

April 22, 1960

Rector Vu Quoc Thong  
National Institute of Administration  
4, Alexandre de Rhodes  
Saigon, Vietnam

Dear Rector Thong:

As you know, members of the NSU staff have expressed increasing concern about Mr. Thuyet's prospects for successful completion of a Ph.D. program in the United States. On the basis of information now available, it is our opinion that Mr. Thuyet is not a good candidate and that he has neither the attributes necessary for successful completion of a Ph.D. program in the States nor the proper attitudes and work habits for becoming an effective faculty member of the National Institute of Administration. Under these circumstances it is our judgment -- and this is a difficult decision to make -- that it would be unwise to permit Mr. Thuyet to utilize his scholarship and that the scholarship funds should be made available to another candidate. In the hope that you will concur in this judgment, I would like to set forth in detail the basis for this unpleasant conclusion.

Last August and September we initiated the procedures necessary for Mr. Thuyet to apply for admission to study at an American university. His academic record made it clear that Mr. Thuyet would have some difficulty obtaining admission to an American university of high quality. His record showed examination grades of only 10 or 11 on all certificates of the License en Droit and for the first certificate of the doctorate; it also showed that he failed the examination for the second doctorate certificate. (It should be noted that, in his papers submitted to USOM for processing, Mr. Thuyet claimed to have passed successfully the examination for the second certificate, a claim which is not true.) In addition, we noted that there were certain gaps in his academic training which would need to be remedied before he was prepared to enter a regular graduate program in Economics. (This latter point would be true for almost any student trained in Vietnam or many other countries, because of differences in academic curriculae and it is not an insurmountable obstacle.) To meet these shortcomings two suggestions were made to Mr. Thuyet: (1) he was to make every effort to pass the examination for the second certificate of the doctorate in order to remove this stigma of failure from his record; and (2) he was to arrange with Dr. Child for some independent study in Economics.

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Mr. Thuyet's response to the first suggestion is discussed below. As to the second suggestion, Mr. Thuyet did arrange with Dr. Child for a course of readings in economics, and he agreed that after reading certain materials he would return to Dr. Child to discuss the material contained therein. Not once during the past seven months has Mr. Thuyet appeared for such discussions.

In October, Dr. Child was requested to offer a course at the Faculty of Law on the subject of Price Theory and Welfare Economics. This is a subject which is notably missing from Mr. Thuyet's academic record. It is a vital requirement for advanced study in every American institution of quality. It was pointed out to Mr. Thuyet that this course of study would be especially useful and desirable. In spite of Mr. Thuyet's apparent agreement on this point, he showed a notable lack of interest, attending lectures rarely. On the few occasions when he did attend class he was tardy.

In addition, during his period of employment with MSUG, Mr. Thuyet has shown work habits which, if continued, would virtually guarantee his failure in a program of graduate study in the United States and preclude his effectiveness as a faculty member of the National Institute of Administration. In his work with Mr. Taylor, he has been absent frequently, often tardy, and has shown a lack of ability to apply himself consistently and steadily for any extended period of time. He complains of fatigue, low fever, and alleges he must take frequent relief time. Whether his physical condition is real or feigned -- and his physical examination showed no physical defect -- if he were to continue to exhibit this kind of behavior during graduate study at Duke University, his chances of success would be virtually nil.

Our estimate of his chances for admission to an American school proved correct. His application was refused by every university to which it was sent with the exception of Duke University, which agreed to admit him only on a provisional, probationary status. As you know, we were very disappointed that he was unable to complete arrangements for his departure to the States at the end of January or early February. We realize that the word of his acceptance by Duke University came very late; he had only a limited period of time for preparation and that period was interrupted by Tet. Nevertheless, it is our impression that the necessary arrangements could have been made if he had offered maximum cooperation and had applied himself with maximum diligence. The various agencies responsible for processing his papers, both American and Vietnamese, gained the distinct impression that he was not fully cooperative and energetic. He failed to keep several appointments and was late for others. He seemed reluctant to exert the necessary effort to depart for Duke University in time for classes and showed a distinct lack of initiative and enterprise.

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Our impression of Mr. Thuyet is shared by responsible persons in official Vietnamese agencies, such as the Directorate of Plan, who have become convinced that Mr. Thuyet is not a serious candidate for the scholarship which has been offered him. In fact, only the urgent appeals of the National Institute of Administration induced the Overseas Study Commission to accept him as a candidate. You will recall your own skepticism, expressed at the NIA Tet party for the children, about Mr. Thuyet's eagerness to leave Vietnam. In view of the difficulty we had had in gaining an acceptance for him at an American school, this attitude is especially disappointing.

Late in February, Mr. Thuyet, after becoming fully aware of the disappointment that his behavior had caused, apparently resolved to remove the unfavorable image which he had created of himself. He declared his decision to attend lectures at the Faculty of Law, to sit for the doctorate examination in April, and to apply himself consistently to his work with Mr. Taylor. This new attitude was short-lived. He attended two lectures; he worked for several weeks (on his regular half-time schedule). As the examination period approached, he became ill again. About a week before the doctorate examinations began he sent a friend to ask whether a failure to take the examination for health reasons would prevent him from going to the States. I replied that in the case of legitimate illness I thought another form of examination might be substituted. (At that time I did not know that even before his illness Mr. Thuyet was again failing to meet his obligations, at least so far as Dr. Child was concerned.) I urged, however, that Mr. Thuyet make every effort to take the doctorate examination, and his friend assured me that he would. Since then, we have had reason to doubt whether Mr. Thuyet made a sincere effort to take the examination. His illness lasted over a period of almost seven weeks, during which time Mr. Thuyet was not well enough to work, although he did come to the office on two occasions to announce that he was still sick. During the first week of the examination period, on the evening of April 8, Mr. Thuyet was observed having dinner with friends at a local café on Catinat. It was not until April 18, however, that Mr. Thuyet was well enough to come into the MSU office on Pasteur, at which time he announced that he was still too weak to take up his duties there. Even assuming the genuineness of this and previous illnesses of Mr. Thuyet, strong doubts are raised about the durability of his health for three years of living in a climate to which he is not accustomed.

In short, Mr. Thuyet's work habits, apparent physical weakness, his lack of full cooperation, and his apparent lack of concern over these matters have caused us to revise our original estimate of his qualifications for a scholarship. It is our considered judgment, on

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the basis of present information, that a decision to deny him a scholarship at this time is a lesser evil than permitting him to go. His study in the States, which we believe would not be successful, would mean that this time and these resources would not be available to someone else -- someone else who is more likely to become available and be a distinct asset to the faculty of the National Institute of Administration. Recognizing the difficulty of the decision, I still hope that you will concur in this judgment.

With best personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Lloyd D. Musolf  
Chief Advisor

IDM:pp