

OPC

Rev. 16/66

Saigon, Vietnam

Recent arrivals to Vietnam: John Steinbeck of Newsday Syndicate; Ted Sell and Marvin Miles of the Los Angeles Times; Lloyd Wendt, editor of Chicago's American; J. A. C. Dunn of the Charlotte (N. C.) Observer and the Knight Newspapers; Clayton Fritchey of Harpers and Newsday Syndicate; Max Frankel of the New York Times. In addition, a seven-man press delegation from the Philippines; a five-man New Zealand press delegation and a 12-man ~~European journalism~~ group of European journalists (including one from Yugoslavia) have recently arrived.

Bernie Kalb, has returned to the Far East after a one-year absence in the ~~Paris~~ Paris bureau of CBS. Now CBS correspondent-in-charge in Hong Kong, he is currently visiting Saigon.

~~Recent~~ Recent departures from Saigon: William R. Heart Jr. and Bob Considine; William Leonard, vice-president for CBS. Expected arrivals in the near future: Ed Taylor of the Reporter and W. L. White of Reader's Digest.

Pre-Christmas totals of news media accredited by the U. S. Military Command here have reached 507, which includes 179 Americans, 79 Vietnamese and 249 other nationalities.

Correspondents and military accreditation officials are now busy preparing for the re-accreditation of correspondents for 1967, which is due at the end of the year.

TO: SIBBY CHRISTENSEN
FROM: BEV DEEPE, SAIGON
DATE: MAY 10, 1966

Saigon, Vietnam.

The American military headquarters here has issued a complex set of requirements for American, Vietnamese and other foreign correspondents desiring as of May 15th initial accreditation or renewal of existing accreditation.

Some Western correspondents here fear that the Vietnamese and American officials here may impose a subtle, "creeping censorship"--as one correspondent termed it, by threatening to withdraw or cancel the accreditation card if the correspondent publishes a long-list of certain types of information, chiefly involving military security and delicate political information.

These are the accreditation criteria for correspondents effective May 15:

a. All correspondents must hold and maintain current accreditation from the Government of Vietnam to receive and maintain accreditation (U.S. Military Assistance Command).

b. Except for a. above, U.S. correspondents accredited by U.S. Department of Defense will need no additional documentation, providing DOD accreditation is maintained throughout the period of MACV accreditation. Actual DOD renewal or an agency letter (as described in c, below) must immediately replace expired DOD accreditation. DOD accreditation may be in the form of a card, a letter or a message to this command.

c. U.S. citizens not DOD accredited and Vietnamese citizens employed by U.S. or other foreign agencies (except Vietnamese agencies) will be accredited based on a letter, prepared on agency letterhead, and forwarded by the agency direct to the Office of Information, MACV. This letter must state that the individual is in fact employed, that the agency assumes full responsibility for his professional actions, including financial responsibility and personal conduct as these affect his professional actions and that immediate written notification will be provided the Office of Information, MACV, upon termination of his employment. Letters not meeting these requirements will not be accepted.

d. Citizens of other nations (not U.S. or Vietnamese) employed by a U.S. or a foreign agency must provide an agency letter as in c, above, plus insuring that their diplomatic representative dispatches a letter to the Office of Information MACV, vouching for the identity of the individual.

e. Individuals employed by Vietnamese agencies will be accredited to MACV by agreement between the U.S. Mission Press Center and the Vietnamese Ministry of Information. Evidence of approval under this joint agreement and an agency letter as in c, above, must be submitted to the Office of Information, MACV. Citizens of other nations (not United States or Republic of Vietnam) employed by a Vietnamese agency, in addition to the above, must insure that their diplomatic representative dispatches a letter to the Office of Information, MACV, vouching for the identity of the individual.

f. Applications for accreditation by free lance writers, photographers and other related media will be examined by the Office of Information, MACV, on a case-by-case basis. In any event, applicants must insure that a letter on agency letterhead is initiated by an agency indicating a desire on the part of the agency to purchase the free lance agent's copy, photography, or product. This letter must be forwarded by the agency concerned directly to the Office of Information, MACV. Correspondents who are not U.S. citizens must also insure that their diplomatic representative dispatches a letter to the Office of Information, MACV, vouching for the identity of the individual.

