

July 16, 1975

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Dear Sarge,

I was very pleased to get the news that you gave me over the phone, which I gather has been rather widely circulated already at least in this area. First of all, let me begin by offering a small contribution on the principle that a little bit now may be worth even more than a great deal later on, concerning which I will also see what may be possible.

I hope that I may be able to hear from you what the appropriate address of your campaign headquarters will be and how such contributions should be addressed on the part of others.

In the same connection based on my preliminary conversations with the people whom I have tried to influence on your behalf, it would be very useful if I could get from you some quite serious descriptive material of which there probably is a good deal from your Vice-Presidential campaign. A review of your history in public life and possibly four to five pages of excerpts from your principal speeches during the last campaign would be extremely useful! This would be intended for many very serious minded people.

It may be a little early to be going into some issues, but I can hardly resist the opportunity of passing on a few thoughts on domestic policy.

Enclosed is a copy of a letter that I wrote to Senator Tunney that I think reaches some questions that are much more important than may appear on the surface. The social welfare issue, in its broadest terms, is bound to be one of the predominant issues in the campaign. In my opinion, McGovern absolutely botched it by having seized upon fragments of advice without thinking how they related into a well thought-out and quantitatively measured total picture. I have no anxiety that there will be a repetition of that scene on your part.

Now I am sure that we share a belief common to almost all liberal-minded people that we must strive toward a more equitable distribution of income as a political and ethical imperative for the future of this country. At the same time the oil crisis, and the general crisis of the industrialized

world which is typified by the problems of Great Britain and Italy must also showing us that we need to combine the impetus for equity with a more efficient economy that leads to the higher levels of productivity that are needed to provide the base for redistribution. Otherwise we will all go down together in levelled poverty.

For these reasons I would hope that you would give very careful attention to the development of policies for tax incentives and other approaches toward the enhancement of productivity together with the programs for guaranteed income and similar welfare support that I am sure are also in your repertoire. At a political level I believe that this may make it possible to enlist a very high measure of support from the "beleaguered middle class" and avoid the error of a too polarized Populist appeal which was obviously one of the reasons for the fiasco of the last election campaign.

The specific proposal that I copy here (from my letter to Senator Tunney) obviously should not take center stage in such a program, but I send it to illustrate some of the directions that a more comprehensive approach might very appropriately include. If you were interested in pursuing this further, I believe that I could help you to assemble a pluralistic group of economic consultants of the highest possible quality that would now be able to have sufficient time to give you very well thought-out advice and again avoid some of the errors of the last campaign.

Over the phone I think I mentioned that I had some comments on the speeches that Mr. Birenbaum had sent me in connection with your trip to the Soviet Union in March and April.

The appeal to common existence and its distinction from mere co-existence is a moving statement of the fundamental issue of world security. But there is so much evidence that the Soviets are deeply divided about their future course and their own commitment one way or another that I think we should be very careful about giving them the impression that we are going to be swayed by sentimental optimism. That is why I put some focus on the general tenor of your remarks on page 7. From my own reading of history I would conclude that the idea of world revolution was very deeply held by many of the new Soviet leaders, and of course was one of the points of polarization between Stalin and Trotzky. To gloss over the idea that there was indeed a revolutionary threat - however feeble the first revolutionary government might have been and therefore poorly able to meet its own expectations - I think is to give the Soviets the idea that we are easily misled about their potential intentions. Similarly, as half-hearted as was our own intervention in Siberia, I wonder I persuaded your Soviet audience would have been about the assertion that its true purpose was to restrain Japan! Now I think that elsewhere in your text you make the point very, very strongly about the need for hard-headedness and I do not think that these lines would really alter the main thrust of it, but I felt it might be useful to you in the drafting of future speeches to get some idea as to how these lines are understood by someone on the side-lines.

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I think we do need to make it clear that there are divisions of interest within this country, just as there are within the Soviet Union. That there are imperialist tendencies that we hope can be kept in check on both sides. That continued Soviet expansionism, for example in Africa and in the Near East, can only make it more difficult for us to establish our own policies that are likely to lead to a true common existence. Again, I think you have said all that but possibly with a somewhat different distribution of emphasis. And, of course, you may well have your own ideas about whether these are useful suggestions or not.

I wish I could suggest a catchier phrase than "common existence" which I think is going to be a little difficult to explain and distinguish from co-existence. Also, I do see some problems that a small amount of handwaving will not put away about how to implement arrangements for common existence with the Soviet Union, during a period when it is, for example, still in a condition of great tension with China, that will not appear to the Chinese to be an effort at superpower condominium. Judging from what Soviet people say during their occasional visits here, we have exactly the opposite problem in explaining our rapidly improving relationships with China as being other than directed to them. So, there is some very fundamental level at which this particular problem is not likely to go very much further unless and until the Sino-Soviet conflict reaches some better degree of resolution. Exhortations about common existence may be relatively fruitless or perhaps worse may be misunderstood, as long as this has such a central place in the political agenda.

But I am spending too long criticizing what is really a great overture; as Mr. Birenbaum did solicit some comments, I may have a little more to say later on.

I should call your attention to the World Health Organization as an important forum for common existence, probably among the most successful of organizations for international cooperation.

I think it could offer a lot of useful case material about the advantages of this cooperative approach, and I would be happy to brief you further if you have other occasions to expand on that theme.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr
Enclosure