arrives in Saigon to affirm support for Diem with \$100 million in aid.

### **October 9**

Final withdrawal of French troops from Hanoi. Ho Chi Minh's government returns to Hanoi.

## **Prelude to U.S. Combat Intervention**

### **1955**

(U.S.) International Cooperation Administration is formed.

National University of Vietnam established in Saigon, many students and faculty transfer to Saigon. Dr. Nguyen Quang Trinh a graduate of University of Paris is rector.

### **January**

U.S. funnels aid directly to Saigon government, agrees to train South Vietnamese Army.

### **March 28-April**

Ngo Dinh Diem crushes Binh Xuyen sect.

### **June 5**

Ngo Dinh Diem launches campaign against Hoa Hao.

### **July 6**

The Geneva Agreements are repudiated by Ngo Dinh Diem, as he refuses to plan for open elections throughout the country.

Ho Chi Minh, in Moscow, accepts Soviet aid, having already negotiated in Beijing for Chinese assistance.

### **October 23**

Diem defeats Bao Dai in a referendum, becoming chief of state.

### **October 26**

Diem proclaims the Republic of Vietnam, with himself as president.

### **November**

U.S. Military Advisory Group-Vietnam evolved from U.S. Military Advisory Group-Indochina.

### **December**

Radical land reform in North sends landlords before “people’s tribunals.” Excessive land redistribution results demotion of Party General Secretary Truong Chinh and other DRV officials.

**1956**

Cambodian Prime Minister Prince Sihanouk asserts the intention to pursue neutralist policy.

Diem increases merciless pacification program, corrupt land reform, crackdown on dissidents and Viet Minh suspects.

**1957**

University of Dalat opens, as ‘private’ Catholic university; its first rector is Archbishop Ngo Dinh Thuc, brother of President Diem. University of Hue opens. National University of Vietnam becomes University of Saigon, as the public university opening in Hue assumes the former title. University of Saigon has eight Faculties: Letters, Law, Medicine, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Science, Pedagogy, and Architecture.

**January**

Soviet Union (favoring permanent division of Vietnam), proposes that North and South Vietnam are admitted to United Nations as separate states.

**May 8-19**

Diem visits United States; President Eisenhower reaffirms support for Diem regime. Diem returns to South Vietnam to face rising discontent among many elements of South Vietnamese population.

**June**

Last French military advisers leave the Republic of Vietnam.

**October**

Communist insurgency in South Vietnam begins in accordance with Hanoi decision to organize thirty-seven armed companies in Mekong Delta. During the year communist guerrillas assassinate more than four hundred South Vietnamese officials.

**1958**

U.S. Congress approves National Defense Education Act, grants federal funding to American colleges and universities for language and area studies programs.

University of Michigan begins USOM/USAID contract for English language development (1958-1963) under the Southeast Asia regional English Project (SEAREP).

Adoption of three-year plan by DRV launches collectivization in the North.

William Lederer and Eugene Berdick’s *The Ugly America* is published. Modeled Gen. Edward Lansdale, sometimes called “The Father of Vietnam.” Lansdale served with the OSS in World War II. Then working for the CIA from its inception, serving in the Philippines before arriving in Vietnam on **1 June 1954**—before the Geneva accords were signed. His mission for the CIA in Vietnam was to shore up the government of South Vietnam and encourage emigration from North

Vietnam. An avid U.S. supporter of Ngo Dinh Diem, he assisted in Diem's rigged election victory and with crushing rival sects in **1955-56**. Lansdale returned to Saigon in **1961** as special adviser to John Kennedy, and in **1965** as special assistant to the U.S. ambassador. He sought to orient the U.S. war effort toward counterinsurgency and pacification. Lansdale's failure marked a shift in U.S. priorities from building up South Vietnam to taking over the war effort. He was convinced that the U.S. could prevail against communism by "exporting the American way" and "winning the hearts and minds of the people" by military and economic aid to developing nations.

## **June**

Coordinated command structure is set up in eastern Mekong Delta by Communist elements.

## **July 22**

The neutralist Laotian government of Prince Souvanna Phouma is dissolved as Phoui Sananikone heads new anti-Communist government with American support.

## **1959**

National Agricultural Institute opens in Bao Loc, later moves to Saigon.

## **January**

Vietnamese Workers' Party Central Committee adopts program to resume revolutionary war in South Vietnam.

## **February**

Plot to overthrow Sihanouk is uncovered, with CIA agent involved.

## **April 4**

President Eisenhower makes his first public commitment to maintain South Vietnam as separate nation.

## **May**

North Vietnam forms Group 559, which begins infiltrating weapons and cadres into South Vietnam via the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

## **July**

Group 759 is organized by Communists to send supplies south by sea.

## **July 8**

First American servicemen to be killed in what officially became known as the Vietnam Era. Major Dale Buis and Sergeant Chester Ovnard are killed by Vietcong at Bien Hoa.

**August**

Laws authorizing intense repression of dissidents and Communist suspects, are promulgated by Ngo Dinh Diem; National Assembly Law 10/59 enacted.

**September**

Group 959 is created by Hanoi leadership to furnish weapons and supplies to Communists insurgents in Laos.

**December 1**

Thomas S. Gates replaces Neil H. McElroy as U.S. secretary of defense.

Charles de Gaulle takes power in France.

**December 31**

Approximately 760 U.S. military personnel now in Vietnam. South Vietnamese Armed Forces now total 243,000 personnel.

DRV in Hanoi adopts second constitution.

**1960**

Ohio University and Southern Illinois University sign longest contracts in history of USAID assistance to RVN.

Walter Rostow's book: *The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-Communist Manifesto*.

**April**

Caravelle Group petitions Diem. Group of eighteen former South Vietnamese politicians and government leaders met at the Caravelle Hotel in Saigon demanding reforms. These reforms included economic reforms, civil rights guarantees, more democracy, and recognition for political opponents, as well as an end to the corruption that pervaded Diem's government.

Universal military conscription is imposed in North Vietnam.

**August**

In Laos Captain Kong Le stages coup d'etat, handing power back to Souvanna Phoumi. The CIA helps General Phoumi Nosavan form opposition faction in southern Laos.

**September 5-10**

In Hanoi, Third National Congress of (Lao Dong) Vietnamese Workers' Party elects Le Duan as first secretary; stressing an escalation of the revolutionary struggle against Diem's regime.

**November 8**

John F. Kennedy is elected U.S. president.

**November 11**

Abortive coup against President Ngo Diem by South Vietnamese Army units. Diem reacts by having members of the Caravelle group and others arrested.

**December 20**

Formation of the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam, established by Hanoi leadership and dubbed by Saigon as the Viet Cong, meaning Communist Vietnamese.

Crisis escalates in Laos as General Phoumi Nosavan attacks Vientiane and Soviets supply Souvanna Phouma's neutralist faction.

**December 31**

Approximately 900 U.S. military personnel in Vietnam.

**1961**

COSVN originated in **1961** as the central and southern branches of the Lao Dong Party merged. The group was designated the Central Committee Directorate for the South, but the U.S. military mistranslated the name. U.S. military leaders believed that COSVN to be a fixed headquarters with a bureaucratic structure that once located could be destroyed, but COSVN was no more than a mobile leadership group. U.S. strategists believed COSVN to be located in Laos and later in Cambodia, launching several operations (Operations Junction City, Fishhook and Menu). COSVN served to justify military incursions into Cambodia, but the U.S. never located or destroyed it.

**January 21**

John F. Kennedy succeeds Dwight D. Eisenhower as president. Eisenhower warns Kennedy that Laos is the major crisis area in Southeast Asia. Kennedy will turn to defense of South Vietnam.

Dean Rusk succeeds Christian Herter as secretary of state; Robert McNamara succeeds Thomas Gates as secretary of defense; McGeorge Bundy succeeds Gordon Gray as national security adviser.

**January 28**

Kennedy approves a counterinsurgency plan for Vietnam.

**February**

Kennedy calls education the chief means for young countries to develop economic, political, and social institutions.

**March 23**

Kennedy insists that negotiations to establish a neutral Laos must be preceded by a cease-fire.

**April**

At the Bay of Pigs, Cuba, an American backed attempt to overthrow Fidel Castro fails.

**May 8**

President Kennedy promises to continue U.S. aid to the Republic of Vietnam.

**May 9-15**

Vice-President Lyndon Johnson tours South Vietnam proposing additional American aid to Diem.

**May 16**

Geneva Conference on Laos opens, lasting until **July, 1962**.

**June 9**

President Ngo Dinh Diem requests U.S. military advisers to train South Vietnamese Army.

**July 1**

President John Kennedy appoints General Maxwell Taylor as presidential military adviser.

**September 4**

U.S. Congress passes Foreign Assistance Act, separating military and non-military aid and mandates the creation of an agency to administer economic assistance projects.

