

Statement by John A. Hannah, President
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Our first reaction to the article in Ramparts magazine was that the attack on Michigan State University was so grossly inaccurate, unfair and misleading that it should not be dignified by a comprehensive response from the University. A quick analysis revealed no fewer than 53 errors of fact, not even counting the gross distortions or statements quoted out of context.

It has become clear, however, that the charges in the article have far outrun the responses made by various members of the University individually. Other universities holding to the same educational philosophy as Michigan State University consider that they, too, have been attacked indirectly. A decent sense of responsibility to the whole educational community appears to demand a formal response from this University in an effort to set the record straight.

Let me turn first to the broad issues of educational philosophy and purpose. These matters are, in the final analysis, the main targets of this abusive attack.

Michigan State University, and most other universities in this country, particularly the public institutions, do indeed believe in extending service to the public. Also, we believe in providing high quality instruction on our campuses, and in conducting research programs which are both basic and oriented to the needs of society.

We feel that these three functions -- instruction, research, and service -- are interrelated, that one does not necessarily detract from the others, and that only a reactionary definition of higher education would challenge the validity of public service programs. The modern American university strives for excellence in all three areas.

When our faculty members are engaged in providing service, either within Michigan, elsewhere in our country, or overseas, we do not consider their activities as a "diversion of the University," but instead a recognition of a significant and defensible function of the University. International service in this day and age is a recognition by this University and a great many others that our country is a part of the larger world community.

To say that a University should never undertake to serve the national policy is to deny the right of the public university to exist. In everything it does, the public university carries out the national policy that education shall be fostered and encouraged for the benefit of all citizens in all of their legitimate undertakings. We are not about to abandon that mission after more than a century of spectacular success.

The M.S.U. participation in the U.S. aid program in Vietnam began in 1955 and ended in 1962. It was carried out under contracts between the University and the Foreign Operations Administration and its successor agencies, and between the University and the Government of South Vietnam.

As one part of our contract program in Vietnam, we contracted to provide advisory and training services in the field of civil police administration. As another part, we contracted to provide advisory and training services to other agencies of public administration.

To question in 1966 the need for civil police improvement in a country such as Vietnam under the conditions obtaining in 1954 and 1955 is to ignore reality. In 1954, the civil police services in Vietnam were extremely weak, since most of the leadership and administration of these services had formerly been provided by the French, who had recently withdrawn. The same serious weaknesses were characteristic of the other public services. The Vietnamese Government was seeking to establish itself and to restore public order with few or no resources, or facilities, or trained personnel.

When the United States Government and the President of Vietnam asked Michigan State University for aid in strengthening the Vietnamese public services, it seemed to be a logical request. Michigan State University had then and continues to have a well-known and highly respected professional School of Police Administration capable of providing advisory and training services in the area of evident need.

Now let me turn to a few of the specific charges on the Vietnam project itself. As noted earlier, we have identified at least 53 erroneous statements in the article. Some of the errors are minor, but when errors are added to falsehoods and distortion, the sum total becomes vicious in effect. I am not going to cover the minor points, even though their refutation can be documented. Instead, I am going to dwell upon some of the major lines of criticism to which this University feels it should respond.

What about this most publicized question of Central Intelligence Agency personnel working within our ranks? First, let me state without any reservations that Michigan State did not have a spy operation within its Vietnam Project. It did not have CIA people operating under cover provided by the University, or in secret from the Vietnamese government.

After agreeing to assist in the broad field of public administration, we found that the dimensions of the assignment would require us to recruit additional personnel from other universities, which we did. In the field of civil police administration, we had to recruit from civil police organizations, in Michigan and other states, individuals capable of carrying out advisory and training assignments in several specialized areas, such as identification and traffic control.

In the field of counter-subversion, these specialists were not available from American civil police organizations, but could be recruited only from other Government agencies. Having accepted responsibility in the entire civil police field as defined by the Vietnamese government, we employed on our staff individuals who had a background in intelligence work for the United States Government. None of these, at the time of employment, was known by the University or its representatives to have affiliations with the Central Intelligence Agency.

