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Executive Registry

74-5724

NATIONAL TOWN MEETING

National Town Meeting

EISENHOWER THEATRE-KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

DUTTON, Frederick G.
(orig under ORG)

September 30, 1974

Honorable William Colby
U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
McLean, Virginia

Dear Mr. Colby:

I am writing with what is obviously an unusual invitation, to be one of two principal participants in the National Town Meeting to be held in the Eisenhower Theatre of the Kennedy Center on Wednesday morning (10:30-11:30), November 6th, on "The Need for a Foreign Intelligence Organization by a Major Democratic Nation".

The session would be part of the weekly National Town Meeting series begun this summer in the Kennedy Center to give visitors to the nation's capital an opportunity to hear and ask questions of key governmental and other figures in our society. The series has been so well received that it has been expanded to include meetings alternately at the Kennedy Center and important historical sites in U.S. history, as: Concord, Mass. (Sept. 29), Independence Hall in Philadelphia (Oct. 13), Springfield, Illinois (Oct. 27) and others. Among the speakers are Senators Hugh Scott, J. William Fulbright, John Tower, Secretary of Agriculture Butz and Dr. Edward Teller. A list of the participants and topics this summer and as scheduled for this autumn thus far, is attached.

The programs are broadcast nationwide by public television and National Public Radio. The moderator for the sessions is Harrison Salisbury of the New York Times.

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The format of the meetings calls for brief opening statements (five minutes or less) by the two participants, then about six minutes of questions by two established members of the media in order to get the session flowing, and then questions from members of the audience for the remainder of the hour. The objective of the format is to give cross-sections of citizens an opportunity to participate more in public discussion than has been possible with just speakers, or speakers-and-a-press panel, or senators and congressmen questioning expert witnesses. With the Town Meeting sessions conveyed nationally by public TV and public radio, it is hoped the want of increasing numbers of Americans to be heard can be responded to within a context of intelligent, rational discussion. The National Town Meetings and public broadcast of them have been made possible by a grant from the Mobil Oil Corporation similar to its funding of Masterpiece Theater on public TV.

I recognize that public meetings present problems for you and are contrary to the Agency's general past practice. At the same time, a widespread re-appraisal would seem to be developing as to the role of the intelligence community in a time of both increasing global complexity and evolving domestic attitudes. You have been responding with considerable sensitivity to the crosscurrents at work. And it would seem that one of the National Town Meetings, with its public television and radio coverage, would be an effective way to convey to a significant number of Americans your own thinking - -- and in a way relating directly to the public rather than just agency critics.

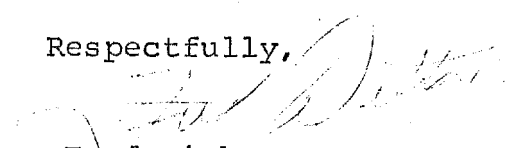
The National Town Meetings do not seek a direct debate but rather an exploring of contemporary developments from differing, mainstream viewpoints. The other principal participant for November 6th would be invited from the Senate, and the press panel would be balanced and selected from the major networks or newspapers. The suggested topic seeks to focus as much as possible on the broad underlying premises of national policy and need rather than on any particular specifics.

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If you would like to have more information on the National Town Meeting or the proposed session, please do not hesitate to have your staff call me.

I hope very much that you will accept the invitation and believe it can be a constructive opportunity for you as well as for public thoughtfulness on an admittedly difficult matter.

Respectfully,



Frederick G. Dutton
Executive Director

FGD/cbg
Enclosure

✓ Liberty and Law Enforcement - June 12

Senator Sam Ervin
Patrick Murphy, President of the Police Foundation

Press Questioners:

George Herman, CBS News
George Will, National Review and syndicated columnist

2 ✓ Perspectives on Defense Spending - June 26

Senator John Tower, Rep, Texas
Senator Thomas McIntyre, Dem. N.H.

Press Questioners:

Robert Walters, Washington Star-News Congressional Correspondent
Robert Goralski, NBC News

3 ✓ America Revisited: A Deeper Look - July 3

Eugene McCarthy
Senator Charles Mathias, Rep. Md.

