MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS:

President Ford
Frank Stanton, Chairman of Panel on International Information
Walter Roberts, Project Director
Lt. General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME:
Tuesday, March 11, 1975
12:45 p.m.

PLACE:
The Oval Office
The White House

The President: Nice to see you.

Mr. Stanton: This is an independently funded study. Both of the parent Advisory Commissions called for it. The area hadn't been looked at in depth for 20 years.

We spent 10 months on it. We have talked to Rusk, Rogers, Kissinger, and all the living USIA directors. We have a solution which makes it more effective and manageable.

There is duplication between the State Department and USIA. Our recommendation is to give it back to State. Take the cultural activities of USIA and the cultural affairs of state and make it a new entity within State like AID. Make the Voice of America independent under a five-man board with two people from State.

The President: Does that include RFE and RL?

Mr. Stanton: No, we thought of putting it in the BIB [Board for International Broadcasting]. One problem was the State board members on VOA. The other was the CIA association of RFE and RL -- so as not to tar VOA with CIA.
The President: So USIA disappears.

General Scowcroft: Yes. Part of it goes into State and part of it would be autonomous.

The President: Who were your commission members?

Mr. Stanton: Lewis, Gulley, Wrench, Shaheen.

The President: Was the panel unanimous?

Mr. Stanton: No, we had one abstention. One was appointed ambassador.

The President: Will this come to me or to Congress?

Mr. Stanton: Technically it will go to Georgetown University since they funded it. But I think it will get to you.

The President: How about the Hill?

Mr. Stanton: I think Slack is opposed, but most of the others commented favorably.

The President: I expect the USIA people will oppose it.

Mr. Stanton: Yes and No. VOA mostly likes it. Even Jim Keogh said it is more important for the cultural aspects to be united than who owned them. But he is not cheering.

The President: How about the USIA bureaucracy?

Mr. Stanton: You know there was an FS IO category. We maneuvered them into the FSO category. I don't think it will cause any changes in the field, just more efficiency in Washington. USIA executes cultural affairs in the field, but State does it in Washington -- mostly because of Fulbright who thought the propaganda (USIA) was dirty.

The President: My feeling is you would require legislation to get it done.

Mr. Stanton: Yes. There would be at least three or four separate pieces of legislation.
The President: I appreciate the job you did. I will try to look over the report. I think we should periodically look over these things. What was good at the time of the organization of the agencies isn't necessarily permanently good.

Mr. Stanton: There were earlier recommendations to return the Information Agency to the State Department. There was one study done under Ike by Rockefeller.

Mr. Roberts: Legislation was initiated in August, but it died when Congress adjourned in September.

Mr. Stanton: This was in State originally, but Dulles pushed it out because he didn't want to get more tangled up with McCarthy.
P. Stanton
11 March 75

This is a study funded by the Ford Foundation. We've been working with them, and we're planning to do the same thing again in the next few months.

We sent a memo about the situation in the U.S.A. to the State Department. We have some ideas about what we think is important. It will be a good opportunity for the U.S.A. to show its influence.

There is a proposal that the U.S.A. should give it back to the State Department.

The need for increased activity in the U.S.A. is crucial. We need to make sure that this is not just a one-time thing.

They sent a note about the situation in the U.S.A. and the need for increased activity in the U.S.A. It was not clear whether it was from the State Department.

P. So, we need a memo on this. Our plan was to send a memo to the State Department. We need to get some feedback from the State Department. We need to make a plan to send a memo.

S. We want to do this. We need to do this.

P. We will do this. We will do this. We will do this.

S. Technically, we will do this. It will be done.

P. We will do this. We will do this. We will do this.

S. I think that we should. But we need to do this.

P. I think that we need to do this. We need to do this.

S. I'm not sure about it. But most of them want to do this.

P. I'm not sure about it. But most of them want to do this.

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AUTHORITY: NSC 001250

NLF DATE: 4/1/70
S. Yes. We VA much like it.

Even Keppel said it more urgent for cultural aspect to be united than physical... but he not clearly.

P. How about V&V vision

S. You mean the way a Free country we

then and folding them in the end.

But this... not could cause any change in

fall to panel mass efficiency in work.

As if operate... cultural change in field, but

Scott does it she in work—mostly because

I Fullbright and the propaganda... in this thing

P. We feel in your need acquire legislation

S. Well?

S. Yes. There would be at least 2 or 3 segments

P. Segments a quite special. With the study of the

same report, I think we should probably

also consider 1 more, but more good at time of

depot expansion... made more permanently good.

S. First what certain visionary... to state

one example I had by head eldest.

US legislation was initiated in May, but it did

return USA joined in Sept.

S. This week in St. Louis, finally sort Dubois

fulfilled. It not seems he didn't want to put there

Thought it would have hardly
