V) From the end of the Vietnam War to the end of operations (1973-75)

1) Backstage:

As an official Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex signed in January and February 76 by several CIA Department Heads points out, the plan to phase out Air America goes back to a decision made by Richard Helms, Director of Central Intelligence in April 1972: “The divestiture by the Agency of the [erased, i.e. HBILKA] complex was directed by the DCI on 6 April 1972 [erased, probably reference number]. It was decided at that time to begin an orderly phase-down of the Agency’s air capabilities in the Far East as they became excess to U.S. Mission requirements.”¹ “It was originally anticipated that Air America Inc., Air Asia Company Limited, Civil Air Transport Company Limited and Thai-Pacific Services Company Limited could be sold on a going-concern basis and continue to operate in the private sector. Bids were solicited from a list of competent bidders furnished by R. Dixon Speas, aviation consultants.”² This idea to continue Air America as a privately owned airline explains several things: Dated 7 March 73, Air America’s Base Manager James A. Cunningham Jr. presented a 29 page paper called Air America Capability Laos,³ that not only describes in detail, what each department of Air America’s Vientiane Base was capable of, but also how these capabilities could be expanded for civilian use. There was also a similar report for Udorn,⁴ and in April 73, the new Operations Support Group took office at Bangkok⁵ – evidently in order to phase out Taipei offices, but certainly also to be closer to the future area of activities of potential customers. For a certain time, even CEO Paul C. Velte Jr from Washington took office at Bangkok,⁶ as to be more easily available to customers who might be interested in buying the CAT-Air America complex. On 12 July 73, Dixon Spears Associates published an audit report called The Pacific Corporation and Subsidiaries: Description of Organization, Facilities and Operations.⁷ Here, all aspects of the Company – contracts, revenue, stations, etc. – were presented in a very detailed way as to attract possible customers.

Yet, all of these attempts to attract financially strong bidders did not work. So in early 1976, the CIA Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex had to note: “All bids received were found to be unresponsive to the criteria set forth in the request for bids. It was therefore decided to request bids on the sale of the Air Asia maintenance facility as a separate entity and to liquidate the other companies by selling off the assets. Appropriate new approvals were obtained to cover the changed situation.”⁸

⁴ See the Udorn, Thailand facilities and capabilities report, in: UTD/Abadi/B1F4.
⁵ Air America Log, vol. VII, no. 9, 1973, pp.4-5.
2) Boards and Committees

A) The Pacific Corporation

In 1973, the Pacific Corporation had six Directors. All of them also served as Directors of Air America Inc.: James B. Ames (Washington), George A. Doole, Jr (Washington), Robert G. Goelet (Washington), Arthur B. Richardson (Washington), and Paul C. Velte (Washington/Bangkok), and here, too, Samuel S. Walker served as Chairman of the Board. Meetings were held every 4 months, and discussed was the sale of parts of the aircraft fleet and of Company operations to customers outside the Air America/Air Asia complex. Two items were treated in detail: the sale of 4 Hughes 500 helicopters and 1 Caribou to Southern Sky Inc. and the possibility of selling the interests that The Pacific Corporation had in Air America Inc., Air Asia Co Ltd, Civil Air Transport Co Ltd, Air America Ltd, and Thai Pacific Co Ltd.

“In furtherance of this objective, the Company retained R. Dixon Speas Associates, Inc. to make an evaluation of the assets and liabilities of those companies and to recommend a procedure for the disposition thereof. Dixon Speas made such a study during the latter part of May and the early part of June and prepared a report and recommendations. The Company held a bidder conference on July 12, 1973 with several parties who had indicated an interest in acquiring its subsidiary and affiliated companies and on August 20, 1973, the Company issued to such parties an Invitation to Bid. The deadline for filing response to the Invitation to Bid was October 15, 1973 and a number were received. The Company now proposed to enter into negotiations with the responsive bidder or bidders with the objective of reaching an acceptable agreement for the sale of The Pacific Corporation’s interest in such subsidiary and affiliated companies.”

George A. Doole Jr was then authorized to negotiate for and on behalf of the Company with the responsive bidder or bidders and to enter into a formal agreement as agent of the Company. Finally, a new committee, consisting of Samuel Walker (Chairman), James Ames and Robert Goelet, was created that was to have “the Charter, or By-Laws, all of the power of the Board of Directors in connection with negotiations for the proposed sale of the Company’s interest in Air America Inc., Air Asia Company Limited, Civil Air Transport Company Limited, Air America Limited, and Thai Pacific Company Limited.”

On 16 March 74, it was reported to The Pacific Corporation that negotiations with two bidders – E-Systems Inc. and Lockheed Aircraft Service Company – were still ongoing and that Air America’s President Hugh Grundy was in the Far East to request the Thailand Government to select a Thai entity to take over the ground operations then being conducted by Air America in Thailand, i.e. Air America’s Udorn maintenance facility. “The Company operated facilities would be turned over to the designated entity in exchange for their continuing the operations and thereby provide jobs for the employees and assume all personnel liability.”

On 21 August 74, Air Asia Co Ltd was sold to E-Systems Inc., and on 17 September 74, The Pacific Corporation approved and ratified the sale, which had been arranged by George A. Doole and was accomplished on 31 January 75.

B) The Board of Directors

In 1973, Air America’s Board of Directors still had the same eight members as before – James B. Ames (Washington), George A. Doole, Jr (Washington), Robert G. Goelet

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9 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of The Pacific Corporation of 30 October 73, in: UTD/CIA/B1F6.
10 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of The Pacific Corporation of 30 October 73, in: UTD/CIA/B1F6.
11 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of The Pacific Corporation of 30 October 73, in: UTD/CIA/B1F6.
14 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America Inc. of 20 February 75, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.
(Washington), Hugh L. Grundy (Taipei), William A. Read (Washington), Arthur B. Richardson (Washington), and Paul C. Velte (Washington/Bangkok) –, and Samuel S. Walker still served as Chairman. On 18 June 74, the Board of Directors of Air America Inc. again elected Samuel S. Walker as Chairman and George A. Doole Jr as Vice Chairman of the Board. On 17 December 74, Messrs. Walker, Ames, Goelet, and Richardson resigned as members of the Board of Directors effective 31 December 74. On 21 January 75, Clyde S. Carter was elected as a member of the Board of Directors, and Paul C. Velte Jr was elected Chairman of the Board of Directors, so that the Board then had only 4 members, i.e. Messrs. Doole, Grundy, Velte, and Carter. The main issue on 2 April 75 was to “consider the disposition of the net available cash proceeds of the sale of the Company’s subsidiary, Air Asia Company Limited, amounting to $1,000,000. There is no present or prospective requirement for these funds in the operations of the Company. Consequently, after thorough discussion, the following resolution was offered and unanimously adopted: RESOLVED, that the Board of Directors declares a dividend of $5 per share of the Company’s stock, payable April 10, 1975 to holders of record April 3, 1975.”

C) The Executive Committee of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited

On 17 January 61, the Board of Directors had made a resolution regarding the Executive Committee, which limited the number of its members. Pursuant to this resolution, on 15 August 72, the Board of Directors elected the “following as an Executive Committee to manage the business and affairs of the Company during intervals between meetings of the Board of Directors, to serve at the pleasure of the Board: Paul C. Velte Jr, Chairman; George A. Doole Jr.” It was not until 2 years later, i.e. on 18 June 74 that the Board of Directors elected Air America’s President Hugh L. Grundy as a third member of the Executive Committee.

The Minutes of the meetings that the Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Co Ltd held in 1973 are not available, but the meetings that the Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Co Ltd held in 1974 followed the usual pattern: Reports (statistics, accidents) at the beginning and financial questions ( Appropriation Requests, Bank accounts) at the end, minutes signed by Mark L. Peterson. Statistics were very detailed and by base. For example, on 7 January 74, Air America accumulated 202 flying hours, i.e. 141 at Saigon, 56 at Udorn, and 5 at Bangkok and Chiang Mai, reflecting the nearby end of Air America operations in Laos and Thailand. Three items dominated discussions: Two of them, the constant decrease of personnel and the sale of surplus aircraft and equipment and

15 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 17 April 73, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
16 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 June 74, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
17 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 17 December 74, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
18 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 21 January 75, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3. On 16 June 75, the Annual Meeting of the Stockholders confirmed Messrs. Velte, Doole, Grundy and Carter as Directors of Air America (Minutes of Meeting of the Stockholders of Air America Inc. of 16 June 75, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3).
20 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 15 August 72, in: UTD/CIA/B4F2.
21 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 June 74, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
22 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 8 January 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F1.
23 A detailed phase-out plan for phase-out of operations in Laos can be found in: Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 11 April 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F1.
24 On 31 December 73, the Company had a total of 7,554 employees, i.e. 3,022 with Air Asia, 4,471 with Air America Inc. and 61 with Air America Ltd at Hong Kong (Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air
even the sale of Air America’s Udorn maintenance base\textsuperscript{27} and of Air Asia at Tainan\textsuperscript{28} were consequences of the phase-out of operations in Laos, Thailand, and Taiwan. The third frequent item was the ICCS account, i.e.

money that ICCS owed Air America.\textsuperscript{29} In January 1974, there were labor disputes in Thailand.\textsuperscript{30} At the 30 April 74 meeting of the Executive Committee, “announcement was made of the formation under the Treasurer-Controller of a Termination Claims Committee including also the Director of Cost Accounting Division, the Director of Marketing/Contract Affairs and the Assistant Legal Counsel-Operations Support Group. This committee will prepare appropriate claims for the recovery of any termination costs payable to the Company.”\textsuperscript{31}

After the sale of Air Asia to E-Systems in 1974/5, there are some Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America Inc. for 1975. The Minutes of 20 February 75 give a very detailed picture of Revenues and Expenses as well as Operating Statistics for the last 10 months prior to 31 January 75 as well as Personnel Statistics: According to these statistics, Air Asia Co Ltd had 3014, Air America Inc. 1072, Air America Ltd 105, and Civil Air Transport had 18 employees on 31 January 75. The CEO reported “that claims of approximately $2,125,000 are being pursued against Contract -0002”,\textsuperscript{32} i.e. the USAF contract for flying in Laos that also covered maintenance advise in Cambodia by LMAT. The Minutes of 19 March 75 offer similar statistics, discuss problems connected with the sale of Air Asia and plan “to phase-out all Air America operations in South Vietnam by 30 June 1975.”\textsuperscript{33} With Saigon taken by North Vietnamese troops on 30 April 75, this plan did not materialize.

