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March 10, 1958

Mr. William B. Shore, Staff Officer  
American Society for Public Administration  
6042 Kimbark Avenue  
Chicago 37, Illinois

Dear Mr. Shore:

Laverne Burchfield passed through Saigon shortly after a preliminary meeting to plan for the 1958 Regional Conference on Public Administration to be held in Manila, June 16-27. In discussing the Saigon preliminary meeting Laverne thought it would be interesting to get some information on it in the Public Administration Review.

Mr. Charles Myers of our staff has accordingly prepared the attached short statement with the thought that it may be suitable for the "Contemporary Topics" section of the Review. If you wish to make use of this, please feel free to draw upon it or re-write it as you think appropriate.

I am also forwarding under separate cover a complete set of proceedings of the meeting with some of the news coverage. If this would be useful in any way for the files of the Association, please use it as you see fit. However, if you have no use for such materials, I would very much appreciate it if you would forward them to the Coordinator, Vietnam Project, Michigan State University, with a note suggesting that he make them available to the library there.

Sincerely,

John T. Dorsey, Jr., Chief  
Public Administration Division

JTD/mpw

enc.

cc: W. R. Fishel ✓  
C. Myers

A permanent regional organization for the promotion of improved public administration appears to be in the making in Southeast Asia. This is, perhaps, the most significant result of the preliminary meeting held in Saigon, Vietnam, February 7-13, to develop an agenda and working procedures for the Regional Conference on Public Administration to be held in Manila in June 1958.

The Manila Conference will discuss some of the administrative problems common to all of the countries in this area, such as the educating, recruiting, and post-entry training of civil servants, <sup>and</sup> the administration of economic organization. The proposed organization would sponsor periodic international conferences, set up special committees to study specific administration problems, provide for the publication and exchange of reports and other materials, and eventually, if the necessary financial support can be developed, establish a regional center for the training of higher level civil servants.

The ten nations represented at the preliminary meeting in Saigon were Australia, Republic of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Federation of Malaya, the Philippines, Thailand, and the host country, the Republic of Vietnam. No official American agency was represented although the Michigan State University Advisory Group and the ICA Mission in Saigon provided some assistance in the form of translators and secretarial help. The fact that the meeting was sponsored and managed exclusively by Asian countries appears to have reassured some countries that the Manila Conference will not be dominated by the U.S. or other western powers, and it is expected that several additional countries will attend.

The underlying theme of the meeting, expressed by Mr. Nguyen-Ngoc-Tho, Vice-President of Vietnam, in his welcoming address and re-emphasized by other delegations during the course of the meeting, was the idea that administrative concepts and methods must develop and change with the times to deal effectively with new and challenging problems.

In addition to the formal discussions held at the International Conference Hall in downtown Saigon, delegates visited a number of central government agencies and field offices. One afternoon was spent at the National Institute of Administration, where they were briefed by N.I.A. faculty and staff on the N.I.A.'s teaching, research, and in-service training programs. The advisory role of the MSU technical assistance group was also explained.

This preliminary meeting in Saigon, the first such international conference on public administration to be held in the region, gave considerable impetus to the developing interest in public administration in Asia, and to the realization of the importance of effective public administration in solving the region's very difficult problems of economic and social development.

February 25, 1958