

PLANNING COMMISSION FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

Building a citizens' political-action organization on global issues

19 January 76

Hector Garcia
American GI Forum of the US
1315 Bright Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Dear Hector,

On the evenings of February 10th (Washington) and February 11th (New York), the Planning Commission will hold two extremely important "twin" meetings.

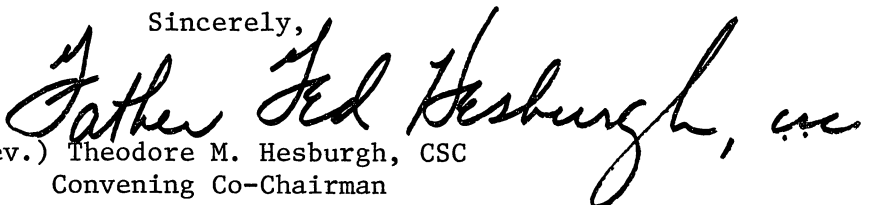
Ambassador William M. Roth, with whom we have been in discussions for several months, is prepared to assume the Chairmanship of the Commission if, at these meetings, consensus determines that we can and should proceed to create the New Directions ("World Action") organization.

As the enclosed reports indicate -- and particularly so on the basis of our public opinion research study and our first test fund solicitation -- we believe that all the elements for creating the new organization are present or readily accessible. All it now takes is leadership...and that's the objective of these meetings.

I apologize for the short notice, but we urgently need your attendance at one or both of these meetings. Details are enclosed, and the agenda will follow.

I know I can count on you to be with us.

Sincerely,


(Rev.) Theodore M. Hesburgh, CSC
Convening Co-Chairman

RSVP:
by the enclosed card, or
to Michael Shower - (202) 483-5116

PLANNING COMMISSION FOR NEW DIRECTIONS

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WASHINGTON

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10th

6:00 - 9:30

Federal City Club / Sheraton-Carlton

The South Lounge

16th & K Streets, NW

(202) 638-2626

NEW YORK

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11th

6:00 - 9:30

Bar Association of the City of New York

The Cromwell Room

42 West 44th Street

(212) 682-0606

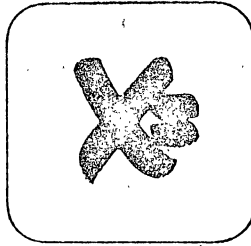
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- [] I will attend the Planning Commission meeting in Washington on Tuesday, February 10th.
- [] I will attend the Planning Commission meeting in New York on Wednesday, February 11th.
- [] I can attend either meeting, if it would be helpful to balance numbers.
- [] Sorry. I will not be able to attend either Commission meeting.

Name: _____



OXTOBY-SMITH INC.

November 1975

REACTIONS TO THE "NEW DIRECTIONS" IDEA

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FINDINGS: A MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The key findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

.....There is a felt need for an organization such as that proposed by the Planning Commission for New Directions. It would help to overcome feelings of powerlessness and disappointment in current representation in Washington on world issues.

.....People respond favorably to:

- . A citizens' lobby to counter-act vested interest groups;
- . Supported by citizen contributions;
- . Working largely through Congress and regular US political channels; and

- . With an informed, active membership.
- with the overall aim being to help effect responsible action by the United States in dealing with worldwide problems.
-An obstacle in the development of the organization will be skepticism regarding the need for another organization.
- . People need to be told how this organization will differ from the others which they have been supporting which have ostensibly similar policy goals.
 - . They need to be reassured that this organization will supplement and strengthen the other groups with parallel goals, and that indeed, leaders of such other groups support the development of this organization.
-The who is very important as a signal of the basic orientation of the organization. The list used was generally viewed as somewhat impressive. However, it was also criticized for lacking:
 - . women;
 - . youth; and
 - . non-establishment supporters.
 -These people do not need to be sold on the urgency of the problems nor on their interdependence.
 - . Their greatest concern is what specific actions might be supported by the organization.
 - . They do not want -- and are suspicious of -- promises of "magical" solutions to complex world problems; they are instead interested in step-by-step specific actions to relieve the problems.

- . In addition to wanting some indication of what actions the group might support, they want evidence that the organization will be effective and will get results.
-People were convinced of the need for lobbying in Congress and making sure that the US does its part in fighting the deteriorating world situation.
- . They would be uncomfortable with any idea of the US telling other nations how to live or act.
- . They feel it is both morally right and in our own self-interest for US citizens to do what they can to protect and improve life on this planet.
- . They are hopeful of having similar groups seeking corresponding actions in other countries.
-The subject of reductions in the arms budget raises in some people the spectre of unilateral disarmament, which they vehemently oppose. To others, cutting the arms budget is an important objective. There seemed to be near unanimous support for efforts at mutually-negotiated arms reductions.
-The written materials prepared by the Planning Commission to explain its proposals were considered inadequate, often pretentious, and vague. In many cases, people favorable to the idea were turned off by the materials. Informational materials must effectively answer the questions of:
 - . Why another organization?
 - . What specific actions would it support?
 - . Who are the leading -- active -- supporters?
-There was no consensus on the best name for the organization. The diversity of opinion, and relative absence of any strong disapproval, indicated

that most any of the names suggested by the Planning Commission would be accepted, and that if a non-specific name, like "Common Cause", was chosen, it would probably take on the meaning that the organization's work gives to it.

.....The organization will have to compete -- both for money and for recruitment attention -- with the other causes which these participants support.

- . It should be made clear that the formation of this organization is supported and endorsed by other organizations, and that it will enhance -- not hinder -- their efforts.

- . A statement of support by John Gardner and leaders of other similar organizations (those which now claim their loyalty) on the envelope of a mailing or in a prominent position in any advertisement would be a major asset.

.....The sample was taken largely from Common Cause membership. It is noteworthy that these members of Common Cause are interested not only in Common Cause-type issues [principally dealing with domestic process] but also in lobbying on international issues. This was particularly true among persons over 40. They expressed strong interest in a new organization that would help them influence their country to behave more responsibly on international issues.

The preceding is the Summary of a full Report prepared by Oxtoby-Smith, Inc., based upon a series of "focus panel" group discussions conducted in five cities across the country during the months of September and October 1975.