

JHW

RFE

Seen also by

MSB

LCD

PEM

JMP

mz

|     |            |    |
|-----|------------|----|
| CIB |            | EW |
|     |            |    |
|     |            |    |
| EL  | AUG 19 '49 | Eu |

June 22, 1949

Underdeveloped areas

JUN 13 1950

Copy of pp. 1-2 is filed 908

P+P

### Study of Efforts to Help Backward Peoples to Help Themselves

I suggested to GKS that IHD should precipitate its rich experience of nearly a half century in helping people to help themselves to better public health. In making this suggestion, I had several considerations in mind:

(1) That IHD experience was a rich storehouse of lessons as to how to work effectively in bringing the knowledge and skills of the industrialized countries to the service of countries and peoples who were, from the point of view of an industrial civilization, less advanced.

(2) The industrially undeveloped countries are not going to be permitted to evolve their own societies as they might choose from within by themselves. Whether for purposes of power, of revolution, of trade, of humane service, or even of understanding, they are not going to be let alone. The world is shrinking too rapidly. This process of political, economic and cultural penetration is a long-time process.

(3) The U. S. is going into this penetration of backward countries on a mass-production basis. All of the above features are represented in our program, which has now culminated in President Truman's point No. 4.

(4) We are going into this program with a maximum sense of our own power, our own interest, our own goodness, and our own knowledge. We have very little knowledge of the parties of the second part, - their social systems, their human relations situations, their resources in personnel, their philosophies and values in life. Our conceit and our desire for speed gives us very little readiness to study these matters before acting. Yet, the delivery end is one of the crucial points of the whole problem.

(5) Consequently, our efforts are likely to lead to extravagance, to injury to the peoples and cultures we are trying to serve, to erosion of

Willkie's reservoir of good will for us, and to help to Russia in her campaign to win the minds and loyalties of these people. It is not inconceivable that if we mess our advances up badly enough, we may become, as the Governor General of India recently said to a friend of mine we were becoming "the most-hated country in the world."

(6) Since this effort is a long-time effort and we will be re-assessing our experience from time to time as we discover our failures, it would seem to be the task of someone to try to distill the lessons which the world's varied experience contains as to the policies which make for effective help in helping others to help themselves. Most of all would this seem to be the function of the RF, which has had a unique experience, a unique selflessness, and a unique freedom for experimenting.

I send this memorandum to you because the IHD experience is merely one corner of the experience whose lessons should be distilled. I consider it important that a distillation of the similar lessons be made from the record of other agencies than IHD.

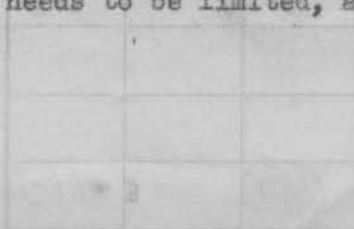
In the last fifty years various private (as well as public) agencies have had a lot of experience in trying to help backward peoples to help themselves. Foundations, missionary groups, business and public agencies started out with naive ideas as to the way of working. Souls to save, money to burn, areas to exploit, - these were prominent motivations. All the mistakes in the book were made. But the best of these ventures learned and developed sound standards. Now we are likely through government to repeat the mistakes that have been made by others, instead of systematically using their experience.

I hope you will undertake the task of first assembling the experience of these other agencies, then digesting it, - along with your other duties pertaining to the Far East and to government and public administration. I turn to you for this because of your experience for eight years in such a country and your interest in looking at these problems at the grass roots from the point of view of the practical way in which they work out.

What does the task include? It means approach primarily from the vantage ground of the peoples and the social and cultural systems of the backward countries. What policies work there, and what do not? What helps them to help themselves? What serves to strengthen their cultural, economic and political integrity and evolution, and what injures? In short, I am suggesting a thorough collection of the experience of others and, then, a review of past and current experience with a view to developing certain principles of approach that should characterize the efforts of agencies honestly seeking to help others to help themselves. Some illustrations of what I have in mind are contained in my memorandum of March 8 about Crete. - copy filed 900

Such a task as I am suggesting to you can easily lead to an omnium-gatherum. The task needs to be limited, and I suggest the following to that end:

Pro  
unco-2



(1) We should think of approximately 18 months as the period in which to complete the task.

(2) I would suggest a preliminary reconnaissance to determine what groups and agencies and experience would warrant intensive study. I assume the work of foundations, of certain missionary and welfare groups, of business and government would be considered.

(3) After having determined the agencies that are worth study, the task will involve:

(a) Collecting and reading pertinent documents.

(b) Interviewing men who know the experiences and guiding philosophy of the ventures, and recording their conclusions.

(c) Perhaps visiting certain countries involved and studying developments on the ground.

What will come out of this? I would hope that the following would ensue:

(1) A collection of digested materials and experience that will constitute a reference center for those, whether in government, in foundations, in business, in universities, or in journalism, who are interested in practice or in studies of this problem. Some publication might result from this. For example, a monograph of, say, 100 pages, that might be entitled "How to Help and How to Hurt Backward Peoples." But we needn't cross that bridge now.

(2) Light on the adequacy of training of our personnel to work in backward areas.

\*\*\*\*\*

For as long a period as we can foresee, I assume that the most important issues in international relations will center around these four sets of problems:

(1) The policies, organization and program of the United Nations.

(2) The development and administration of an effective, consistent, practicable, and peacefully motivated foreign policy for the United States.

(3) Relations between Russia and the West - international and internal.

(4) The evolution of the relations between the industrialized and politically powerful countries and the non-industrialized or so-called backward

Excerpted for  
910  
P+P  
International  
relations

countries. This proposed study is addressed to one aspect of the last of these problems. In my judgment, it is not the least.

Your own excellent memorandum suggests the task more adequately than this memorandum. I would cite only one dissent; I would not completely limit study to American experience. I would learn where learning is to be done.

I would appreciate it if you would undertake this important, - and neglected, - task.

JHW

JHW:EES