

Mr. May

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJ: Meeting with Mr. Lam Le Trinh,  
Secretary of State for the Interior  
November 24, 1958

The above meeting was attended by Secretary Trinh, Vice President Philip J. May of MSU, and Messrs. Smuckler, Hoyt and Ryan.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce Mr. May to the Secretary and also to permit the Secretary to discuss MSU-GVN cooperation, or such other matters as the Secretary desired.

Following the usual introductory formalities, etc., Secretary Trinh outlined some of the current problems facing the Ministry of Interior. Relative to the general area of administration, the Secretary presented the problems in the following sequence:

1. Training. Mr. Trinh pointed out that future development and the increased levels of efficiency which are required are entirely dependent upon the subject of adequate training programs. He declared that an in-service training program is now underway within the Ministry of the Interior in Saigon. He stated that the instructors are selected from the more experienced administrative heads, from the staff of the National Institute of Administration, and also from Michigan State University. He stated that this training program is now also underway in each province under the leadership of the province chief. It was pointed out by the Minister that monthly achievement reports regarding training programs in the provinces are received from each province chief. The Minister noted that he, himself, is giving personal attention to the progress of these programs. He declared that all administrative employees in the Ministry of the Interior will be expected to participate in these training programs. Monthly examinations are given and a comprehensive examination is given quarterly. Special provisions are made for the advancement of those employees who do well in the training programs. The results of the examinations are reported in the employee's dossier. Mr. Trinh declared that certain equipment needs exist as follows: duplicating equipment, projectors, screens, films, desks, chairs, amplifying equipment, and training material. The Minister inquired as to whether or not MSU would be in a position to assist GVN in solving some of the equipment problems. He also inquired as to whether or not MSU



could increase its assistance relative to the matter of training material. Dr. Smuckler called the Minister's attention to the fact that USOM has made available certain funds for the purchase of various types of training equipment and that these are being handled by Mr. Maynard. Dr. Smuckler also pointed out that MSU would be happy to assist GVN in the development of training material. Mr. Trinh also requested that MSU assistance be provided in translating the more important English language publications in the field of public administration. It was suggested to the Minister that perhaps it would serve the interests of GVN if steps were taken within the Ministry of Interior to hire competent translators for this purpose.

2. Regulations and Laws. According to Mr. Trinh, several committees have been formed within the Ministry of Interior for the purpose of reviewing existing administrative codes, rules, regulations and laws. He pointed out that many of the laws under which the Ministry of Interior is now operating are French laws which have never been changed. The Minister suggested that perhaps MSU technical advice will be sought in the future.

3. The general election of 1959. Mr. Trinh declared that general elections will be held throughout Vietnam in September of 1959. He pointed out that although the election date may yet be a long way off, it is not too early to begin taking the necessary preparatory steps in this regard. He pointed out that a committee under his leadership has been created and that MSU technical assistance would most certainly be useful in developing the proper procedures which would govern this election. He noted that it would be a point of honor for the Ministry of Interior, as well as GVN, if the elections could be carried out smoothly and efficiently. He asked whether or not MSU had on its staff at the present time in Saigon anyone who has had experience in this particular field. Dr. Smuckler replied by pointing out that Dr. Scigliano has had some experience in the matter of elections and would certainly be available to Mr. Trinh. The Minister then inquired whether or not it would be possible for MSU to bring from the US<sup>A</sup> qualified technician on a short term basis who could become a member of the elections committee. He also advised that any written materials covering the handling of elections would certainly be useful.

4. The National Identification Card Program. Mr. Trinh asserted that during the course of a recent trip to Central Vietnam, the province chiefs and military leaders in this region were very disappointed to learn that the identification card program, as it is now envisaged, would first begin in the southern region of the country. Mr. Trinh declared that it would be most useful if the entire program could be achieved throughout Vietnam prior to the elections in September of 1959. It was pointed out to the Minister that given the present number of fingerprint technicians employed at Surete Headquarters and given the number of personnel who are now being trained for participation in the program in the field, it would require approximately 10 years before the entire country could be covered under this program. Mr. Trinh agreed that a separate letter dealing with this subject from MSU in

which all of the details could be spelled out would be useful. Mr. Hoyt recommended that it would be advantageous to GVN were the President and the Ministers of the government be among the first to be fingerprinted as part of the Identification Card Program. Adequate publicity could then be given showing these men as willingly participating in the program and would, therefore, reduce possible changes of the Viet Cong to use the identification card program as a political weapon. The Minister pondered this suggestion, but pointed out that he did not anticipate any difficulties in this respect, that he intended during the next two weeks to launch the propaganda campaign dealing with the program with a speech over Radio Vietnam.

