

Senator John F. Kennedy

August 13, 1960

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I am not telling you anything when I indicate that our present foreign policy consists largely of a negative rather than a positive approach. I think this is the reason why Krushchev has been able to make such propaganda out of our mistakes. Our doctrine, as one British scientist paraphrased it, seems to be that of "reciprocal nastiness."

The USSR, for example, set certain restricted areas in their country where foreigners are not permitted to go. We have set up similar areas, applicable primarily to the Russians. There is no real sense to the division, except this reciprocity of nastiness. For example, Boston is a closed city, whereas the much more sensitive Cambridge area is open.

With all the present spy scare in Russia, where even the tourists are looked on askance, I think there is one thing that we could do that would have a world-wide beneficial effect on our relationships with countries. If we could, unilaterally, simply wipe out these closed areas, I think we have nothing to lose and a great deal to gain. When the Union is urging their scientists and citizens not to consort with foreigners, a more open policy on our part would, in my opinion, have a favorable influence throughout the world.

This is perhaps only a small thing. Perhaps the State Department advisers have many reasons why it would not be advisable for us to take this action. But I at least toss it out to you for consideration. I am particularly sensitive because I was in Moscow at the time this notice came out. As a matter of fact, I talked on the Moscow radio, urging greater exchange of science and scientists between the two nations, the better to understand one another, with a view of peaceful coexistence. I have no idea how faithfully they may have translated my talk into Russian, although I was promised that this would be a literal and exact translation.

I hope you received my note of congratulations, sent to the Biltmore Hotel in advance of the actual convention results. But again my congratulations. And I reiterate my enthusiastic endorsement of your candidacy. Please call on me in any way, if I can help.

Cordially yours,

DHM/db

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