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MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Anisio Teixeira

From: Charles F. Schuller

Subj: Address by David Bell, Administrator, USAID
at Michigan State University on October 11, 1963

1. The enclosed address by Dr. David Bell was given at the close of the conference at Kellogg Center which was sponsored by the Education and World Affairs Council in New York. Ralph Smuckler who is on leave from MSU this year is Vice-President of EWA.

2. I thought Dr. Bell's address would be of particular interest because of his assessment of USAID's purposes and needs and the directions he sees it moving; and also because it was an "off the record" talk to a group of professional educators.

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MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY,
EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN

Address by the Honorable David E. Bell
Administrator, Agency for International Development
at the
Education and World Affairs Conference
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan
6:30 p.m., October 11, 1963

THE UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPING NATIONS

I welcome the opportunity to be here with you tonight, to discuss with you the special, unique, and extremely important role that our universities play in the foreign assistance program. The national commitment to the developing nations requires more--much more--than effort by government. The Agency for International Development is, in a very real sense, simply the governmental expression of the national determination to extend a helping hand to less-developed societies struggling against great odds to modernize their societies. As such, we in AID are engaged in mobilizing the talents and competence that exist throughout the American society, and channeling them to the task of assisting in the building of nations.

Our colleges and universities are plainly a great reservoir of such talent, skill, and determination. In the past decade, the universities have been valued partners in the foreign assistance program. This partnership must be expanded and strengthened in the years ahead. Perhaps no other group in our society gives so much, or has so much to give, as the academic community. It is especially gratifying to have the opportunity to say this here on the campus of Michigan State University, which has pioneered in the provision of technical assistance to AID and its predecessor agencies. Under the able leadership of President John Hannah, several dozens of MSU faculty members have worked in the developing countries over the past decade in helping build the kinds of educational systems required by a modernizing society. In assuming a national responsibility, MSU and other universities like it have given major support to the foreign assistance program and have at the same time enriched their own teaching and research programs with fresh insight and new knowledge.

I doubt if there are many persons, even from universities with AID contracts, who realize the full extent of AID's reliance on the university community. The first university contract was signed in 1953. Under that contract, Oklahoma State University committed itself to help develop a modern system of agricultural education in Ethiopia. Since then, the contract system has grown steadily to embrace more programs, more U.S. universities, and more countries.

At present, 69 universities are engaged in technical cooperation efforts abroad in 37 countries. AID has currently committed about \$136 million in support of university contracts. The sheer variety of programs is also impressive. As illustration--Stanford University is helping Peru build a program in business administration; Colorado School of Mines is working with a technical university in Turkey to develop metallurgical engineering; the University of Connecticut is at work in Northern Rhodesia in education and agriculture; Michigan State University is responsible for a regional education center serving all of Central America; a consortium of nine U.S. universities has undertaken the ambitious task of developing a new technical

university in India. The principal fields of activity are: education, agriculture, engineering, business administration, public administration, and medicine--fields which provide the specialized manpower so essential to the developing nations.

No two contracts are alike. In each case, the assignment is a highly specialized one which is tailored to the local situation. AID, with university help, is starting new programs within established universities, modernizing academic programs in others, and--in some few instances--helping create new institutions. One of the most notable of these, of course, is the program with Michigan State University in Eastern Nigeria--one which President Hannah was telling me about during dinner which is doing very well indeed. This program has the unique characteristic that a member of the Michigan State faculty has been elected Vice Chancellor in that new Nigerian university. This is a case of truly being welcome.

In all countries, our objective is the same: the building of modern educational systems which better equip that society to meet its own pressing need for highly-specialized manpower. We are--and this I emphasize very strongly--not primarily engaged in the export of American know-how, but rather in the development of local institutions which have roots in the society they serve, and will help that society to meet its needs now and in the future.

What does the record show? After nearly a decade of growing university involvement, what can fairly be claimed? These are significant achievements:

First, AID and its predecessor agencies have tapped many of the strongest U.S. universities for overseas service. The list includes many of the leading land-grant universities, some of our best state universities, and a creditable number of the private universities. The response of the academic community, in short, has been impressive.

Second, the university contract arrangement has brought to the campuses of the United States new ideas, new perspectives--a true and valuable broadening of the experience of hundreds of faculty members and university administrators.

