

CONFIDENTIAL

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PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
WASHINGTON

July 3, 1952

Mr. George S. Franklin, Jr.
Council on Foreign Relations
58 East 68th Street
New York, New York

Dear George:

I have told our Director, Dr. Raymond B. Allen, about the talk I had with you in New York last week, and with his authorization I shall try to elaborate a little upon some of the points I made:

As I explained to you, we are deeply concerned with the related problems of promoting unity of purpose among the Atlantic Powers -- particularly among the members of NATO -- and of stimulating a greater release of creative energy in the Atlantic Community as a whole. In addition to the various governmental programs directed at these problems, it seems to us that certain types of non-governmental activity might make a valuable contribution to their solution. In particular we feel that some very important long-range results might be achieved through a well-organized and carefully prepared non-governmental conference or seminar of American and European leaders somewhat along the lines of the American Assembly which General Eisenhower sponsored at Columbia.

This "Atlantic Assembly" would bring together outstanding leaders in various branches of public and private life from all of the NATO powers, from the German Federal Republic, and perhaps from friendly neutral countries such as Sweden, Switzerland, and Eire. Its goal would not be to produce manifestos or other propagandistic statements but to engage in sober, objective study of a number of vital problems common to the Atlantic Community as a whole, and to seek constructive solutions to these problems. It would not be expected that the work of the conference would lead directly to governmental action or to the launching of popular movements. The aim would not be to manipulate but to educate and stimulate.

The agenda of the proposed conference might concentrate on some particularly important and timely topic but it seems to me that it would be most valuable if it included at least some discussion of the outstanding political, economic, social and even scientific and technological problems related to the security and continued progress of the Atlantic Community, since all of them are inter-related.

NSC review(s) completed.

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Without in any way deprecating the importance of strengthening political ties among the free nations in the Atlantic world, or the need for a greater armaments effort, or the problem of trade-expansion, it seems to me that the problem underlying all others for the free world is the problem of invention. Only by a tremendous release of the creative imagination and energy of the free peoples, only by raising our sights in every field, can we develop the dynamism to withstand communist expansion and recover that faith in the future which is an essential part of our Western -- and particularly American heritage.

Invent -- or vanish, is the choice that history offers us. We need new discoveries, new techniques, new tools and weapons, new social, political and economic concepts. The need is particularly great in the countries of continental Europe where traditional cultural and social patterns, nationalism and reactionary or collectivist economic attitudes gravely impede the development of a real situation of strength. In my opinion a seminar of the type proposed would accomplish a great deal merely by bringing together European leaders who normally have little direct contact in their own countries. If in addition it brought these leaders to examine some of the major problems of the day objectively and outside of doctrinaire frames of reference, the long-term intellectual impact might be very great.

As you have been able to see, this scheme is still in a very nebulous shape in my mind, but I am passing it on in this form precisely because I hope to get the benefit of your thinking on the problem. I should be most grateful personally -- and I know that Dr. Allen would deeply appreciate it on behalf of PSB as a whole -- if you and your colleagues on the staff of the Council could devote some thought to the problem and give us your frank opinion on the feasibility and utility of the project, and on the most effective means for carrying it out. It would be particularly valuable if it were possible to organize some informal consultation on the problem among members of the Council.

Among the specific questions that occur to me are the following:

Assuming that some type of privately organized and sponsored conference of Atlantic leaders is feasible and useful, does the approximate formulation of the project that I have given seem adequate as a preliminary basis, or would some other approach be more practical and effective?

How should such a conference be prepared? Would it be useful to envisage a small preliminary conference to prepare it?

What American organizations would be best qualified to contribute actively to the organization of the conference, and likely to take an interest in it? (I know the answer, at least my answer, to the first part of the question; is there any possibility that the Council would be interested?)

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Would it be possible to obtain adequate financial assistance from American foundations for organizing the conference? If not, could U.S. Government support be furnished in whole or in part, without giving too strong an official flavor to the project?

How could the project be launched so that it did not seem too obviously an American idea? And what European leaders or organizations would be most likely to take a real interest in it and assume some measure of leadership in developing it? (We have discussed the project informally with a senior officer of the State Department who has expressed keen interest but feels as we do that the conference would lose much of its value if it were held in the United States or brought about solely by American initiative).

I realize that this is a rather formidable list of questions, but the interest you expressed in our talk has encouraged me to come back for more, and insofar as I am competent to judge, the problem is of real importance from the viewpoint of the national interest.

Sincerely,

Ed (signed)

Edmond L. Taylor
Assistant Director for
Office of Plans and Policy