

COUNCIL FOR A LIVABLE WORLD

National Office: 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036, Telephone: (202) 265-3800

MEMORANDUM

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

From: Leo Szilard

To: Members of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science

I am taking the liberty of sending you this memorandum on the tentative assumption that you have been asking yourself if there were anything that any of us could do to halt the general drift towards war. I, myself, didn't think that there was, until about a year ago, when I began to see how even a small group of people, ten to twenty thousand perhaps, who may unite on a set of attainable political objectives, would have a chance to bring about the change that is needed.

We came close to war last October when the Russians transported rockets to Cuba, and if the arms race continues other crises of this sort are bound to occur. It is easier to build long-range rockets, such as the Minuteman, as fast as the available production facilities permit, than to stop the arms race by arriving at an agreement on arms control with the Soviet Union which the Senate may be willing to ratify. If we keep on following this line of least resistance we shall before long reach a point of no return in an all-out arms race.

With President Kennedy, a number of exceptionally capable men moved into the Administration. No one knows better than they do that America cannot be made secure by trying to keep ahead in the arms race, but they find it difficult to keep their attention focused on the central issues when peripheral issues take up much of their time and attention and when they get little encouragement from the Congress.

There are a number of exceptionally capable men in the Congress also, particularly in the Senate. Many of them are deeply concerned about the general trend towards war and have considerable insight into what needs to be done but, more often than not, they give in private conversation a lucid analysis of the problems with which we are faced and then, at some point or other, they say "Of course, I couldn't say this in public."

About a year and a half ago, it occurred to me that if enough people would unite on a set of attainable objectives they could maintain an organization which would bring to Washington from time to time scientists and scholars who understand the problem that the bomb poses to the world. These distinguished men would speak with the sweet voice of reason to key people within the Administration and the Senate; they would try to get them to focus their attention on the central issues and assist them in clarifying their minds on some of the more complex issues which are involved.

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The next thing that occurred to me was that these distinguished men would be heard, but they might not be listened to, if they were able to deliver neither votes nor campaign contributions.

I was led to conclude that the sweet voice of reason alone could not do the job, that campaign contributions alone could not do the job, but the combination of the sweet voice of reason and substantial campaign contributions might very well do the job.

Twenty thousand people having an average income of \$10,000 and willing to devote 1% or 2% of their income to campaign contributions for Congressional candidates would provide an amount of \$2 to \$4 million a year. This amount, if wisely spent, could have a profound effect on the composition and the attitudes of Congress.

The Council for a Livable World, set up in Washington in June of last year, is prepared to advise its supporters as to where their campaign contributions would be most effective.

The Council is composed of scientists, scholars and men well-versed in practical politics. It includes William Doering, Director of the Division of Science, Yale University; Morton Grodzins, Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago; and James G. Patton, President of the National Farmers Union.

In the last Congressional election the Council recommended to those who sought its advice to concentrate their campaign contributions on three Senatorial candidates. Checks were made out directly to the candidate and sent to the Council for transmission. The Council transmitted over \$20,000 to George McGovern, formerly Director of the Food-for-Peace Program, who was running for the Senate in South Dakota. He was elected with a margin of a few hundred votes, the first Democratic Senator in South Dakota in 26 years. To the other two Senatorial candidates, the Council transmitted over \$10,000 and over \$4,000 respectively, and both of them were elected.

On the basis of the experience gained so far, I am inclined to believe that the Council could become the most effective public-interest lobby that ever hit Washington by the time the number of its supporters reaches 10,000.

Regular Supporters of the Council are expected to expend 2% of their income, and Contributing Supporters of the Council are expected to expend 1% of their income or \$100, in support of the work of the Council, including campaign contributions to Congressional candidates.

If you believe that you might wish to become a supporter of the Council, please fill out the enclosed form and mail it to the Council for a Livable World, 1346 Connecticut Avenue, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20036. A pre-paid envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,



Leo Szilard