**October 1**

Ngo Dinh Diem asks for a bilateral defense treaty with the United States.

**October**

General Maxwell Taylor and Walt Rostow visit Vietnam on fact-finding mission. On **Nov. 3** they report to President Kennedy recommending American combat troop intervention “disguised as flood relief.” Taylor concludes that U.S. financial, political, and military aid can bring victory without a U.S. takeover of the war. He asks for 8,000 U.S. combat troops to be sent to Vietnam. Kennedy rejects direct intervention at this time, but gives Diem more equipment and advisers.

**November 3**

Kennedy establishes the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

**December 15**

President Kennedy restates U.S. commitment to an independent South Vietnam.

**December 31**

There are now 3,205 U.S. military personnel in Vietnam.

**1962**

James H. Albertson is appointed as President of Wisconsin State College-Stevens Point.

National Institute of Administration opens in Saigon.

**February 6**

MACV (U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) formed in Saigon under the command of General Paul Harkins. The build up of American forces begins.

**February 14**

President Kennedy authorizes U.S. military advisers in Vietnam to return fire if fired upon.

**February 27**

Ngo Dinh Diem and his family survive as presidential palace is bombed by two South Vietnamese pilots. Ngo Dinh Nhu was chief adviser and head of the RVN police, he used terror and corruption to maintain political power for the Diem regime. Madame Nhu "first lady" of the Diem regime, headed a paramilitary women's group and set national family and moral codes.

**March 22**

The Strategic Hamlet (rural pacification) Program is launched in South Vietnam with U.S. aid.

The Agroville program, launched in **1959** was the earliest pacification program established with American advice. Borrowed from a similar British concept used in Malaya, "Agroville" were communities built by the government for protection from insurgents. The south Vietnamese government mandated that eighty Agroville be built by peasants in exchange for vague promises of farm aid, land, and schools. However, peasants resisted and resented being uprooted and insurgent attacks continued. In **1961** the Strategic Hamlet program was a new version of the Agroville, as villages were surrounded by barbed wire and other defenses and the peasants were armed and trained in basic defense. The government hoped to confront the Viet Cong with a network of fortified hamlets organized into a "crisscrossed line of defense." 3,235 strategic hamlets were built by the end of **1962**, as South Vietnamese officials claimed 34 % of the rural

population lived under government control. In reality, the Viet Cong often destroyed strategic hamlets and concentrated their forces at will.

## **May**

Communists establish battalion-size units in central Vietnam.

## **May 15**

5,000 United States Marines and 50 jet fighters arrive in Thailand to counter Communist aggression in Laos.

## **July 23**

Geneva Accords on Laos are signed.

## **October 1**

General George Decker is replaced by General Earle Wheeler as chief of staff, U.S. Army.  
General Maxwell Taylor becomes chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

## **December 31**

U.S. military personnel in South Vietnam now number more than 11,300.

## **1963**

*Robert R. LaFollette first director of USAID Office of Higher Education/Vietnam.*

## **January 2**

Viet Cong units defeat South Vietnamese troops at the battle of Ap Bac, revealing weaknesses.

ARVN forces attacked Viet Cong guerrilla positions near this village, 40 miles southwest of Saigon. The Viet Cong eventually abandoned their positions, but inflicted heavy casualties on the South Vietnamese. The success of the guerrillas provided them with an important psychological boost, while the ARVN's poor performance revealed their questionable capacity to wage war.

## **May 1**

Ho Chi Minh indicates North Vietnamese shift toward China by meeting with Chinese President Liu Shaoji and denouncing Soviet "revisionism."

## **May-June**

Buddhist demonstrations lead to additional repression by government in South Vietnam. The Diem regime issued edicts that limited religious freedom and suppressed political opposition.

**May 8**

South Vietnamese troops shoot at Buddhist demonstrators in Hue. Buddhism had gained in prominence during the Vietnam's anti-colonial struggle with the French. As a dominant popular religion in South Vietnam, during the 1950s and 1960s, Buddhism was a contrast to Confucianism's concern for hierarchy and social order. Buddhism focused on a faith that transcended society and politics, promoting community and equality among individuals.

**June 11**

The crisis is intensified with Quang Duc, first of seven Buddhist monks to commit self-immolation; photos by Malcolm Browne, news reports, and speech by Madame Nhu send shock waves around world.

**July 4**

CIA agent, Lucien Conein is informed by South Vietnamese General Tran Van Don that officers are plotting against Diem.

**August 21**

Ngo Dinh Nhu's forces attack Buddhist pagodas.

**August 22**

Henry Cabot Lodge replaces Fredrick Nolting as United States ambassador to Vietnam.

**August 24**

Lodge concurs with Washington recommendation that Nhu's influence be removed and the suggestion that possible American support be given to mutinous generals against Diem.

**September 1**

President Kennedy criticizes Diem in a television interview.

**November 1**

Duong Van Minh and other generals stage a successful military coup against Diem and Nhu.

A Military Revolutionary Council is formed to continue the struggle against the revolutionary movement; Duong Van Minh assumes control of South Vietnam.

**November 2**

Diem and his brother Ngo Dinh Nhu are assassinated after their surrender.

**November 22**

President Kennedy is assassinated in Dallas; succeeded by Lyndon Johnson.

**December**

Central Committee of Vietnamese Workers Party, Communist leadership in Hanoi decide to escalate the struggle in the South.

**December 31**

South Vietnam has received \$500 million in aid during the year of **1963**; there are now 16,300 American military advisers in South Vietnam. SVNAF strength remains at 243,000.

**1964**

John Gardner report: *AID and the Universities: A Report to the Administer of the Agency for International Development.*

John Gardner is awarded Presidential Medal of Freedom.

University of Van Hanh opens, 'private' institution operated by Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam/Vien Hoa Dao (Organization for Executing the Dharma).

**January 30**

General Nguyen Khanh seizes power in Saigon; arresting four ruling generals but allowing Minh to remain as figurehead chief of state.

**February 7**

President Johnson orders removal of American dependents from Vietnam.

**March**

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara visiting South Vietnam vows support for Khanh.

**June 2**

Secretary of State Dean Rusk, McNamara and others confer in Honolulu on increased aid to South Vietnam. Pentagon strategists refine plans for the possible bombing of North Vietnam.

**June 20**

General Paul Harkins, head of MACV, is replaced by General William Westmoreland.

**June 23**

General Maxwell Taylor replaces Henry Cabot Lodge as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

**June 30**

Admiral Harry D. Felt is replaced by Admiral Ulysses S. Grant Sharp as CINCPAC.

**July 3**

General Harold Johnson replaces General Earle Wheeler as chief of staff, U.S. Army.

**July**

Covert maritime operations by South Vietnam begin against North Vietnam.

**August 2**

First Tonkin Gulf Incident: U.S. destroyer *Maddox* is allegedly attacked by North Vietnamese patrol boats. Since the 1950's, the U.S. Navy had conducted covert operations against the Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and then North Vietnam. Code-named "DeSoto missions," these were conducted by intelligence-gathering destroyers that remained in international waters. President Johnson authorized DeSoto missions and a program of clandestine warfare named Oplan 34a, gathering information about North Vietnamese radar, photographed and charted the coast, monitored ship traffic, and recorded radio communications.

**August 4**

U.S. destroyer *Turner Joy* claims it is under attack by North Vietnamese patrol boats.

**August 7**

U.S. Congress passes Tonkin Gulf Resolution, giving President Johnson extraordinary power to act in Southeast Asia; only two American Senators voted in opposition to the resolution.

Later this month American aircraft bomb North Vietnam for the first time.

**September-November**

Deterioration of political structure of South Vietnam; several governments succeed each other in Saigon. Revolutionary forces exploit situation by extending their control over rural areas.

**October 1**

U.S. Army Fifth Special Forces Group arrives in South Vietnam.

**October 30-November 1**

Viet Cong predawn mortar bombardment of Bien Hoa Air Base; five American servicemen are killed and six U.S. B-52 bombers are destroyed. Johnson rejects proposal for retaliatory raids against North Vietnam, at this time. Bien Hoa, some 20 miles from Saigon, became a major air base and the headquarters of III Corps. The base was overrun in the North Vietnamese Spring offensive of **April 1975**.

**November**

Lyndon Johnson defeats Barry Goldwater for American presidency.

Saigon is convulsed by dissident rioters protesting Khanh's regime. Ambassador Taylor urges Khanh to leave the country.

**December 24**

Vietcong terrorists bomb American military billet in Saigon; two U.S. soldiers are killed in attack on the Brinks Hotel.

**December 31**

U.S. military personnel now number in excess of 23,300; SVNAF strength increases to 514,000.

**American Vietnam War****1965****February 4**

McGeorge Bundy, Johnson's national security adviser, arrives in Saigon as Soviet Prime Minister Aleksei Kosygin visits Hanoi.

