

# PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND THE PAST: THE SEARCH FOR AN AMERICAN STYLE OF PROPAGANDA (1952-1977)

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*From the outset, the U.S. government's decision to practice the art of propaganda has been clouded by dissension over the scope and method of its mission. Definitions of propaganda, information and cultural affairs — the fundamental elements of public diplomacy — have consistently been obfuscated by canny bureaucrats and congressmen. Each administration has sought to devise formulae to create a program to best meet the perceived needs of the day.*

*The present administration is no different from its predecessors in attempting to put its own imprimatur on its public diplomacy program. Under the direction of Charles Z. Wick, the United States Information Agency's visibility has heightened. Congress has rewarded the USIA's ambitious "offensive" programming plans with increased funding, especially those targeted at television, Voice of America and exchange programs.*

*In this article, Ms. Roth emphasizes the 45-year debate concerning which elements should or should not be included in a public diplomacy program. Such an historical approach emphasizes the still-undefined character of USIA's role. It is of particular value in lending perspective and vision to those contemplating the future nature of public diplomacy programs in a representative democracy.*

Reorganization of the foreign affairs agencies of the federal government, a continuing topic of study and debate, has by conservative estimate produced some 65 major studies in the last three decades. Of these, an astonishing number, at least 31, have dealt in large measure with U.S. government propaganda, information, and cultural programs. The relationship of these activities to U.S. foreign policy has been examined in exhaustive detail again and again. Looking at these studies is a revealing

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experience, for they add up to a 30-year attempt to understand the proper role of official "information" and "cultural" programs in a democratic society, where their multifaceted activities are constantly open to scrutiny. They make clear that consensus as to the objectives and value of these programs has never been achieved.

A brief historical excursion is necessary to place these programs in the context of the last three decades. A semantic journey is equally necessary to clarify the terminology used to describe these programs since the long search for objectives can, in part, be explained by the lack of clear definitions, and by the persistent longing for an American style of propaganda.

### EARLY HISTORY

Prior to World War I diplomacy was regarded by all, and certainly by Americans, as the formal relationship between governments. With rare exceptions it was deemed neither necessary nor proper to attempt to reach the people of other nations over the heads of their governments.

The exceptions came in time of war. One week after the United States entered World War I, President Wilson instituted the first official U.S. government "propaganda" office, appointing George Creel, a journalist, to direct it. Its mandate: to make the U.S. war aims widely known throughout the world. Creel was sensitive to the pejorative meaning that the word "propaganda" had acquired since its origins in 17th-century Rome, when the Committee of Cardinals was established to direct the propagation of the faith. He insisted that the word "information" be used to describe his activities: thus his office was called the Committee on Public Information, in part a euphemism and in part the early phase of a quest for new American forms of activity in this domain. As befitted the President of a nation at peace, Wilson abolished the Creel Committee in 1919.

The Soviet hierarchy in the early 1920s, following Lenin's lead, viewed the world differently. Their attempts to reach mass foreign audiences directly through propaganda techniques went beyond the niceties of traditional diplomacy. In the 1920s the international propaganda programs of Italian fascism and later of Nazi Germany, originally designed to consolidate their positions domestically, posed little threat to the United States. But as the European crisis deepened and the tempo of world propaganda increased, we reacted. In 1938, responding to the spread of Axis propaganda in Latin America, President Roosevelt created an Inter-departmental Committee for Scientific Cooperation and a Division of Cultural Cooperation in the Department of State, the beginning of official

U.S. cultural relations with foreign countries. Thus the U.S. government, the last of the great powers to do so, formally entered the arena of intergovernmental cultural relations, previously left to the private sector, and did so for important political reasons. The programs under Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy, which contained the seeds of every government effort in information and cultural affairs we know today, were created as a peacetime means of countering hostile propaganda. It is significant that neither the conceptual framework of this effort nor its title contained the word "information."

With the onset of World War II the situation changed radically. In 1941 President Roosevelt established an Agency for Foreign Intelligence and Propaganda, the first and last time "propaganda" was used in the name of a U.S. government agency. One of its divisions, the Foreign Information Service, operated without sanction of Congress until it was subsumed in 1942 under the Office of War Information (OWI), reviving the euphemism coined by Creel. It is noteworthy that the cultural programs with Latin America and those initiated with China at the same time were kept separate from the OWI. A clearly articulated policy kept information and cultural or educational programs separate, if only because information programs were aimed at enemy and occupied territories, while the cultural or educational programs were directed toward neutral areas.

At the end of the war, Harry Truman, responding to the popular mood, ordered the dismantling of the wartime agencies, including both the OWI and the Office of Inter-American Affairs. With the Cold War looming on the horizon and muddying distinctions between war and peace, Truman established an Office of Information and Cultural Affairs in the Department of State, the first time the words "information" and "cultural affairs" were joined.

William Benton, Truman's Undersecretary for Public and Cultural Affairs, with jurisdiction over the Office, proceeded energetically to plan for a long-term peacetime operation, eliminating those wartime functions deemed unnecessary. Benton unveiled his new plan in January 1946 in a speech calling for "a dignified information program, as distinguished from propaganda," adding that President Truman had deemed some information operations still necessary so that the U.S. could "continue to endeavor to see to it that other peoples receive a full and fair picture of American life and of the aims and policies of the U.S. government." Thus the first official peacetime program of the newly-linked information and cultural affairs began, aimed at "other peoples," not governments. The United States had entered a new era of diplomacy: never again would our conduct of foreign affairs take place solely between governments.

Confusion arose early from the lack of a clear concept for information activities. Many argued that the U.S. needed a strong "disinformation" component. They recognized the need for the kind of covert peace-time propaganda and counter-propaganda activities which the Cold War had created. This theme has been stressed particularly during periods of heightened international tensions, usually followed by upswings in Congressional appropriations and increased scrutiny and debate about these programs.

The goal of "mutual understanding" was just as unclear. The Fulbright amendment to the Surplus Property Act of 1946 and the Smith-Mundt Act of 1948 described this objective so broadly that it was subject to widely divergent interpretations. The Smith-Mundt Act, the first omnibus legislation for overseas information and cultural activities, states that the purpose of the programs was: "to promote better understanding of the United States in other countries, and to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries." Ironically, although this language reflected peaceful assumptions, the Act owed its passage to the Cold War. The debate surrounding the passage of the bill focused sharply on the distinction between information and educational activities; there was much insistence that the two be kept separate. The information program, in the debates, was variously described as being concerned with the "psychological approach," "propaganda," or "public relations," designed to gain acceptance of U.S. policies abroad. Educational exchanges on the other hand were described as "cooperative," or "reciprocal." They were seen in a framework of more general, longer-range objectives.

To reflect the intent of the new law, the State Department's Office, by now called the Office of International Information and Educational Exchange, was divided in April 1948, creating an Office of Educational Exchange and another Office of International Information. Based on the recommendation of a task force on government reorganization, the first of several which were to affect the information and cultural program, the new organization was subsequently modified in 1950. A General Manager was appointed, under the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, to supervise both information and educational activities. But the rapid pace of international events — including the coup d'état in Czechoslovakia, the defeat of the Nationalist forces in China, the Berlin Blockade, the explosion of the first Soviet atomic bomb in late 1949, and growing anti-communist sentiment in the United States — led to President Truman's speech in April of 1950 calling for a "Campaign of Truth," a phrase he preferred to "propaganda campaign." When the Soviet Union's disinformation efforts boomed, following the North's invasion of South Korea, Congress tripled the program funds for international information activities. Meanwhile, the NSC was

defining the primary mission of the information program as the deterrence of the Soviet war effort. Shortly thereafter, in January 1952, yet another reorganization was implemented, this time creating the U.S. International Information Administration (IIA) as a semi-autonomous unit within the Department of State. The new unit, freed from its former concerns with domestic public affairs, was now solely responsible for overseas information activities. It also included educational exchange programs. This office remained intact until August 1953, when the U.S. Information Agency (USIA) was created. In the intervening period the IIA was subjected to more scrutiny and criticism than were all of its many predecessor organizations put together.

### CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Our brief look at the early years suggests that, from the very beginning, the U.S. had no real idea of what was expected from its overseas information and cultural programs. Much of the confusion may be attributed to the lack of precise concepts and definition of terms, not to mention American allergy to the word "propaganda." The meanings of some of these key words must be clear in our minds as we move forward — as Harold Lasswell noted, "the language of politics is the language of power."

Dictionaries may be banal sources but they are good indicators of the perceived meaning of words, part of our concern in this paper. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary (the 1955 edition) defines "propaganda" as any organized or concerted group effort to spread a particular doctrine or system of doctrines or principles, or a scheme or plan for the propagation of a doctrine or system of principles. Lasswell's definition of propaganda is more concise for our purposes: the attempt to use language to influence mass attitudes on controversial issues, implying that the speaker takes one side or another, as distinguished from such related but "objective" processes as diplomacy, military operations, economic bargaining, or education. Traditional distinctions should also be noted between: black propaganda, or information falsely attributed; grey propaganda, or un-attributed information; and white propaganda, which is information clearly attributed either directly or by inference. On the other hand, "information," according to Webster, has a different complex of meanings — it is neutral knowledge communicated by others or obtained by personal study and investigation.

These words have separate lives when used bureaucratically. One analyst, in an early study of overseas information activities, describes information, as opposed to propaganda, as less closely related to controversial issues, such as war, and adds that the content of U.S. information materials was chosen more for the purpose of reinforcing favorable impressions of the

United States in allied, neutral, or liberated territories. "Cultural affairs," a term not found in the dictionary, had been given clear bureaucratic meaning in the United States by the Latin American programs in 1938, as well as by the practices of European countries, particularly the French.

These three terms — propaganda, information, and cultural affairs — define three different functions in the everyday world. But for whatever reasons, the language of officialdom tends to be less precise, perhaps in order to be more operational. The terms used from the beginning in discussions within the U.S. government tended to describe functions actually being fulfilled.

Other terms have crept into government vocabulary only more recently. "Public affairs," a post-World War II concept borrowed from Edward Bernays and used in Benton's title, were different from cultural affairs. This term too tends to be defined operationally, encompassing what USIA would later do: a mix of information, educational and cultural activities aimed directly at foreign audiences. This portmanteau phrase was enlarged upon in 1965 by Edmund Gullion, who coined the phrase "public diplomacy" to cover non-governmental, private sector and direct people-to-people programs as well. "Cultural diplomacy" emerged as a working concept from the Stanton Panel's report in 1975. It connotes overseas programs in a broad range of intellectual, artistic, and educational activities that transmit information about the cultural attainments of a nation.

As we shall see, this mosaic of terminology did not help much, as the U.S. government tried to define goals for its propaganda, information, and cultural activities. Indeed it has probably helped generate a series of turf wars over the programs launched in these fields.

Turning to the studies under consideration, we find certain striking themes. Three basic questions about the role of overseas "information" and cultural programs arise repeatedly and will provide the focus for this brief effort to understand our past:

- (1) Does the U.S. government need propaganda programs as part of its foreign policy arsenal?
- (2) Should the U.S. government operate information and cultural programs as part of its foreign policy?
- (3) Are the purposes of such programs clearly articulated and understood?

These issues then give rise to a further series of questions:

- (1) What means should be employed to carry out these programs? Should they tell the whole truth, or should they present only favorable information about the United States?

Should they be generally informative, or should they be targeted to countering misunderstandings and distortions about the United States, as propagated by others?

(2) Should these programs be designed to serve long-range strategic goals of "mutual understanding," or should they be used in the service of more specific, tactical objectives?

(3) Are short-term objectives and long-range goals best met by the same, or by different programs? Is information a short-range and culture a long-range game? Are these two compatible within the same organization?

These seem to be the macro-issues with which studies of U.S. overseas information and cultural programs have been concerned for nearly 30 years (for other recurring questions not dealt with in this paper, see Appendix I).

These serious questions cannot be side-stepped in any discussion of public diplomacy. Some sort of consensus on these questions among various branches of government, and among those parts of the private sector with which these programs are deeply involved, must lie at the base of any sound thinking about overseas information and cultural programs. Yet the innumerable studies and reports stand as sad roadsigns to a consensus that never took place. Despite the human effort they consumed and the wisdom they represent, the U.S. government was, in the period under review, unable to decide what it wanted from these programs and how they might best serve U.S. foreign policy aims.

This review of these reports attempts to place them in a historical context. The focus is heavily on the 1952-53 period and the years between 1973 and 1977 because the flurry of activity in those periods led to specific reorganizations. It is also because feelings ran high in those periods and the reports are rich in argument.

#### USIA: FOUNDED IN CONTROVERSY (1952-1953)

The year 1952, an election year in which partisanship intensified attacks on the Department of State and the International Information Administration, found support for the new IIA waning and the junior Senator from Wisconsin Joseph McCarthy on the rise. Truman's attempt to win bipartisan support for the information program through the appointment of a Republican, Dr. Wilson Compton, did not keep the new agency out of the election arena. In a West Coast campaign address in October 1952, General Eisenhower stated his determination to make the program an effective instrument of national policy. Then, in his State of the Union Address, the new President promised to "make effective all activities related to

international information because it is essential to the security of the United States." Six days into office he appointed William H. Jackson to head the President's Commission on International Information Activities and nominated Robert L. Johnson, a distinguished educator, to head IIA. Meanwhile, in the legislative branch, Senator McCarthy's Committee on Government Operations began its investigation of the IIA and would come as near to destroying its programs as any other event in its embattled history. In July of that year, Johnson resigned in discouragement. With the U.S. information programs so much in the public eye, it is not surprising that the sentiment for change was mounting.

In the summer of 1952, the Subcommittee on Overseas Information Programs of the United States of the Committee on Foreign Relations commenced its work, under the chairmanship of Senator Fulbright, replaced by Senator Bourke Hickenlooper in 1953. Parallel to this effort no less than five other studies of the U.S. information and cultural programs were underway, both within the IIA itself and in other executive and legislative bodies. A 1953 study by a distinguished group of academics, publishers and researchers, under the direction of Wilbur Schramm, Dean of the Division of Communications at the University of Illinois, dealt with a program of research and evaluation for the IIA and concerned itself mainly with the process of communication. The others — the May, Rockefeller, Jackson and Voorhees Reports — dealt with the major issues confronting U.S. information and cultural programs and their relationship to foreign policy. While all agreed that it was worthwhile for the U.S. government to maintain overseas information and cultural programs, there was no clear vision as to their ultimate objectives, specific roles in foreign policy, the structure of the organization or organizations which should administer them, or the methods they should employ.

Using the occasion of its semi-annual report to Congress in February 1953, the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information presented a number of recommendations for "making the international information program a more effective weapon in the world's battles of ideas." It stressed the need for more vigorous information programs based on specifically stated goals and cited the weaknesses of a "one-way" information program. The Commission's report (often referred to as the Mark May Report) recommended "that the IIA be separated from the Department of State and placed in a new agency of Cabinet level in which there is vested authority to formulate psychological strategy and to coordinate information policies of all Government agencies and consolidate all overseas information programs." In discussions of the information program itself the Commission called for a "declaration of principles to guide the information program," followed by a noteworthy footnote: "This recommendation applies only to the part



of IIA to which this Commission is advisory. It leaves open the question of whether the educational exchange activities of IIA should remain in the Department of State."

In recommending a separate agency for the U.S. overseas information program the Commission ducked the issue of whether to incorporate in the same agency the educational exchange activities, for reasons which I have not ascertained. Given the Report's stress on two-way information flow, the suspicion is that the members saw the two programs as incompatible.

