

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

January 14, 1961

Guy H. Fox

Conference with Chief Advisor and Rector Thong, Jan. 13, 1961

Thong expressed his regret that a meeting at the School of Pedagogy precluded his meeting with Musolf on Thursday. He said the NIA faculty had been invited to take advantage of the university housing. However, because of the location of the housing project at Thu Duc, it is not convenient for NIA personnel to live there. Approximately 300 applications for university housing have been received.

1. Participant selection. Thong said 24 applications for Ph.D. participant grants had been received from Vietnam. He proposed that MSUG examine these participant applicants first and eliminate those who are not qualified in English. Several applicants from the U.S. must also be considered. Musolf said he believed Thong's idea of having Michigan State make a preliminary elimination of candidates (applying from Vietnam) was a good idea. He agreed to Thong's proposal that the preliminary elimination begin on January 30. This would give time, he said, for answers to come from our cables to East Lansing, inquiring about materials which were lacking from candidates applying from the U.S. Thong said that because of the December 31st deadline, applications received after that date are invalid. Fox remarked that there might be some difficulty in determining what constitutes an "application." For example, some students in the U.S. have written letters of application but it may be through no fault of their own that the letters of recommendation and transcripts have not yet arrived.

2. Fact-finding study. Musolf said that Michigan State was proceeding to draw up recommendations, following the completion of the factual study. Thong said the factual study had been the subject of two meetings of the Executive Committee. All members of the committee were in agreement that the report should be kept strictly confidential. Musolf said that Michigan State has not informed, and does not intend to inform, any other agencies about the report. However, a copy of the report has been sent to the MSUG campus. Thong said that it was his understanding that the paper was intended for the NIA and not for the Michigan State campus. Musolf said that he agreed that this was the case; however, since Dr. LaPalombara is coming here for the purpose of studying the NIA and advising us on NIA matters, it was necessary that LaPalombara see the report, even though it may be subject to later

corrections. He assured Thong that MSU campus authorities would not pass on the report to anyone else.

Thong said that it was essential to keep the report confidential because some of the matters contained in the report were not accurate. For example, on the first page it is ~~said~~ pointed out that the report makes "no judgments." Yet on the same page it is said the "chart is inaccurate in several respects." Thong added also that certain expressions used in the report were not appropriate; for example, it is said on page one that two sections are "moribund." The use of this expression might create the wrong impression. As it stands, this statement--and there are others--may be interpreted by one not familiar with the situation as indicating the NIA is inefficient and negligent. However, the two sections are inactive because of reasons beyond the control of the Institute. Some explanation is needed to explain why conditions are as they are. Thong suggested the replacement of the first page by another.

Musolf said the preliminary version of the factual report was checked by the NIA before it was drafted in final form. Thong said, however, he was not here at the time the report was checked, and he believed that some inappropriate remarks ~~were~~ were contained in the report. He again referred to the statement in the report saying that the formal organization chart was inaccurate and that two sections were moribund.

At this juncture Dang joined the discussion and again Musolf explained why it was necessary for Dr. LaPalombara to have a copy of the report in spite of the fact that it may be refined and corrected later. Musolf said that if the NIA has any comments for correcting the report he would like to send them to the campus and furnish them to LaPalombara.

Both Thong and Dang said they do not see how MSUG could draw the conclusions reached under "Teaching Methods" on page 20 on which it is stated that "in standard courses the same lectures are used in successive years." Both Thong and Dang asked how MSUG could have arrived at such a conclusion. Dang says that he knows that he uses new facts and theories constantly in his courses. It is true he does not know to what extent the other teachers use their old materials, but he said, by the same token, he does not believe that MSUG would have such information. Dang said also that he did not believe MSUG was justified in implying that there was unnecessary duplication in course material. Of course it is inevitable that courses in the same general field will touch and coalesce. For example, after an introduction course is given, later specific courses will go more into detail over the same subjects. Almost any two courses in Public Administration in the U.S. will have some duplicatory material. Thong added that especially since the Vietnamese faculty lecture in Vietnamese, he doubts that MSUG can say as a fact that there is excessive

duplication in courses. Dang said that if Michigan State does find and can verify cases of overlaps please let him have the evidence.

Musolf asked why attention was not called to such objections at the time the NIA checked the faculty report for any possible errors or inaccuracies. He suggested that a supplement or addendum of corrections be added to the report. He said he would be glad to send this to MSU. Dang said that he must confess that he missed some mistakes and inaccuracies in the report; and furthermore, MSUG did not take cognizance of some of those to which he and Quynh called our attention. Fox said that in fairness to Dang it should be pointed out that the Vice-Rector had inadequate time to study the report during a very busy period while he was acting as Rector.

