

TO Mr. Morrill

FROM Gov. Eccles

REMARKS:

I would appreciate it very much if you would go over this letter and draft an appropriate reply for my signature -- advising I am not interested, the difficulties of financing, etc.

GOVERNOR ECCLES' OFFICE

690 N. 21st Street  
San Jose 11, California  
June 3, 1950

Mr. Marriner S. Eccles  
Federal Reserve System  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Eccles:

I read in the New York Times of March 31 a brief account of your address in Salt Lake City, in which you were quoted as saying that we have lost the cold war, and that we should be prepared soon for an offensive war that will enable us to enforce the peace. I want to express my strong agreement with your views on this most important of all problems which we face today; and I want to request a copy of your speech, if you have a copy which you can spare.

I have a proposal to make to you concerning the problem of national security. I believe that there is some possibility ~~that~~ that Congress might be persuaded to force a showdown with Russia in the near future, provided it felt that sufficiently strong popular support could be enlisted to insure that such a course could be carried through to completion. My proposal, as outlined below, would seek to provide very powerful machinery for the enlistment of public approval, as well as for the persuasion of Congress.

#### The Proposal:

I propose that some 10 or 20 prominent men who hold views similar to yours band together in a small organization, with the purpose of formulating their arguments for forcing an early showdown, and of devising means of presenting these arguments to Congress in the most persuasive way possible. I believe there are several arguments, quite independent of one another, each of which shows beyond reasonable doubt that we are very likely to be enslaved unless we force an early end to the Communist threat to civilization. Different members of the proposed organization might formulate these different arguments, for circulation among the other members and criticism by the other members. This procedure would serve a number of important purposes: 1) before the arguments were presented publicly, the members would come to agreement about the various points to be made, and would thereby avoid public contradictions of one another, with the resulting confusion of public opinion; 2) arguments which might seem too strange or imaginative, or depend too much on technical information, could be simplified or eliminated altogether, even though they might be logically valid; and 3) this sifting of the arguments through the criticisms of different members would result in formulations which would be more likely to win general acceptance and less apt to arouse the opposition of religious sects and other groups tied together by common convictions or interests.

All of the following men have made public statements which suggested, with varying degrees of clarity, that they might be in favor of forcing a showdown: George Fielding Eliot, William Bullitt, Ely Culbertson, Val Peterson, Joseph and Stewart Alsop, and Generals John R. Deane, Ira Eaker, Carl Spaatz, William J. Donovan, James Doolittle, and Claire Chenault. It may be that some of these men would not be willing to advocate a showdown; but I imagine that you and the men whose names I have listed know of other prominent persons who might join effectively in this effort.

Conversations with many, many people about this problem have led me to the conclusion that the greatest obstacle to bringing matters to a head with Russia is the conviction of a large percentage of the American people that the nation as a whole, and particularly the nation's leaders, are unwilling to take the initiative and act with decision. The Kremlin has very cleverly succeeded in making our public spokesmen reiterate their desires for peace so frequently that we are well-nigh hypnotized. On the other hand, there is much evidence that many political commentators, Congressmen, and other leaders of public opinion sense the dreadful logic of the present situation, and will lend their full support to any decisive action as soon as it seems likely that the ice will be broken and such action will be initiated. As Professor Frederick Seitz wrote in the March issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, American public opinion seems to be in a "supercooled" state at the present time, and there is likely to be an abrupt change in the near future. And he continues: "If the impending change in public opinion hinges upon such a disaster [as Pearl Harbor], it is clear that events may have advanced to a point where defeat is certain."

There is little doubt that the Administration, if it wished to do so, could bring about this change in public opinion of which Professor Seitz speaks; but events so far indicate that the Administration is trying to prevent the arousal of public opinion. The result, I fear, is that public determination to end the Communist threat to democracy is unlikely to be crystalized except by some startling event: either a disaster such as Pearl Harbor, or some dramatic action by our own government. Since the Administration seems unlikely to act, I believe that a direct, concerted appeal to Congress by a number of prominent men offers a greater chance of success than any other course.

The appeal to Congress should be accompanied by detailed plans for enlistment of popular support for the action suggested to Congress. The members of the organization, including men from various walks of life and from both of the major political parties, would be prepared with radio speeches for delivery immediately after congressional action. These speeches, as well as articles for release to the press, would present extensive explanations of the necessity for bringing the cold war to an end, and of adopting a course designed either to banish the threat of war or else to precipitate the war while we still have a chance to win. These broadcasts and articles would also explain why

it would be enormously dangerous today to lay these questions open to lengthy public debate before acting, as we did with the Lend-Lease Bill in 1941.