During the 1952 political campaign, Eisenhower had promised, as others have done, "to overhaul the entire creaking federal establishment." On January 29, 1953, he established the President's Advisory Committee on Government Organization with Nelson Rockefeller as Chairman; Arthur S. Flemming and Milton Eisenhower were among its members. In memorandum #14 on Foreign Affairs Organization in April 1953, the committee recommended, with full concurrence of Secretary Dulles, the creation of both a separate Foreign Assistance Agency and a separate Foreign Information Agency, in order to free the Secretary from foreign program operations. The memorandum recommended that either through legislation or reorganization the President should:

Establish a new foreign information agency in which would be consolidated the most important foreign information programs and cultural and educational exchange programs now carried on by the U.S. International Information Administration, the Technical Cooperation Administration, by the Mutual Security Agency, and by the Department of State in connection with the Government of Occupied Areas.

Mainly concerned with the structure of the Department of State and sympathetic to Secretary Dulles, who sought to divest himself of foreign program operations, the Rockefeller Committee did not deal in depth with the goals of the projected new Agency, with the methods it should employ, nor with the relationship between the information and educational exchange programs it recommended merging. This recommendation became the basis of President Eisenhower's Reorganization Plan #8 which created the United States Information Agency.

Within days of his inauguration President Eisenhower had also asked eight distinguished citizens and a high-powered staff to serve, under William H. Jackson, on the President's Committee on International Information Activities. They were to survey and evaluate international information policies and activities, with particular reference to international relations and national security. They were to report on these activities specifically in light of the capabilities of the Soviet system and of the

United States and its allies. Their report, which is still classified, was to be completed in five months. The Committee clearly perceived its mandate to be so broad as to encompass all aspects of U.S. government information programs, including covert activities.

After reviewing the information programs at State, Defense, the Mutual Security Agency and the CIA, the Committee concluded that propaganda (sic) is most effective only as an auxiliary, to create a climate of opinion in which U.S. national policies can be accomplished; to be effective it must be dependable, convincing, and truthful. This was a new wrinkle on the word propaganda, to say the least. Assessing the U.S. foreign information program, the Committee recognized that it "suffered greatly from confusion regarding its mission," the first clear statement to that effect from any group studying U.S. information and cultural programs. In all probability it stimulated President Eisenhower's October 1953 Statement of Mission for USIA.

The Jackson Committee specifically took into account the findings of the Rockefeller Committee, the Fulbright/Hickenlooper Committee, and the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information in preparing its recommendations. It considered three basic options:

- (1) The separation of IIA from the Department of State and its establishment as an independent agency, under the National Security Council, and adding the information activities of Mutual Security Agency and Technical Cooperation Administration;

- (2) Retention in the Department of most of the educational exchange programs; and establishment of an independent agency for all "fast media" (radio, press, films), books and periodicals, and aid to libraries and information centers;

- (3) Retention of IIA in State, but with higher rank for the Administrator and with effective provision for autonomy in the selection, assignment and management of personnel and in the control of IIA appropriations.

The Committee concluded that the third option best solved the problem of locating and properly organizing the foreign information program because such an arrangement would facilitate policy guidance and provide the necessary unity of program by including all media within a single administration: ". . . In the interest of the closest possible integration of foreign information activities with the development of foreign policy, the Committee believes that the program should be left within the Department of State."

While clearly favoring the third option, the Jackson Committee nonetheless acquiesced to Dulles, who preferred an agency independent of the State

Department but under its policy control. In a letter to the President (May 2, 1953) the Committee said it would prefer to leave the program in the Department of State but recognized the strong arguments in favor of an independent agency and did not oppose the recommendations of the Rockefeller Committee, which paralleled Dulles' desires.

The Jackson Committee was not much concerned with educational activities. After describing the extensive exchange of persons program, the Committee noted that there had been differences of opinion among its administrators. It touched on selection criteria and short-range and long-term objectives; it questioned whether candidates should be chosen primarily for their academic or technical merit or for their potential usefulness to U.S. policy. The Committee's conclusions were hardly strong endorsements: "Exchange of persons, particularly students, for long-term cultural purposes is worthwhile and should be continued." The Committee saw these programs in operational terms: "More use should be made of the medium of exchange of persons in influencing the attitudes of important local individuals." Out of 59 recommendations, only this language dealt with educational and cultural programs. As in the May Report and the Rockefeller Report, the relationship between educational, cultural, and information programs was evaded.

By far the most exhaustive study of U.S. information and cultural programs, over 2000 pages, was undertaken by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In response to Senate Resolution #74 of the 82nd Congress, a document ringing with Cold War rhetoric, hearings began in November of 1952. The final report was delayed until February 1954, in part because of its thoroughness but also because of the turmoil created by the McCarthy investigations.

The Report makes it apparent that there was agreement on the overall value of U.S. overseas information and cultural programs. But there was no consensus on the other major points we have been considering. The testimony shows very little agreement on terms and perhaps even a certain amount of obfuscation. For example, when Senator Fulbright asked IIA Administrator Reed Harris why the word "education" had been dropped from the IIA name, Harris argued that the original title, U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Program, was too long and clumsy and that information encompasses education "in the broad sense."

As to goals, some witnesses, like former IIA Administrator Johnson, felt that the task of the information program was first to mobilize support for U.S. policies, second to build confidence in the U.S. capacity for world leadership, and third to roll back communism. Joseph Phillips, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, speaking to this position, reluctantly agreed, under Fulbright's prodding, that these

three objectives could be said to fall into separate categories of short-term and long-range goals and that the programs aimed at them should not necessarily be administered together.

Others saw the situation quite differently. Various members of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Educational Exchange and of the Board of Foreign Scholarships testified about their concerns. Martin R. P. McGuire, a member of both bodies, said that it was "most unfortunate" that exchange programs and information programs were in the same division: "The long-range foreign policy objectives of international understanding through educational exchange are different psychologically from political persuasion as carried out by the mass media. The two together weaken exchange and make it seem to be but a part of short-range propaganda activities." Historian Walter Johnson testified that he was uneasy that the IIA administered both information and educational exchange programs, and feared that the "Campaign for Truth," while necessary and admirable, already overshadowed long-range programs. Robert Stozier, Dean of Students at the University of Chicago, urged that IIA's "vague objectives" be clarified and added: "If the program is to be pursued in the adventuresome American tradition that ideas and learning are the source of our material greatness, then we must conduct it free from contradictory political pressure and conduct it as an educational enterprise."

McGuire described the high prestige of the educational exchange programs overseas: "Most countries are allergic to propaganda . . . Many are now weak economically and militarily but not culturally." He asked why the government had avoided the word "culture," saying it was time to understand that education is a part of culture, part of our total accumulated achievements in literature, the arts, technology and general know-how. He argued that the phrase "cultural exchange" should be substituted for "educational exchange" as a more inclusive term.

The Hickenlooper subcommittee, which was crystal clear in its condemnation of propaganda, noted the "lack of a common understanding of the objective of the information program on the part of the Administration, Congress, and the American people." Its final recommendation was to "adhere to the terms of Public Law 402 and maintain a tone in the program worthy of the United States and its citizens," a reference to the Smith-Mundt Act's stress on mutual understanding. The Hickenlooper Report did not come out until the U.S. Information Agency had already been created. The committee's organizational recommendations had been communicated to the President several months earlier. While opposed to separating the information and cultural functions from the Department of State, since that would tend to give exchange programs a "propaganda flavor," the Committee felt that, if the information operations were to be

vested in a new independent "information and propaganda agency," the educational exchange programs should remain in the Department of State.

Not surprisingly, the end result was a compromise. The Department of State was freed of having to operate overseas information programs, and the proponents of a new and separate Agency prevailed; but because of the insistence of the Subcommittee, cultural and educational programs were to stay in the Department of State until April of 1978.