All of the people in the M.S.U. mission in Saigon were there to perform functions that had been specifically requested by the Vietnamese government. Those functions had been clearly laid out and agreed to by all concerned. There was no deception of the government of Vietnam.

All of our people were involved in training and advisory roles only. They were under Michigan State University control, and could have been sent home at the discretion of Michigan State University if they had performed in a way we did not consider appropriate. They put in a full day's work each day on M.S.U. training and advisory assignment, and received pay from the University for services specified in our contracts with the U.S. aid agency and the Vietnamese government. Despite statements to the contrary, the University never entered into any contract with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Those employed by the University for civil police assignments were not given academic appointments, as has been alleged. All of those not regular members of the M.S.U. School of Police Administration were given the title of "police specialist" -- not titles as instructors, or professors at any level.

To recapitulate, the individuals named in the article -- and others not so identified -- were nominated to us by agencies of the United States Government other than the Central Intelligence Agency, were interviewed by us, and met our requirements. Their work in Vietnam was under our supervision exclusively, and was performed under the terms of our contracts.

The Ramparts article is incorrect when it states that there were agents on our staff instructed or permitted to engage in counter-espionage and counter-intelligence. This was not the case and to the best of our knowledge it did not occur.

Most of the references in the article to incidents related to the CIA are anecdotal in nature and it is not possible to comment on them specifically. I do not know when any individual had his "first brush" with the CIA or who said what to whom at what moment about such individuals. The type of hearsay which is reported as fact in the Ramparts article cannot be answered by the University nor dignified by it.

Let me merely add that our decision to withdraw from counter-subversive training of the Vietnamese civil police was part of a general decision that we had made on this campus to reduce the size and scope of our police administration effort in Saigon to dimensions that could be staffed more adequately by our own people.

After we had made that decision, we could not implement it within a matter of weeks. Instead, it took a number of months because of personnel commitments and the need to be sure that functions from which we were withdrawing were not left completely unserved. Our obligations were to the United States Government and to the Vietnamese Government, and to a segment of our project staff as well, and all three knew what we were doing. By the fall of 1959, almost seven years ago, we had reduced the size of our civil police administration division to eight persons, and this included five from our own Michigan State faculty.

In concluding our response to this particular charge let me say that this University has been and continues to be opposed to having university groups "used" by the CIA or any other organization. Anything this University does abroad it does at the request of the host country, and is fully known to the host country's officials. This has been the case in the past and it is now the case.

Now for a second issue -- the amount of money involved in our project. \$25,000,000 is cited in the article as the amount spent by this University in technical assistance to South Vietnam. This figure is a gross exaggeration. The truth is that our reimbursement in U.S. dollars under our contracts during the entire seven-year period amounted to \$5.3 million.

In addition, our project in Vietnam received counterpart funds for use in paying local rents, for salaries to local staff, and for other local expenses. The total piasters expended for these purposes, translated into dollars at the exchange rate then current, approximated \$2.5 million. If those two totals are added together, then the total cost of our project did not exceed \$7.8 million. This, it will be noted, is less than one-third of the \$25,000,000 figure cited by Ramparts.

The amount of money spent on the Michigan State University project should be viewed within the context of the total support provided to the Republic of Vietnam by the U.S. Government during this seven-year period. The best figures we are able to find indicate that the U.S. Government provided \$1,366,000,000 in economic and technical assistance to Vietnam from 1955 to 1962, the period of our contracts. Thus the amount of money that went into our project was about six-tenths of 1 per cent of the total amount provided by the U.S. Government in support of the social and economic development programs of the Government of South Vietnam in those seven years.

Michigan State University was not responsible in any respect for funds that may have been expended by other agencies of the U.S. Government in Vietnam. Our people may have advised on the wise use of some of those funds, as I would maintain was their responsibility, but they did not control or expend the funds.

The article in Ramparts concludes with the query: "What the hell is a university doing buying guns anyway?" The answer is easy: Michigan State University did not buy a single gun. Nor did it buy ammunition for guns, nor handcuffs, nor other police supplies.

