

File with D. P. PILLAK material - George Lane, Jr.

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Dear Dick:

I'm sorry I was so choked with rage the last two days that I could hardly convey to you, coherently or at all, the reasons why I consider the appointment of Valentine as President of the CFA both ill-timed and ill-advised. You know I never asked for the appointment in the first place, and I was surprised when you said you would approved launching the CFA if I would go out as acting president to set it up. Even before we organized you will remember I tried to get Turner, ^{aka} Baine to take the chief executive's position. Many times since then I have been so discouraged in fighting the paper war to get approvals for CFA's program and in trying to arouse the Executive Committee's interest in the program, sufficiently to act on the program proposals, that I have been inclined to retire and find some other way to carry on the battle. You will remember that I wrote B.W. a memorandum dated in early August setting forth my views on the appointment of a proper type of leader to head the CFA, of which I sent you a copy. Also, that I wrote you a letter dated September 20, describing some of the difficulties I had in acting as middleman between the sponsors and B.W.'s Executive Committee. I don't know just how I lost favor with B.W., except that I seemed to stand in the way of his ambition to make CFA a great, big, showy reflection of his executive genius. Nothing was more disconcerting to me than his and the Executive Committee's failure to appreciate the importance of timing in the publicity build-up of the CFA, and the sponsors' failure to give me any support on this point and on the many other matters which were subjects for coordination, so that he grew to believe that a more forceful executive than I was needed to represent the CRA before the sponsors.

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Brayton Wilbur

To begin with, B.W. is justly proud of his success as a self-made business leader and as a promotor of civic and public-spirited enterprises. You know the many organizational chairmanships he holds which seemed to make him a "natural" as Chairman of the CFA. We did not realize the importance which he attaches to the prestige he gains from these positions, and the fact that he runs the groups which he heads, not merely as parliamentary chairman, but as supervisor of operations in detail. Of course, the permanent staffs do the real work and he only keeps abreast of their activities by "staff conferences" in his office and constant "follow-up" and "prodding" of staff secretaries by telephone. The procession of various organizations' staff secretaries through his office is truly amazing. How much of this "supervision" is constructive and how much could be classified as interference is questionable. At least, B.W. is able to speak authoritatively on all the activities he heads, and the public announcements thereof appear, mentioning his name, with - I am inclined to say, almost monotonous-regularity. He certainly makes the most of the influence he gains from these many organizational chairmanships, at least to as great extent as they use him.

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Further, to give B.W. credit, he has considered that his executive direction of the activities of CFA would be as wholesome and beneficial as it was in respect to the World Affairs Council and, previously, the Chamber of Commerce. Also, that his executive direction in detail of the activities and program of CFA would fit into the pattern of his direction of other organizations. On the contrary, I have tried to make him understand that the staffing and program development were to be in accordance with a generally preconceived plan which was to be carried out in coordination with and step-by-step approval of the sponsors who provided the financial backing for CFA. Perhaps ill-advisedly, after obtaining the sponsors' approval, I have followed the policy of telling him at as great length as he desired what we were planning and to ask his advice as to how best to present the plans to the Executive Committee and then to say that I hoped this would have his and the Executive Committee's approval - hoping in this way to avoid involving him in the details of operations. I can see now that this tended to thwart what he thought were his good intentions to take over full responsibility for all programs and even the internal administration of CFA, to make the president his trusted agent to run the organization so that he could assume full responsibility before the directors and the sponsors.

There were thus many reasons why to him I was "not a good executive." I didn't act like the executive secretary of the World Affairs Council in reporting to him and seeking his advice in detail. I sometimes asked his and the Executive Committee's approval of facts accomplished which had been laid on by the sponsors. I didn't write enough memoranda of conversations with him. I sometimes refused his invitations for weekends and for dinners, because I had to get the work out and literally had no one to whom I could delegate it. In accordance with your instructions, I did not fill the position of Executive Vice President for Operations and I therefore had to "wear two hats", spending hours daily meeting people who were entitled to see the chief executive of the organization, thereby to some extent slighting the branch chiefs who waited in line to see me, and having to schedule my time on a "first things first" basis in terms of relative importance and to the exclusion of some things which by neglect gradually came to assume greater and greater importance. Two of the things which I neglected and only began to find time to do during the last two weeks were to begin a series of calls on the members of the committee to tell them of our progress and answer their questions about our program, and to start entertaining members of the Executive Committee and eventually of the general committee at home. I did not appear at enough social and public functions where I could be identified as the president of this up-and-coming CFA which was mentioned so frequently in the press, Etc., etc.

