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THE WHITE HOUSE  
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Dear Mr. President:

Probably too belatedly, I am trying to face the facts concerning the People-to-People project, and to do it quite unemotionally, although a year's work on your plan has convinced me that it has the elements of eventually providing the world atmosphere essential to enable the diplomats to get some degree of accord and bring about Peace.

Much to my surprise, meetings with the nationals of a dozen other nations in London and Rome have indicated positive interest by these counterpart organization leaders in the plans and purposes of our U.S. People-to-People.

Originally, our People-to-People project got off on the wrong foot. The planning for the 1956 meeting, and the format therefor, affronted the officers of the great Foundations by non-reference nor acknowledgment of their great contributions to the programs of a number of the groups assembled.

Then when a committee of Group Chairmen got together and recommended formation of a "Foundation" to collect and disburse contributions to People-to-People and to correlate (where necessary) the variety of programs and activities, resulting in request to a leading Foundation for a five million dollar grant, we did not know how deeply the Foundation was already involved in various Group activities, financially and otherwise. We learned this the hard way and this has mitigated against our chances of success with the Foundation involved. And if you "strike out" with one of the large Foundations, you can be pretty sure of a turndown by others.

Working on a shoestring and with a staff of only three persons since this became a "non-government" project two months ago, enough has been accomplished to confirm that an adequately staffed organization can whip up tremendous interest

and effort by millions of Americans and spread the gospel of Peace through understanding and friendship to the peoples of a majority of the nations of the world.

It has been obvious for months that what the People-to-People project needed domestically was a burst of publicity to fully activate the 42 groups you selected. I sincerely believe literally millions of Americans can be enlisted by the Groups in a great diversity of efforts which can bring into being the linking in friendship and better understanding of as many nationals of other nations around the world -- yes even of Russians and the satellite countries.

To this end result, even in the absence of money, we have been planning. The major plan contemplated a People-to-People Week in early 1958, as I previously advised you. It was projected that we would have every State Governor, City Mayor, as well as the great, far flung organizations embraced by your selected 42 Groups, participate in spreading the gospel of Peace during People-to-People Week and thereafter. The high light, of course, and the priceless ingredient for success was to be your participation through addressing the group of People-to-People Chairmen et al, who would be assembled in Washington, and through television and radio, reaching the hundreds of meetings and dinners held simultaneously to hear your message and receive your orders to proceed forthwith.

With the world in turmoil and with fears of the cremation of humanity extant, I am convinced the program of domestic understanding can be carried out successfully. It may even enable us to get necessary funds to carry on thereafter the ambitious program evolved and to enlist like effort by nationals of many other countries.

I was about to ask you (or some one from your staff) to let me unfold the whole program we have projected, but the turndown by The Ford Foundation of the request for staff expense, etc., in carrying out the program until more is known by the mass of the people regarding it, gives me pause.

Some of my associates in this effort were so shocked at the turndown by The Ford Foundation



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that, in spite of their sincere belief in the project, they believe we should not adopt a "dog in the manger" attitude but should resign as an organization and clear the road for you to assign this great project to an organization to carry on, that has the highly professional staff in place, as well as all the money available to do the work on a scale it deserves.

Then too, we have all been disturbed by rumors that when various Foundations (to whom we had made requests for grants of aid) have had their representatives discuss the People-to-People project with some Government agency representatives, the word has been passed that the future of People-to-People, Inc. is most doubtful and they had better "wait and see".

Worst of all, from my own point of view, were the advices passed out that present thinking was "how to get The President off the hook" with respect to the whole project.

Because our plans to try to get the whole People-to-People project under way, nationally at least, in the early part of 1958 centers on the contribution you alone could make through the address desired then, and in full realization of the myriad other domestic and world problems you must wrestle with, I thought it in order to describe the real problems confronting us and to make it crystal clear that if some solution could be found that eliminated People-to-People, Inc., "we" would all do our utmost to help in the transfer of responsibility.

For example, maybe -- at The President's insistent request -- even The Ford Foundation would take over. They have a splendid staff and plenty of money. Or, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Neither organization would have the confidence nor trust in dependence on "People-to-People" efforts to the extent envisioned by you, but they can supply everything else needed that our present organization lacks.

As for Wilson -- whatever you decide regarding the matter is agreeable to me. I have devoted thirteen months almost entirely to the People-to-People Project to the exclusion of "business", except that I have continued to spearhead money raising activities for two national "causes" successfully, although I have

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to admit complete failure in money raising for People-to-People.

Because of my personal belief in the People-to-People idea you advanced and its efficacy in meeting the requirements of this upset world and providing the only plan I have heard of that gives some assurance of providing a better atmosphere of understanding and friendship amongst most of the peoples of the world, so necessary to provide the foundation from which the world's diplomats conduct their efforts toward World Peace, I freely admit that "if I were President", I would lean toward the enlistment of a big Foundation with its splendid staff of "professionals" and its great financial resources to take over and be enabled to do next year the many things envisioned in our well established plans, which can not be carried out until we are in funds.

On the other hand, if you decide to give the personal effort that would be required if you announce a People-to-People Week in early 1958 and make an address, then we will set up the great series of meetings and dinners throughout the country to hear your message, and thereafter the local people will try to enlist the support (including financial support) of the whole project on a scale that well may be successful.

Soon, I hope it may be possible for you to give me a few minutes to let me know which plan you prefer.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Wilson  
President  
People-to-People, Inc.

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.