

Copy

March 28, 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Guy H. Fox

Conference with Vice Rector Dang, March 27, 1961

1. Recommendations for future. Dang said there would be little opportunity from now until the end of the session on the part of the faculty or Rector Thong to discuss MSUG recommendations for the NIA's future. However, the recommendations, along with the factual report, have been distributed to the faculty and Dang is beginning to receive impressions from the faculty members who have read the report.

A number of the staff have been "joking" about MSUG proposals. They are saying that MSUG has "threatened" to withdraw its assistance in the event the NIA does not modify its management. In fact, faculty members who have commented on the report have almost unanimously regarded the report as an indictment of the NIA's administration, and have mentioned the "threat" of Michigan State to withdraw.

Probably the remarks of the NIA faculty members stem from the fact that they are not accustomed to, and do not understand, criticism. At this juncture Dang made a very elaborate analogy to the government and the politics of Vietnam. He said that the concept of a "loyal opposition" is not comprehended and those who oppose the existing regime are often considered (and often are) factions which seek the overthrow of the government.

Dang said that Thong was somewhat ruffled and vexed by the critics on the faculty. Perhaps the terms "vexed" or "ruffled" -- or even "displeased" -- are too strong. Nevertheless the point is that criticism is increasing on the part of the faculty because of MSUG's report from which faculty members have quoted freely; and Rector Thong is permitting more criticism. Much of this, said Dang, is to the good. It is well to have constructive criticism. Unfortunately, however, much of the criticism seems not to be constructive; on the contrary it is irresponsible. One faculty member, for example, after referring to MSUG's recommendations regarding examinations, urged that a period of three weeks be used for examinations. In the United States the majority opinion would prevail and in a faculty ordinarily the majority opinion would be the sound one and irresponsible proposals would be out-voted. This is not always true in Vietnam even among intellectuals





such as are found at the NIA. Here the criticism of one person can sometimes have a bad influence. If one person suggests taking three weeks for examinations a number of others may fall for such a demagogic proposal. Even in France Dang said a person such as Poujade can lead an irresponsible movement calling for non-payment of taxes. When rights and privileges are talked about, most NIA faculty members seem to understand very well, but when duties and responsibilities are discussed, they do not understand. Dang noticed at the last faculty meeting that staff members are likely to pick up only one phase of one idea. For example, they ignore the proposals for strengthening the management and merely gain the impressions that the present management of the NIA is defective. Some of them have interpreted the report to say that MSUG believes the administration is making the faculty do too much, therefore they should have a lightened work load and they should be able to do what they want to do, that is, have freedom from overhead control.

Dang said again because both the faculty and Thong have such full schedules during the rest of the term it was not likely that any decisions could be taken on the recommendations.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

VIETNAM ADVISORY GROUP

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Ruben V. Austin, Coordinator DATE: March 30, 1961
FROM: Lloyd D. Musolf, Chief Advisor *LDm*
SUBJECT: Attached Minutes of Weekly Dang-Fox Meeting

We thought you would be interested in preliminary NIA reaction to the recent recommendations to the NIA. Perhaps the NIA leadership is awakening to the existence of a lack of a spirit of dedication among the faculty. This attitude was an important factor in persuading PAD to write the kind of report it did.

NB | Vietnam Advisory Committee members should, of course, be cautious in discussing any set of Dang-Fox minutes for fear of discouraging Dang from making the frank reports that help our task greatly. Particularly should this be kept in mind when Dang visits campus.

IDM/dw

cc: Guy Fox



APRIL 5, 1961

TO: LLOYD D. MUSOLF
FROM: RUBEN V. AUSTIN
SUBJECT: FOX-DANG MEETING
MARCH 30 REPORT

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS, OF COURSE, WILL BE ALERTED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING DISCREET IN THE HANDLING OF THIS INFORMATION WHICH YOU ARE GIVING US. WE VALUE HIGHLY THIS MATERIAL.

RVA:sf

cc: DEAN SCELYE
SMUCKLER
PROFESSORS BRANDSTATTER
DORSEY
FISHEL
HENDRY
LAPALOMBARA
SCIGLIANO
TAYLOR