**February 7**

Viet Cong launch widespread attack on U.S. military installations in South Vietnam; attack on American base at Pleiku provides Johnson Administration with the pretext to launch Flaming Dart, air raids on North Vietnam. Viet Cong attack U.S. billet at Qui Nhon. Johnson now begins to dispatch U.S. combat troops to South Vietnam.

**February 18**

General Khanh flees the country as Dr. Phan Huy Quat forms government in Saigon.

**February 24-March 2**

Operations Flaming Dart and Rolling Thunder begin; sustained American bombing of North Vietnam (until **October 31, 1968**), was an incremental application of force designed by President Johnson and Secretary of Defense McNamara to bring North Vietnam to the negotiating table; by CINCPAC as an interdiction campaign against communist supply lines; by Gen. Westmoreland as justification for additional U.S. ground troops for air-base security; and as a means to bolster South Vietnamese resolve. U.S. pilots and weapons operators suffered a disproportionately high share of their service's combat loses; of 655 U.S. POWs returned by North Vietnam, 457 were aviators downed over the North, most during Rolling Thunder.

**March 8**

First American combat troops arrive in Vietnam, U.S. Third Marine regiment (two battalions) land to defend DaNang airfield.

**March 24**

First teach-in of Vietnam War held at the University of Michigan.

**April**

U.S. First Logistical Command formed at Long Binh to control logistics buildup in Vietnam.

U.S. Air Force begins Operation Steel Tiger; striking targets in the Laotian panhandle next to North Vietnamese border to interdict supply and troop movements.

**April 6**

President Johnson gives go ahead for U.S. ground troops to conduct offensive operations.

**April 7**

In a speech at John Hopkins University, Johnson offers Ho Chi Minh participation in a Southeast Asian development plan in exchange for peace.

**April 8**

North Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Van Dong rejects Johnson's proposal, noting any settlement must include Vietcong platform.

**April 17**

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) hold antiwar rally in Washington.

**April 26**

Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara states that the Vietnam war commitment costs the United States about \$1.5 billion a year.

**May**

U.S. 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade, III Marine Amphibious Force, Third and Fourth Marine Divisions deployed to Vietnam.

U.S. Navy begins Operation Market Time to detect and intercept surface traffic in South Vietnam coastal waters and to seize and destroy enemy craft.

**May 15**

National Teach-In held across America.

**May 29**

Battle of Binh Gia. Town in Quang Ngai province on Vietnam's coastal plain. Viet Cong forces attacked, destroying two ARVN battalions, which dropped their weapons and fled. On **7 June Gen.** William Westmoreland sent message to Adm. Ulysses S. Sharp, Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC), concluding that in his judgment the South Vietnamese could not defeat the Viet Cong without massive U.S. assistance.

**June 8**

The State Department announces that President Johnson has authorized the use of U.S. troops in direct combat operations if the South Vietnamese Army requests assistance.

**June 11**

Young Turks under Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky and Nguyen Van Thieu seize control of government in Saigon. Ky takes over as prime minister.

**June 18**

Arc Light Operations begin; strikes mark the first use of B-52s in combat, previously B-52s were used exclusively as part of the U.S. strategic nuclear force. Arc Light was the code name for high-altitude B-52 bombing raids in support of U.S. and ARVN operations in South Vietnam and Laos. Flying above 30,000 feet, B-52s dropped bombs, unseen and unheard until they began exploding, wrought enormous destruction in the impact areas. Most Arc Light strikes were against North Vietnamese or Viet Cong base areas. Strikes were largely confined to South Vietnam, absorbing 80 % of the total; targets immediately across the Laotian border were hit from 1966 on, and there were occasional strikes against infiltration and transportation targets in the southernmost North Vietnam.

**June 26**

MACV in Saigon reports that five South Vietnamese combat regiments and nine battalions have been put out of action by the Viet Cong.

**July**

John Gardner is sworn in as first Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

**July 3**

Presidential Executive Order 11231 authorizes Vietnam Service Medal for award to members of U.S. armed forces serving in Vietnam.

**July 8**

President Johnson re-appoints Lodge as ambassador to South Vietnam, replacing Taylor.

Eighteen U.S. combat battalions are now in South Vietnam.

**July 28**

President Johnson grants General Westmoreland's request for forty-four new combat battalions.

Johnson during news conference answers question: "Why Vietnam."

**August 18-21**

Operation Starlight (named by a typographical error by clerk who misread the original name Satellite); successful U.S. amphibious operation by three U.S. Marine Corps battalions, surprising the 1<sup>st</sup> Viet Cong Regiment on the small Van Tuong Peninsula. Marines killed more than 600 Viet Cong, while sustaining 51 dead and 200 wounded. The Marine Corps Special Landing Force (SLF) units helped keep North Vietnamese and Viet Cong coastal forces off balance and served as a means of reinforcing allied units already engaged. Until late **1967**, the SLF units did not count against "in-country" troop strength figures, permitting MACV some leverage and providing a means of replenishing and refitting I Corps through a system of helicopter and battalion rotations to and out of SLF units.

**October 15-16**

Antiwar protests in forty U.S. cities.

**October 23-November 20**

Operation Silver Bayonet by U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry and ARVN in Pleiku Province, II Corps.

**October-November**

Battle of Ia Drang Valley; the first big conventional clash between U.S. troops and North Vietnamese units in the south, a sustained battle in which Americans defeat revolutionary foes.

### **December 25**

Johnson announces thirty-seven day bombing pause, suspending bombing of North Vietnam (Operation Rolling Thunder), attempting to induce North Vietnam to negotiate.

### **December 31**

636 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date; 184,300 American military personnel now in Vietnam; 22,420 Allied troops in Vietnam. SVNAF strength at 514,000.

## **1966**

John Gardner heads Evaluation Team in Vietnam, finds Vietnamese higher education ineffective as instrument of economic and social reform.

**Robert R. LaFollette Report:** *Higher Education Facts in Vietnam.*

University of Can Tho opens in Mekong Delta region. Can Tho opens with 974 students, 47 faculty, within four Faculties: Letters, Sciences, Pedagogy, and Law and Social Science.

### **January**

U.S. Operation Masher/White Wing begins, lasting until March. U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry, ARVN and ROK forces in Binh Dinh Province, II Corps; first large unit operations across corps boundaries, U.S. Marines from I Corps cross into Binh Dinh linking up with 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry division.

### **January 19**

President Johnson asks Congress for an additional \$12.8 billion for the war in Vietnam.

### **January 31**

President Johnson orders resumption of bombing of North Vietnam. Counteroffensive Phase I.

### **February 4**

U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee opens televised hearings on Vietnam.

### **February 6-8**

Honolulu Conference: Johnson and Thieu / Ky meet for war strategy, emphasis on “the other war” for pacification, economic and political stability in the south; drawing attention away from Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings critical of administration policy.

**March 1**

Senate refuses to repeal Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

**March 8**

U.S. State Department legal memorandum: "The Legality of U.S. Participation in the Defense of Viet-Nam."

**March 10**

Buddhist demonstrations against Saigon government occur in Hue and Da Nang. On **May 23** RVN government troops (ARVN) take over Da Nang, and Hue on **June 16**.

**April**

First use of B-52s upon targets in North Vietnam, in strikes against the Mu Gia pass.

**April 1**

Walt Rostow replaces McGeorge Bundy as national security adviser.

**May 1**

U.S. forces bombard Viet Cong targets in Cambodia.

**June 29**

American aircraft bomb oil facilities near Haiphong and Hanoi. **July** Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase II commences.

**September**

U.S. military command announces that it is using defoliants to destroy communist cover.

Election of a Constituent Assembly in South Vietnam.

French President de Gaulle visits Cambodia, calls for American withdrawal from Vietnam.

**October**

U.S. Navy begins Operation Sea Dragon to interdict enemy supply vessels off North Vietnam.

**October 25**

In Manila, American and South Vietnamese leaders conclude strategic conference.

**October 26**

President Johnson visits U.S. troops in South Vietnam.

**December**

WSU-SP and USAID negotiate Wisconsin Contract in Higher Education.

Albertson-led Wisconsin Team prepares to go to Vietnam.

**December 31**

385,300 U.S. military personnel now in Vietnam; 6,644 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date; 52,500 Allied troops now in Vietnam. SVNAF strength increases to 735,900.

47,712 SVNAF killed in action to date.

