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SUBJECT: REPORT OF DEANS C. E. ERICKSON AND MILTON E. MUELDER OF
THE M.S.U. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN SAIGON.
30 JANUARY TO 9 FEBRUARY 1956

INTRODUCTION:

FOLLOWING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MSU GROUP OPERATIONS IN S. VIETNAM DURING THE SPRING TERM 1955, THE TRIP OF DEANS C. E. ERICKSON AND MILTON E. MUELDER CONSTITUTED THE FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT OF REPRESENTATIVES FROM MSU TO THIS AREA. THE OPERATIONS OF THE MSU GROUP IN S. VIETNAM HAVE BEEN REPORTED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL FROM MONTH TO MONTH AND NO ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO DUPLICATE THESE MATERIALS OR TO SUMMARIZE THEM. ONE SECTION OF THE REPORT OF A RECENT TRIP TO JAPAN AND OKINAWA WILL BE REPEATED HERE BECAUSE IT HAS EQUAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE SITUATION IN SAIGON.

BECAUSE OF THE FACTORS OF GREAT PHYSICAL SEPARATION AND THE NECESSITY TO DELEGATE MANY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MISSION MEMBERS, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO SUPPLEMENT WRITTEN REPORTS WITH A PERSONAL VISIT IN ORDER TO REVIEW ON THE SPOT PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS, PRESENT PROGRAMS, AND FUTURE PLANNING. OF EQUAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THESE ADMINISTRATIVE REQUISITES IS THE NEED THROUGH SUCH VISITS TO DEMONSTRATE CONVINCINGLY TO THE STAFF ABROAD THAT MSU IS MAINTAINING A SINCERE INTEREST IN THEIR WORK, PROBLEMS, AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS. ALSO IT IS FREQUENTLY POSSIBLE FOR PERSONS REPRESENTING MSU TO DO THINGS FOR THE MISSION ABROAD WHICH THEY CANNOT DO SO EASILY FOR THEMSELVES, SUCH AS CLARIFYING FOR IMPORTANT LOCAL AUTHORITIES, BOTH NATIVE AND AMERICAN, THE PURPOSES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MSU GROUP, CALLING ATTENTION TO SPECIAL NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE, AND INDICATING THROUGH DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIONS THE SINCERITY AND INTEREST OF MSU IN ITS MISSION ABROAD.

OBSERVATIONS WILL BE RESTRICTED TO MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST AND OVER-ALL EVALUATION.

HEALTH AND HOUSING

THERE IS, FIRST OF ALL, A GREAT HEALTH HAZARD. MOST OF THE MSU PERSONNEL AND THEIR FAMILIES AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER COME DOWN WITH ILLNESS, USUALLY AMOEBIC DYSENTERY. SAIGON, AS A CITY, IMPRESSED US AS BEING EXTREMELY UNHEALTHY AND THE INHABITANTS APPEARED SICK AND SLUGGISH. BECAUSE OF INSECURITY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, SAIGON HAS GROWN ENORMOUSLY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS. EXTREMELY CROWDED HOUSING CONDITIONS PREVAIL.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST CONTINGENT OF THE MSU GROUP FELL CONCURRENT WITH A MAJOR RIOT IN SAIGON IN WHICH MANY HOMES WERE DESTROYED. THE HOTEL MAJESTIC, WHERE SOME OF OUR PEOPLE WERE STAYING, WAS RANSACKED AND RENDERED TEMPORARILY UNLIVABLE. WITH THE NORMAL SHORTAGE OF HOUSING A REAL PROBLEM DEVELOPED FOR THE MSU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, HOMER HIGBEE, IN FINDING SUITABLE QUARTERS FOR OUR PERSONNEL. THIS WAS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE, AT LEAST NOT IMMEDIATELY, EVEN BY THE PAYMENT OF RELATIVELY HIGH RENTS. GIVEN THE PROBLEMS AND CIRCUMSTANCES CONFRONTING MR. HIGBEE WE BELIEVE THAT HE HAS DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB IN PROVIDING PHYSICAL FACILITIES OF BOTH LIVING QUARTERS AND OFFICE QUARTERS SO IMPORTANT TO EFFECTIVE WORK AND OPERATIONS. SOME CRITICISM HAS BEEN LEVELED AT US BY USOM FOR OUR HIGH PAYMENT OF RENTS. THESE CRITICISMS APPEAR TO US UNJUSTIFIED IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT USOM ELECTED NOT TO TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING AND IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE. ALSO THE AVERAGE RENT COSTS OF HOUSING FOR USOM AND MSU PERSONNEL HAVE BEEN EQUALIZED TO A LARGE EXTENT.