The last report from this period, the Voorhees Report was addressed to the Administrator of IIA in June 1953. Anticipating change, Robert Johnson, during his brief incumbency, appointed a distinguished committee to draw up a plan for an independent agency. Former Congressman Tracy S. Voorhees headed the committee, which included Theodore S. Streibert, then Chairman of the Board of the Mutual Broadcasting Company and later to become the first director of USIA. The report focused on those weaknesses of IIA which flowed from policy inconsistencies. It argued that the key to the success of the new agency would lie in a clarification of its role in the creation, direction and implementation of foreign policy.

Basically an internal document, the Voorhees report concerned itself with structure, but the demoralization of IIA staff was a constant subtext: "Persistent public criticism of the information program continuing over a long period, and intensified in recent months, has resulted in many vacancies in key positions, in an utterly shaken morale, in fear, uncertainty, confusion and resultant indecision throughout the organization. The long continued lack of public and congressional confidence has caused frequent internal reorganizations and now seems destined to express itself in severe budget cuts with resultant reductions in force."

While it noted the problems caused by unclear program objectives, the Voorhees report did not address the specific mission of the new agency. Nor did it come to grips with the problem of whether the educational exchange programs should join the information program in the new agency, although USIA archives contain dozens of memoranda and working documents in the Voorhees files weighing the pros and cons of separating the information and exchange functions, and of whether to locate them in USIA or in State.

Staggering under the weight of scrutiny, exhausted from responding to requests for reports and information, depressed, demoralized, and resentful of the McCarthy investigations, the United States Information Agency began life on August 1, 1953, taking with it some 40 percent of the Department of State's total personnel. President Eisenhower named Streibert to head the new agency. On the recommendation of the NSC he issued an October 1953 Presidential directive which established the Agency's first set of objectives (see Appendix II), based on the Jackson Report. The

USIA was to "submit evidence to peoples of other nations . . . that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace." The Eisenhower directive called for: explaining and interpreting U.S. government objectives and policies; stressing the relation between U.S. policies and other peoples' "legitimate" aspirations; unmasking and countering hostile attempts to frustrate U.S. policies; and delineating aspects of American life and culture which facilitate understanding of U.S. government policies. This directive does not, in my judgment, meet the criteria called for by the Jackson Report: it contained within it the kind of internal contradictions and confusion which were to plague the new Agency throughout its 25-year existence.

### THE SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS: THE EARLY YEARS (1953-1960)

Even with a shiny new mandate, the Agency faced formidable problems in its first year. But under Streibert's business-like approach, USIA worked hard to establish itself as a partner in the foreign affairs community. At the end of his first term Eisenhower appointed Professor Arthur V. Larson, former Dean of the University of Pittsburgh Law School, who had served as a speech writer in the campaign, to replace Streibert. He aimed for a large increase in appropriations, but he was unpopular with the majority in Congress because of one particularly partisan speech and he resigned less than a year after taking office. Senator Lyndon Johnson and others at this time seriously suggested putting USIA back into the Department of State as Smith and Mundt had done in 1955 but Dulles blocked the move. Meanwhile a piece of turf had come into existence in Washington. There would be no shortage of warriors to defend it.

After Larson came George Allen, career diplomat and former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs. Allen tended to emphasize those aspects of the information program which he called "cultural activities" (i.e. English-language teaching programs, libraries, book translation programs, and bi-national center activities). With the temporary relaxation of international tensions following Stalin's death, the end of the Korean War, and the Soviet "peace offensive," more stress fell on the long-range policy aspects of the information program. During Allen's three-year tenure, USIA reached out for the longer view, for programs of culture and ideas, to provide people abroad with an opportunity better to understand the American people, their character and institutions.

Even during the Allen years, the information and cultural programs did not escape scrutiny. President Eisenhower's Advisory Committee on

Government Organization, still known as the Rockefeller Committee, made a series of recommendations between November 1958 and the summer of 1959 concerning the reorganization of the State Department, requesting "that it be given responsibility for the political, economic, informational and cultural aspects now encompassed by the present Department of State, the International Cooperation Administration, and the U.S. Information Agency." The intent was to assure that the Department had "the strength and breadth necessary to develop comprehensive long-range plans to deal effectively with the day-to-day conduct of foreign affairs." Rockefeller and his colleagues, presumably with Dulles' concurrence, had changed their minds.

Eisenhower agreed and legislation was drafted calling for an International Cultural and Information Administration in the Department of State under an Administrator at the Deputy Undersecretary level. But the bill never went forward. President Eisenhower then formed the Sprague Commission in December 1959, instructing it not to concern itself with organization. In the last year of the Eisenhower Administration, concerns about structure were once more put aside.

During this period the Congress was reviewing U.S. policies and programs with respect to changing world conditions. At the request of the Foreign Relations Committee, the Brookings Institution completed a study under the direction of H. Field Haviland, Jr. That plan called for a major overhaul of the U.S. government's foreign affairs agencies, recommending the creation of a new and enlarged Department of Foreign Affairs comprising three component departments: State, Foreign Economic Operations, and Information and Cultural Affairs. The proposal put both information and cultural affairs in one department in order to encourage coordination, but it allowed considerable autonomy for both. It noted that information activities tended to overshadow cultural ones and that "longer-term, less controversial, and ultimately more decisive influence may be gained through these [cultural] channels." The Brookings recommendations were never implemented. However, Secretary of State Christian Herter decided to replace the International Exchange Service with a Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs in June 1959, to unify and strengthen the Department's educational and cultural programs in which he believed deeply, raising these activities to a level equal to the Department's other Bureaus. His nominee, Robert L. Thayer, held the title of Special Assistant, with Assistant Secretary rank.

In December 1959, Eisenhower appointed Mansfield D. Sprague, a New York industrialist, to head the President's Commission on Information Activities Abroad. He requested that Sprague and his colleagues, who

included the Directors of USIA and the CIA, the Undersecretary of State, other top government officials, and several prominent businessmen, review and update the findings of the Jackson Committee.

On December 23, 1960, well after John F. Kennedy's election, the Sprague Commission submitted its report. The report, still classified, had three general conclusions:

- (1) the U.S. information system and efforts to integrate psychological factors into policy had become increasingly effective;
- (2) the evolution of world affairs, the effectiveness of the communist apparatus, and the growing role of public opinion internationally made continued improvement necessary; and
- (3) this area demanded substantially greater resources, better training of personnel, further clarification of the role of information activities, more competence on the part of government officials to deal with informational and psychological matters and improved coordination.

The Commission foresaw a protracted non-military conflict between the free world and the communist system and believed that the eventual outcome of the struggle would depend on the extent to which the United States would be able to influence attitudes. There were recommendations for strengthening U.S. covert facilities, for using more unattributed materials, for developing in-depth training in psychological factors for all officers dealing with foreign affairs, for seeking more knowledge about foreign opinion-molders, and for establishing "overall themes, armatures for words and actions."

Educational exchange programs and cultural activities were convincingly stressed. Long-term foreign educational assistance was recommended. The Report commended existing English-language teaching programs and urged their expansion. Sprague and his colleagues had reservations about "wholesale mobilization of private American international activities"; but they proposed an expanded international role for private foundations and the establishment of a quasi-independent Foundation for International Educational Development. As for educational exchange programs, the Commission urged that they be extended outside Western Europe and suggested that exchanges concentrate on "leaders," recognizing long-range as well as immediate objectives in order to operate for "net political gain." A surprising recommendation called for facilitating visits to the United States by leaders of the political left by revising cumbersome visa procedures.

Finally, the Commission urged that a single government agency work with universities to coordinate long-range policy; it suggested that State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs was the right body. While



specifically not mandated to review organization, the Commission recommended the continued existence of Eisenhower's Operations Coordinating Board, which dealt with the impact of our actions on foreign opinion; indeed it urged that the level of representation on that Board be raised.

After a year's work, Sprague submitted his report less than a month before the end of the Eisenhower Administration. Not surprisingly, few of its recommendations were heeded. Kennedy immediately set up entirely new task forces to examine information and cultural programs; the Operations Coordinating Board was soon abolished. The net impact of the Sprague Report, despite its broad vision, was minimal.