Third, there is a solid record of tasks accomplished. The Indonesian medical schools are stronger because of our help; modern programs of business and public administration have been successfully planted in some of the Brazilian universities; a new agricultural experiment station exists in Sierra Leone; at Makerere College in Uganda a teacher training program of great potential is taking shape. We could cite a very long list of successes around the world, and nothing I say tonight is intended to obscure that fact.

However, in my judgment, we all should ask ourselves whether we should not lift our sights. Both from the standpoint of the universities and of the government it seems to me time to make a searching reappraisal of what we are in fact doing and what we can and should do better. I believe, for example, that we in AID are very far from tapping the full energies and talents of the colleges and universities. Moreover, we have yet to develop the kinds of arrangements which strengthen the universities and

enable them--and us--to do a better job for the long pull. This is why, earlier this year, we asked Mr. John Gardner of the Carnegie Corporation to head a Task Force on AID-University Relationships. That group is taking a fresh look at AID-university relationships, and we look to Mr. Gardner for recommendations for improvements which will serve the interests both of the universities and of the government.

May I mention here tonight several of the issues that are high on the agenda of the Gardner Committee.

First, what can be done to ensure that the universities involved in AID programs are strengthened in their essential tasks of teaching, research, and service? There is no real assurance now that an AID contract will strengthen the contracting university. Frank Bowles, in a recent address to the American Council on Education, had this to say about the use of universities as a technical resource by government agencies such as AID. "They are not used as universities but are necessarily employed piecemeal-- a school of librarianship here, a public administration program there, agriculture somewhere else. In piecemeal operations they rarely command the best administrative talent, or the best teachers from the parent institution. In fact, too often the overseas operation is staffed by men recruited for the purpose, not members of the faculty, very often men who are retired from other institutions, while the regular staff and organization of the university are untouched by the overseas undertaking."

The criticism may be too harsh--I think it is--but Mr. Bowles is dealing with real issues which cannot be ducked. A university which accepts a contract, if it is to do an effective job, must undertake real responsibility, involving a true commitment of the time of its own faculty and its own administration. By the same token, it will not do for the government simply to regard universities simply as contractors who make available specialized talent.

In the long pull, federal programs must be so structured that they add to the capability of the cooperating university. I do not know what methods may be found to meet this need, but there is no question in my mind that we must find such methods if the universities are to play a full and appropriate role in the effort to build free institutions--and free nations--around the world.

Second, how far can we move in the direction of bringing the universities into AID programs at earlier stages and for more ambitious assignments? Plainly AID should not think of its relationships with universities in terms of defining an assignment and then searching for a suitable contractor. In those areas of AID's activities where a university contract is appropriate, it is plainly desirable to enlist the special talents of the universities at an early stage, that is, in the diagnosis of the problems they are expected to tackle, and the development of programs to meet those problems. Moreover, we may well have been thinking of "projects" in too narrow, and circumscribed, a sense. In some cases at least, it may be that instead of trying to upgrade a part of a university we should seek to modernize the university in its entirety--as indeed I believe MSU is now seeking to do in one instance. The experience of President Hannah and the MSU people in Nigeria may be very revealing on that score.

At the same time, it is clear that in designing and managing programs, AID and its field missions cannot abdicate their basic accountability to the President and the Congress. In accommodating these interests there is abundant room for ingenuity and innovation.

Third, how do the universities and AID cooperatively develop a better method for selecting a university for a given assignment? AID is extremely anxious to pick the right university for the task at hand. This is not an easy matter. Obviously, AID cannot simply put assignments up for competitive bid. Equally obviously this is much too important a matter to be left to chance encounters or haphazard selection processes.

Here we should be able to learn more than we have learned from our own experience and that of the private foundations and of other government agencies. Whatever we do, it is essential that we build on existing institutional capability. Even the strongest universities cannot do everything equally well. How many "centers of excellence" in Latin American Affairs, for example, can the nation justify? One idea that plainly needs exploration is that AID, in concert with other interested federal agencies, might invest in certain institutions so that their capability to undertake assignments for federal agencies would be steadily strengthened.

The small university and the liberal arts college pose a special problem. It will not do to bypass these institutions because no single one is able to staff an overseas operation. A group of universities may be able to do what no one university or college can do by itself. The solution may be to encourage the use of consortia of universities. I realize that the use of consortia raises the spectre of red tape and administrative complications. But surely these problems can be minimized. To bypass the smaller institutions strikes me as indefensible.