Particularly, when B.W. mentioned to you and Tom and others that he thought I was "no good as an executive", you did not even say that I was administering the Committee to your satisfaction, or that I was acting in accordance with your instructions, and performing satisfactorily, or anything that would in some measure reassure him. Actually, B.W. is not in any position to know whether I am a good executive or not, since he has been in the CFA office himself only five or six times for meetings or brief calls and sees the office only through the eyes of his daughter

(who now works in Radio Free Asia) and of Harold Noble, whom B.W. used (I am now informed) to keep him posted on how I maintained relations with the Branch Chiefs. I do not need to mention Harold's limitations or the many points of disagreement which I have had with him about general policy, about relations with our sponsors, about the relative importance of the programs of the Editorial Branch and of the other branches, and about his staffing and program development problems. Although he has many excellent qualities and capabilities, which I thought could be encouraged by placing trust in him (and among which is his valuable savoir faire in gaining the confidence of and dealing with Orientals), I am afraid his inability to get along with his American associates, his terrible temper, his egocentricity, and his perfectionist tendency in organizational matters must have colored some of his reports to B.W. rather unduly. (I daresay the memorandum which he may have prepared for B.W. to bring East with him should be taken with a grain of salt.) What I mean to convey here is merely that B.W. could not have observed enough or gained enough unbiased information about the day-to-day administration from all his sources - including the many hours I spent in his office week after week - to have enabled him to form an accurate impression of the efficiency of CFA's administrator. He could only have done that by spending more time with me in my office, and not by trying to fit CFA into the pattern of his executive direction of other organizations.

The "inspection teams" which the sponsors occasionally sent to look CFA over did not help to improve his opinion of me as an executive. Nor did the long delays in obtaining the sponsors' approval of our programs.

Secondly, San Francisco is a very small community, really, and the Committee is already prominent in it by reason of publicity in connection with projects and, also, the size of the staff. It cannot help continuing to be in the public eye either on the basis of concrete accomplishments or because of failure to perform. The publicity in connection with the Crusade, the Korean newsprint project, Radio Free Asia, Seeds for Democracy, lecture, radio and television appearances of staff members, and nationwide expectations that CFA and RFA will equal the accomplishments of NCFE and RFE, places the Committee on the spot to "deliver the goods" in terms that both the Executive Committee and the public will understand. We are not yet quite ready to perform in these terms because of the long delay in the preparation and approval of our program and in the recruitment of key staff. We need to provide a sop to the public in the form of a limited publicity program concerning going projects such as Radio Free Asia, pending the time when we are in position in the field to fire more guns with our editorial, student relations and lecture programs. (In this connection, there is no reason why the Editorial Branch, with its earlier start, could not have been as far along as Radio Free Asia right now, except that Harold Noble had to have direct contact with the field in order to bring him around to the view that the program envisaged in our preliminary planning was actually practical.) But we should hold back promotional and expansive publicity, such as would accompany the announcement of the appointment of a "big-name" president, which would quicken nationwide interest in CFA and its program and which would call for more and more publicity in anticipation

