

VIETNAM *Magazine*

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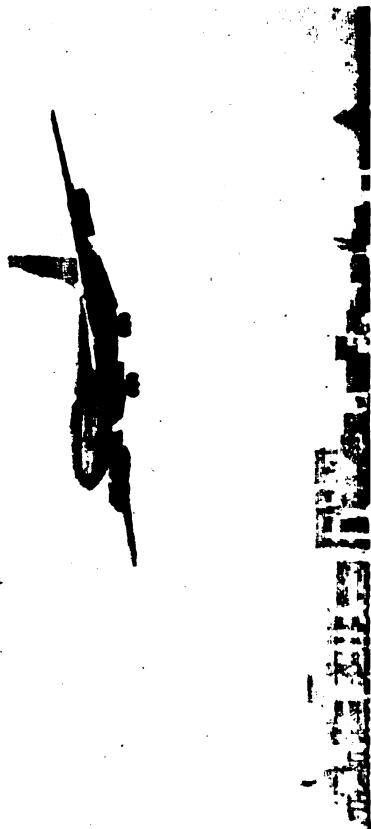
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FROM OUR READERS

Although I have never received your magazine myself, I happened to see it at the Vietnamese Embassy in Tokyo once, and found it very interesting and informative. When we have no information cadres overseas and only an inadequate budget for information services, its contribution to the latter is quite important. I did not mean to talk you into sending me the magazine free of charge: the truth was our information services were not too active abroad so far.

ANH LAM
82-1 Hommachi Hirano
Higachi Sumiyoshi-ku
Osaka, Japan

Being a Cambodian student of Pedagogy Faculty in Phnom Penh, I am very interested in your **Vietnam Magazine**. The contents of this publication are very useful to my studies. I have received from the Vietnam Information Office in Phnom Penh two copies of this magazine for which I would like to thank you very much. If possible, please mail to my address your forthcoming issues.

KEAN BEANLY
38 Vat Unnalom, 3^e Quartier
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The National Library serves the Republic of Singapore as a national and public library. It is anxious to build up its limited collection now totalling just over 400,000 books and other materials, for the use of its increasing number of readers. We are interested in obtaining materials. It would be much appreciated if you could put us on your mailing lists.

MISS ARLENE SOON
Ag. Head, Gifts & Exchange
Section
National Library
Stamford Road, Singapore, 6
Republic of Singapore

Would you please forward me some information materials on the Vietnam conflict? Furthermore, I would like very much to receive the **Vietnam Magazine** regularly.

JONAS OGLAND
Solitudenstrasse 24
9012 St. Gallen
Schweiz (Switzerland)

Thank you sincerely for sending me a copy of **Vietnam Magazine**. It seems to be very interesting and gives me useful information about Vietnam and its achievements. I am also interested in your other publications and informations about Vietnam, its people and their cultural activities.

A. V. VASAVAN
Managing Editor
The Janashakti
Cochin. I., Kerala, India

VIETNAM *Magazine*

Board of Directors of THE VIETNAM COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Editorial Address:

P. O. Box 932
SAIGON, VIETNAM

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Cover photo: Movie and stage luminary Kim Vui holds Presidential Award for best performance by a movie actress in 1970 for her role in «Chan Troi Tim» which is packing movie houses all over South Vietnam.

The Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations is a wonderful people-to-people organization sponsored by respectable and enthusiastic personages. With their untiring efforts, the Council has gradually become an internationally known body in broadening the knowledge of people all over the world about the Vietnamese people and their daily life, in increasing better understanding and in building up greater friendships.

Our group has also been trying to help your cause as you are fighting the same enemy as ours. You have been trying to win friends from outside of Vietnam while we have been trying to win the hearts and minds of the farmers inside of Vietnam. Let's hope that the sacred war of VN can be won from both inside and out.

CHANG LIEN-CHUM
(LEONARD C. CHANG)
Director, Chinese Agricultural
Technical Group to Vietnam
31 Cao Thang, Saigon

This is to inform you that your **Vietnam Magazine** is a very interesting review and I would like to have my name included in your mailing list. I would like also to receive some postage stamps because I am a philatelist or you can give my name and my address to persons who want to exchange stamps.

RAMON LOERA GONZALEZ
Lerdo #279 Norte
Cd. Juarez
Chili, Mexico

Being interested in South Vietnam, I had to request some objective informations from the Consulate General of the Republic of Vietnam in Paris who was kind enough in sending me various documents such as **Le Courier du Vietnam** and **Vietnam Magazine**.

I would like to compliment you on your magazine which allows me to have more knowledge on your country and which confirms me on the false informations published by the press.

BERNARD ASSIE
Controleur du Travail
10 Rue Paul Bert
25 Besancon, France

I would like to subscribe to your **Vietnam Magazine**. I am very interested in the conflict taking place in your country, so I would be very pleased if I could have some more information on it. Regarding the conflict there, I quite agree with the cause your country is fighting for.

I am a member of the "Committee of Southeast Asia" which has been in South Vietnam a few times.

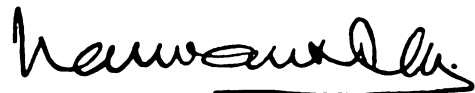
ATLE GANDRUBAKKEN
Ovre Bergveg 49
5063 Krakenes, Norway

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

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If you decide to participate as a Grand Patron or an Honor Patron you will receive a special scroll, as well as be included in our Honor Roll. To be an Honor Patron a minimum payment of US\$850.00 (or equivalent) required; to be a Grand Patron a minimum payment of US\$425.00 (or equivalent) is required.

If you would like to learn more about our activities, we indeed would be pleased to hear from you.



President
TRAN VAN LAM

It would interest you to hear that I have taken keen interest in your country since I've heard about her and would be obliged if you could tell me in brief, her history and the history of her present war. I wish too to know who the VC's are, why the Americans should take it upon themselves to become part of the war, and why your country was divided into the South and the North Vietnam.

The above questions become imperative because I happen to hear about your country quite often. Maybe I would be in a position to enlighten some of my countrymen who, like me are quite ignorant about your country and the reasons why the war is unavoidable.

J. A. ANDREW
35A. Ahmadu Bello Street
Jos, Nigeria, West Africa

It was so kind of you to send us copies of **Vietnam Magazine** and **Vietnam Newsletter**, together with the booklets. These literature helped me a lot to understand Vietnam and its people. Actually, we have so little knowledge about your country, though as a journalist and an editor of a district newspaper, we always like to learn about Vietnam and inform our people of the happenings in that country as far as is practicable.

KAMAL BENERJEE
Editor, Parikrama News Weekly
Khagra P. O., Berhampore
Murshidabad Dt.
West Bengal, India



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KIM LAI AN QUAN

(Kim Lai Printing Shop)

Chinese experts boost farm techniques

"Helping the rural citizen to fill his rice bowl regularly," says a modern-day Chinese sage, "is the best approach to winning his allegiance and foiling Communist subversion efforts." That is one reason why the Republic of China, while it maintains a military mission in Saigon, continues to send more skilled farmers than soldiers to South Vietnam.

Chinese agricultural experts have been working in Vietnam ever since December 1959, when the first team of 11 farmers arrived from Taiwan. In 1967 they numbered more than 100. Today 34 of these farm advisers, assigned to Agriculture Ministry directorates and to four field teams, still are helping to carry out the Republic of Vietnam's rural reconstruction program. The Republic of China Army contingent — staffing a political warfare advisory program in Saigon since October 1964 — numbers 31 officers.

The 34 farm experts, recruited in Taipei by the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction as members of the Chinese Agricultural Technical Group (CATG), are working under a U.S. AID-supported contract with Saigon's Agriculture Ministry. They are not desk-bound agrarian scientists with illustrated charts and colored brochures; they are farmers with muddy hands. Most of them are working at the rice-roots level to help Vietnamese diversify their crops, increase harvests, improve livestock, utilize water resources,

train youths and their elders in modern cultivation methods, strengthen co-operatives and develop rural industries. In 11 years they have won the confidence of thousands of Vietnamese peasants and shown them the way to higher incomes. CATG estimates that its advisers' work has directly benefited 65,897 families and indirectly helped another 36,926 families. And the CATG men work on projects helping to convince the rural citizens that the Saigon government has their interests at heart.

"Service is the most effective way to fight the Viet Cong," says Leonard Chang, CATG's director in Vietnam. CATG advisers work closely with provincial extension service cadre and stress that the farm improvement program is a Vietnamese program directed and supported by the Vietnamese government.

"I think the reason our advisers inspire trust from the Vietnamese farmers," says Chang, "is because they seldom use their tongues. Instead they work shoulder to shoulder with the farmers in the field."

Tough to Convince

"Our slogan," says Chang, "is to give the farmers 'quicker and greater returns.' If one of our advisers does not produce results in a certain project within three months, he has to go home."

Advisers working with this sword of Damocles hanging over

their heads have not found it easy to pass along their skills. Despite their ethnic similarity to the Vietnamese, they have had to work hard to elicit cooperation from tradition-minded peasants in the provinces. Some of the CATG veterans remember, for instance, the autumn of 1964 when one of their teams was sent into Huong Phu, a village between Hue and the Demilitarized Zone. They remember it not because it was unusual, but because it was so typical.

No vegetables had ever been grown in Huong Phu. The villagers were convinced that only rice could grow on their lands. The entire region around Hue had to depend on airlifts from Dalat for all vegetables consumed. The Thua Thien province chief had warned the Chinese that the villagers were stubborn. "They are wary of all outsiders," he said, "and they never heard of Taiwan."