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{25} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 22 January 74, 12 February 74, and 12 March 74 (all in: UTD/CIA/B10F1), of 13 August 74, 10 September 74 (in: UTD/CIA/B10F2).
\bibitem{26} “The Managing Director also reported that a meeting had been held in Hong Kong among himself, the President of Air Asia, the Senior Vice President Corporate Affairs, the Vice President Purchasing, the Assistant Vice President-Technical Services Representative, the Manager-Air America Limited and the Manager-Surplus Sales, concerning the disposal of surplus property. Round figure estimates have been reached on the sales value of the aircraft totaling approximately $6 million” (Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 30 April 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F1).
\bibitem{27} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 30 April 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F1.
\bibitem{28} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 11 June 74, (in: UTD/CIA/B10F1), of 16 October 74, 12 November 74, 10 December 74 (all in: UTD/CIA/B10F2), and 21 January 75 (in: UTD/CIA/B10F3).
\bibitem{29} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 12 March 74, 30 April 74 (all in: UTD/CIA/B10F1), 9 July 74, 23 July 74, 13 August 74, 10 September 74, 16 October 74, and 12 November 74 (in: UTD/CIA/B10F2). On 10 September 74, Air America even threatened to terminate all service for ICCS. That worked, as by 16 October 74, Air America gad received $602,000 from ICCS. On 12 November 74, Mr. Grundy reported that ICCS currently owned Air America $450,000.
\bibitem{30} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 8 and 22 January 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F1.
\bibitem{31} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 30 April 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F1.
\bibitem{32} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America Inc. of 20 February 75, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3, also at \url{http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197524.pdf}.
\bibitem{33} Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America Inc. of 19 March 75; in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.
\end{thebibliography}
3) The Management

Undated Air America organizational chart (in: UTD/CIA/B51F1), apparently representing the situation after 1 April 1973

As can be imagined, the Cease-fire agreements for Vietnam (24 January 1973) and for Laos (21 February 1973) and the withdrawal of American troops from Southeast Asia meant an enormous loss of business for Air America. However, initially it was hoped that new business could be found in Southeast Asia, especially in Thailand and South Vietnam, and the birth of ICCS Air Services in March 1973 seemed to confirm these hopes. Such hopes clearly appear in James A. Cunningham’s (BM/VTE) booklet of 7 March 1973 called Air America Capability Laos,34 whose preface ends with the following words:

Later, the text of this booklet makes a clear distinction between “what we are doing now” and “what we are prepared to offer”.35 So, in spite of the decision that the Director of Central Intelligence Richard Helms had made on 6 April 1972 “to begin an orderly phase-down of the Agency’s air capabilities in the Far East as they became excess to U.S. Mission requirements,”36 this booklet was also a marketing instrument for Air America to survive – apparently as a private company. And Air America Laos could offer quite a lot of things:

Above is what we are doing now. Below is what we are prepared to offer.

11. Traffic and Sales
   a. Operation of commercial terminal
      Ticket sales
      Documentation, domestic and commercial
      Passenger processing
      Cargo processing
      Border clearance

12. Ground Services
   a. Aircraft handling
      On/off-loading cargo flights
      On/off-loading passenger flights
      Catering (inflight meals, beverages etc.)
      Aircraft grooming
      Ramp services, airstairs

13. Training
    Flight attendant
    Traffic Agent
    Materials handling equipment
    Parachute packing/rigging/repairing
    Teletype operation

14. Warehousing
    Cargo handling/storage/general
    Cargo handling/storage special
    Mail handling/storage

15. Rice Warehouse
    Bagging

16. Aircraft Loadmasters
    Air Freight Specialists
    Air Freight Dispatchers

Air America Aircraft/Personnel

Air America can provide for immediate use, from its own inventory of company owned aircraft, the following aircraft types:

Fixed Wing:
   Hello Courier
   Pilatus Porter
   Beech D-18
   Volpar Turbo Beech
   De Havilland Twin Otter
   De Havilland Caribou (DHC-4)
   Douglas DC-3, DC-4 and DC-6

Rotary Wing:
   Hughes 500
   Bell 204 and 205
   Sikorsky Twin-Pac
At the same time, it was clear that operations and management had to be reduced, and so, in the organizational chart depicted above, there are no longer any stations in Japan, the Republic of China, Hong Kong, the Ryukyus or the Philippines, but the chart still hopes that there would be new business in Laos that might justify the bases at Vientiane and Udorn as well as the stations at Ban Xon (“up country – Laos”) and Chiang Mai (“CHM”). As to Air America’s management, it was also to be “thinned” by inventing the position of a Senior Vice President and two Area Vice Presidents and by phasing out the Taipei offices that were to move to Bangkok or to Washington. The booklet Air America Capability Laos was dated 7 March 73. Only a couple of days later, this optimism was gone, when James Cunningham wrote to Paul Velte on 24 March 73: “The Ambassador has personally made the decision to play down Air America’s role in Laos with CASI being pushed to the front as the chosen instrument for much of the U.S. Mission air support requirement.”

As to Thailand, Gary Bisson recalls: “Once the local Thai population realized in 1973 that UDN, as well as VTE, would be closing under the Geneva agreements two things I remember happening:
1. A nasty labor dispute arose at the UDN base which was eventually settled with a lot of effort by Frank Nihill […].
2. The latest Thai Government, installed soon after the 1973 coup, informed the Embassy of its intent to impose back custom duties from AAM for all the materials previously imported into Laos, even though AAM under continuing annual agreements with the prior Governments was exempt from such duties. I was called to an in-house meeting at the Embassy with Dave Hickler and the COS, the Political Officer, a man with the surname Jones, and other embassy members to discuss the matter. I remember informing them that under AAM contract with the USG, the USG agreed to hold AAM harmless for any such action, with the USG having to foot the bill. The matter soon went away!

There were truly no new business activities in Thailand after the UDN closure. Our base, which was no longer needed, was on land owned by the Thai Air Force. Thai Am was available to provide all aircraft maintenance needs in the Kingdom. AAM was not badly thought of at the time, but was simply no longer needed by the Thai Government and, of course, AAM ownership at that time only wanted to orderly close down Air America."38

A) Taipei Offices Phase-Out

When the Taipei Station was being phased out during the second half of 1973, some of the administration offices were transferred to Bangkok: From vol. VII, no.5 onwards, the Air America Log was no longer officially published at Kadena, Okinawa, but at Bangkok. On 1 April 73, Air America’s Operations Support Group from Taipei took office at Bangkok,39 and even Air America’s Managing Director and CEO Paul C. Velte Jr. switched from Washington DC to Bangkok in 1973 – at least for some time.40 In the restructuring plan implemented on 1 April 73, Air America established an Operations Support Group (OSG) in Bangkok. This group was made up of: Reese T. Bradburn Jr (Director Industrial Relations), Tom B. Ingles (Vice President Industrial Relations), Sigvard O. Larson (Director of Marketing and Contract Administration), Gary B. Bisson (Assistant Legal Counsel), Tom A. Krohn (Director of Labor Relations – Flight), and Francis X. Nihill (Director of Labor Relations – Ground).41 As Gary Bisson points out: “As to the functions of the BKK OSG, from my prospective: It was not set up to market new business, although Sig had the Title of Director of Marketing and Contract Administration (I’m not aware of any new business initiatives developed from our office) but rather to:

1. Provide an orderly close out to AAM bases in Laos and UDN, according to the provisions of the Geneva Accords. I made several trips to VTE and UDN providing legal services in these closeouts.
2. Provide legal and contract support to the AAM operations in SGN under the USG and ICCS contracts, Sig and I made continuing trips there in support of this effort.
3. Following the collapse of FEPA pilots Union in late 1973, to administer the AAM imposed ‘Green Book’ on flight and ground labor relations, which replaced the earlier FEPA ‘Blue Book’ agreement. Tom Ingle VP-IR, Tom Krohn DLR-F and Frank Nihill DLR-G served under the VP-IR in the labor relations field.
4. Reese Bradburn, the D-IR, administered personnel relations for all overseas AAM employees with lots of support from Frank Nihill.”42

As to the FEPA strike, Gary Bisson recalls: “Jack Smith […] was part (with me and others) of the 1973 AAM team on the final negotiations with FEPA led by Paul Velte. That was why Mr. Velte was in BKK that year. The negotiations failed to produce agreement. FEPA called a strike. Mr. Velte advised the Bangkok Post that any pilots who showed up for work the day of the strike would be welcomed. Just about everyone showed up and FEPA disbanded.”43

Other Air America offices moved to Washington, and this not only included the President, Hugh L. Grundy, but also several Vice Presidents like the Vice President Law and Company VIP officers like the Director of Safety.

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38 E-mail dated 20 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson.
42 E-mail dated 20 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson.
43 E-mail dated 21 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson.
Of course, not all of these positions can be explained here. Thanks to Bill Merrigan and Gary Bisson, here are some explanations, referring to the situation of 1973:

Still resident at Taipei were:

Controller – Controller: Lindsey B. Herd
DGAD – Director General Accounting Division
DMAD – Director, Maintenance Accounting Division: Max Garland Wells
DPD – Data Processing Division
DSY – Director of Security: Samuel H. Johnson in March 73
DTD – Director Traffic Division: Stan J. Huster – still in March 73
IM – Insurance Manager: Peter S. T. Cheng (AACL)
MIE – Manager, Import & Export: P.L. Chang in July 69

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44 E-mails dated 5 February 2015 kindly sent to the author by William Merrigan and Gary Bisson.
45 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 5 March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
46 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 6 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
47 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 23 March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
48 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 5 March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
50 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 31 August 72, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
51 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 23 March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
RAD – Revenue Accounting Division: W.J. Chien (Assistant Director Revenue Accounting Division in July 69)

VPA – Vice President Administration: Joseph L. Madison – still VP-A in March 73

In the meantime resident at Washington were:

A/T – Assistant Treasurer:

AVPO – Assistant Vice President Operations:

CEO – Chief Executive Officer: Paul C. Velte Jr

DCAD – Director Cost Accounting Division: from 1970 to 1978 Kwei (“Duke”) Tu, initially at Taipei, then at Washington

DCD – Director of Communications Division:

DENG – Director Engineering Division:

DOC – Director Operations Control: James P. Quigley, late 1971 (Taipei) to June 74 (Washington, since mid-73)

DO-AG – Director of Operations – Audit Group: John H. Bolden (22 May 68 to 31 May 74)

DSAFE – Director of Safety: Philip R. O’Brien

ENG –

MOP – Manager Operations Publications: Neal E. Coltrane (reported to Tom Lewis)

MSLS – Manager, Surplus Sales

PRES – President: Hugh L. Grundy

RVP – Regional Vice President: Var M. Green (since 1973)

SVP-OCA – Senior Vice President – Office of Corporate Affairs:

VPFCA – Vice President for Flying Contract Affairs: Var M. Green – still in June 73

VP-L – Vice President-Law: Henry P. Bevans

VP-OCA – Vice President – Office of Corporate Affairs:

