

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP

MAILING ADDRESS : MSU-USOM
AMERICAN EMBASSY
SAIGON — VIETNAM

CABLE ADDRESS : MICHGOVBUR

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ADVISOR

GENERAL OFFICE :

137, DUONG PASTEUR

TELEPH. NUMBER : 22.022 - 21.528

SAIGON : 3 8 3 - 3 8 4

September 19, 1958

TO: Coordinator

FROM: Robert Scigliano

SUBJECT: EROPA

This is to give you the current situation with respect to EROPA, as well as some reactions to recent memoranda from you and Wes Fishel.

1. No government in the region has yet ratified the EROPA Constitution, for the reason that the Philippines has not yet sent out the official version of the Constitution. I have asked Dave Wood to cable USOM, Manila, to see if they can help move things along. I understand from Mr. Dang that Carlos Ramos took ill immediately following the Conference and was unable to do much for about a month thereafter. This still does not explain the long delay, which, considering the tentative and lukewarm support given by some of the delegates to the creation of the Research Center in Vietnam, requires that the NIA not move too far beyond the other hoped-for member states.
2. The NIA sent copies of its program to all governments which had representatives at the Manila meeting, in mid-August, with a cover letter from Thong soliciting reactions. Thus far, a few acknowledgments of receipt have come back, but no comments. Dang is concerned that the program may not get into the right hands in some cases, since it was sent to each chief of delegation at the Conference, who was sometimes a diplomatic representative of his government, with no special interest in or connection with a public administration institute. I have suggested to Dang that he might send copies informally to institute heads, and will take this up again at our next meeting.
3. The Vietnamese Government has not yet designated leadership personnel to the Center, which would be the director, deputy

director, and research chief. I assume nothing will be done until Thong's return. Within this major limitation on action, the following has been done to date:

a. Foreign librarians. A high priority need will be to obtain a competent librarian from abroad, and we are looking to the Philippines as the most convenient and expeditious source. Thong was given a detailed job description to use in his conversation with Ramos; neither we nor Dang have received any information on this talk. A second librarian will be requested from UNESCO as soon as conditions--some movement by the Philippines and Thong's return--permit. Dick Gardner has been much too busy these past few weeks to do more than give some technical advise in this field. Dick Chapin, as I will mention below, is moving into this breach and Heyman's arrival will provide additional strength.

b. Local Librarians.

(1) One future EROPA librarian, Miss Kim Sa, will leave today for a year's training at Western Reserve. We and Dang have agreed, with her concurrence, to bring her back for a second year's training at the University of the Philippines, assuming, of course, that her performance is satisfactory. This will permit Miss Kim Sa, who already has studied at the University of the Philippines for two years, to transfer her credits there and to receive the B.A. degree. A degree, as you know, is very important to a person's position in a Vietnamese governmental agency. I would appreciate it if you would take all necessary measures, including the application of a certain medieval garment, to ensure that nothing happens to Miss Kim Sa during her stay in the States.

(2) A second possible future EROPA librarian is presently the librarian at the Faculty of Science. He is eager to take the Philippines training and return to EROPA, and Gardner recommends him highly. Since the next semester does not start until May, 1959, there is no need to rush his acceptance, and Dang would like to have Thong pass on his merits.

(3) A good local fill-in for the EROPA document collection is Mrs. Hieu, the present head of the NIA Research Division's document files. Mrs. Hieu, who worked for a time at the NIA library and is well regarded by Gardner, has been kept under wraps by the NIA until recently. Also, until recently, the NIA document collection has been kept distinct and secret from the NIA library. Dang has just instructed Mrs. Hieu to reorganize her document files along "American" lines and to begin limited document purchases. In both

tasks, she will need outside assistance, and Chapin and Carmichael are undertaking to help her in the first, and Chapin will help in the second. We have loaned Mrs. Hieu the half-time services of one of our typist-clerks and will make more help available on a backstopping basis as it is needed, until the Center can go ahead and engage its own personnel.

c. Research project officer. Three suggested candidates have been submitted to Dang, including Pauline Tho. The best person, if Dave Wood is able to spring him, is a USOM employee whose production of their statistical support should make a good person for working on the newsletter and annotated bibliography. This is another decision which can, and will have to, await Thong's return.

We are all very much pleased with the reports on the success of Thong's visit. In fact, I am now administering an antidote so as to temper my optimism. Your groundwork on the exchange of documents will be very helpful to the Center, and we will move ahead from this end. Since this is an NIA activity, it will probably help develop its sense of that fact to have the correspondence issue from there. I think this position should also guide our behavior on the issue of fund-raising, and that we should limit ourselves to advice and some backstopping but avoid getting pulled directly into this kind of activity. Also, it is important that the EROPA Center be viewed from the outside as a Vietnamese operation. One of the problems of the NIA library, unavoidable under the circumstances, is that it has been viewed as an American operation and, consequently, the NIA faculty have not, until recently, taken the interest in or the responsibility for it that they should.

To end on a non-sequitur, thanks very much for the cabled congratulations on the APSA award. I also got an unexpected warm note of congratulations from Thong.

RGS/dcm