On reaching Huong Phu the Chinese took rooms in a small hotel and searched out a farmer known as one of the most intelligent and progressive in the village. They told the farmer, Le Oanh, they wanted to transplant vegetable seedlings on his soil, make a demonstration plot out of a small part of his farm.

"This is my rice land," Oanh snorted. "I don't want to spoil it."

The Chinese did not give up. They grew vegetable seedlings in plastic bags on the veranda of their hotel, where all villagers could



These farmers with muddy hands are working in a vegetable seed demonstration farm in Long Khanh. At right is an adviser from the Chinese Agricultural Technical Group (CATG), one of 34 in South Vietnam teaching modern cultivation practices and introducing heat-resistant seeds from Taiwan.

tivation techniques were used. When the crop was sold and the ragged peasant found 48,000 piasters in his hand, he came back from the market and sought out his Chinese friends. "I am going to send my son to a doctor in Hue and then buy a kilo of pork for my wife," he said. "It's a long time since she's tasted pork."

The rice farmers of Huong Phu crowded around the Chinese, demanding seed and asking advice. Within a year most farmers in the village had remodeled their homes or built new ones of brick. No longer did the local market have to depend on vegetable imports from Dalat.

In other parts of the country, wherever they found soil and climate suitable, CATG specialists ultimately developed vegetable seed demonstration plots totaling 2,572 hectares.

"Seeds are important," says CATG's director Chang. "One kind of seed can make a big difference to a farmer's income. The United States has some very good seed, but it is suitable for temperate weather. Most of our seed in Taiwan has been bred with heat-tolerant strains so it can survive here. It will yield four or five times as much as the degenerated local seed."

Efforts Appreciated

"I can't speak too highly of the CATG members," says Pham Huy Lam, the Ministry's director-general for agriculture. "They are hard-working and dedicated men. They have provided us with commodities and many kinds of crops we wouldn't have known about but for them. When I was chief of agricultural extension projects I worked closely with the CATG extension specialists. With their help we have imported many seeds, some of which originated in Japan and the United States but all tried out first in Taiwan. We found they grow well in Vietnam."

The present extension chief for the Ministry, Nguyen The Thieu, concurs. "I particularly appreciate the help they have given us in demonstration programs for rice, vegetables and sorghum," he says. In addition to their vegetable seed demonstration plots, the Chinese

follow their maturation. Le Oanh was among the curious who watched the seedlings grow. As days passed he came to know the advisers better; he smoked a few Chinese cigarettes and took a few small gifts from Taiwan home to his wife. Reluctantly, one day he told the CATG men they could try out their experiments on a hectare of poor slope land behind his house. But he washed his hands of responsibility.

The Chinese reclaimed the plot and sterilized it to kill insects. They planted cabbage, kohlrabi and cauliflower. Sixty days later Le Oanh sold the crop for 46,000 piasters.¹

Word spread through the village. A wizened, ragged neighbor of Oanh's — a dispossessed share-cropper accompanied by his sickly, stunted, 18-year-old son — asked the advisers from across the sea for a handful of this magical seed.

"I don't want to beg something for nothing," he said with dignity, "but one must humble himself when his family does not eat well." The Chinese assured him there was no question of begging when a man was willing to contribute his labor. They found a tenth of a hectare of unused land for the man and his son and gave them seed to plant hot peppers, Chinese cabbages and eggplant. They worked with the pair day after day, making sure the latest cul-

¹ At the official exchange rate then in effect — 35.35 piasters per US\$1 — this would be the equivalent of US\$ 1,314, but in terms of what seeds, farm equipment and labor this sum would purchase, its value was about half that dollar total. In 1966 the official rate was changed to 80 piasters per US\$1. (While this latter rate remains in effect for many transactions, a more accurate measurement today is the "accommodation rate" introduced in October 1970 for certain currency exchange: 275 piasters per US\$1.)



These cabbages growing on an An Giang demonstration farm were introduced by members of the Chinese Agricultural Technical Group from Taiwan. The CATG has introduced 31 kinds of new vegetables to Vietnam in eleven years.

have developed 3,196 hectares demonstrating field crops like sorghum, millet and corn as well as 8,806 hectares devoted to new rice varieties.

Lam and Thieu agree the Chinese are psychologically suited for their work in Vietnam. "Chinese and Vietnamese are very similar," says Lam. "I'm not talking only about character, although it should be noted that both come from a predominantly Buddhist society and that a lot of Vietnamese have ancestors who were originally Chinese. But I'm also talking about the situation between the two countries, the Republic of China and the Republic of Vietnam. We can understand them and they can understand us. They're well acquainted with the situation and

the climate in Vietnam. They can help us."

Principally the CATG teams have helped the Vietnamese in these types of projects :

- * Introducing to Vietnam 31 kinds of vegetables, including 86 heat-tolerant varieties from Taiwan, and encouraging the planting of Sugar Baby watermelons ;

- * Teaching control of water resources and methods of dry-season irrigation to farmers, and working on the surveying and construction of irrigation projects and a dam ;

- * Encouraging the planting of field crops on ricelands during dry seasons and introducing the concept of multiple cropping to farmers ;

- * Assisting in the distribution of farm implements, water pumps, sprayers, power tillers, seeds, fertilizers and insecticides, and helping to arrange low-cost farm credit to enable peasants to obtain these supplies ;

- * Training of nearly 40,000 Vietnamese in crop culture, livestock breeding, food processing, farm machinery operation and maintenance, home improvement, and group organization ;

- * Advising on the organization of farmers for better processing and marketing of farm and fish products, better use of water, etc. ;

- * Research and experimentation with new varieties, including IR-20 and other high-yield "miracle rice" strains developed in the Philippines, a synthetic corn developed through the "half-sib progeny" method, a sorghum hybrid, and high-yield sweet potatoes ;

- * Breeding high-yield, heat-tolerant silkworm hybrids that out-produce local strains by 300 percent ;

- * Breeding Chinese carp fry (baby carp) through an artificial spawning process ;

- * Artificial insemination of hogs in a program achieving 80 percent conception ;

- * Vaccination of hogs, broilers, other birds, and cattle ;

- * Disseminating information on fertilizers and insecticides and encouraging the growing of pigeon grass (or Taiwan grass, *nieng dai loan*) as feed for swine and poultry ;

- * Advising on credit for rural businesses as well as business management and development, including personnel, administration, product processing, etc.

Improved Village

Many of the techniques developed by the Chinese in passing along their skills to farmers were developed in a joint Sino-Vietnamese program of improved villages (IVP). Concentrated efforts to increase agricultural production through modern methods and improved varieties were launched in selected villages like Huong Phu in Thua Thien province, Hiep Hoa in Bien Hoa province and My Thoi



A Chinese adviser (left) discusses artificial spawning of Chinese carp fry with provincial fisheries service chief at Bien Hoa laboratory and fish-breeding facility. Below: Woman gathering mungbeans introduced by CATG.



in An Giang province. There now are eight such improved villages and CATG is planning to develop two more this year. The program, by giving local farmers "quicker and greater returns," increases their interest in new agricultural methods, raises their standard of living and paves the way for community development in public works, local government, education and other fields.

Tied in with this program is a major effort aimed at better utilization of Vietnam's water resources. The dry season used to mean four or five months of enforced vacation for farmers, particularly those of the Mekong Delta accustomed to harvesting just one crop of "floating" (indigo) rice a year. Irrigation during the dry season has enabled many of these farmers to grow two crops of rice or to plant field crops on their ricelands between rice seasons.

At the village of Tan Hiep in Bien Hoa province is a dam built by CATG. Covering 15 hectares, it pumps water through six hydraulic rams. The 75 families in the village — Catholic refugees from North Vietnam — use the water to grow vegetables. “They used to grow nothing but rice,” said C.F. Huang, a CATG program supervisor, during a recent field inspection trip. Pointing to fields beside the road, he said: “Now they are growing cabbage, cauliflower, onions. Chinese cabbage, lettuce, amaranth and green onion.” And the Tan Hiep people, he said have organized an irrigation committee for more effective water use.

In its 11-year program in Vietnam, CATG has recorded these advances in the field of water utilization:

- * Construction of the Tan Hiep dam and a pumping system covering 300 hectares;

- * Completion of 56 irrigation project designs with a total benefited area of 24,247 hectares;

- * Review of 24 irrigation projects covering a planned area of 20,084 hectares;

- * Participation in field surveys of 145 project sites with a total area of 179,848 hectares.

Another area of prime interest to CATG is the organization of farmers — processing and marketing co-ops, fisheries co-ops, 4-T clubs (like the 4-H clubs of youths in rural areas of America), irrigation committees, district farmers associations, rural credit organizations. CATG advisers have helped organize 12 district-level farmers associations now under direct CATG guidance, another 36 district associations organized in cooperation with Vietnamese provincial agriculture cadres, three irrigation units, six fisheries co-ops, 407 farm discussion groups, 1,151 4-T clubs and 673 home improvement classes. The Chinese advisers also have worked with farm groups in renovating and installing rice mills donated by U.S. AID, in drafting a program for improving co-op management, in making surveys of farm products marketing as well as rice processing, and in the marketing of mungbeans. Some 11,900 Vietnamese have been



The Chinese Agricultural Technical Group working in South Vietnam has done much to encourage the growing of Sugar Baby watermelons, a favorite dish at the Tet lunar New Year Holiday season and a sure way to increase income.

trained in CATG sessions devoted to farmers association management and 2,175 have been trained in 4-T and home improvement club management. The assistance of organized associations also has been sought in developing CATG's other training courses, in which 20,959 have been trained in crop cultivation, 2,429 in food processing, 913 in farm machinery operation, and 615 in Montagnard (hill tribes) farming methods.

