

MEMORANDUM OF DECEMBER 1, 1953

TO: MR. MURRAY SNYDER

FROM: STANLEY M. RUMBOUGH, JR. and CHARLES MASTERSON

SUBJECT: RESPONDING TO SENATOR McCARTHY

XW.C.

I. MAIN POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION

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A. Senator McCarthy has attacked the President, and the President's prestige is threatened both in this country and abroad.

B. Would a response by the President lend dignity and status to the attack?

C. Will a response to McCarthy jeopardize the legislative program?

II. SUPPLEMENTARY FACTS

A. Image of the President as an inspirational leader is important to the independent voter, who provided the margin of victory in the last election. These men and women did not vote for the Republican Party; they voted for Eisenhower. If their image of the President becomes clouded and if they do not vote again as they did in the last election, no amount of effort by the Republican Party will bring success.

B. The threat to the legislative program is highly questionable. There are qualified observers who say that McCarthy and his coterie will neither drag their feet nor vote with the Democrats in the event the President speaks out against McCarthyism. Furthermore, there is no assurance that appeasement now will insure the legislative program. It is apparent that Senator McCarthy acts exclusively in the interest of Senator McCarthy, and if he deems it good strategy to discredit Eisenhower by scuttling the legislative program he will do so, whether or not the President speaks out against McCarthyism.

C. People are swayed by emotion more than by reason. And this is an emotional issue. Furthermore, the image of the President as a fighter may well be more important politically than the success or failure of a legislative program, (assuming that success or failure of the program is involved.).

D. One of the most dramatic moments in the President's career has arrived. He can appeal to the people now as a popular

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leader who has been attacked. Further, in speaking out against McCarthyism he is on the side of the angels. He can answer McCarthyism in the spirit of fair play and in the very words of the founding fathers, the Bill of Rights, Washington and Lincoln.

III. SUGGESTED ACTION

A. Televis the press conference - on Thursday instead of Wednesday to allow more time for a build-up. This is a dramatic moment for the first televised press conference and can be explained partly on the basis of the N.Y. newspaper strike and partly on the need to match the coverage McCarthy had when he issued his challenge.

B. Get Secretary Dulles to answer specific McCarthy charges re Davies, American flyers in Korea, and trade with Communists.

C. Start off the press conference with a statement including such concepts as:

This Administration is determined to keep the people informed. We have been charged on the one hand with harboring Communists and on the other hand with playing politics in our program of cleaning Communists out. The record of this Administration is open to public view - and it is a record we are and will be proud of.

As I have stated before, the era in which we live is dominated by the threat of world domination by the forces of Communism. If our way of life is to be preserved, we must be alert to that threat. Blindness or poor judgment in detecting Communist influence in our government is as dangerous as excesses in the other direction.

Speaking for that part of the Administration that is my responsibility, I can say that we shall not be guided by political motives in our fight against the Communist threat and we shall not be cajoled or challenged into abandoning the traditional American spirit of fair play. We shall be vigilant but not fanatical.