During the transition other Kennedy task forces studied the foreign policy machinery of the United States with considerable overlap. George Ball and John Sharon set up teams to look at various aspects of foreign policy. Lloyd Free, a former USIA employee in charge of the Institute for International Social Research, and W. Phillip Davison of the Rand Corporation headed the task force studying USIA. Donald Wilson, transition man at USIA, undertook a study; so did Thomas Sorensen, brother of Kennedy's Special Counsel-designate.

The Free-Davison Task Force recommended, among other things: 1) that a Committee on Information and Exchange Policy be established under the NSC to provide greater coordination of psychological objectives in all foreign affairs agencies; 2) that the cultural and exchange-of-persons programs in the Department of State be transferred to USIA; and 3) that USIA be renamed the International Exchange Agency or the United States Cultural Agency. The two in-house studies tended to coincide with the Free-Davison recommendations. More interesting than this general agreement were the attempts each made to clarify USIA's role as a psychological tool for U.S. foreign policy. While Free and Davison called for greater emphasis on programs designed to present a clear image of U.S. national goals, and Wilson underlined the importance of presenting U.S. achievements abroad, Sorensen urged that the Agency persuade, not just inform.

One recommendation was common to all three reports: that a man of stature head the information program, and in 1961 Kennedy appointed Edward R. Murrow. Meanwhile, rejecting the integration of USIA and State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (CU) programs, Kennedy elevated CU and made an Assistant Secretaryship available for Phillip H. Coombs, Williams College economist and Ford Foundation official. Coombs would be succeeded by a number of distinguished men, among them Lucius D. Battle, Charles Frankel, and John Richardson, until CU came to an end in 1978.

Another Free-Davison recommendation, dealing with a perceived lack of well-defined Agency objectives, took longer to implement. Following

the Bay of Pigs, the Soviet resumption of atmospheric nuclear testing, the construction of the Berlin Wall, and the 1962 missile crisis, a new Statement of Mission for USIA was finally issued in January 1963 (See Appendix III).

The new Mission of the U.S. Information Agency focused on achieving U.S. foreign policy objectives by influencing public attitudes in other nations. Never officially sanctioned by Congress, this Statement served the Agency, with adjustments, until 1978. It moved a long way from the Eisenhower emphasis on submitting evidence to peoples of other nations that the policies of the United States were in harmony with their aspirations. Like Eisenhower's, the new statement, referring to the peaceful world community of free and independent nations, aimed at unmasking and countering hostile attempts to distort U.S. objectives and policies, and urged emphasis on those aspects of American life and culture which would facilitate sympathetic understanding of U.S. policies.

The shift was of degree not kind. USIA now was to "influence public attitudes," not merely to "submit evidence." The Kennedy Statement did not chart a new course but sought merely to clarify and upgrade USIA's role in the foreign affairs community and to give a rationale to the information programs then underway.

#### RESPIRE FROM EXAMINING EYES (1961-1972)

The Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (Fulbright-Hays) consolidated the various educational and cultural exchange programs previously contained in other laws. Together with the Smith-Mundt Act, it still provided the legislative base for all overseas educational, cultural, and information activities. The Act authorized a number of new activities, emphasizing "mutuality," a newly prominent term in the discussion. New programs were provided for, even if all were not implemented by appropriations: among these, a "reverse flow" of foreign fine and performing arts to the United States, establishing new centers for technical and cultural exchange, financing U.S.-sponsored international scholarly meetings, and supporting private research on problems of educational exchange. A U.S. Advisory Commission on Educational and Cultural Affairs replaced the earlier Commission and its membership was sharply upgraded, under the chairmanship of John Gardner. This omnibus bill was for the most part hammered out in conference by staff aides, since there was little communication between the bill's two sponsors. It passed both the House and Senate by extremely wide margins.

The bill was designed to facilitate the use of virtually any and all reasonable means "to increase mutual understanding between the people

of the United States and the peoples of other countries." In the event that any of the aims of the bill were not clear, Fulbright made them explicit in a statement before the Senate in June 1961: "I utterly reject any suggestion that our educational and cultural exchange programs are weapons or instruments with which to do combat . . . there is no room and there must not be any room, for an interpretation of these programs as propaganda, even recognizing that the term covers some very worthwhile and respectable activities." Fulbright's remarks were targeted at the partisans of persuasion.

Meanwhile the persuaders were practicing their art and Murrow's prestige and good relations with Congress translated into increasing appropriations for USIA. Operating funds were raised by 25 percent in the 1961-1964 period. When Carl Rowan, former Deputy Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and Ambassador to Finland, succeeded Murrow in 1964, operating funds continued to increase, although the large 1965 appropriation increase struck an ominous note: the rising demands on USIA by the expanding Vietnam program.

The emergence of new national preoccupations were already bringing new emphases. President Johnson's "Great Society" programs and civil rights issues focused attention on U.S. domestic concerns. The communications revolution was already permitting the rest of the world to watch the internal U.S. scene closely. The emphasis in USIA moved beyond information to explanations, as Rowan brought an awareness of the need to place our domestic strife in context. Rowan also recognized the necessity of addressing the growing concerns of the developing world.

While study commissions and reorganization proposals were relatively few in these years, Columbia University philosophy professor Charles Frankel, later to become Assistant Secretary of State for CU, did a major study — *The Neglected Aspect of Foreign Affairs* — for the Brookings Institution in 1965. Frankel called for raising the educational and cultural programs "to a level consonant with their significance for the relations of the American people and other nations." He urged a more cooperative and more binding relationship between the government and the private sector involved in educational and cultural activities. He recommended that CU leadership be raised to the Undersecretary level, allowing the same access to the President that the Director of USIA enjoyed and providing greater authority to deal with the Department's Assistant Secretaries. He also suggested transferring the corps of "Cultural Attachés," still working for USIA in the field, to the new Undersecretary's office.

Frankel concluded that, if no change in the structure of the State Department were possible, a semi-autonomous foundation for educational and cultural affairs should be created, taking education and cultural affairs out of both State and USIA. Such a quasi-public foundation, like the

Smithsonian Institution, could receive support from both the private and public sector. The programs would then be insulated from short-term purposes. This proposal, not unlike one of the Sprague Commission's recommendations five years earlier, had a lonely history. It finally re-emerged in the Sixth Annual Report of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Educational and Cultural Affairs in 1968, plaintively titled, *Is Anybody Listening?*

In 1965 President Johnson appointed Leonard Marks, a lawyer specializing in the communications field, as the Agency's new director. At the swearing-in ceremony Johnson's remarks stressed the central role of truth in USIA's mission: "The United States has no propaganda to peddle . . . We are neither advocates nor defenders of any dogma so fragile or doctrine so frightened as to require it." The words at least were proud; their effect is another matter.

Marks articulated a major new concept for Agency attention under the phrase "nation building," meaning the bilateral sharing of information toward achieving mutual goals. Assisting other nations in their development through information programs was Marks' answer to dealing with the preoccupations of the developing world. He recognized, as had Rowan before him, that vast new audiences meant totally different challenges for the Agency. It is perhaps no accident that, under Marks, the Murrow-Rowan emphasis on persuasion diminished.

The Agency was still subject to studies and reorganization proposals. In the fall of 1967 the American Foreign Service Association asked Graham Martin to look at the organization of the nation's foreign affairs. The following August the Martin Committee recommended once more that "the new President use his reorganization authority to place USIA within the Department of State, to operate as an autonomous unit as is now the case with AID, and that its foreign affairs personnel come with the Foreign Service of the United States." Simultaneously, John Ensor Harr, a long-time student of foreign affairs operations, was proposing various changes in his book *The Professional Diplomat* (1969), which called for transferring USIA programs back to the Department.

Nor did the information, educational, and cultural programs remain outside political campaigns. In connection with the 1968 elections, the Republican Coordinating Committee produced a report, "The American Image Abroad," which Senator Howard Baker introduced into the Congressional Record in February 1968. It recommended the transfer of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs from the Department of State to USIA, "to relieve the Secretary of State of administrative burdens and allow the Director of USIA to concentrate on developing effective, long-range programs."