For the Future

Returning from a state visit to Taiwan in June 1969, President Nguyen Van Thieu said that China's agrarian reform program — including land reform, agricultural development and the organization of farmers associations — will serve as “the most important reference point” in carrying out his rural reconstruction program in Vietnam.

On November 25, 1970, Foreign Minister Tran Van Lam, acting on behalf of the Vietnamese Council on Foreign Relations, awarded a medal and citation to CATG in

recognition of its “outstanding contributions toward augmenting agricultural production and enhancing rural livelihood in Vietnam during the past decade.”

Agriculture Ministry officials complain only that the number of CATG advisers is decreasing. But they recognize that as “Vietnamization” continues in the military services, so the civilian areas too must come to rely more and more on Vietnamese talent. Thanks in part to CATG, provincial agricultural cadres as well as central government directorate employees have been well trained in the work needed to transform the Vietnamese peasant ultimately from a subsistence farmer to a commercial farmer. Says CATG's project supervisor Huang:

“I think there is a very good future for agriculture in Vietnam. You have very rich soil in the Delta and fresh water all year 'round. If Vietnam can continue to push good water control programs — and if it can get peace — it would be a good place to invest money. Lots of opportunities!”

Mrs. Fumihiko Togo

An Ambassador's Wife

By TRAN QUOC

Mrs. Fumihiko Togo, the wife of the Japanese Ambassador to South Vietnam, speaks English practically as well as any educated woman who was born to the language. In English her accent is somewhat British, unlike the more American accent of her husband. In addition to Japanese she also speaks German (her mother was German) and French, and hopes to learn some Vietnamese.

But she smilingly insists she is not educated and adds:

"Friends tell me I'm illiterate in two languages."

What she means is that she never spent enough time in one place to get a degree. Her formal education was gathered piecemeal in schools around the world.

But diplomas don't guarantee the qualities which we saw in Mrs. Togo — vitality, spontaneity, a sense of humor and a vibrant interest in life. Like Washington's Martha Mitchell, she can also be opinionated on public issues — a quality which may be more daring or unusual for a Japanese woman than for an American. She will also speak frankly about the diplomatic-mission life which she has known since a child.

It's been said that socially to be part of this life is to be part of an international club or coterie which is basically the same at any of the world's capitals.

"Personally," she says, "I think if you have only the diplomatic root it's a boring life. I positively try to meet as many people as possible and to see as much of a new city as possible."

Both she and the Ambassador, who arrived in Saigon November, 1970, expressed special interest in

a recent issue of *Vietnam Magazine* which did a story on the Cham Empire which once flourished in this land. They hope to visit some of the temples and ruins which still stand.

Diplomacy runs through both branches of Mrs. Togo's family. Her mother, born in Hanover, was the daughter of a German banker-diplomat. Through an unusual set of circumstances, her mother married a German in Japan and later a Japanese in Germany.

As a teenager, Mrs. Togo's mother came to Japan with her father. There she met and married a German architect. Years later the husband died, leaving his young wife with four small children. The woman took her chil-

dren back to Germany. There she later met and married Mrs. Togo's father who had become the first Japanese diplomat in Germany after World War I.

Mrs. Togo spent much of her childhood abroad and was raised in the Shinto religion. Her father became Minister of Foreign Affairs during World War II, though known for his pacifist tendencies. (Today her husband, the Ambassador, is sometimes called "hawkish" by Japanese newsmen because of his views on Japanese rearmament).

"The war days in Japan were very trying," she says "We often went to the mountains."

She was the only child of her mother's second marriage. Her mo-



A confirmed dog-lover, the Japanese Ambassador's wife, Mrs. Fumihiko Togo, wields garden shears to fashion out a dog's likeness from her flower pot.

ther and father separated for a while, but later reunited permanently.

Mr. and Mrs. Togo have two children — twin sons aged 26. One, Shigehiko, is a reporter in Japan for the *Asahi Shimbun*, one of the world's leading newspapers with a circulation above 6 million. The other son, Kazuhiko, is with the Japanese Foreign Service in London and is studying the Russian language.

Many visitors to Vietnam, having had a diet of headlines, expect to find a more "warlike" war here. Mrs. Togo and the Ambassador arrived here in November 1970.

"We've found it very peaceful," she said.

But she considers the everyday pace in Saigon to be as hectic in some ways as Tokyo or New York. Ambassador Togo agreed that crossing the street can be a hectic experience. We mentioned cities in Japan and the United States. The Ambassador does not like certain modern trends.

"I deplore how cities are getting uglier and uglier," he said.

Mrs. Togo has been out of touch with the German part of her background for a while. I pointed out that Germany and Japan are acknowledged as the two countries which have risen like phoenixes from the ashes of World War II. Perhaps Mrs. Togo, who embodied qualities from both these peoples, had her own explanation for this.

"I'm afraid I can't tell you much about Germany — I've been away since 1953. But in Japan we're such an industrious country that I don't see how anybody could hold us down. Of course, the aid we received from the outside helped a great deal too."

A miniature daschund pranced happily around the spacious guest hall of the ambassadorial residence. A German dog?

"No, he's half-Japanese, half-American," Mrs. Togo said, smiling.

She's very fond of animals and enjoys visiting zoos.



A miniature pet daschund gets a gentle scolding from the Ambassador's Lady

"There are some zoos in which animals look out as if people are the ones to look at. They're the kind I like. At the Saigon Zoo an orangutan came out to look at us."

She is extremely fond of India where she and the Ambassador were posted for several years. The Calcutta zoo is her favorite one.

"The Director took me into the cages and he gives great love and attention to the animals," she said.

How about the Indian sari, which Andre Malraux calls the most beautiful woman's dress in the world?

"I'm a great admirer of the sari and was determined to wear it. You feel so stiff at first. It's a question of learning how to move in it."

And the Vietnamese *ao dai*, which has been called the most elegant woman's dress?

"I do want to wear it, but I think you have to be born into it. You need a long time to learn how to wear it."

She wears Western clothes almost exclusively, although her husband is from a very traditional Japanese family.

a vibrant interest in life

"I don't wear the kimono. I think I'm too tall for it."

With a diplomatic smile of resignation the Ambassador says that he has given up trying to get her to wear the kimono.

Places she likes to visit ?

"Markets and cemeteries are fascinating in any city. Cemeteries are interesting because you can see the history of a place and its people in them."

Her reading preferences ?

"History. Biography. For pure relaxation I like Agathie Christie. My sons, who are still trying to

educate me, tell me I should read more philosophy."

Both her twin sons are married. She is expecting a grandchild to be born in London soon.

"I'd prefer a granddaughter, but I think I'd better leave that choice to my son's wife."

She explains that the diplomatic life is much more difficult for a son than a daughter. A diplomat's son might have to miss a Japanese education.

"The school system in Japan is very competitive. A boy, to get anywhere, must have this education... Personally, I think the ideal

education would be a formal one plus what a child picks up as he travels the world with his parents."

Does she have any preferences in mind for her husband's next diplomatic post ?

She thinks a moment, then smiles.

"I would like to visit Africa, especially Kenya. It would be wonderful to see the animals there."

At this point Mrs. Togo smiles at her husband who smiles back.

"But of course," she says, "it would all have to depend on where we were needed."

BOOK REVIEW:

The Answer is Heroic

An Introduction to Vietnam. Pp. 60.

An Introduction to Vietnamese Culture. By Nguyen Khac Kham. Pp. 64.

Famous Men of Vietnam. By Doan Bich. Pp. 88.

All published by the Vietnam Council on Foreign Relations, Saigon.

War in Vietnam is considered an enigma the world over. And it really is an enigma. It apparently presents a picture indicating the dreadful struggle of two power blocs; each one is determined to establish its hegemony particularly in South-east Asia. But actually it is hardly so. Even a little acquaintance, leave aside a thorough knowledge of the history and culture of the people of Indo-Chinese Peninsula, pinpoints the fact that the present war is in the defence

of the cultural and emotional values of the people of Vietnam.

The three books under review do not quite tell why the people of South Vietnam are engaged in such a devastating war. They only give a bird's-eye view of the entire scene in few meaningful words with the force of authenticity. Going through these books one comes to the conclusion that since the beginning of their recorded history the patriotic people of Vietnam have been engaged in the preservation of their independence and the present war is its sad concomitant

During the course of nearly two thousand years of Vietnamese recorded history, its people threw the Chinese aggressor back each time it occupied Vietnam and tried to enforce its culture on an unwilling people. This was the first phase of the history of the Viet-

namese. In their second attempt all the people of Vietnam, including poets, artists, etc., contributed their might towards the fulfilment of their cherished goal, namely, getting rid of the French. And in this they remarkably succeeded. But at the same time it exposed them to a greater danger and therefore a bitter struggle. This time Communist China did not directly attack Vietnam, and for obvious reasons. It is fighting indirectly, of course, with the sneaking assistance from Soviet Russia via the lackeys it has created in the northern zone of the Peninsula. This is the sixth attempt of China — now Communist — to destroy the culture of a brave people. And the answer to that aggression is again heroic.