54 Air Asia Co Ltd Telephone Directory of July 69, kindly sent to the author by Bill Merrigan.
55 E-mail dated 6 April 2015, kindly sent to the author by William Merrigan.
56 Air Asia Co Ltd Telephone Directory of July 69, kindly sent to the author by Bill Merrigan.
57 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 23 March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
58 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of The Pacific Corporation of 30 October 73, in: UTD/CIA/B1F6.
60 E-mail dated 6 April 2015, kindly sent to the author by William Merrigan. Memo no. VPO-73-058 of 9 April 73 re Taipei Phase Down, in: UTD/CIA/B51/F4.
61 List of Air America acronyms, formerly in UTD/Leary/B22F4.
62 E-Mail dated 22 July 2015 by Neal E. Coltrane, kindly sent to Gary Bisson who forwarded it to the author.
63 The position of Director Operations Control was created in late 1971 at Air America’s Taipei headquarters and replaced DFOD (Director Flight Operations Division). E-mail dated 20 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.
64 See John H. Bolden, in: UTD/Small Collections/B12F3, online description.
65 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 6 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
66 E-mail dated 25 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.
67 The MSLS monitors the accomplishment of payments for surplus aircraft that have been sold (Clyde Carter, Letter no. WC-73-2996 of 7 June 73, re sale of DC-6B msn 45550, in: UTD/CIA/B1F5).
69 On 15 May 73, Var Green was still at Taipei (Dixon Speas Associates Report of 12 July 73, p.3, in: UTD/Kaufman/B1F14); Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 6 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
70 Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 17 December 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
71 Clyde S. Carter
72 Letter no. WC-73-2996 of 7 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B1F5.
73 Amendment to Contract AID/VN-100 signed on 25 June 73, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 25.
VPO – Vice President Operations: Earl H. Richmond,76 later (?) Dave Chase77
VPO-OSG – Vice President Operations – Operations Support Group: Earl H. Richmond in April 7378

In the meantime resident at Bangkok were:

ALC – Assistant Legal Counsel: Gary B. Bisson79
DIRA – Director Industrial Relations Administration: Reese T. Bradburn, Bangkok (since April 73)80 – apparently, this was a new designation for the former Director of Personnel (DP), as on Base level, the Personnel Manager had become the MIR (Manager of Industrial Relations)81
DLRF – Director of Labor Relations – Flight: Tom A. Krohn82
DLRG – Director of Labor Relations – Ground: Francis X. Nihill83
DMCA – Director of Marketing and Contract Administration: Sigvard O. Larson84
VP-IR – Vice President for Industrial Relations: Thomas B. Ingles85 (“The VPIR was only concerned with Industrial Relations – managing the Pilot Union contract and its successor when the Union was disbanded, and Brad was his principal assistant.”)86

For more abbreviations and more employees who were working for Air America Bangkok at that time, see Section C: Base and Station Management.

Still resident at Tainan:

AVP-TSR – Assistant Vice President Technical Services Representative: David B. Gluskin87

**Per base:**

FIC – Flight Operations Center88
MFC – Manager of Flight Crews89
MFO – Manager of Flight Operations90

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75 Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 17 December 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
79 Air America Log, vol. VII, no. 9, 1973, pp.4-5. Gary Bisson was an Air America lawyer from 14 February 68 to 30 September 74, working first at Taipei and then at Bangkok (see Gary Bisson, in: UTD/Small Collections/B6F2, online description). In July 69, he was Legal Assistant at Taipei (Air Asia Co Ltd Telephone Directory of July 69, kindly sent to the author by Bill Merrigan). Gary Bisson worked as Air America’s Federal Contracts lawyer. “Annually, AAM had @40 active U.S. Government contracts and I was part of the AAM’s negotiating for almost all of them in my 6/12 AAM tenure. As you know, OLC had to sign off on all Federal contracts and amendments and being part of the AAM negotiating team greatly expedited this process” (e-mail dated 24 March 2015, kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson).
80 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 6 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
81 See Memo no. DO-SVND/74-A08 of 11 January 74 to MIR-SVND, in: UTD/CIA/B39F2.
85 E-mails dated 5 February 2015 kindly sent to the author by William Merrigan and Gary Bisson.
86 E-mail dated 10 February 2015 kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson; Memo no. VPIR-73-PS-008 of 8 September 73 (in: UTD/CIA/B20F1) deals with hostilities pay rates.
87 Survey reports dated 21 July 75, re aircraft abandoned in SVN, in: UTD/CIA/B18F7.
89 See Memo no. DO-SVND/74-A08 of 11 January 74 to MIR-SVND, in: UTD/CIA/B39F2.
90 See Memo no. DO-SVND/74-A08 of 11 January 74 to MIR-SVND, in: UTD/CIA/B39F2.
MGO – Manager of Ground Operations
MIR – Manager, Industrial Relations – new designation for the Personnel Manager

The Air America Bases and Stations BKK (Bangkok), CNX (Chiang Mai), CRK (Clark), DAD (Danang), HKG (Hong Kong), NHA (Nha Trang), OKO (Yokota), PNH (Phnom Penh), SGN (Saigon), UTH (Udorn), VTE (Vientiane), and VCA (Can Tho), which are also given in the Distribution list of 1 April 73, mostly had one or more of the following officers: CMECH (Chief Mechanic), CP (Chief Pilot), DO (Director of Operations), DTS (Director of Technical Services), OM (Operations Manager), SCR (Senior Company Representative), S/MAINT (Supervisor Maintenance), SOM (Senior Operations Manager) SOR (Senior Operations Representative), SSHP (Supervisor, Shops), or SZ (Station Manager). For more details see below in Section C: Base and Station Management.


91 See Memo no. DO-SVND/74-A08 of 11 January 74 to MIR-SVND, in: UTD/CIA/B39F2.
Phasing out the Taipei offices brought a lot of changes. Again, they can partly be seen by looking at the “Distribution” list of Air America’s Flight Operations Circulars. While the list of 1 April 73 still had the traditional location of offices,92 the “Distribution” list of 1 November 73 already shows that several of Air America’s top management representatives had taken office at Bangkok, while others – like the President himself – had gone to Washington. Later “Distribution” lists show how the staff was thinned until one base and station after the other was closed, and at the end, even the staff of Washington Office was reduced to a minimum.

92 See above.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WAS:</th>
<th>TNN:</th>
<th>VTE:</th>
<th>HKG:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>AVP-TSR (20 - For AACL Distribution)</td>
<td>EM VTE</td>
<td>NAAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>A/C</td>
<td>MFO</td>
<td>OM</td>
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<tr>
<td>RVF</td>
<td>AVL-BKK (1*+6)</td>
<td>VP-NTD (1*+14)</td>
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<td>DENG</td>
<td>*CMECH</td>
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<td>VP-L</td>
<td>*CMECH TKL</td>
<td>DO</td>
<td>*CMECH</td>
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<td>DOC</td>
<td>CNECH BKK</td>
<td>MSAF F</td>
<td>MHA</td>
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<tr>
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<td>VPIR</td>
<td>NTRNG</td>
<td>CP/RW</td>
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<td>VP-OCA</td>
<td>*TNCA</td>
<td>OENG</td>
<td>*CMECH</td>
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<td>DRLF</td>
<td>TM</td>
<td>SCR</td>
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<td>*TECH LIB</td>
<td>FNH</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SCR</td>
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<td>DO-AG</td>
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**TPE:**
Controller

**SGN:**
VP-SVND (1*+14)

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<td>VP-NTD (8)</td>
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<td>*CMECH</td>
<td>DO</td>
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<td>RVF</td>
<td>SOR</td>
<td>MFC</td>
<td>NAAL</td>
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<td>*CMECH TKL</td>
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**TPE:**
Controller

**SGN:**
VP-SVND (1*+14)

Distribution, Flight Operations Circular of 1 February 74, in: UTD/CIA/B51F21

Distribution, Flight Operations Circular of 1 May 74, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7C
On 18 June 74, the Board of Directors of Air America Inc. elected the following officers of the Company “to serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors”:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing Director and Chief</td>
<td>Paul C. Velte, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Officer</td>
<td>Hugh L. Grundy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Clyde S. Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Var M. Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President and Secretary</td>
<td>Henry P. Bevans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Thomas B. Ingles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Clarence J. Abadie, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>John R. Barnhisel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>James E. Meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Lindsey B. Herd, Jr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Vice President</td>
<td>David B. Gluskin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Vice President</td>
<td>David Hickler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Paul E. Sinner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Air America’s Officers elected on 18 June 1974  
(Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 18 June 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3)

Again, there are some changes compared to 1972: The CEO has no longer a second job as Treasurer, as that position was then held by Lindsey B. Herd. James H. Bastian is no longer mentioned as Secretary, and the Minutes of 18 June 74 were signed by Henry P. Bevans, VP-Law. James Cunningham was no longer mentioned as VP, as this position had been eliminated on 30 September 73. Other names were equally missing, but Jack R. (not John) Barnhisel had been promoted to Vice President Vietnam, and David Hickler, Base Manager of Bangkok, had been promoted to Assistant Vice President.

Working in the Washington office:

A/T – Assistant Treasurer: Paul E. Sinner

ALC – Assistant Legal Counsel: William J. Merrigan

AVP – Assistant Vice President: Reese T. Bradburn Jr since 19 November 1974. As AVP, he also was the final AAM and related companies “Director of Personnel” 1974-1977.

CEO – Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director: Paul C. Velte Jr

DLR-G - Director of Labor Relations – Ground: Francis X. Nihill (Washington, October 74 to January 76)

DO-AG – Director of Operations – Audit Group: John H. Bolden (22 May 68 to 31 May 74)
DOC – Director Operations Control: James P. Quigley, late 1971 (Taipei) to June 74 (Washington, since mid-73)\textsuperscript{102}
DOR – Director\textsuperscript{103} (?)
DSAFE – Director of Safety: Philip R. O’Brien\textsuperscript{104}
DSLS – Director, Surplus Sales: Hank A. Allain in 1974,\textsuperscript{105} still in 1975\textsuperscript{106}
EA/CEO – Executive Assistant to the CEO: Mark L. Peterson\textsuperscript{108}
FORD – Flight Operations Regional Director: John Ford\textsuperscript{110}
MOP – Manager Operations Publications: Neal E. Coltrane\textsuperscript{111}
MSLS – Manager Surplus Sales:\textsuperscript{112}
PRES – President: Hugh L. Grundy\textsuperscript{113}
RVP – Regional Vice President: Var M. Green (since 1973)\textsuperscript{114}
SVP – Senior Vice President: Clyde S. Carter\textsuperscript{115} – still in February 76;\textsuperscript{116} in June 76 and in April 78, Clyde S. Carter signed as “President, Air America Inc.”\textsuperscript{117}
VP-L – Vice President-Law: Henry P. Bevans\textsuperscript{118}
VP-T – Vice President and Treasurer: Lindsey B. Herd\textsuperscript{119} – on 9 May 75 at Hong Kong,\textsuperscript{120} on 28 May 75 at Washington\textsuperscript{121}

In 1974, the following people, whose job titles are unknown, were also working in Washington office:
Captain Jack Smith (previously assigned in Taipei in Flying Division, previously Station Manager, Chiang Mai)\textsuperscript{123}

Still working at Taipei offices:
Controller – Treasurer-Controller: Lindsey B. Herd,\textsuperscript{124} became VP-T at Washington in 1975