of actual accomplishments. Especially if the "big-name" president is not qualified immediately to undertake public speeches to educate the public concerning the nature of our task and if he himself has to undergo a period of orientation and study to understand and express the purposes of the Committee with an appreciation of the Asiatic environment toward which our program is addressed, all such publicity should be avoided. This matter of timing is hard to put across to B.W. and the Executive Committee, even Turner McBaine, but I consider it important all the more because of the build-up we have already had as well as the prominence we enjoy - or suffer - in the small community of San Francisco. This is a point of difference with B.W. who wants to have his "C.D. Jackson" appearing before local and national audiences with increasing regularity, and under his sponsorship. There we are - a big staff - sitting in San Francisco where there are such groups as the World Affairs Council, the Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis and women's clubs, the Commonwealth Club, the Town Hall, universities, alumni clubs, the Press and Union League Club, and sponsors of radio and television programs - all of whom want speakers to address them occasionally on Far Eastern subjects. Then there are feature and editorial writers who like to write up the programs for the newspapers. We have a number of Far Eastern specialists who are capable of performing for these groups but who are too busy with their jobs to do it frequently or regularly. This was to be part of the function of our Lecture Bureau to provide speakers on approved request for these many occasions, and with the recent approval of its program, the Lecture Bureau would now be ready to perform adequately, I think, to fulfill the local demand, relieve the pressure on B.W. for public appearances of CFA executives, and satisfy some of his craving for the limelight. This type of publicity, together with a limited amount concerning going projects, would be healthy and educationally purposeful, whereas requiring our "big-name" president to tell audiences about the situation in Asia and what CFA is doing or can do about it, at this time would not be, in my estimation. We need to get our people in the field, get into production, get our programs and projects under way, which we are now almost in position to do, before we start sounding off in a big way before the American public. And when we do sound off, we should do so authoritatively, through people who have their ear to the ground in Asia, not through someone whose views and opinions are second-hand. Again I say, San Francisco is a small community in which, willy-nilly, we stand out both locally and before the whole American public. Our public relations program is important both as to substance and as to timing of publicity, as well as to the effect of our pronouncements in Asia. In the long run, and even immediately, what will count in the public estimation is accomplishments, not more build-up of expectations in anticipation of accomplishments. Especially, we cannot fool the communists and the people threatened by communism by such a build-up.

Thirdly, I question whether Valentine is really the type of chief executive CFA really needs, and whether his appointment would not change the whole character of CFA's program and the direction in which it moves. Granted that there is as yet little or no basis of performance on which to evaluate the program as thus far developed, and granted that most of the individual branch chiefs are still on trial as to their capabilities to execute such a program, there may still be reasonable bases for rational evaluation of the whole program itself and of the individuals who have ten-

tatively been chosen to execute parts of the program. The basis for evaluation of the program would be the calculated effect on the target area in the light of detailed knowledge of the area and comparison with other possible means of achieving the desired effect. The basis for evaluation of the capabilities of the individuals tentatively chosen to execute the program would be their past records and their performance to date in the organization in developing the plans which comprise the program. Also relevant would be an evaluation of my performance in assessing, passing and fitting the parts of the plan into the whole and of my presentation of the whole program to the Executive Committee and the sponsors. Whether or not I was prejudiced, or lacking in perspective, or lax, or negligent, or inflexible to suggestions of possibly desirable changes in the original concept of the general plan, would also be relevant.

Granted that the whole program should make sense to the Executive Committee as well as in Asia, and that something more is needed now to convince the Executive Committee of the soundness of our program than my feeble efforts in monthly meetings of the Executive Committee, in frequent meetings with B.W. and occasional meetings with other members of the Executive Committee - is it a new chief executive of Valentine's type that is required to make the evaluations and presentations for the Executive Committee?

This brings up the question of the whole purpose and function of the Executive Committee. There are two views of this within the Executive Committee. One is represented by Charles Blyth and Ted Peterson who stated that their idea was that the Executive Committee and the general committee were only intended to be a front before the public for the activities of the CFA and that they did not have time and did not want to accept the responsibility of passing on the program in detail as long as they knew it was approved by the sponsors and that the CFA was run in a business-like way. On the other hand, B.W., Turner and Crawford take the view that they do not want to be rubberstamps for any kind of a front organization. They anticipate the possibility of a Congressional investigation and want to be prepared to vouch for the soundness of every one of the activities of the CFA, as responsible agents of the sponsors. In this connection, it is difficult to determine whether this risk of an investigation fosters their desire for a chief executive of nationwide reputation who would strengthen their cover and to whom they could look to relieve them of some of the responsibility in an investigation, or whether they are more interested in having such a chief executive for prestige or for bolstering their confidence in the proper management of the CFA's activities. I think J.D. Zellerbach is influenced by B.W. but would be as much influenced by Charles Blyth if he saw as much of him. In any case, it would be easy to eliminate the question of Executive Committee responsibility in the event of a Congressional investigation by offering them a waiver of responsibility which would guarantee to hold them harmless of any financial accountability for expenditures in operations and would state that their formal approval of budgets, accounts and operations is merely an acknowledgment of the sponsors' approval thereof. If