DEEN BANDHU

(Reprinted from *THOUGHT*, a weekly review of politics and the arts, published in New Delhi, India).

VNAF sprouts strong wings

Vietnamese Air Force growth impressive

With the dawning of a new decade a fresh page is being written in the checkered history of the Soc Trang airfield, this time by the Vietnamese Air Force. While Soc Trang may not be as familiar to air travelers as Orly or Heathrow or Kennedy, it is an airfield of considerable significance to the Republic of Vietnam and to all with a vested interest in the success of the "Vietnamization" program now underway in the republic.

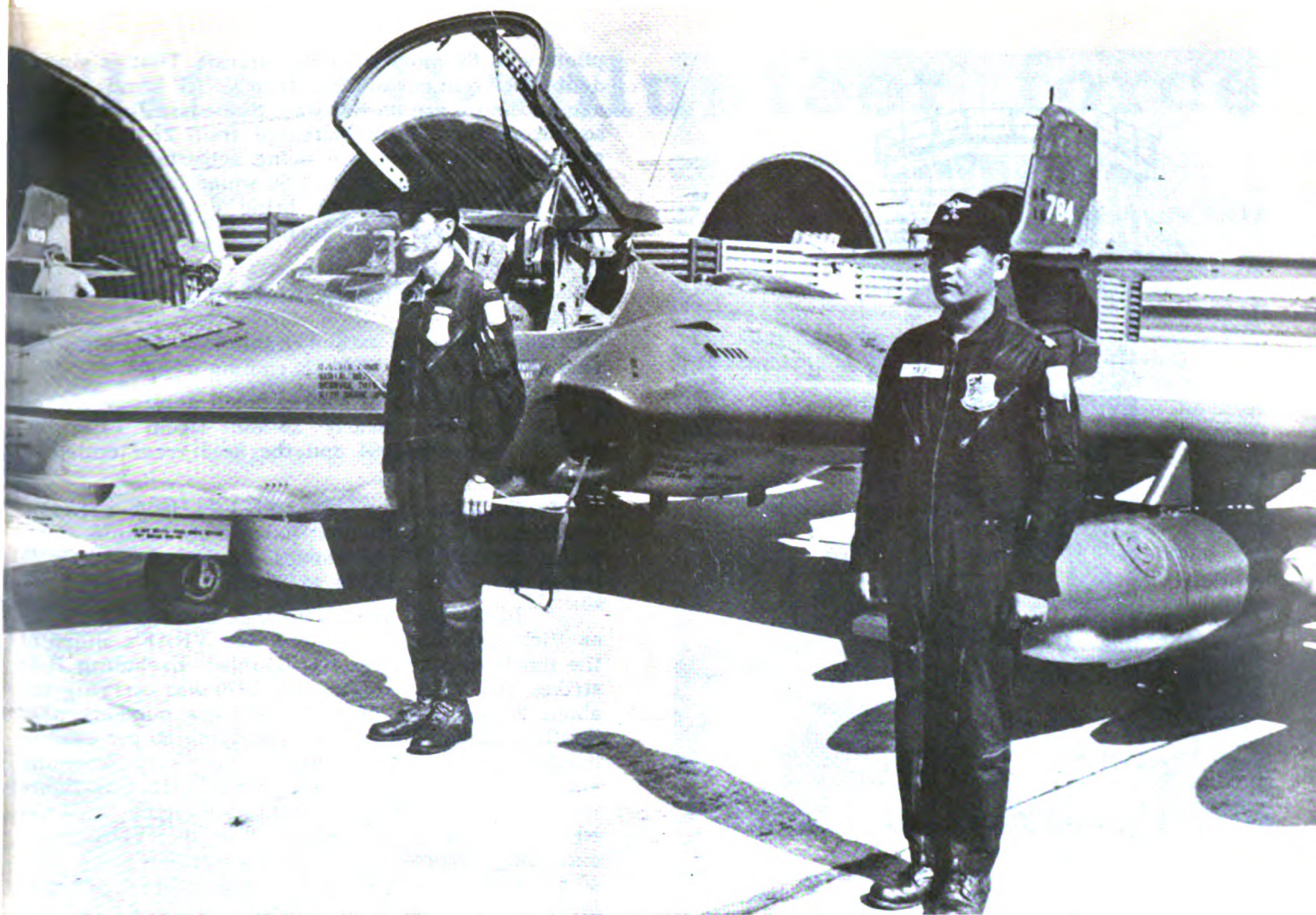
Deep in the Mekong Delta in Ba Xuyen province, 130 kilometers southwest of Saigon, Soc Trang had a nonepochal beginning. It was built of gravel and clay in 1935 as a landing strip for French planes ferrying spectators to a horse-racing track nearby. The Japanese used it during World War II, building a concrete runway and metal hangars for their warplanes shuttling to the Philippines and intercepting American bombers. After the armistice the French flag flew over Soc Trang until 1954, when President Ngo Dinh Diem began basing his fighter-bombers there in a campaign to crush feudal banditry and warlordism. Diem turned over the field in 1959 to the VNAF, the Vietnamese Air Force, then four years old. A tiny outpost of a fledgling corps, Soc Trang was commanded by a heroic young lieutenant who died in a Ca Mau battle three years later. In 1962, as the Viet Cong began tightening their grip on the country's richest ricebowl, American helicopters clattered in to take over the field and relieve its ill-equipped garrison. As the war against the Communists escalated, Soc Trang grew to become the largest U.S. Army helicopter base in the Delta — an aviation battalion headquarters and home base for two assault companies plus medical evacuation choppers and extensive maintenance facilities. On November 4, 1970, the entire complex was turned back to a VNAF which in the meantime had come of age. Veteran U.S. aircrews withdrew from Soc Trang as their companies were deactivated. The VNAF activated two new helicopter squadrons and Vietnamese pilots took over the controls of 62 more UH-1 "Huey" copters.

One more major step in the accelerating Vietnamization program, the transfer of Soc Trang's command and assets means that defense of the

Delta's 18 provinces has become almost exclusively a Vietnamese responsibility. The last U.S. Army infantry division, the Ninth, has long since left the Delta, turning over the ground war in all of Military Region IV to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam: the ARVN's Seventh, Ninth and 21st Infantry Divisions and its territorial companies and platoons. The Vietnamese Navy is now in full command of the "brown water fleet" patrolling the Delta's 8,000 kilometers of navigable rivers and canals. The VNAF since last summer has been in operational control of the Military Region IV Direct Air Support Center (DASC) in Can Tho, which directs all air strikes in the Delta. With Soc Trang's turnover supplementing the helicopter and fighter-bombers capability of the VNAF's other big Delta base at Binh Thuy, 12 kilometers from Can Tho, the Vietnamese now hold prime responsibility for the security of the nation's most populated region, where seven million citizens live on 37,000 square kilometers of watery flatlands.

US Presence in Delta Thin

What American presence remains in the Delta today is spread very thin. There are U.S. Army advisers with ARVN divisions and territorial units, but their functions in the field now are primarily concerned with communications; the advisers provide the link between Vietnamese commanders and the U.S. artillery and air support they can call on. A U.S. Army Aviation Battalion has headquarters at Can Tho, so American pilots still make combat strikes and support ARVN troop insertions in the Delta, but their missions are controlled and directed by bilingual Vietnamese DASC personnel. There are U.S. Air Force advisers at VNAF bases, but more and more their advice is on matters of training, maintenance and logistics instead of basic aviation, administration and air-war tactics. There are U.S. Navy advisers in the brown water fleet — one enlisted man to each patrol boat or Swift craft turned over to the Vietnamese Navy — but these advisers serve under Vietnamese skippers. Command, hence responsibility, today is mainly Vietnamese at facilities run by all military services throughout the Delta.



Two Vietnamese Air Force captains stand at attention before the A-37 jets they will fly. The Dragonfly attack bombers were among 40 turned over to the VNAF at the Bien Hoa Airbase on October 1, 1970 according to plan.

While the other Military Regions (MR I, II and III to the north) have not yet achieved the high degree of Vietnamese command evident in MR IV, each month they are moving closer to the ultimate objective — making the RVNAF, the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, capable of assuming full combat authority.

Within the VNAF, new functions are being acquired steadily as its operations become more effective, with Vietnamese taking over such jobs as control tower operation and weather forecasting along with combat roles. In October 1970, Forward Air Controllers of the VNAF took over complete responsibility for directing air strikes in Quang Ngai province of MR I; based at Da Nang, the 110th VNAF Liaison Squadron now coordinates the activities of Vietnamese and U.S. ground forces and fighter-bomber pilots. As the program progresses, Forward Air Controllers of the VNAF will assume control in the rest of MR I.

Other branches of the military report similar transfers of authority. With the overall Vietnamization program ahead of schedule in all services, American fighting men are being redeployed to their home bases at a steady rate. From a high of 549,500

men, U.S. forces in Vietnam by December 1970 had been reduced to 335,800 and are slated to total no more than 284,000 by May 1971. Airmen of the U.S. Air Force (USAF) in Vietnam totaled 43,100 at year's end, compared with 61,200 at their peak in May 1969.