**1967**

*The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), at the request of the Republic of Vietnam, sponsored a study of the public universities in South Vietnam. Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point accepted the contract to survey the present status of higher education, set a determination of the needs to be met through the program of higher education, formulate a definition of a development program to meet those needs, suggest a definition of an organizational structure, recommend avenues for financing the programs, identification of steps to be taken, and develop a projection for a periodic review of progress. Dr. James Albertson, President Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point headed the survey team, whose members were selected from American universities. The team was briefed and then spent approximately three months in Vietnam from **January to April, 1967**. Just prior to the completion of their recommendations the team members Dr. James H. Albertson, Dr. Harry F. Bangsberg (President Bemidji State College), Dr. A. Donald Beattie (Dean of the School of Business and Economics, Wisconsin State University-Whitewater), Dr. Vincent F. Conroy (Director of Field Studies, Harvard University), Dr. Howard G. Johnshoy (Dean of Academic Affairs, Gustavus Adolphus College), Dr. Arthur D. Pickett (Director of Honors Programs, University of Illinois-Chicago), Dr. Melvin L. Wall (Head Department Plant and Earth Sciences, Wisconsin State University-River Falls), and USAID Higher Education Advisor Dr. Robert LaFollette lost their lives while professionally engaged in the survey of higher education and touring sites, their plane crashed in a storm over the mountains of South Vietnam.*

**January 8-26**

Operation Cedar Falls: U.S. and South Vietnamese troops cooperate to destroy revolutionary emplacements in the Iron Triangle; forcibly relocating villagers so the Viet Cong-controlled area could become a free-fire zone. Operation was ultimately unsuccessful due to tunnel structures.

**January 23**

University of Florida Team arrives in Vietnam to begin study of agricultural training.

**January 28**

North Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh says no talks until U.S. stops bombing of North.

**February**

Bernard Fall, internationally known expert on Vietnam, killed by a Viet Cong booby trap in Hue.

*Albertson-led Wisconsin Team works on Survey of Higher Education in Vietnam. Albertson returns for two to Stevens Point with USAID proposal for WSU-SP to form 2<sup>nd</sup> team for wider National Survey of Vietnamese Education. Albertson departs again for Vietnam to complete survey of higher education.*

*Preliminary Report Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam: 14 March 1967.*

**March 20-21**

President Johnson attends the Guam Conference meeting with President Thieu and Prime Minister Ky. The South Vietnamese requested increased military aid, while Johnson pressed for a more effective pacification program, in a display that was as much for the American media, demonstrating continuing U.S. commitment to an independent anticommunist South Vietnam.

North Vietnamese release an exchange of letters between Johnson and Ho Chi Minh.

*Plane crash kills all members of the first Wisconsin Team, and USAID/Saigon Education adviser, and pilot: 23 March 1967.*

**April**

National Assembly approves new Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam.

*Burdette Eagon arrives in Vietnam, first of three trips during 1967 as he heads new Wisconsin Team.*

*Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam: April-May 1967, completed by 2<sup>nd</sup> Wisconsin Team.*

**April 15**

Antiwar rally in New York draws 100,000 protestors.

**April 27-28**

General Westmoreland confers with President Johnson in Washington and addresses Congress.

**May 1**

Ellsworth Bunker replaces Henry Cabot Lodge as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

**May 9**

Robert Komer appointed deputy to MACV commander.

**May 17**

In a letter drafted by Senator Frank Church, sixteen U.S. Senators critical of administration policy in Vietnam warn Hanoi that they oppose unilateral U.S. withdrawal.

**May 19**

U.S. aircraft bomb a power plant in Hanoi.

**Team report: “*Education in Vietnam: Proposals for Reorganization,*” June-August 1967.**

**June 24-25**

President Johnson meets with Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin at Glassboro, New Jersey.

**August**

Secretary of Defense McNamara, testifying before Senate subcommittee, reveals that American bombing of North Vietnam is ineffective.

**September**

Westmoreland begins to fortify Khe Sanh; establishing a potential launch point for ground operations to cut the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

Communists start major military actions. Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase III Campaign begun.

**September 3**

In national elections held in South Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu is elected president and Nguyen Cao Ky vice-president of the RVN. Ky used his protégés in South Vietnam’s police, intelligence services and 3<sup>rd</sup> Army Division to intimidate the National Assembly into ratifying the results of the rigged presidential election. In **1971** Thieu moved to contain Ky’s power.

**September 29**

Johnson proposes to stop bombing of North Vietnam if they will meet at the negotiating table, this (San Antonio Formula) is an offer to halt bombing in exchange for “productive discussions.”

***Seminar in Higher Education: 7 October 1967.*** John Gardner delivers University Convocation Address at WSU-SP, meets with Wisconsin Team and Vietnamese rectors.

**October 21**

Fifty thousand antiwar activists protest in “March on Pentagon” demonstration.

**November**

Westmoreland exudes optimism (light at the end of the tunnel) while in the United States.

**December 29**

Foreign Minister Trinh states that North Vietnam “will” talk once the United States ceases its bombing.

**December 31**

U.S. military personnel in Vietnam now number 485,600; 16,021 U.S. military personnel killed in action to this date. SVNAF strength increases to 798,000; 60,428 killed in action to date.

Rise in U.S. domestic protests by years end.

**1968**

***Wisconsin Contract expanded with Amendment, umbrella contracts will be extended periodically through June of 1974.***

**January**

Prince Sihanouk informs Johnson’s emissary, Chester Bowles, that Cambodia will not stop American forces from pursuing the Vietcong over the Cambodian border.

**January 3**

Senator Eugene McCarthy of Minnesota announces his decision to seek the Democratic presidential nomination.

**January 19**

Operation Pershing ends; 5,401 known enemy casualties in Binh Dinh Province.

**January 22**

Pershing II begins.

**January 23**

USS *Pueblo* seized by North Koreans.

**January 21**

North Vietnamese Army siege of Khe Sanh begins.

**January 30**

Tet Offensive begins as North Vietnamese and Viet Cong attack cities, military and government installations throughout South Vietnam. Heavy fighting in Hue, in Saigon, and along the Demilitarized Zone as Khe Sanh firebase is under heavy attack for several weeks. The Tet Offensive surprised the U.S. military and stunned the American public. Westmoreland had recently assured “we have turned the corner.” The determined communist offensive created an atmosphere of uncertainty and gloom, confounding the American people’s and government’s expectations for a final victory. The assaults were very costly, decimating the PAVN and especially the NLF of its veteran leadership and combatants, impairing operations for years. Despite its costs, Giap’s plan had regained the initiative of the war by unanticipated means, fracturing any U.S. consensus for the war. The North Vietnamese continued with “mini-Tet Offensives in **May 1968**. Johnson struggled to regain political momentum, ending the buildup of U.S. forces in Vietnam, recalling Westmoreland to Washington and denying the generals request for more troops. Johnson’s American public approval ratings sank to 24 % in **March**.

**January 31**

Viet Cong and NVA capture Hue. 2,800 civilians massacred in Hue.

In the U.S., General Leonard Chapman becomes Marine Corps commandant, replacing General Wallace Greene.

**February**

Team consultation and report in Vietnam (Fred Harris): “*Elementary Education in Vietnam, SEADAG.*”

**February 1**

Richard M. Nixon declares his candidacy for the presidency, announcing he will seek Republican nomination.

Street execution; the photo, in tandem with an NBC film of South Vietnam’s chief of national police, Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan, executing a Viet Cong officer turned many around the world and in America against the Vietnam War.

**February 10-17**

All-time high weekly rate of U.S. casualties—543 killed and 2,547 wounded in action.

**February 25**

American and ARVN troops recapture Hue after twenty-six days of intense fighting.

**February 27**

General Earle Wheeler, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, brings Johnson a request from Westmoreland in Saigon for 206,000 more American troops. New secretary of defense Clark Clifford, succeeding McNamara, begins study of request of which he soon favors rejection of buildup.

CBS news anchorman Walter Cronkite predicts over the evening report that the war cannot be won.

**March 5-6**

At Southeast Asia Development Advisory Group (SEADAG) Education and Manpower seminar at Asia Foundation in San Francisco., Glen Atkyns (consultant with Wisconsin Team) presents report.

**March 12**

Senator Eugene McCarthy (42%) nearly upsets Johnson (48%) in New Hampshire presidential primary.

**March 16**

Senator Robert Kennedy of New York announces his decision to seek the Democratic presidential nomination.

My Lai massacre occurs.

**March 25-26**

Senior Advisory Group on Vietnam (Johnson's "wise men") meets in Washington, recommending to Johnson a de-escalation of the American commitment in Vietnam.

**March 31**

President Johnson, saying he will not run for reelection, announces partial bombing halt offering peace talks.

**April 2**

Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase IV begun.

**April 4**

Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. The civil rights leader was a voice for nonviolence in opposition to the Vietnam War.

**April 23**

Demonstrations begin at Columbia University.

**April 26**

Antiwar demonstration in New York City draws 200,000 people.

**April 27**

Vice President Hubert Humphrey declares his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination.

**May 3**

The U.S. and DRV agree to peace talks. President Johnson announces that formal peace talks will be held in Paris.

