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## Science Ambassadors

Early in 1958 the Department of State reactivated the program of assigning science attachés to U.S. embassies in other countries. Wallace Brode was appointed science adviser to the Secretary of State, and scientific representatives have since been sent to 10 major capitals abroad. We recently had the opportunity to discuss the program with a few science attachés and with several scientists in Europe who have observed the work of our scientific ambassadors.

There have been some initial problems. A new science attaché must demonstrate that he can live and work as a member of the embassy staff and that he can contribute to the working effectiveness of the embassy. In the 18 months since the first attachés reached their posts, much of their time has gone into learning how to work most usefully. Now, the report is, "We are beginning to be truly effective." They facilitate scientific exchanges with the U.S. They interpret American science to scientists, science writers, editors, and others who influence foreign attitudes toward the U.S. and its scientific and technological achievements. And—as a function of prime importance to the Department of State—they help other members of the embassy staffs to give proper consideration to the scientific and technical factors involved in the decisions they must make. The program is well started; the attachés express a feeling of growing accomplishment in what they are doing.

What of the future? The program is, in a sense, on trial. Before it can work at maximum effectiveness, three hurdles must be crossed. First, the Department of State must demonstrate that it gives the program continuing, nonpolitical support. Both the present administration and the administration that takes office on 20 January must be alert to the importance of demonstrating the continuing, nonpolitical character of the program.

The second hurdle is to persuade first-rate men to replace the present attachés, most of whom were appointed for two-year periods while on leave of absence from their permanent positions. If the Department of State passes the first hurdle successfully, the science adviser can recruit good replacements; if the Department fails the first hurdle, the second will also surely be failed.

The third hurdle is to work out long-term staffing policies. The well-selected amateurs in diplomacy we now use have dedication, knowledge of American scientific activities, and considerable acquaintance with the language, customs, and scientific activities of the countries in which they work. Ideally, they should also have a greater understanding of national policy and of Department of State procedures and problems. It is possible to combine the advantages of an amateur with those of a professional, perhaps most effectively by making periodic foreign service a recognized part of the career patterns of appropriate scientists and science administrators, but it will be a waste of time to worry about this third hurdle unless the first one is successfully crossed.

Our emphasis on the first hurdle is because the Department of State failed on this one once before. In 1951 the Department appointed a science adviser and a number of science attachés. When the science adviser resigned, no replacement was appointed; as the attachés came home, their posts were left vacant. Thus the program stumbled to a halt in 1956. The service that the program can render to the nation is too important to allow the first hurdle to be failed again.—D.W.