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MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARYTO : The Secretary
Through: OS/ES _____

DATE: September 5, 1972

FROM : Special Assistant
for International AffairsSUBJECT: Gaining Knowledge from Abroad--INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

You will recall that in your staff meeting of February 2, you asked agency heads to cooperate with my office in completing a study about "how international research can be a valuable 'add on' to domestic research", thus having an impact on the achievement of our domestic objectives. You also asked that I investigate the possible need for a mechanism within the Department to coordinate better our international activities, and what its mandate might be. We undertook these studies of our international activities, focusing on a five-year projection of research goals that might be pursued abroad with excess currencies, and they have given us a better understanding of the scope of HEW's international dimensions and the need for refinements in them.

We found, among other things:

1. That HEW funds only a small amount of research abroad with dollars--instead, funding it mostly with "excess currencies".
2. That the existence of "excess currencies" has tended to skew our research programs, which have been established primarily on the basis of where the money was rather than where the knowledge needed to be gained was.
3. That, only partly because of (2), many of our research and knowledge-gaining efforts abroad have not always been closely related to the domestic programs that the agencies had determined were most important. (Despite what is said in (2) and (3), much research has proved worthwhile.)
4. That knowledge-gaining efforts abroad have been hampered by inadequate information about where the best sources of knowledge are.



5. That the institutions within the agencies of HEW do not exist or are inadequate at present to pursue on a much increased scale knowledge-gaining programs abroad.
6. That, so far as coordination is concerned, the need for better coordination manifestly exists and to an important degree is unmet.

Most importantly, we found that an expansion of our efforts to learn from other societies (with the frequent side benefits of various kinds that such efforts often produce) almost surely holds promise for meeting HEW's established goals. And we found, as the points above indicate, that the matter of resource allocation in this context has never received adequate study.

Since we completed our study, outside developments sharpened the issue of resource allocation: the amounts of excess currencies available sharply decreased--for political reasons in India and Egypt and because of depletion in Yugoslavia. A ceiling on expenditure in Poland is likely, and desirable, to preserve the program.

The individuals in the agencies with whom we've been working are aware of these findings and would like to do something about them. "P" is willing to help us with further steps in this direction.

Therefore, I have formulated a two-step process that is intended, at a minimum, to make the Department's international knowledge-gaining activities more effective and that will also lay the groundwork for rationally deciding whether or not to augment our knowledge-gaining activities abroad. I use the broader term "knowledge-gaining" instead of "research" so that we will think in terms of sending HEW officials abroad to learn, of bringing foreign experts to advise us on HEW programs, and of other activities, as well as narrower "research" as customarily defined.

This two-step process should also lead us, both directly and indirectly, toward increased and more effective coordination of our international activities.



STEP ONE

The agencies should ask themselves two basic questions: What do we most need knowledge about? And, where are the best sources of this knowledge?

The first question the agencies can answer in a number of ways, for example, in terms of their priority goals as established through the Department's planning process.

To answer the second question, the agencies will have to identify knowledge resources both at home and abroad. My office's responsibility would be to start them down the road toward identifying the resources abroad. To do this, we should begin by seeking answers to the following additional questions:

1. What are the most effective methods of identifying these knowledge resources? Are the agencies, themselves, in a position to do it, directly? Or could they use American and foreign academic institutions, other institutions, foreign governments, or international organizations such as WHO, UNESCO, the Science Committee of OECD, etc.?
2. Should HEW support (and has it supported), with excess currencies or dollars, the inventorying of knowledge resources abroad?
3. What has been done--and what more should be done--under existing, or potential, bilateral agreements to promote international knowledge-gaining activities?
4. Do present HEW programs for training foreigners here materially increase our own knowledge in priority Departmental program areas?
5. What is the knowledge-gaining value to the Department's objectives (including the development of individual officers) of assigning HEW personnel to AID, international organizations, etc.?
6. To what extent does travel abroad by HEW officials currently result in knowledge-gaining?



7. What could be done to improve HEW's awareness and utilization of the knowledge-gaining efforts of other USG departments?

Having answered the questions in Step One, and, presumably being aware of knowledge-gaining resources in the U.S., the agencies should be able to weigh the quality of knowledge resources against each other, estimate the cost of exploiting each resource, and then decide, despite the difficulties of quantification, which source would yield more product for our buck. Money presently being spent abroad might be better spent at home--and vice versa. This process could not only result in the reallocation of existing funds for knowledge-gaining; it could provide sound justification for seeking additional funds in the Department's budget for increased knowledge-gaining activities abroad.

STEP TWO

The first step, the decision about which knowledge resource to exploit, should be followed by other decisions about how to bring knowledge to bear on our programs. Relevant here, too, is the need for better coordination. Thus, the agencies, and other relevant parts of the Department, should undertake Step Two, in which they would attempt to answer questions like:

1. Can any helpful generalizations be made about the techniques by which knowledge from abroad can best be brought to bear on HEW programs?: through acquisition of existing finished material; through development of existing raw data; through the development and analysis of new data; through sending Americans abroad to study ongoing programs or for sabbaticals of varying lengths; by bringing foreign experts to consult with and advise us, and so on.
2. Do HEW agencies need to create new mechanisms or institutions to foster knowledge-gaining abroad, particularly exchange of persons activities for knowledge-gaining?--institutions similar, say, to the Fogarty International Center?
3. To what extent might HEW use foreign or international institutions such as a Japanese university or the Science Committee of OECD, actually to produce the knowledge-product for us?



4. What mechanisms should be utilized or created within and among agencies to assure that international -- knowledge-gaining efforts by one part of HEW are available to other parts, and that program developers become effectively aware of the availability of particular knowledge?
5. What, if any, legislative authority--or delegations of existing authority--would agencies need to conduct additional knowledge-gaining activities internationally and with dollars?

So that my office can help the agencies take Steps One and Two, I intend to proceed as follows:

First, hire a consultant, or find a suitable staff member available in the Department, who will work with both the international and program people in the agencies to determine if the questions I have asked in Steps One and Two are precisely framed, adjust them, if they are not, answer them, and prepare an agenda for concrete action based on the answers. I expect this will take until early in the new year, and I will report to you when this stage is completed.

Second, after the completion of stage one, I expect to create a task force or other suitable mechanism to consider and act upon the resulting agenda.

Proceeding as above, I expect that by early March HEW will be in a position to move internationally with increased intelligence and vigor.

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Granville S. Austin

Prepared by: GSAustin, IA, Ext. 21387
9/5/72



MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

TO : Granville S. Austin
Special Assistant to the Secretary
Office of International Affairs

DATE: November 1, 1972

FROM : Director
Office for Civil Rights

SUBJECT:

This is a follow up to our luncheon yesterday.

If you would please send me a copy of the memorandum outlining the nature of the assistant's job we discussed, I would appreciate it. I want to introduce Bill van den Toorn to you, and discuss the matter further.

Any circulars, telegrams, or other information on conferences that might be of interest can be directed to me in Room 3256. In addition, as I mentioned, I will keep you informed about any invitations to conferences that may be directed to this office, and which may be of interest. (I mentioned the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights conference in South Africa. I do not have any further information on this, as I thought, since time, place and the like have not yet been formally set. I would like to raise it with you as soon as we find out more about it.)


J. Stanley Pottinger

Lacey

