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Date: Tue, 10 Aug 1999 03:16:52 -0500  
From: James Reckner <jjrec@TTACS.TTU.EDU>  
Subject: Vietnam Trip  
Dear Admirals, Phil, Colonel Donlon:

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I reached home about 0100 this morning, completing the trip to Vietnam. Following is a very brief summary of the trip. A formal report will follow within the next couple of days.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT:** I believe the trip was very successful. Chancellor Montford greatly enjoyed Vietnam, and also was impressed with the vitality of the general populace. He felt there were great challenges there, and that Texas Tech could play an important role.

**HANOI:** The Chancellor signed expanded MOUs with Vietnam National University in Hanoi, and with the University of Social Sciences and Humanities. I held further discussions with Professor Phan Huy Le, the Director of the Center for Vietnamese and Intercultural Studies, and we have agreed to a number of collaborative projects, the most ambitious of which is to survey all Vietnam scholars world-wide to determine their areas of specialty and research and to solicit suggestions for further topics of research in Vietnamese history. Chancellor Montford much appreciated Professor Le and has invited him to visit Texas Tech later this year, when I anticipate we will sign a MOU between the two Vietnam Centers.

**LTGEN Uoc.** We held a meeting with Lieutenant General Uoc, who received us in the official foreign dignitaries' reception area of the Ministry of Defense. Concerning the proposed panel discussion of general officers, he reports that if we wish to engage active duty officers for this, then an official request must be forwarded through diplomatic channels. However, if we wish to speak with retired general officers --and most of the ones with combat experience are now retired-- then it could be arranged easily through the Vietnam Veterans Organization, which is headed by a retired general officer.

General Uoc advised me, too, that he has corresponded with Jean Fallon, the POW/MIA widow who spoke on the panel at Texas Tech in April.

**HUE:** We visited Hue University and Phu Xuan Private University. The latter institution is in process of seeking formal permission to begin operations. Also toured one of the university libraries there. Perhaps because this was our first visit to Hue, the interactions with academics there seemed somewhat guarded to me. We made no firm commitments here, other than to provide further information.

**SAIGON:** In contrast to Hue, our reception here was extremely warm. Chancellor much impressed with the faculty there and with the President of the university who joined us for meetings and for two dinners. We did not expand the existing MOU with this university, as they seemed quite satisfied to build on the existing framework.

CAN THO: On Sunday we visited Can Tho where our reception was exceptionally warm, despite the fact that it was a Sunday. A detailed tour of the facility and discussions with Rector Tuan and deans of the various colleges was most constructive. Chancellor left convinced that this was the institution with which we could most easily cooperate.

On the return trip, the Chancellor directed me to request \$20,000 from a foundation which he heads, to grant 100 \$100 scholarships [this is equal to one year of tuition at VN universities] to war veterans (north and south), their children or grandchildren, plus an additional \$10,000 to assist with technology, with a view toward ensuring that each institution has at least one function Internet connection for students. In the meantime, he will provide \$8,000 immediately for 10 scholarships and additional funding for library improvement at each university.

He is now planning a return trip which will include [though they do not yet know it] the dean of the medical school and Dave Schmidly, whom you have met, who is vice chancellor for research.

On the medical side, we had two public health specialists with us, and they are now abuzz with ideas about future cooperation. Their first step, they report, will be to hire a full-time person to be the medical representative to the Vietnam Center, with a primary mission to contact other universities and try to coordinate public health projects in order to reduce/avoid duplication of effort.

A detailed report on all of this and much more will follow in the next couple of days, when I have had some time to rest.

TRIP TO CAN THO: On a personal note, we went into the Delta on Sunday via hydrofoil. It was a Russian-built craft which, though not particularly well maintained, operated quite smoothly and was very comfortable. The route was Saigon River to Nha Be, Soi Rap, Vam Co, Cho Gao Canal to My Tho, then Mang Thit Canal to Nickolai and on to the Bassac near Can Tho. The entire trip took four hours and was thoroughly enjoyable. I climbed up onto the roof of the boat and had a tremendous view throughout most of the trip.

Of personal interest to us, Nha Be base is alive and very active. Two minesweepers and a small floating drydock were moored there when I went by. A small craft was in the drydock and another was up on a slip. I took photos, and if they come out, will forward copies to you and also to Captain Wages who, I suspect, will be somewhat interested.

The run down to Can Tho took exactly four hours, with a short stop at My Tho to discharge and take on passengers. Given the distance, that means we averaged somewhere around 30 - 40 kmh, which is quite fast for the relatively narrow canals. Throughout the passage, the skipper relied upon his air horn just about as much as Saigon taxi drivers used to. Total cost for the one-way voyage was \$24 and it was truly worth it.

