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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

September 27, 1961

Guy H. Fox, Chief Advisor

Meeting with Rector Thong, September 16  
Present: Messrs. Thong, Hendry and Fox

In response to Thong's question, Hendry said his tentative departure date was September 26. Thong said he would like Hendry and Fox to come to dinner at his home on September 25. They accepted the invitation with pleasure.

The dedication ceremony for the new NIA has been postponed from October 15 until approximately November 15, Thong said.

Thong recalled his conversation in Washington with Hertz, who said he had received rumors to the effect that relations between the NIA and MSUG personnel were not smooth. Thong said he corrected this misapprehension of Hertz', saying while there had been an isolated case or two of friction between individuals, generally NIA-MSUG relations had been cordial. Hendry commented that although there may have been no friction perhaps cooperation between NIA and MSUG members has not been so close as desirable. It may be that MSUG professors have not been utilized in the most efficacious ways.

Hendry asked Thong what the role of MSUG professors would be in the event of a new contract. Thong replied he believed they should act as advisors and educators. In these roles they would give assistance in numerous matters, such as curriculum, course content, in-service training, research, etc. He cited Donoghue's assistance in sociology as an example of MSUG help in introducing a new course.

Thong stated the NIA would like MSUG's help in setting up the Press and Information Section at the Presidency, the Director General of Information wants the NIA to undertake this program, and the NIA is the only logical place for it. Hendry said MSU could probably not support this program. It is not the kind of field in which he believed the University would send assistants. He said he believed the NIA would be weakened by expansion into new activities at this time. Thong said because the NIA has a special request from the Presidency and because it can help in this vital area he has little choice but to support the program. In answer to Hendry's question, Thong said the NIA has not received an order to undertake the information and press program, but he considers the request of the Presidency to be tantamount to an order. Furthermore, the NIA is the best-equipped agency to handle the function. When the Ph.D. participants return they can assume some of the new

activities. Hendry pointed out that the participants will not return for several years. Thong said that initially the NIA would concentrate principally upon the in-service training part of preparing press and information persons and would give more attention to the 3-year program when the participants returned. The specialized work in press and information would be given mainly--if not exclusively--during the third year, which is the intern year. At least ten students at the NIA have indicated they would move into an Information Section if it should be set up.

In answer to Hendry's query as to who would teach the courses, Thong said Mr. Sun--formerly Director of Press and Information and now an assistant professor at the Institute--would teach such courses. Hendry said he has heard it is likely Sun will be drafted into the military service. Thong replied he had written a letter to have Sun exempted. The President, Thong said, has asked the NIA to explore the possibilities of technical assistance for a press and information program from MSUG, USOM and USIS. If the NIA is denied U.S. assistance it will have to proceed on its own resources. Thong emphasized he was applying first to MSUG for aid.

Hendry said the NIA would be in a stronger position for expansion in the future. MSUG believes the NIA should resist strongly expansionist programs now. Thong replied he was aware of the case against press and information, but there is an urgent, immediate--and perhaps vital--need in the country and the NIA is the best-qualified agency to meet this need. Thong cited the cooperation of the NIA with the Department of Defense in preparing army officers for civil positions. Hendry said the help of the NIA to the Defense Department was different: in that case, NIA personnel were using the same knowledge and were teaching in the same fields as those of the regular courses; teaching in a special functional field was not involved. Thong again made the point there is no other agency besides the NIA to which the government can turn. The social science background of the NIA fits into the program for press and information officers.

Fox asked specifically into which fields the NIA is likely to expand in the coming years. Thong said the two main fields would be public relations and foreign affairs. Hendry commented he had heard Saigon University was interested in undertaking the program of training students for foreign affairs. Thong said he believed the University would not do so. It is the specific purpose of the NIA to prepare civil servants and therefore he believed the NIA would be assigned the task of preparing foreign service officials. Hendry asked if the NIA favored going into foreign affairs or whether it would enter the field only if subjected to pressure. Thong said he agreed, in principle, with MSUG's recommendation for an intensive development of the NIA--that is, a concentration on improving existing programs--but finds it impossible to resist existing pressures, especially when the NIA is the logical agency to assume the functions.