MORALE AND RECEPTION

WE FOUND THE MORALE OF OUR GROUP UNUSUALLY HIGH, EXCEPT IN ONE OR TWO INSTANCES. IN VIEW OF SPACE PROBLEMS IN SAIGON THE OFFICE QUARTERS ARE GOOD. AS ONE ENTERS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE MSU TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM ONE HAS THE IMPRESSION OF A BUSINESSLIKE, ORDERLY OPERATION. AND THE IMPRESSION, IN FACT, TAKES ON REALITY.

WE WERE EAGERLY AWAITED. OUR COMING WAS TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF THE INTEREST OF MSU IN THE WORK ITS REPRESENTATIVES IN THE FIELD WERE DOING. WITH THE MANIFOLD PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE MSU GROUP, IT IS URGENTLY RECOMMENDED THAT AS MANY CONSULTANTS AND REPRESENTATIVES AS POSSIBLE PROCEED TO SAIGON FROM TIME TO TIME.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE OUTSTANDING ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE MSU GROUP IN GETTING ITS PROGRAM UNDER WAY, AND IN DEFERENCE TO MSU WE WERE BOTH ENTERTAINED AT SPECIAL RECEPTIONS AND DINNERS IN AN EXTREMELY IMPRESSIVE MANNER.

THIS WAS PARTICULARLY TRUE OF PRESIDENT DIEM HIMSELF, WHO NOT ONLY HAD A SPECIAL DINNER FOR DEANS ERICKSON AND MUELDER BUT HELD A SPECIAL RECEPTION IN HONOR OF THE MSU GROUP. NO LESS WARM AND SINCERE, HOWEVER, WAS THE ENTERTAINMENT BY MEMBERS OF OUR OWN GROUP. IN FACT, IF ANYTHING, WE SUFFERED FROM A BOUNTY OF GOOD WILL WHICH RESULTED IN UNINTENTIONAL BUT AN INEVITABLE SUCCESSION OF EIGHTEEN HOUR DAYS.

MSU PROJECTS

CONFERENCES WERE HELD WITH THE MSU GROUP AS A WHOLE AND WITH INDIVIDUAL STAFF IN CHARGE OF THE RESPECTIVE PROGRAMS. THE MSU GROUP AT THE TIME OF OUR VISIT WAS CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:

1. RALPH SMUCKLER, ACTING CHIEF ADVISOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

2. HOMER HIGBEE, EXECUTIVE OFFICER
3. ROBERT MCKEEN
4. MISS ROSALIE CASAD, SECRETARY

POLICE PROJECT

5. HOWARD HOYT, DEPUTY ADVISOR
6. JACK RYAN
7. COREY DYMOND
8. GILBERT SHELBY
9. CHARLES SLOANE
10. GEORGE BOUDRIAS
11. RICHARD ROGERS
12. JOSEPH MARLOW

FIELD ADMINISTRATION PROJECT

13. WALTER MODE, DEPUTY ADVISOR
14. MELVILLE SANDERSON
15. WAYNE SNYDER
16. ROLLAND HANEY
17. MISS ALEXANDRA ROLLAND
18. MRS. MARJORIE LINDHOLM, SECRETARY

INSTITUTE PROJECTS

19. GUY FOX, DEPUTY ADVISOR FOR DEGREE PROGRAM
20. MRS. HENRIETTA ALUBOWICZ, LIBRARIAN
MRS. BLANCHE STROUP (CONTRACT EMPLOYEE)
21. JOHN HUNTER, DEPUTY ADVISOR FOR ECONOMICS SECTION
22. DAVID COLE, ECONOMICS SECTION
23. RICHARD LINDHOLM (ECONOMIST, ON LOAN TO USOM)

PRESIDENCY PROJECT

24. JOHN DORSEY, DEPUTY ADVISOR

IN-SERVICE TRAINING

25. FREDERIC WICKERT, COORDINATOR (DEPUTY ADVISOR)

A REVIEW OF THE FIELD ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM INVOLVED CONFERENCES WITH THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, A VISIT IN THE FIELD OF STUDY PROJECTS BEING CARRIED OUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE RESETTLEMENT COMMISSION AND THE PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF THE ADMINISTRATION, THE CENTRAL MINISTRY, AND THE PROVINCE, DISTRICT, AND VILLAGE UNITS.