5. Library at the Ministry of the Interior. The Minister recalled having shown the existing library at the Ministry of the Interior to Dr. Smuckler a few months past and noted the paucity of existing texts in the field of public administration. He declared that it would be extremely valuable were a suitable library developed so that his personnel would be able to increase their general knowledge as well as remain up to date with the developments taking place throughout the world in this particular field. The Minister inquired as to whether or not MSU assistance could be secured in this regard. Dr. Smuckler pointed out that certainly a program of cooperation between the National Institute Library and the Ministry of Interior could be satisfactorily worked out. By this he suggested that texts could be ordered as a part of the National Institute Library but that they could be physically transferred to the Ministry of the Interior while being carried on the inventory cards at the Institute. The Minister agreed that this would be a satisfactory solution to the problem.

The next general area of problems confronting Mr. Trinh was in the field of security.

1. Equipment. Mr. Trinh very briefly sketched the problems confronting the various police and security forces of Vietnam which are the results of inadequate communications and transportation equipment. He explained how the internal security situation in Vietnam could be cleared up considerably were sufficient quantities of these types of equipment available in Vietnam. Mr. Trinh also explained his opinions relative to the necessity for his having direct radio communications with each of his province chiefs. He declared that he did not consider using either facilities available within the Surete or the PTT as being satisfactory. The Minister declared that many province chiefs are not inclined to accept orders from General La; that in many instances they fail to bring to General La's attention certain secret information. He pointed out that such information is reported directly to the Minister himself; that it does not pass through General La. He pointed out that he felt it was quite necessary under these conditions to have direct communication to each of the provinces. It was recommended to the Minister that perhaps it would be possible for the development of direct communication with the provinces through the installation of telephone communication from his office to the communications center at Surete headquarters, and that

classified information could be coded by his office in a code known only to the Minister and the province chiefs. Mr. Trinh advised that he had received information from a Vietnamese technician to the effect that it would be possible for a direct communications net between his office and the more principal or important provinces to be developed at a cost of about one million piasters through the purchase of locally made communications equipment.

In terminating the discussion on this subject, the Minister requested that MSU explore all possibilities inasmuch as he considers the problem to be an urgent one.

2. Monthly meetings with General La. Mr. Trinh advised that he now is having monthly meetings with General La for the purpose of keeping abreast of all developments within the police and security forces. He stated that this includes the various programs involving MSU and the police and Surete. The Minister stated that he would like very much to have meetings with Dr. Smuckler prior to his meetings with General La. Dr. Smuckler agreed that such meetings could be arranged.

3. Traffic problems. Mr. Trinh asserted that a committee has recently been formed within the Ministry of the Interior with representatives from other interested government agencies, for the purpose of studying the existing traffic problems in Vietnam. He pointed out that there is a great need for traffic control not only in Saigon but also on all of the main highways and arteries throughout the country. Mr. Trinh stated that it would be very helpful if a MSU technician could also be assigned to this committee for the purpose of providing technical assistance. Dr. Smuckler pointed out that Mr. Jerry Franklin could undertake such responsibilities.

4. Prison Administration. The Minister declared that President Diem recently signed a decree in which the prison administration is being transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the Ministry of Interior. He declared that although he had been a magistrate, had worked within the Ministry of Justice for many years, he regretted to admit that the administration of the prisons in Vietnam left much to be desired. He stated that he wishes to shift the philosophy involved from one of merely punishing the inmates to one of re-educating said inmates so that they may become useful citizens following their incarceration. The Minister requested MSU to provide technical assistance by way of American texts or manual materials in this particular field. It was pointed out to Mr. Trinh that such MSU assistance could be provided particularly inasmuch as the School of Public Safety and Police Administration at the University in East Lansing has such a program now in existence under the guidance of an experienced former custodial administrator.

In closing the meeting, Mr. Trinh brought to Mr. May's attention the high esteem and regard which is felt by the government of Vietnam for the excellent cooperation and assistance which has been provided by Michigan State University. Mr. May replied in kind.

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