Turnover Preparations

Soc Trang was the first all-American airbase to be turned over to the VNAF. In previous turnover programs, such as at Nha Trang and Binh Thuy, joint VNAF-USAF commands became VNAF commands, although USAF advisers generally remained at wing and squadron levels to smooth the transition. At most installations throughout South Vietnam where Vietnamese airmen have taken over responsibilities from Americans, the turnover has followed a general pattern: basic training for new recruits, officer training, pilot or specialized training, on-the-job practical training, gradual turnover of functions to VNAF command, the phase-out of American personnel, and the transfer of equipment and other assets. At Soc Trang, for example, the turnover was preceded by more than a year of preparations. Vietnamese helicopter pilots already



Moments before the Vietnamese flag replaced the US flag, VNAF crewmen line up before one of 62 UH-1 «Huey» helicopters turned over to them on November 4, 1970 together with the command of the rejuvenated Soc Trang air field.

were training in the United States when plans were mapped. In May 1970, 20 of them returned to Vietnam and reported to Soc Trang; additional pilots, crewmen and support personnel arrived soon after, most of them from the Nha Trang Air Training Center. For the next four months each Vietnamese airman worked side by side with the American he was to replace. At first the Vietnamese flew only support missions, then combat support missions, finally combat assault sorties. The Delta's oldest American flying unit, the 121st U.S. Army Aviation company, was replaced by Vietnamese airmen on October 2. Later that month Soc Trang's tower facilities for control of landings and takeoffs were turned over to the VNAF. The next week the 336th U.S. Army Aviation Company flew its last missions before deactivation. By the November 4 turnover date, the Vietnamese were handling all flying, maintenance and command functions. Activation of the new 225th and 227th VNAF Helicopter Squadrons was a formality.

Among those present at the Soc Trang ceremonies was U.S. Air Force Secretary Robert C. Seamans, Jr., who hailed the "tremendous progress" made by the VNAF in recent years. From a handful of pilots flying 32 old planes inherited from the French when the VNAF was founded on July 1, 1955, it has grown to a strength of some 40,000 men, including 1,800

pilots who fly more than 700 aircraft. That is almost double the number of aircraft in VNAF hands a year ago and more are on the way. Since last July VNAF squadrons have been increased from 22 to 32, and additional squadrons are being activated regularly. Achievement of the goal of 50 squadrons within the next year and a half will bring VNAF's personnel total to well over 50,000 men.

Dramatic Statistics

Some pertinent — and dramatic — statistics tell part of the story of VNAF's coming of age :

- * The number of sorties flown annually by the VNAF increased nearly 23-fold (from 14,251 to 324,350) between 1964 and the fiscal year ended in June 1970.

- * Between July 1969 and July 1970, a period which saw the battlefield expand to include Cambodia, monthly VNAF sorties jumped more than 40 per cent — from 15,984 to 26,655.

- * In the past year, with U.S. missions declining as Vietnamization progressed, the VNAF's share of the fixed-wing air war has doubled. Excluding B-52 strikes, the VNAF in January 1970 was carrying out about 22 per cent of all fixed-wing missions over South Vietnam. By July it was flying 30 per cent of fixed-wing sorties, according to Secretary Seamans, who predicted that by the end of 1971 this figure would reach at least 50 per cent on a regular, sustained basis. But by December 1970 the VNAF was exceeding expectations : it was averaging more than 40 per cent of fixed-wing sorties and the 50 per cent level already had been exceeded for short periods.

Helicopter Sorties

In addition to these fixed-wing missions, the VNAF has helicopter sorties as its responsibility. (In the U.S. armed forces helicopter sorties are the job of the Army instead of the Air Force.) The great majority of the VNAF's sorties are made by its helicopter crewmen. In one busy week (October 1-6) VNAF pilots and crews flew 5,101 sorties, including among them such missions as these :

- * Helicopter crews flew 3,124 sorties, delivering 6,483 troops and 62 tons of ammunition and equipment;

- * Fighter-bomber pilots flew 598 sorties in support of ground operations ;

- * Tactical airlift crews were airborne 364 times, transporting 3,289 passengers and 2,148 tons of cargo ;

- * Gunship crews flew 70 night missions providing fire support and flare illumination for ground troops in contact with the enemy ;

- * Recon crews flew 119 photo and visual reconnaissance sorties ;

- * Light aircraft pilots flew 124 Forward Air Control sorties, 88 liaison, 297 reconnaissance, 93 psychological warfare and 90 training sorties.

VNAF crewmen must fly well over 310,000 operational hours a year to maintain their current sched-

Elite all-volunteer force

ule of sorties. "Man for man, its pilots have more combat experience than any other pilots in the world," says an adviser. "The all-volunteer VNAF is an elite force now." On three occasions Presidents of the United States have awarded Presidential Unit Citations to Vietnamese units: the 514th Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa in February 1965, the 74th Tactical Fighter Wing at Binh Thuy in June 1966, and the 41st Tactical Wing at Da Nang in July 1970.

VNAF's Growth

Modernization of the VNAF, while accelerated in the past four years, actually has been underway since USAF took over advisory functions from the French Air Force in May 1956. VNAF's 32 planes then included combat-weary B-26s, a few Morane Saulnier-500 observation planes and 18 C-47 Sky-

trains. The U.S. advisory effort was modest at first, but grew as the size and responsibilities of the VNAF grew. There are now about 900 USAF advisers in Vietnam. Most of them are formed into seven Air Force Advisory Teams (AFAT) stationed at the Nha Trang Air Training Center, at the Bien Hoa Air Logistics Command and at five major airbases, with detachments at two smaller bases. Through the years these AFAT advisers and their predecessors not only have counseled Vietnamese commanders on the training of airmen but on the acquisition of planes. By 1960 there were still fewer than 100 VNAF pilots, and they were flying 150 aircraft. Between 1962 and 1965, VNAF manpower increased from 4,000 to 10,000 officers and enlisted men, while the number of planes more than doubled — from 180 to 380. During this period the VNAF was completely restructured: Four tactical wings and an air transport wing were activated, each of the tactical wings conducting air oper-



Its «Hail and farewell» as American and Vietnamese pilots shake hands after the Bien Hoa Airbase ceremonies. Their squadrons deactivated, the Americans returned to the United States right after the turnover ceremonies.

ations in one of the four Military Regions (then called Corps, later Corps Tactical Zones) into which the country was divided.

In 1966, long before the term "Vietnamization" was coined, plans were mapped for VNAF's eventual self-sufficiency, with emphasis on modernizing its equipment and strengthening its internal organization. The effort was rapidly accelerated in December 1968 when the U.S. Department of Defense approved a massive Improvement and Modernization (I & M) program for the VNAF. Its purpose was to develop, expand, train and equip the VNAF to be able to overcome any Viet Cong threat that could be countered from the air. Training, both in Vietnam and in the United States, was stepped up. Squadrons of more sophisticated aircraft were turned over to the Vietnamese as rapidly as they could learn to fly and support them. But while undertaking this expansion the VNAF had to continue to maintain operational effectiveness in day-to-day sorties against the enemy.

"The admirable thing about this," says Brigadier General Kendall S. Young, Chief of the U.S. Air Force Advisory Group. "has been the VNAF's ability to absorb the accelerated expansion. They have really taken it in stride, and our portion of the I & M program is progressing much faster than we had originally planned."

The two VNAF squadrons formed at Soc Trang last November, for instance, were among four new squadrons activated within a 35-day period. The others included a squadron of A-37 Dragonfly fighter-bombers and the first squadron of CH-47 Chinook medium-lifter copters to enter the VNAF inventory. "The average pilot training time is from 16 to 20 months," says General Young. "If we hadn't embarked on an intensive I & M program many months ago, we wouldn't have the input of trained pilots and mechanics to activate these new units today."

VNAF Restructured

Now the VNAF consists of five air divisions. The divisions, created from the original tactical wings, are located in each of the Military Regions: the First Air Division at Da Nang, the Second at Nha Trang, the Third at Bien Hoa and the Fourth at Binh Thuy. Early this year the 33rd Tactical Wing at Tan Son Nhut, the airbase for the Saigon area, became the Fifth Air Division. Each of the divisions, commanded by a VNAF colonel, will eventually reach a strength of about 5,000 men. When the VNAF buildup is complete each division will have two or three tactical wings comprised of two or three squadrons, plus a support wing for maintenance and supply requirements.

In addition to its divisions, the VNAF has its Air Training Center at Nha Trang and its Air Logistics Command at Bien Hoa, plus a Tactical Air Control Center and other specialized units directly under Major General Tran Van Minh's VNAF Headquarters at Tan Son Nhut.

VNAF pilots are flying modern aircraft, some of them among the world's best for the type of warfare



Maj. Gen. Tran Van Minh, commander-in-chief of the Vietnamese Air Force, which now totals some 40,000 men, including 1,800 pilots who fly more than 700 aircraft. General Minh remembers the time in 1955 when the Vietnamese Air force had only a handful of pilots and 32 airplanes.

being waged in Southeast Asia. Included in the VNAF inventory are nine squadrons of fighter-bombers:

- * Pilots of the 522nd Tactical Fighter Squadron at Bien Hoa fly F-5 Freedom Fighters. Their transition from propeller-driven fighters to the supersonic jets was a demonstration of these pilots' talents, and the VNAF was one of the few air forces to make such a transition directly and smoothly. Air Vice Marshal Nguyen Cao Ky, then Prime Minister and now Vice President, accepted 20 of the F-5s at Bien Hoa ceremonies on June 1, 1967, after 33 carefully selected pilots had been chosen and trained to form the nucleus of the squadron.

