

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

October 6, 1960

Guy H. Fox

Conference with Chief Advisor and Rector Thong, Oct. 6, 1960

1. Bach Lan. Rector Thong brought up the question of Mrs. Bach Lan. Musolf read some excerpts from Professor Truman's letter in which it was said that Columbia University would not permit Bach Lan to obtain a Ph.D. Thong said there was some doubt that she would return to Vietnam. Especially in view of her academic deficiencies he said that the NIA did not favor retaining her as a participant until after she obtained her M.A. degree. After some discussion it was decided that both the NIA and MSUG would recommend the immediate termination of Bach Lan's participant grants for the reason of unsatisfactory academic performance. MSUG would cable the decision immediately to East Lansing, Musolf said; Thong said the NIA would write Planning.
2. Conference in Tel Aviv. Rector Thong recalled his recent letter asking for MSUG's financial assistance in sending a delegate or possibly two, to Tel Aviv for a conference sponsored by the International Union of Local Governments. Musolf said MSUG would pay the travel expenses of one delegate. Thong said he did not know yet who the NIA representative would be and asked if MSUG would send a representative. Musolf said that since it would be difficult to justify sending a MSUG member so far, he did not believe he would do so; the consent of ICA would also be required. Nevertheless he said he believed the conference worthwhile and would consider the possibility of sending an MSUG member, perhaps Woodruff.
3. Examinations to Ph.D. participant applicants. In answer to Musolf's question, Thong said the NIA did not yet have the results of the written examinations given by the NIA to applicants for Ph.D. participant grants. Thong and Musolf agreed that a meeting would be held at 3:00 on Friday, October 7, for the purpose of appraising the candidates who took the examinations here and also those who have applied from the United States. Members of the examining committee would attend the Friday meeting.

4. Needs of the NIA. Rector Thong said that he and members of his staff have discussed the six questions submitted to the NIA by MSUG. He would like at this time to give preliminary, general answers; further discussions would be necessary before detailed answers were possible. In the first place, he could say unequivocally that the NIA wanted continued assistance from MSUG professors after June, 1962. He said it is the unanimous opinion of those who considered the matter that now is the time to plan a revision not of the nature of assistance to the NIA, but of its procedure.

Help of two kinds is needed: (1) technical assistance, and (2) financial aid. Taking up first the subject of technical assistance; Thong said he hoped the NIA would receive MSUG professors after June, 1962 to help especially in the areas of (1) teaching and (2) research. Professors are needed in the fields as follows: economics, political science, public administration, sociology, in-service training, and perhaps international relations.

He expressed the hope that MSUG professors would devote full time to teaching and research at the NIA and not accept time-consuming commitments at the University or elsewhere. The professors should have the help of typists and interpreters. In the case of the American professors at other Vietnamese educational institutions such as the Faculty of Law, USOM pays for such typists and interpreters; it is hoped the same arrangement could be made for the professors at the NIA.

How many MSUG professors are needed? Thong said that of course the number would have to be determined by the size of the grant, but he felt at least 5 or 6 experts were desired in the fields which he had already mentioned.

MSUG professors should be sent for at least a two-year assignment and their tour of duties should coincide with the NIA academic year; that is, from August until May. It would be a good idea for them to arrive in July in order to become acquainted and acclimated.

The NIA, Thong said, is considering plans to set up two new sections for foreign affairs and business administration. Before any new section can be established, however, clearances must come from the agencies concerned; for example, the Department of Foreign Affairs must approve the plans for a foreign affairs section.

A proposal will be made, Thong said, to the President for the admission by the NIA of students other than those receiving scholarships. To this second category of students there will be not only no scholarship stipends but also no commitment for employment by GVN. These students will receive a license or M.A. MSUG professors would have a role in teaching these students.

At this point Musolf asked if the curriculum for the non-scholarship students would be the same as that for scholarship students. Thong said the curriculum would be the same though it was possible that certain additional courses or "practical exercises" might be added.

Thong then proceeded to the question as to whether assistance to the NIA should come from a foundation or from ICA. He said he hoped after 1962 that MSU personnel would be at the NIA under ICA auspices, though of course it would be preferable to have two sources of support; that is, from a foundation as well as ICA.

Thong expressed the hope that continuing aid to the NIA could be extended for five or six more years in certain areas. Specifically mentioned were the library, in-service training, and the participant program. Musolf said that a cloud of uncertainty now hangs over future technical assistance and aid to the NIA. He expressed the belief that ICA would be reluctant to furnish aid after 1962 on the same level as present. Undoubtedly the NIA will have the burden of justifying continued aid on the basis of needs. By way of illustrating the kinds of questions to which ICA will want answers before considering the continuation of aid, Musolf said ICA might ask whether the return of Ph.D. participants might not lessen the need for MSUG personnel. Thong said that only four participants would be expected to return by June, 1962 and this number would not be adequate in the fields of public administration, political science, economics, international relations, sociology, and in-service training. Another question which ICA or USOM might ask is whether or not the establishment by the NIA of new programs such as business administration or foreign affairs might not make for a duplication of educational facilities. How can the NIA justify the setting up of courses which are given by the University? Thong said the NIA program would not be a duplication of the University offerings. The purpose of the NIA is pre-service training for the public service (and possibly later for business administration). The University of Saigon's charter does not qualify it to enter the fields of the NIA.