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{102} E-mail dated 20 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.
\item \textsuperscript{103} E-mail dated 29 July 2015 kindly sent to the author by Frank Nihill.
\item \textsuperscript{104} E-mail dated 25 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.
\item \textsuperscript{105} Letter no. WA-74-1960 dated 9 October 74, in: UTD/CIA/B17F3.
\item \textsuperscript{106} Bill of Sale of C-54 msn 36028 to Air Vietnam on 2 April 75, in: UTD/CIA/B40/F7.
\item \textsuperscript{107} EA/CEO was in the Distribution list of the letter of 28 October 75, Clyde Carter to FAA, re sale of PC-6Cs to Omni, in: UTD/CIA/B17F4.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc, of 18 June 75, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197595.pdf.
\item \textsuperscript{109} In CC (“Info”) section of addressees, Telex of 24 March 75, CEO to VP-SVND, re sale of aircraft, in: UTD/CIA/B18F2.
\item \textsuperscript{110} E-mail dated 29 July 2015 kindly sent to the author by Frank Nihill.
\item \textsuperscript{111} E-mail dated 25 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.
\item \textsuperscript{112} The MSLS monitors the accomplishment of payments for surplus aircraft that have been sold (Clyde Carter, Letter no. WC-73-2996 of 7 June 73, re sale of DC-6B msn 45550, in: UTD/CIA/B15F5).
\item \textsuperscript{113} Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 18 June 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
\item \textsuperscript{114} On 15 May 73, Var Green was still at Taipei (Dixon Speas Associates Report of 12 July 73, p.3, in: UTD/Kaufman/B1F14); Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 6 June 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.
\item \textsuperscript{115} Letter no. WC-74-1308 of 19 July 74, in: UTD/CIA/B17F3.
\item \textsuperscript{116} Letter of 17 February 76 to FAA, in: UTD/CIA/B18F9.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Letters nos. WC-76-1267 of 16 June 76 (in: UTD/CIA/B18F9) and no. WC-78-105 of 5 April 78 (in: UTD/CIA/B18F10), both sent to the FAA.
\item \textsuperscript{118} E-mails dated 5 February 2015 kindly sent to the author by William Merrigan and Gary Bisson.
\item \textsuperscript{119} List of Air America acronyms, formerly in UTD/Leary/B22F4.
\item \textsuperscript{120} “Mr. Herd was a Vice President and Treasurer of Air America, when he closed his Taiwan office in 1976 [and returned $20 million to the US Government] and moved to McLean” (Matt Schudel, “In memoriam Lindsey Herd”, in: Air America Log, vol. XXIV, no. 4, December 2007, p. 4).
\item \textsuperscript{121} Telex of 9 May 75, SVP-OCA to CEO, VP-T at HKG is in the CC (“Info”) section (in: UTD/CIA/B17F5).
\item \textsuperscript{122} Letter of 28 May 75, Clyde Carter to Air Asia/North Hollywood, VP-T at Washington is in the BCC (“Info”) section (in: UTD/CIA/B17F4).
\item \textsuperscript{123} E-mail dated 25 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.
\item \textsuperscript{124} Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 18 June 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3. “Mr. Herd was a Vice
DPD – Data Processing Division.\textsuperscript{125}
IM – Insurance Manager: Peter S. T. Cheng (AACL)\textsuperscript{126}
MIE – Manager, Import & Export: P.L. Chang in July 69\textsuperscript{127}

Still working at \textbf{Bangkok} offices as of 1 May 74:\textsuperscript{128}
ALC – Assistant Legal Counsel: Gary B. Bisson,\textsuperscript{129} still in August 74\textsuperscript{130}
CMECH BKK – Chief Mechanic Bangkok: Jerry Sarsfield was an AAM mechanic at TKL in the period from September 69 to 74 (?).\textsuperscript{132}
DLCRF – Director of Labor Relations – Flight: Tom A. Krohn\textsuperscript{133}
DLCRG – Director of Labor Relations – Ground: Francis X. Nihill\textsuperscript{134}
VP-IR – Vice President for Industrial Relations: Thomas B. Ingles\textsuperscript{138}

Still working at \textbf{Tainan} offices:
AVP-TSR – Assistant Vice President Technical Services Representative: David B. Gluskin;\textsuperscript{139} he was the Air America representative who served as liaison between Air America and an Air Asia Co Ltd that had become more independent, as in mid-1973, Allan Wueste had become President of Air Asia Co Ltd.\textsuperscript{140} There was no longer any Air America VPTS on 1 November 73.\textsuperscript{141}
VPSS – Vice President Surplus Sales: James E. Meals (?)\textsuperscript{143}

\textsuperscript{125} John T. Burnite, “Data Processing”, part 1, in: \textit{Air America Log}, vol. XXIV, no. 4, December 2007, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{126} Letter no. IM-73-117 of 28 March 73, re UH-1H insurance, in: UTD/Bisson/B5, microfilm reel no. 26.
\textsuperscript{127} Air Asia Co Ltd Telephone Directory of July 69, kindly sent to the author by Bill Merrigan.
\textsuperscript{128} Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 19 November 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
\textsuperscript{129} Air America Log, vol. VII, no. 8, 1973, p.2.
\textsuperscript{130} Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 19 November 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.
\textsuperscript{131} The Summaries of Aircraft Sales were published by Surplus Sales Dept. (in: UTD/CIA/B40F6).
\textsuperscript{133} Air America Log, vol. VII, no. 9, 1973, pp.4-5.
\textsuperscript{134} Air America Log, vol. VII, no. 9, 1973, pp.4-5.
\textsuperscript{135} Richaud Merrigan, Letter no. WW-74-1385 of 1 August 74, in: UTD/CIA/B17F3.
\textsuperscript{136} Distribution, Flight Operations Circular of 1 November 73, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7C.
\textsuperscript{137} E-mails dated 5 February 2015 kindly sent to the author by William Merrigan and Gary Bisson.
\textsuperscript{138} The Summaries of Aircraft Sales were published by Surplus Sales Dept. (in: UTD/CIA/B40F6).
\textsuperscript{139} Jim Meals was the Special Assistant to CEO Paul Velte (Anonymous, “In memoriam James E. Meals”, in: \textit{Air America Log}, January 1999 - online).
Still working at **Saigon:**
DTS – Director of Technical Services: Boyd D. Mesecher\(^\text{144}\)
MFC – Manager of Flight Crews: Fred F. Walker, still in 1975\(^\text{145}\)

**Working at Hong Kong:**
CMECH – Chief Mechanic:
DA – Director of Accounting (?): Max Garland Wells (?)\(^\text{146}\)
MAAL – Manager of Air America Limited: Thomas J. Clifford\(^\text{147}\)
OM – Operations Manager:

The Air America Bases and Stations BKK (Bangkok), CNX (Chiang Mai), CRK (Clark),
DAD (Danang), HKG (Hong Kong), NHA (Nha Trang), OKO (Yokota), PNH (Phnom Penh),
SGN (Saigon), UTH (Udorn), VTE (Vientiane), and VCA (Can Tho), which are also given in the
Distribution lists of 1973 and 1974, mostly had one or more of the following officers:
CMECH (Chief Mechanic), CP (Chief Pilot), DO (Director of Operations), DTS (Director of Technical Services),
FIC (Flight Operations Center), MFC (Manager of Flight Crews), MFO (Manager of Flight Operations),
MGO (Manager of Ground Operations), MIR (Manager, Industrial Relations – new designation for the Personnel Manager), MTRNG (Manager of Training),
OM (Operations Manager), SCR (Senior Company Representative), S/MAINT (Supervisor Maintenance),
SOM (Senior Operations Manager) SOR (Senior Operations Representative), SSHP (Supervisor, Shops),
SZ (Station Manager), or TM (Traffic Manager).
For more details below in Section C: Base and Station Management.

Still working in the **North Hollywood, CA** office:
MAPD – Manager, American Procurement Department: Frederick J. Sheller (who resigned in December 74)\(^\text{148}\)

**Air Asia Company Limited – Sale**
In mid-1973, Air Asia Co Ltd. became a more independent company with its own President, Allan Wueste, while Hugh L. Grundy remained working as one of Air Asia’s directors from his Washington office.\(^\text{149}\)
Other known Air Asia employees of that period include John A. Bottorf (Vice President Administration/TNN),\(^\text{150}\) George Stubb (Assistant Vice President Production/TNN, still in 1974\(^\text{151}\)), and Frank Huang (Director, Industrial Relations/TNN).\(^\text{153}\)

On 20 February 1975, it was reported to the Executive Committee of Air America Inc. “that the sale of Air Asia shares to E-Systems, Inc. had been accomplished on January 31, 1975 and that approval of the outward remittance of the purchase price by the Chinese

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\(^\text{145}\) See *Air America Log*, vol. XXVII, no. 1, March 2010, p. 10.

\(^\text{146}\) Max Garland Wells was a manager of accounting responsible for US military aircraft contract maintenance, who was stationed at Tainan since 1962, then briefly at Taipei, then for some years at Hong Kong and at the end at Washington (Bart Crotty, “In memoriam Max Garland Wells”, in: *Air America Log*, vol. XXIX, no. 3, September 2012, p. 6).


\(^\text{148}\) Internal Audit of December 74, in: UTD/CIA/B51F2.


Government authorities was being processed without any known problems.”

The final net book value stipulated in the sales contract was $3,218,000.00.

Civil Air Transport Co Ltd – after 1973

On 31 December 74, Civil Air Transport Co Ltd still had 18 employees.

B) The Washington Office 1973-75

Before being phased out, the Washington Office was first staffed with Air America officers who had come from offices in the Far East in 1973. As of August 74, there were “30 persons assigned to the Washington office which include several personnel transferred to Washington from Bangkok.” As always before, the “Distribution” list for the Flight Operations Circular of 1 April 73 (which still has most of the staff stationed at Taipei) still shows that Washington only received 2 copies destined for the Managing Director and to be delivered via the President. However, the “Distribution” list for the Flight Operations Circular of 1 November 73 gives no less than 16 recipients for the Washington Office. So, who was new at Washington? First of all, the President (Hugh L. Grundy), who remained with Air America until mid-1975, when he was transferred to Southern Air Transport at Miami, then the Vice President Law (Henry P. Bevans, VP-L), the Regional Vice President (Var M. Green, RVP), the Assistant Treasurer (Paul E. Sinner, A/T), the Director of Operations-Audit Group (John

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154 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America, Inc. of 20 February 75, p.3, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.
155 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America, Inc. of 19 March 75, p.3, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.
156 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 21 January 75, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.
157 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 13 August 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F2.
159 List “Distribution” for Flight Operations Circular no. DFOD-C-73-015 of 1 November 73, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7C.
H. Bolden, the DCD (Director of Communications Division), the Director of Safety (Philip R. O’Brien, DSAFE), and the Manager Operations Publications (Neal E. Coltrane, MOP), who all came from Taipei, and the Director of Labor Relations – Ground (Francis X. Nihill, DLR-G, Washington, October 74 to January 76), who came from Bangkok. However, it seems that some officers received new titles, when transferring to Washington, as the acronyms of their positions cannot yet be identified: AVPO and ENG. On 31 December 74, the Washington Office of Air America Inc. still had 26 employees. Frank Nihill confirms: “The primary function of the DCA office at that time was to prepare for the companies’ liquidation. As such, we all did whatever was asked of us, very often titles and duties having no relationship. Although my title was DLR-G, I had no labor relations responsibility but served to settle Workers’ Comp cases, helped to close out Viet Nam operations and provided assistance to the former employees who came to the US as refugees.”