Press Questioners:

Eileen Shanahan, New York Times writer
David Halberstam, Pulitzer-prize winning author

4 ✓ Women's Rights Struggle - July 10

Congresswoman Martha Griffiths, Dem. Mich.
Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly, author of A Choice Not an Echo

Press Questioners:

Martin Nolan, Boston Globe Washington bureau chief and syndicated columnist
Peggy Cooper, Post-Newsweek Stations executive

5 ✓ A Critique of the Media - July 17

Patrick Buchanan, Special Assistant to Pres. Nixon and former newspaperman
Richard Goodwin, Special Assistant to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, author, and chief of Washington bureau of Rolling Stone
Richard Harwood, National Editor, Washington Post
Thomas Asher, Director, Media Access Project, a public interest law firm specializing in the communications field

6 ✓ The Energy Problem and the Environment - July 24

Senator Edmund Muskie
Federal Energy Chief John Sawhill

Press Questioners:

Jim Bishop, Newsweek magazine energy and environmental editor

Thomas O'Toole, Washington Post science editor

Harriet Sugar, Boston Globe summer intern

7 ✓ Perspectives on Detente - July 31

Senator J. William Fulbright, Dem. Ark.
Prof. Hans Morgenthau

Press Questioners:

Peter Lisagor, Chicago Daily News Washington bureau chief and syndicated columnist

Stanley Karnow, contributing editor, New Republic

8 ✓ Inflation and the American Economy - August 7

Andrew Brimmer, Federal Reserve System Board of Governors
Congressman Henry Reuss, Dem. Wisc.

Press Questioners:

Hobart Rowen, Washington Post financial editor

Edwin Dale, New York Times business and economics writer

9 ✓ The Spreading Nuclear Danger - August 14

Dr. Edward Teller

Dr. Philip Morrison, Chairman, Federation of American Scientists

Press Questioners:

Bill Hines, Chicago Sun-Times Science Reporter

Judith Randall, Washington Star-News Science Editor

10 ✓ New Directions in the Arts - August 21

Nancy Hanks, Chairman, National Endowment for the Arts
Daniel Boorstin, Director, Museum of History & Technology

Press Questioners:

Nora Ephron, New York Magazine, contributing editor

Michael J. Sobran, Jr., National Review, art critic

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Autumn 1974 Series to Date

Sunday, September 29th - From First Parish Meeting House, Concord, Mass.

'Whatever Happened to The American Dream? Our Hopes and Values...And the Shifting Balance Between Optimism and Pessimism About So Much In U.S. Society.'

Speakers:

William Ruckelshaus, former chief administrator, Environmental Protection Agency and Deputy U.S. Attorney General

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Albert Schweitzer Prof. of History, City University of New York.

Interrogators:

William Rusher, publisher, National Review
Tom Winship, executive editor, Boston Globe

Wednesday, October 2nd - From the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

(TV Broadcast Sunday
October 6th)

'High Food Prices At Home and Famine Abroad
U.S. Agricultural Policy.'

Speakers:

Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz

Senator Hubert Humphrey (Dem., Minn.)
(Both are U.S. Delegates to the World Food Conference in Rome in November)

Interrogators:

Gladwyn Hill, New York Times (just back from World Population Conference)

Alan McConnagha, Minneapolis Tribune, Washington Bureau (just back from six-week study of famine in the sub-Saharan)

Sunday, October 13th -

Congress Hall in Philadelphia: (This session is part of the ceremonies observing the two hundred anniversary of the convening of the First Continental Congress)

'The Congress Today - Is Congressional Reform Going Anywhere? Is the Congress Going To Reclaim Anything from the Executive Branch?'

Speakers: Senator Hugh Scott, Republican Senate Leader
Congressman Richard Bolling (Dem., Missouri)
Chairman of the Special Committee appointed
by Speaker Carl Albert to study reorganization
of the House Committee structure.

Interrogators: David Broder, Washington Post, Syndicated
Columnist
Catherine Mackin, NBC News Congressional
Correspondent

Wednesday, October 16 - From the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.
(TV Broadcast Sunday
October 20) 'Campaign Spending and Political Ethics'

Speakers: Governor Dan Walker, Dem.
Republican Member of Congress not yet announce

Interrogators: Fred Wertheimer, Common Cause
Congressional Correspondent
Mary Russell, Washington Post Congressional
Correspondent

Sunday, October 27th - From Springfield, Illinois - the restored stat
legislative chamber where young Abraham Lincoln
served.
'Washington, D.C. As Viewed From the Heart-
land - Shifting State-Federal Relations;
and Grievances Against the Federal Government'

Sunday, November 3rd From New Haven, Connecticut - Yale Law
School Auditorium
'Critiquing the Evening News Shows'

Wednesday, November 6th From the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.
(TV Broadcast
Sunday, Nov. 8) 'The Sovereignty of the Bureaucracy'

(And weekly through Sunday, December 15th)