- * The VNAF has five squadrons of A-37 Dragonfly jet attack bombers which first began arriving in Vietnam in July 1967. Relatively easy to support because of the simplicity of its equipment, the A-37 was specially modified from the T-37 trainer for counterinsurgency operations and close air support for ground forces. The plane's maneuverability at low rocket-firing and strafing speeds makes it a favorite with pilots.

- * Three squadrons of World War II Skyraiders, the A-1s, are the workhorses of the VNAF fighter force. The 530th Squadron at Pleiku, the 518th at Bien Hoa and the 514th — the oldest squadron in the VNAF, formed in June 1956 and now at Bien Hoa — all fly Skyraiders. The single-engine, prop-driven fighter-bomber has a low cruise speed of 173 miles an hour, carries a bomb load up to 8,000 pounds and

For future pilots : accent on youth

can stay in the air up to four hours. It is an ideal plane for close support and interdiction and, despite its age, is well liked by VNAF pilots.

Flying from the Saigon area is a squadron of AC-47 "Spookies," which are gunships converted from C-47s, each armed with three miniguns — gatling-type guns firing 4,000 rounds a minute each.

Carrying troops and cargo is the job of transport squadrons that fly the versatile C-47 Skytrain and the C-119 "Flying Boxcars." The newer additions to the inventory, the CH-47 Chinooks, are capable of carrying 44 men each but normally are used as equipment movers and supply carriers.

The VNAF now has 10 squadrons of UH-1 "Huey" helicopters. In May 1969 the first squadron completed its transition to the jet-engine Hueys, and later that year three other squadrons transitioned from the reciprocal-engine H-34 Choctaw helicopters. By the end of 1969 some 70 Hueys were being flown on airborne combat and combat support operations and on medical evacuation sorties. Helicopters to activate new VNAF squadrons are being turned over by the U.S. Army at a rate of one company a month and, according to a U.S. military spokesman, "there should be a substantial speedup of the turnover program" early in 1971. Meanwhile, some of the old Choctaws remain in service, giving the VNAF a helicopter fleet of well over 300 aircraft.

Other squadrons included in the VNAF are five liaison squadrons of Forward Air Control and reconnaissance aircraft. The little Cessna 0-1 Bird Dogs are used as FAC aircraft for "eyeball" reconnaissance, artillery spotting and controlling fighter planes onto their targets. There are also a photo reconnaissance squadron, a special air mission squadron that is used for high-priority personnel transport, and a training squadron of T-41s.

Training Crews

When the VNAF celebrated its 15th anniversary on July 1, 1970, for the first time in many years it skipped the traditional demonstration of firepower at Tan Son Nhut because its aircraft were too busy on support sorties in South Vietnam and Cambodia. But VNAF's commander-in-chief, General Minh, took the occasion to comment on the outstanding quality of the young men with whom the VNAF has filled its ranks. He noted that the accent is on youth, and that active recruiting continues. Future pilots are selected on the basis of intelligence and aptitude tests as well as their level of education and general health. Most officers serve a minimum of 10 years' active duty.

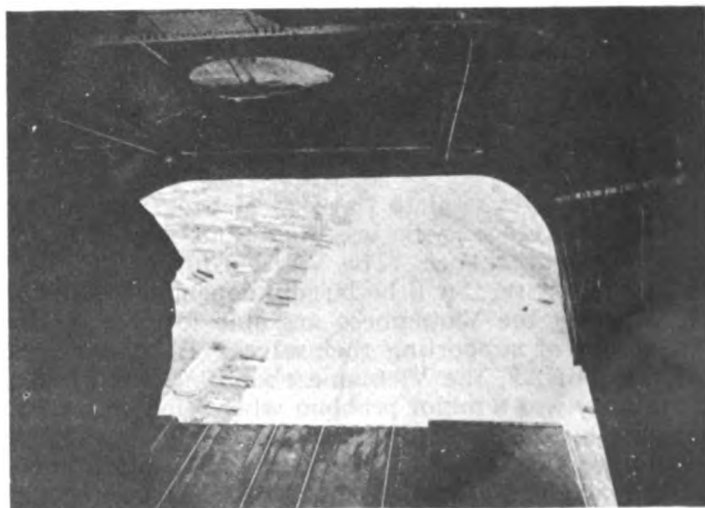
The training of these pilots, crewmen and technicians is a major part of the I & M program. In 1970

more than 3,500 pilots and aircraft mechanics were trained in the United States, but the emphasis is rapidly being shifted to in-country training.

A VNAF officer candidate normally spends two months in basic training, either at the Nha Trang Air Training Center or at one of the other basic training centers recently established in Vietnam. Candidates then spend three months in officer training at Nha Trang. On graduation they are given orders either to take flight training at Nha Trang in the single-engine T-41 trainer, or to go to the United States for training in jet aircraft or helicopters. Those who go to the United States first spend an average of six months at Nha Trang learning English. They graduate with the rank of warrant officer.

Besides these basic, officer, pilot and language training courses, the VNAF gives instruction in communications, electronics, other technical subjects, general service, air-ground operations and command-and-staff work. Even before the VNAF was organized as an independent corps, Vietnamese at Nha Trang were in the aviation training business, launching the first courses there in 1952 while still with the French Air Force. In the next 14 years more than 1,500 pilots won their wings at Nha Trang.

The biggest breakthrough towards in-country training came after a joint planning conference in February 1969. More than 240 VNAF instructors were ordered to go to the United States to train in their specialties, taking the same courses that USAF airmen complete. They also attended a five-week technical instructor school and completed three weeks of practice teaching before returning to Vietnam to begin teaching other Vietnamese. The Nha Trang center now has more than 100 instructors compared with 29 less than a year ago. Of their 1,500 students, 300 are enrolled in technical classes. The center, with a capacity of 3,000 students, has modern classrooms containing mockups of jet engines, landing gear, electrical systems and other equipment that the future pilots and technicians must be familiar with.



Aerial view of strategic Soc Trang airfield which was turned over to the VNAF command last November 4, 1970.

In January 1970 the Nha Trang center launched a course to improve VNAF leadership. Officers ranking from first lieutenant to major are enrolled in the Intermediate Command and Staff School.

As more instructors are trained, the center is rapidly becoming self-sufficient. But for the next few years a portion of VNAF's pilots and some technicians will have to be trained at bases in the United States.

There are about 1,600 VNAF airmen, two-thirds of them pilots, attending courses in the United States. They are scattered throughout the country at a number of U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army bases. Fixed-wing pilot training, for instance, is offered at Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, and at England AFB in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Helicopter pilots train at Fort Wolters in San Marcos, Texas, or at Fort Rucker in Dothan, Alabama. Communications and electronics technicians go to Keesler AFB in Biloxi, Mississippi. The length of pilot training depends on the type of aircraft. Most fixed-wing training is about one year in the U.S., plus the 10 or 11 months trainees have spent in courses in Vietnam. Helicopter training in America takes about nine months. On returning to Vietnam they get additional practical training at the base to which they are assigned for duty before replacing U.S. aircrews.

An important advance came on January 4, 1971, when in-country training of C-123 aircrews was started at the Phan Rang Airbase. The C-123 Provider transport is scheduled to enter the VNAF inventory during 1971. The VNAF crews — pilots, navigators, flight mechanics and loadmasters — being trained by the 315th Tactical Airlift Wing had received their initial combat crew training at Lockbourne AFB in Ohio. At Phan Rang they are learning techniques used during short-field operations and in making parachute deliveries of troops and equipment. The C-123 is tactical aircraft capable of operating from more than 100 remote airstrips throughout Vietnam. It is a rugged, short-range transport that can airlift 60 fully equipped troops or 12,000 pounds of bulky cargo. The C-123s used in Vietnam are a modified version of the Fairchild-Hiller basic C-123, the major change being the addition of two jet engines adjacent to the regular reciprocating engines to increase takeoff and load-carrying capabilities.

Supply and Maintenance

Training is vital to the I & M program, but of equal importance is the less glamorous field of logistics and maintenance. "The VNAF's future success," says one adviser. "will be largely dependent on whether or not the Vietnamese are able to develop the capability of supporting themselves." In all services of the RVNAF, the Vietnamese's initial lack of this capability was a major problem when Vietnamization began, because logistics and maintenance support could not keep up with the rapid expansion in manpower and equipment. But progress has been made within all services since then, and while logistics and maintenance are still problem areas, there is growing confidence that VNAF and its sister services will be



U. S. Secretary of the Air Force Robert C. Seamans, Jr., congratulates General Cao Van Vien, chief of the RVNAF Joint General Staff as Soc Trang is transferred from the US Army to the VNAF. Behind is General Creighton Abrams, commander of all United States forces in South Vietnam.

able to assume full support responsibility when the time comes.

At VNAF's Air Logistics Command in Bien Hoa, emphasis is being placed on the expansion of maintenance capabilities and improved materiel management systems along with the on-going development of maintenance, supply and base-support facilities. The Air Logistics Command (ALC), headed by Colonel Tu Van Be since 1958, grew from an Air Depot established at Bien Hoa in 1955. In 1969 it was reorganized to head up a logistics system along the lines of the USAF Logistics Command's Air Materiel Areas — a reorganization necessitated by the challenges presented by the growing quantity and sophistication of the weapons systems in the VNAF inventory. Assisting Colonel Be at the ALC is AFAT-6, one of the largest USAF advisory teams in the country.

