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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EAST LANSING

DEAN OF INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

October 19, 1960

To Joseph LaPalombara

From Ralph Smuckler

At the meeting of the Vietnam Advisory Committee October 3, 1960, we talked about the types of things you might look into on your forthcoming consulting trip to Vietnam. Since memoranda on this subject have been requested, I am sending you this note in order to specify some of the questions which you might be concerned with while you are in Vietnam.

While you will be concerned with other matters, I assume that your main focus will be on the National Institute of Administration, its development to date, and its future needs. You will probably be concerned with its current strength, image, chances for survival, contribution to the public service of Vietnam, and its relationship to other educational institutions. I think that the following might be of specific concern to you.

1. Will the leadership of the Institute be strong enough to bring about gradual improvements in the Institute program? You will want to look into the general organizational framework for the Institute, including the administrative board, the departmental or divisional headships, the aspirations of the rector and vice rector, and of other leaders within the Institute faculty. You will also want to look into the relationship of the Institute leadership to the government administrative and political structure, including the relationship to the presidency.
2. Is the faculty of the Institute at a level of self-sufficiency? Has the professionalization of the faculty reached the "take off" point in terms of professional aspirations, professional associations and interest? Is the faculty developing and are there avenues for its future development? What are the chances of stagnation?
3. Are the existing programs -- academic, advanced academic, evening school, in-service training, research -- sufficiently manned to hold their own and to progress? Are the present programs moving along well and as presently scheduled will they be reasonably effective by mid-1962?
4. Are the products of the Institute filling the need in Vietnam at a sufficiently rapid pace? Are the applicants for enrollment good candidates for the public service and is the selection process adequate?

5. Does the Institute have a program planned for the period ahead? What are its goals, and are they realistic in view of resources available?
6. Is the financial structure of the Institute sound? Will the Institute encounter financial difficulties according to current plans and prospects?
7. Are the facilities of the Institute including the library going to be adequate? What will be the impact of the new facilities on Institute programs and on the Institute's image in the public's eye and in the eye of other public servants?
8. How is the morale of the faculty and of the student body? Is the image of the Institute sufficiently strong and well defined to help in assuring continuity.

These questions are not listed in any particular order of importance, nor are they all inclusive. There is a good deal of overlap as might be expected. Some of these questions will probably be answered negatively, and the overall question becomes one of whether there are enough affirmative answers to give us some assurance of continuity after mid-'62.

Based on the answers to many of these questions, the broad consideration becomes one of the type of assistance MSU should continue to extend to the Institute, even though a contract with ICA may be out of the picture. How could we be most effective in assuring a significant development over the years ahead?

I hope you realize that the Institute has been led from the beginning by the Vietnamese themselves. Therefore, they do not consider themselves to be taking over from us. We have been assisting them and our departure would merely mean that they will have less assistance -- technically and financially. I know that Rector Thong has been irritated by some visitors who have made such comments as "Are you ready to take over the work of the MSU team when it leaves?" He does not view it this way, and he has voiced his resentment to me concerning the official ICA attitude toward the Vietnamese Institute, which seems to be one of considering the Institute an MSU product rather than a result of his leadership and the Vietnamese government's efforts.

I want to spend some time with you talking about each of the questions I have raised and others that may come to mind as we go through these. Perhaps we ought to set a date in the near future, well before you get swept up in last minute pre-departure arrangements. Please get in touch with me when you have some time to go over these matters.

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