

October 11, 1957

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
October 10, 1957

Others present: Mr. Heald
 Mr. David
 Secretary Herter
 Mr. Allen Dulles
 Mr. Arthur Larson
 General Goodpaster



Mr. David reported the action of the Ford Foundation Trustees turning down the request for financial support for the People to People Program. At the President's request, Mr. Heald gave the reasons, which he indicated as two: in overseas work, the Foundation has found that it cannot work effectively through intermediaries, but must exercise very careful direct control; the Foundation is recognized as a private agency, and in many areas is able to work effectively only because its freedom from governmental influence and connection is unchallenged. If they were to support the People to People Program, they would lose the selectivity they wish to retain and would inevitably be thought to be linked to the government.


The President said he was astonished regarding these points. From the outset he had stressed that this activity must not have a governmental tie. He had limited his own participation simply to helping launch the project. He also said that he did not see how the question of selectivity was connected with this particular request, inasmuch as the money asked for was to provide administrative support so that the central organization could go out and raise funds for particular efforts. He recalled that since he had come to Washington he had given his name to only one project, the Eisenhower Exchange Fellowships. He felt that People to People contact is essential in the world today, and that if private people are unable or unwilling to support this effort we as a nation are doomed to a very bad future. He said that, as a result of their decision, he did not know where to turn, but he could

and would assure them of one thing -- that he would not give up efforts to find the funds that they were unwilling to provide.

Mr. David said that the Foundation is not unwilling to support this kind of activity -- they are spending \$15 million in direct activities of this kind -- but the projects are under their own control, and they always control these activities directly. The President thought the need was to organize a wider effort, enlisting more people rather than confining activities to those of the Foundation. In his opinion America stands at a cross roads in the world today -- if we cannot develop an understanding of and friendship for our country on the part of the rising nations of the world, we will be in a bad way. Exchange of people, giving each the opportunity to live with the others, is the great essential. A broad organization for this purpose is required. Mr. Larson recalled that this effort is intended to support and coordinate the activities of other groups.

Mr. David said the Trustees (whom he named, pointing out that many of them are close personal friends of the President) had been unanimous against the proposal. He said they felt that the project has a government tag on it. He asked if the President thought, as he did, that the effort should not be in USIA. The President replied that the USIA had simply started the project. He had made a great effort to keep the government out of it. Accordingly, the government provides no funds.

In closing, the President said he was sorry the group could not see their way to support a project which he had thought essential for America, and which he had wanted to see organized on the broadest possible base. He had thought this work should interest the Foundation, but would turn to other possible sources since he felt that it is of tremendous importance to getting mass movement started.


A. J. Goodpaster
Brigadier General, USA

