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GETTYSBURG
PENNSYLVANIA

Palm Desert, California
January 23, 1964

Dear Walter:

I have been reading -- actually studying -- the paper that accompanied your note of January eighth. It is named, "A Call to Excellence in Leadership" and comes from the members of The Ribon Society of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The paper is the kind that I like to see published and pondered because it devotes more attention to the philosophical aspects of politics than to tactics, organizations and stratagems. I completely agree with the conclusions of the document because these seem to me to appeal to that quality in men that none of us can accurately describe but which each of us believes himself the proud possessor, namely, common sense.

Furthermore, in developing its thesis (which is well-stated at the bottom of page four under the paragraph, "Toward a Mature Republican Philosophy") I find the paper very logical and persuasive. I do not agree, however, with some of the observations it makes which, though not vital to its main argument, are nevertheless, sufficiently important to give me some pause. For example, the comment is made that Kennedy had successfully pre-empted the "central" position. Apparently the writers of the paper have forgotten the late President's Yale speech in which he derided all those people who respected such words as frugality, economy and thrift. The President implied that deficit spending should be adopted as a deliberate policy of government. This, in my definition, is not a philosophy of the center.

Apparently, in an effort to get the Bay of Pigs fiasco off the front pages and out of the headlines he proposed several things that, in my personal opinion, showed far more concern with a personal image than a sound political philosophy. One of these was a great expansion in the ground forces of the defense establishment, the need for which had not been demonstrated. Out of a blue sky came the challenge to Russia to engage in a race to the Moon. Of all the silly, immature proposals this was one of the most stupid and costly ones that quickly comes to mind. We have no way of knowing whether the Soviets have accepted or laughingly ignored the challenge; we do know that the prestige of America depends upon her solid accomplishments in world-betterment rather than games and stunts.

I agree that the Republican Party has been too slow -- and possibly too complacent -- to recognize the value of and need for adopting a doctrine of the center. I might remind you that in September, 1949 -- a time at which I had not only no political ambitions whatsoever but had made public some 18 months earlier a letter completely removing myself from the political scene -- I delivered an address to the American Bar Association in St. Louis. In that speech, which I called "The Middle Way," I particularly took issue with the people who derided the central position as weak and wishy-washy. I pointed out that such a course was the most difficult to maintain because it inherently attracts opposition on both flanks. I urged its adoption as a fitting position that needed thinkers and doers as its leaders. One of the great disappointments of my eight years following 1953 was my failure to get enough of my Republican associates to see the truth and value of such a position and belief; I think it was only after the disastrous off-year election of 1958 that a majority of Republicans began to believe that the Administration's policies, conforming to this kind of belief, were more dynamic concepts and practices than the so-called "liberal" or "conservative" doctrines.

These comments are not intended to be profound criticism. I do intend to express my delight that an obviously intelligent group of people has taken the trouble to voice its concensus on this important subject, and also to express my basic agreement in the mainstream of its thinking. Again I say that while, excepting in the fields of pure sciences and morals, there are in human affairs no real blacks and whites, yet vital differences are to be found between the shades of gray in which we have to live in the world.

In any event, if you know any of the authors of the paper I would be very delighted for you to let them know of my basic agreement with their expressed views.

With warm personal regard,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Shaz' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr. Walter Thayer
President
Whitney Communications Corporation
Time and Life Building
Rockefeller Center
New York 20, New York

January 8, 1964

Dear General Eisenhower:

I enclose "An Open Letter To The New Generation of Republicans" which has been put out by a group of young graduate students and professors at Harvard, M.I.T., and other colleges in the Boston area who have banded together under the name "The Ripon Society." I think it is an extraordinarily well-worded, well-thought out document (I guess we always do when we agree with what's said), and I know you will be interested in reading it. I have sent copies to Milton and others on the Critical Issues Council and have urged them to get these young men involved in what we are doing.

I spent several hours today with William S. Cutchins, who retired last week as President of the Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company. He is the youngest looking, most energetic, active 65-year-old I have seen in a long time. He is a dedicated Republican and he has agreed to take on for the C.I.C. the task of the supervision, preparation and dissemination of the Council's reports. We have enlisted the help of Ted Bates & Co. (a large New York advertising agency) in working out a program to see that the reports get the widest possible distribution and publicity. Cutchins is going to spend full time at this beginning next week and is donating his services.

I have been in constant touch with Tom McCabe for the past few weeks. He is working like a beaver to launch Scranton. He has had extensive conversations with Herb Brownell, who seems about ready to go to work for Scranton. Tom is having another luncheon for Scranton on the 17th. Len Hall, Meade Alcorn and others will be there. Tom tells me that Len is uncommitted and undecided at the moment but "leaning" to Scranton. Many acquaintances of yours and mine, who were pro-Goldwater prior to November 22nd, now look upon Scranton as the only hope the party has. Scranton seems to be the one person who can pull the various factions of the party together. I am doing everything I can to move the cause along.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

The Honorable Dwight D. Eisenhower
Eldorado Country Club
Palm Desert
California