C) Base and Station Management – Phase out

In the restructuring plan implemented on 1 April 73, Air America established an Operations Support Group (OSG) in Bangkok. This group was made up of: Reese T. Bradburn Jr (Director Industrial Relations), Tom B. Ingles (Vice President Industrial Relations), Sigvard O. Larson (Director of Marketing and Contract Administration), Gary B. Bisson (Assistant Legal Counsel), Tom A. Krohn (Director of Labor Relations – Flight), and Francis X. Nihill (Director of Labor Relations – Ground, until September 74). However, most of this personnel was then transferred to Washington: As of August 74, there were “30 persons assigned to the Washington office which include several personnel transferred to Washington from Bangkok.” The “Distribution” list for the Flight Operations Circular of 1 November 73 not only has the traditional recipients – David Hickler (now Assistant Vice President, AVP/BKK), a Chief Mechanic for Bangkok (CMech BKK), a Chief Mechanic for Takhli) (CMech TKL), and a SOR (Senior Operations Representative), but also the new positions of Vice President Industrial Relations (VPIR),

161 See John H. Bolden, in: UTD/Small Collections, Box 12, Folder 3, online description.

162 E-mail dated 25 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.

163 E-mail dated 25 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.

164 E-mail dated 29 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by Frank Nihill.

165 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 21 January 75, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.

166 E-mail dated 29 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by Frank Nihill.


173 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 13 August 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F2.


175 Jerry Sarsfield was an AAM mechanic at TKL during the period from September 69 to 74 (Richard Brunelli, Letter, in: Air America Log, vol. XXII, no. 4, December 2005, p. 4).
As to operations in Thailand, “it was noted that as of 1 July 1974, Udorn and Chiang Mai activities having been closed for the most part, Air America’s strength in Thailand was down to 148, 81 of those being retained at Udorn for PIPO (Phase in Phase out) purposes; the balance being at Bangkok.” As of 23 July 1974, Mr. Veltz advised that the number of personnel in Thailand has been reduced to 15 which include two persons remaining in Udorn in conjunction with the transition of activities to ThaiAm and including 13 persons remaining in Bangkok – ten Thai Nationals and three Americans. He noted that the tentative date for closing the Bangkok offices is 1 October 1974 and that the Company’s senior local person, Mr. Hickler, is scheduled to leave Bangkok around 7 October 1974. There are no further Air America personnel in Laos, and the total personnel now in South Vietnam stands at 1,242. Further, with respect to personnel in South Vietnam, it is anticipated that by 1 September 1974 the number of pilots will have been stabilized at 75-80.”

Immediately after the Cease-fire agreements of 21 February 73, Air America’s Vientiane Base began to reduce operations, as, by the decision taken by the US Ambassador on 22 March 73, much of the Company’s business was to be turned over to Continental Air Services Inc., which, in the eyes of the population, was apparently more linked to humanitarian work than Air America. In November 73, only 5 Air America aircraft were still based at Vientiane: the last 3 C-123Ks used to train RLAF pilots and the 2 Grant C-46s used for drops. By 1 December 73, no Air America aircraft was based at Vientiane any longer, as the last 3 C-123Ks had been turned over to the Royal Lao Air Force and the 2 C-46s to Royal Air Lao. As could be seen in the organizational chart of the Northern Thailand Division, Udorn, shown in the previous file, from 1 October 73 onwards, Vientiane Base was under

176 List “Distribution” for Flight Operations Circular no. DFOD-C-73-015 of 1 November 73, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7C.
182 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 13 August 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F2.
183 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 13 August 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F2.
184 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 10 September 74, in: UTD/CIA/B10F2.
186 Flight Operations Circulars nos. DOC-C-73-015 of 1 November 73 and DOC-C-73-016 of 1 December 73, both in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7C.
the control of the VP-NTD, Udorn, i.e. became a satellite base of Air America’s North Thailand Division. After 30 September 73, the positions of “Vice President Laos Division” and “Assistant to the Vice President, Laos Division” were eliminated, and the man who ran Vientiane Base was the “Senior Manager” Luther E. Martin, former Director Ground Transport. So, Air America continued to fly into Laos out of its Thai base of Udorn, and in December 73, no less than 34 aircraft were assigned to contract F04606-71-C-0002 for operations out of Udorn, most of them evidently into Laos, with more aircraft unassigned. This did not last very long however, and on 3 June 74, the last Air America aircraft – C-7A “389”, piloted by Captain F. F. Walker and Captain M. W. Shaver – crossed the border from Laos into Thailand en route from Vientiane to Udorn.

Known personnel still assigned to Vientiane Base after the Cease-fire agreements includes:

1) Management: James Cunningham (Vice President Laos), who resigned by 30 September 73, Gerald D. Macpherson (Assistant Vice President Laos), who also resigned by 30 September 73, Luther E. Martin (“Senior Manager” Vientiane after 30 September 73, signed as Base Manager), and John W. Melton (MAS/ABM/VTE, November 73 to June 74, last AAM employee assigned to VTE).


3) Operations: Dennis P. Grace (OM at VTE November 71-February 74).

4) Traffic: Luther E. Martin (Director Ground Transport VTE until 30 September 73).

5) Communications: V. Henley (Manager Communications Department / Laos) still in 1973.


8) Technical Services: Jack Pearsall (Manager Technical Services in 1973, but Director, Contract

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189 Telefax dated 28 September 73, VP-JD to CEO, re termination of Laos Division, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7B.
190 Telefax dated 28 September 73, VP-JD to CEO, re termination of Laos Division, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7B. The telefax sent by VP-LD was signed as “MBS”, which probably stands for Mission Base Staff.
192 Telefax dated 28 September 73, VP-LD to CEO, re termination of Laos Division, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7B. The telefax sent by VP-LD was signed as “MBS”, which probably stands for Mission Base Staff.
193 Telefax dated 28 September 73, VP-LD to CEO, re termination of Laos Division, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7B. The telefax sent by VP-LD was signed as “MBS”, which probably stands for Mission Base Staff.
203 Telefax dated 28 September 73, VP-JD to CEO, re termination of Laos Division, in: UTD/Hickler/B8F7B.
204 Memo no. MCD/L-73-014 of 2 March 73 re Close out of Kadema, in: UTD/CIA/B31F2.
207 (Anonymous); “Vientiane visit”, in: Air America Log, vol. VIII, no. 3, 1974, p.15.
Air America's Udorn Thailand Base was closed on 30 June 1974 and Udorn's big maintenance base was sold to Thai Airways Maintenance Co (Thai-Am); Thai-Am started operations on 1 July 1974. The last Air America flights that left Udorn in June 1974 were ferry flights to Bangkok and Saigon. John W. Melton was Administrative Assistant to VP-NTD from June 72 to November 73. In June 74, L.M. Kandt was still OM at Udorn. On the Udorn Daily Flight Schedule for 30 June 74, Air America's Vice President Northern Thailand Division (VP-NTD) Clarence J. Abadie (already in 1973). Air America's Director of Operations – Northern Thailand Division (DO-NTD) E. Wayne Knight (already in 1973). Air America’s Manager Ground Services – Northern Thailand Division (MGS-NTD) W. F. Palmer, and USAID’s Chief/Air Support Branch W. R. Leonard signed a famous farewell: “So ends the last sentence of the final paragraph of a saga that may have an epilogue, but never a sequel. It has been to each participating individual an experience, which varied according to his role and perspective. However, there is the common bond of knowledge and satisfaction of having taken part in something worthwhile and with just a slight sense of pity for those lesser souls who could not, or would not, share in it. This last flight schedule is dedicated to those for whom a previous similar schedule represented an appointment with their destiny.”

Other known Air America employees of Udorn’s last days include Richard G. Ford (A/VP/NTD), John Joseph (“Jack”) Brennan (Staff Assistant to VP-NTD until 31 May 74), J.C. Bond (Chief Air Freight Specialists/NTD), Jim Rhyne (Manager of Flight Crews/NTD/Udorn in 1974), “Bart” Brigida (Assistant to the Chief Pilot/RW in 1974), Jack Pearsall (Director, Contract Maintenance, Udorn in 1974), Jack S. Porter (Manager, Aircraft Shops/UDN 1968-74), and John W. Melton (Assistant MPA&IR-UTH, believed to stand for Assistant Manager, Personnel Analysis & Industrial Relations Udorn, June to 31 July 74).

In Japan, after the end of the Booklift operation on 30 June 1970, there was still a small-scale operation out of Yokota that served several air bases in Japan and some Pacific Islands like Marcus Island and Iwo Jima. This operation lasted until the end of 1973. At that time, “Doc” Lewis, head of Air America operations in Japan, had already changed his title from “General Manager Japan” at Yokota (GMJ OKO) to “General Manager – North Pacific

210 See John Thomas MacCormick, in: UTD/Small Collections/B3F20, online description.
218 J.J. Brennan, in: See UTD/Small Collections/B7F7, online description.
Division” at Yokota (GM-NPD OKO). On 1 February 74, the last two aircraft that had been assigned to Air America Japan were relocated to Tainan as spare aircraft, where they remained until the end of Air America in South East Asia. As to Air America’s operations at Yokota Air Base, there was still some maintenance to be done, but on 30 June 74, Air America’s Yokota operations, which had still had 10 employees at the end, were phased out.

As to Air America’s Phnom Penh Station, LMAT continued to exist until 31 December 74, with E. J. Griffis as Senior Company Representative (SCR) and J. M. Schulze as his assistant (A/SCR). But LMAT reemerged as LMAT Inc. under the presidency of Gary Bisson of Washington DC, and on 1 January 1975, E.J. Griffis, the former director of Air America’s LMAT, also became the new director of LMAT Inc. – at least for a very short time. There were also Air America flights into Cambodia as late as 10 April 75, when Air America’s Volpar N9577Z flew from Saigon to Phnom Penh (C-01), where it remained at customer direction for several hours, until it returned to Saigon. But of course, when the Khmer Rouge took over the country on 17 April 75, all Air America personnel had already been evacuated.

The last Air America operation to close doors was Saigon Base. After the Cease-fire agreement of 24 January 1973, there had been some optimism as to Air America operations in South Vietnam. Air America received more than 30 UH-1Hs in 1973. The smaller part of them was assigned to contract AID/VN-100, flying all sorts of supplies to isolated villages in South Vietnam, but also into besieged positions in Cambodia. The greater number of those helicopters – 22 UH-1Hs in the beginning – was assigned to contract ICCS-73-008, that is to ICCS Air Services, as the air operations of the International Commission of Control and Supervision were called. These aircraft had to fly around members of the commission who had to supervise the observance paid by all sides to the Peace Agreement. The inefficiency of the ICCS (dubbed “I Can’t Control Shit”) may have been the reason why since 1974, more and more UH-1Hs were returned to normal Air America service or to the US Army. And in the last days of April 75, it were those UH-1Hs that carried out most of Air America’s evacuation work from 13 designated points in Saigon to the U.S. Embassy roof top in downtown Saigon and to the Defense Attaché Office at Tan Son Nhat airport and then to the 7th US fleet waiting in neutral waters outside South Vietnam – until late in the evening of 29 April 75. At that point, Air America’s four Stations in South Vietnam had already been evacuated: Pleiku on 18 March 75, Danang on 29 March 75, Nha Trang on 1 April 75; and Can Tho at noon on 29 April 75.

