

U.S. Adviser Quits Vietnam to Show His Disgust

By GLORIA EMERSON

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SAIGON, South Vietnam, Oct. 11—A 26-year-old Foreign Service officer, who spent 13 months in Vietnam as a refugee expert, quit his job and left South Vietnam last week without notice. He said his action was intended to show disgust with the United States role and policies in Vietnam.

In an interview before his departure last Friday, John Isaacs, who had been assigned to the United States agency that supervises the pacification program, said he had mailed a letter of resignation to Secretary of State William P. Rogers. He said he had returned his civilian medal for service to Mr. Rogers.

A Recent Promotion

Mr. Isaacs said that the reasons for his departure included his belief that the pacification program was useless, that American advisers to the South Vietnamese were rarely of any genuine assistance and that American efforts in Vietnam in general were a waste of time and money and often damaging.

In his letter to Secretary Rogers, Mr. Isaacs wrote that the longer he stayed in Vietnam, "the more convinced I become of the utter futility of my remaining here and in the Foreign Service as well."

He Tells Rogers Pacification Program Is Useless and Does Damage

"The war in Vietnam," the letter said, "has been lost and the continued participation of American forces under the guise of Vietnamization is a fraud being perpetrated on the American people to cover up the loss."

Mr. Isaacs, who worked for the agency known as Civil Operations and Rural Development Support, was recently promoted in rank in the Foreign Service.

When asked why he had chosen not to make known his resignation to his immediate superiors, he said that if he had quit here in the normal way, it would have meant "two weeks of hassling."

"They don't like anyone resigning and so I am leaving on my terms, not on theirs," he said. "They won't listen to my reasons anyway."

Mr. Isaacs termed the work that Foreign Service officers are expected to perform in Vietnam "a perversion of the traditional duties" of reporting what goes in a foreign country.

"Here, it is not just reporting but actively working to uphold

a local government," he asserted.

Mr. Isaacs said that most of the young Foreign Service officers he knew felt that a Vietnam tour was a waste of time, but that they did not necessarily share his moral objections to it.

In Vietnam a Year

Mr. Isaacs entered the Foreign Service in 1969. On his arrival in Vietnam in August, 1970, he was sent to Binh Tuy Province in the coastal lowlands as an adviser to a social welfare chief who was trying to resettle 5,200 repatriates from Cambodia.

"I was sent into the province with no knowledge of refugees, never having seen, smelled, touched or talked to a refugee," Mr. Isaacs said. "I was supposed to advise a Vietnamese who had worked with refugees for four years."

In Binh Tuy, where he lived in the provincial capital, Ham Tan, with a team of 120 Americans, Mr. Isaacs said most of the men were fairly idle.

'They Didn't Know How'

"They were not advising the Vietnamese because they didn't know how and the Vietnamese did not want to be advised" he said. Mainly, they [the Vietnamese] don't care enough—these are American programs."

Mr. Isaacs said he often had written reports critical of plans to relocate Vietnamese refugees and he questioned whether the relocations were voluntary.

"It is clear any number of times when they [United States and South Vietnamese officials] talk about moving refugees that the wishes of the people are the last factor they ever consider," he said.