Major divisions within the ALC structure include the Materiel Management Center, the Maintenance Engineering Wing, the Supply and Transportation Center and the Base Support Group. Staff offices include Plans and Management, Personnel, Education, Training, and Political Warfare.

The ALC has a significant maintenance operation. Its overhaul capability on the A-1 Skyraider, the O-1 Bird Dog, the U-17 Skywagon and the T-41 trainer is virtually complete. In addition to repair of battle damage to these aircraft, IRAN programs (Inspection and Repair as Necessary) now are in effect. The IRAN programs keep the planes airworthy through periodic inspections and carefully planned preventive maintenance.

The F-5 Freedom Fighters are supported with all but the IRAN programs. The jet engines used in the F-5 are completely overhauled at the ALC. As new types of aircraft are added to the VNAF inventory,

On their own and doing fine

the Bien Hoa operation is being expanded in both personnel and facilities. Base and wing shops do much maintenance work, but the more sophisticated jobs are handled at Bien Hoa.

The Materiel Management Center is responsible for maintaining all weapons systems at combat readiness. The weapons systems of almost all of the aircraft in the VNAF inventory are managed here at Bien Hoa. In addition, the Materiel Management Center manages ground communications and radar systems, armament systems, air space ground equipment and special-purpose vehicles.

Beginning in July 1970, a computerized stock control and distribution system has helped to revolutionize Bien Hoa's supply operations. Until then the 110,000-item inventory of VNAF stocks had overtaxed the manual supply system. A UNIVAC 1050-II computer was installed and the standard USAF Base Supply System computer program was modified to meet Vietnamese needs. The computer allows for more rapid response to supply needs of field units, more complete logistics planning, and increased manageability through constantly updated information and visible records.

The Supply and Transportation Center since the 1969 reorganization has completed a number of major projects: warehouse validation surveys to crosscheck item records placed in the computer, for one, and improvement of warehouse facilities by better lighting and hard-surfacing of storage areas. The transportation capability has been doubled, and measurable improvement has been effected in storage and timely issue of items.

The ALC is manned by about 1,800 officers, enlisted men and civilian personnel. With the upswing in workload resulting from VNAF's expansion, that number will increase to about 6,000 personnel by 1973.

Vietnamization In Full Swing

Similar progress — in turnover of responsibilities, expansion of manpower and equipment, training and logistics — is being made in the ARVN and in the Vietnamese Navy. In the total Vietnamization plan, the VNAF turnover will be the last to be completed. As General Young explains: "The I & M program is really rolling, but it takes much more time to train pilots and maintenance personnel in the intricate aircraft systems than it does to teach most of the specialties in the other services." The program is moving ahead of schedule, and as it does the redeployment of U.S. forces is proceeding apace.

A milestone in the Vietnamization program came in July 1970 with the first completely Vietnamese combat assault mission of the war. Supporting two battalions of Vietnamese Marines being inserted into a landing zone in Cambodia, gunships of the 217th Helicopter Squadron from Binh Thuy, commanded

by Major Truong Thanh Tam, came under heavy communist fire. The gunships suppressed the enemy fire with their miniguns, each pumping out 4,000 rounds a minute. Later the landing zone came under mortar fire, and again the gunships silenced the enemy positions. From then on the Marines landed without incident. Says one of the AFAT advisers who helped qualify the 217th Squadron's crews: "It was a particularly tough mission and gave the VNAF a test under the most difficult conditions. The fact that the mission was highly successful confirms the confidence we had in their abilities while we were training them. Now they're on their own and doing fine."



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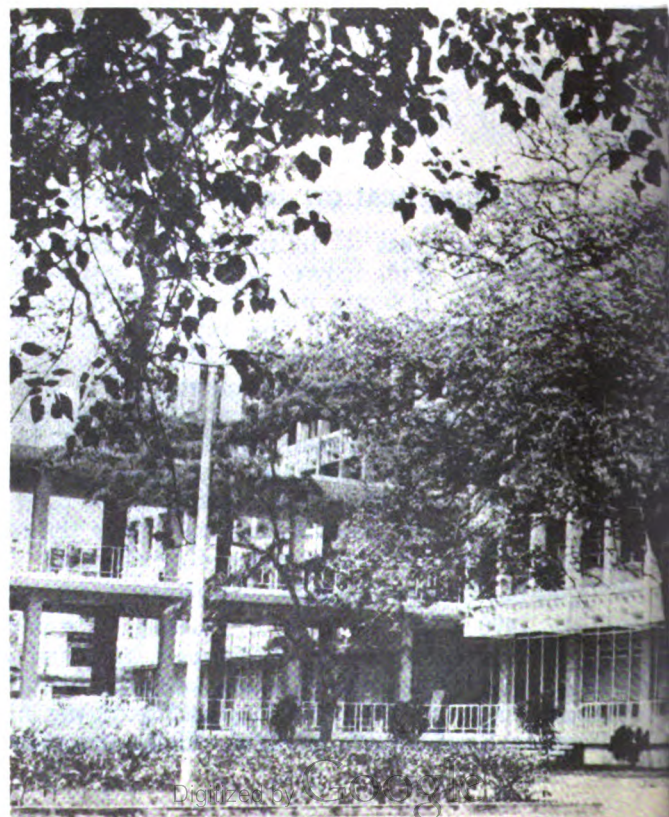
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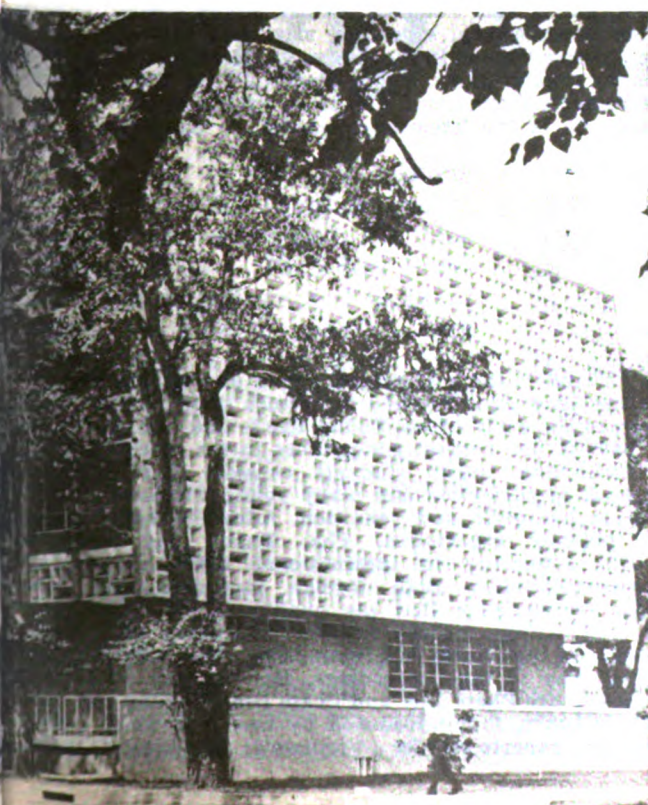


Above: Shopping and office center in downtown Saigon is the S. R. Building which is also popularly known as the Tax Building. Left: Among the new edifices in Cholon is the Ba Hai Building on Tran Hung Dao Blvd. Below: Saigon University main building in Cholon shows modern bent with sun breakers.



Saigon Edifices Old and New

The construction boom goes on unabated in Saigon and environs despite the struggle against an aggressor who has no qualms about using rockets, plastic explosives and other kinds of bombs to kill, spread fear, and sow discord. The trend is along modern, functional lines, but not a few hew to the aesthetic charm of the old Saigon influenced by French and European architecture. On this spread: the blending of the old and the new.



Above is the Caravelle, a modern hotel that caters to Saigon's metropolitan tourists, on Tu Do Street. Top left photo shows Saigon's City Hall with its contrasting French influenced architecture on Le Thanh Ton St.

Women of Vietnam



Madame Tran Kim Thoa, mother of six children, entered the political arena through her social welfare activities — her main interest for the past thirty years. A former member of the Saigon City Council, she ran for Parliament in 1968 and with the strong support of labor in six of the 11 districts in Saigon, emerged victorious over ten male rivals. As Chairman of the National Assembly Committee on Labor, Social and Veterans Affairs, she is a familiar sight in her constituency, especially after any calamity strikes. One of three women in the Assembly, Madame Thoa is active in many organizations, among them the Cong Nong (Workers and Farmers Party), and the Asian Parliamentary Union of which she is the Treasurer-General, to name but a few.

Thai Thanh is the undisputed queen of Vietnam vocalists. She has long since reached the zenith of her career which began in the early fifties. Today, she is in a class by herself far beyond her nearest competitors in the world of music. In fact, most music students consider her well nigh the peak of perfection and many young Vietnamese artists emulate her style and rendition. Adept in both classical and popular repertoires, Thai Thanh has performed abroad, appearing in international radio stations and television studios. Both foreign musicians and music critics acknowledge that the quality of her voice places her well within the top bracket of leading vocal artists throughout the world. At present, Thai Thanh devotes most of her time to tape recordings. Her favorite Vietnamese composers are Pham Duy and Pham Dinh Chuong and many of their songs, first introduced by her, have since become standard repertoire for Vietnam's performing artists.



Some 150 young Communist defectors volunteer to serve in Kien Hoa's territorial security forces. Above, they are sworn in by Huynh Cu (right), a former lieutenant-colonel in the North Vietnamese Army, now with the GVN.

