

President - TPE
VPFO - TPE (Via Pres. - TPE)
MGDR - WAS

30 April 1964

WD-64-1013

Executive/Utility Aircraft Operations

Ref.: P-64-146 dated 16 April 1964
VPFO-64-134 dated 1 April 1964

Your memos, which were received here April 24, are greatly appreciated and information contained therein has been put to good use. Discussion of this subject here brought out, I am sure you will be interested to hear, a variety of comments highly favorable regarding our operation in general as well as comments on executive aircraft needs.

It is clear that some of the comments we receive are not entirely factual and are second and third hand statements, but the fact remains that the statements are made from time to time, and we must take such action as we can which will improve public/customer relations.

Your memos are appreciated and the information has been used constructively at three or four locations.

George A. Doole, Jr.

GAD:aep

APPROVED FOR
RELEASE DATE:
23-Sep-2009

MEMORANDUM

TO : MGDR
FROM : President
SUBJECT: Executive Aircraft - Vientiane

DATE: Apr. 16, 1964

REF. No. P-64-146

REC'D 1113 APR 24 1964

Reference: WD-64-0447

I regret the delay in forwarding VPFO-64-134, but felt that I should send along this endorsement and other things more pressing kept me from getting at it as quickly as I should have.

As noted by VPFO, we explored this matter rather in detail with all of those concerned at Vientiane. One thing that emerged from the examination was the apparent fact that we have taken pains to comply with local laws and regulations, as we have so often been admonished to do, while our competitor doesn't bother. He simply loads the passengers in his airplane and takes off. For example, weight and balance forms are not used. He would of course have less of a weight and balance problem with, for example, his Baron than we would with our Ten Two which is somewhat critical in respect of balance. We are told that he doesn't bother to process passports and manifests through CIQ as we do and if he gets off in the reported times, it would appear there is no opportunity for him to do so. During our meeting several means were devised of our speeding up our processing, such as taking pains to elicit from our customer exactly who is expected to go on the flight, sending a car downtown to pick up their passports for prior processing through CIQ, having the pilot do his own last minute weight and balance corrections at planeside, etc. It was apparent in our meetings that part of the trouble was last minute changes in number of passengers, with previously unannounced passengers showing up. Naturally we should accommodate them, but the better the pre-planning, the smoother things will go. We are just a little more formalized and regimented in our handling procedures than is our competitor who seems to pay the minimum amount of attention to formalities and regulations and is apparently complimented for it, while on the other hand we are in some instances admonished for any failures to observe regulations and at other times criticized for cutting corners on them. However, since we have a competitive situation, then it is incumbent upon us to customize our handling and make it as well thought out, efficient and convenient as possible in the eyes of the customer. It doesn't appear to any of us that the situation was nearly as bad as it apparently had been reported to you, but usually there is room for improvement and we believe that some improvement has followed our joint examination of the matter.

Your memorandum observed that you believed that I had been present in one instance of departure confusion involving the Ten Two. I presume that you refer to a trip taken with the SWS pre-planning party from Vientiane to Udorn. The Ten Two that day had made another trip and was coming back in to pick us up on the ramp in front of our administration building. Preceding it was a Lao Air Force C-47 which blew a tire on the bridge between the taxiway and our ramp, thus blocking access to our ramp. This was an unforeseen, last-minute happening and resulted

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in what appeared to our guests to be confusion and lack of planning, I suppose. It was necessary to divert the Ten Two to the public terminal ramp, then to divert our passengers from our administration building to that new spot and for maintenance to relocate their equipment. This may have looked like something of a last-minute "production" to some who may not have been aware of all the circumstances. Another thing, the flight was operating on a more informal basis than might have been the case. It was a passengers' convenience flight with passengers coming from several sources, including the company, as people were being taken to Udorn to sit in on the survival meeting with Mr. Webster. I'm sorry our guests gained a bad impression.

I considered the report about our manager in Laos addressing the American Ambassador and the Director of USAID as "Hey Mate" a most serious indictment and, had I been able to confirm that it was so, I would have summarily dismissed him. However, I could not conceive that he would do such a thing. At lesser levels and with people with whom he was quite familiar I have heard the term "Mate" used, but took no particular objection, since it is not uncommon to people who have spent time in the Navy and, in fact, one of the ACOs, Mr. Sparks, is an ex-Navy man himself. I personally explained to Mr. Holding, Contracting Officer, whom I have known for a long time and in whom I have great faith, without identifying source and asked him if he would ask Mr. Mann if he had ever been so addressed or otherwise shown any discourtesy by our manager. He expressed astonishment at any such report, saying that he knew Mr. Stitt very well and it was inconceivable to him that he would address gentlemen of the rank and importance of the Ambassador and US AID Director in such terms. He further related that although he and Mrs. Holding saw a good deal of Mr. and Mrs. Stitt socially and were on very much of a familiar name basis with them, Mr. Stitt had without exception been formally polite and entirely correct during all business contacts with him during the several years he has known him, most frequently addressing him as Mr. and Sir. However, he said he would be glad to check with Mr. Mann. He very promptly called on Mr. Mann and got back in touch with me to tell me that Mr. Mann had unequivocally stated that such report was absolutely not true, that Mr. Stitt had in all instances addressed him properly and politely and had never been other than completely courteous in every way. Unfortunately, time ran out on me without my having the opportunity to make the same check with the Ambassador. However, I intend to do so on my next trip there. VPFO apparently made independent checks, as I note his findings substantially are the same. I do not know what checks he made.

Some of our problems with executive aircraft have stemmed from maintenance, a few from general handling, but the majority from pilot problems. Some of them we knew about, others are just coming to attention. VPFO has been making an effort recently to better stabilize and motivate pilots assigned to these aircraft as I have for some time insisted is necessary to success of the program.

We appreciate your bringing these reports that reach you to our attention. Some of the discrepancies reported will be news to us and it will give us an opportunity to make the necessary corrections. In other cases we hope that we will be able to tell you that the reports are not accurately representative. I would comment here in closing that I am most disturbed

Jan. 18, 1955

by the amount of disparaging reports being generated. We are at fault in some cases and will have to take our whipping and try to do better. In other cases, and there are too many of them, the genesis is the factional situation which unfortunately has been allowed to develop. The result is an unconscionable waste of time, effort, efficiency and money. It is a rather widely accepted fact that the excessive anxiety caused by all this results in errors of judgment and general demoralization. In such a climate people tend to lose their sense of direction. All this is beside the plain fact that people, including myself, like to work in a more pleasant atmosphere of singleness of purpose.

Hugh L. Grundy
Hugh L. Grundy

encl: VPFO-64-134

cc: File (2)