THE FIELD ADMINISTRATION PROJECT IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IN WHICH WE ARE ENGAGED. THE WORK WHICH IS BEING DONE HERE HAS NO COUNTERPART IN THE ACTIVITY OF USOM, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ADMINISTRATION, OR THE VIETNAM GOVERNMENT. THE IMMEDIATE AND IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THIS WORK PROCEED AND EXCELLENT PROGRESS IS BEING MADE. EVENTUALLY THERE WILL BE THE PROBLEM OF DETERMINING HOW THE FIELD ADMINISTRATION PROJECT CAN BE LINKED TO SOME ESTABLISHED AND PERMANENT AGENCY OR INSTITUTION.

WE VISITED AND MET WITH THE OFFICIALS IN CHARGE OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION. THE HEAD OF THE INSTITUTE IS MR. THONG, WHO IS ALSO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTION. HE GAVE A RECEPTION IN OUR HONOR. ALSO THE STUDENTS OF THE INSTITUTE WERE CALLED BACK A DAY EARLY IN ORDER TO MEET THE TWO DEANS FROM MSU WHO WERE ASKED TO GIVE SPEECHES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS RELATED TO GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS. OF CONSIDERABLE SURPRISE AND SIGNIFICANCE TO THE VIETNAM OFFICIALS WAS THE FACT THAT A NIGHT SCHOOL FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ON A ONE-YEAR BASIS FOUND READY AND POPULAR ACCEPTANCE. ABOUT 650 STUDENTS, OUT OF SOME 1400 TO 1500 APPLICANTS, ARE IN ATTENDANCE. THIS ONE-YEAR PROGRAM IS IN ADDITION TO REGULAR THREE-YEAR PROGRAMS FOR THE DAY STUDENTS, WHICH HAS AN ENROLLMENT OF SOME 207 STUDENTS. THE LIBRARY OF THE INSTITUTE, WITH MSU'S ASSISTANCE, IS RAPIDLY BEING ASSEMBLED AND ORGANIZED TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE. SOME IN-SERVICE TRAINING WORK HAS BEEN PERFORMED BUT MUCH MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE AT ALL LEVELS IN THIS AREA TO IMPROVE THE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS IN ADMINISTRATION.

THERE IS URGENT NEED FOR ONE OR TWO PERSONS WELL VERSED IN O & M WORK (ORGANIZATION AND METHODS) PREFERABLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE HAD A GREAT DEAL OF PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING THE ORGANIZATION OF AN OFFICE, THE DEVELOPMENT OF FORMS, FLOW CHARTS, ETC. BECAUSE OF THE SHORTAGE OF SECRETARIES, MRS. R. LINDHOLM HAS SERVED IN A SECRETARIAL CAPACITY RATHER THAN IN THE TRAINING OF SECRETARIES AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED. THERE IS SOME URGENCY TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF SECRETARIAL HELP IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE USEFULNESS OF THE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND ABILITY OF THE STAFF.