3. All correspondence submitted to the Office of Information, MACV, in accordance with this memorandum should use one of the following addresses:

- a. Processed through.....Office of Information (SPD)
U.S. Postal System MACV
APO San Francisco 96243
- b. Processed through.....Office of Information (SPD)
International MACV
Postal System 196 Cong Ly
Saigon, South Vietnam

4. Requests for renewal of existing accreditation, complete with required documents, should be submitted to the Office of Information, MACV, 15 days prior to the expiration of present accreditation.

5. Appropriate sample letters which may be used as a guide in requesting MACV accreditation, follow.

(SAMPLE)

LETTERHEAD OF AGENCY CONCERNED

Office of Information (SPD)
MACV
APO San Francisco 96243

Dear Sir:

Mr. John J. Jones is employed by this agency as a photographer/correspondent and his trip to Vietnam is authorized by this company.

This agency assumes responsibility for Mr. Jones' actions, including financial responsibility and personal conduct as these affect his professional actions, while he is in Vietnam, and agrees to notify your office if his employment, is terminated.

Sincerely yours,

MAX D. BRAND
General Manager

Herald Tribune

64-A, HONG-THAP-TU, SAIGON
TELEPHONE: 25.010 - CABLES: DEEPN SAIGON

Correspondents:

BEVERLY ANN DEEPE
PHAM-XUAN-AN

May 10, 1966

Mr. Victor Riesel, President
Overseas Press Club
54 West 40th Street
New York, New York 10018

Dear Mr. Riesel:

I am the correspondent for the OPC Bulletin from Saigon as well as the correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune here. I have read with satisfaction not only of your election as OPC President, but also your dispatch of an emissary to American government officials in Washington to assist the Western press in Vietnam.

I am, therefore, enclosing a DRAFT memorandum for correspondents, written by U.S. information officials, here, which is now being revised and will later be issued as a joint communique between the U.S. government here and the Vietnamese government. The American information officials (Barry Zorthian, minister counselor for information at the U.S. Embassy, and Col. Roger Bankson, information officer for the U.S. military command here) admit that this draft was drawn up without the consent or knowledge of the Vietnamese government officials. It is now being re-edited by the American officials here and in Washington.

A hand-ful of Western press correspondents have had bitter debates with the U.S. officials about this draft. The principle points of contention were conditions 1 and 2 on page 2. In the past, the press has operated under "voluntary self-censorship"—mostly involving military security of little news interest. Now, however, "the price of accreditation" will be for the correspondent to accept certain restrictions on his movements, as well as to restrict what may be written. If he does publish this restricted information, his accreditation will be withdrawn or cancelled—which means that although one can still stay in Vietnam, he can not cover any Vietnamese or American military units, or interview the officials of both countries, or be present at background sessions. This amounts to a de facto ostracization.

Herald Tribune

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Correspondents:

BEVERLY ANN DEEPE
PHAM-XUAN-AN

The Western press corps here, numbering about 150 Americans, but a grand total of more than 350 of all nationalities, is too large to be organized and too self-interested to be unified in this fight against the growing restrictions on the press. At the request of former OPC President M. Mueller, I canvassed the press corps about establishing a Saigon chapter of the OPC, but this seems virtually impossible at this time. (I'll write a full report to you about this after I return from vacation in several weeks).

Therefore, it seems the only hope for us is that an investigation will be made at the Washington level to determine how this draft is being revised--and hopefully to oppose it if the current proposed restrictions are still being contemplated.

I'm also enclosing several other memoranda to the press here--some of it off the record for unknown reasons--which will serve as background and examples of other restrictions on the press.

It's clear to me, after four years as a correspondent in Vietnam, that this is a subtle type of censorship, on what is written before it is written--with official punitive measures of dis-accreditation for those who dare to break the rules. Most of the items impinging on military security, contained in the draft, are considered harmless by the press, and of little news value. However, the essential point is the political impact of these restrictions on military information--example, the rules of engagement involving U.S. troops crossing into Cambodia, or firing in self-defense across the Cambodian border.

There will probably be a show-down between the U.S. officials here and the Western press--but we have little power and no veto power. Therefore, I hope at your level something may be done to dissuade the Washington officials from this creeping censorship.

With best regards,

(Miss) Beverly Deepe