I have spent many hours, over a period of months, thinking about this proposal and considering various aspects of the plan. I am not so optimistic as to believe that this scheme is certain to achieve success, but it does seem to me to offer some hope of success; and it also seems to me that if nothing of this sort is done, then the overwhelming probability is that we will continue to drift until the chance of preventing enslavement, even at the price of millions of American lives, becomes extremely small. Today it is conceivable that resolute and concerted action by a dozen men of prominence, intelligence and conviction might save the nation. Next year or the year after may be too late.

#### Implementation of the Proposal:

A certain amount of money will be necessary in order to carry out the proposed action efficiently. I am confident that \$5,000 or \$6,000 would be enough to handle the work for a year, though speed and efficiency might make it desirable to spend twice that amount, or more, if the money were available. It would be necessary for the members of the organization to contribute the requisite funds, unless they could think of other sources from which finances could be obtained. *It would be my guess that contributions could be deducted from income in computing income taxes.*

It will be necessary for the organization to have a secretary to mimeograph and distribute the material which the members wish to circulate among themselves, and to handle the day-to-day routine. The salary of this secretary, and the cost of the office supplies required in the work, would constitute the minimum financial outlay.

If you think this proposal is worthwhile and feasible, the problem then arises of getting a suitable person to act as secretary. I should like to undertake this work myself, but if you know of some one who is qualified for the job and to whom you would want to offer the position, I would expect you to offer ~~it~~ it to him. I shall now give a statement of my present situation, so that you will have some information on which to base your consideration of me for the position of secretary of the proposed organization.

I am now employed as an assistant professor of mathematics at San Jose State College. I am 38 years old, and received the degree of Ph. D. in mathematics from Duke University in 1940. I hope to find some kind of employment which will permit me to devote my energies exclusively to combatting the Communist threat to human freedom, for as long as that threat continues I will never be able to give my undivided attention to any other job. However, if I am not able to find such employment, I shall continue in my present position next fall.

I would be able to undertake the proposed work at an annual salary of \$4,500, which is somewhat less than the salary I now receive for nine months' work. I am divorced and have 2 children to whose support I contribute, so that I could hardly manage on a salary much smaller than that.

I am sure that you would not care to make any commitments to me without character references and further information about me. I shall be glad to have references sent to you if you are interested in my proposal. If you have a friend in San Francisco or elsewhere in this region whom you would like to have interview me, I should be glad to ask him for an interview to discuss my proposal, provided you wrote him to expect a request from me for an appointment. I shall be here until our college term ends on June 23. If my proposal is adopted and if I am chosen to handle the work of the secretary, I could begin on August 15. If I undertook the work, I would plan to live in Washington, or wherever else it might be decided that I should be.

I hope that you will give this proposal your serious consideration, and that I will hear from you about it before I leave San Jose on June 23.

Sincerely yours,

*Abram V. Martin.*

Abram V. Martin

June 9, 1950.

Mr. Abram V. Martin,  
2010 Navy Street,  
Santa Monica, California.

Dear Mr. Martin:

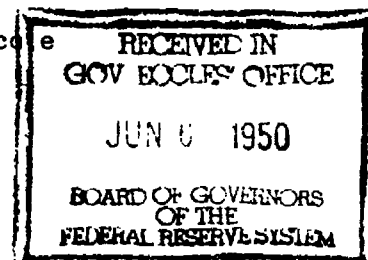
In response to your letter of June 3, 1950, I regret that I am unable to furnish you a copy of my talk at Salt Lake City because it was not written out. It was an extemporaneous expression at a luncheon meeting of the Salt Lake City Kiwanis Club and the Chamber of Commerce of what I have been thinking for a long time.

I am pleased to learn, however, that you read the newspaper report and that you are in agreement with my views. To the extent that the general public takes notice of such a discussion and understands the significance of the problem, I feel that I may have accomplished something.

I am sure that the development of such a program as you propose would entail a great deal more effort in order to enlist the interest of the men who would be most influential, and the building up of the campaign would involve much more time and effort and a great deal more expenditure than the modest approach that you suggest. At the same time the motives of those who would participate might so easily be misinterpreted and misrepresented that the very fact of the campaign might destroy its effectiveness. It is something, in my opinion, which must have more spontaneity among the general public. Because of my other public and private responsibilities, I would not feel justified in devoting the time and the expenditures that would be necessary to do what you suggest. In the circumstances, I feel that if such a campaign were to be undertaken it must come from other quarters.

Sincerely yours,

M. S. E



June 9, 1950.

*changed*

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690 N. 21st Street,  
San Jose 11, California.

2010 Navy Street,  
Santa Monica, Calif.

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*amw*  
CM/ec

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M. S. Eccles