**May 12**

Vietnam peace talks open in Paris, between North Vietnamese diplomats and an American delegation headed by Averell Harriman.

**June 5**

Senator Robert Kennedy assassinated in Los Angeles after winning the California primary.

**July 1**

General Creighton Abrams replaces General William Westmoreland as head of MACV. Vietnam Counteroffensive Phase V Campaign commences.

**July 3**

General Westmoreland replaces General Harold Johnson as chief of staff, U.S. Army.

**July 31**

Admiral John McCain replaces Admiral U.S. Grant Sharp as CINCPAC.

**August 8**

In Miami, Richard Nixon wins Republican nomination for president.

**August 28**

Vice President Hubert Humphrey wins Democratic nomination for president amid antiwar protests and riots during the Democratic National Convention in the Chicago.

**Team report: “*Suggestions on Public Universities of the Republic of Vietnam*,” 18 September 1968.**

***Seminar in Higher Education: 2-8 October 1968, Rectors at WSU-SP.***

**October 31**

President Johnson announces end of bombing of North Vietnam.

Operation Rolling Thunder ends with total cessation of bombing of North Vietnam.

**November 5**

Richard Nixon defeats Hubert Humphrey in the 1968 presidential election, with Spiro Agnew as vice-president.

**November 9**

*“A Report on American Higher Education,”* Nguyen Van Hai.

***Visitation of Vietnamese Minister of Education Le Minh Tri: 10 December 1968, WSU-SP.***

**December 31**

American troop strength now 540,000; 30,610 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date; 65,600 Allied troops in Vietnam. SVNAF at 820,000; 88,343 killed in action to date.

**1969**

*USAID/Vietnam Office of Education Briefing Materials.*

**January**

Paris peace talks expanded to include Saigon government and Vietcong representatives.

***Minister of Education Le Minh Tri is assassinated in Saigon.***

**January 22**

Richard Nixon inaugurated as president of the United States.

Henry Kissinger formally becomes national security adviser. William Rogers becomes secretary of state. Wisconsin’s Melvin Laird becomes secretary of defense.

## February

Vietnamese Communist forces implement “high point” strategy, mortaring and rocketing South Vietnamese cities. Tet 1969 Counteroffensive Campaign begins.

## March

Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird coins the term “Vietnamization” to describe U.S. troop withdrawals.

## March 18

Nixon begins secret bombing of Cambodia, lasting until **August 1973**.

## March 26

Women Strike for Peace in Washington, D.C.; first large protest against Nixon administration.

*A Study-Observation Tour of Vietnamese Secretaries-General and Deans to Universities and Colleges in the United States: April 1969, WSU-SP.*

## April 30

The number of U.S. military personnel in Vietnam reaches highest level: 543,300.

## May

*New York Times* exposed secret U.S. bombing of Cambodia; criticizing the Nixon administration for widening the “credibility gap.”

## May 14

Nixon proposes eight-point peace plan for Vietnam involving simultaneous withdrawal from South Vietnam of American and North Vietnamese forces.

## June

Formation of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Vietnam (PRG) under the guidance of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV).

## June 8

On Midway, Nixon with Thieu, announces removal of 25,000 U.S. troops from South Vietnam.

*Team report (Eagon and Vickerstaff): “Proposals for Preparatory Center at the University of Saigon,” July 1969.*

**July 25**

In Guam, Nixon unveils Nixon Doctrine, which relied on regional powers armed by the U.S. to preserve international stability; U.S. forces were to turn over all combat operations to ARVN forces and begin an intensified training of ARVN soldiers through the Vietnamization program.

**August**

Henry Kissinger meets covertly in Paris with North Vietnamese negotiator Xuan Thuy.

*A Study-Observation Tour of selected Members of Congress, Republic of Vietnam to the United States, republic of Korea, and Republic of China: 4-10 August, 1969, WSU-SP.*

**September 3**

Ho Chi Minh dies in Hanoi at age seventy-nine; widespread mourning across Vietnam.

**October 15**

National Moratorium stages massive antiwar demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and across U.S.

Two anti-war groups—the reconstituted New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam and the Vietnam Moratorium Committee—sponsored an ongoing series of nationwide protests organized by Sam Brown, on a monthly basis beginning in **October 1969**; founding what became known as the Moratorium Day demonstrations—urging people to take a day off from school or work to protest the war. In the U.S. millions participated, ranging from drivers leaving their headlights on all day in protest of the war, to the chemical Workers of America and the United Automobile Workers endorsing the day, a 100,000 people protested in Boston Common, Mayor John Lindsay of New York declared a day of mourning, and Coretta King led a candlelight vigil in Washington, D.C. Thousands of U.S. soldiers in South Vietnam wore black armbands as a protest against the war.

**November 3**

Nixon delivers “silent majority” speech, appealing to Americans to support his search for a “just and lasting peace” rather than immediate withdrawal which would cause “a collapse of confidence in American leadership, not only in Asia but throughout the world.”

**November 15**

“March against Death.” The New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam sponsors big antiwar march in Washington, D.C., crowd estimates range from 250,000 to 500,000. One of the largest demonstrations in American history, as even more people participated than in October.

**November 16**

Revelation of My Lai massacre, which occurred the year before, revealed and described in press.

**November 30**

U.S. Third Division withdraws from Vietnam.

**December 11**

U.S. Third Brigade, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, removed from Vietnam.

**December 31**

U.S. troop strength in Vietnam reduced by 60,000 declining to 475,200; 40,024 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date; Allied personnel has increased to 70,300; SVNAF to 897,000.

**1970**

*WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus goes to Vietnam as Team leader, first of three trips.*

Minh Duc University 'private' institution in Saigon opens; has Faculties of: Applied Science, Agriculture, Medicine, Philosophy, and Economics and Business.

Hoa Hao University opened by religious sect in Long Xuyen; Schools of Letters, Pedagogy, Commerce and Banking, and International Relations and Management.

**February 20**

Henry Kissinger opens secret peace negotiations with Le Duc Tho.

**March 9**

*WSU-SP President Lee Sherman Dreyfus news conference discusses Vietnam.*

**March 18**

In Cambodia, Prince Sihanouk is overthrown by General Lon Nol and Sisowath Sirik Matak.

**April**

Mass demonstration in Washington supporting Nixon's Vietnam policies.

**April 15**

U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division is withdrawn from Vietnam.

**April 29**

American-ARVN Operations in Cambodia begin.

**April 30**

Nixon announces that American and ARVN forces have attacked Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia. Large antiwar protests mount across the U.S. in reaction to invasion of Cambodia.

**May 4**

National Guard troops fire into crowd, killing four students at Kent State University in Ohio during demonstrations against the Cambodian invasion. **May 15** two students die from National Guard gunfire at Jackson State University in Mississippi.

*A Report from Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc: May 1970.*

**June 30**

U.S.-ARVN ground operations in Cambodia end; 10,000 known enemy casualties.

Team report: *“Basic Student Services Program,” July 1970.*

Team report: *“Observations and Reflections on University of South Vietnam,” 7 July 1970.*

Team report: *“A Report on Consulting Regarding-University Development, Manpower Needs, Documents and Policies Related to the Governance of Vietnamese Universities,” 30 July 1970.*

Team report: *“Basic Studies: Common Trunk,” 6 July-27 August 1970.*

Team in Vietnam: *“Assistance in Modernization of Student Records in South Vietnamese Universities, 15 September-15 November 1970.*

**October 7-8**

President Nixon proposes “standstill cease-fire,” then repeats mutual-withdrawal formula the next day.

**October 11**

U.S. Ninth Infantry Division, Third Brigade, withdraw from Vietnam.

*Evaluation Seminar in Higher Education, Wisconsin State University-Stevens Point Foundation, Inc.: 18-31 October 1970.*

**October**

U.S. combat deaths in Vietnam during the last week of **October, 1970** numbered twenty-four, lowest toll since **October, 1965**.

**November 12**

At Fort Benning, Georgia, Lieutenant William Calley goes on trial for his part in My Lai massacre; trial lasting until **March 1971**.

**November 21**

Unsuccessful American raid on Son Tay Prison in North Vietnam.

**December 7-8**

U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions are withdrawn from Vietnam.

**December 22**

Congress repeals Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

United States Congress prohibits U.S. combat forces or advisers in Cambodia or Laos.

**December 31**

American troop strength in Vietnam reduced to about 300,000 (2 estimates: 334,600/ 280,000); 44,245 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date. Allied military troops decline to 67,700.

**1971**

Cao Dai College opened by Cao Dai religious sect in Tay Ninh. Begins with two-year programs in Education and Agriculture.

Decrees in 1971 institute two public community colleges: My Tho in the Upper Delta, and Nha Trang as the Coastal Community College open in 1972-1973 school year.