Known Air America personnel assigned to South Vietnam during the 1973-75 period includes: 1) Management: Jack Barnhisel (Vice President – South Vietnam Division, still in July 74), Var M. Green (Vice President – South Vietnam Division, since at least October 227 List “Distribution” for Flight Operations Circular no. DFOC-C-73-015 of 1 November 73, in: UTD/Hickler/ B8F7C.
229 Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committees of Air Asia Co Ltd and Air America Inc. of 9 July 74 in: UTD/CIA/B10F2.
231 Robbins, Air America, p. 264.
232 Saigon Daily Flight Schedules for 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 28, and 29 April 75, in: UTD/Walker/B31F6+9.
233 For more details, see my file Air America in South Vietnam III – the Collapse within this e-book.
235 Marius Burke (Danang Station Manager), 236 Frank E. Stergar (ACP/Senior Company Representative Danang in February 75), 237 Ed Adams (Station Manager Nha Trang / ACP/SCR/NHA), E.V. Valebia (Station Manager Can Tho in December 74), 240 Francisco G. Vizcarra (Chief Mechanic and Senior Company Representative at Can Tho in January and February 75). 2) Flight Department: H.J. Hudson (Chief Pilot/SVN around 1973), 243 Carl A. Winston (Acting Manager of Flight Crews and Chief-Pilot Rotary Wing since May/June 1973), 244 Manager of Flight Crew/Chief Pilot still in July 75), 245 Fred F. Walker (Manager Flight Crews still in 1975), 246 Claude James (Assistant Chief-Pilot Rotary Wing around 1973), 247 James L. Roberts (Assistant Chief-Pilot/Fixed Wing in 1974). 3) Operations: Reed Chase (Operations, Special Assistant to the Vice President / Director of Operations – SVN in 1973 and in 1975), Richard J. Hoover (OM/SGN 1966-75), Al Brau (Operations Manager, Ground/SVN in 1974 and 1975), Ralph N. Begien (Head of Air America’s FIC), Dave Conley (Manager, Ground Operations/SVN in 1974), Peter Shu (OM Danang in 75). 4) Traffic: Stan J. Huster (former Director Traffic Division/TPE), Wilfredo V. Fernandez (Assistant Traffic Manager SGN in 1974), A.E.


236 Burke, “The Danang Fiasco”, in: UTD/LaShomb/B8F4.


246 See Air America Log, vol. XXVII, no. 1, March 2010, p. 10.


257 Minutes, Meeting Board of Review of 23 March 73, in: UTD/CIA/B34F5.

Alvarez (Traffic Manager Nha Trang in January 75), and Nguyen Tan Tien (Assistant Traffic Manager Nha Trang in January 75).


A complete list of all Air America employees – management, ground support and flight crews – has been put together by Jesse Walton and appears in my file Air America in South Vietnam III – the Collapse. These were the Management and Ground Support people listed there:

266 E-mail dated 23 March 2015, kindly sent to the author by Tony Coalson.
267 E-mail dated 23 March 2015, kindly sent to the author by Tony Coalson.
269 E-mail dated 23 March 2015, kindly sent to the author by Tony Coalson.
270 E-mail dated 23 March 2015, kindly sent to the author by Tony Coalson.
D) Air America Limited Hong Kong – Phase out

Known Air America Ltd personnel still working in 1974 includes: Thomas Clifford (Manager, Air America Ltd), S. Mak (Manager, Data Processing Unit), T. Chic (Chief, Payroll Dept.), C. Fu (Assistant Chief, Payroll Dept.), A. Fagan (Special Assistant to AAL’s Treasurer), and S.Y. Hsu (Operations Dispatcher/Airport). “American employees at 10 September [1974] were noted 3 in Air America Limited.” On 31 December 74, Air America Ltd still had 60 employees. On 21 January 75, “The Chief Executive Officer mentioned that a broad plan has been developed to phase out Air America Limited in Hong Kong approximately sixty days after active operations in Southeast Asia cease.” In 1976, Air America Limited was dissolved.


“Total American employees at 10 September [1974] were noted to be 39 in Air Asia Company Limited (20 at Tainan, 19 at North Hollywood), 140 in Air America Inc. and 3 in Air America Limited.” Manager of the American Procurement Department (MAPD), as it was later called, was Frederick J. Sheller, who resigned in December 74. In May 1975, a John P. Lauer of Air Asia Co Ltd still worked at 6842 Beck Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91605, when Senior Vice President Clyde S. Carter informed him that Air America Bell 204B N8514F was insured when transported by the SS The Greenwave from Guam to Corpus Christi, TX in May/June 75.
VI) After the end of operations (1975-77)

1) Backstage:

It was not only after the loss of South Vietnam in April 1975 that the CIA, owner of the CAT-Air America complex, decided to phase out the entire complex, called “Project HBILKA” in CIA terminology. In an official Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex signed in January and February 76 by several CIA Department Heads and released by the CIA in September 2009, we read: “Termination Approval. The proposal to sell Air Asia Company Limited and to liquidate by sale of assets all other instrumentalities was approved by the 40 Committee in May 1974. The divestiture by the Agency of the complex was directed by the DCI on 6 April 1972 [erased, probably reference number]. It was decided at that time to begin an orderly phase-down of the Agency’s air capabilities in the Far East as they became excess to U.S. Mission requirements.”

CIA Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex


2) Boards and Committees

A) The Pacific Corporation

In an official Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex signed in January and February 76 by several CIA Department Heads, the function of the Pacific Corporation is given as follows: “The Pacific Corporation, incorporated in Delaware, is owned by the Agency through three corporate Officer/Board Members in the name of the Sigler Corporation, the nominee of Manufacturers Hanover Trust Co., custodian. Pacific is the holding company for all equity in the [erased: probably HBILKA] complex. It has no employees and conducts no operations.”

While in 1974, the Pacific Corporation still had six Directors, all of whom also served as Directors of Air America Inc. – James B. Ames, George A. Doole, Jr., Robert G. Goelet, Arthur B. Richardson, and Paul C. Velte Jr., all of Washington DC, with Samuel S. Walker serving as Chairman of the Board, two years later, the committee had been reduced to 3 members, the same as in the Board of Directors of Air America: Paul Velte, George Doole, and Clyde Carter. At the meeting of 18 February 76, there were 2 agenda items: the financial situation and the future: “The Chairman reviewed the cash position of the Company based upon a report of February 13, 1976. The total assets held in bank accounts and U.S. Treasury securities at face value at that date amounted to slightly over twelve million four hundred thousand dollars.” As to the future, “Mr. Velte advised the Board that in order to pursue certain personal interests he desired to resign his position as President, effective at the close of business March 31, 1976. The Board accepted the resignation with regret and with gratitude for his valuable services to the Company. The Board also requested that Mr. Velte continue as Chairman of the Board of Directors and that he be prepared to perform the duties of that office on a full time-basis to which requests Mr. Velte acceded. Thereupon Mr. Doole nominated Mr. Carter as President of the Company, to take office April 1, 1976, and Mr. Carter was duly elected as President, whose duties encompass those of the Chief Executive Officer of the Company.” In early 1976, the Pacific Corporation as the holding company was “functioning only as a repository for funds generated in liquidation prior to their return to the U.S. Treasury.”

B) The Board of Directors of Air America Inc.

On 18 June 75, the Board of Directors of Air America Inc. composed of Messrs. Velte, Grundy, Doole, and Carter, “the Chairman announced that at the Annual Meeting of Stockholders, held June 16, 1975 all directors had been reelected. It was noted that normally under the provisions of the Company’s By-Laws the Board would at this first meeting following the annual stockholders’ meeting organize itself and elect officers for the coming year. In view of the current state of the Company’s affairs and the possible need for early

302 “Also present at the invitation of the Board were Mr. Lindsey B. Herd Jr., Treasurer, Mr. Mark Peterson, Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Henry P. Bevans, Secretary of the Company” (Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 June 75, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197595.pdf ).
changes in Company organization it was resolved to continue the present organization of the Board and of the officer staff until further action by the Board.

Also on 18 June 75, the Board “adopted the following resolution, with Mr. Velte abstaining: RESOLVED, that the Board express its admiration and gratitude for the devotion to duty and courage displayed by the Air America personnel serving in Saigon and elsewhere in Vietnam during the last days of April and especially by the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Paul C. Velte, Jr."

In 1975, President Hugh L. Grundy was transferred to Southern Air Transport at Miami.

In February 76, Hugh Grundy was no longer with Air America. “A meeting of the Board of Directors of Air America, Inc. was held at Suite 309, 1725 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., on February 18, 1976 at 11:00 a.m. PRESENT: Messrs. Velte, Doole and Carter. Also present at the invitation of the Board was Mr. Bevans, Secretary.” The first agenda item was the cash position: “The Chairman reviewed the cash position of the Company based upon a report of February 13, 1976. Total assets held in bank accounts and U.S. Treasury securities at face value at that date amounted to approximately seven million eight hundred forty thousand dollars.”

Then, in his capacity as Managing Director, Paul Velte reported, among others, as follows: “(a) Sale of Company Property – Substantially all of the Company property, exclusive of the furnishings in the offices in Washington, has been sold to Omni Aircraft Sales, Inc. for $3,925,000, of which $1,000,000 is represented by a one year, 8½ percent note, the balance in cash. Mr. Velte noted that the cash portion was reflected in the February 13th figure previously reported. (b) Company Receivables – Mr. Velte reported that the only substantial receivables outstanding consisted of those under USAID Contract no. AID-SA-C-1029 and USAF Contract no. F04606-71-C-002 and a number of commercial accounts generated by Air Asia prior to its sale to E-Systems, Inc. Collection of the U.S. Government receivables is in progress, and efforts are being made to dispose of the commercial accounts, possibly as a package. (c) Liquidation of Foreign Companies – It was reported that all necessary filings had been completed to effect the liquidation of Civil Air Transport Company Limited in the Republic of China, Air America Limited in the Crown Colony of Hong Kong, and Thai Pacific Services Company Limited in the Kingdom of Thailand. […] (e) Residual Matters re: Air Asia – It was reported that by virtue of an agreement reached with E-Systems, Inc. as of October 23, 1975 concerning matters then in dispute relating to the sale of the assets of Air Asia, a payment of approximately $23,800 had recently been received.”

At the end, Paul Velte announced his resignation: He “advised the Board that in order to

303 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 June 75, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197595.pdf.
304 Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 June 75, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197595.pdf.
306 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197614.pdf.
307 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197614.pdf.
308 There had been Air America property in the custody of Air Asia: See the letter dated 5 August 75, Air America’s Assistant Vice President TSR Dave Gluskin to A. Wueste, President of Air Asia (online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/1975107.pdf) and the letter dated 22 August 75, Air America’s AVP-TSR Dave Gluskin to G. D. Morrison, Director of Supply, Air Asia (online readable at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/1975110.pdf) and the letter dated 22 August 75, Air America’s AVP-TSR Dave Gluskin to G. D. Morrison, Director of Supply, Air Asia (online readable at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/1975110.pdf). And there had been Air Asia property abandoned at Saigon, while in the custody of Air America: See the letter dated 22 September 75 sent by a lawyer to Lindsey B. Herd, Air America’s Vice President Treasurer (online readable at http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/1975114.pdf).
309 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197614.pdf.
pursue certain personal interests he desired to resign his positions as Managing Director and President effective at the close of business March 31, 1976. The Board accepted the resignations with regret and with gratitude for his years of faithful service to the Company. The Board also requested that Mr. Velte continue as Chairman of the Board of Directors, to which request Mr. Velte acceded. Thereupon Mr. Doole nominated Mr. Carter as President of the Company, and Mr. Carter was duly elected to take office April 1, 1976. It was also decided that the office of Managing Director would not be filled at this time and that pending the filling of this vacancy the President will serve as the Chief Executive Officer.9

C) The Executive Committee of Air America Inc.

