

SF Chronicle

A Sad Day

At the Viet

Embassy

MAY 24 1975

Washington

With little ceremony and no fanfare, the Vietnam embassy has closed its doors, leaving its 40 employees sad, jobless and with an uncertain future.

"All the past is gone," said Nguyen Thi Phuong Dung, the second secretary and political officer. "Now we must prepare for a new life. We have to think about earning a living."

Miss Phuong Dung said the embassy closing was "like half of your life dying."

Before the embassy closed, Ambassador Tran Kim Phuong called the staff members together and thanked them for their cooperation in difficult times.

Bui Ngoc Khanh, former embassy counsel, said most of the staffers are now looking for any type of employment — in supermarkets, restaurants or offices.

Khan said he lives in a three-bedroom apartment in suburban Virginia with his wife and five children. He has a degree in hospital administration and hopes to find a job in a hospital or as a language instructor, he said, "but I'll do office work, too."

The future of the embassy

itself remains in limbo. When the ambassador locked its gates for the last time, he turned over the key to the State Department, which will act as caretaker.

The new government in Saigon has requested the Algerian government to take over the embassy and other Vietnamese assets. A State Department official said yesterday that no decision had yet been made on whether the Algerians would be allowed to do this.

Associated Press