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The Harpers Ferry Charter for International Voluntary Services, Inc. in the 1970's

REMARKS

OF

HON. HENRY S. REUSS

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 18, 1971

Mr. REUSS. Mr. Speaker, International Voluntary Services, Inc. and its executive director, Richard J. Peters, have developed the following charter outlining the organization's plans for the 1970's:

IVS IN THE 1970'S

The Board and staff of the International Voluntary Services meeting at Harpers Ferry on February 19-21, 1971 asked themselves three fundamental questions:

A. Does volunteer work abroad, which peaked in the mid-1960s and is now declining, have an important role in the 1970s

B. If so, does IVS with its concept of volunteerism, have a significant contribution to make in this new era?

C. If IVS does have a significant contribution to make, what changes are required in the IVS structure and program to make them responsive to the new circumstances and potential of the 1970s? What changes should be initiated in 1971 if the longer run goals are to be achieved on a timely basis?

The conclusions of the discussions follow:

THE IVS ROLE IN THE 1970'S

IVS in the 1950s pioneered the non-sectarian international use of volunteers when it was established with its charter:

To utilize the services of volunteers on an organized basis to combat hunger, poverty, disease, and illiteracy in the underdeveloped areas of the world and thereby further the peace, happiness, and prosperity of the peoples thereof.

The success of the concept and of its initial implementation was attested to by the establishment of the Peace Corps in 1961, and of comparable organizations by many

other developed countries in the 1960s. IVS performed a more limited role of service in the 1960s in those countries, notably South Viet Nam and Laos, in which the Peace Corps would or could not operate. By the late 1960s, the programs in South Viet Nam and Laos had become caught up in the turmoil and controversy of the war. They contracted rapidly from their peak of some 250 volunteers to the present level of approximately 70.

Today, the people of the United States are at the end of one era in international affairs and at the beginning of another whose outlines are just now being perceived. The overwhelmingly dominant role of the U.S. in the world is passing. Other developed and developing countries rightfully play an increasing role. The U.S. has turned inward in response to urgent internal needs and discord over the Indo-China war. At the same time the U.S. with each year is becoming increasingly interdependent with the other nations in a shrinking world. There is a growing gap between rich and poor. This gap is widening *between* the rich and the poor nations; it is also widening *within* developing countries, faced with unprecedented problems and an expanding unemployment born of the population explosion and accelerating urban growth. The 1970s are likely to be years of turmoil as there are struggles over fundamental changes within developing societies and in the international structure itself and there will also be need for unprecedented growth to meet requirements of expanding populations and growing aspirations. It will be an era both of increasing need for cooperation between the peoples of the rich nations and the poor nations, and in many cases of increasing difficulty for the government to government activities which characterized the international development cooperation, and volunteerism of the 1960s.

The new need for IVS in the 1970s, and the changing climate for government to government relationships, is testified to by

the steadily decreasing number of countries in which the Peace Corps now operates. This comes when the requirements are greater than ever for development, for middle level manpower, and for increased understanding of the rapid and major changes taking place within developing countries. At the very time when some countries are experiencing radical societal change, when the need is growing for communication and mutual understanding between Americans and peoples of these countries, government to government programs are being reduced or eliminated. In response to pressures from overseas and at home, the U.S.A. is separating its development programs from other foreign policy programs. For the same reasons it appears to be turning away from direct USG operated programs in the developing countries. It plans greatly to increase support of the programs of multinational institutions and of private organizations willing to provide assistance to developing countries. This increasing emphasis on support of independent, private organizations willing to conduct their own programs comes at a time when many Americans have a growing preference to work within private rather than government agencies.

For IVS to contribute effectively to human betterment and social justice in the 1970s, it must be characterized by program independence, financial flexibility, and responsiveness to felt needs of the people of developing countries. The volunteers in turn must be characterized by an ability to work closely with the people in the country of their assignment, a willingness to receive little financial remuneration for their work and a combination of technical ability and commitment to social and economic development. The organization must constantly strive to be independent of outside pressures which would compromise its fundamental posture of sensitivity to and guidance by goals of the people hosting its programs.

THE IVS MODEL FOR THE 1970'S

The model of IVS we foresee in the five years ahead has a combination of traditional and new dimensions. We seek to build on the successes of the past. We hope to inject new features growing out of experience, and applied to the new circumstances of the world in which we must operate.

Such new features include the following:

1. Broadened financial support.
2. Additional and diverse programs in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the United States.
3. Multinational representation at all levels: volunteer, staff and Board.

This projection suggests an increase in size during the next five years to 500-1000 volunteers. It may also suggest additional and new patterns of service. This will depend on the requests and needs of host country leaders, public and private, as well

as the personnel resources available to IVS in the years ahead. Crucial to the implementation of IVS goals in the 70's is a restructuring of the basis of financial support for the organization. As IVS reconsiders its priorities and its world-wide program challenges, it must seek to diversify its funding. We should move away from dependence on funding by individual project contracts. We should try for global financing with freedom to allocate funds according to IVS-determined priorities.