**January**

ARVN Operation Lam Son 719 begins, supported by U.S. Operation Dewey Canyon II, lasting until **April**.

**January 31**

Winter Soldier Investigation begins in Detroit.

**February**

South Vietnamese forces initiate incursions in Laos against Ho Chi Minh Trail.

**Eagon and Team in Vietnam: *Campus Planning Consultants*, 28 March-11 April 1971.**

**March 29**

Lt. William Calley convicted of premeditated murder of South Vietnamese civilians at My Lai.

**April**

Washington, D.C. and San Francisco are sites of massive antiwar protests, including Dewey Canyon III protest by Vietnam veterans.

## **April-December**

U.S. troop withdrawals continue: U.S. III Marine Amphibious; U.S. 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions, 5<sup>th</sup> Special Forces, 11<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> Brigades, 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne all withdraw; American Division is divided in individual units.

### **May 3-5**

People's Coalition for Peace and Justice demonstrate against the war in Washington, D.C.

### **June**

*Charles Green arrives in Saigon, new chief officer USAID/Higher Education.*

### **June 13**

*The New York Times* begins publishing Pentagon Papers; Supreme Court upholds its right to publish materials, citing the First Amendment freedom of the press clause. The day before the ruling Daniel Ellsberg was indicted for his role in leaking the papers.

### **July**

*Earle Hoshal, "Brief Status Report Higher Education in Vietnam."*

### **July 15**

President Nixon announces Kissinger's trip to China.

### **July 17**

White House chief of staff, John Ehrlichman, not content to wait for the Ellsberg case to work its way through the justice system, organizes the "Plumbers" to investigate and discredit Daniel Ellsberg, who had revealed Pentagon Papers to Neil Sheehan of the *New York Times*. The Plumbers broke into the office of Dr. Lewis Fielding, Ellsberg's psychiatrist. In **1973** Ellsberg's case was declared a mistrial because of the Plumbers break-in. The Pentagon Papers were significant both in exposing government policy and in prompting illegal government activities, a harbinger to the Watergate scandal.

*Eagon and Team in Vietnam: Follow up and Evaluation with Ministry of Education and USAID-Education, July-August, 1971.*

*Team in Vietnam: Relating Area Resources to Curriculum Planning, September-October, 1971.*

*Seminar in Policy Formulation and Administrative Structure in American Higher Education: September-October, 1971, WSU-SP.*

### **October 3**

President Nguyen Van Thieu re-elected president of South Vietnam.

**October**

Team report: “*Registration and Record System,*” **October 1971.**

Team in Vietnam: *Administrative Procedures,* **October-November, 1971.**

**November 12**

Nixon restricts U.S. ground forces in South Vietnam to a defensive role.

*Administrative Internship: November, 1971-February, 1972, UWSP.*

**December 26**

President Nixon orders resumption of bombing of North Vietnam.

**December 31**

American troop strength in Vietnam reduced to 156,800; 45,626 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date; Allied strength declines to 53,900. SVNAF up to 1,046,250; 156,260 killed to date.

Team in Vietnam: *Assistance in the Planning and Development of Community Colleges:* **December, 1971-January, 1972.**

**1972**

Team report: “*Recommendations for the Use of Military Facilities for Educational Purposes,*” **January 1972.**

Joint report: “*Projection-Higher Education Ministry of Education and USAID-Education,*” **January 1972.**

**January 25**

Kissinger’s secret negotiations with the North Vietnamese are revealed by Nixon.

**February 21**

Nixon visits Beijing seeking détente with the People’s Republic of China.

**March 10**

U.S. 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division withdraws from Vietnam. U.S Air Force Operation Commando Hunt ends forty month effort to interdict enemy supplies along the 1,700-mile Ho Chi Minh Trail.

**March 23**

United States suspends Paris peace talks until North Vietnam and the NLF enter into “serious discussions.”

**March 30**

North Vietnamese launches Easter Offensive, crossing the demilitarized zone.

**April 7-July**

Siege of An Loc, capital of Binh Long province, located on main highway 70 miles north of Saigon, NVA and VC troops besieged South Vietnamese forces in An Loc after taking Loc Ninh. President Thieu rushed a division of ARVN to defend An Loc, but the division never reached the city because the VC 7<sup>th</sup> had blocked the highway. During the climactic siege the VC and NVA were decimated by U.S. Air Force B-52 strikes and finally withdrew in July. Without the U.S. air support, the ARVAN would not have held the city.

**April 15**

Nixon authorizes U.S. bombing of area near Hanoi and Haiphong.

**April 15-20**

Widespread antiwar demonstrations resume across the United States.

**April 20**

Kissinger arrives in Moscow to prepare Nixon's **May 20** summit meeting with Brezhnev.

**April 27**

Paris peace talks start up again.

**May 1**

North Vietnamese forces capture Quang Tri City.

**May 4**

U.S. suspends the Paris peace talks.

**May 8**

Nixon announces intensification of American bombing of North Vietnam (Operation Linebacker begins, lasting until **October**.) U.S. Navy mines North Vietnamese ports (Haiphong Harbor.)

**June**

General Frederick C. Weyland replaces General Abrams in Vietnam. **Oct. 16**, Abrams becomes chief of staff, U.S. Army.

**Team Report—*The Baccalaureate Examination: June, 1972.***

**June 17**

Watergate break-in, five men arrested for breaking into Democratic National Committee offices at Watergate complex in Washington, D.C.

**June 26-29**

U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, and 196<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade withdraws from Vietnam.

**July 13**

Paris peace talks resume after ten week stoppage.

**August 1**

Kissinger meeting with Le Duc Tho in Paris, senses progress. Kissinger in mid-**August** finds Thieu reluctant to accept cease-fire accord.

**Team in Vietnam: *Consultation with Ministry of Education, USAID-Education Officials, 3-19 August 1972.***

**August 23**

U.S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 21<sup>st</sup> Infantry, last major U.S. ground combat troops withdraw from Vietnam.

**Team report: “*Administrative Reorganization,*” August-September, 1972.**

**September 15**

ARVN forces recapture Quang Tri City.

**September 26-27**

Henry Kissinger holds secret negotiations with North Vietnamese diplomats in Paris.

**October**

U.S. Air force Operation Linebacker I ends.

**October 4**

In Saigon meeting with Kissinger’s assistant, Alexander Haig, Thieu opposes peace agreement.

**October 8**

Breakthrough at Paris meeting of Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho.

Team in Vietnam: *Consultant Conference with Chief of Higher Education-Vietnam and Current Consultants in the Vietnam Contract, 11-12 October 1972.*

**October 19-20**

Back in Saigon Kissinger finds Thieu firmly opposed to pending agreement. Hanoi Radio broadcasts details of the agreement in an effort to pressure Kissinger and the U.S.. Kissinger reassures North Vietnam that “peace is at hand.”

**November 7**

Nixon is reelected president in a landslide defeat of Senator George McGovern.

**November 11**

U.S. logistical base at Long Binh turned over to South Vietnamese, **marking end to direct U.S. Army participation in the war.**

**November 20-21**

Kissinger and Le Duc Tho meet in Paris to put final touches on the Paris Peace Accords; Kissinger presents sixty-nine amendments demanded by South Vietnamese President Thieu.

**December 13**

In Paris, fresh talks between Kissinger and Le Duc Tho deadlock and break down.

**December 18-29**

Operation Linebacker II; Nixon orders “Christmas Bombing” of areas around Hanoi and Haiphong; air-strikes continue for eleven days. North Vietnam agrees to resume talks when bombing stops.

**December 31**

During **1972** U.S. military strength in Vietnam declined to 24,000; 45,926 U.S. military personnel killed in action to date. Allied personnel dropped to 35,500. South Vietnamese Armed Forces strength increases to 1,048,000; (SVNAF) personnel killed in action to date number 195,847.

Team in Vietnam: *Instructional Development Planning, December, 1972-January, 1973.*

Team in Vietnam: *Campus Planning, December, 1972-January, 1973.*

Team in Vietnam: *Community College Planning, December, 1972-January, 1973.*

**1973**

Polytechnic University of Thu Duc opens; National Agricultural Institute becomes its School of Agriculture, National Technological Institute Engineering program becomes its School of Engineering. Thu Duc also houses Vocational Teacher training program, Pedagogy School and Science School.

**January 8-12**

Le Duc Tho and Kissinger convene more private peace negotiations.

**January 15**

President Nixon calls a halt to all U.S. offensive action against North Vietnam.

**January 23**

Kissinger and Le Duc Tho initial Paris Peace agreement.

**January 27**

Peace pact formally signed in Paris by the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the National Liberation Front. Cease-fire in place; Secretary of Defense Laird announces that the draft in the United States has ended.

**January 30**

Elliot L. Richardson appointed United States Secretary of Defense.