they accept the offer, then you will know they are mainly concerned with the question of responsibility. If they do not accept the offer, then you will know they are mainly concerned with prestige and the desire to run the show in their own way. Then I think the sponsors should insist on giving them a waiver of responsibility anyhow along with a definition of their function as directors, an expression of appreciation for their interest and cooperation, and a statement of the ways in which it is hoped their local leadership may be made effective for the purposes of the sponsors. This would meet their desires of not being mere rubber-stamps, would solve the question of coordination and effective direction of CFA operations, and place the responsibility where it belongs. They must be made aware of the basic fact that they are really incompetent to assume responsibility for running a show of this nature because they do not have the necessary backgrounds of experience and knowledge or access to the necessary current information - which would entail full-time concentrated study and continuous effort for a period of time for them to acquire. Not only this requirement but the necessity of keeping policy direction in the hands of the sponsors emphasizes the importance of their accepting a well-defined limitation of their responsibility.

In the light of these considerations perhaps the sponsors and the Executive Committee (once the position is made clear to them) will wish to reconsider the appointment of Valentine. If his selection was based on the premise that he was to assert more vigorous direction of CFA operations, programs and policies on behalf of the Executive Committee in order to discharge their responsibility, then a waiver of responsibility from the sponsors to the Executive Committee would eliminate the assumed necessity of such "more forceful" direction. If, on the other hand, the sponsors are willing to concede to the Executive Committee's desire for more active participation in the planning, direction and execution of CFA operations and for an expanded public relations program in the United States, then it would be to the great advantage of the sponsors - if not an absolute necessity - as well as to the advantage of the Executive Committee to have as president a man who is immediately capable of evaluating the whole program not only from the executive - administrative standpoint of efficiency and economy but also with a sense of the Asian environment to which the program is addressed. Otherwise, there would be inadequate coordination of activities with the sponsors and the president would merely serve the function of a go-between between the staff and the Executive Committee and between the latter and the sponsors. That is, he would be merely a fifth wheel.

If it should ever finally be established that what is needed is not more forceful direction of intermediary relations between the staff and the Executive Committee and between the latter and the sponsors, but competent direction of planning and operations for the benefit of all concerned, then I think it will become clear that Valentine has only half the qualifications required for the job, and that he cannot acquire the other half in any reasonably short time. This is not to say that anyone with fair intelligence cannot acquire a working knowledge of the Far East within a reasonable length of time by close application, or that anyone has a mono-

poly on the knowledge of and feeling for the political and psychological sensitivities of Far Eastern peoples. But Valentine is being hired as a local public relations man and professional manager - a sort of efficiency expert, as it were - by the Executive Committee at a professional salary. He does not have the sense of a cause or of the devotion to duty which others of us have attached to the calling. Nor do I consider him possessed of the genius that you have, Dick, to acquire by hard work and close application what you initially lacked of the knowledge, grasp and feeling of the many factors that enter into policy determination in your very difficult assignment. He can probably pick the brains of his staff of specialists and then draw his own conclusions for the purpose of making a decision, but to some extent the validity of such a decision will depend upon the cogency and eloquence with which his staff members present the case and the firmness with which the sponsors enforce their policy determining authority. In Valentine's mind decisions may be made more with a view to their public relations effect in the U.S. than to their effect in Asia.

