

February 28, 1955

C/55-6

Memorandum to: Members of the Planning Committee

From: Ithiel de Sola Pool

Subject: Progress of the International Communications Program

It is some time since I've written you. I've been conscious for some time that I should keep the Committee better informed, but for the first year of the program it always seemed as though we had only plans and preparations and little to report. Then a couple of months ago enough had happened to write and send you the Progress Report together with a few articles that had appeared up to that time. Now data is beginning to flow in torrents and a trickle of results is beginning. In this happy state I can start something long since planned. I hope now to send you an informal periodic news letter about what we are doing and what we are finding. Along with these bulletins I will send you from time to time the articles and some of the working papers being produced.

Enclosed with this bulletin is Harold Isaacs' first report on his study of American attitudes towards India and China. (Please don't circulate it because Harold is still interviewing and does not want knowledge of it to affect potential subjects.) Harold has now interviewed about 100 persons at some length. His is an elite sample including public figures, businessmen, opinion leaders, and others who have had some contact with Asian affairs. He has succeeded in reaching most of the top people concerned with relations with India. The paper which is enclosed is a preliminary report of the images he found of China. Later parts will deal with the images of Chinese and with parallel images of India and the Indians. Incidentally, Dorothy Jones is doing a small study for Harold of stereotypes of Chinese and Indians in American movies.

Also enclosed are four out of a group of 10 articles which may not be a major break through in social theory, but are quite amusing. There is in Japan an Institute of Science of Thought. For some time I have been aware of their content analyses and other activities on Japanese mass media, but none of the material has been available in English. A member of the Institute is in Cambridge this year. We have asked Mr. Kato and his wife to translate 10 selected articles in the hope that they might be of some use to students of international communications. If you don't have time to read all four of the enclosed I can recommend highly the ones on popular songs and on life counseling columns. One of the other articles reporting a reaction of working girls to a film was written by an uneducated factory worker. The forthcoming articles cover the gamut of forms of Japanese popular culture.

Dan Lerner is sending extremely interesting letters back from France. He has succeeded in getting remarkable cooperation there. The work is proceeding under the auspices of an organization he formed called "Institut de Recherches Sociales sur la Cooperation Europeenne". The executive committee of that organization which is directly responsible for the research consists of Raymond Aron, Jean Stoetzel, and Dan himself. The Comite de Patronage has as its President, Andre Siegfried, and in addition, Gaston Berger, Directeur general de l'Enseignement Superieur, Robert Bothereau, Secretaire general de la C.G.T. Force Ouvriere, Rene Cassin, Vice-President du Conseil d'Etat, Robert Marjolin, Secretaire executif de l'O.E.C.E., Gaston Tessier, President de la Confederation Internationale des Syndicats Chretiens, and Georges Villiers, President du Conseil National du Patronat Francais, (The French NAM). These committees are working committees, not just lists of names. All the members have become enthusiastic supporters of the enterprise. General Gruenther has also shown much interest in the Institut which represents not only a useful research program on the problems of top significance in France today, but also a major break through in French political relationships. For the first time leaders of capital, labor, and public life are sitting down together to examine the orientation of France in the world. This research is having its feedback on to policy almost before it has begun. Because of their tremendous significance I am appending several quotations from Dan's letters. Please treat them as confidential since the letters were obviously personal.

I wish I could send you more details of Dan's work, but so far what we have are primarily fascinating interviews, and these are, of course, not for distribution. Most of the interviews are in Paris, where the material is being typed, assembled, and analyzed. A few (particularly those with certain Americans), have been sent over here for reasons of international delicacy. His interviewing crew are of unusually high calibre. They are accepted members of the groups among whom they are interviewing. They include young businessmen, newspapermen, professionals, etc. The initial methodological difficulty he ran into was to persuade the interviewers, (even more than the respondents), that certain personal and psychological queries were relevant to the purposes of the study. There has, however, been very little resistance to any other aspect of the study.

I have not sent you the Keesing manuscript on communications in Samoa because it is 600 hectographed pages. If you want to see it in its present form, please let me know. We still have a few copies available.

For the past few months Professor Kali Prasad of the Psychology Department of the University of Lucknow has been with us in Cambridge. He brought with him two sets of questionnaires which he used in our studies. He replicated Howard Perlmutter's experiments on power and communications and on xenophilia. The power and communications set have now been coded and statistically analyzed. For once we can say of a cross-cultural psychological experiment that it worked. The instrument apparently drew with success in Boston, in Montreal, and also in Lucknow. The differences in the data are fascinating. I don't want to anticipate Professor Prasad's interpretation of the results, but I can only say that they document beautifully certain glib generalizations that one might make about national character. The Indian results are particularly distinctive on the dimensions of hierarchy and aggression-submission.

The trade study is going extremely well. We have had an article accepted by Fortune. That, however, is a straightforward report of businessmen's views on foreign economic policy. It does not get into the communications problems which we were exploring. The communications data is by far the most complex part, and we are busily analyzing it at this time. We find some rather striking things about the effect of foreign travel on businessmen. Extensive and recent foreign travel cannot be said either to make them more liberal nor more protectionist, nor to reinforce their previous ideas. What it does do is to moderate their previous ideas, whatever they may have been. The self-interest of their firm is the major determinant of the stand on foreign trade taken by businessmen who have traveled little. The businessmen who have traveled a lot, however, form a distinct universe whose stand on foreign trade is much the same, regardless of the self-interest of their firm. It is also much the same as that of businessmen whose firms have no self-interest.

We are now sending a follow-up mail questionnaire to our respondents to determine what changes have taken place in the past year and to see if we can predict from our initial interviews which ones have acted in what way. In order to maximize the returns to this questionnaire without the necessity for further follow-ups, we are enclosing a report which shows that our respondents made a tremendous impression upon the interviewers. This is the result of a little study we had made by NORC of how interviewing businessmen affected the interviewers' image of them.

I am enclosing one item prepared for the trade study: a background paper which William Miller did for us on the history of some of the same topics as we are now investigating.

We have finally begun to put some of our work to use at the policy level. Recently Edward Bernays formed a National Committee for an Adequate U.S. Information Program. He asked us to act as hosts to the initial conference of the Committee. The conference was quite a success. Approximately 50 people came to the meeting, which was under the auspices of the Committee, with the Graduate School of Public Administration at Harvard and ourselves as official hosts, and held in our building. Those present included Theodore Streibert, Abbott Washburn, and Leo Crespi from the U.S.I.A. A copy of the report of the Conference is enclosed. From all indications, the information program people found the conference extremely helpful, and it should certainly give impetus to the attempts of the Committee to arouse public interest. The four chairmen whom we asked to lead the discussions, Walt Rostow, Carl Friedrich, Jerome Bruner, and Jerome Wiesner, all did outstanding jobs getting across a lot of important points. About 350 copies of these minutes have been asked for by the Committee and the USIA people.

Let me take this opportunity once more to tell each of you that your comments and suggestions on all aspects of our activity would be extremely welcome. I realize that up to now you have perhaps not had the information on the basis of which you could comment. Now that we have things to show you, I would like to ask once more for your critical judgment. Some time this spring, summer, or fall we should perhaps hold another meeting. At that time the shape of our reporting will begin to be clear, but it will not be too late to take account of your suggestions. Could you let me know about your movements during those months and what would be a convenient time for you?