The last Minutes of Meeting of the Executive Committee available are those of the meeting of 18 June 75. At that time, the Company still had 97 employees, i.e. 1 at Clark, 11 at Taipei, 59 at Hong Kong, 1 at Bangkok, and 25 at Washington, plus 8 Filipinos preparing the Air America inventory in Tainan for shipment to Roswell, New Mexico; the rest of the Minutes lists up claims and losses.312

3) The Management
A) Washington Office since May 1975

During the last days of the evacuation of South Vietnam, Air America’s CEO Paul C. Velte Jr had been present at Saigon and had flown to Hong Kong on one of the evacuation planes on 29 April 75. At the same time, Air America’s President Hugh L. Grundy had remained at Washington, acting as CEO. After the loss of Saigon, President Grundy immediately sent a long telex to the Manager Air America Ltd, Hong Kong (Tom Clifford), the Assistant Vice President TSR, Tainan (Dave Gluskin), and the Assistant Vice President Corporate Affairs, Bangkok (Sig Larson), about “Interim Handling, Vietnam Aftermath”.313 It determines how to manage the interim situation, saying:

“I. With the collapse of the prevailing order in South Vietnam and Air America’s hurried evacuation from Saigon, personnel and aircraft assignments and normal organization/administration associated with the South Vietnam Division were disrupted. Contact has been lost with the Chief Executive Officer from WAS and with most senior SVND persons including VPSVND, Chief Pilot and DTS. SVND personnel and aircraft scattered, a number of persons have been located at various points in Asia. The whereabouts of numerous others has not yet been established. A number of aircraft have been located at several points in East Asia. A number remain unaccounted for. It becomes necessary therefore that interim personnel and aircraft assignments as well as organizational/administrative arrangements be made to serve until the dust settles and succeeding decisions are feasible. Accordingly, the following interim assignments and arrangements are prescribed:

A. Air America Limited in Hong Kong is established as AAM’s principal administration point in the Far East and Mr. Clifford, Manager AAL (MAAL) as AAM’s senior person.

B. Personnel:
   1. Mr. Nihill, DLR, is to continue his assignment at HKG and serve under MAAL as AAM’s Senior Personnel Officer in Asia.
   2. Mr. Velte Jr. remained Chairman of the Air America and subsidiary-element Boards of Directors also after 1 April 76, i.e. until 30 September 76. During this time, he was available full-time, if and when needed (John F. Blake, CIA Deputy Director for Administration, Memo of 4 February 76, re Paul C. Velte Jr., online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197611.pdf ).

310 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197614.pdf .

311 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committee of Air America Inc. of 18 June 75, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.

2. Mr. Altamira is to remain at BKK with AVPCA and Thai Pac to assist with personnel and administrative matters until American and TCN evacuees have been moved out of or settled in BKK, then after coordinating his proposed movement from BKK to HKG with WAS and HKG, transfer to HKG to assist Mr. Nihill in evacuation follow-on administration of personnel.

3. Captain Tom Sailer is requested to act as Chief Pilot pending Captain Winston’s services again becoming available.

4. Pilots

Hong Kong is named as an emergency temporary point of assignment of those pilots who were based at SGN. But, those pilots who have homes or families at BKK or Taiwan may, with the specific approval of the Chief Pilot, base temporarily at those points instead of Hong Kong. Because, among other reasons, their services may be required for the ferry or other operation of aircraft, pilots remain obliged to have the approval of Chief Pilot prior to departing their base and to keep their Chief Pilot advised of their whereabouts.

5. Filipino Employees […]

6. Chinese Employees […]

C. Finances

1. Subject to clarification of separation/transfer action […], all employees evacuated from SVN are considered on TCS assignment.

2. All American, Filipino and Chinese employees so affected and currently TCS at Bangkok, Hong Kong, Clark, Taipei/Taiwan are authorized the following per diem rates: […].

3. Thai Pacific will be the paying authority for all per diem payments to be made in Thailand. Chief Disbursements Peninsula Hotel will be responsible for all Hong Kong payments, SCR, Mr. Libut, will be responsible for Philippines payments, DRAD Taipei, Mr. [erased, i.e. W.J.] Chien, will be responsible for all TPE/TNN per diem payments.

4. As needed, funds will be supplied to the appropriate office by MAAL Hong Kong […]

D. Aircraft

1. The ongoing program for the ferry of Company owned aircraft from the Far East to Roswell, New Mexico should continue. […]

2. VTBs N9157Z at BKK and N7770B at Hong Kong should in coordination with AVP-TSR be sent to TNN.

II. All messages relating to this matter should bear the same subject identification as this message and be addressed to CEO WAS. […]

III. All addressees are urged to forward promptly and at least daily any additional information or suggestions.”

The next step undertaken by CEO Paul C. Velte Jr. as soon as he was back to Washington was to thank, also “on behalf of the Board of Directors and our customers”, all Air America flight crews and all Air America ground staff who had made the evacuation from South Vietnam for “the truly outstanding and professional manner”, in which this hazardous mission had been accomplished. On 11 May 75, he sent out 2 such letters, one addressed to “The Company’s personnel, both ground staff and pilots,”, and another one especially to “our flight crew members”.315

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315 Both letters of 11 May 75 by Air America’s CEO Paul C. Velte Jr. can be read online at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197580.pdf.
Paul C. Velte’s “Thank you, well done” to Air America’s South Vietnam personnel\(^{316}\)

So who was still with Air America after 30 April 1975, working in Management, Administration or Ground Support? The following persons are known:

A/S – Assistant Secretary: Mark L. Peterson, as late as 1 April 76\(^{317}\)
A/T – Assistant Treasurer: Paul E. Sinner, as late as 1 April 76\(^{318}\)
AVP-CA – Assistant Vice President Corporate Affairs, Bangkok: Sigvard O. Larson, who became Assistant Vice President on 19 November 74 and was dealing with phasing out Company operations.\(^{320}\) “Sig remained in BKK in order to cost the close out of the remaining AAM flying services contracts (with the USG and the ICCS in SGN).”\(^{321}\)
AVP-OCA – Assistant Vice President – Office of Corporate Affairs, Washington: Reese T. Bradburn Jr, AVP since 19 November 1974.\(^{322}\) As AVP, he also was the final AAM

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\(^{320}\) Minutes of Meeting of the Board of Directors of 19 November 1974, in: UTD/CIA/B4F3.

\(^{321}\) E-mail dated 18 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson.


and related companies “Director of Personnel” 1974-1977.324

AVP-TSR – Assistant Vice President Technical Services Representative: David B. Gluskin, Tainan,325 still active in August 75,326 Base Manager at Roswell, New Mexico as late as January 76.327

CEO – Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director: Paul C. Velte Jr.;328 resigned on 31 March 76,329 but remained Chairman of the Board of Directors until 30 September 76;330 on 1 April 76, Clyde S. Carter became Acting CEO.331

DLRG – Director of Labor Relations – Ground: Francis X. Nihill332

DOC – Director Operations Control:333 ? (James P. Quigley had left in June 74).334

DOR – Director (?).335

DRAD – Director, Revenue Accounting Division, Taipei: W.J. Chien336 (who had been Assistant Director Revenue Accounting Division in July 69)337

DTS – Director of Technical Services, formerly Saigon: Boyd D. Mesecher338

EA/CEO – Executive Assistant to the CEO:339 Mark L. Peterson340

MAAL – Manager Air America Limited, Hong Kong: Thomas J. Clifford341

MFC – Manager of Flight Crew/Chief Pilot: Carl A. Winston, still in July 75342

PRES – President: Hugh L. Grundy until mid-1975,343 then Paul C. Velte Jr. until 31 March 76, then Clyde S. Carter on 1 April 76;344 as late as April 78, Clyde S. Carter signed as


329 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197614.pdf.


331 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at: http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1818029/197614.pdf.

332 E-mail dated 29 July 2015 kindly sent to the author by Frank Nihill.


334 The position of Director Operations Control was created in late 1971 at Air America’s Taipei headquarters and replaced DFOD (Director Flight Operations Division). E-mail dated 20 July 2015, kindly sent to the author by James Quigley.

335 Survey reports dated 21 July 75, re aircraft abandoned in SVN, in: UTD/CIA/B18F7.


337 Air Asia Co Ltd Telephone Directory of July 69, kindly sent to the author by Bill Merrigan.


339 EA/CEO was in the Distribution list of the letter of 28 October 75, Clyde Carter to FAA, re sale of PC-6Cs to Omni, in: UTD/CIA/B17F4.


344
“President, Air America Inc.”345

SCR CRK – Senior Company Representative, Clark Air Base: Antonio R. Libut346
(SPOA) – Senior Personnel Officer in Asia: Francis X. Nihill (also Director of Labor
Relations – Ground, Bangkok, already working at Hong Kong since early 1975)347

SVP-OCA – Senior Vice President – Office of Corporate Affairs348, Clyde S. Carter349 – still
in February 76;350 promoted to President on 1 April 76;351 in June 76 and in April 78,
Clyde S. Carter still signed as “President, Air America Inc.”352

THAI PAC BKK – Thai Pacific Services Co Ltd, Bangkok: John A. Altamira353 (who had
worked in the personnel department of Yokota in 1970354 and continued in Thai
Pacific Services Co Ltd who handed Air America personnel affairs at Bangkok)

VP – Vice President: Var M. Green as late as 1 April 76355

VP-L – Henry P. Bevans in May 75;356 in June 75, he was also Secretary of the Company,357
still as late as 1 April 76358

VP-T – Vice President and Treasurer:359 Lindsey B. Herd360 – on 9 May 75 at Hong Kong,361
on 28 May 75 at Washington,362 still active at Washington in September 75,363 as late as
1 April 76364

However, things changed quite fast: “Air America Inc. sold all remaining surplus parts,
equipment and aircraft at the storage point in Roswell, New Mexico in December 1975. The