The article states "many supplies . . . were requisitioned by the East Lansing School of Police Administration from stocks left over from America's aid to the French Expeditionary Corps." Such supplies may have been requisitioned by U.S. agencies, but they were not requisitioned by the M.S.U. School of Police Administration.

The article is illustrated with something labeled "An M.S.U. Inventory, 1955," which lists ammunition stocks. Where this sheet came from is best known to the editors of Ramparts. We have been unable to identify it. It may have been taken out of a U.S. aid mission file, or from a Vietnamese government release of some sort. It may even have come out of an M.S.U. advisor's file, because I would assume that a civil police administration advisor would have some notion of the supplies available to the police organization he was advising and its operational requirements. This would be logical and necessary.

Let me say again, no armaments nor ammunitions were supplied through the Michigan State contract. Such items were supplied by the U.S. aid mission in Vietnam through normal aid procurement channels as a part of the normal economic aid to the Vietnamese government. People working for Michigan State in Saigon advised the aid mission on such purchases, and they saw to it that the funds were efficiently spent and the equipment was well used. But the University itself did not requisition or procure such items.

Furthermore, and more importantly, all of this information was given to the tri-partite International Control Commission, the enforcement agency for the Geneva Agreement, and it raised no objections. So much for the truth of the accusation that our university was violating international agreements.

Turning to another broad accusation -- that the M.S.U. people in Saigon lived luxuriously. The first death among our staff resulting from our work in Vietnam occurred within a year after the project began, and came as a result of distressing living conditions, and the lack of appropriate medicine. Most of our people at one time or another were hospitalized or treated for amebic dysentery and/or hepatitis. The article refers to "air-conditioned villas." There were several small air-conditioned houses, but even in the severe Saigon climate, most advisors lived in homes that had one or two air-conditioned bedrooms at best. The house occupied by our chief of mission in Saigon was smaller than many faculty homes in East Lansing. It was smaller than the residence of chief of mission of the U.S. aid program, and far smaller than those occupied by the ambassador and by the general who headed the MAG program.

As for salaries, the arrangements in Vietnam were standard practice. A professor's salary was annualized, and then an average incentive increment of no more than 10 per cent was added to his salary. This became his base overseas salary. In some posts, such as Saigon where severe hardships existed, an increment, called a hardship allowance, was added. This varied during the life of the project from 15 to 25 per cent. The salary scale for our people in Saigon did not run high nor were their salaries out of line with salaries of other Americans working in Saigon or at other overseas posts of a similar nature.

Now let us turn to another broad unfounded accusation -- that our people were uncritical or were muffled by the University or others. It is true that those who had access to classified information could not, for security reasons, use such information in publications. Beyond this, the accusation is false.

Let us remember that the situation of the 1950's in Vietnam was considerably different than it was in the 1960's. With rare exception, there was general agreement that the government of Ngo Dinh Diem, when it came to power in 1954, offered the best hope for social, economic, and political progress in Vietnam. There is plenty of second-guessing today, but that is just what it is. The fact

that not many of our people were being openly critical in American newspapers about the Diem regime in the 1950's undoubtedly reflects the fact that many of them, in their independent judgments, felt that the situation at that time was evolving in a reasonable direction.

It is a well-known fact that our project in Vietnam was terminated ahead of schedule in 1962 at least in part as a result of the critical writing of our professors and others within our group. President Diem objected vigorously to this criticism, but the University made it clear that it would not censor faculty writing nor impede informed criticism. The criticism increased as his regime evolved in an increasingly authoritarian direction.

Almost all of the reports written by our people recommended changes in the government. For example, early in our work, M.S.U. advisors recommended popular election of province chiefs. Our recommendations in the civil police field repeatedly urged more modern and more humane practices in that field. Changes and improvements were urged frequently upon President Diem directly in meetings with him. Our people brought their criticisms to the attention of high officials within the Vietnamese government and within the American government. All of these were aimed at improving the situation and at expanding social and economic development opportunities. That our recommendations were not being followed became increasingly apparent. By the late 1950's our project had developed a phase-out plan because we recognized that our advice was not being listened to and that, in fact, we could not be effective because of trends within the country and within the government.