*Administrative Internship-AACTE, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point: February 1973.*

**February 12**

Operation Homecoming, first American POWs (588) released by North Vietnam.

**February 21**

Peace agreement signed in Laos.

Team report: "*Higher Education Project Planning*," **March 1973.**

**March**

*Eagon consultation service in Vietnam.*

**March 16**

ROK Capital Division and 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division withdraw from Vietnam.

**March 29**

MACV headquarters removed. Last American troops leave Vietnam.

**April 1**

Last of American POWs released by North Vietnamese in Hanoi.

Team consultant in Vietnam (Lamar Johnson) Team report: "*Community College Development,*" **April 1973.**

Team report and assistance in Vietnam (W. Wood): "*National System of Higher Education-Higher Education Law,*" **April 1973.**

Team consultation and report (Reitz): "*Graduate Education.*"

**April 30**

Amid charges that the administration obstructed justice, Nixon aides H.R. Halderman, John Ehrlichman and John Dean and Attorney General Richard Kleindienst resign.

**June 13**

In Paris the Implementation accord is signed by the United States, South Vietnam, North Vietnam, and the National Liberation Front.

**June 15**

*Charles Green, "Some Current Observations, General Information and Data on Higher Education in Vietnam."*

**June 24**

Graham Martin replaces Ellsworth Bunker as U.S. ambassador to South Vietnam.

Congress prohibits all bombing in Cambodia after **August 15.**

**June 25**

Former White House Council, John Dean, tells a special Senate committee that Nixon sought to cover up the Watergate affair. On **July 13**, former Nixon aide, Alexander Butterfield discloses to the committee the existence of tapes of White House conversations.

**July**

*USAID meetings in Washington: July 1973.*

**July 2**

James Schlesinger becomes secretary of defense.

**July 16**

U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee begins hearings on the secret bombing of Cambodia.

**August 12**

*Wisconsin Consultant/USAID meetings in Los Angeles. Eagon meets with Asia Foundation.*

**August 14**

In accordance with congressional prohibition the United States stops bombing Cambodia; Arc Light Operations end.

All direct United States military operations in Indochina end.

**August 22**

Nixon appoints Henry Kissinger as secretary of state, replacing William Rogers.

**September**

*Team consultation and report in Vietnam (Philip Hendren): Notes and Sketches and Things Related to the Development of Cai Khe Site University of Can Tho.*

**October 10**

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew resigns and is replaced by Representative Gerald Ford.

**October 11**

*Team consultation and report in Vietnam (Rothwell and Easton): "Development of Educational Foundations," "Vietnam Foundation for Educational Development University of Hue."*

**November 7**

Congress overrides Nixon's veto of the War Powers Act; limiting the president's right to wage war.

*Eagon consultant service in Vietnam, final trip of nine as team leader of Wisconsin Team.*

**December 31**

United States military personnel in South Vietnam limited to 50; no Allied military personnel remain in Vietnam. Total 56,244 American military personnel killed in action in Vietnam.

At time of **Jan. 27, 1973** Peace Accords some 185,546 ARVN personnel, and 927,124 NLF and NVA personnel had been killed in action during the American-Vietnam conflict.

**1974**

Team consultation and report in Vietnam (Philip Hendren): *Architectural Notes in Vietnam, 1974*.

U.S. Congress terminates Public Safety Office of the USAID with the 1974 Foreign Assistance Act.

**January**

Paris Agreement begins to break down; South Vietnamese President Thieu declares that the war has begun again.

**May 9**

United States House Judiciary Committee opens impeachment hearings on President Nixon.

**June**

Wisconsin Contract terminates.

Communist buildup of supplies and forces increase in South Vietnam; **September-October** DRV Party leadership undertakes policy review and decides to launch major offensive in South Vietnam the following year during the upcoming dry season.

**July 24**

U.S. Supreme Court rules that President Nixon must turn over White House tapes to Watergate special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski.

**July 30**

House Judiciary Committee votes to recommend impeachment of Nixon on three counts.

**August 9**

Richard Nixon resigns the presidency; Gerald Ford is inaugurated as president.

**August 20**

U.S. Congress cuts aid to South Vietnam from \$1 billion to \$700 million.

**September 8**

President Ford pardons Nixon for all federal crimes that he “committed or may have committed.”

**September 16**

President Ford signs proclamation offering clemency to draft evaders and military deserters.

**December 13**

NVA and ARVN engage in combat in Phuoc Long Province.

**December 31**

United States military personnel in South Vietnam remain at 50.

**1975**

**January 6**

NVA troops take control of Phuoc Long Province.

**January 8**

North Vietnam leadership decides on a massive invasion of South Vietnam ordering major offensive to “liberate” all areas.

**February 5**

North Vietnamese General Van Tien Dung takes command of Communist forces on the offensive in South Vietnam.

**March 10-11**

NVA captures Ban Me Thuot.

**March 14-15**

President Nguyen Thieu meets with his commanders at Camranh; orders northern provinces of South Vietnam abandoned.

**March 20**

President Thieu reverses himself, orders Hue held at all costs.

**March 25-26**

Hue falls to the NVA.

**March 30**

NVA captures Da Nang.

**March 31**

Hanoi leadership directs General Dung to push offensive toward Saigon in the “Ho Chi Minh Campaign.”

**April 1**

In face of Khmer Rouge invasion, Cambodian President Lon Nol flees Cambodia.  
South Vietnamese forces abandon the northern half of South Vietnam to North Vietnam.

**April 7**

Le Duc Tho arrives at Communist headquarters in Loc Ninh to oversee NVA offensive.

**April 8-20**

Battle of Xuan Loc rages as ARVN 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division attempts to hold off attack by three NVA divisions.

**April 11-17**

Operation Eagle Pull withdraws U.S. embassy personnel from Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

**April 14**

Operation Babylift ends: American airlift of homeless children to the U.S. from South Vietnam transports about 14,000 children.

**April 17**

Phnom Penh falls to Khmer Rouge.

**April 21**

Communist forces capture Xuan Loc, last South Vietnamese defense line before Saigon.  
RVN President Nguyen Thieu resigns.

**April 23**

U.S. President Ford, in a speech in New Orleans, calls the war “finished.”

*Nguyen Quynh-Hoa serves on Ford's council for refugees.*

**April 25**

Thieu leaves Saigon for Taiwan.

**April 28**

RVN Vice President Tran Van Huong transfers authority as chief of state to General Duong Van Minh.

**April 29**

NVA begins attack on Saigon.

**April 29-30**

Option IV (evacuation of last Americans from Saigon), Operation Frequent Wind evacuates all American personnel and selected South Vietnamese from Vietnam; Ambassador Martin departs.

**April 30**

NVA and NLF forces capture Saigon. Colonel Bui Tin accepts surrender from General Minh.

**Vietnam War ends; reunification of Vietnam under communist rule.**

**May 12**

In Kampuchean waters of the Gulf of Siam, Cambodian Communists seize the U.S. merchant ship *Mayaguez*. President Ford orders American aircraft to bomb Kampuchea; thirty-eight U.S. Marines are killed during the rescue of the *Mayaguez's* thirty-nine seamen.

**Spring 1975-Fall 1978**

Border clashes occur between Vietnam and Cambodia; the government of Kampuchea charges Hanoi with seeking to dominate Indochina.

**August (1975)**

The Pathet Lao assume control of Laos.

**Aftermath****1976****April**

A new National Assembly, representing the entire country, is created as elections are held throughout Vietnam.

**July 2**

The official announcement of the creation of a new Socialist Republic of Vietnam (SRV), unifying North and South into a single nation.

**November 2**

Jimmy Carter elected president of the United States.

**December 4-20**

In Hanoi, the Fourth National Congress of the Communist Party is held. The name of the party is changed from the Vietnamese Workers Party to the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP).

**1977****January 21**

U.S. President Jimmy Carter, on the day after his inauguration, pardons most of the 10,000 Vietnam War draft evaders.

**March**

Talks begin between Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and Vietnamese officials, exploring U.S. recognition of Vietnam.

**1978****March 17**

SRV government announces the nationalization of all private commercial and manufacturing enterprises above the family level throughout Vietnam.

**May**

Refugees, many of them Chinese, increasingly flee Vietnam. The People's Republic of China accuses the SRV of repression and mistreatment of its Chinese residents, cuts off aid to Vietnam.

**June**

Vietnam becomes a member of the Comecom, the Eastern European economic community.

**July**

Tensions build between Vietnam and Cambodia; relations between Vietnam and China continue to deteriorate.

**October**

The United States planned normalization of relations with Vietnam is postponed.

**November 3**

A Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation is signed between the SRV and the Soviet Union. China terms the pact a “threat to the security of Southeast Asia.”

**December**

Exodus of “boat people” from Vietnam begins.