It is now 0315, and as I can't remember the last I had some real sleep, I am signing off for now. I will be back in normal working routine by Wednesday at the latest.

Very respectfully, Jim Reckner

# TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

## THE VIETNAM CENTER

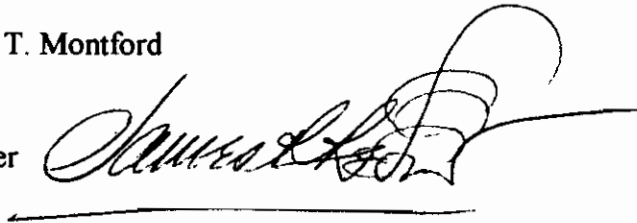
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### Memorandum

August 16, 1999

To: Chancellor John T. Montford

From: James R. Reckner



Subj: Report of Trip to Vietnam

1. **Itinerary.** We departed from Lubbock at 5:30 p.m. on July 29, 1999 and, flying via Taipei, Republic of China, arrived in Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 31, 1999. On Saturday and Sunday, August 1, 1999, we visited cultural and historical sites in the Hanoi area including the Temple of Learning, Ho Chi Minh's Tomb and Museum, the Historical Museum, and assorted temples. On Sunday night, Vietnam National University hosted a dinner in our honor.

Our first full working day was **Monday, August 2, 1999**, when we visited with the leadership of Vietnam National University, Hanoi, the University of Social Sciences & Humanities, and the Center for Vietnamese and Intercultural Studies. That afternoon we visited the class room of Dr. Ronald Frankum, Associate Director of the Vietnam Center, who was at that time teaching a course on Library and Archival Management at Vietnam National University. From there we visited the People's Army Central Library and then were met at the Ministry of Defense by Lieutenant General Nguyen Dinh Uoc and other PAVN officers. On Monday night, the University of Social Studies & Humanities hosted a dinner in our honor at which Chancellor Montford signed an expanded Memorandum of Understanding.

On **Tuesday, August 3, 1999**, we visited with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the US Embassy, Mr. Dennis Harter, the Ambassador then being in Washington to testify before Congress. We also called on officials at the Ministry of Education & Training and the Ministry of Health, and visited the University of Medicine. In the evening Chancellor Montford hosted a dinner for senior leadership of VNU Hanoi and Lieutenant General & Mrs. Uoc.

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**Wednesday, August 4, 1999**, the party flew to Hue, where we conducted meetings in the afternoon with the leadership of Hue University and also toured the Citadel. The medical members of the delegation also visited the medical school.

**Thursday, August 5, 1999**, we met with the leadership of Phu Xuan Private University and also toured the library of the University of Social Sciences & Humanities of the University of Hue. For the remainder of the day we toured historical and cultural sites, including the tombs of various Nguyen emperors as well as a notable pagoda, where we had discussions with the chief monk, the Venerable Thich Chi Mau.

**Friday, August 6, 1999**, the delegation flew to Ho Chi Minh City where, in the afternoon, we held meetings with Vietnam National University, HCMC, and also the University of Social Sciences & Humanities. The medical members of our delegation also visited the medical school. That evening we attended a dinner hosted by VNU.

**Saturday, August 7, 1999**, the delegation visited the General Sciences Library and then toured the former Presidential Palace. From there, we went to the War Remnants Museum, while the medical folks toured medical facilities. In the evening, the Chancellor hosted a dinner for VNU leadership.

**Sunday, August 8, 1999**, the delegation traveled to Can Tho by hydrofoil. We were met by a delegation from Can Tho University, had lunch with them, then toured Can Tho University and met with the deans of the various colleges and the Directors of the Cuu Long Delta Rice Research Institute and the Southern Fruit Research Institute. Upon completion of these meetings, we toured the agricultural experiment station, and then drove back to Ho Chi Minh City. En route, we stopped briefly to tour the Southern Fruit Research Institute. We reached HCMC at about 8:00 p.m., and there found a senior academic, Professor Dao Cong Tien, waiting to meet with us, having flown down from Hanoi specifically to do so.

**Monday, August 9, 1999**, the delegation returned to Lubbock, dogged by flight delays and rapid transfers at every step of the way. We reached Lubbock shortly after midnight on Tuesday, August 10, 1999.

