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February 22, 1982

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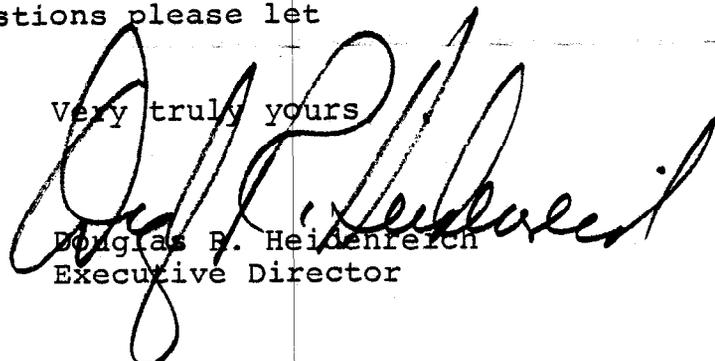
45298  
Dear Mr. Tuttle:

At its meeting of February 18 the Board considered your situation and concluded that you may not claim credit for studying Chinese.

You still remain on involuntary restricted status pursuant to the enclosed rules.

If there are any questions please let me know.

Very truly yours



Douglas R. Heidenreich  
Executive Director

DRH:db

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable John E. Simonett

John McCarthy ✓

Nancy Tschimperle

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February 5, 1982

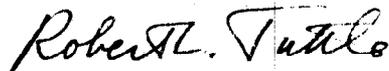
Douglas R. Heidenreich, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Minnesota State Board of Continuing Legal Education  
675 Summit Avenue  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105

Dear Mr. Heidenreich:

Thank you for your letter of January 29th.

I am enclosing a copy of an editorial-opinion from the New York Times of February 4th, and request that you consider some of the ideas of modern thinking expressed by Miss Lewis in connection with your recommendation to the Court. I am also sending a copy to the Clerk of the Court.

Very truly yours,



Robert L. Tuttle

cc: John McCarthy, Esq. ✓

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# Speaking In Tongues

By Flora Lewis

There are countries in the world where language is the most divisive political issue. Belgium and Canada are racked by the argument, which reflects real rivalry for economic and social benefits.

In parts of the U.S. the problem is reaching similar proportions. Some demographers predict it won't be long before it's nationwide. The time for a sensible approach is before it starts tearing at the country's unity.

There seems to be a good deal more public awareness of most Americans' poverty in the resource of foreign language, and sometimes even their own, than appears on the surface. In November 1979, when the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies presented its findings, it concluded that "Nothing less is at issue than the nation's security." It bemoaned "the complacent and defeatist attitude" of officialdom toward the nation's linguistic shortcomings: "Americans' incompetence in foreign languages is nothing short of scandalous, and it is becoming worse," the commission said. Then one more report was shelved.

It isn't surprising that at a time of sharp budget cuts that are going to affect many aspects of education and culture, support for language study is languishing. But the problem isn't just money, it's attitudes.

That shows in the conflict over "bilingualism" in areas with large Spanish-speaking populations. The term is turned on its head. Instead of the real meaning of fluency in two languages, it has come to be used as a euphemism for sticking to one's mother tongue.

It should be obvious nonsense to imagine that anybody gains when people can't understand each other. Babel didn't collapse because the workers couldn't communicate but because they didn't try to learn.

Gregory Jaynes once reported in *The New York Times* with delicious satiric insight about the quarrels of Western intelligence agents dumped in a delapidated town in Cameroon, ostensibly to watch the fighting across the river in Chad when Libyan troops took over. The Americans, he said, went about proclaiming that anybody in the world could understand English if it was shouted loudly enough.

The syndrome is widespread, and unattractive. English is the dominant and official language of the U.S., and of course every American needs to know it. Lack of ease in using it not only condemns people to second-class citizenship, with all that implies in terms of jobs, standing, access to the culture. It also weakens the sense of national identity and the sharing of values to which the country is dedicated.

But there is no reason why requiring that basic education be in English should exclude English-speaking Americans from other languages. Where a second language is widely used, as Spanish is in Florida and the Southwest, the shattered feeling of community would be immensely improved if all the other pupils were required to study Spanish. That would be more like bilingualism.

The emphasis of those who do urge the value of breaking out of the single-language mind-box is mostly on utility. The commission report stressed the need for language ability in defense, business abroad, foreign relations and research. True, these things are important. But it's a mistake to think languages are only good for certain careers and travel.

They are tools for enriching every day life, as music, hobbies, sports add zest to humdrum existence. They open the door to enjoyment of humor, legend, drama, food, the wisdom of tradition, from another point of view, and therefore help broaden and brighten the mind.

Refusal to accept anybody else's language as worth knowing reflects the same narrow-gauge kind of head, the same stubborn ignorance, as that of the fundamentalist I heard about who denounced people speaking in other tongues, saying, "If English was good enough for Jesus Christ, it's good enough for them." The story is apocryphal in both senses.

Certainly, nobody can ever learn all the languages of the world. There are thousands. This argument for trying a few stems from considering only the immediate professional utility of multilingualism. It leaves out the fun and fantasy of having more than one track to think along.

And that is mainly what is wrong with the way Americans are taught foreign languages, as though they were computer programs. Along with the infinitives and subjunctives, maybe even before, should come the attractions. Perhaps a better way to start learning French is with a menu and recipes, German with an account of a soccer game, anything with news about familiar subjects.

Americans need to talk with the rest of the world and with each other. When we come to think of it as not just a chore and a conflict but as an adventure, like space with everybody going into orbit, we'll be safely launched.

*William Safire's column now appears Fridays and Mondays.*