

A Farewell to Vietnam: 2 Flown Out Tell Story

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The following dispatch was written by Vo Tuan Chan, 30 years old, and Le Kim Dinh, 41, members of The New York Times Saigon bureau who were evacuated to Guam with their families.

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ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE, Guam, Monday, April 28—Good-by Vietnam.

Chan and Dinh: We could not find anything more to say. Our heads were filled with confusing thoughts, and our hearts were assailed by millions of mixed feelings.

Chan: At noon of that day I almost gave up the trip when I saw my mother and my sisters crying. I have helped feed the family for 10 years, but I think I cannot support so many in America.

Chan and Dinh: Panic had gripped Saigon that afternoon. The soldiers had run from Xuan Loc. The bridge to Vung Tau was destroyed. And there were rumors that criminals had divided the city for an imminent looting operation. People were running in all directions.

Friends Left Behind

Dinh: I did my best to introduce my friends to Americans. They needed a sponsor to get on a plane. They did not want to go until the last minute. Poor people. There is not much chance for them. Sometimes I was so fed up with all the killing and suffering. Sometimes I could not think of leaving my beloved and miserable land forever. What have we done to deserve so many miseries for such a long time?

Chan and Dinh: Our families met at the rendezvous at 2 P.M. Our American friends took our bags to the

cars. Some Vietnamese friends decided not to go. They tried to hide their feelings, but one girl's eyes were red. She kept going into the other room.

The Americans drove the cars. We had a soft drink at the restaurant of the airport for one hour. It was a long time. Then another American came. He knew the plan. He said it was time for our American friends to leave. We waved. God bless them!

At 5:50 P.M. we took a bus

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to the corner of Tan Son Nhut Airport to a large C-141 aircraft. They said to get in. We were pale with emotions. I felt dizzy.

A Father's Farewell

Dinh: I thought of my sick old father and I wept. He did not want to go and be a burden on us. "Go and don't worry about me," he said. "Whatever happens I will still be happy because I know you have gotten out and you are having a better life in a better land." Maybe he can still be evacuated.

Chan and Dinh: The plane did not leave for three hours. We waited for more people. There were 180. The powerful engines made so much noise. And we climbed so steeply that the ones sitting on the floor slid back.

The plane flew for more than five hours and we landed at 5 A.M. Guam time. The ladies in the American Red Cross gave use hot soup and crackers and the children began to run around. The older people felt exhausted because of all of the emotions.

The processing lasted for two hours and then we took a bus to a barracks. This is one of the better places. We have four families in one

room of 12 by 24 feet. We sleep on the floor with blankets. It is more comfortable than we expected.

We have rice with every meal, though no fish yet. And everyone smiles at us. We save the plastic spoons and knives. Maybe we will need them.

Already, the children like American bread. They play while we look at the map of the United States, our new land. Why has someone circled Texas?

The News From Saigon

Chan: During the day there are many lines—for soap, for toys, for sandals. Some of us are interpreters. We can go to the airport to ask the new refugees about the news of Saigon. In the evening there are movies and then everyone gathers around the radio for the news of B.B.C. or Voice of America. We hope Saigon would be spared bloodshed because we have so many friends and relatives there.

Chan and Dinh: We think most people are happy here. They were afraid the Communists would kill them. But there are moments of sadness when you think of our country. And we are still much moved at the sudden separation from my dear folk. We will never see them again.

We cannot continue now.