We commit ourselves therefore to working in the 70's toward financial independence of the organization through multi-funding sources. Specifically, we aim towards 51% of our total funding from sources other than the U.S. Government. We are well aware of the enormous problems implied in this commitment, but we will try. We will aim to increase host-country contributions along the lines of the program in Algeria and that proposed for Libya. We will explore ways to solicit greater volunteer financial contributions. We will continue to seek reduction of overhead charges, as measured on a per-volunteer basis, but not at the cost of efficient administration.

IVS will, in the foreseeable future, seek to become more multi-national in character and to avoid a strictly American view of our goals and of policy implementation. IVS has in the past been "international" primarily in the sense that it has sent American volunteers out to other countries. There have been non-American volunteers, and both IVS and the countries in which they have served have benefited greatly by their work. It is time, however, to enlarge upon this modest effort and to become more of a multinational organization in every sense. This will require increased efforts to recruit volunteers outside the U.S.; it will require the inclusion on the Board of Directors of several non-Americans who will be able to attend meetings regularly. Selection might be from those resident in North America or who would otherwise be able to attend meetings at modest expense to IVS.

Teams of staff, alumni and Board members should be established promptly to explore, within the next six months, new program possibilities in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the U.S. to supplement present activities. From this effort, we hope for several proposals that can be initiated within the next year which will diversify and broaden our total program. They should be geared into the new needs being felt by peoples of the third world, both official representatives and private citizens. Programs in the U.S. initially should be on a limited basis and will utilize the special characteristics of IVS.

The Board and staff will take all steps necessary to facilitate greater participation by volunteer and alumni in formulation of IVS policy. We will seek to include former volunteers as Board members until, by the

end of the 1970s, a majority of the members of the Board will be men and women with previous experience in IVS, Peace Corps, or comparable organizations. A weekend retreat meeting of the Board will be held each year at which there will be made a special effort to involve volunteers from the field.

FIRST STEPS

The Board recognizes the need to give greater attention to fund raising from both public and private sources. This may involve adding special staff in the near future. The Board membership should be strengthened with this in mind. Perhaps cooperative efforts with similar organizations would be fruitful. We believe that a greater cultivation of our constituencies, especially alumni, would help.

We resolve to take immediate steps to supplement staff efforts in seeking broad support from business groups, church organizations and foundations. Further, we will negotiate with various agencies of the USG, AID, Peace Corps, and Cultural Affairs have contributed in the past. We need to make prompt approaches to the new semi-autonomous agencies being created to work in the developing countries, for example in Latin America. If special funds are needed our first request should be for an exploratory and development grant.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Board is deeply troubled by the problems and risks inherent in working in a country torn by civil and/or international war, particularly when the American government is involved. It is difficult, if not impossible to do development work and to remain free of political or even military involvement.

In this regard, the IVS programs in Viet Nam and Laos merit special attention. If the security of the individual volunteer is not threatened and volunteers are able to work in programs making effective contributions to the Vietnamese and Lao people, IVS will continue programs in these countries for the present. Unless required sooner by events, the Board will reevaluate the situation in Southeast Asia in the winter of 1971-72. If

there has been no substantial improvement in the situation, the Board presently is of the opinion that programs should be completed as the then current volunteer contracts expire. During this period, the IVS Field Directors will lay what groundwork is possible toward continuation of the programs given a favorable change in the military situation.

IVS-VN will operate in accord with the February 21, 1970 Board decision: an AID contract for up to 24 volunteers; greater international participation; privately funded IVS activities in Viet Nam.

IVS Laos will continue in the direction set for it in the November 1969 Board meeting: less program involvement with USAID; a closer cooperation with the RLG; a more austere standard of living.

IVS consciously remains in low profile in Indo China in the hope that an expanded program commensurate with the IVS model for the 1970s will be possible in the future and that in the meantime, we can provide effective service to the Vietnamese and Lao people.

PRESENT AID CONTRACTS

IVS will continue with the AID contracted programs in the Congo and Morocco as long as we can provide effective service to the people of these countries by this vehicle. The overhead money generated by these and the Southeast Asian contracts will be used to assist in the development of other programs and other funding sources.

CONCLUSION

Those of us who have participated in this Harpers Ferry Conference have felt keenly the responsibility and opportunity of considering the present and future role of IVS as an organization in a global context. Our thoughts have been continually directed with appreciation to the effective work of the volunteers in the villages and schools of Asia and Africa. We have sought unity on important issues affecting the organization and volunteers. We have been grateful for the participation of several volunteers and staff. Our confidence in the future of IVS derives from their commitment.