Meanwhile, discussion on the Hill continued. In December 1968, the Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, chaired by Dante Fascell, issued Report #6 on "Winning the Cold War: The U.S. Ideological Offensive." With admirable forbearance this report resisted the game of recommending organizational change. But it called for a "thorough systematic reappraisal of the entire information policy of the U.S. government," in view of the subcommittee's findings, which disclosed "a disheartening picture of the U.S. image abroad." It found the activities of USIA "sadly lacking." Convinced that the Agency needed new dimensions, duties, and emphases, Fascell introduced a bill in July 1969 establishing a committee to examine the overseas information activities of the U.S. government. The draft bill was superseded in 1972 by the bill establishing the Murphy Commission.

President Nixon turned to the media world and named Frank Shakespeare of CBS to USIA. Shakespeare's strong convictions may have been the trigger for a resurgence of Congressional and private discussion of the Agency in the early 1970s, with the familiar persistent questions about USIA's mission and purposes. A management study conducted for USIA by the Arthur D. Little company in June 1970 recommended that the Kennedy Statement of Mission be either revalidated or revised. Agency officials actively discussed the matter but no new statement was forthcoming.

When Shakespeare was replaced by former *Time* editor James Keogh in 1973, the stage was set for another round of scrutiny. USIA, after 20 years of existence, had achieved one major victory: it had become the focal point for debate about *its* mission, *its* objectives, and *its* methods, as contrasted with past discussions of the issues. And the quiet in-fought battles over turf, which thrived on obfuscation of issues, mounted as the Agency entered its third decade.

#### THE DEBATE CONTINUES (1973-1977)

By now the question of whether the United States needed overseas information and cultural programs, so much discussed in early studies, had disappeared. But concerns about the relative value of short-term and long-range goals and the proper methods of achieving them still weighed heavily on members of Congress and the Executive, particularly when they turned to organizational issues. At least seven studies grappled with these problems between 1973 and April 1978 when, under President Carter, the International Communication Agency was created.

Stressing the advisory role question, the importance of bringing USIA's unique resources to bear in the formulation of foreign policy, the 26th Annual Report of the U.S. Advisory Commission on Information lamented

the fact that the Agency's Director was not included in high-level decision-making on foreign policy concerns. If this was not to be remedied, the Commission suggested that USIA should cease to exist as an independent agency and its functions (with the exception of the VOA) returned to the Department of State. In its place it suggested that strictly information functions be integrated into the geographic bureaus of the Department of State and the rest of USIA be replaced by a new agency consolidating all educational and cultural activities presently carried out by the Department and USIA. The Commission's concluding recommendations called for an independent, comprehensive examination of USIA's mission and operations, an annual recommendation since 1968.

Shortly after this report, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, reporting on the FY 1972 USIA authorization bill, noted that "what is needed today is a more mature, confident approach to the world; making information about ourselves available but not trying to foist it off on people. We may be far better served if we remove our information and cultural efforts from the realm of sales and returned them to the realm of diplomacy." The Committee also questioned the validity of a separate information agency; suggesting that USIA's "cultural activities" return to State, the Committee considered abolishing the press, motion picture, and television services and retaining the Voice of America as a quasi-independent government agency. While no legislation to this effect was drafted, the Committee announced its intention to continue its review of USIA activities. This effort resulted in "The United States Communicates with the World" of 1975, a Library of Congress report written by former USIA officer Joel Woldman. Although the issues were fully analyzed and alternatives outlined, this study made no specific recommendations.

At the request of the Director of USIA and the Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs, Barbara White, a respected senior USIA officer, examined U.S. information and cultural programs, which she named "overseas *communication* programs." This was the first use of a word which would make its way in the years ahead. Seeking to identify the needs for these programs given a new communications environment and the requirements of U.S. foreign policy for the seventies, she concluded that the U.S. should offer services that are wanted and those that are in the U.S. interest to provide. She argued that increasingly these programs must be in the framework of "mutuality." In her 1973 report, she proposed a number of internal reorganizations to strengthen USIA: her report concurred with that of the 26th Advisory Commission favoring the retention of a separate USIA "for the seventies."

It is noteworthy that Ms. White concluded her study with a separate suggestion "for the eighties." Under the assumption that "the differences

between cultural and information functions would become even more blurred because 'information' programs would concentrate increasingly on information in depth about the United States and its institutions — a function that many now regard as 'cultural,' " she suggested the advantages of placing information activities in one agency, leaving major U.S. educational and scientific programs elsewhere. Looking still further ahead, Ms. White proposed consolidating all of these programs into one organization; but she recognized that such an organization could not be aimed directly at unilateral advocacy of U.S. foreign policy objectives. Thus she envisioned three separate entities:

- (1) a Public Affairs Office in the Department of State, to contain the traditional press and media functions of USIA, which support U.S. foreign policy positions and advise the Executive Branch on the foreign opinion implications of its policies;

- (2) a separate agency for educational, cultural, and scientific affairs, comprising the State Department's educational exchange and cultural programs, USIA's cultural activities, the Department's Science Office, and those programs of other government agencies such as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the National Science Foundation whose main purpose was overseas exchange; and

- (3) a separate Voice of America.

This proposal, not unlike Frankel's, was originally posited for the distant future. But in her remarks before the Stanton Panel a year later, Ms. White advanced the timing of her proposal: "Based on political judgments," she said, her suggestions for the eighties should "be attained as rapidly as possible."

The Commission on the Organization of the Government for the Conduct of Foreign Policy (the Murphy Commission) had been established by Congress in 1972 in response to Senator Fulbright's 1968 call for the appointment of a high-level commission to study the Department of State and USIA. The Commission's seven-volume report (June 1975) gave less than five full pages to considerations of public diplomacy, because they accepted the recommendations of the March 1975 Stanton Panel Report entirely. This tactic may have left the wrong impression on readers.

In a statement to the Chairman of the Murphy Commission in October 1973, USIA Director Keogh proposed a new solution: that USIA be retained as an independent information agency but that it include CU. He based his proposal on the "successful integration of these programs in the field" and considered their separation in Washington artificial. Keogh's

proposal was based on his own definitions of "information" and "cultural" activities. He considered the two to be complementary parts of the total communications effort and saw very little difference between them in view of their "common objectives."

Others did see differences and disagreed as to "common objectives." Under John Richardson, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs, CU articulated its objectives in a March 1974 Concept Paper (see Appendix IV): "We seek to increase mutual understanding, cooperation and community between people of the United States and other peoples by direct and indirect efforts to: (1) enlarge the circle of those able to serve as influential interpreters between this and other nations; (2) stimulate institutional development in directions which favorably affect mutual comprehension and confidence; and (3) reduce structural and technical impediments to the exchange of ideas and information."

Prompted by growing criticism from both public and private institutions, the 1973 recommendations of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for redistribution of USIA functions, and the repeated calls for an in-depth examination from the Advisory Commission on Information, in the summer of 1973 the Advisory Commission on Educational and Cultural Affairs decided to study ways in which USIA and CU might rearrange their functions, on the grounds that the separation was not working well. The CU Commission turned to Wayne A. Wilcox, a professor of political science on leave from Columbia University, then serving as Cultural Attaché in London, who agreed to do a thorough study, on the condition that it had the support of both Advisory Commissions. While this was never initiated, the Advisory Committee on Information did agree to cooperate in such an undertaking and an independent panel on International Information, Education, and Cultural Relations was created.

Frank Stanton, who had served for nine years as Chairman of the Advisory Commission on Information, was named as Chairman. Georgetown University's Center for Strategic and International Studies agreed to host the foundation-financed study. The Dean of the Georgetown School of Foreign Affairs, Peter Krogh, was named Vice-Chairman of the panel; and Walter Roberts resigned as Associate Director of USIA to take on the task of Project Director. All members of both Advisory Commissions were appointed members of the panel: they were supplemented by several other distinguished private citizens. In its ten-month study, the panel reached the most controversial conclusions of the decade.