The University has not tried to hide its Vietnam project in any sense, as the article implies. The critical reports referred to above have been circulated and have been available for many years in appropriate university and other libraries throughout the United States. They were available to the authors of this objectionable article had they had any intent to make a fair presentation.

The University encouraged the writing of an objective analysis of the total project, which was published and is often quoted. There has been considerable scholarship growing out of the experience in Vietnam. At least seven books have been published, based on work there, and in addition to this 25 or 30 monographic studies, including a number of training manuals, have been published. Bibliographies have been prepared in order to broaden scholarly interest in Vietnam, and these were published by the MSU/Vietnam project office. A substantial number of articles was published by people affiliated with our project and members of our faculty during this time. There are 35 or 40 mimeographed surveys, studies and analyses of various segments of the Vietnamese government and society as a part of the product of the program.

There are a number of other positive accomplishments to the credit of the project. These are completely ignored in the article. The National Institute of Administration, the main instrument of our efforts in the public administration field, still exists in Saigon, and is still functioning effectively. Many of its graduates now serve as district chiefs and elsewhere. The institution we helped to build is continuing to contribute trained civil servants and administrative leaders in Vietnam. A recent personal letter told me in glowing terms about the work of one of these graduates in a remote area of Vietnam; it is something of which to be proud. Some of the students whom we helped train, either at Michigan State University or through our participant program at other universities, are now in highly responsible positions both at the National Institute and within government agencies in Vietnam.

The Ramparts article offers its authors' gross assumptions about the motivation of this university and others involved in international work. Establishing motives is a very difficult business, but it seems to me that there have been too few questions asked about the motives of the authors of the Ramparts article and of the magazine itself.

We know that Ramparts magazine has been extremely critical of U.S. policy in Vietnam. This is the publisher's privilege, but he is not privileged to use this University as his whipping boy.

We have been informed that two or three of the authors of the article are running for Congress in California.

We know that one member of the writing team, now an editorial board member of Ramparts, and a candidate for Congress, was a staff member at Michigan State who left this University in a very unhappy mood.

We wonder whether the sensational methods used to hawk this article in Michigan do not represent an amazingly brazen -- and regrettably successful -- promotion scheme. I cite all this only to suggest what may be clues to the motivation of this attack on this University and those who serve it.

Finally, Michigan State University is continuing to evolve in its international program work. The Vietnam project was one of the first that Michigan State entered into, and we have learned many lessons since then.

For example, in our various overseas projects we now make use of Michigan State faculty members primarily. Of the 17 persons currently stationed at various points in Asia on University technical assistance projects, 16 are drawn from our regular faculty and the 17th we would like to hire if we possibly could. In Africa and Latin America, the percentage will vary from one month to another, but in general four out of five of the people working for Michigan State come out of teaching departments on our campus. This has been our record since 1959.

The types of overseas projects in which our University and others are involved have been heavily influenced by early experience. Today, we try to have contractual relations with other universities or ministries of Education, not with governments directly. Our main efforts are to help build educational institutions or educational programs. Research which is of interest to our faculty

and needed by the developing countries is one of the by-products of these projects. We have established a variety of exchange programs through which our faculty and students can study abroad and scholars from other countries can come to East Lansing.

We have learned some of the things that university people are best able to do internationally, and others which they cannot. We try to avoid situations of great political sensitivity because we do not feel that university teams can operate effectively under such conditions. However, it should be pointed out that projects which begin in relatively non-sensitive situations may eventually find themselves in an environment which is considerably different. Vietnam is an example. This is one of the facts of life in the developing countries and must be understood by those who attempt to evaluate university projects overseas. All of these factors, in addition to those that I have mentioned earlier, emphasize fundamental distortion in the Ramparts attack.

I have not attempted to comment on the article in every detail, but only to indicate the University's response to broad accusations. Our Vietnam work has been criticized before; it has also been praised. Our work was less successful than we would have liked, but not nearly as bad as some, for whatever reason, would have the public believe.

The main issue for us now is whether we have made any contributions, whether we have learned from past experiences, and whether we have continued to improve. We believe we have.