Thong then outlined the 5-year plan of the Institute:

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

It is expected that training officers will be set up in the various departments. There is an assurance of at least fifteen additional training centers in the provinces. It is hoped eventually to have such centers in all the provinces. At this point Hendry inquired as to the possibility that Buu Dich, who has an important role in the implementation of the in-service training program, will be drafted into the army. Thong said he had interceded aggressively in Buu Dich's behalf. Hendry and Fox pointed out that undoubtedly Buu Dich would serve the interests of his country better in developing in-service training than in being in the army.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The tentative plan calls for a Press and Information Section, as well as a Foreign Affairs Section. The Highlander program will be reactivated; this will be a one-year course. Also contemplated are: a Fiscal Section and a Business Section. It is planned to offer a licence in administration; no scholarship students would take this course; they would have no guarantee of government employment upon graduation; and they would not be obligated to work for the government. Also in the mill is a program for the training of super-clerks--for the Than Suu class. The evening program will continue.

At present there are fifteen full-time faculty members at the NIA: 7 permanent members and 8 chargés de cours.

In response to Fox' question, Thong said the NIA is giving consideration to re-establishing a meaningful graduate program.

RESEARCH

The NIA will undertake studies for the government in four fields: 1) sociology in the area of administration; 2) manpower study; 3) program of social security for the government; 4) local government study.

The NIA hopes to set up a tri-partite committee for each study. This would consist of members of the NIA, MSUG and the agency concerned. The assumption by the NIA of these projects for the government will not preclude individual research, Thong emphasized. In addition to the government research and the individual research, there will be research activities in connection with EROPA. Five NIA staff members will work for EROPA. Michigan State help is needed in the preparation of questionnaires in several fields for each EROPA conference and for organizing, collating and editing the answers, as well as for preparing the NIA's own answers to the questionnaires. Thong said he hoped to have the third issue of the EROPA REVIEW ready before the conference in late October in Tokyo.

Thong expressed the hope that MSUG could advise in all the foregoing fields possible and help the NIA to realize its 5-year plan. Hendry asked what role MSUG would have with respect to curriculum and content course. Thong answered it should be to advise the NIA and furnish consultation services. MSUG could help also to prepare materials and to further existing knowledge through

research. Hendry asked which research studies could be published and which ones might be forbidden. Thong said this would depend on the nature of the publication. Some publications would be designed for a specific agency such as the Health Department or Labor Department. Probably this kind of study would be disseminated only within the agency and to others directly concerned with the problems. Other kinds of publications would be for general distribution and there would be no restrictions on their dissemination. All publications, however--either in English or Vietnamese--would be subject to review of the Rector of the NIA. Thong said the Director General of Information has delegated to him the authority to approve all publications issued under the aegis of the NIA. If, as in the case of a recent study made by Donoghue, it apparently contains a communist appeal to the people of South Viet Nam it will be necessary to delete materials. Of course, if the study has a restricted audience it would be all right to include this communist appeal, because sophisticated readers would take it for what it is worth. But a book with inflammatory communist tracts cannot be distributed to the general public.

Fox asked specifically what kinds of studies can be given general circulation. Thong said that any kind of study could be given general circulation if it followed the regular procedure--that is, if Thong reads and approves it. Most of the individual research, as distinguished from that made for government agencies, could be expected to have a wide distribution. The authors themselves, Thong said, should have a pretty good idea of what constitutes communist propaganda under existing conditions in Viet Nam. Hendry asked if the NIA would want MSUG to teach courses at the NIA. Thong replied that he would like such teaching. In the past there were language barriers hindering teaching by MSUG personnel, but he expressed the belief that the barrier is not now insuperable. He cited sociology and international relations as courses which MSUG might teach.

At this point the meeting was interrupted by visitors. Thong and Hendry agreed to resume the discussion at a later date.

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Vice Rector Dang  
cc: Rector Vu Quoc Thong  
James B. Hendry  
Leonard Maynard✓