SOME UNHAPPINESS STILL REMAINS ON THE PART OF THE MSU ECONOMICS PERSONNEL BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY THEY HAVE HAD IN GETTING PROGRAMS UNDER WAY RELATED TO ECONOMICS. THIS HAS BEEN CAUSED IN PART BY THE ILLNESS OF DR. HUNTER, WHO IS NOW COMPLETELY RECOVERED, BUT CHIEFLY BECAUSE OF THE FEAR FELT BY THE DIRECTOR OF USOM THAT OUR PERSONNEL MIGHT ENGAGE IN THE TEACHING OF ECONOMIC PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES, OR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS IN ECONOMIC RESEARCH PROJECTS, WHICH MIGHT BE AT VARIANCE WITH ECONOMIC OPERATIONS AND POLICIES OF USOM. AS A RESULT PROFESSOR RICHARD LINDHOLM HAS BEEN WORKING DIRECTLY ON THE STAFF OF USOM, THUS OBTAINING ANY CONFLICT AS FAR AS HIS WORK WAS CONCERNED. DR. LINDHOLM HAS PROBABLY BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A GREATER DIRECT IMPACT AS A SENIOR ECONOMIST AT USOM THAN AS A PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS AT THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION INSTITUTE. WORK PLANS HAVE NOW BEEN DEVELOPED BY THE MSU ECONOMICS SECTION UNDER DR. HUNTER WHICH, IF CARRIED THROUGH, SHOULD AVOID ANY QUESTION OF CONFLICT WITH ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF USOM AND WOULD ALSO PROVIDE A BASIC CONTRIBUTION TO ECONOMIC KNOWLEDGE NEEDED IN S. VIETNAM. DR. LINDHOLM HAS EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO RETURN TO THE MSU GROUP AND TO USE THE WEALTH OF ILLUSTRATIVE MATERIAL HE HAS GATHERED FOR TEACHING IN THE INSTITUTE. WE WERE INFORMED IN WASHINGTON THAT ICA/W HAS BEEN UNABLE TO RECRUIT ANYONE AS YET OF DR. LINDHOLM'S ABILITY AND BACKGROUND.

THE MAJOR POLICE TRAINING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS WERE VISITED. THESE INCLUDED THE CIVIL GUARD (RURAL POLICE) TRAINING CENTER AT QUAN TRUNG; THE NATIONAL POLICE ACADEMY; THE MUNICIPAL POLICE IN SAIGON; AND A MEETING WITH GENERAL LE, DIRECTOR OF THE VIETNAMESE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION. THE POLICE ADMINISTRATION SECTION OF THE MSU GROUP, ASSISTED BY DR. FREDERIC WICKERT, HAS DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB IN DEVELOPING ITS TRAINING PROGRAM. IT IS WELL ADAPTED TO THE BACKGROUND OF THE TRAINEES, IS ADDRESSED TO IMMEDIATE EXIGENCIES, AND IS MAKING EXCELLENT PROGRESS. MORE AMERICAN PERSONNEL IN THIS AREA IS NEEDED. THIS PROBLEM WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH BETWEEN OURSELVES AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM WASHINGTON. INCIDENTALLY, DR. WICKERT HAS GIVEN INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE TO A NUMBER OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMS IN ADDITION TO THE POLICE PROJECTS. HE HAS A GOOD GRASP OF THE PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF IN-SERVICE TRAINING PROGRAMS.

A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE ON THE PRESIDENCY PROJECT, PARTICULARLY AS TO A STUDY OF FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION. THIS WORK HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT PRIMARILY BY MR. DORSEY. THE RECENT ILLNESS OF HIS SON AND THE BOY'S FORCED RETURN TO AMERICA WITH THE MOTHER MAY RESULT IN THE PREMATURE RETURN OF MR. DORSEY. THIS IS ILLUSTRATIVE OF SOME OF THE REAL PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE MSU GROUP. MR. DORSEY ALSO HAS AN ACTIVE PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTICIPANT PROGRAM WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE SENDING OF VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO MSU FOR FURTHER TRAINING.

DR. RALPH SMUCKLER TOOK OVER AS ACTING CHIEF ADVISOR OF THE MSU GROUP FOLLOWING THE RETURN OF DR. E. W. WEIDNER, WHO LEFT TO BECOME THE COORDINATOR OF THE MSU PROJECT AT MICHIGAN STATE. DR. WEIDNER LAID THE FOUNDATIONS FOR A VERY EFFECTIVE OPERATION AND WAS ABLY SUCCEEDED BY DR. SMUCKLER, WHO HAS GAINED THE ADMIRATION AND LOYALTY OF THE ENTIRE MSU GROUP. HE ALSO ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE AND SUPPORT OF THE USOM AND VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS.