344 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at:
345 Letters no.WC-76-1267 of 16 June 76 (in: UTD/CIA/B18F9) and no. WC-78-105 of 5 April 78 (in: UTD/CIA
/B18F10), both sent to the FAA.
346 Telex dated 1 May 75, President to MAAL HKG, et al., re Interim handling, Vietnam aftermath, online at:
347 Telex dated 1 May 75, President to MAAL HKG, et al., re Interim handling, Vietnam aftermath, online at:
351 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 18 February 76, online readable at:
352 Letters no.WC-76-1267 of 16 June 76 (in: UTD/CIA/B18F9) and no. WC-78-105 of 5 April 78 (in: UTD/CIA
/B18F10), both sent to the FAA.
353 Telex dated 1 May 75, President to MAAL HKG, et al., re Interim handling, Vietnam aftermath, online at:
355 Certificates of Dissolution of Air America Inc. and the Pacific Corporation, both online readable at:
356 Telex dated 1 May 75, President to MAAL HKG, et al., re Interim handling, Vietnam aftermath, online at:
357 Telex dated 1 May 75, President to MAAL HKG, et al., re Interim handling, Vietnam aftermath, online at:
358 Certificates of Dissolution of Air America Inc. and the Pacific Corporation, both online readable at:
359 List of Air America acronyms, formerly in UTD/Leary/B22F4.
360 “Mr. Herd was a Vice President and Treasurer of Air America, when he closed his Taiwan office in 1976 [and
returned $20 million to the US Government] and moved to McLean” (Matt Schudel, “In memoriam Lindsey
361 Telex of 9 May 75, SVP-OCA to CEO, VP-T at HKG is in the CC (“Info”) section (in: UTD/CIA/B17F5).
362 Letter of 28 May 75, Clyde Carter to Air Asia/North Hollywood, VP-T at Washington is in the BCC (“Info”)
section (in: UTD/CIA/B17F4).
363 Letter dated 22 September 75 sent by a lawyer to Lindsey B. Herd, Air America’s Vice President Treasurer
364 Certificates of Dissolution of Air America Inc. and the Pacific Corporation, both online readable at:
The remaining activities of Air America are all in the area of claims settlement. AAM officers are pressing claims against former contractors – primarily AID, USAF and the Department of State (State is settling claims against ICCS by U.S. contractors); processing claims from former employees and subcontractors; processing BEC claims involving death and disability of former employees; and litigating/negotiating various suits arising from air crashes and the losses of former employees. AAM continues to monitor the status of employees missing in action. […] Air America currently [that is in January / February 1976] lists 23 employees; all assigned to the Washington office. […] As fewer and fewer employees are required to perform the corporate work, the Chief Executive Officer, Air America will administer the phased termination of the remaining employees. It is presently anticipated that about 10 of the employees currently in the Washington office will be required through 31 March 1976, reducing to zero by 30 June 1976. The plan for the phased termination of the remaining corporate employees has been reviewed by the DDA. He is briefed at least monthly on the size of the remaining work force. […] All personnel who have security clearances and who have been briefed on Agency ownership who are being terminated will be provided a security debriefing at which time secrecy agreements will be executed if appropriate."

Two years after the end of Air America, the Board of Directors was still meeting, but now at the Company offices at Washington, and only at long intervals. Present were Clyde Carter (who served as Chairman), Mark Peterson (who served as secretary) and George Doole. Items reported and discussed were financial questions, Workmen’s Compensation, and lawsuits. As to the Personnel, the Minutes state: “Mr. Bradburn’s employment was terminated effective 31 July 1977, leaving a present complement of three persons plus a young lady two days a week.”

**B) Air America Limited Hong Kong – Phase out**

After the loss of South Vietnam in April 75, Air America’s President Hugh L. Grundy determined on 1 May 75 that, as an interim solution, “Air America Limited in Hong Kong is established as AAM’s principal administration point in the Far East and Mr. Clifford, Manager AAL (MAAL) as AAM’s senior person. […] Hong Kong is named as an emergency temporary point of assignment of those pilots who were based at SGN. […] As needed, funds will be supplied to the appropriate office by MAAL Hong Kong.”

However, this role of Hong Kong as principal administration point, home base, and financial center of Air America did not last very long. On 18 June 75, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Air America, Paul Velte, “advised the meeting that at the annual stockholders’ meeting held June 16, 1975 a resolution was adopted instructing its representative at the annual meeting of Air America Limited (Hong Kong) to move for and to vote its shares in favor of dissolution and that at the latter meeting a resolution dissolving Air America Limited Hong Kong was passed.”

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365 DCI – Director of Central Intelligence: William Colby, 1973-76.
366 GSA – General Services Administration.
368 OMB – Office of Management and Budget.
370 The meeting before 9 November 77 had been held on 9 May 77, as the Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 9 November 77 (in: UTD/CIA/B4F4) indicate.
371 Minutes of Meeting of Board of Directors of Air America Inc. of 9 November 77, in: UTD/CIA/B4F4.
America Limited was unanimously adopted.”

In an official Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex signed in January and February 76 by several CIA Department Heads, the function of Air America Ltd is given as follows: “Air America Limited (AAL) was wholly-owned by Air America, Inc. and was a Hong Kong company. It performed computerized accounting and recordkeeping functions for its parent company. Air America Limited has filed for dissolution under Hong Kong law. This process was completed during December 1975.” By 1976, Air America Limited had been completely dissolved.

C) Civil Air Transport Co Ltd – Dissolution

On 31 December 74, Civil Air Transport Co Ltd still had 18 employees. But in an official Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex signed in January and February 76 by several CIA Department Heads, the function of CATCL is given as follows: “Civil Air Transport Company Limited (CATCL) was a Chinese company chartered in Taiwan under the laws of Nationalist China and was owned by The Pacific Corporation. Pacific owned 40% of the capital stock directly; 60% in the names of three Chinese citizen, nominee shareholders; and small amounts in the names of U.S. citizen shareholders. Formerly a Chinese flag internationally scheduled air carrier, CATCL completed corporate dissolution in December 1975.”

D) The Dissolution of Air America Inc. and The Pacific Corporation

In the CIA Liquidation Plan for the CAT-Air America-complex, the method of liquidation was well described: “Responsibility. The Deputy Director for Administration, with the assistance of his Air Advisor and in coordination with the General Counsel will be responsible for the liquidation of the Project. Since the Project has no assets remaining in the Far East and no longer performs operationally on behalf of the Agency, the need for guidance and assistance from the Operations Directorate will be minimal. The Chief Executive Officer of Air America, Inc. will be responsible for accomplishing the specific liquidation tasks, as directed by the DDA.” “At the appropriate time the Pacific Corporation and Air America Inc. will be placed in dissolution in accordance with applicable Delaware statute. A cleared and witting attorney will be appointed by OGC to act as trustee of the corporation to handle any residual responsibilities and those stockholder and corporate liabilities that extend beyond corporate dissolution and departure of all corporate officers.” The Pacific Corporation was functioning as the “repository for funds generated in liquidation prior to their return to the U.S. Treasury.”

On 11 March 76, CIA’s Deputy Director for Administration John F. Blake sent the following message to Paul C. Velte, Jr., CEO of Air America Inc.: “You are hereby requested to proceed with the dissolution of Air America, Incorporated and the Pacific Corporation. It is suggested that Air America Inc. file for dissolution on 1 April 1976 and the Pacific Corporation file for dissolution on 15 April 1976. I request that you proceed to obtain the

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375 See the material preserved at UTD/CIA/B9F3.
376 Minutes of Meeting of Executive Committees of Air America Inc. and Air Asia Company Limited of 21 January 75, in: UTD/CIA/B10F3.
stockholders’ votes and the necessary Board of Directors resolution to accomplish this. You will receive specific instructions with regard to the sale of assets of the Pacific Corporation. The proceeds from the sale of the assets of the Pacific Corporation will be paid to the Treasury of the United States.\textsuperscript{382}

\begin{center}
\textbf{CIA letter to Paul C. Velte Jr. regarding the dissolution of Air America and the Pacific Corporation}\textsuperscript{382}
\end{center}

On 1 April 76, The Prentice-Hall Corporation System Inc. of Dover DE sent certified copies of the Certificates of Dissolution of Air America and The Pacific Corporation to Clyde Carter. In both cases, the action was taken on 25 March 76, and the dissolution of Air America Inc. was effective 1 April 76 and the dissolution of The Pacific Corporation was effective 15 April 76. The Certificates themselves also contain the names of the directors and the names of the officers of each corporation. The address of all directors and officers of both corporations is given as “1725 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006”. Both Certificates were signed by Vice President Clyde S. Carter and attested by Secretary Henry P. Bevans. The names of the directors are the same for both corporations: Paul C. Velte, Jr., George A. Doole, Jr., and Clyde S. Carter. However, the names of the officers mentioned in the Certificates are not the same for both corporations: Paul C. Velte Jr. is given as President of Air America Inc. and of the Pacific Corporation. Next is Clyde S. Carter, Vice President of Air America Inc. and of the Pacific Corporation. Then, only the Air America Certificate has Var M. Green as Vice President, while the Pacific Corporation Certificate has Lindsey B. Herd, Jr. as Vice President and Treasurer. Then both Certificates have Henry P. Bevans – as Vice President and Secretary for Air America and as Secretary for the Pacific Corporation. Then the Air America Certificate only has Assistant Vice President Reese T. Bradburn, while the Pacific Corporation Certificate only has Mark L. Peterson as Assistant Secretary. The next to follow in the Air America Certificate is Lindsey B. Herd Jr. as Treasurer, who has already been mentioned as Vice President and Treasurer of the Pacific Corporation. The last in line in both

Certificates is Assistant Treasurer Paul E. Sinner. In everyday correspondence, however, the distinctions made here between the title an officer had in Air America and the title the same officer had in the Pacific Corporation, were often not taken into consideration.

Certificate of Dissolution of Air America Inc. effective 1 April 1976

Of course, this legal action did not mean the end of Air America’s office at 1725 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, which continued to exist for several years…

Someone may want to know what happened to the money. Commenting the letter dated 11 March 76 that the CIA sent to Paul C. Velte Jr. regarding the dissolution of Air America and the Pacific Corporation, Air America’s former Assistant Legal Counsel Gary Bisson said: “That portion of the letter concerned what to do with the sales proceeds of AAM assets upon dissolution. These assets were estimated to be @ $25 Million by the Church Committee. I was personally informed by the AAM Controller, the late Lindsey Herd, that he was directed to issue a check for $20 Million made out to the U.S. Treasury which was deposited into the U.S. Treasury’s Miscellaneous Receipts: Account. The remainder of these assets were temporarily retained by the CIA for contingent liabilities related to AAM operations (at that time I was informed by the late Clyde Cater that the Agency was concerned with the pending AAM CSC retirement claim actions – they even hired the late Helen Wight to gather and safeguard their AAM personnel files). I was also informed by the late Jerry Fink that a portion of the retained proceeds were used to jointly settle with E-Systems, Inc. the 1989 award against AACL by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal, Ninth Circuit in the Air-Seas


Forwarders case. (Jerry had been retained as a consultant by the Agency in that case).”

“The thing I am trying to reconcile is the report that $25,000,000 was returned in 1975 but these assets were disposed of in 1976. Is this just a matter of date confusion or were there two separate transactions?”

“$25 Million was never returned. That figure was merely the stated value of AAM assets at the time of the Church Committee Report in 1975. My sequence of events and amounts is historically accurate. The CIA used some of this amount, roughly $2 Million, for liabilities or potential liabilities related to AAM operations.”

© University of Texas at Dallas, 24 August 2015

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385 E-Mail dated 4 August 2015, kindly sent to the author by Gary Bisson, Air America’s former Assistant Legal Counsel.

386 E-Mail dated 4 August 2015, Jeffrey Blanchford to Gary Bisson, kindly copied to the author.

387 E-Mail dated 4 August 2015, Gary Bisson to Jeffrey Blanchford, kindly copied to the author. Dialogue reproduced here with kind permission of Gary Bisson and Jeff Blanchford.