## 2. Principal Developments in Hanoi

- a. **VNU Hanoi.** Vice President Prof. Dr. Dao Trong Thi and Chancellor Montford signed an expanded Memorandum of Understanding. VNU indicated interest to cooperate in English instruction, natural sciences, teaching, foreign languages, technology. Chancellor Montford added that we should examine the possibility of incorporating distance learning into the program. Additional programs to be worked out later.
- b. **University of Social Sciences & Humanities, Hanoi.** (Prof. Dr. Pham Xuan Hang, First, Vice-Rector) Cooperative programs proposed between **Center for Vietnamese and Intercultural Studies** (Dr. Phan Huy Le) and The Vietnam

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Center at Texas Tech. These include a global survey of scholars conducting research in Vietnam-related subjects, and the joint development of a textbook for teaching Vietnamese to foreigners.

The **USSH Department of History** expressed willingness to have more contact with Texas Tech.

The **USSH Department of International Studies** presented a written proposal for an American Studies project, and seeks a partner university to assist in developing this project.

The **USSH Department of Oriental Studies** suggested an exchange of books and other materials, and especially scholars in Chinese, Korean and Southeast Asian studies.

**Other fields:** literature, law, economics, USSH will provide further information for study.

**Chancellor Montford** raised issue of **paleontology** and work on dinosaurs with **Professor Sankar Chatterjee**. Dr. Phan Huy Le of the Center for Vietnamese and Intercultural Studies will identify a qualified Vietnamese scholar with whom he can work.

**English instruction.** Chancellor Montford offered to bring high quality professors, Ph.D. students to VNU Hanoi.

**American Studies.** Texas Tech will make an immediate response.

**Distance Learning.** Chancellor Montford wants to receive a delegation from VNU to examine TTU distance learning

**Documents.** Chancellor pressed the leadership to provide documents for the Vietnam Archive.

Chancellor Montford wants to host a visit by Dr. Phan Huy Le, "sooner rather than later."

- c. **People's Army Central Library, Hanoi.** Reckner emphasized readiness of Vietnam Archive to photocopy documents on request. PAVN library is interested in acquiring American books about the war, as well as technical manuals. Colonel Mac Van Trong, the director, proposed cooperation in two areas: material exchanges and development of methodology/technology for the library.
- d. **Ministry of Defense.** Lieutenant General Uoc reported that he had responded to a number of individual requests posed during the April Vietnam Symposium at Texas Tech.
  - PAVN Officer to Texas Tech.** They will advise when the officer has completed his English-language training.
  - Conference of US/VN general officers.** If we want active duty officers, we will have to go through diplomatic channels; if retired officers, then we can submit request directly to the Vietnam Veterans Association in Hanoi.

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- e. **Ministry of Education and Training.** (Prof. Dr. Tran Van Nhung, Director of International Relations) Strongly supports cooperation with American universities. They currently have project to spend US\$10 million to send students overseas. One-third undergrad; remainder graduate study. Requested further information about Texas Tech, including cost for overseas students. Chancellor Montford committed to send information.
- f. **Ministry of Health.** Here discussions remained at a very general level. Chancellor Montford asked our host, Dr. Tran Trong Hai, to put his ideas on paper so we can discuss them in detail.
- g. **University of Medicine, Hanoi.** Dr. Ton That Bach, Dean of the Medical School, requires the following:
  - Basic Science.** They have no close cooperation with any country in this field and very much would like to establish a relationship.
  - Public Health**
  - Nursing Training****Dr. Bach** suggested that TTU have specialists come out and analyze the situation and then think about how to help.

### 3. Principal Developments in Hue

a. **University of Hue.** (Dr. Le Viet Ngu, Vice President) This was our first meeting with Hue leadership. Talks remained more general than in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Nevertheless, Hue University highlighted the following areas needing development:

**Information and Archives** for students and faculty.

**Quality of Young Staff.** they would like to improve quality by sending faculty abroad for study.

**Research.** They are trying to fund research projects that would serve the community.

**Chancellor Montford** is looking forward to increased cooperation with Vietnamese universities and is interested in opportunities for cooperation between Hue and TTU. He committed Dr. Ron Frankum to present his library and archival management course in Hue within the next year.

b. **Phu Xuan Private University.** (Dr. Nguyen Dinh Ngo, founder) This university is under development and awaiting formal government approval. They need a wide range of items

- Need facility (material) to train students

- Need library, examination rooms and other means of education

- Need qualified teaching staff

**Chancellor Montford** highlighted TTU distance learning, possibility TTU might from time to time station a professor in Hue to teach English and study Vietnamese.

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**Phu Xuan** specifically requested textbooks in all fields; magazines relating to technical sciences and books/magazines relating to public education.

### 4. Principal Developments in Ho Chi Minh City.

**a. VNU HCMC.** Chancellor Montford expressed interest in a distance learning arrangement. Also interest in placing additional students and faculty in Vietnam, and to receive Vietnamese students/faculty at TTU.

