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You Asked for It, Professor Goldman

By WILLARD WEST
Of the Editorial Page Staff

President Johnson recently named a Princeton University history professor, Dr. Eric F. Goldman, as his *idea man*. His principal duty will be to channel the "best thinking" of the country to the President.

Dr. Goldman humbly admitted that at the moment he hasn't any really bright ideas, but he invited one and all to write letters to him if they have any. He said the letters could be sent either to Princeton or the White House.

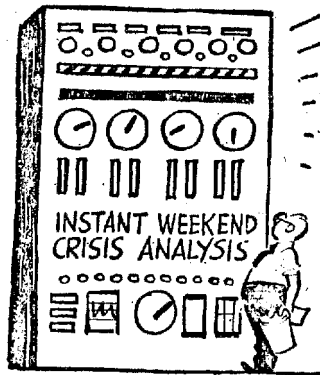
We've drafted one but are a little timid about sending it and haven't yet gotten around to signing it. The letter follows:

Dear Dr. Goldman:

It's our belief that the government needs a fresh insight into the problems it faces, especially in foreign affairs. We seem to have a fixation on how to solve these problems, and too often come up with the incorrect solution. For a while it was called "brinkmanship" and now it's "CIAmanship" but the solutions always seem to create more problems.

My proposal is that the scientists should take over the State Department. And, the best way to do this is to let them set up their computers and circuitry and apply the sound principles of data processing.

As a professor, you are, no doubt, well versed in the advances made by data processing in science and business,



and now the Internal Revenue Service.

For example, in space exploration our satellites are now flashing back to us enough information each day to fill 422,306 IBM cards. This is a formidable amount of knowledge and it is rapidly being processed in our successful assault on the heavens.

In lesser fields, data processing each day brings new wonders. One computer is now making progress in translating Chinese to English.

Are we not at the point where such machines could take over the overworked and harassed State Department?

Some newspaper friends point out that we now have a crisis a week. These crises seem to confront us each Monday morning and last through the week, usually being solved—the wrong way—by Friday. Although sometimes they go through the weekend.

Data processing certainly could deal with these matters faster. The scientists probably could set up a machine, perhaps a 5-Day-Cycle Cataclysm

Analyzer. Feeding all available information into such a computer might bring the right solution within minutes.

A Weekend-Cycle Solution Dissector would free untold hundreds of State Department employes for rest on Saturday and Sunday and give them an opportunity to get to the job on Monday morning refreshed and unhampered.

Last week our dilemma was an island—Cuba. Why not a data processor, the Instant Insular Retaliator? It could deal with a whole hutch of problem islands: Zanzibar, Cyprus, Borneo, Great Britain. Isthmuses, like Panama, could be processed in the same machine.

We have Cyprus all this week but the IIR might have solved the whole thing last Tuesday.

A whole battery of computers, oriented to the geopolitical-scientific approach, could be developed. There could be a 5-Year Peninsular Speculator to take up the questions of Viet Nam, Laos, Cambodia, etc. And a Harmonic Land-Mass Calculator for Russia, China and our latest problem, France.

There are many other possible ways of data-processing our foreign policy. But it is realized, of course, that you must want your letters to be brief since there will be so many other ideas coming to you.

Just one thing more. Isn't the Post Office carrying its automation a little too far by taking away the corner mailboxes?

Yours truly,