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Area studies

Proposal for a National Plan of Work
on
Foreign Languages, Institutions, and Customs

JUN -8 1959

1. The United States has developed from a small beginning a variety of resources in personnel to deal with unusual foreign languages, institutions, and customs. The war has brought us that benefit for improved international relations and also new responsibility for protection and development of these resources.

This memorandum rests on two assumptions:

- (1) Language control is basic for direct dealings on any practical issue or for any scholarly relation of the United States with a foreign country. This is the fact even in cases where English is the established secondary language of the other country.
- (2) The economical, orderly development of centers for training and research depends on cooperation of government departments, organized business, and educational institutions.

For these two assumptions the United States has evidence from the record of Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Holland.¹ From the open record these countries entered the war prepared in their knowledge of foreign languages and cultures in this descending order of strength.

2. In the United States wartime expansion in this respect has been rapid but wasteful. Institutions that now should be the sources of fresh supply of men and material have sent their language and subject matter specialists into government service or to government training centers. Much duplication of effort and striving for top personnel have been the consequences. This point can easily be documented.

3. The training programs of army and navy have developed many new potentials of manpower and material. The ASTP programs in universities also have brought to the surface scores of men who should have future careers somewhere that use their high abilities for this type of work.

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See the text and appendices of the appeal to the British Treasury of the School of Oriental Studies (University of London), "Case for Increased Financial Assistance" (June, 1938) 49 pp.

4. The choices for the United States are to develop separate schools or related schools to meet the needs of government, organized business, and educational institutions. From British experience one can see what occurs without related action of government and universities. It is true that the University of London from the beginning assisted the government in work of the London School of Oriental Studies (now called the School of Oriental and African Studies). On the other hand stands the following summary of conditions in Chinese studies in Great Britain with respect to university planning. In September 1939, Dr. J. J. L. Duyvendak, University of Leiden, reported in conversation on requests to him from Great Britain for advice on Chinese studies and personnel. His leadership in the field and his external position made this a logical step to take. Four chairs of Chinese in Great Britain fell vacant successively during 1938 and 1939. Cambridge took Gustav Haloun, a Sudetan Czech who had been driven out of Prague and Göttingen. Oxford took a native Chinese, Tschien Yinkoh. London took Simon, a German citizen. London agreed that Wolfram Eberhard, son-in-law of the astronomer at Potsdam Observatory, was the logical candidate for a second vacancy but balked on another German in such a post. None of these appointments would have been necessary if either Dutch or American sources had been ready to deliver worthy candidates. As for Great Britain herself, she had never troubled to develop her own men to replace her old leaders of the rank of Arthur Waley and James Legge. Some useful comparisons might be drawn from American experience.

5. As a basis for discussion the following draft is submitted to show the needs. Three levels of work are to be noted:

- (1) General orientation in the institutions and customs of certain countries, all work in English; at the junior college level of a university or college.
- (2) Centering on one or two schedules of knowledge of a foreign culture, the student would have intensive work in the essential language for work with primary sources in geography, economics, history, literature, philosophy; at the senior college level in a university or college.
- (3) Specialization for university teaching and research or for foreign duty under organized business or a government department; at the senior college and graduate school levels of the university.

In return of costs level (1) should pay its way by fees, level (2) should pay one-half its way by fees, level (3) can exist in a university or college where (1) and (2) are steady feeders of men and fees. These three levels for any one language and culture can exist in only a few institutions, and then only if protected from adverse competition. Level (1) will exist on its own income in scores of colleges that feed the best qualified men into appropriate centers to be developed for work in one of the three indicated outlets.

Ideally, the universities should have agreement among themselves on division of labor to give solid plans for the Pacific Coast, in the Middle West, and on the Atlantic Coast. This is particularly true for the more

expensive and least developed specialties demanded for relations with Eastern Asia, India, and Russia.

A theoretical description of a division of labor can be drawn from present facts on conditions in five institutions which work on Eastern Asia, India, and Russia:

- (1) Claremont Colleges, California. The first two levels of work on China and Japan can be reconstituted and developed satisfactorily.
- (2) Stanford University. The first two levels on China, Japan, Dutch East Indies, Malay Straits, possibly Russia. The complex at Stanford is typical of the mixed growth under war conditions that now demands clear decisions on policy.
- (3) University of California, Berkeley. All three levels on China, Russia, India. Here again the potentials are greater than the actual power under present conditions.
- (4) University of Washington. The first two levels, possibly the third level, on China, Russia, possibly Japan. (At Washington as at Stanford the exclusion of Japanese nationals militates definitely against work at the first two levels, for which native speakers and teachers are desired.) Here as elsewhere future growth is dependent upon the return of men in war services.
- (5) University of Colorado. The first two levels on China and Japan. The distinctive record of the Navy School in Japanese is central to future planning of the University of Colorado, which lacks personnel and library resources at present to do more complex work.

6. Reasons for desiring new planning now are found in discussion of their present problems in this area with the executive officers of these five institutions. These talks have gone so far as to produce a desire for a conference of representatives of the five institutions. The Rockefeller Foundation is ready to call such a conference.

The officers of the Foundation do not wish to anticipate the needs of government departments or to do more than present the preceding general facts on the possibilities for united effort. Neither government departments nor educational institutions have yet faced the direct competition of organized business. This may be competition or it may be cooperation. When the pull of organized business comes, one hopes that it can be used. Again an example appears in the experience of a foreign country. Some years ago a fellow of The Rockefeller Foundation, J. J. de Lange, had been trained for X-ray work at Delft under Dr. Van Iterson. After he completed his training, Dutch Shell picked out de Lange to start their X-ray research on constituent facts regarding asphalt. Van Iterson told them in effect, "This is no way to treat science. Leave de Lange here. He is the only man in Holland able to do advanced research and to train men. Leave him here and he'll produce for you." They agreed and paid his salary.

7. The Rockefeller Foundation has an immediate interest in a definition of this problem by institutions on the Pacific Coast. Each of the five institutions named under heading 5 will have returning to duty its former fellows -

provided they see clearly what prospects are after war service for work in Japanese, Chinese, and Russian studies.

Before proposing a conference of administrative officers and faculty members for discussion of a division of labor, to be held in late August or early September, the officers of two divisions of the Foundation wish to submit this memorandum for review by government departments. State, Army, Navy, possibly Commerce and Agriculture may be interested. On the oral suggestion of Assistant Secretary Shaw, this draft of background data has been made for first examination by the Secretary of State.

David H. Stevens

June 7, 1944