**Vietnam Studies.** VNU HCMC thinks cooperation here will be easy.

**Student Exchange.** VNU HCMC reports it will be easier to host US students than to send VN students to the US

**TOEFL.** VNU HCMC cited huge cost and proposed establishing a sort of international TOEFL which could be administered in Ho Chi Minh City.

**Distance Learning.** VNU HCMC is interested, but first will have to calculate cost per student. Nevertheless, they thought this was a promising area for future cooperation.

**Libraries: VNU President Tran Chi Dao** said that the most important issues for them were organizational structures and management systems that would enable them to provide the best service for readers.

**b. University of Social Sciences & Humanities, HCMC** (Vice Rector Dr. Nguyen Van Tai) Would like to focus on **American Studies**. They propose to establish a major Department of American Studies in their university. Will need help to establish this, and will need books and documents.

**English language.** Chancellor Montford has idea to send doctoral students to study Vietnamese and teach English.

**c. General Science Library, HCMC** (Ms. Huynh Ngoc Suong, Director) Director Suong cited problems of preservation and inability to accommodate readers. Chancellor Montford indicated TTU interest to help preserve documents and proposed a joint microfilming project. Suong agreed with concept, but said she would have to gain approval through channels. Suong requested a listing of books and dissertations about Vietnam currently held by Texas Tech.

**d. War Remnants Museum** (Ms. Nguyen Tuyet Van, Director) We discussed possibility of exchange of documents with this completely one-sided propaganda organization. It is highly unlikely we will go any further with this. Their only interest was acquisition of anti-war documents, though Reckner suggested we should perhaps also include some communist atrocities.

### 5. Major Developments, Can Tho University

**Medical School.** **Dr. Pham Hung Luc**, the Dean, would like to have someone do a Ph.D. in public health at TTU. He needs to establish a clinical epidemiology unit at CTU. His basic lab lacks equipment for research and he needs an expert to

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help CTU improve. Luc recommends a group of scientists come to CTU to meet with staff, assess the situation, and work with staff.

**Chancellor Montford** suggested possibility TTU Ph.D. students might teach English at CTU, and opened TTU to any CTU discipline. Highlighted distance learning.

**Rector Tran Thuong Tuan** emphasized the need for library development, development of medical training: "Our dream is to create an international training center for Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian students. But we do not have enough resources."

**Chancellor Montford** looks forward to sending a team to CTU to talk about distance learning and the technology that gives us linkages. "On the TTU side, there is a hunger, an excitement, to learn about Vietnam. . . . You have my commitment. We will go back home and see what we can do. I will have a meeting when I get back home to discuss these issues. We will provide, too, a printout of the materials in our archive."

### 6. **Follow-up Actions.** On the return flight, Chancellor Montford indicated the following:

**a. Plum Foundation.** Reckner to submit a proposal for \$20,000 to the Plum Foundation to establish 100 \$100 scholarships for Vietnamese students to study at Vietnamese universities and an additional 100 scholarships for medical students. The criteria for receipt of these scholarships is that the students be veterans of the war (North or South), their children or grandchildren, or that they be otherwise excellent students who lack the financial resources to attend university. [US\$100 is the approximate amount of tuition for a full school year; thus, these scholarships would have significant impact.] This request has been submitted.

**b. Additional funding.** Chancellor is to provide an additional \$8,000, which will be used to provide 25 \$100 scholarships to each of the four universities we visited, plus \$1000 to each university for library improvement.

**c. Medical School.** Associate Vice President James Laible should inventory South Park for outdated medical equipment that is still useable and send unneeded equipment to Vietnamese medical schools, attempting to send equal amounts to each school.

**d. Next Vietnam Trip.** For the next Vietnam trip, the Chancellor would like to include Dr. Joel Kupersmith, Dr. David Schmidly, and Dr. John Abernathy from Agricultural Sciences. Also for the next time, we will start in Can Tho, spending several days there, and then work our way to the north.

**e. Funding.** The Chancellor would like to get some big federal grant to assist with the Vietnam initiative.

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**f. Slide Show.** The Chancellor also would like to develop a slide show from photographs taken during the trip, for his use speaking publicly.

xc:   Dr. Donald R. Haragan           Dr. David Schmidly  
      Dr. John Burns                Dr. Joel Kupersmith  
      Dr. Jane L. Winer             Dr. John R. Abernathy  
      Dr. E. Dale Cluff             Mr. James Laible  
      Dr. Allan Kuethe             Ms. Lynne Hudson  
      Dr. Idris R. Traylor         Dr. Ronald B. Frankum  
      Dr. Henry Nguyen