

# NYT Memo Assignment

By Sean McCormick

September 19th, 1963

Dear President Kennedy,

We are nearly finished preparing your speech to the United Nations. I apologize for the delay, but there have been ongoing developments this past week that have required some eleventh-hour additions (and a couple of corrections). The nuclear test ban treaty, which the Senate will hopefully vote on Monday, appears to be moving forward as planned. Rusk will be in touch later this afternoon regarding it, by the way. I do have a few updates about the treaty, which I will address shortly, but for starters, here are a few other issues of concern.

As you are aware, this has been a difficult week domestically. Birmingham is still in chaos. One of the girls, Carole Robertson, was laid to rest yesterday. The current victim count is now six; in addition to the four girls slain in the bombing, two Negro boys were killed during the following protests. I have been getting updates from Assistant Attorney General Marshall, as well as the FBI a few times a day since the attack. Still waiting to hear if Birmingham P.D. is going to entertain his suggestion of appointing Negro police officers to help in the neighborhoods. There are still no suspects in custody regarding the bombing.

Wallace doesn't appear to be handling the situation (which you can argue he helped bring about) appropriately, the DPS troopers are creating an incendiary environment. Your brother claims we have no jurisdiction in the matter, but I urge you to encourage him to explore some alternatives to the current status quo. It seems unlikely Mayor Boutwell will be able to defuse the situation alone. Our desegregation efforts are

going to be set back indefinitely if we don't act soon.

Regarding our 'issue' in Asia, there has been some discontent within the diplomatic corps with your reluctance to take a personal stance regarding the removal of Nhu. Ambassador Lodge is very keen on moving forward with this as Buddhist protests are becoming more frequent. The day before yesterday, a monk in Paris penned a petition to Secretary General Thant using his own blood! Let's hope there isn't another Thích Quảng Đức around the corner.

The U.N. is making an effort today to include debate regarding these human rights violations in South Vietnam. We are encouraging the U.N. to allow To Ngoc Thach, the acting observer representing South Vietnam (his predecessor, Mrs. Tran Van Chuong, quit her post in protest recently) to speak regarding the situation. The assembly will have to ultimately make that call, as it isn't normal to allow anyone from a non-member state to speak. We expect they will allow it, however. No matter how things shake out, the removal of Nhu (and perhaps, Diem, eventually) may create a whole new slew of issues, should their replacements be even more difficult to deal with, as hard as that is to imagine.

This year, the Apollo budget lands at around 2.5 billion dollars. Since 1958, the budget has almost doubled every year, and if my sources are correct, four percent of *total* federal spending will be put towards the program next year. I don't see how this growth is sustainable. Public will for this project (as well as Congressional) is already tepid and may run dry soon. I realize this is very last-minute, but I urge you to revisit the Bundy memo from last year (attached). This may be an opportune time, with the success of the implementation of the hotline and the ongoing treaty talks, to reach out and again suggest that a cooperative approach to space exploration may be mutually beneficial. Continuing to go it alone will be a huge financial battle for us.

Despite the obvious technical hurdles of equipment compatibility, there are areas in which each nation can take a lead on. An end result of two flags successfully placed on the moon would be an iconic image and metaphor for world peace and global cooperation. We feel the timing is right for this. While Khrushchev has had a public stance in the past that it wouldn't be practical, we have intel that he may actually be amenable to such a proposal now. With your permission, we'd like to go ahead and include a passage in the speech tomorrow that revisits the issue.

Regarding the test ban treaty, a bit of good news to start with. It's looking favorable that it will be ratified without any amendments per Senator Carlson. Thanks to Douglas and Jordan changing their tune there's now the necessary two-thirds required. The Joint Chiefs aren't completely happy, but they'll be on board.

Goldwater's registered a reservation regarding demanding Soviet withdrawal from Cuba, but Fulbright has every expectation it will find defeat should it reach the floor. Dodd has filed five understandings, but he is expected to remove them based on your prior assurances. On Tuesday, Senator Russell, predictably, was making claims that the treaty puts the U.S. on a path to unilateral disarmament. He also bemoans the lack of content regarding inspection, plus he remains a doubting Thomas about the chill between Peking and Moscow and maintains that the Soviets are ahead of us in a nuclear capacity. He knows his chances of thwarting Fulbright are slim to none at this point, however.

You hear what Senator Miller (who was wavering, but now is reluctantly on board) recently said on TV? He made a claim that should the Russians sign off on this that it might help you win in 1964. Senator Pastore, chairman of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy made a great speech regarding what would be left behind if we didn't act now and allowed a holocaust to occur.

The American Legion, who has been hammering us on the situation in Cuba, has agreed to endorse the treaty with a few reservations: The U.S. may continue legal nuclear testing and remain prepared for the resumption of atmospheric testing should another party violate the treaty, our sovereignty remains intact, and this is not to be a step towards total U.S. disarmament. As all of these stipulations have already been addressed, it's safe to say the Legion is on board.

There's been several reports of anti-treaty propaganda being mailed out in the guise of correspondence from legitimate-sounding organizations that we have no knowledge of. Senator Aiken of Vermont claims his mail has been 60 percent opposed to the treaty, yet the anti-treaty mail was all postmarked from Texas and California. He said eighty percent of his treaty-related Vermont mail has been pro-treaty.

Were you made aware of Governor Rockefeller's claim two days ago that we are just shaming our allies into signing? He also said unemployment will go up from 3,800,000 to 9,000,000 by 1967! On a lighter note, as of Tuesday, we caught a big fish, San Marino, a little postage stamp in Italy. They became the 94th nation to climb aboard. On Wednesday we also added Togo and Tanganyika, which got us to 97.

All said, the general consensus is that we are making a great step forward in the quest for peace between our fellow global citizens. It is my recommendation we allow the current version of the treaty to move through ratification as-is, then we can revisit the issue of inspections and some of the other reservations when appropriate. We will hopefully have your speech delivered later this afternoon. Best of luck at the U.N. tomorrow!

Respectfully,

Sean McCormick