Fourth, how can we do a better job of profiting from experience, of building the results of past experience into the technical assistance program? We now have a substantial body of experience with university contracts. Yet one has the impression that many problems are being approached as if no one had faced them before. This is not good enough. The task of institution-building is delicate, complex, and hazardous. It involves changing the beliefs and attitudes of others--and changing some of our own in the process! We cannot excuse ourselves if we do not learn from our own successes and failures, and steadily improve our performance in the future.

Here AID and the universities share a responsibility and an opportunity. If a system of evaluation is built into the contract, it ought to be possible not only to evaluate efforts as we go but to learn as we go. I believe this will require significant changes in the way AID approaches the university contract, and in the way many universities think of their responsibilities under the contract.

Lastly, how can we enlarge the pool of competent people with the necessary professional and personal skills for "overseas-manship"--and how can AID, along with other agencies, find better ways to tap that pool, to find the right person for the job, and do it quickly? We have not found enough Americans with the right combination of training and experience to staff all our present commitments. And our present methods of matching men and jobs are inadequate. Hit or miss recruitment will not do.

This is no rhetorical plea for "better people" (I once heard a Kansas farmer say "all this country needs is more rain and better people"). It is in part a suggestion for better training. A decade of hard experience attests to the fact that the overseas American can profit greatly from advance preparation. The good engineering professor in a U.S. university is not necessarily a good engineering professor in an overseas university. The well-prepared and successful dean of a U.S. college of education does not always succeed as an education adviser overseas. Good intentions are not enough. New, and unfamiliar demands are made on the overseas American. He functions, in the jargon of the sociologist, as a "change agent". He no longer simply does a task; his job is to change attitudes, and even behavior--no mean task in any culture, and an especially difficult task in strange surroundings and an unfamiliar culture. (Given the large obstacles, it's a miracle that so many overseas Americans do as well as they do!)

Our universities can do a great deal in preparing Americans for better performance in overseas assignments. Language and area studies suggest one approach; the intensive three month programs which universities have designed for the Peace Corps suggest another approach. However, short-term orientation programs designed to sensitize the overseas American to the culture in which he will work, and give him a good start at mastery of the language, are not enough. If the United States is to meet its many international commitments in the years ahead, an international dimension must be consciously built into the structure of the university--into the departments of economics and political science, into the professional schools of law, business administration, medicine, education. It can be done; in fact there now exist at a number of universities promising efforts which point the way.

There is new, hard knowledge about the developmental process emerging in our universities. And this new knowledge is forcing major shifts in curricula.

It will do little good to enlarge the pool of persons who plan to work overseas, at least for a part of their lives, unless at the same time we find better ways of identifying and recruiting such people. One of the AID regional bureaus recently prepared a list of field positions which have been vacant for over six months. The implication was that we should go slow in developing projects where staffing proved so difficult because of acute labor market shortages in these specialties. The list included jobs such as agriculture credit adviser, livestock adviser (poultry), adult education adviser, and public health physician. The competition for specialists is intense. But I am inclined myself to think that such specialists who are interested in overseas jobs can be found.

I am buttressed in this opinion by such facts as the recent poll by the Association of American Medical Colleges which revealed that about one-third of the faculty complement of the 86 schools of medicine consider themselves available for short or long-term service abroad, under conditions that will protect their academic and financial status. This is very impressive; and my guess is that this high degree of interest is matched in other professions.

But I do not believe that we have anything approaching an adequate recruiting system for the professions. And this we must work on.

Finally, neither the universities or the U.S. government will make the best use of academic talent until we learn how to simplify the movement of professionals between the federal agencies and the universities. The academic career ladder tends to reward those who do not step off the ladder. And the same is true--perhaps to a lesser extent--of government. Insurance, retirement, and other fringe benefits tie the individual to the system. This is bad for the universities, bad for the U.S. government, and bad for the profession. We need to develop ways to encourage university faculty to move freely in and out of government assignments. Instead of two competing career systems, can we not devise more flexible combined career systems which would enable the government to draw upon academic talent and at the same time encourage the universities to utilize the talents of professionals in government. The obstacles are formidable. But the task needs doing.