Musolf said in the event the NIA proposes establishment of a foreign service section, the NIA could expect such questions as these: How many students will there be? What is the past preparation of such students? What is the need of the foreign affairs? Does the Dept. of Foreign Affairs prefer the NIA to the University? Thong said he had discussed these points with his staff. The NIA is contemplating a set-up which has been adopted by other countries, including India, France and Indonesia. Thus far, he said, the NIA has had no reactions from the Dept. of Foreign Affairs except from the Director of Cabinet whose comments have been encouraging.

Musolf said that ICA has asked Austin to prepare for a "phase-out" of MSUG. Gardiner of USOM and ICA officials seem to be of the opinion that the contract ought to be terminated and that a foundation should take over. As to whether or not there will be American aid after 1962 will probably depend on the kind of case the NIA can make by demonstrating its need to ICA and/or a foundation. ICA will likely be willing to give support in the field of in-service training but it is possible that the university type of help may have to come from a private foundation. Musolf emphasized again the necessity that the NIA carefully document and be able to make a strong case for aid and to refute arguments against the granting of aid.



Musolf said in view of the strong opinion in ICA and USOM circles against renewing the contract with MSUG, the NIA should be mentally prepared to accept considerably curtailed aid. Perhaps a compromise might be effected for the NIA to receive aid from ICA for in-service training and certain other activities and to receive foundation support for the sending of professors. Perhaps the NIA with MSUG's help can work out such a plan. After a foundation does give support to the NIA it will probably be only for an austerity program. For example, a foundation might very well agree only to sending one or two faculty members to the NIA to help with library acquisitions, and to send one or two NIA faculty members to the States.

Musolf said he believed only a remarkably strong case made by the NIA for continued aid would overcome that agency's present disposition against renewal of the contract, and further financial aid. ICA will expect the NIA to justify fully its needs.

This is one of the reasons why MSUG is interested in having the NIA consider its needs and draw up a plan for its future. Musolf requested that the NIA furnish him with information as it develops about NIA plans and needs in order that he might send such information to East Lansing. The more information he can send the better it will be.

Musolf inquired about the graduate program at the NIA. Thong said because students in this program already have their license or are graduates of the NIA, they have little to gain from the advanced program and it is difficult to get a sufficient number of interested students. However, the Institute might offer a Masters degree. Musolf asked for a clarification of the Masters degree. Dang said it is probably better to refer to the degree as a license. There are insuperable difficulties of trying to equate the NIA and the license.

Musolf asked if Thong had considered Turner's proposal for police training at the NIA. Thong answered that he had written a reply to Turner. Musolf said that Turner evidently had not yet submitted his new detailed plan. Thong said in his opinion it was better for police students to take the regular NIA course such as several Army officers were now doing; or it might be possible for them to take courses in in-service training given by the NIA.

Musolf said he was disturbed to learn that NIA students in sufficient numbers were not reading the library books in English. He approved of the idea suggested by the English teachers at the NIA of using high school textbooks in the social sciences for the purpose of teaching English and thus preparing students for the more difficult books in the library. Musolf also expressed concern over the continuation of magazine subscriptions by the library. Dang said he would like to receive some support for this purpose from ICA. Musolf said he believed that foundation support also ought to be considered.

Musolf said that the sooner the NIA can have a plan ready the better it will be. ICA will want full information regarding the kind of Institute that is visualized for the future. Musolf suggested that the NIA follow a schedule in making the plan. Early next year, he said, a consultant from MSUG will be in Saigon. The consultant will want to study the plans in order to make recommendations to MSUG. The same person who will come here as a consultant will in the meanwhile be contacting foundations.

Musolf asked Thong if he believed the NIA could get any comment from or endorsement of aid from the President; the specific kind of aid should be stated. Thong said he believed such an endorsement could be obtained but first the NIA must make a proposal to the President suggested the lines along which aid is needed.

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Musolf said that Mr. Gardiner had recently indicated that neither he nor ICA/Washington was favorably disposed towards continuing MSUG's contract, but "the door had been held open." No final decision has been made. MSUG itself can do very little at this time in the way of appealing to ICA. MSUG must avoid leaving the impression that it is trying to perpetuate itself or promoting its own interests. Therefore, the NIA must carry the burden in seeking aid, though MSUG will of course help in giving advice and suggestions. Thong said he had heard that there may be some opposition among Gardiner and others to MSUG because of the Group's special status in Vietnam. Musolf said that there was probably some resentment because MSUG is neither Government nor private and enjoys the best privileges of both positions. Furthermore, USOM may feel MSUG is too independent. Also, USOM wishes to economize by having a single car pool, housing office, etc., for all American agencies. Thong asked if MSUG would accept a position whereby its professors would work directly for USOM. Musolf answered that he would check on this question with East Lansing.