Dying VC Stronghold

The trend in 1970 is running against the Viet Cong in one of their last strongholds in the Mekong Delta — Kien Hoa Province. The birthplace and home of South Vietnamese rebel leaders since French colonial times, Kien Hoa Province this year is recording the nation's highest numbers of defectors under the government's Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) amnesty program.

For 14 continuous weeks, Kien Hoa has registered more returnees than any of the Republic of Vietnam's other 43 provinces. Of the 27,900 ralliers recorded nationwide during the first ten months of 1970, 3,201 of them came to the

government side in Kien Hoa — more than in any other province.

Kien Hoa, bounded and traversed by three major arms of the Mekong River, is located 110 kilometers southwest of Saigon on the South China Sea.

Kien Hoa's highest Chieu Hoi total this year occurred in August, September and October, reflecting an intensified government campaign to establish permanent control in the province's two most insecure districts, Mo Cay and Don Nhon.

In Don Nhon, government officials re-established a district capital that lay desolate and abandoned for several years.

In Mo Cay, where hard-core Communist leaders proclaimed establishment of their National Liberation Front in 1960, government forces are taking control in territories the Viet Cong and Viet Minh held since the end of World War II. Thirty new government outposts have been built to protect populated areas since February 1970, and other new ones to be added by the end of this year will bring the total in Mo Cay District alone to nearly 100.

The Viet Cong still controlled the lives of a quarter of Mo Cay's population in the second half of 1970. But in mid-October, President Thieu emphasized his confidence

in the district's growing security by lunching one day at An Thanh Village, a place known until earlier this year as "Viet Cong Market." President Thieu pointed out that An Thanh, now pacified, has a new electric generator, a new eight-bed maternity clinic, a new fish market under construction, an enlarged vegetable market building, an expanded commercial rice mill to handle rice grown on previously fallow lands, and three school teachers at a school just across the road from a villa formerly occupied by the Viet Cong village chief. Village population,

down to 800 in October 1969, has increased to 2,600.

In fertile Ham Long District, nearby, pacification has progressed even farther than in Mo Cay. A year ago 12 hamlets were still under Viet Cong control. Now none are.

Kien Hoa was one of the last provinces to accept French colonial authority in the 1800s. Its leaders were among the first to fight for independence in 1940s. It was a recruiting-ground for several Viet Cong main-force battalions during the early 1960s.

The trend is unmistakably against the Communists, according to Kien Hoa Deputy Province Chief Tran Huynh Chau. "Before the Communists' Tet offensive in 1968, at least 60 per cent of the population here supported the Viet Cong," he notes. "But the Viet Cong broke their promise of a Tet cease-fire, and they have been losing the trust of the people ever since."

About 80 per cent of Kien Hoa's 566,800 population now lives in areas controlled by the government, Vietnamese officials report.



« We have completed our project (making the village safe against the Viet Cong). Now it is up to all of us to protect what we have, » says this sign advising local residents of An Thanh village, longtime VC stronghold.

Kien Hoa defectors lead others



Above, An Thanh village youngster buys a late morning snack in a marketplace once called « Viet Cong Market.» At right, a VC rallier gets a haircut from colleague at the Open Arms Center.



Above, young women of Ham Long District carry new-threshed rice from the fields. At left, villagers of An Thanh, formerly known as « Viet Cong Market,» build a new fish market with help from government Village Self Development funds.

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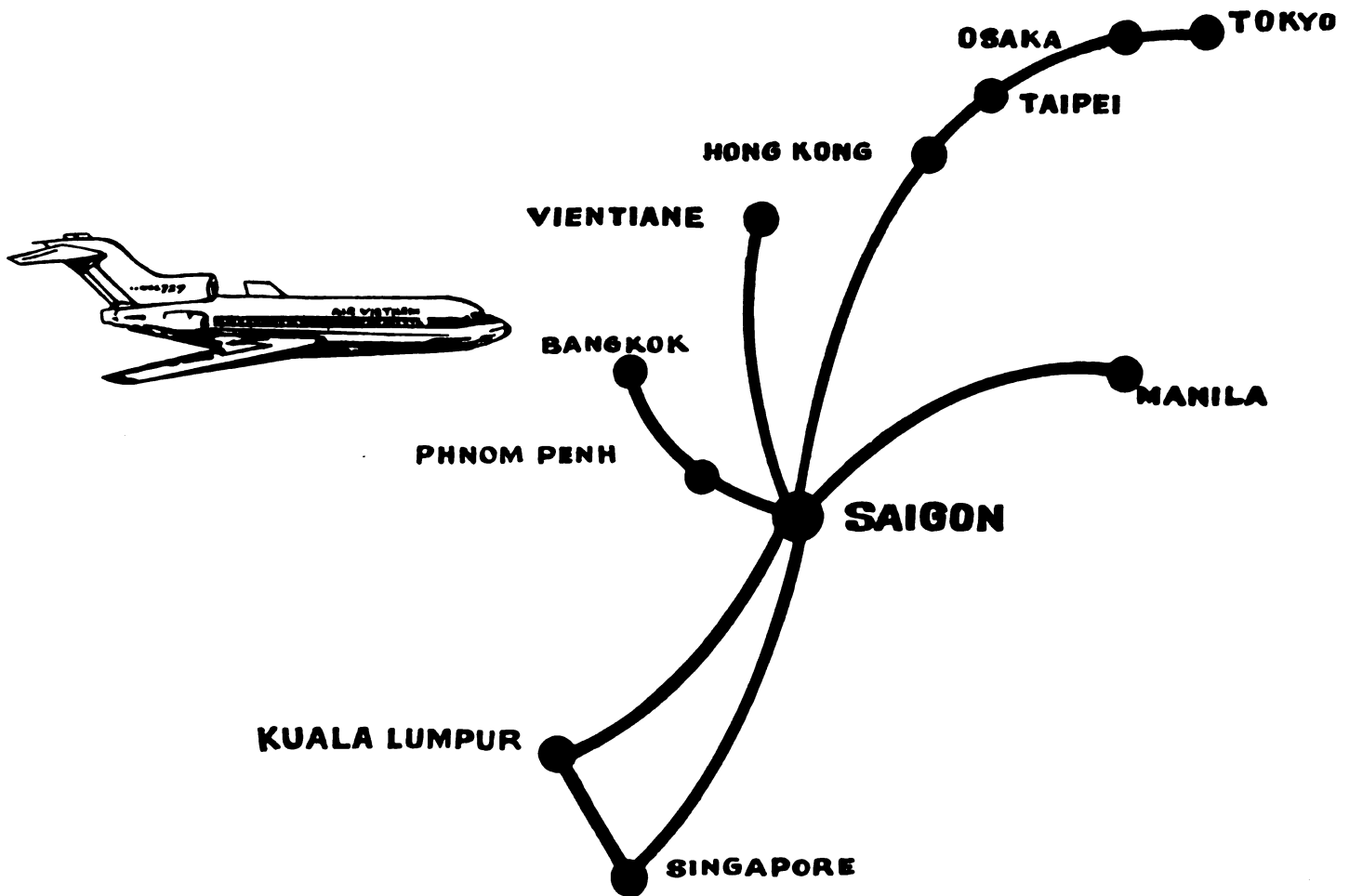
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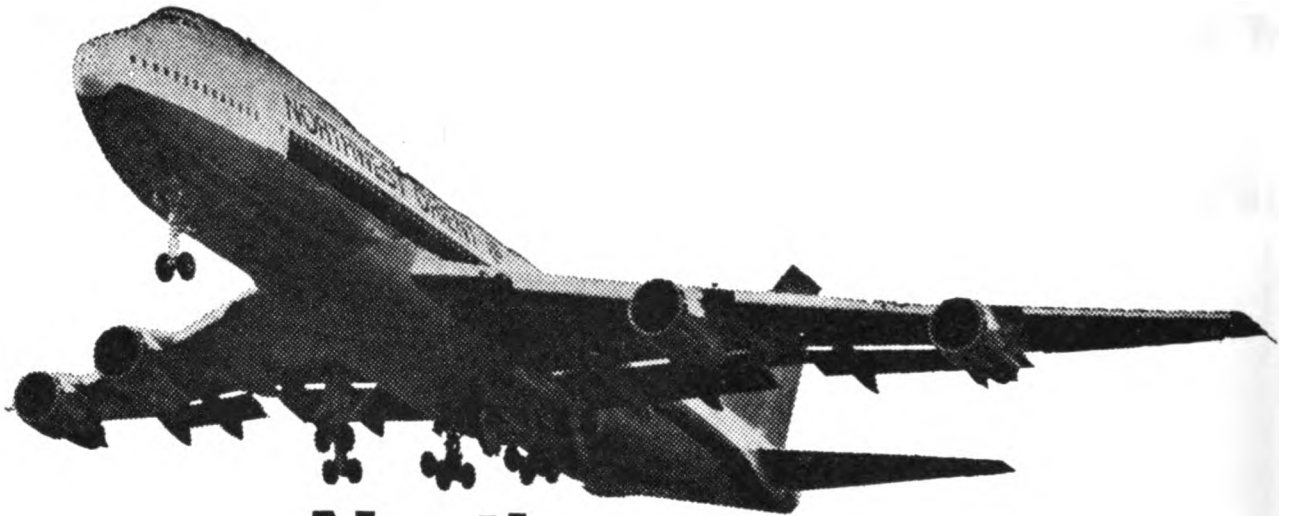
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