UNIVERSITY OF SAIGON RELATIONS

A BY-PRODUCT OF THE TRIP WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF SAIGON. THE RECTOR, IN FACT, GAVE A RECEPTION IN OUR HONOR. THE MSU GROUP HAS BEEN ASKED TO PROVIDE ONE OR TWO PROFESSORS TO TEACH AT THE UNIVERSITY IN THE FACULTY OF LAW. THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF LAW, VU VAN MAU, IS ALSO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. HE URGED US REPEATEDLY TO MAKE AVAILABLE PROFESSORS IN THE FIELD OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, COMPARATIVE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, AND AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT IT IS DESIRABLE TO PROVIDE A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADMINISTRATION AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SAIGON, WE ENCOURAGED THE MSU GROUP TO GIVE AS FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION TO HIS REQUEST AS LIMITATIONS IMPOSED BY OTHER COMMITMENTS ALLOWED.

CONFERENCES WERE HELD WITH THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND ONE OR TWO ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS WERE VISITED.

ATTITUDE OF U.S. AUTHORITIES

THE CHIEF OF USCM, LELAND BARROWS, AS WELL AS AMBASSADOR REINHARDT SPOKE HIGHLY OF THE WORK OF THE MSU GROUP. DESPITE CERTAIN MISGIVINGS OVER RENT COSTS, PIASTER DISBURSEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND INITIAL APPREHENSION OVER THE ROLE OF THE ECONOMICS SECTION OF THE MSU GROUP, MR. BARROWS IS SINCERELY HAPPY AND PROUD TO HAVE THE MSU GROUP IN SAIGON. HE FEELS THEY HAVE MADE A REAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND AS INDIVIDUALS ARE PEOPLE OF QUALITY AND STATURE. WE CAN BE ASSURED OF HIS OVER-ALL SUPPORT. ON HIS OWN STAFF HE HAS LACKED ABLE ASSISTANCE IN THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AREA. HIS PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION ADVISER, FOR EXAMPLE, PRESUMES TO EXPERTISE EVEN IN QUESTIONS OF LOGISTICS FOR THE POLICE OPERATIONS. THIS HAS LED TO NEEDLESS DELAY, CONFUSION, AND MUTUAL UNHAPPINESS.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFIDENCE

THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHICH WE OBSERVED WAS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONFIDENCE OF THE VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS IN OUR GROUP AS TO THEIR SINCERITY AND BASIC PURPOSE OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. AN ADVANTAGE ENJOYED BY THE MSU GROUP IS THE ADVANCED ORIENTATION AT MICHIGAN STATE. THE FACT THAT THEY KNEW SOME VIETNAMESE INDICATED A RESPECT FOR THE VIETNAM CULTURE UNUSUAL ON THE PART OF FOREIGNERS. WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTUAL RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE AN IMPORTANT BASE HAS BEEN LAID FOR THE FUTURE WORK OF THE MSU GROUP. UNDERSTANDABLY THERE WERE SUSPICIONS AND APPREHENSIONS WHICH HAD TO BE OVERCOME. THESE WERE ALLAYED, HOWEVER, LONG BEFORE OUR ARRIVAL.

UNCERTAINTY

A CLOUD OF UNCERTAINTY HANGS OVER S. VIETNAM. CLEARLY PRESIDENT DIEM IS DETERMINED TO MAKE HIS COUNTRY COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT. HE DOES NOT LACK FOR VIGOR AND ACTION BUT WHETHER THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND INTERNATIONAL FORCES AND DEVELOPMENTS WHICH HAVE THRUST THEMSELVES ON S. VIETNAM CAN BE DIRECTED AND WHERE NECESSARY ASSISTED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR DIEM TO REALIZE HIS AMBITIONS REMAINS A QUESTION MARK AS WELL AS OUR CONCERN. JULY 1 IS VIEWED WITH SOME APPREHENSION. THIS IS THE DATE THAT GENERAL ELECTIONS FOR NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM ARE TO BE HELD AS PROVIDED IN THE GENEVA TREATY. S. VIETNAM HAS RENOUNCED THIS TREATY ON THE GROUNDS THAT IT WAS NOT A SIGNATORY POWER.

REPORT

THE WORK BEING PERFORMED IN SAIGON IS ONE IN WHICH MSU CAN TAKE CONSIDERABLE PRIDE. AN INFORMAL AND ORAL REPORT WAS MADE TO ICA IN WASHINGTON 23 FEBRUARY.