**December 15**

President Carter opens full-scale diplomatic relations between the United States and the People’s Republic of China.

**December 25**

Vietnamese military forces invade neighboring Democratic Kampuchea.

**1979****January 7**

Phnom Penh is occupied and a new pro-Vietnamese government is established in Kampuchea, the People’s Republic of Kampuchea (PRK).

**February 17**

Chinese invasion of Vietnam; military forces of the People’s Republic of China cross the border in a brief but bitter attack, lasting until **mid-March**.

**April**

Peace talks between Vietnam and China open, but the two sides can not agree upon a settlement.

**1980****November 4**

Ronald Reagan elected president of the United States.

**December 18**

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam promulgates a new constitution, the third since the declaration of independence in **1945**. The new document calls for a rapid advance to a fully socialist society.

**1982****March 27-31**

Fifth National Congress of the Vietnamese Communist Party held in Hanoi; the meeting approves a compromise program calling for a more cautious advance to socialism.

**June**

Rebel groups form Coalition Government of Democratic Kampuchea to force the withdrawal of Vietnamese occupation forces from Kampuchea.

**November 11**

Vietnam Veterans Memorial dedicated in Washington, D.C.

**1983****June**

Reflecting upon their experiences in Vietnam, several U.S. generals advise against military intervention in Central America without the clear support of the American public and Congress.

**October**

U.S. marines are withdrawn from Beirut by President Reagan, following an attack against their barracks. U.S. military then invades Grenada.

**1984****May**

A federal judge announces a \$180 million out-of-court settlement between seven manufacturers of Agent Orange and Vietnam Veterans.

An unknown U.S. casualty of the Vietnam War is interred at Arlington National Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; in **1998** these remains are identified.

**November**

The bronze statue of three U.S. servicemen overlooking the polished black granite wall, added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial after demands by veterans, is dedicated.

**1985**

Famine spreads across Vietnam following failure of farm collectivization program.

**1986****July 9**

General Secretary Le Duan dies in Hanoi. Politburo member Turong Chinh replaces him.

**December 15-19**

Vietnamese Communist party convenes for its Sixth National Congress in Hanoi. Truong Chinh and other veteran members are dismissed from the Politburo. Nguyen Van Linh is elected General Secretary and launches liberal economic reform program.

**1987****June**

Pham Van Dong and Truong Chinh resign as Prime Minister and Chief of State and are replaced by Pham Hung and Vo Chi Cong.

**1989**

Mikhail Gorbachev, as Soviet leader, embarks on reform programs reducing aid to Vietnam.

Vietnamese leadership is alarmed by the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe.

**September**

Vietnam withdraws the bulk of its troops from Cambodia, leaving only a few units in support of Cambodian units.

**1990**

President Bush deploys U.S. military units with coalition forces in the Persian Gulf following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. On **January 16, 1991** air war is launched against Iraq: U.S. and its allies are victorious in six weeks after only 100 hours of ground combat. Bush visits U.S. forces after their Gulf War victory, declaring the victory has "kicked the Vietnam Syndrome" announcing that the "ghost of Vietnam" had been put to rest.

**August**

Under United Nations auspices, rival Cambodian factions agree to form coalition national council and accept United Nations peacekeeping forces to supervise national elections.

**September**

United States Secretary of State James Baker meets with Vietnam's Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, in New York.

**1991**

*Nguyen Quynh-Hoa returns to Vietnam for tour of National Library system.*

Soviet Union ends aid programs to Vietnam, announcing that trade will henceforth be conducted at world market prices.

**February**

Vietnam and the United States agree to open a “temporary” office in Hanoi to deal with the tracing of Americans missing in action during the war.

**1992****November**

Bill Clinton elected president of the United States.

**1993****November**

On Veterans Day, sculptor Glenna Goodacre’s bronze statue of three women nurses attending a wounded U.S. soldier, was unveiled. As an addition to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the women’s memorial honors the 11,500 American women who served in Vietnam.

**1994****February**

President Clinton lifts embargo on trade with Vietnam.

**1995****July**

President Clinton announces recognition of Vietnam.

**1998**

*Return visit to UWSP by Nguyen Quynh-Hoa and Vietnamese educators: January, 1998.*

*Eagons, Stielstras, Greens, Linh, and others visit unified Vietnam: Summer 1998.*

**2000**

*Green, Linh and others visit unified Vietnam: August 2000.*

**1997-2003**

*Thesis research and writing, USAID Contract in Higher Education: WSU-SP and the Republic of Vietnam. Thomas C. Reich. Thesis submitted and approved May 2003.*

**2004**

**Thesis is awarded 2004 MAGS Distinguished Thesis Award, St. Louis, MO.**

### **Vietnamese Declaration of Independence, 2 September 1945**<sup>547</sup>

All men are created equal. They are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

This immortal statement was in the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America in 1776. In a broader sense, this means: All the peoples on the earth are equal from birth, all the peoples have a right to live, to be happy and free.

The Declaration of the French Revolution made in 1791 on the Rights of Man and the Citizen also states: “All men are born free and with equal rights, and must always remain free and have equal rights.” Those are undeniable truths.

Nevertheless, for more than eighty years, the French imperialists, abusing the standard of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, have violated our Fatherland and oppressed our fellow-citizens. They have acted contrary to the ideals of humanity and justice. In the field of politics, they have deprived our people of every democratic liberty.

They have enforced inhuman laws; they have set up three distinct political regimes in the North, the Center and the South of Vietnam in order to wreck our national unity and prevent our people from being united.

They have built more prisons than schools. They have mercilessly slain our patriots—they have drowned our uprisings in rivers of blood. They have fettered public opinion; they have practiced obscurantism against our people. To weaken our race they have forced us to use opium and alcohol.

In the field of economics, they fleeced us to the backbone, impoverished our people, and devastated our land. They have robbed our rice fields, our mines, our forests, and our raw materials. They have monopolized the issuing of bank-notes and the export trade.

They have invented numerous unjustifiable taxes and reduced our people, especially our peasantry, to a state of extreme poverty. They have hampered the prospering of our national bourgeoisie; they have mercilessly exploited our workers.

In the autumn of 1940, when the Japanese Fascists violated Indochina’s territory to establish new bases in their fight against the Allies, the French imperialists went down on their bended knees and handed over our country to them.

Thus, from that date, our people were subjected to the double yoke of the French and the Japanese. Their sufferings and miseries increased. The result was that from the end of last year to the beginning of this year, from Quang Tri province to the North of Vietnam, more than two million of our fellow-citizens died of starvation. On March 9, the French troops were disarmed by the Japanese. The French colonialist either fled or surrendered, showing that not only were they incapable of “protecting” us, but that, in a span of five years, they had twice sold our country to the Japanese.

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<sup>547</sup> U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. *United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense*. Book 1-12. Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1971.

On several occasions before March 9, the Vietminh League urged the French to ally themselves with it against the Japanese. Instead of agreeing to this proposal, the French colonialists so intensified their terrorist activities against the Vietminh members that before fleeing they massacred a great number of our political prisoners detained at Yen Bai and Cao Bang. Notwithstanding all this, our fellow-citizens have always manifested toward the French a tolerant and humane attitude. Even after the Japanese putsch of March 1945, the Vietminh League helped many Frenchmen to cross the frontier, rescued some of them from Japanese jails, and protected French lives and property.

From the autumn of 1940, our country had in fact ceased to be a French colony and had become a Japanese possession. After the Japanese had surrendered to the Allies, our whole people rose to regain our national sovereignty and to found the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The truth is that we have wrested our independence from the Japanese and not from the French. The French have fled, the Japanese have capitulated, Emperor Bao Dai has abdicated. Our people have broken the chains which for nearly a century have fettered them and have won independence for the Fatherland. Our people at the same time have overthrown the monarchic regime that has reigned supreme for dozens of centuries. In its place has been established the present Democratic Republic.

For these reasons, we members of the Provisional Government, representing the whole Vietnamese people, declare that from now on we break off all relations of the colonial character with France; we repeal all the international obligation that France has so far subscribed to on behalf of Vietnam and we abolish all the special rights the French have unlawfully acquired in our Fatherland. The whole Vietnamese people, animated by a common purpose, are determined to fight to the bitter end against any attempt by the French colonialists to re-conquer their country.

We are convinced that the Allied nations which at Tehran and San Francisco have acknowledged the principles of self-determination and equality of nations, will not refuse to acknowledge the independence of Vietnam.

A people who have courageously opposed French domination for more than eighty years, a people who have fought side by side with the Allies against Fascists during these last years, such a people must be free and independent.

For these reasons, we, members of the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, solemnly declare to the world that Vietnam has the right to be free and independent country and in fact it is so already. The entire Vietnamese people are determined to mobilize all their physical and mental strength, to sacrifice their lives and property in order to safeguard their independence and liberty.

## APPENDIX

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