By its own admission, the Stanton Panel did not set out to alter official information and cultural programs radically but instead sought ways of improving the government's capacity to conduct them. It pin-pointed three major problems: "(1) the division of one program between two agencies, USIA and the Department of State; (2) the assignment, to an



agency separate from and independent of the State Department, of the task of interpreting U.S. foreign policy to the world and advising in its formulation; and (3) the ambiguous positioning of the Voice of America at the crossroads of journalism and diplomacy.”

Making the fundamental distinction, for the first time in over 25 years of debate, that some activities of these programs were directly related to the formulation and execution of foreign policy and others more removed from day-to-day tactical issues, it isolated four functions: exchange of persons, general information, policy information, and advisory role. This simple distinction lay at the heart of the Panel’s thinking. The Panel agreed that the last two functions could not be performed without a close relationship to those who formulate policy and therefore recommended that they be fully integrated into the State Department. The first two functions, on the other hand, with their close dependency on the private sector, could best be performed in an autonomous institution, but within the Department of State. Thus the Panel proposed:

- (1) abolishing USIA and creating a new, quasi-independent Information and Cultural Affairs Agency, whose director would report to the Secretary of State, and which would combine the cultural and “general information” programs of both USIA and the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs;
- (2) establishing a new State Department Office of Policy Information, headed by a Deputy Undersecretary, to administer all programs which articulate and explain U.S. foreign policy;
- (3) setting up the Voice of America as an independent federal agency under its own board of overseers.

The originality of the Stanton Report lay in a single idea on which the entire structure rests: that policy information, i.e. the whitewashed American version of overt propaganda, should not be disseminated by the same institution which handles general information and cultural affairs. For the first time in almost fifty years, a clear idea had shown how both policy advocacy and information and cultural affairs could be structured in the American system.

#### THE DEBATE DOZES OFF (1977- )

While the rest of the story is not the concern of this paper, it would be unfair to leave the reader here. Supported by 19 of 21 members and strongly endorsed by the Murphy Commission in June 1975, the Report was a major factor in stimulating the interest of the new President and the Congress “in effecting organizational change” in this domain. Dante Fascell’s hearings began in June 1977 and resulted in the 700-page volume

*Public Diplomacy and the Future.* Following these hearings, President Carter's Reorganization Plan #2 merging USIA and CU was approved by Congress in November 1977. Discussion seems to have dwelt mostly on the new Agency's name.

As an example of the high tone of the debate, one White House staffer recalls being laughed out of the room when he proposed the name Agency for International Understanding. "International Communication" would prove scarcely more popular. In August 1982 the name reverted to United States Information Agency. Most people rejoiced at ridding the agency of a clumsy and unpopular name; yet some contended that the educational and cultural programs, which came to USICA in 1978, were no longer represented in the Agency's title.

By this time the light shed by the Stanton Panel had dimmed. The "two distinct but related goals" outlined in Carter's message transmitting the Plan to Congress were "to tell the world about our society and policies — in particular our commitment to cultural diversity and individual liberty, and to tell ourselves about the world, so as to enrich our own culture as well as to give us the understanding to deal effectively with problems among nations." This new view of things was expanded on in the Presidential Memorandum to USICA Director John Reinhardt of March 1978 (See Appendix V). It used the word "information" three times, in the new context of general information; "culture" and "cultural" are sprinkled throughout, nine times in all. And "propaganda" is eschewed as bluntly as it can be with the new Agency enjoined from undertaking any activities which are "covert, manipulative or propagandistic." But the functional simplicity of the Stanton Report's concept is no longer visible.

The Stanton Panel cast the die, but more powerful hands snatched it away. The issue was joined before the Fascell hearings began in a sharp exchange of letters between Stanton and Elmer Staats, Comptroller General and head of the GAO. In May 1977 the GAO had completed one more report, this time confined to the Stanton findings; it accepted only one recommendation, that which urged that information and cultural programs be merged. Stanton's response, read into the first day's proceedings, accused the GAO of failing to understand the conceptual distinctions which lay at the heart of the Panel's recommendations and of falling victim to the turf-owners, specifically those who defended "USIA's vested interests."

Many in these hearings would base their vision on long-held views paralleling the Stanton Panel's perception. Ambassador William Tyler, for example, made the following statement on June 21, 1977:

It is absolutely essential to distinguish between information relating to national policies and objectives on the one hand,

and information relating to the infinitely varied aspects of national life on the other. I believe that if this basic distinction is defined and accepted, much of the existing semantic and conceptual confusion will be dispelled and certain principles of organization will suggest themselves logically and naturally. . . . I think it is a mistake to lump all information and cultural activities under a common catch phrase such as "public diplomacy," which obscures the vital distinction to which I have referred.

Ambassador Tyler and the Stanton Panel's argument lost out in the hearings to contentious turf warriors and longstanding mindsets, despite an impressive array of statements by experienced students of these issues and prominent Americans.

The following exchange took place on the first day of the hearings. It may perhaps serve as a wry epilogue for our story:

*Frank C. Conahan* (Associate Director, International Division, GAO): I think the whole argument which still persists, as shown by some of the studies, is that the people who are engaged in propaganda cannot effectively carry out our cultural relations. We have got to decide if any objective, or one objective of USIA, is propaganda. We don't think it is. But somewhere, we have got to come up with a national statement which says it is or it is not.

*Elmer Staats*: Where that argument goes astray is that they don't recognize that USIA has been carrying on cultural programs ever since it was set up and no one has found anything incompatible with the carrying-on of those activities and the information.

*Dante Fascell*: It might be useful if we just dropped from our lexicon the word 'propaganda' and I don't know that you need persuasion. Is pure news propaganda? Is pure news persuasion? Pure news, whatever that is, certainly has a fantastic impact on society, and to that extent, it becomes part of the cultural milieu in which we live and is therefore propagandistic because it is a basis for me to make decisions. And yet, I am relying upon another man's judgment as to what is pure news or what the facts are.

I don't make an independent investigation, so I don't know that we should get hung up on the semantics of what the thing is. I think we need to say what we need to do and just do it.



# *APPENDIX I*

Other issues which have consistently plagued the numerous studies and evaluations of U.S. information and cultural programs are noted here in order to present a more complete picture of the areas of concern which have repeatedly occupied examinations of the USIA and its predecessor organizations:

1) The advisory role: should the head of U.S. information programs assume an active advisory role to the President and the NSC on the public affairs implications of U.S. policies?

2) The evaluation process: how effectively can the results of U.S. overseas information and cultural programs be measured?

3) Audiences: should programs be targeted toward "opinion leaders" and elites, or should a broader-based audience be sought for these programs?

4) The Voice of America: how closely should the VOA be tied to U.S. foreign policy? Is retaining its credibility, based on complete truthfulness, a worthwhile goal or should it broadcast only information directly supportive of foreign policy objectives?

5) Attribution: to what extent and under what circumstances should materials distributed by U.S. information programs be attributed to the U.S. government?

6) World-wide or targetted media products: are world-wide materials sufficiently effective or would specifically designed media products for individual countries better accomplish information and cultural goals?

7) Public/Private sector efforts: should U.S. government programs compete with or supplement private sector initiatives?

8) Personnel: should the personnel administering overseas information and cultural programs be integrated into the Foreign Service personnel system?



## *APPENDIX II*

### MISSION OF THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

(Adopted by the President and the NSC, October 22, 1953)

In carrying out its responsibilities in accordance with pertinent statutes and Presidential directives, the U.S. Information Agency shall be guided by the following:

1. The purpose of the U.S. Information Agency shall be to submit evidence to peoples of other nations by means of communication techniques that the objectives and policies of the United States are in harmony with and will advance their legitimate aspirations for freedom, progress and peace.

