

U.S.I.A. Is Set for Major Changes if Study Group

By DAVID BINDER

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 27—The United States Information Agency faces its first major reorganization in more than two decades as a result of proposals by an independent study group. Administration and Congressional authorities said today.

The changes recommended by the panel on international information, education and cultural relations include combining most of the U.S.I.A. functions with the State Department's Bureau of Cultural Affairs.

The proposed changes, which would bring considerable savings in administrative and technical costs, are understood to have been welcomed by Secretary of State Kissinger and by members of Congress who oversee the agency.

The officials said that the only apparent opposition to reorganization at this time came from James Keogh, the director of U.S.I.A., who was appointed two years ago by President Nixon.

A 10-Month Study

The 20-member panel, headed by Frank Stanton, former president of CBS, drafted its proposals last week after 10 months of inquiry into the benefits and disadvantages of keeping overseas information functions separate from the rest of the American foreign-policy apparatus.

The information agency, which was established as an independent executive branch in 1953, disseminates cultural, political and technical information about the United States overseas. It runs libraries and teaching programs, distributes films and gives out information to the press.

The panel found numerous examples of duplicate operations by the State Department and U.S.I.A. and a history of friction between the Secretary of State and agency directors dating almost to the time in 1953 when U.S.I.A. was split off from the department.

"There was duplication of the state department and U.S.I.A. was split off from the department."

"There was duplication of the state department and U.S.I.A. in the policy information area," Mr. Stanton said in an interview today. "Also it never made any sense to have cultural exchanges managed by the State Department and administered by U.S.I.A. in the field."

A typical example cited by one panel member was an arrangement made by State Department cultural affairs officials a few years ago to send Isaac Stern, the violinist, to Yu

goslavia. "State sent him, but U.S.I.A. handled his program," he said.

Mr. Stanton said the panel had also concluded that the voice of America should be given a separate charter, perhaps under the authority of a reconstituted Board for International Broadcasting, which presently oversees Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

The privately funded Stanton panel, which had its origin in recommendations by two advisory commissions authorized by Congress, proposes that U.S.I.A.'s operations be placed under a new State Department office, which it tentatively calls "information and cultural affairs."

Although the panel does not have a precise cost analysis, one member said the reorganization could bring a saving of \$50-million on the current \$350-million expenditures by the Government on overseas information and cultural activities.

Some of the savings would come from combining technical facilities and equipment purchases of the Voice of America, Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe. The Voice has a budget of \$55-million. Radio Liberty, which broadcasts to the Soviet Union, and Free Europe, which broadcasts to Eastern Europe, have a total budget of about \$50-million.

Mr. Stanton said there would also be savings through the elimination of dual administration and dual operations. "When I was in Vienna last summer," he remarked, "I found the U.S.I.A. was sending out daily wireless bulletins to its office while Kissinger's people were sending an almost identical wireless file to the embassy."

Final Report Awaited

He said that he expected the panel to submit its final report in mid-February, although its basic proposals have already been cleared with the Department of State, Congress and the Office of Management and Budget.

Asked why reorganization had not been tried before, Mr. Stanton, who has served on several advisory panels concerned with the U.S.I.A., said that previous proposals had been opposed in Congress, principally by Senator J. W. Fulbright.

While cost was one of the factors cited by Mr. Stanton for reorganization, he said his main concern was that the present system was "totally unworkable."

"It doesn't make any sense to have two sets of policy planners and facilities in the same field," he remarked. "Our proposal combines things that belong together. I wouldn't want

to be Secretary of State with my information arm hanging out there on a loose pulley."

He observed that the combining of U.S.I.A. and State Department functions could probably be done by executive order, while the transfer of the Voice of America to different authority would require Congressional action. He pointed out that under the proposals the Voice would retain its own editorial direction, separate

from Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

The Stanton panel was formed at the suggestion of the Advisory Commission on International Education and Cultural Affairs and the Advisory Commission on Information. The two commissions appointed the members. Financing came from the Ford, Rockefeller and Ahmanson foundations and from the Lilly Endowment.

The panel's members include

Has Its Way

Walter Roberts, former associate director of U.S.I.A.; Peter Krogh, dean of Georgetown's School of Foreign Service; Andrew Berding, former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs; Prof. W. Phillips Davison of Columbia University; Edmund Gullion, dean of the Fletcher School of Law, and Kenneth W. Thompson, director at the International Council for Educational Development.

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