

FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

February 27, 1970

Dr. Wesley Fishel
Center for Vietnamese Studies
Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

Dear Wes:

Yesterday I received a letter from Nguyen Ngoc An with whom I worked closely during 1968 and 1969 when he was Minister for Chieu Hoi and also Minister of Information in the Huong Cabinet. Former Minister An is now out of office and wrote me the attached letter which is self-explanatory.

I am writing because I truly feel that he could be an outstanding addition to your faculty in one of a number of capacities. Let me describe this individual in greater detail. He comes from Trang Bang District of Hau Nghia Province and is 56 years old. He was a battalion commander in the Viet Minh and had extensive personal experience in guerrilla combat. He was number two in the Ministry of the Interior in the earlier Huong Cabinet in 1965, having been one of the members of the "Caravelle Group." During most of his career, he was principal of a number of private schools, and thus his primary career was in education.

He is a man of very high integrity and great force of character. To give you some insight into his personality, his customary routine while Minister of Chieu Hoi was to go to bed at 10 o'clock and get up at 3:00 a.m. He would work on office papers for three hours, then take one hour's physical training, then go to the office and put his paperwork in the out basket, which gave him a chance to have conferences and deal with the many problems which would arise during the day without holding up the usual heavy load of documentation. I would describe him as a Roman character, deeply patriotic, anxious to see Viet-Nam returned to civilian control, vigorous and dynamic. He was also a man of impeccable manners and old world courtesy. He used to appear on television and radio quite frequently, and also made many public speeches, and was one of the more effective GVN spokesmen.

An speaks fair English which he is rapidly improving, fluent French and is thoroughly versed in the classical culture and history of Viet-Nam. As an individual, a fighter and a politician, I think he would be an outstanding representative of his country abroad and one who would be immensely popular with the faculty and students at your school. When I received Minister An's letter, it occurred to me straight away that he is precisely the type of man whom you might wish to have visit or work with SIU in some capacity. Since I strongly believe in him, I would be prepared to send him an airline ticket from my own funds if that were the only way to bring him to the United States. My regard for him makes me want to do something for him, but I can assure you that it in no way affects my objectivity concerning his potential to a program such as yours. I wish to reply to his letter shortly and would appreciate any indication you might be able to give as to any interest your school might have in his services.

I am going to spend the month of April in Thailand and will be passing through Saigon on the way out. I may be able to return through India and will try to locate Wolf Ladejovsky in New Delhi, if he is still there. I am at present in charge of the Viet-Nam Training Center of the Foreign Service Institute, which I find most interesting. Last week we had a visit from Dennis Duncanson from London, and you will be interested to know that he remains a staunch supporter of Ngo dinh Diem. P. J. Honey will be visiting us at the end of March, and I will be most interested to hear his assessment of North Viet-Nam, particularly since I have never met him in person.

I hope the new program at Southern Illinois will flourish and extend my best wishes.

Sincerely,

Jan 3/81 M
Ogden Williams
Coordinator
Viet-Nam Training Center

Attachment

P.S. You will note from An's letter that he thought he wanted to teach Vietnamese at our school here in Washington. Obviously, I would love to have him with us here, but I can hardly see a former Minister of Viet-Nam drilling young students in basic Vietnamese, while the rest of the instructors are young girls or young men. Therefore, I am hoping to look at something more worthy of An's calibre.

O.W.

O/FSI/VTC:OWilliams:d

Saigon, January 1970

COPY

Dear Mr. O. Williams:

At the threshold of the new year of 1970, I warmly wish you and family a happy New Year and good luck.

On this occasion, I would like to remind you of some of our souvenirs of VN: in November and December 1968, together we contributed all of our efforts to the realization of the Chieu Hoi program. In my speeches successively delivered on September 11th 68 on the Prize distribution day at Binh Duong province, then on November 9th, 68 at Darlac province and later on December 8th, 68 at Kien Giang province I always stressed on the importance of the Chieu Hoi program. With the brilliant results we got from this program, the Chieu Hoi reached the high top rank of the national policy. I can't help concealing my emotions when I remember the common victory we triumphantly won. After your leaving VN, the Chieu Hoi and information activities continued to make good progress until the day I retired from the political stage.

I have spent the last four months of 1969 for a quiet resting. Now I'm planning a new way for my future. And the way I always follow is to defeat the communists in South Viet-Nam. To wipe out the communists from my country is the goal I aim at.

But how can I achieve this aim? By what means? Executive or legislative means? All roads lead to Rome, I know, but I like to choose a better way to fight communists with the close cooperation of our American friends like you.

As I told you before, I'll be very happy if I have an opportunity to go to the U.S. to get a better understanding of your country as well as to teach Vietnamese in your school if possible.

I long for an occasion which enables me to go to your school teaching Vietnamese with a Southern accent. I strongly believe that our cooperation will bring to us many good results as it already did in the past.

I hope to see you again in March 1970 at Saigon.

Sincerely yours,

Nguyen Ngoc An