

18 OCT 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director (Plans)

SUBJECT: Letter from Abbott Washburn re Global Information Campaign on Disarmament

1. This memorandum suggests action on the part of the DCI. The requested action is contained in paragraph 7.

2. DD(P), OCI, ONE, OSI and have reviewed the attached letter from Abbott Washburn regarding his proposals for a world-wide information campaign on the free world disarmament proposals. The following comments summarize our views:

a. We agree that there is a great need for the United States to demonstrate to the rest of the world its sincere desire to work toward meaningful disarmament. We also agree that the Soviets have made significant propaganda gains by obtaining considerable support in world public opinion for their simple package of "ban the tests" and "ban the bomb."

b. In view of the Soviet success in their disarmament propaganda campaign, we agree that the United States should give a very high priority to this subject, although not necessarily number one priority as advocated in Mr. Washburn's memorandum. We also agree that the great personal reputation of the President throughout the world makes it important that he should personally take the lead in such a campaign.

c. We think that the main problem presented by Mr. Washburn's proposals is that it commits the President to a propaganda campaign based on a disarmament proposal which is only our initial negotiating position. Presumably the western proposal is only the beginning from which we are willing to negotiate and should not appear to be a rigid program upon which the United States and its allies are resting their case. In view of the fact that the UN General Assembly is about to open debate on the subject of disarmament, wouldn't it be dangerous for us to promulgate such a campaign as this when we may wish to change our position--for example, on the question of suspension of tests?

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3. In addition to the foregoing comments, there are certain important technical inaccuracies in Mr. Washburn's memorandum.

a. He says that the four-power plan offers the only hope of reducing the enormous arms spending. This statement is obviously not true and we would have great difficulty convincing the people of many nations throughout the world that it is.

b. We should be extremely careful in the way in which we handle the issue of suspension or cessation of nuclear testing. Already there are indications that the handling of this in the USIA program may be out-of-date. We are informed that Mr. Stassen is now circulating a paper in the White House and the Department of State recommending a change in this position.

c. United States policy does not at this time envisage the destruction of all nuclear weapons. The USIA paper over-states the extent to which we are willing to carry this program.

d. We should be careful in talking about our need for nuclear weapons to counter-balance the superiority of the conventional forces of the Soviet bloc since the Soviet Union has already advocated lower levels of conventional forces than the United States is presently prepared to adopt.

4. We have been informed by Mr. Berding's office in the Department of State that they have discussed this project with Mr. Washburn on October 17. They took an extremely negative position on most of the paper, commenting favorably only on the idea of a monograph by the President expressing his personal feelings about disarmament. We are informed that the Department thinks this is an excellent idea, particularly if it could be related to a major speech on disarmament by the President at some important and significant occasion.

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6. Since we know that the Department of State rather strongly opposes most of this program and since your staff representatives agree with the Department of State position, it is recommended that a detailed criticism of the project not be sent to Mr. Washburn under your signature.

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Campaign on Disarmament

7. It is recommended that you sign the attached letter to
Mr. Washburn.



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1 Attachment-Proposed Letter to Mr. Washburn
1 Attachment-Letter from Mr. Washburn

cc: DDCI

CONCUR:

Deputy Director (Plans)

Date

Mr. Abbott Washburn
Deputy Director
United States Information Agency
Washington, D.C.

*NOT SENT
(See note on handwriting sheet)*

Dear Abbott:

I have read with considerable interest your memorandum proposing a world-wide information campaign on the free world disarmament proposals. I certainly agree that this is one of the priority tasks for the United States overseas information effort. We have considerable evidence that the Soviets have made very substantial gains with their single and popular campaign based on stopping the tests and banning the bomb. It is clear that the success of the Soviet campaign has great strategic significance in that they have made progress in posing as the champions of peace while questioning the sincerity of our desire for disarmament. I also agree with you that the United States campaign should, if possible, be led by the President himself in view of his great personal prestige throughout the world.

I wonder whether your proposal doesn't have a danger of committing the United States to a firm position in the field of disarmament based entirely on a western proposal which was submitted merely as the basis for serious negotiation. Isn't it possible that we might be considerably embarrassed if we tied our propaganda at the outset to an initial plan for negotiation when conceivably even during the coming debates in the UN we may wish to make certain modifications? Such a firm commitment could also embarrass us with our major allies who probably feel that they are not committed to any single rigid set of proposals.

I wonder if it wouldn't be wise, before launching any campaign, for us to await the results of the UN debate. In the meantime we could be preparing a positive program based on a set of principles such as our willingness to permit full and open reciprocal inspection and our willingness, after such inspection procedures have been established, to cease the production of nuclear materials for military purposes. In other words, it seems to me that we could have a very effective program not necessarily tied to the western disarmament proposals as such. I think your idea of a monograph by the President is excellent and maybe this should be the first step in preparing our program.

You ask particularly for my reaction to the suggestion calling for an international congress of free world groups on disarmament. This might be a good idea at some later stage after our campaign has been carefully developed but I think that it would be ill-advised to promote any large scale debate in the free world until we have some assurance that public opinion is moving fairly well in the direction we want it to move.

I suggest that we might consider setting up a high-level task force made up of representatives from your Agency, the Department of State and CIA to work on the further refinement of an action plan in the field of disarmament information. If you agree with this thought, I think it would be better to await any decisions on questions of financing until such an inter-agency group has submitted its plan.

Sincerely,

ALLEN W. DULLES
Director

Signature Recommended:

Date: _____

Deputy Director (Plans)
DDP/ [redacted] 17 Oct 1957

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