

Bustling Danang Said Reverted to Provincialism

By Nayan Chanda

Reuter

SAIGON, June 25—Danang, the second largest city in South Vietnam, has changed from a noisy, bustling American military base to a quiet and clean provincial town, two Vietnamese students arriving from the city said today.

The students, who came to Saigon to see their parents, said the shanty town around the U.S. and South Vietnamese bases in Danang has disappeared.

The people have taken bamboo poles, wood and other salvageable materials from their makeshift homes and returned to their villages. Many people from Danang proper also have gone back to the countryside, they said.

Recently the People's Revolutionary Committee of Danang launched a campaign to "build a beautiful nation" calling on Danang citizens between 17 and 45 to go to the countryside and help in reconstruction, they said.

Men and women left the city in groups of 25 to repair bridges and roads and reclaim and cultivate the land. People who volunteered were said to receive about a dollar a day.

With its reduced population and reduced traffic, Danang has become a pleasant town, the students said, and thanks to students and youth leaders in the local cells, composed of 10 households each, the city is also considerably cleaner.

The cells have helped the authorities round up former soldiers who had not registered, and have almost eliminated theft and burglary, they said.

All primary and secondary schools in the city are open but lectures have not been resumed at the university.

The cost of living in general has come down but meat and vegetables are not abundant, the students said.

In order to travel outside Danang, permission must be obtained from the local cell as well as from the People's Revolutionary Committee—organizations taking increasing responsibility for administration while the military looks after security.

The students said the route between Danang and Saigon was safe and in good condition, and the 360-mile journey took only a day and a half. One-way fare on a privately owned bus is \$7.60.