



OFFICE OF  
THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON

NOV 21 1958

Dear Chris,

Abbott Washburn tells me that you and some others at the OCB meeting of November 5 raised questions concerning the People-to-People Program.

Your questions stem no doubt from reports you have had of the demise of the People-to-People Foundation. That organization was formed on February 4, 1957, with the primary mission of raising money for the whole People-to-People operation. In this it was unsuccessful. When it was concluded that the government could no longer subsidize its efforts, the organizers decided to discontinue it.

Termination of the Foundation unfortunately created the impression in some quarters that the whole Program was closing down. This was altogether untrue. The forty committees had been going ahead since formation without much reference to the activities of the Foundation itself and without any financial support from it. Some had even been against the whole idea of a centralization of activities and had refused to work with the Foundation.

As of today there are thirty-nine committees in existence. Twenty-Eight have carried out projects that have had some impact on foreign relations, and are actively engaged in more projects at present. Eight have made a start but are inactive at present. Two never have done anything. One is inactive at present for lack of a chairman. Only one (the Radio-TV Committee) chose to disband.

The Honorable  
Christian A. Herter  
Under Secretary of State



The one great problem not solved so far is that of getting the financing completely on a private basis. While a majority of the Committees have managed on whatever slender resources they could get together, thirteen are receiving grants averaging about \$8,000 a year to provide secretariats and cover their bare office expenses.

To give you concrete examples of the accomplishments of committees I refer to the enclosed copy of a summary issued several months ago and to the current issue of PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE NEWS.

Incidentally, I find the PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE NEWS one of the most interesting publications I see, telling as it does of the numerous instances of activity by private citizens and groups to help build international understanding. We are arranging for the publication issues to reach your office. I hope you will look at it from time to time.

While the People-to-People Program is moving slowly, I believe it is performing a valuable function. It has contributed a new term ("People-to-People") to the language of international relations, and it has inspired many person-to-person and group-to-group activities over and beyond those formally launched by the committees. It is helping awaken interest in foreign affairs in the ranks of the 700 national organizations represented on its committees. It is increasing the volume of communication and contact of our people with other peoples. If the theory that bringing governments together in the United Nations for discussion of their likes and differences is sound, then the people-to-people stimulation of contact and communication must also be a step forward in seeking understanding.

At a conference at the White House on September 29 of this year the Assistant to the President made some comments about the importance of the Program and the relationship of government to it. I am attaching a summary as of possible interest to you.

One of the handicaps in developing the People-to-People Program has been scepticism and even downright opposition to the Program by some of our officials abroad. This we are hoping to correct by a quiet program of education as the Program grows in strength and accomplishment.



I am well aware that a movement of this kind is likely to attract a certain number of dreamy-eyed do-gooders, or people looking for personal publicity. I do not pretend that it will make over the world tomorrow. At the same time, I am convinced that the idea is basically sound and am impressed by the momentum it has generated and the constructive work being done.

At the original conference on the Program, Secretary Dulles warmly endorsed the idea. (His remarks are shown in the printed pages attached). But much more could be done by the State Department -- such as commending it to posts abroad -- to help make it go. We would hope that you might decide after due study of the history and present status of the Program to do something constructive toward assuring for the committees the recognition and encouragement of the State Department forces.

Sincerely,

George V. Allen



Enclosures