Musolf said that the main point of the study, as well as any later discussion about the study, is to determine just what the facts are. If LaPalombara had not been coming to Saigon he probably would have waited to send the report to East Lansing until after the NIA faculty had examined it. Thong said he hoped that we would make certain corrections in the report. First, that we would re-write page 1; second, we would cancel the sentence on page 20 indicating that NIA professors use the same lectures in successive years; and third, on page 26 the innuendo that NIA faculty members do not contribute to the Newsletter because of low compensation. As a matter of accuracy, the Administrative Research Journal pays 100\$VN per page, and not 120\$VN as the report says. Musolf asked the Institute to draw up an addendum citing all inaccuracies and needs for correction. Musolf repeated that the report represents a sincere effort to find the facts. There were many obstacles to making the report because of the failure of the NIA faculty to cooperate with MSUG. If there are inaccuracies they may well be due to the failure of faculty to furnish us information. As it was, MSUG had to get information as best we could. We then presented this information to the NIA for confirmation. Representatives of the NIA confirmed the material as being valid. MSUG then drew up the present version of the report. The main thing is to get the facts. If still more corrections need to be made, let us make them and get the facts straight.

Thong said that on page 39 the impression is left that NIA faculty members spend so much time on articles that they neglect their other duties. Does MSUG have any evidence of this? Dang added that the articles contribute to the academic functions of the Institute by furnishing materials to students and by enhancing the competence of faculty members who write the articles. Musolf said that he would like to emphasize the fact that it was not MSUG's purpose to condemn the NIA in the report. The only purpose of the report was to ascertain facts, and if the faculty now objects to the facts as they are stated, they should realize that they made it difficult for us to obtain information by refusing to furnish us the facts.

Dang said that in his opinion the choice of words in the report was unfortunate in several cases. Perhaps softer or more diplomatic words may have been used in several instances. Indeed, it appeared that occasionally the writer did not have "good intentions." For example, why could not the word "inactive" be used instead of "moribund?" On the other hand, Dang said the study was a good report in many ways and that it did reveal the failure of certain persons at the NIA to perform their duties. However, the report might have been less sharp in tone and used kinder words.

Musolf said that the report was that of a friend of the NIA. The word "moribund" was not intended to carry a bad connotation. He reiterated that he would welcome any corrections; an addendum could be clipped on the report and reference to it made on the first page. Musolf suggested that the word "judgments" in the first paragraph of the first page of the report be changed to "policy conclusions."

Thong said that he fears the last paragraph on page 9 leaves the wrong impression. He said that the consent of the Rector was necessary for outside employment. Musolf suggested changing the word "irregular" to "sporadic" in the 6th line of the last paragraph on page 9. Thong said that on page 26 the statement saying that NIA faculty members are not interested in writing for the Newsletter is too strong. Thong said also he believed that we were making an unjustified judgment in indicating that the quality of the articles by NIA faculty suffered because of the quantity. He asked how we arrived at this conclusion. Fox said that the conclusion was based on the study of the translation of approximately twenty or thirty articles in several magazines. Dang said that our report would be truly factual if we had simply stated only exactly what had been done and what had been found. He did not believe that we should make such a general judgment of this without giving evidence. Thong said that the last sentence on page 46 (saying a "spot-check" revealed that 60% of the faculty did not keep their office hours) might be all right in an inspection report but was inadequate for a fact-finding study.

Musolf said that he believed the discussion had been very helpful. After the recommendations have been drawn up, USOM or a foundation will have to be brought in in some stage. Either USOM or the foundation will want MSUG's advice and recommendations. Dang suggested that he and Quynh meet with Child and Fox to discuss the recommendations after MSUG has prepared a draft.

3. Additional costs at new NIA. Musolf said that he hoped the NIA was prepared to assume increased maintenance costs at the new NIA campus. The expenses for custodians and general upkeep would be much higher at the new campus than they are at the present.

4. Newspaper stories. Musolf said that he had noticed two stories lately in Vietnamese newspapers: one of these stories related to the new NIA building and the other to participants. Musolf said that he was struck by the fact that the stories were not complete; they did not indicate that the American Government had given the money to make the building and the participant grants possible. Thong asked in which newspapers the articles had appeared. Musolf said he did not recall but would send Thong copies of the articles. Thong said that the omission mentioned by Musolf was probably caused by inadequate reporting.

5. Quang Nam study. Thong said that since the first trip to Quang Nam was merely preliminary, he believed that too many persons were planning to make the trip. He thought it would be appropriate to send only two persons from MSUG and two from the NIA. However, after Musolf pointed out that the MSUG members would need an interpreter, Thong suggested that two MSUG members plus an interpreter, and one NIA member, Prof. An, should make the trip.

6. LaPalombara's visit. Musolf said that Dr. LaPalombara will arrive in Saigon on January 28. There will be a reception at Musolf's house on the 31st; Thong and Dang were invited to attend. LaPalombara will remain in Saigon for a period of three weeks.