

INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE FOR THE  
ACQUISITION OF FOREIGN PUBLICATIONS

Meeting of 16 March 1945

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

PRESENT:

Agriculture	Miss Mildred Benton
Library of Congress	Mr. Verner Clapp
War Department	Lt. Col. Oron J. Hale, AUS
State Department	Mr. Richard A. Humphrey
Navy Department	Comm. J. L. Riheldaffer, USN (Ret)
Foreign Economic Admin.	Mr. Lewis A. Riley
Office of Strategic Services	Lt. George Young, USNR
Interdepartmental Committee	1st Lt. John B. Ashcraft, CAC
	2nd Lt. David H. Clift, AUS
	Mr. Harvey Hall
	Mr. George N. Kates
	Miss Dorothy Kodadek
	Mr. John Ottemiller
	Lt. (j.g.) Frederick Kilgour, USNR

Executive Secretary:

Lt. Kilgour presided.

The Minutes of the Meeting of 23 February 1945 were approved as distributed.

The chair reviewed the history of the two Budget Requests that IDC had presented in November, 1944 for funds and personnel for IDC operations during the fiscal year 1945/46. As directed Budget (A) was prepared on the basis that hostilities in Europe would have ceased by 1 July 1945, and Budget (B) on the basis that hostilities in both the Far East and Europe would be over by 1 July 1945. Budget (A) requested a total of 68 departmental positions. Somewhere along the line seven positions had been added to the Request before it was presented to the Bureau of the Budget. The Bureau of the Budget had generally approved the Request for presentation to Congress but had asked that a five per cent cut in personnel positions be made. The not too accurate arithmetic result has been that IDC's request for personnel is now 70 as it goes to the Congress to be written into the OSS Appropriation Bill. That Bill has not yet become law.

The OSS Personnel Board had assigned IDC 70 positions as of 31 March 1945 and had requested a program outlining how IDC would be able to reduce to 70 positions but had not indicated that IDC would have to start such a reduction program on 1 April 1945. In response to a request as to how many personnel slots IDC needed as of 31 March 1945, the chair had worked out a total of 91 departmental positions as opposed to IDC's present 92 positions that would be absolutely necessary if IDC is to carry out effectively its function.

The question of reducing the IDC staff was discussed at length by the Committee. Mr. Clapp moved as follows: "Upon being informed of the projected cut in personnel of the departmental staff of the Interdepartmental Committee, the Committee instructed the Chairman to record the sense of the Committee as follows. The Committee has already recognized the appropriateness of contemplating reductions in force contingent upon the cessation of hostilities in Europe and has already taken steps in that direction by not filling positions approved by the Bureau of the Budget and specifically appropriated for the use of the Committee by Congress. It is not of the view, however, that such a termination of the war in Europe can now be safely predicted and that consequently the need of intelligence analysis has, or shall immediately cease to exist. The Committee, therefore, considers (a) such a cut as is contemplated to be impracticable and (b) protests strongly against the terms of the reduction being decided administratively by OSS without prior consultation with the Committee." The motion was seconded by Colonel Hale and unanimously approved.

The chair announced that Mr. Cyrus H. Nathan is the new Committee Member representing the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs.

Colonel Hale mentioned the shortage of Balkan material and said that he felt the need for analysis of Rumanian publications was of continuing importance, but after some discussion agreed that the reduction of force policy agreed upon in the Committee Meeting of 17 November 1944 should not be altered. The Chair added that in light of the Committee's general policy for reducing force the positions made vacant by the transfer of Analysts reading the European press were not being filled by new European Analysts. The Committee approved.

Mr. Riley called attention to the fact that the requirements of FEA for newspapers, serial publications, official bulletins, etc., from the European and Asiatic fields would in all probability continue for many months beyond cessation of hostilities. The studies and projects for post-war control of the enemy economy and for the rehabilitation of subjugated people will require extensive services in the field of foreign publications. The burden of work in this line is likely to increase between now and the peace conference rather than decrease. FEA, therefore, is particularly concerned with any proposal to decrease the staff of IDC at this time.

The Chair called upon Mr. George Kates, recently returned from the IDC Outpost in Chungking. Mr. Kates said that the IDC problem in Chungking was a most vital and interesting one though the difficulties in operation are manifold; there are problems arising from the Chinese parties; transportation within China has literally

broken down; there is a deficiency of effective intellectual activity; publications are inferior; the Chungking office is badly understaffed. Mr. Kates said that the American Publications Service (IDC) had been taken over by OSS. (The Chair stated here that the move had been made without the knowledge of IDC/Washington.) In spite of the many difficulties of operating with inadequate personnel and questionable autonomy Mr. Kates said the average microfilm footage had increased during his service in Chungking but the acquisition program would have been more fruitful had it been possible to make more field trips.

Priority in acquisition of publications in Chungking is as follows: publications from Japan are of first importance; Communist China second on the list; publications from puppet China third; Free China last. Endeavor is also made to obtain material from Indo China and Southeast Asia generally.

Mr. Kates recommended that two main difficulties be cleared up at the earliest possible date. These are (1) the problem of the jurisdiction of IDC/Chungking and (2) lack of adequate manpower. A minimum of three people is required. Though the quality of publications in China is disappointing Mr. Kates said his real regret was that the complications of administration and lack of personnel had prevented the kind of growth and expansion of IDC in Chungking which otherwise would have been possible. With respect to the manpower situation the Chair reported that five of IDC's field positions are assigned to the China Theater.

The question of whether APS in Chungking should remain with OSS or return to the Embassy was discussed. It was agreed that the important factor is which connection would produce a better volume and quality of material. Mr. Kates did not feel that the present status of APS in Chungking made any vital difference and thought that acquisition of Japanese material possibly might be easier under OSS. Colonel Hale inquired if the translating pool was affected by the recent changeover and Mr. Kates said that it was not. He added that the translating pool benefited through the good spirit of cooperation among the agencies in Chungking and that the Pool was proving cheap, simple, and highly effective way of getting work of the best quality done.

The physical plant will in the nearest future undergo a radical change. General Wedemeyer has now requisitioned the entire Chiu-ching compound for his expanded headquarters; and Colonel Hepner has arranged to house not only APS but also all of the Coordinated Translation Center in a three-story bank building taken over to by the OSS center.

There was further discussion of the status of IDC in Chungking after which Mr. Clapp moved that "IDC in Chungking should remain with OSS for the present but the separate character of APS (IDC) must be maintained." Mr. Riley seconded the motion. The question was put to vote by calling the roll. Representatives from the Library of Congress, Navy, OSS, FEA, State and Agriculture voted "Yes". The representative from the War Department voted "Present".

The Chair said arrangements had been completed with the Army Medical Library and the Department of Agriculture for those libraries to catalog books received from IDC and furnish IDC with duplicate cards. This is similar to the system now in effect with the Library of Congress which has been working satisfactorily.

The Chair, announced that newspapers from Northern Italy are beginning to come in via Bern.