You will see that the Gardner Task Force faces a formidable agenda. We expect a great deal from the Gardner Committee; but we do not expect miracles. In a very real sense, the issues which I have outlined here tonight can be viewed as agenda items for the American academic community. Without your help, nothing is possible. With your help, promising new developments are possible.

I am fully persuaded that our universities can participate in overseas assignments in ways which enlarge their horizons and strengthen their resources.

Our universities can take on much more ambitious, more basic, assignments.

We can develop better methods of selecting universities for the assignment at hand.

We can do a much better job of profiting from past experience. And finally, we can--because we must--find ways of enlarging the pool of Americans qualified by special preparation for overseas service.

The world is not neatly divided into the "developed nations" and the "less-developed nations". We are all developing. And we all have much to learn from one another. We in the foreign assistance program say to the developing nations: "If you want the fruits of modern science and technology, develop the skills and talents of your people--this above all else". Can we do less for ourselves?

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Following the formal speech, the Chairman, President John A. Hannah of Michigan State University, opened the meeting for questions.

President Hannah:

Mr. Bell you have lived up to our expectations. We are grateful to you for this forthright presentation indicating that you have a pretty clear understanding of some of the problems the universities face when they undertake these overseas commitments. Mr. Bell has indicated a willingness to take a question or two if someone would like to address one to him. Does anyone have a question or comment that they would like to make?

Dean Glen Taggart:

You may not be prepared yet to comment more on something that you have already said, but if you feel that you can enlarge upon it I am sure this audience would appreciate it. This would be with regard to the thinking that your agency is doing at this point concerning setting up the AID-university relationship in such a way that you see a much greater return to the university in terms of building its fundamental resources in the academic field of international affairs, in the broad sense of the word.

David Bell:

Right. I am not well prepared to respond to that question at this time. I will say a word or two, but I hope you will all understand that what I say in response to that is tentative, and does not represent a commitment. I would have three comments on this.

First of all, I think that the conception of what we are seeking to do jointly, the Agency for International Development and the university, needs to be well devised and needs to be built on the conception that the people involved are responsible individuals who are seeking to solve a problem or helping to solve a series of problems--meaning that we are not hiring people to go down and do something that is cut and dried. We are instead enlisting high talent to embark on the continuing study and efforts to move with a situation and contribute to its development in directions which are obviously agreed upon, not only between AID and the university, but between AID, the university and the people in the country concerned.

If one thinks of the job in this way, one is, I think a good deal less concerned than some of the AID contracting officers may have been in the past with the precise questions of details of salary and other items of necessary red tape, and one is much more concerned with seeking a commitment of a university to provide qualified leadership and participation recognizing that the university should be engaging people who are learning themselves in the process, and who will bring back to the university, and should bring back to the university, a lot of results in the form of greater experience, accomplished research, associated endeavors in the university and so on. This is kind of a vague and general answer, but I am trying to express an attitude which I think is important.

Secondly, there has been a question as to whether we should build into our contracts specific provision for associated research. To me, as an academic type, this has great appeal. I would say, however, by way of warning, that I think that AID is a very poor agency with which to try to pioneer in government-university relationships. I think we ought to be inventive and prepared to consider different elements than we have considered up to now, but I do not think we are a good agency to do any pioneering in the sense that I just used the term.

There is one other comment I would make on this question. Again, it stems largely from my own previous background with the university and with the foundations and was recalled to my mind very much by some of the things that were said in President Henry's paper for this conference and others like Mr. Marvel's. This is the question of what we may be able to do to increase the universities' abilities to hire and retain what amounts to a larger faculty than is necessary to accomplish their campus activities. You all know of various kinds of experiments that have been undertaken in most instances by the foundations, but in a different sense some of the things that have been attempted through the institutional grant device by the Science Foundation and other government agencies. These are headed in the same direction. This is intended to recognize that a university which receives funds from government only under a contract limited to a specific project may find itself in a very disadvantageous position in seeking to attract and retain persons to augment its faculty to carry out that kind of activity and subsequent similar types of activity that may come along but may not come along.

Now here again, I am stating an objective and I do not know what method we may be able to find to accomplish it. We are not a foundation, we are a highly restricted government agency, much more restricted than most government agencies. But I certainly think within those limits we should seek to serve this objective in any way that we possibly can and to stretch those restrictions where feasible where we all agree it is desirable to try to do so. These are offhand and preliminary comments but related to your questions.

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