I am willing to concede that I may be wrong in my judgment of Valentine from his record and from the five hours of contact I had with him. Maybe he does not aspire to use the CFA merely to enhance his reputation or as a political stepping-stone to an important position in the next administration. Perhaps his ability, character, and past experience are such as to enable him to adapt himself to all the requirements of his new job. Possibly he will be able to strike a proper balance between the Far Eastern and the local considerations that enter into policy determination. It is conceivable that the salary which was offered him was not the main consideration which prompted him to accept the appointment. He may be able to build up further the esprit de corps which has been my particular pride. Perhaps the many Asian groups with whom we have been in touch will not regard Valentine's appointment as "political" and will give him the confidence and understanding they have already accorded us. The judgment of the Executive Committee and the principal sponsors, in any case, takes precedence over mine and is final.

It only remains for me to say that in my opinion the appointment of a professional executive is bound to change the character of the organization to some extent. This is particularly true in the respect that I and some key staff who have entered into the work of the CFA as a cause and at a considerable sacrifice can no longer be expected to work for B.W. and his professional appointee with the same confidence, concentrated effort and self-sacrifice as we worked for the CFA before. The staff relationship to the Committee will be more cold-blooded and calculating than before. However, there may be a way to salvage the objective values of the staff capabilities as so far developed. I cannot speak for the staff, but for my part I would care to stay with the Committee only on a professional basis, selling my services to the Committee on a basis commensurate with the importance of my background, experience and ability in proportion to the valuation placed by the sponsors on the merely professional managerial capabilities of the new president. In other words, I would work for the CFA just as I would for the Bank. At least this would give Valentine a chance to prove himself and to test me (and perhaps

the rest of the staff), professionally, for a trial period. If this leaves me out, at least there will be an understandable basis for my separation from the Committee.

I hope that this exposition will serve ^{to} clarify the position I have taken and the misunderstanding which has developed because of the lack of a positive stand by the sponsors in response to B.W.'s and my previous conflicting representations on this subject.

All the best.

Sincerely,

George
George N. Greene,
(Jr.)

George Greene Jr

Return to Ethel

November 27, 1951

Dear Tom,

To bring you up to date, Turner McBaine, Harold Noble, and I called in the various branch chiefs and department heads this afternoon. I told them that, in George Greene's absence and in my absence, both of which might be somewhat extended, Harold Noble would be the executive in charge of the office and Turner McBaine would be the chief of the Committee.

I said that, in the absence of Messrs. Wilbur and Greene, we wished the Committee to go ahead with added vigor and there should be no let-down. I mentioned that we were endeavoring very hard to get Mr. Valentine to be the overall chief and that, of course, we had been trying to get such a head for some time and, further, if we did not get Mr. Valentine, we had in mind a couple of other prospects of equal calibre.

I then asked Turner and Harold if they had anything to say, but apparently the idea was quite clear.

Now, regarding Mrs. Cross, Turner will speak to her tomorrow about some other matters and will simply mention that, in the absence of George Greene and Brayton Wilbur, Noble is in complete charge, subject to the wishes of the Committee as voiced through Turner McBaine. Noble then can tell her what duties he wishes her to assume in the office. She apparently has stated around the office that, if Greene were to leave, she would resign.

I think this covers the situation in accordance with your wishes. I am just dashing this off before I take the train. I expect to see you Saturday afternoon and your friends Sunday. I will arrive at the Carlton, I hope, about noon on Saturday.


Brayton W.

The Mayflower

A HILTON HOTEL



WASHINGTON · D. C.

Mr. Brayton Wilbur, Chairman,
Committee for a Free Asia, Inc.,
~~4 Wellesley Street~~
334 California Street
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Wilbur:

The Committee for a Free Asia has now passed its first organizational phase of recruitment of key staff and development of a comprehensive program designed to promote free democratic enterprise and halt communism in Asia.

After rounding out its staff, the Committee will shortly be ready to launch its program in the field.

In accordance with our original agreement, I was to serve as President of the Committee only to get it organized and on the road. I have been happy to be associated with you in the initial phase of this very constructive enterprise, and even to see several of the Committee's first projects, such as "Newsprint for Korea's School Textbooks" and "Seeds for Democracy" well on the way to success.

I now wish to resign in order to enable you to elect a nationally known executive head of the Committee and to enable me to accept a traveling fellowship, which, I hope, will eventually result in a monograph study that will to some

