

✓  
Wheaties

February 5, 1955

Dear Mr. Pusey:

My apologies for this long delayed reply to your January 19th letter, but unfortunately I have been out of town so much that my correspondence has suffered badly.

Here are the answers to your specific questions:



Where did the plan originate?

The plan of an atomic pool for peaceful purposes originated in a memorandum by the President to Lewis Strauss in August 1953. The President was then in Denver.

How long was it under discussion before the President made his famous speech to the General Assembly?

The idea of the President's making a major speech on the general subject of the atomic age started as far back as early April 1953. However, the "pool" idea was not injected until August.

Why did he decide to make the speech to the United Nations?

Because it seemed to be the perfect world audience before which this plan could be launched. There had been a certain amount of discussion as to when and where the speech should be made, but when the intimation came that he might be invited to address the closing session of the UN 8th General Assembly, everyone agreed that that was it. As a matter of fact, it turned out not to be the actual closing day because of a pile-up on the UN agenda, but as I remember, it was within 48 to 72 hours of the actual close.

Had other countries approved the plan before the President made the public announcement?

No countries were asked for "approval". However, a draft was shown to the French and the British at Bermuda as a matter of courtesy. It would have been embarrassingly rude after having

sat with Churchill, Eden, Laniel, and Bidault for three days, to have flown direct to the United Nations and delivered a speech of this import without having told them something about it.

They were shown the draft informatively and comments were invited. The French had no comments. Churchill, who had Lord Cherwell, Britain's number one atomic scientist, with him, made a couple of points which we felt actually improved the speech -- but contrary to some press reports at the time, Churchill did no editing, did not propose any language. His comments were simply directed at the "tone" of certain sections of the draft.



How much weight should it be given in the record thus far of the President's work for peace?

This is of necessity the only subjective answer to your list of questions.

I think that great weight should be given to this speech and to the concept it outlined and the plan it proposed. Its impact outside the U.S. was tremendous. In the U.S. it was considerable at the time, but because we are so accustomed to international generosity it was much more "matter of course" here than abroad.

The debate at this last session of the UN General Assembly, culminating in our specifically setting aside 100 kilograms of fissionable material for this purpose, indicated how much power this original proposal had in the minds of the other nations. In fact, this speech and the proposal it contained were used by Vishinsky in his last-ditch effort to block UN action 48 hours before he died. At that time Vishinsky criticized the Lodge-Dulles proposals by saying that the President's grand proposal of December 1953 had been whittled down by the Americans to tracer isotopes, fertilizer, and scientific libraries.

I was sitting not more than three feet away from Vishinsky when Ambassador Lodge made his final speech which had as its surprise last paragraph the offer of the 100 kilograms of fissionable material. All through Lodge's speech, Vishinsky had been, as usual, furiously scribbling notes for his rebuttal. When Lodge pulled out the 100 kilograms, there was absolute silence in the hall. Vishinsky looked up, shrugged his shoulders, reached for his briefcase, threw in his notes, put down his briefcase, and sat back in his chair. He had had it.

During the entire debate both in the Committee and before the General Assembly, none of the scores of speakers ever failed to refer to President Eisenhower's proposal of last December.

Personally, I think this will be a "sleeper" as far as this country is concerned -- but one of these days when the deserts do bloom, and atomic reactors are turning out electricity where there was no fuel before, and when millions of people are eating who never really ate before, etc., etc., the President's December 1953 speech and proposal will be remembered as the starting point of it all.

Do you know of any criticism of the Plan?

The only criticism of the original plan came from the Soviet bloc. However, we ourselves amended the original plan and the atomic pool this year by allocating a specific quantity of fissionable material, followed by the British, without any allocation from the Russians, which had been a requirement specifically made in the original speech.

Also, in order to simplify and speed up the work, the original idea of having the physical custody of the material in the hands of a special UN Authority, which would have had the responsibility of guarding it and distributing it, was changed to the current Lodge-Dulles proposal.

I hope this will answer your questions. Again my apologies for the delay.

Sincerely yours,



C. D. Jackson

Mr. Merlo J. Pusey  
The Washington Post  
1515 L. Street N.W.  
Washington 5, D.C.

cc: Mr. James Hagerty