2. The purpose in paragraph 1 above is to be carried out primarily:

- a. By explaining and interpreting to foreign peoples the objectives and policies of the United States Government.
- b. By depicting imaginatively the correlation between U.S. policies and the legitimate aspirations of other people of the world.
- c. By unmasking and countering hostile attempts to distort or to frustrate the objectives and policies of the United States.
- d. By delineating those important aspects of the life and culture of the people of the United States which facilitate understanding of the policies and objectives of the Government of the United States.

Note: An additional paragraph, still classified, deals with inter-governmental coordination of non-attributed information.





# APPENDIX III

## THE KENNEDY STATEMENT OF MISSION

(January 1963)

The mission of the U.S. Information Agency is to help achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives by (a) influencing public attitudes in other nations, and (b) advising the President, his representatives abroad, and the various departments and agencies on the implications of foreign opinion for present and contemplated U.S. policies, programs and official statements.

The influencing of attitudes is to be carried out by overt use of the various techniques of communication — personal contact, radio broadcasting, libraries, book publication and distribution, press, motion pictures, television, exhibits, English-language instruction, and others. In so doing, the Agency shall be guided by the following:

1. Individual country programs should specifically and directly support country and regional objectives determined by the President and set forth in official policy pronouncements, both classified and unclassified.

2. Agency activities should (a) encourage constructive public support abroad for the goal of a peaceful world community of free and independent states, free to choose their own future and their own system so long as it does not threaten the freedom of others; (b) identify the United States as a strong, democratic, dynamic nation qualified for its leadership of world efforts toward this goal, and (c) unmask and counter hostile attempts to distort or frustrate the objectives and policies of the United States. These activities should emphasize the ways in which U.S. policies harmonize with those of other peoples and governments, and those aspects of American life and culture which facilitate sympathetic understanding of U.S. policies.

The advisory function is to be carried out at various levels in Washington, and within the Country Team at U.S. diplomatic missions abroad. While the Director of the U.S. Information Agency shall take the initiative in offering counsel when he deems it advisable, the various departments and agencies should seek counsel when considering policies and programs which may substantially affect or be affected by foreign opinion. Consultation with the U.S. Information Agency is essential when programs affecting communications media in other countries are contemplated.

U.S. Information Agency staffs abroad, acting under the supervision of the Chiefs of Mission, are responsible for the conduct of overt public information, public relations and cultural activities — i.e. those activities intended to inform or influence foreign public opinion — for agencies of the U.S. Government except for Commands of the Department of Defense.



# APPENDIX IV

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE, BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS (CU)

### THE CU PROGRAM CONCEPT

(March 12, 1974)

*Purpose.* Pursuant to the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, CU-sponsored programs are designed to strengthen patterns of informal two-way communication in ways which will favorably influence relations between the United States and other countries and help build the human foundations of the structure of peace.

*Objectives.* More concretely, we seek to increase mutual understanding, cooperation and community between the people of the United States and other peoples by direct and indirect efforts to:

1. *Enlarge the circle of those able to serve as influential interpreters between this and other nations.*

We enable current and potential opinion leaders and decision makers to gain through first-hand experience, more accurate perceptions and a deeper understanding of those realities in each others' societies which ultimately tend to affect international relations.

2. *Stimulate institutional development in directions which favorably affect mutual comprehension and confidence.*

We encourage a wide variety of key institutions, such as education systems and the mass and specialized media, to strengthen their capacity to increase understanding of cultural, social, economic and ideological differences, similarities and interdependencies.

3. *Reduce structural and technical impediments to the exchange of ideas and information.*

We promote responsible leadership dialogue, relevant interest-group interaction, and significant institutional linkages; in this context, we encourage further extension of English as an international language.

*Program Criteria.* To gain the greatest return from available resources, all of the following criteria are considered in deciding whether to undertake, facilitate or endorse particular programs or projects:

1. They should be multi-purpose — improving the process of intercultural communication while furthering U.S. and shared international goals of other kinds as well.

2. They should be designed to achieve substantial multiplier and side effects through such means as stimulating and reinforcing other constructive programs and mechanisms, private and governmental.

3. They should engage the energies of influential or potentially influential individuals of exceptional talent, achievement or promise and offer them face-to-face cross-cultural experiences of lasting value.

4. They should reflect the two-way character of effective communication by emphasizing mutuality in planning, participation, support and benefit. (This recognizes the reality that Americans, like others, harbor myths and misconceptions which impair understanding.)

5. They should take full advantage of American strengths which facilitate intercultural communication, including individual freedom, pluralism, openness and hospitality, in addition to the many fields of special American competence.

# APPENDIX V

THE WHITE HOUSE  
MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR, INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNICATION AGENCY

(March 13, 1978)

As you and the International Communication Agency embark upon your new mission, I want to outline my views of the purposes and functions of the Agency, and the manner in which it should conduct its affairs.

In transmitting Reorganization Plan No. 2 of 1977 to the Congress, I said that the principal function of the Agency should be to reduce the degree to which misperceptions and misunderstandings complicate relations between the United States and other nations. In international affairs, as in our personal lives, the starting point for dealing effectively with others is the clearest possible understanding of differing points of view. The fundamental premise of the International Communication Agency is that it is in our national interest to encourage the sharing of ideas and cultural activities among the people of the United States and the peoples of other nations.

It is in the general interest of the community of nations, as well as in our own interest, that other nations and other peoples know where this great country stands, and why. We want them to understand our values, our institutions — the vitality of our culture — and how these relate to their own experience. We must share our successes, and look for help in learning from our failures. We must make available to people of other nations facts they would not otherwise learn about ourselves and our views.

It is also in our interest — and in the interest of other nations — that Americans have the opportunity to understand the histories, cultures and problems of others, so that we can come to understand their hopes, perceptions and aspirations. In so doing, the Agency will contribute to our capacity as a people and as a government to manage our foreign affairs with sensitivity, in an effective and responsible way.

You and your colleagues have five main tasks:

1. To encourage, aid and sponsor the broadest possible exchange of people and ideas between our country and other nations. It will be your job to:

— Continue successful government-sponsored exchange programs that now come under your Agency, and improve them wherever possible.

— Encourage private institutions in this country to develop their own forms of exchange and aid those that are in the broadest national interest.

— Provide counsel and information on our international exchange program as a whole, and assist in maintaining broad participation in the international exchange programs conducted by government departments and agencies, including those administered by the International Communication Agency.

2. To give foreign peoples the best possible understanding of our policies and our intentions, and sufficient information about American society and culture to comprehend why we have chosen certain policies over others. In so doing, you will wish to draw upon thoughtful and representative Americans, through the use of radio and television, magazines and other printed materials, and through seminars, personal contacts, the presentation of American art and culture, and the teaching of the English language where necessary and appropriate.

3. To help insure that our government adequately understands foreign public opinion and culture for policy-making purposes, and to assist individual Americans and institutions in learning about other nations and their cultures.

4. To assist in the development and execution of a comprehensive national policy on international communications, designed to allow and encourage the maximum flow of information and ideas among the peoples of the world. Such a policy must take into consideration the needs and sensitivities of others, as well as our own needs.

5. To prepare for and conduct negotiations on cultural exchanges with other governments, aware always that the most effective sharing of culture, ideas and information comes between individual people rather than through formal acts of governments.

In discharging these responsibilities, you must keep these goals in mind:

Since all the Agency's activities bear a relationship to our foreign policies and interests, you will seek guidance on those policies and interests from the Secretary of State.

You will be responsible for maintaining the scholarly integrity and non-

political character of the exchange programs within your agency, and for maintaining the independence of the Voice of America news broadcasts. You will wish to assure that they reflect the broad interests of the United States and of the people served by these programs.

I look forward to your periodic accounting of your undertakings and your recommendations on the conduct of public diplomacy.

Finally, the Agency will undertake no activities which are covert, manipulative or propagandistic. The Agency can assume — as our founding fathers did — that a great and free society is its own best witness, and can put its faith in the powers of ideas.

I'm sure the Congress and the American people join with me in wishing you every success in these important endeavors.

Jimmy Carter





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